

BOARD OFFICERS ELECTED

President	Jef Wright
Vice President	VACANT
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Treasurer	Toni Floyd
BOARD OF DIRECTORS (APPOINTED)	
CFMS Chairperson:	Charles Shoup
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Parliamentarian:	Chris Toft
Shop Coordinator:	Alan Mazzola
Program Chair	Karen Wagner
Show Chair	VACANT
Newsletter Editor	Carol Hiestand
Website:	Ian Burney
Membership Chair	Karen Wagner
STANDING COMMITTEES (APPOINTED)	
Facebook Page	Admin
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Historian	Barbara Bury
Hospitality & Good Cheer	Judy Jessup
Meeting Displays	Barbara Bury
Picnic Coordinator	Moni Waiblinger
Refreshments	Dawn Wright
Redwood Rep	Barbara Bury
Librarian	Chris Toft
Calendar	VACANT

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(From their Dec. NL)

COVID IS STILL IMPACTING US IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY;
We are now under mandatory 3-week "Stay at Home" orders.
So hang in there, people. Wear a mask, distance as needed!
Sorry, No Christmas party this year, but some good news. (p.2)

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO DECEMBER
BIRTHDAY PEOPLE!!!**

Notes from recent Dec. Board Meeting:

Membership: 2021 membership dues were discussed. The shop has been closed since February and probably will not open until late winter / early spring. Due for the coming year will be voluntary. The membership will be offered the choice to pay due or defer for the year. Their membership will continue until January 2022 when that years dues will be requested.

General Meeting program chair: The possibility of having the general meeting by zoom was discussed. CFMS has published speakers who are available for zoom lectures. Toni will contact CFMS to get the list. We will also look into a zoom contract for the club.

CFMS show page was updated for June 2021

June 12-13, 2021, Escondido CA

Palomar Gem and Mineral Club

340 N. Escondido Blvd., Escondido CA 92025

Saturday – 10 AM – 5 PM, Sunday 10 AM-4PM

Palomar Gem and Mineral Show – presented by the Palomar Gem and Mineral Club. Held in the California Arts Centers museum and ballroom. A beautiful indoor facility. Secure for vendors and comfortable for attendees. 30-35 dealers.

Website: pgmcshow@palomargem.org

Gem show leaders

- Chair – Toni
- Vendors - Toni
- Sponsors– Archie
- Volunteers – Chris
- Vendor Floor map
- Advertising
- Printing advertising paper
- Demo coordinator
- Showcases recruitment and coordination
- Supply orders
 - Table covers
 - Wrist bands
 - Raffle tickets

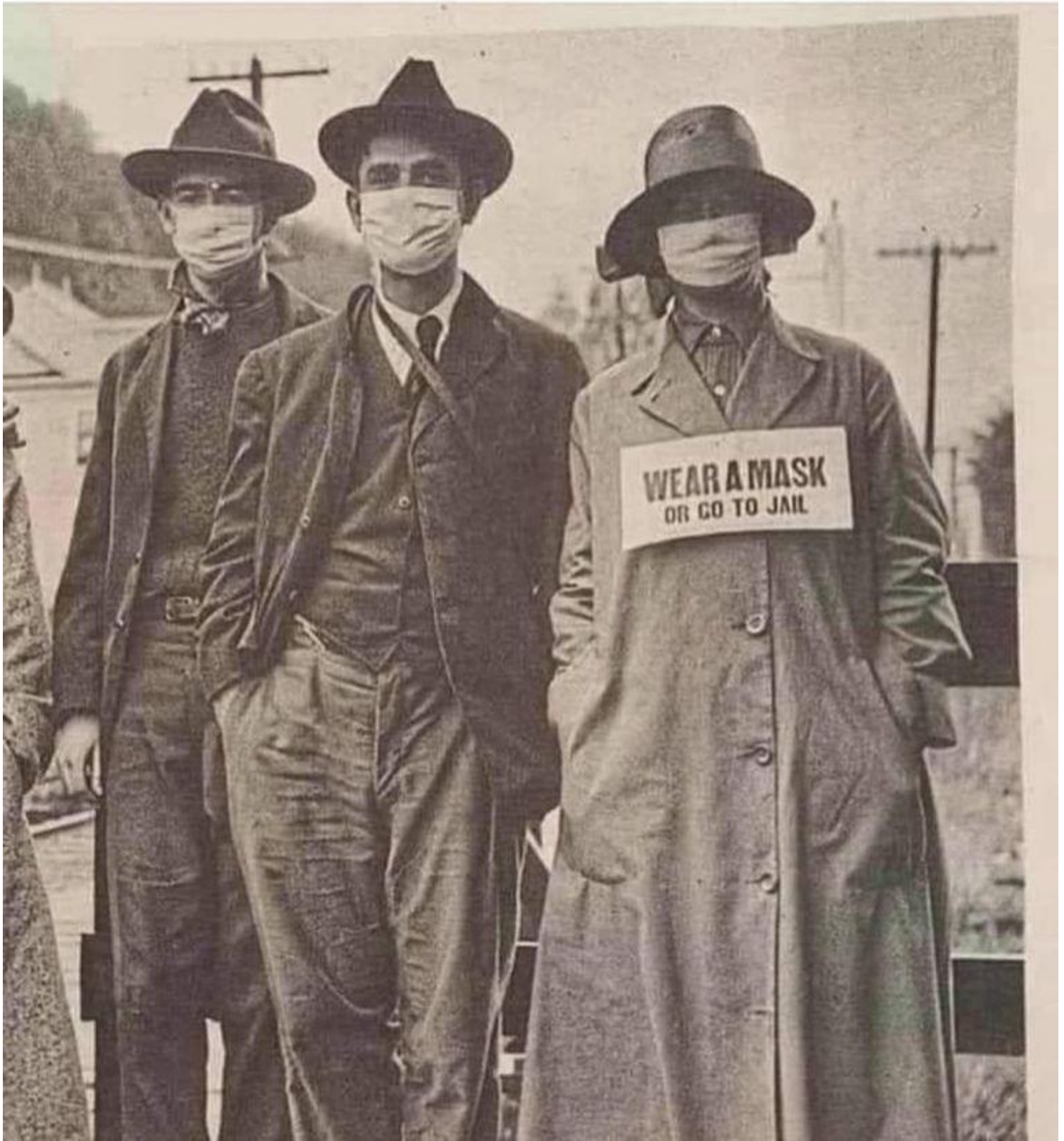
Show day –

Friday

- Friday Vendor check in - Toni
 - Electrical and Cases
 - Table set up
 - Show signs set ups
- Saturday and Sunday
- Front door / cashier support - Toni
 - Security

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR OPEN SPOTS, PLEASE CALL OR EMAIL TONI OR CHRIS

This picture was published in the Toronto Star yesterday. It was taken 100 years ago during the Spanish flu. Thanks for sharing Jamie.



A FEW SHORT STORIES PART 2

By: Gene Ciancanelli

MY FIRST CAREER

I got my first 40 hour a week job when I was 12 years old. I was a water boy and carpenter's apprentice during the summer school break. That first year I mostly hauled water from a water well a quarter of a mile away, dug ditches, pushed a broom, got taught carpentry, and nailed drywall for 25 cents an hour, which seemed to be a fortune to a twelve-year-old. Over the next decade, I worked in construction during summers and worked my way up to carpenter. Later, when I was in high school, I also worked the swing shift and weekends as a carpenter. The work was hard, but the money was great. However, work could occasionally be dangerous; so, I never told my mother what I was doing. I think she thought I was doing work like laying flooring, putting up drywall, or framing houses and I did do a lot of that type of work, but there were also dangerous jobs like working in a tunnel or building a high-rise building.

