



# THE GOLDRUSH LEDGER



CHARLOTTE GEM & MINERAL CLUB

MAY 2014

## THE PREZ SAYZ

**T**he long range weather forecast 6 days before the April 19 Reel Mine dig looked great – rain the middle of the week followed by clearing and 70 degrees on Saturday (dig day). The day before the dig, however, was a totally different story with continuous heavy rain starting the night before and predicted to continue throughout Saturday (not sure how much they pay these weather forecasters but it's obviously way too much)! This created the big question - go ahead with the dig or cancel? That decision was made for us by Friday afternoon telephone calls from out of state SFMS members who had signed up for the dig and



wanted to make sure it was still on. Fully aware of the bad weather conditions, these rockhounds were willing to drive several hours (3 people drove 7 hours each way from Alabama) for a chance to dig in what would probably be a big mud pit. How could we say no to such commitment and resolve?

I arrived at the dirt access road to the mine at 7:20 Saturday morning and found two cars ahead of me navigating through the half mile of mud and ruts to the mine entrance. The rain was coming down at a brisk pace and the "parking area" was already well on its way to becoming a professional caliber mud bog. We set up a sign-in area off the back of my SUV with the tailgate up and within five minutes the humidity made the reservation sheet and Waiver of Liability forms a soggy mess. Things got a bit brighter when Jimmy Strickland arrived with his ever-present poles and tent tarp. A short while later a very strange thing began to happen - people in ponchos, boots and assorted rain gear started turning up with shovels, pickaxes and buckets asking me to take their \$25 so they could slog up to the mine and get started. Somehow we wound up with 58 diggers, including about 15 kids under the age of 13 and approximately 15 SFMS club ... continued on page2



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members from out of state. By noon some were so soaked, cold and muddy they decided to leave early. I felt bad for them and was thinking of giving refunds but as they went by our makeshift (by then thoroughly soaked) sign-in booth they were smiling and thanked me for not canceling.

It took until about noon for me to find the time (and get up the initiative) to hike through the rain and mud up to the mine to see what was going on. Talk about surprises! There were a couple of dozen adults and kids fully caked in mud: some adults were so deep into holes they had dug you could only see their heads. (a few had gone in head first and only their legs were visible). Some of the younger kids were using the sides of the pit as a mudslide and taking great pleasure in getting filthy without getting yelled at by a parent. They all looked like they were in it for the entire day. A couple of diggers commented that the rain was a good thing because it kept



the dig from getting too crowded and it loosened the dirt. Late in the morning a beautiful doubly terminated smoky quartz crystal bigger than a golf ball was found by a ten year old rockhound and that brought several diggers back out of their cars where they were trying to dry off.

I have to confess that although I chose not to do any digging, I was very impressed with the enthusiasm shown by those who did so under such trying conditions. Field trips are obviously a popular event for a club such as ours and I will make the effort to see to it that the CG&MC generates more opportunities to sponsor more digs – hopefully under more favorable weather conditions

By the way, profuse thanks to Neil Hohmann, Chuck Borawa and Kim Gwyn for helping to turn a potential washout into a successful event.

*Murray Simon, President  
Charlotte Gem and Mineral Club*



# OREGON SUNSTONE GEMS

Sunstone is a type of labradorite or plagioclase feldspar which occasionally has copper or hematite inclusions. Finer specimens are popular as gemstones.



While most sunstone is colorless or pale yellow, some high quality material from Oregon in the USA is found in a variety of colors, some with copper inclusions that give it a glittery or spangled appearance that make these gems especially valuable.



Indeed Oregon sunstone is generally regarded as the finest sunstone in the world. While mines in the USA were once the source for many gem varieties -- including tourmaline, kunzite, sapphire, peridot, turquoise and gem silica -- sunstone is one of the few gems still mined commercially in America.



Sunstone is a sodium calcium aluminum silicate by chemical composition. It has a hardness of 6 to 6.5 on the Mohs scale. Sunstone is found in many places in the world, including Canada, Madagascar, India, Russia, Norway and the USA.

Most sunstone is pale in color and has little value but the Oregon material occurs in an interesting range of colors, from pink and tan to orange, green and red. The orange and red are the most valuable, especially when the stones exhibit a glitter or schiller caused by fine-grained copper inclusions. This phenomenon is known to gemologists as adventurescence.

The Oregon sunstone mines are located in a relatively small area of 7 sq. miles in the high desert in Lake County in southern Oregon, near the tiny town of Plush. The sunstones formed in a basaltic lava flow at an altitude of around 4,600 ft. Though there indications that Indian tribes passing through the area had collected sunstones, the first documented report dates to 1908, when Maynard Bixby, a mineralogist from Salt Lake City, discovered a new deposit of labradorite in southern Oregon. The Spectrum Mine was the first commercially operated sunstone mine in the state.

In 1987 sunstone was named the state mineral of the state of Oregon.

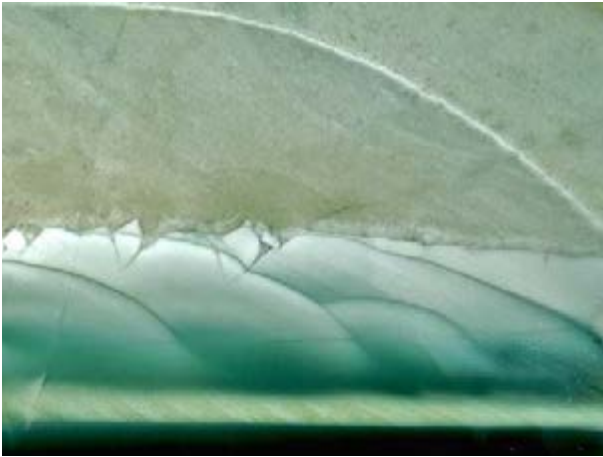
<http://www.ajsgem.com/articles/oregon-sunstone-gems.html>



## ***Jasper Classification - Part III***

### ***Scenic Jaspers***    *by ron gibbs*

Scenic Jaspers (aka picture jaspers) derive their name from their distinctive look. These jaspers freeze what appear to be small scenes or landscape paintings in their structure. The complexity of the scenes are often amazing, with details that appear to be plant structures, rocks, mountains, lakes, streams, and complete skies, even at times with cloud like structures.



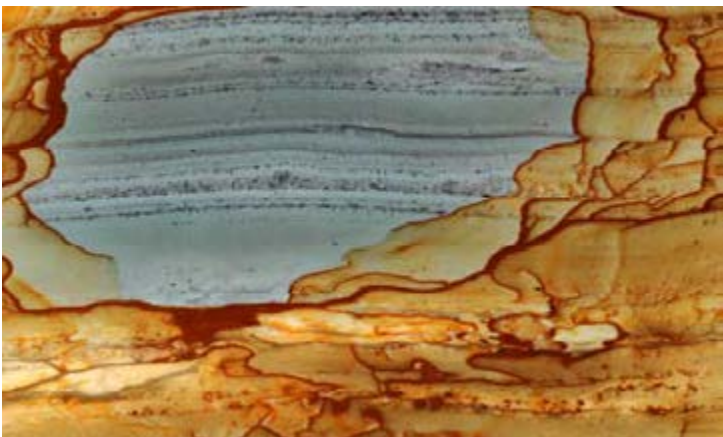
*Ocean Waves - Imperial Jasper - Mexico*



*Biggs Jasper - Oregon*



*Biggs Jasper - Oregon*



The scenic jaspers tend to be very fine grained often resulting from the cementation of mud or siltstones. They may also form from silicified pyroclastic flows. The scenes may be formed by the repeated sedimentation processes of water, wave or wind action. These may produce repetitive patterns that lock in their actual method of creation. For example wind traveling over fine grain sediment might produce miniature sand dunes that are eventually trapped in layers and look exactly like the sand dunes they are.