THIS OLD BUILDING

The older cities on the east coast have a lot of three- or four-story brick buildings built in the last half of the 19th and early 20th Century. Typically, these buildings will have a small business, such as a delicatessen, hardware store, bakery, etc. on the first floor and apartments on the upper floors. The usual layout is two apartments on each floor. My friend Frank's father was in the plumbing business and he also owned several old buildings built around the time of the Civil War. John, Frank's dad, decided to remodel these old apartments to bring them into the 20th Century. He hired Vern Cahill, a man in his 40s and I to do the carpentry work. I would get out of high school and arrive at the jobsite by 3:30 PM to change into my work clothes and begin working. Vern would arrive about 5 PM and we typically worked until about 8 or 9 PM. On weekends, we worked all day on Saturday and Sunday, which meant I averaged a 40-hour week. I was earning about \$100 a week, which was a good salary for a grown man with a family and unheard of for a high school kid. I saved every penny to pay for college.

The remodel work began with tearing everything down to the building's frame. That was a dirty job and we inhaled a lot of dust. Next plumbers and electricians would install new plumbing and wiring. Vern and I would install new windows and doors, insulate the building, put in dry wall and wood trim, paint and varnish the interior, and refinish the original solid maple floors. When the buildings were built during the Civil War, they were insulated with old newspapers. Upon demolishing the old plaster walls, we could read articles about the Civil War. John's plumbing business included a store selling bathroom and kitchen fixtures and appliances. He would put in new bathrooms and kitchens plus electric baseboard heating to replace the old fire hazard kerosene heaters. John also put in air conditioning, which was unheard of in the 1950s; especially in old apartment buildings. When an apartment was finished it looked fantastic, especially compared to what it had been. The original maple hardwood floors could no longer be replaced and when we sanded them down they came back to look like bowling alleys. Typically, when an apartment was remodeled, John moved a tenant out of an old apartment into the remodeled apartment and then we remodeled the empty apartment.

One year, just before Christmas, we finished an apartment about 7:30 in the evening. Vern said, *"You know that colored woman with the three kids, who lives next door, is going to be moved into this apartment. Let's go next door and show it to her."* We knocked on her door and told her John was going to move her into the apartment across the hall. John had three sons and the family resembled the Cartwright family on the old Bonanza TV show. John's oldest son Leo was a civil engineer, who managed the family business much like Adam Cartwright. The middle son, John Jr., was a big strapping jovial guy much like Hoss Cartwright. Frank, the youngest, was the runt of the family and he was Little Joe. Each time John moved a family, he sent his boys to do the moving, which they really didn't appreciate, but father knew best and he was boss. The black woman didn't have a husband and she told us she couldn't afford to move, but we told her John's sons would move everything for her. After some

convincing, Vern escorted the woman to “just take a look” at the new apartment. She came over with her three little kids, a daughter and two sons. They could not believe the transformation. Her first words were, *“I can’t afford this”*. Vern told her the rent was not going to change and that took some convincing. I had asked John once why he did not raise the tenant’s rate on the new apartments. He said, *“Some people never get a break in life and I can afford to move my established renters without raising the rent on these poor people.”* I remembered years earlier, my father remodeled several apartment buildings owned by the local mafia God Father and he said the same thing about helping poor people. The woman looked in disbelief at the new bathroom and kitchen with new appliances and the latest Formica counter tops. She was living in an apartment with a dangerous and smelly kerosine heater, a real ice box that used ice, and an ancient stove. Now Vern introduced her to the thermostat. He explained if she set the temperature at 70 degree the apartment would stay that temperature winter and summer. The woman had never heard of air conditioning, but there was a movie theater across the street and Vern explained that her apartment would be cool in summer just like the movie theater. That she really couldn’t believe. There were three bedrooms in the apartment and John had told us to paint them yellow, blue, and rose pink. As Vern guided them through the bedrooms, he told her there was a yellow and pink bedroom for her and the little girl and a blue one for the two boys. I remember the little 7-year-old girl saying to her mother, *“Momma is this beautiful pink bedroom going to be mine?”* The woman, a single mother, started crying. She grabbed Vern’s hand and said, *“God Bless you. No one has ever done anything like this for me.”* Vern answered, *“Merry Christmas”*. It had taken us months of hard work to fix the apartment, but it was all worth it to see how happy she and her children were. Since those long-ago days, I have worked for many big companies and very wealthy people for whom I have made millions of dollars. No one ever expressed any appreciation but that woman did. It was the most rewarding job I ever did. I just wish that there were more people like John and Vern.

In 1994, Paul Newman made a movie called Nobody’s Fool. It was about an aging bachelor, with limited prospects, living in a small town. The movie was filmed in my home town and in one scene Paul is driving down a street and drives pass the building Vern and I remodeled. We never could have imagined that building being in a Hollywood movie. Today, 64 years on, that old building probably could stand another remodel and so could I.

THE GRAYMOOR FRIARY

When I was 20, several hundred of us are building a Catholic monastery in the New York City’s outer suburbs. The workday begins at 6:30, when the carpenters assemble at Ranelli’s bar to fill their beer coolers for the 25-mile drive to work. I’m not a heavy drinker, two beers are my usual limit. These construction guys routinely drink throughout their waking hours. I remember my uncle Phil’s standard breakfast was two quarts of Rheingold beer with two more quarts at dinner. A car convoy travels to work from Ranelli’s bar with guys drinking their breakfast beer and throwing the empties out the windows (This is long before the environmental movement and littering is then considered normal behavior). One Navy vet says, *“As we drive along, with cans flying out both sides, we look like Navy destroyers depth charging Nazi subs.”*

The first few weeks are hard. The foreman, a Swede named Ollie, is always assigning me the toughest and most dangerous jobs. One day he orders, *“Gene tear off the scaffold hanging on the outside of the fifth floor.”* (Gene) *“That requires at least three men. Who is going to help me?”* (Ollie) *“No one, do it alone!”* Several older men hear this and shout, *“Gene don’t do it alone. It is too dangerous. You could get killed.”* Ollie views their comments as questioning his authority and he gets angrier and says, *“Do it or I’ll run your ass off this job!”* (Gene) *“Not unless I have two guys to help me.”* (Ollie) *“You’re fired! Pick up your tools and get off the job.”* Picking up my toolbox, I climb down the five stories to the ground, where the shop steward is working. (Shop Steward) *“Where are you going?”* (Gene) *“Ollie just fired me, because I refused to work alone dismantling the fifth-floor scaffold.”* (Shop Steward) *“That’s a three-man job!”* The shop steward blows a whistle and several hundred carpenters, laborers, plumbers, electricians, masons, and ironworkers, pick up their tools and walk off the job. The men are standing outside the building; refusing to work, unless I’m rehired. Three hundred construction workers sit and wait, while there is a meeting between the trade unions and the company. Finally, 600 man-hours later and with a nice

afternoon's paid rest, they announce, *"There was a misunderstanding. Gene is back on the job and three men will dismantle the scaffold."* I'm now Ollie's sworn enemy, but Ollie soon leaves on his annual vacation. Sailing on a steamship to visit his relatives in Sweden, Ollie has a heart attack and dies. No one misses Ollie and certainly not Gene. Ollie is in Valhalla (Viking Heaven) and Bob, the new foreman, is an easy-going Irishman. Here is my 60+ year on mental picture of Bob. A short thin fidgety fellow dressed shirtless in blue striped bib-overalls and wearing a small white cap perched on a round red face, as he scurries about checking on everything. Bob resembled an agitated leprechaun in bib overalls.