Coloration may come from the original sedimentary materials, or it may be introduced by later water staining in the porous sediment, or it might be carried by the siliceous fluids that caused the cementation process. Likely the final colors come from a mixture of these processes.

Getting a life-like scene from any given rock cut is often a matter of pure luck. Sometimes an educated guess can be made based on the layering structure of the beds or hints of internal structure from chips along the outside of the rough. Often the resultant patterns are too large for gemstone use, but they can be polished and framed making small works of stand-alone art.

A very large number of the finest scenic jaspers come from the Oregon-Idaho border area. Many of the best known jaspers with wonderful patterns and excellent hardness come from this general locale. Most of these are silicified mudstone and siltstone. They often produce color images reminiscent of the American South West.

Imperial Jasper is most often found in a red-maroon variety or a greenish-blue variation. It often has orbs, but sometimes can make nice ocean wave patterns.

*Succor Creek - Oregon*

Biggs and Deschutes Jasper both come from the same general locality, and can often be confused. They are both very fine grained and take a great polish. The most sought after is the variety with the bluish cast.

Rocky Butte Jasper is another fine grained jasper with a wider variety of colors than the previous two. It often has a blue to blue-green area that is perfect for sky with brown to brown-red mountains and even some green grassy areas.

Succor Creek Jasper is another fine picture jasper from south-eastern Oregon. It has blue to blue green sky areas with tan to darker brown mountain like structures.

There are many other scenic jaspers, Owyhee being one, but the named Owyhee Jaspers produces such a large variety of jaspers they will be covered in the next installment all by themselves.



*Rocky Butte - Oregon*



*Deschutes Jasper - Oregon*



*Rocky Butte - Oregon*



*Deschutes Jasper - Oregon*



*Succor Creek - Oregon*

# BIRTHSTONE OF THE MONTH EMERALD

As the birthstone for May, the emerald, a symbol of rebirth, is believed to grant the owner foresight, good fortune, and youth. Emerald, derived from the word *smaragdus*, meaning green in Greek, was mined in Egypt as early as 330 B.C. Today, most of the world's emeralds are mined in Colombia, Brazil, Afghanistan, and Zambia. The availability of high-quality emerald is limited; consequently, treatments to improve clarity are performed regularly.

Emerald is a gemstone, and a variety of the mineral beryl ( $\text{Be}_3\text{Al}_2(\text{SiO}_3)_6$ ) colored green by trace amounts of chromium and sometimes vanadium.[2] Beryl has a hardness of 7.5–8 on the 10-point Mohs scale of mineral hardness.[2] Most emeralds are highly included, so their toughness (resistance to breakage) is classified as generally poor.

From: [www.americangemsociety.org](http://www.americangemsociety.org)



<http://www.thejewelleryeditor.com>



## William Holland School of Lapidary Arts

Are you interested in taking your gem and mineral hobby or business to the next level? Then William Holland School of Lapidary Arts is the place for you! Registration for the 2014 season is open now.

Learn about silver smithing, faceting, cabochons, opals, and tons of other interesting and exciting topics. Spend one week immersed in rockhounding pursuits in the beautiful Georgia countryside.

Learn more at:

<http://www.lapidaryschool.org/>



<http://www.wondermondo.com>



[www.mindat.org](http://www.mindat.org)

# **Charlotte Gem and Mineral Club Monthly Meeting**

*Thursday May 15, 2014  
Gathering at 6:30, Meeting to Start at 7:30*

## **Location:**

*Tyvola Senior Center  
2225 Tyvola Rd. Charlotte, NC 28210 (704) 522-6222*

## **A LAPIDARY ROUND ROBIN**

*Everything and anything you may want to know about faceting, cabling,  
wire wrap, polymer clay and gem identification in a new and dynamic  
meeting format*

## **FACETING POWOW**

*From 5:30-6:30*

*Do you facet? Have an interest in faceting? Are you experiencing issues  
with your facets? Come and discuss with your fellow faceters.*