In the days before political correctness ruined our great country, there is colorful good-hearted humorous ethnic rivalry on construction jobs and elsewhere. A group of men, including Pete McCabe Jr. and his father, are sitting together eating lunch. Pete is a carpenter apprentice studying to be a priest. Everyone knows Pete's mother is Italian and his father is Irish. An Irish carpenter says, *"Pete, tell us are you Irish or Italian?"* He figures Pete, being a McCabe, will say Irish and all the Irish guys will have a laugh at the Italians. Young Pete is smart and sees through this set-up. (Pete) *"I'm half Italian and half ashamed."* Pete takes off running with several Irish guys chasing him. Pete, being much younger, easily outruns the older beer-bellied Irishmen, who return flush-faced red with huffing and puffing after their 500-foot lunchtime run in the sun. Lunchtimes now include someone saying, *"Are the Irish going to have a fun run today?"*

Construction workers all have nicknames, which often call attention to some humorous incident in the man's life or some shortcoming or disability he may have. For example, when John Romanelli sees a good-looking woman, he shouts, "Well HELLO THERE...Yut Yut." This gave him the nickname Yut Yut. Nicknames I recall include Dog-Face Rudy, Prince Albert, Numb Nuts, Charlie New Paltz, Ali Babba, Imbo (short for imbecile), Der Fuhrer, El Duce (who looked like Mussolini), Head O'Leary, Meatball, the Mouse, Fat Joe, Cockroach, Harry the Horse, The Grouch, Father Murphy, Tuna Fish, Step-and-Fetch It, and The Landlord. On the job no one is ever called by his real name.

The different trades tend to gather together at lunchtime to eat and joke around, because they work together and know one another. Numb Nut's wife makes him the same lunch every day. It never changes and he often bitches about his lunch. One day Yut Yut is sitting next to Numb Nuts and says, *"Prince Albert what do you have for lunch today?"* (Prince Albert) *"Roast beef."* (Yut Yut) *"Dog Face, what did your wife send?"* (Dog Face) *"Salami and provolone with a big piece of cherry pie."* (Yut Yut) *"Father Murphy what are you eating?"* (Father Murphy) *"Corn beef and I got some Twinkies."* (Yut Yut) *"That's a good Irish lunch."* Then Yut Yut leans over and looks at Numb Nuts' sandwich, which is always the same every day. *"What do you have?"* (Numb Nuts) *"Peanut butter!"* (Yut Yut) *"Oh! AND do I see JELLY TOO!"*

New guys, still wet behind the ears, are always good entertainment. One kid is told. *"Go get a wood stretcher and bring the one with the blue handle because the red handle one doesn't work."* Off he goes and half an hour later he returns and now understands it was a wild goose chase. The next day he is told, *"Go get a keg of toenails."* Off he goes again. He will make three trips before he gets smart, a record he is told.

We are building this large building at the Greymoor Friary, which has a rule that alcoholic beverages are not allowed on holy ground. Loni, the Grand Knight of the Catholic Knights of Columbus, is working on the job. Loni has a lucrative side business, selling beer on every job he works. Money wins out over church rules and everyone is drinking beer clandestinely. Loni's helper and associate Leroy (his real name) is a tall lanky young black guy. Leroy's job includes keeping the carpenters supplied with wooden wedges, which he delivers in a burlap sack. The wedges are used to plumb and level the concrete forms. To get wedges, Leroy has to walk near Loni's station wagon, where the beer coolers are located. It takes only a few seconds to add several cold beer six-packs to the wedge sack. Leroy is in effect Loni's bartender. The burlap sack, which Leroy carries around the job, has a few wooden wedges among the cold beer. Leroy delivers wedges and beer, for which he collects 25 cents a can. Leroy would have made a great secret agent, because he is a savvy guy with the ability to fade into the

background. His nickname is “now-you-see-him-now-you-don’t”. Each day, for two years, he manages to deliver thousands of cans of beer, without a foreman ever detecting beer on the job. Leroy has various whistles and coughs, which everyone recognizes along with the secret drop points. Empty beer cans are tossed inside the concrete forms, where they vanish when the forms are filled with concrete. It would be correct to say the monastery is made from beer-can-reinforced concrete.

Early one morning, we are removing the wooden forms after the concrete has set from the previous day's pour. Moths fly out when the forms are pulled apart, because concrete gives off warm moist heat as it sets and nighttime moths are attracted to the warm-damp wooden forms. (Leroy) *“Where are all them bugs coming from?”* (Prince Albert) *“The moths hatch out from the concrete lice. All concrete is full of lice and this always happens when you tear apart forms.”* (Numb Nuts) *“Be careful, I got stung last week and it hurts like Hell.”* Leroy now refuses to go anywhere near concrete or concrete forms. He is not going to let concrete lice sting him.

I have two partners, Pete the Fixer and Ralphie the Landlord and both are masters at goofing off. Pete will eventually go into politics and successfully exploit his twin talents for avoiding honest work and making a quick shady buck. Ralphie wisely invests his money and owns a couple of apartment buildings. Being rich and single, Ralphie enjoys a bevy of adoring girlfriends. Collectively, we three are called the Peanut Men, because we do the dangerous scaffold installation and removal on the building's exterior (there is no polite way to explain why peanut men are brave). One day, the Fixer finds some blueprint plans. The Landlord says, *“These are golden passports. All we do is walk around the job with these plans. If a foreman asks what we are doing, we unroll the plans and point to the other end of the building and say we are on our way to fix some problem for the engineers.”* We set out on a stroll and sure enough a foreman stops us and the Landlord goes into his routine and the foreman says OK. We use those plans to enjoy regular work breaks. There are more angles in the construction business than there are in the buildings.

The monastery building is constructed in stages. First steel beams are erected then we peanut men walk out on those beams and build wooden scaffolds from which iron workers, plumbers, electricians, and carpenters work installing steel reinforcing rods, electric conduits, and plumbing pipes. Next wooden forms are built to enclose the steel beams, steel reinforcing rods, electric conduits, and plumbing pipes. The forms are filled with concrete encasing the steel and conduits. When the concrete sets-up, the wooden forms and scaffolds are dismantled completing that floor. Work then moves up one story to construct the necessary scaffolding, ironwork, and concrete forms for the next floor above. Upon completing the building's concrete shell, scaffolds are built upward on the building's exterior and masons lay a brick veneer over the concrete shell. We Peanut Men are dismantling a scaffold from outside the sixth floor when the Fixer has an idea. We get red surveyor's spray paint and in five-foot-high letters write "THERE IS NO GOD" on the monastery's exterior. Once the scaffold is removed, there is no way to get back outside, until the masons arrive at the sixth-floor months later. We Peanut Men agree this will inspire the monks to pray and think.

Our work requires walking on narrow 3- and 4-inch-wide iron and wood beams many stories above the ground, while carrying heavy lumber. In the summer it is hot and we don't wear shirts. One idiotic stunt is to take cold water from a cooler and throw it on someone's back as he walks along a beam. There are no safety lines and a misstep is death. There were two serious accidents on that job. One young man, in his early twenties, didn't take his salt pills and got severe heat stroke. He became permanently mentally deranged. Another man threw a large plank off the building. It was suspected that a nail, sticking from the plank, caught on his wedding ring and the man was pulled from the building to his death.

For one task, I had to walk out on a 3-inch-wide steel beam that sticks 8-feet straight out from the building's ninth floor. I'm out there to attach a large pulley wheel to the beam's end. The pulley will be used to hoist metal door and window frames to each floor. Loni comes along selling Knights of Columbus raffle tickets just as I finish attaching the pulley wheel. (Loni) *“How many tickets do you want to buy?”* (Gene) *“None!”* Loni removes the plank

I have used to climb diagonally from a window out onto the narrow beam. Tossing a beer over, he leaves me stranded standing on the 3-inch beam. (Loni) *"I will be back later when you change your mind."* After finishing the only free beer Loni ever gave anyone, which later became known as *"The Miracle of the Free Beer"*, I drop the empty can and watch as it plummets earthward for nine stories. This is when beer cans were still made from steel and not the lightweight aluminum cans that replaced steel cans in the 1960's. As the can begins its decent, suddenly the construction company's owner, Walter Kiddy himself, leaves the building. Kiddy is a multi-millionaire big shot. The can hits the ground about 10-feet from the big boss and ricochets 20-feet into the air. Kiddy looks up and shouts to his flunky, *"Find out who that idiot is!"* Just then, Loni comes back and asks *"Are you ready to buy raffle tickets?"* I stick a 16-penny nail through a \$5 bill and toss it to him. He puts the plank back and Gene is gone when Kiddy's huffing and puffing toady climbs the stairway up to the ninth floor.

The next day Irish Bob assigns Father Murphy and I the job to move large heavy steel door and window frames up to each floor. We will be using the pulley wheel attached to the beam sticking out from the 9th floor. A stout rope now leads from this pulley to the ground. Down on the ground, we tie a steel door or window frame on the rope and hoist the frame to the appropriate floor, where two other men swing the frame into the building and untie the rope. After working at this for several hours without incident, Max arrives on the scene. Max is the guy I wrote about whose shoes I nailed to the floor. Max is from Germany. In World War II, Max served in the Wehrmacht at Stalingrad on the eastern front. Max has that not uncommon German attitude that they know more than anyone else. Max says, *"You young boys are tying the wrong knots and are pulling up those frames like tired old ladies. Let an old man show you the official German Army hoisting knot and how to work like real men."* Max ties the rope to a doorframe with some strange looking knot. He then starts pulling on the rope like a madman and the doorframe quickly rises. The steel doorframe gets to the appropriate floor and sails right past the topside crew until it slams into the pulley wheel with a loud crash. The knot pulls loose and the steel doorframe now starts a nine story earthward decent. Everyone shouts and runs for his life. The doorframe hits the ground with a loud crash and instantly became twisted scrap iron. Father Murphy turns to Max and says, *"It sure is more exciting to work THE GERMAN WAY!"* Max quickly leaves us with the expensive and now junk doorframe. Father Murphy says, *"What are we going to tell Irish Bob?"* (Gene) *"I know what to do. I'll cut about 10-feet off the rope's end and bash both cut ends with a rock to fray the fibers. Then we tie the 10-foot piece to the broken doorframe and tell Bob the rope broke."* Father Murphy, who is a priest in training, says, *"We can't say that it would be lying."* (Gene) *"You let me do the talking and you can hear my confession later."* Irish Bob never brings up the matter and later the building must have come up one doorframe short. Meanwhile, Max has requests to teach everyone the official German Army hoisting knot.

There is an old tradition in construction called the "tree raising ceremony". When a building's highest point is completed, a large tree branch or small tree is nailed to the highest point to mark the occasion. This is a monastery and the guys decide a simple ceremony will not do. We decide to make up an elaborate Catholic Church-like ritual. Yut Yut, is a large fellow with a fun-loving personality. He will make a fine Friar Tuck type high priest. Vestments are made from burlap sacks decorated with bright colored surveyor's ribbon. A decorated altar is constructed on the monastery roof. The pipefitters fashion a 20-foot-long metal Swiss Mountain horn. The monastery sits on a high bluff, overlooking the Hudson River, and when the great horn is blown, the sound resonates across the valley. It is usually foggy early in the morning and it is decided the ceremony should take place just as the fog is lifting. At the ceremony, Yut Yut, accompanied by an altar boy retinue, burns a small fire on the altar and pours a "very small" beer sacrifice into the fire with appropriate prayers. A man blows the great holy horn and a beer-can-decorated fir tree is raised to the rooftop. Everyone, including the engineers and foremen, hoists a beer to drink a toast to our accomplishment. This is so much fun that it becomes a ritual repeated each morning and everyone faithfully attends Mass to start the day with a cold beer.

The Catholic Church decides to have an official tree raising dedication ceremony and they relax the monastery's no alcohol rule for the party. It is mid-afternoon on a hot August day, when we are told to stop work and go to the

ground. Large tables are waiting filled with sandwiches and iced beer. Souvenir beer mugs are passed out, but the dedication ceremony has to take place before we can eat and drink a cold beer. The audience is an eclectic mixture with dirty shirtless construction workers on the left and on the right are elegantly dressed wealthy and important men, women, politicians, and church officials plus the press corps. First a Cardinal gives a speech, then a Bishop, then the monastery's head monk, and now one politician after another gets up to court the Catholic vote. Long speeches on a hot afternoon are not a good idea. Especially, when there are several hundred hot-sweating-bare-chested-thirsty construction workers sitting in the hot sun and holding empty beer mugs in close proximity to ice cold beer. Finally, someone shouts, *"TO HELL WITH THE BULLSHIT WE WANT BEER!"* and several hundred men charge the beer coolers. Someone goofed and there is not enough beer to go around and now a riot breaks out. The construction workers are shouting *"CHEAP BASTARDS"* and worse. The clergy and wealthy dignitaries are trying to get into their limousines, which are being pelted by empty quart beer bottles, assorted food items, and the souvenir mugs. The small "Irish" police honor guard is hopelessly out numbered. The Irish bagpiper stands there playing as photographers from Life Magazine and the New York newspapers are shooting riot pictures. I'm standing there with an empty beer mug, when Uncle Phil suggests that before more police arrive, it would be prudent to find a bar where we can get these mugs filled. When it came to beer, Uncle Phil always had his priorities straight.