**\*\*There will not be a Jewelry  
Workshop before the meeting\*\***

# UPCOMING SHOWS

## **May 23-25—SALEM, VIRGINIA:**

23rd Annual Show; Treasures Of The Earth Gem & Jewelry Shows; Salem Civic Center; 1001 Boulevard; Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 11-5; adults \$5 (good all 3 days), children (under 16) free; beads, pearls, gemstones, wire wrapping, wire sculpture, silversmiths, goldsmiths, custom work and repairs while you wait, door prizes, classes; contact Van Wimmer, 5273 Bradshaw Rd., Salem, VA 24153, (540) 384-6047; e-mail: [van@toteshow.com](mailto:van@toteshow.com); Web site: [www.toteshow.com](http://www.toteshow.com)

## **May 31- June 1—WEST PALM BEACH, FLORIDA:**

Wholesale and retail show; Intergalactic Bead Shows; Expo Center at South Florida Fair Grounds-Bldg. 10; 9067 Southern Blvd.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; adults \$5, children free; precious and semiprecious gemstone beads, sterling silver, findings, freshwater pearls, hand-blown glass beads, vintage beads, crystals, delicats; contact Tonya Nicholson, 3865 Lawrenceville Hwy., Ste. 107, Lawrenceville, GA 30044, (888) 729-6904; e-mail: [contact.beadshows@gmail.com](mailto:contact.beadshows@gmail.com); Web site: [www.beadshows.com](http://www.beadshows.com)

## **June 14—GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA:**

Annual show; Greensboro Gem & Mineral Club; Greensboro Day School; 5401 Lawndale Dr.; Sat. 10-6; adults \$4, students \$2, children (under 5) free; gemstones, minerals, jewelry, geode cutting, demonstrations, books, door prizes; contact KB Montgomery, 4810 Sweetbriar Rd., Greensboro, NC 27455, (336) 286-5052; e-mail: [kbmonty@triad.rr.com](mailto:kbmonty@triad.rr.com); Web site: [www.ggmc-rockhounds.com](http://www.ggmc-rockhounds.com)

## **June 14-15—DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA:**

Wholesale and retail show; Intergalactic Bead Shows; Durham Convention Center-Jr. Ballrooms; 301 W. Morgan St.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; free admission; precious and semiprecious gemstone beads, sterling silver, findings, freshwater pearls, hand-blown glass beads, vintage beads, crystals, delicats; contact Tonya Nicholson, 3865 Lawrenceville Hwy., Ste. 107, Lawrenceville, GA 30044, (888) 729-6904; e-mail: [contact.beadshows@gmail.com](mailto:contact.beadshows@gmail.com); Web site: [www.beadshows.com](http://www.beadshows.com)

## **June 20-22—BOONE, NORTH CAROLINA:**

20th Annual Show; Treasures Of The Earth Gem & Jewelry Shows; National Guard Armory; 274 Hunting Hills Ln.; Sun. 10-6, Sat. 10-6, Fri. 11-5; adults \$3 (good all 3 days), children (under 16) free; beads, pearls, gemstones, wire wrapping, wire sculpture, silversmiths, goldsmiths, custom work and repairs while you wait, door prizes; contact Van Wimmer, 5273 Bradshaw Rd., Salem, VA 24153, (540) 384-6047; e-mail: [van@toteshow.com](mailto:van@toteshow.com); Web site: [www.toteshow.com](http://www.toteshow.com)

## **June 27-29—FISHERSVILLE, VIRGINIA:**

27th Annual Show; Treasures Of The Earth Gem & Jewelry Shows; Augusta Expoland; 277 Expo Rd., I-64 Exit 91; Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 11-5; adults \$4 (good all 3 days), children (under 16) free; beads, pearls, gemstones, wire wrapping, wire sculpture, silversmiths, goldsmiths, custom work and repairs while you wait, door prizes; contact Van Wimmer, 5273 Bradshaw Rd., Salem, VA 24153, (540) 384-6047; e-mail: [van@toteshow.com](mailto:van@toteshow.com); Web site: [www.toteshow.com](http://www.toteshow.com)