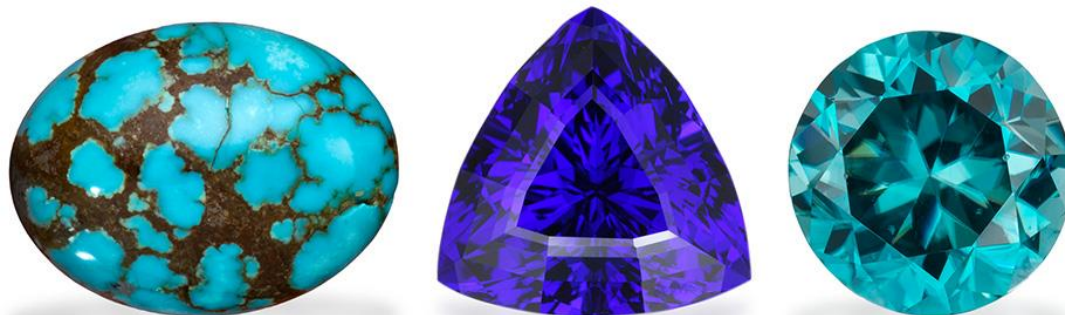
In the Middle Ages, the Catholic Church's con job includes telling the people working to build churches and monasteries that for their free labor they will go directly to Heaven when they die. No stop in Purgatory, you go directly to Heaven. It is like a "Get Out of Jail Free" card in the Monopoly game. Someday, when I get to the Pearly Gates and St. Peter is standing there, I just say, *"Gene Ciancanelli, monastery carpenter Graymoor Friary 1959"* and St. Peter will say, *"GO ON IN!"* After 61 years, I still have my Heaven entry-ticket souvenir beer mug. I use that beer mug every day to drink water. Many Popes have made the promise; so, perhaps I'm safe, but that's what mothers thought when they sent their sons to be altar boys. Our mom was smart and my brothers and I escaped the very dangerous altar boy job.

That fall, my friend Dick "Father" Murphy was going to take his priest vows. Dick had never gone on a date with a girl. I suggested he go on a date before joining the Pope's gang. Dick took my advice and skipped the priest business. Soon after, I came out west and we lost track of one another. I visited Dick 30 years later. He had 6 kids, which made him a gold star Catholic, and he was the town mayor. Dick is the only honest politician I ever met. On that same visit, I ran into Louie Amoroso, whom I didn't recognize until he said, *"We were the elephant"*. I immediately knew, who he was. In a kindergarten Christmas play, Louie and I wore the elephant costume. I was the back end and Louie was the front. Perhaps, we brought some enjoyment to the mothers, whose husbands were all off fighting World War II. I don't think a single kid in my class had a father at home.

Well, that's it for this month and this year. Here's wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a Covid-19 free New Year. I just heard from my grandson Kyle, who works in the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota that there are now two Covid-19 vaccines. Hopefully the end of this pandemic is near.



DECEMBER BIRTHSTONE



If you had to pick one December birthstone, which would it be: tanzanite, turquoise or zircon? From the blue to bluish purple of tanzanite, to the intense blue and green of turquoise, to the rainbow varieties of zircon – there's a color for everyone. If blue is what you're looking for, all three December birthstones have their own unique take on this favorite hue. Whatever your color, style or budget preferences may be, we can help you pick the right December birthstone for you or a loved one.

JUMP TO:

TURQUOISE TANZANITE ZIRCON

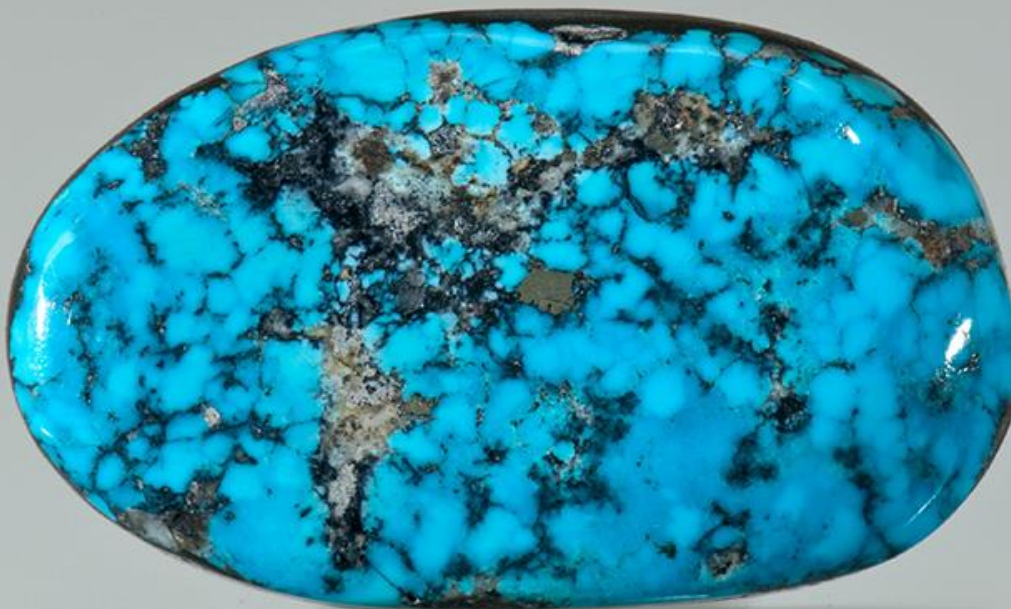
TURQUOISE BIRTHSTONE

TURQUOISE BIRTHSTONE MEANING & HISTORY

Turquoise is a semi-translucent to opaque gem that ranges from blue to green and often has veins of matrix (remnants of the rock in which it formed) running through it. This December birthstone has been cherished for millennia. The pharaohs and other rulers of ancient Egypt adorned themselves with it. Chinese artisans carved it more than 3,000 years ago.

The turquoise birthstone was thought to possess many beneficial powers, like guaranteeing health and good fortune. From the 13th century on, it was believed to protect the wearer from falling (especially off horses), and would break into several pieces at the approach of disaster. Hindu mystics maintained that seeing a turquoise after beholding the new moon ensured fantastic wealth.

This turquoise birthstone also played an important role in the lives of Native Americans. The Apache thought turquoise could be found by following a rainbow to its end. They also believed that attaching the December birthstone to a bow or firearm made one's aim more accurate. The Pueblo maintained that turquoise got its color from the sky, while the Hopi thought the gem was produced by lizards scurrying over the earth.



GIA.edu

A 46.28 ct medium green blue turquoise free-form cabochon Photo: Robert Weldon/GIA

This December birthstone adorns the funerary mask of King Tut, who ruled Egypt more than 3,000 years ago. It also appears in jewelry belonging to more modern royalty: Wallace Simpson (1896–1986), Duchess of Windsor (the woman for whom King Edward VIII gave up his throne), wore a famous [amethyst and turquoise necklace](#) made by Cartier. Turquoise is also the gem of the [11th wedding anniversary](#).

In European tradition, the gift of a turquoise ring means “forget me not.” Turquoise is considered a national treasure in Tibet, where it is believed to grant health, good fortune and protection from evil. December's birthstone also imparts peace to those who wear it.

WHERE IS TURQUOISE FOUND?

Turquoise has been mined in the Nishapur district of Iran for more than 1,000 years. The prized even-colored, intense blue turquoise from this region is dubbed “robin’s egg blue,” “sky blue” and “Persian blue.” Trade professionals now use these terms to describe turquoise of this color – regardless of the source.



This is the view on the way to the Nishapur district of Iran. Courtesy: Dr. Edward J. Gübelin Collection

Although New Mexico was the largest producer of turquoise in the U.S. until the 1920s, today most of the U.S. production of this December birthstone comes from Arizona and Nevada. Mines have evocative names like Dry Creek, Easter Blue, Emerald Valley and Fox. The Kingman mine in Arizona is a historically important source that is known for producing intense blue turquoise. Now closed to turquoise mining, Arizona's Sleeping Beauty mine was a prolific producer for more than four decades.

Today, China is the world's largest producer of this December birthstone. Hubei Province, in central China, is the source of most of the gem-quality turquoise currently being mined there.

TURQUOISE BIRTHSTONE CARE & CLEANING

Some turquoise is treated to improve its durability (it has a Mohs hardness of 5 to 6), appearance and polish. Turquoise can be dyed or chemically enhanced by adding an epoxy or acrylic resin for greater hardness or better color. Also seen are cavities filled with a metal-loaded epoxy to imitate pyrite inclusions.

Turquoise is generally stable to light, but high heat can cause discoloration and breakage. Your turquoise birthstone can be damaged by acids, and it can be discolored by certain chemicals, cosmetics and even skin oils or perspiration. It's safe to clean turquoise jewelry with warm, soapy water, but this December birthstone should never be cleaned with steam or ultrasonic cleaners. Heat or solvents can damage the treated surfaces on some turquoise.



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The intense blue turquoise beads in this necklace came from Arizona's Sleeping Beauty mine. Photo: Robert Weldon/GIA. Courtesy: Somewhere In The Rainbow

MORE ABOUT TURQUOISE **TURQUOISE BUYER'S GUIDE**

TANZANITE BIRTHSTONE

TANZANITE BIRTHSTONE MEANING & HISTORY

Tanzanite may be a relative newcomer to the world of colored stones, but it was one of the most exciting gem discoveries of the 20th century. Blue stones emerging from Tanzania were identified as the mineral zoisite in 1962. Not until 1967, though, did prospectors locate the primary source for this December birthstone: the Merelani Hills. It was eventually named tanzanite in honor of its country of origin. The tanzanite birthstone is often described as “velvety,” mostly because of its deep and saturated color, which ranges from a pure rich blue to violet, with the blue considered most valuable.

Tiffany & Co. believed that tanzanite had international appeal and became its main distributor. In 1968, Tiffany launched a major advertising campaign to promote it. With its vivid colors, high clarity and potential for large cut stones, tanzanite quickly became a sensation. Today, it is not only a December birthstone, but it is also the gem for the [24th wedding anniversary](#).



This 5.59 carat (ct) oval tanzanite is surrounded by 28 tapered baguettes and 12 round brilliant cut diamonds.
Courtesy: EraGem.com

WHERE IS TANZANITE FOUND?

The Merelani Hills of northern Tanzania is the only place on earth where tanzanite is mined commercially. Grass-covered hillsides, scrub brush, rocky soil and an occasional tree form the local landscape. In the major mechanized operations there, thousands of workers recover tanzanite from mines dug over a 100 meters (more than 300 feet) deep into the earth. North of the mines tower the snow-covered slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro.



Emerging from the clouds is the domed summit of Mount Kilimanjaro. Tanzanite is mined in its shadow. Photo: Eric Welch/GIA

TANZANITE BIRTHSTONE CARE & CLEANING

This December birthstone (6 to 7 on the Mohs scale of hardness) is resistant to the effects of normal heat, light and common chemicals. Still, the December birthstone may crack if exposed to very high temperatures or sudden temperature changes, and it abrades easily. It can be attacked by hydrochloric and hydrofluoric acids.

Most tanzanite begins as brownish zoisite that is heat treated to produce the blue to violet hues that characterize this December birthstones. The resulting color is permanent, and there are no additional durability concerns.

Your tanzanite birthstone is best set in earrings or pendants. While not recommended for daily wear in a ring, with a protective mounting and some care this December birthstone can be an attractive special-occasion jewel.

Warm, soapy water is the best way to clean this December birthstone. [Ultrasonic and steam cleaners](#) are never recommended for tanzanite.



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In this beautiful special-occasion ring, a 4.91 ct tanzanite is protected by eight prongs and a regal frame of diamonds. Courtesy: 1stdibs.com

MORE ABOUT TANZANITE **TANZANITE BUYER'S GUIDE**

ZIRCON BIRTHSTONE

ZIRCON BIRTHSTONE MEANING & HISTORY

The origins of the word “*zircon*” have elicited colorful debate. Some scholars believe it comes from the Arabic word *zarkun*, meaning “cinnabar” or “vermilion.” Others think the source is the Persian word *zargun*, or “gold colored.” Considering the broad color palette for this December birthstone – red, orange, yellow, brown, green and blue – either derivation seems possible. Colorless zircon is known for its brilliance and flashes of multicolored light, called fire, which have resulted in centuries of confusion with diamond.

During the Middle Ages, this December birthstone was thought to lull one into a deep sleep and scare off evil spirits. In the Hindu religion, zircon alternates with hessonite garnet as one of the nine [gems of the navaratna](#). When worn together, the nine gems protect the wearer and bring wealth, wisdom and good health.

Victorians had a fondness for blue zircon. Fine specimens can be found in English estate jewelry from the 1880s.



Zircon comes in a wide array of attractive colors. Photo: Robert Weldon/GIA. Courtesy: Dr. Edward J. Gübelin Collection

WHERE IS ZIRCON FOUND?

Sri Lanka's wealth of gems is legendary: Sapphire in various colors, [ruby](#), [alexandrite](#), [spinel](#), [tourmaline](#), [moonstone](#) and quartz are some of the gem minerals unearthed there. So is the December birthstone zircon. Elahera, a region in central Sri Lanka, is one of the country's most productive areas. Mountains, jungles and restless streams make for a dramatic landscape.



An artisanal miner searches for gems in the Elahera region of Sri Lanka. Photo: Vincent Pardieu/GIA

Australia's Harts Range is known for producing zircon birthstones in yellow-brown, orangy brown, pink and purple. Go there and you'll see open savannahs, dry stream beds and low-lying hills that meet the

horizon. Zircon Hill is where this December birthstone is mined. The nearby city of Alice Springs is known for its outback culture, aboriginal art and quirky sporting events like a regatta race held in a dry river bed.

This December birthstone is often located near sapphire sources. In addition to Sri Lanka and Australia, countries where the two gems overlap include Myanmar, Vietnam and Cambodia.

ZIRCON BIRTHSTONE CARE & CLEANING

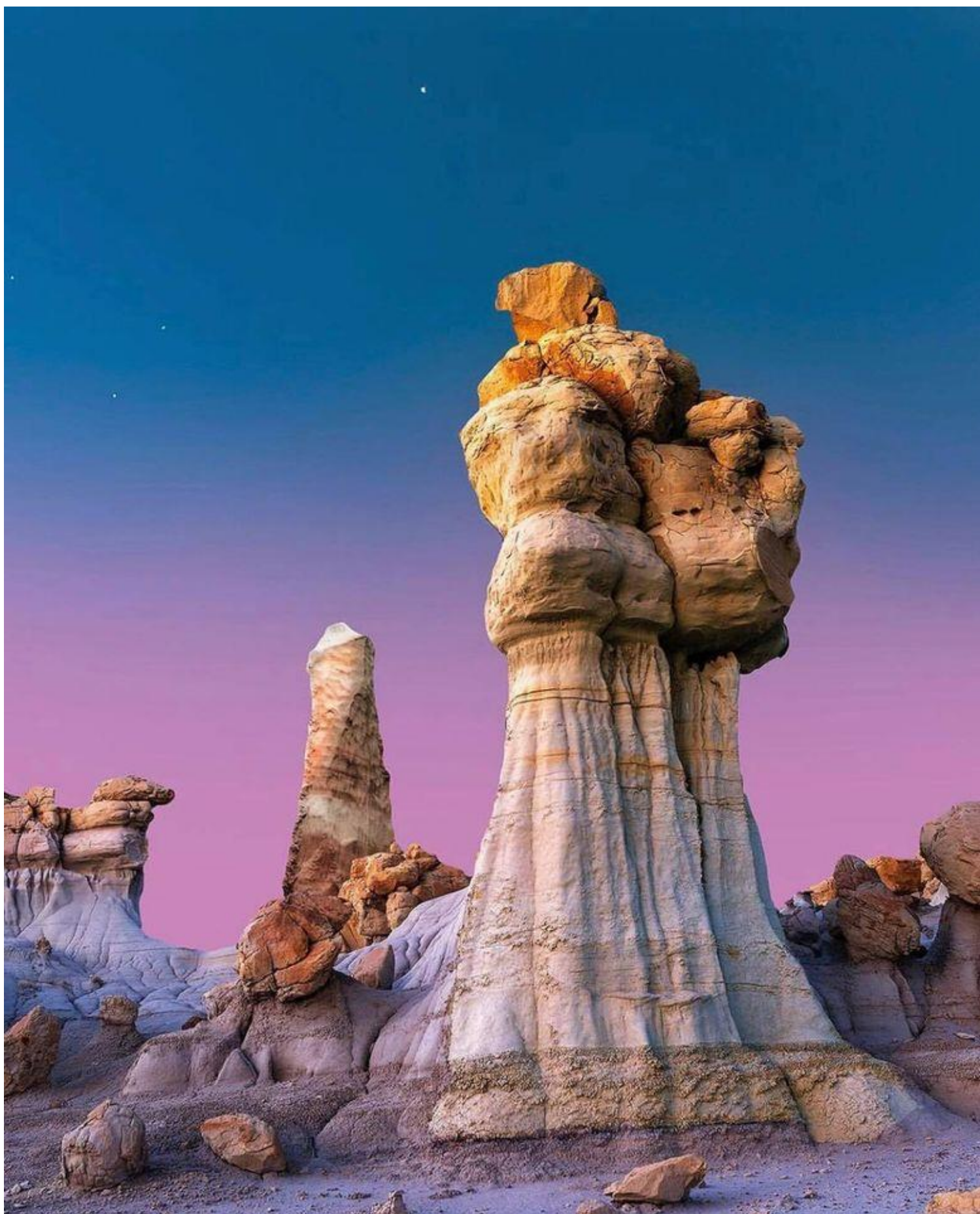
Zircon ranges from 6 to 7.5 on the Mohs scale of hardness. It is commonly heat treated to produce blue and colorless varieties, as well as orange, yellow and red. The gem is generally stable when exposed to light, but some heat-treated stones may revert to their original colors (usually light brown) after prolonged exposure to bright light. Exposure to heat can alter the color of some zircon. This December birthstone is stable when exposed to chemicals.

Because zircon tends to abrade, it is best to avoid wearing it in rough conditions, such as while gardening, playing sports or doing dishes.

Clean your zircon using a soft brush and mild soap in warm water. Ultrasonic and steam cleaners are not recommended for this December birthstone.



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Where is this??? Answer next NL



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ROCKHOUND SOAP BOX

CFMS – PLAC

John Martin – PLAC Chair 2020

plac@antelecom.net

This is the last in the articles on Lapidary Art from the last quarter of the 20th century. We are all looking forward into the 21st century and what it has to bring to Recreational Rockhounding and Lapidary Art. Stay safe and sane and most of all “Happy Rockhounding and enjoy your Public Lands”

SHOP SUGGESTIONS

Compiled by Bernice D. Schilling - 1975
San Fernando Valley Mineral and Gem Society

“POTPOURRI”

COLD DOPPING METHODS

Cold dopping is a must on many fragile and heat sensitive stones. Opal is one in which damage from regular “hot” dopping may show up, not immediately, but at some future date.

1. First, squeeze a small amount of strong-hold cement on a stone and beside that place a small amount of corn starch in a mound. Gradually add the corn starch to the cement until it is the texture of spun honey. It doesn't take much of either. Now place the dop stick on the stone, and let set at least 24 hours before you work it. Remove stone with acetone.

....Rockhound's Rag

2. Cabochons are set level in florist's putty, Elmer's or other white, water soluble glue is used to cement the cabs to 1/4 to 3/4 inch diameter corks....Let stand overnight or for 8 hours. Corks may also be used for handles to sand slabs. Standard dop sticks may be used with this method. To remove stones, soak in warm water.

....Point Loma Navy Rockhounds

3. Cold dop with Elmer's Glue. It is always ready and will dry enough to begin work in 30 to 40 minutes. It seldom lets loose, even on a rough wheel. The warmer the stone gets, the tighter it holds. To remove the stone from the dop stick, drop it all in water and leave for several hours.

....The Agatizer

4. Talc mixed with sodium silicate (water glass) will make a rock-hard cement that will not chip. Good for holding cabs.

.....The Agatizer

As a CLEANER for Lapidary SANDING CLOTH, Crepe rubber is excellent. It is the same as used for the shoe soles. A small thick sheet of crepe rubber held against the sanding cloth, while in motion, acts as an eraser to remove the accumulation of debris and expose the abrasive cloth for better work.

....The Agatizer

TO DISLodge UNWANTED PARTICLES FROM BUFFING WHEELS try a pumice block which is usually available at a drug store. Run the buff dry while holding the block to the running wheel with a medium firm pressure.

....The Tumble Rumble

Instead of DUMPING USED ACID (oxalic, muriatic, etc.) down the drain, where it can cause pollution and can damage the plumbing, try the following: Put it in a plastic bucket or earthenware crock (do not use metal) and put in a piece or two of limestone. The limestone will neutralize the acid so that it can safely be dumped almost anywhere.

....East Bay Nodule

A SMALL HAND SANDER can be made from a safety razor. Remove the blade and wrap sanding paper around the curved blade holder. Tuck ends under the teeth and tighten handle. Ideal for sanding small surfaces, especially if they are curved.

....The Pegmatite

TUMBLE ABALONE SHELLS in fine quartz sand, and enough water to barely cover for 24 to 36 hours. Wash out thoroughly and dry. Replace shells in tumbler, with 1 pound of Tripoli for each 50 pounds of shells, tumble for 12 to 15 hours. Wash tumbler and shells and dry well. Next fill the drum to half full and add enough hardwood sawdust to keep the shells from bumping. Add polish of your choice, in the ratio of 1 pound to 50 pounds of shells. Run this mixture DRY for 2 or 3 hours. Wash well and discover beautifully polished shells.

....Ore-Cuts News Bulletin

ALUMINUM PENCILS will give you a good idea of the HARDNESS of STONES. The harder the stone, the fainter the mark it will make. It won't mark a stone harder than 7.

....The Agatizer

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When DRILLING HOLES IN STONES, Glycerin is a good holding agent for the grinding compound or grit. It adheres to the drill and you do not have to use a dike. Ball point pen tubes make good drills for drilling holes for pen sets.

.... The Agatizer

TO ORIENT STAR SAPPHIRES (or other star stones): Epoxy WITHOUT hardener can be used. The droplet maintains a nearly spherical form, showing the rays better than oil.

....Rockhound's Rag
...via Rocks and Gems

Since women like small EARRINGS (4 or 5 mm.) find two buttons of the required diameter and cement them on to the back of the stone to be ground, and then cement the dop stick on to the button. The button serves as a template and the result is Two Identical small round stones.

....Del Air Bulletin

If you wish to know if your BOTTLES and GLASSWARE WILL TURN PURPLE without exposing them to sunlight — place them under a Black Light and if they fluoresce green, they will turn purple when exposed to the Ultra-Violet rays of the sunlight for many months.

....Rocks and Gems

TO CLEAN OBSIDIAN NEEDLES; wash them in castile soap using a toothbrush to get the clay off. Never put obsidian in detergent as it will leave a white film on the stone which is very hard to remove. To remove iron stains, soak in oxalic acid. Wash well afterwards. This might also be a good tip for CHALCEDONY as it gets a white film on it

....The Rock Ledger

To keep your tools from rusting, simply spray them with "PAM" — then wipe with a dry cloth to remove excess.

....CFMS Newsletter

TO ALL NEW STUDENTS and a reminder to those WITH YEARS OF EXPERIENCE: When working on sanding disc of a coarse grit be sure to wash your cab and your hands thoroughly before going on to a finer sanding disc. This prevents carrying grit from one wheel to another and causing contamination resulting in a scratched cabochon. If warm water is used it will warm the stone and speed up the polishing process.

....Pegmatite

If you find scratches on your cabochons, DON'T COMPROMISE! Go back to grinding or sanding steps and make the stone perfect. Check the stone with the image of the light bulb off to one side so you are not blinded by the reflection. Stones should be polished until they are like a mirror and you can see yourself in the polished surface.

....Spit and Polish

A good way to tell how solid a slab is to heat it in hot water. The surface will dry immediately after being removed from the water. If there are holes or fractures in it, every one will soon be lined in water. These can then be marked with a pencil and used to orient your cab.

....Rockhound's Rag

Keep a piece of agate near the wheel while grinding. If the wheel becomes a little rough, work the agate back and forth across the face of the wheel. This prevents dressing of the wheel, which is costly and wasteful.

ALWAYS MOVE STONE BACK AND FORTH ACROSS THE WHEEL TO PREVENT UNNECESSARY GROOVING.

....Rocks and Gems

HOW TO MAKE BASES TO HOLD CRYSTALS

1. Five pounds of plaster of paris
2. A divider (insert pencil — use as a scribe)
3. Styrofoam cups (such as used for coffee)

Set the divider points about one-half inch apart and starting at the bottom of a cup, mark a line around the cup about one-half inch from the bottom. Cut on the pencil line with a single edge razor blade. Repeat this operation until you have used all of the cup. Place two or three of the cut sections of the cup on a piece of glass window pane. Now mix a small amount of plaster of paris with enough water to make a creamy paste and pour this mixture into the cup rings. Leave set until the plaster starts getting firm and then place your crystal specimen in the center of the cup ring. Press down until the bottom of the crystal is covered with plaster. Hold for a minute or two and you will have a fine base for your specimen.

....The Agatizer

STORE CABOCHONS IN PLASTIC NOTE-BOOK LEAVES USED BY COIN COLLECTORS. Each sheet has 20 individual compartments and can be kept in a regular note-book.

....LOESS Bulletin

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To bring out the bright RED COLOR of an otherwise drab slab of BRAZILIAN AGATE, place the slab in the OVEN and bring the temperature to 550 degrees F. Do this gradually, over a two hour period. Hold it at 550 for one-half hour, then allow it to cool overnight. DO NOT OPEN THE OVEN while the slab is hot — IT WILL FRACTURE! An even deeper red may be obtained at 650 degrees.

....The Digger Digest

It is ILLEGAL to have any MINERAL DETECTOR in YOUR POSSESSION while in a NATIONAL PARK.

....The Rockhound's Rag

RENEW YOUR SANDING CLOTH by rubbing a wet rag in a circular motion when the sender is NOT in motion. Let it dry before using.

....The Agatizer

Your grinder should be started BEFORE turning on the WATER, and always turn off the water BEFORE turning off the grinder. Let it run a short while to dry off. The water sinks to the bottom of the wheel and it becomes heavier on one side. You CAN NOT TRUE A WHEEL when it is WET. (Editor Note: This applies to Silicon Carbide Wheels and not to Diamond Wheels)

....The Agatizer

Use household VINEGAR to dissolve EPOXY RESIN glue. Try it, it really works! Use regular dark vinegar and soak overnight or longer if necessary.

....CFMS Newsletter

Try using a potato peeler on a stone to REMOVE THE DOP WAX instead of a knife. The peeler will follow the curvature of the stone.

....Strata Gems

MAKE AN EASEL to hold your polished slabs or geodes from DRAPERY HOOKS by spreading two wires back to hold easel up as legs. Bend two wires into curves at the bottom to hold the slab. Straighten out the "hook" in the center and shape to make a back rest and give proper slant to the slab.

....Strata Gems

For CLEANING COPPER, try "Toni" Wave Lotion. It is a simple, inexpensive method, and specimens will remain clean for a long time.

.... The Agatizer

Oil of cinnamon or oil of cassia, sold by the ounce in drug stores, have a refractive index near that of most stones. When you submerge a stone in the oil, the surface irregularities vanish and you can see the flaws and inclusions.

....The Rockhound's Rag

HIDE THAT FRACTURE: The secret of the art of healing fractures in a cab with epoxy is to shape your stone and semi-polish it. To get rid of that nasty crack, heat the stone to 200 degrees in an oven. Mix the epoxy and apply it to one edge of the crack. Gradually work it from one end of the crack to the other. This is very important. You will notice that the epoxy becomes very liquid when it touches the hot stone, and flows right into the crack. By applying the epoxy at one end and working towards the outside edge of the cab, the air in the fracture is driven out and the epoxy replaces it. Then put the stone back in the oven and let it remain there for another 20 minutes. By this time the epoxy will harden. Scrape off the surplus and proceed with your final polish. If you do this right, the fracture will be very difficult to detect.

....Gems

To be continued in January newsletter. Thank you John for sharing this with us.

DECEMBER SAFETY

By Joe Goetz, Chair

December is the month of family gatherings, feasting and laughter amongst other things. However, in the age of COVID 19 extra precautions are needed to be safe. You've already heard about all the different ways to stay safe by the experts. Still after a time, a vaccine may be ready in your doctor's office for your inoculation. Hopefully, it will work, and we can get back to a more normal life as we are used to.

There may have to be a few modifications on how we can transport people to collecting sites and back to camp. If your vehicle is equipped with running boards or a luggage rack that might offer alternatives for seating (just kidding). Joking aside, those on field trips should be in their own vehicles. Masks will have to be worn at the very least.

Of course, the whole idea is to have fun and have a chance to interact with other members and get to know your guests and of course get rock from a particular area that may have remarkably interesting material. See you around.