



# THE CONGLOMERATE

OCTOBER 2020

THE NEWSLETTER OF  
THE RENO GEM AND MINERAL SOCIETY

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*Dean Sizemore*

I hope this finds you all well as we enter October. As an organization we are staying active, and the Board is meeting monthly. Last month we had a trip to McDermitt over the Labor Day weekend.

The new Website is up and running and looks amazing. It's a work in progress and is being updated continuously as suggestions and fixes are made. I want to thank Tom Nichols and his Tech group for making this happen; it has been a long time coming, and they have put in more hours than you can imagine. They are looking for pictures from past trips and events. It has an interactive calendar of events coming up, Field Trip page and so on. Please take a minute to check it out at [renogms.org](http://renogms.org), or you can go to the old website address and it will forward you there.

The McDermitt trip was lightly attended but we had a great time. Denise and I mapped most of the area and were able to search most roads finding lots of great specimens. It was hot and dusty as most trips are, but that did not slow us down. I want to thank those that attended.

At this time we are looking for a few new Board Members. If you are interested, please contact me at [rgms.president@gmail.com](mailto:rgms.president@gmail.com). Most are continuing for next year, but there will be some openings. Please make sure to read the Volunteer's Section of this newsletter. We have multiple openings and would love to get those positions filled.

Some classes are continuing, and we have a couple of upcoming Field Trips in October [Check Facebook and [renogms.org](http://renogms.org)] and will have completed a trip to Gabbs by now. If you are qualified on Lapidary please stop by and take advantage of the Monday Open Houses; we have had great turnouts for these.

There currently are still no General Meetings planned. We must wait until more than 50 people are allowed to convene. When groups of 150 or more are allowed and when Baldini's meeting room

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Wednesday, Oct. 7, 2020  
General Meeting **Cancelled**

WEDNESDAY, Oct. 14, 2020  
Board Meeting **7:00**

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## RGMS, INC. MISSION STATEMENT

The **mission** of the **Reno Gem and Mineral Society** is to create, develop, and encourage interest in the Earth Sciences and to locate and identify various material through field trips. As a **501C(3)** corporation RGMS qualifies for donation write offs of cash and materials. Donation receipts are available at the society's headquarters.

A General Meeting, open to the public, is held usually the first Wednesday of each month at 7 PM at Baldini's Casino, Second Floor, 865 S. Rock Blvd, Sparks, NV. Board meetings are open to all members and are held the second Wednesday of each month at 7 PM at the Rock Building, 480 S. Rock Blvd., Sparks, NV. Annual membership dues: student: \$25, Individual: \$35, and Family: \$50.

## CONGLOMERATE SUBSCRIPTIONS 2020

**Digital edition:** no charge to members

**Shortened edition by USPS:** \$1 per copy or \$12 annually, in advance

**Full edition by USPS:** \$1.75/ copy or \$21 annually, in advance

**Full edition copies** at the meeting: \$2 except to guests. Free to guests.

SEPT. FIELD TRIP REPORT*Rob Kendrick field trip director.*

Fellow members,

As of September 30, I will no longer be the field trip director for RGMS. I just wanted to say thank you to the people that have helped to lead some awesome trips, and especially, I want to thank everyone who participated in the trips. Our society has had great participation in our trips over the past 2 years! Thanks again and I look forward to more trips next year! As always, happy hounding.

Rob

SUNSHINE*Lori Connel, Sunshine Director*

Hello rockhounds, are you still with us? I know many of you are feeling kind of left out, or a little numb, sad, fearful or angry due to the safety restrictions put upon us right now. Every day there is good news and bad news about COVID and it's a little too much to stomach sometimes. Our schedules and routines are disrupted. Everything has changed on how we shop, worship, exercise, eat and entertain ourselves. This has caused many of us to lose a sense of safety, predictability, control of our freedom and security. We have the best cure for that: get out there and start rockhounding. Even if it's in your rock room, backyard, or getting together for small rockhounding adventures with close family and friends. If you are able, join the rockhounding adventures Rob has scheduled for us. We may have one trip more coming up.

Since the last Conglomerate, we have lost 2 of our Society members. **John Boyne and Gary Dalton**. These men were active members of the RGMS. Gary Dalton's family is in Oregon and may be coming to Reno for a visit soon. John Boyne's wife **Kathy** could use our virtual hugs and prayers during this time.

Please also give your thoughts and healing prayers to **Steven Smith, John Montgomery, Sam Macaluso, and Bobby White**. They are continuing to make good progress. Imagine how wonderful it feels when your friends reach out to make sure you are ok. It really helps with healing .

In closing, this "Stepping out of our ruts" quote from **M. Scott Peck** may be helpful.

"The truth is that our finest moments are most likely to occur when we are feeling deeply uncomfortable, unhappy, or unfulfilled. For it is only in such moments, propelled by our discomfort, that we are likely to step out of our ruts and start searching for different ways or true answers."

Bottom line is that if it's a good period in my life, I will enjoy it fully. If it's a difficult time, I'll do what I need to get through it and come out stronger.

Please stay safe and keep to the social distancing rules. We need you out rockhounding. We miss you all very much.

*Pres. Msg. cont. from p. 1*

becomes available again, we will resume General Meetings. We may need to find another place for General Meetings; it needs to be able to handle up to 200 people and have plenty of parking. If you know a place or know someone at a place, please let me know at my email listed above.

Have a great and safe October

RGMS LIBRARY REPORT*Kathy Boyne, Library Director*

Like us all, I am still Staying Home for Nevada. When restrictions are lifted, I will be actively involved with the RGMS Library. I am accepting donations to the library. Donations may consist of magazines, journals, books, and/or maps related to RGMS interests which include Nevada History, Jewelry, Beading, Metalwork, Lapidary, Geology, Rocks and Minerals. Contact Kathy via phone or email address: [RGMS.librarian@gmail.com](mailto:RGMS.librarian@gmail.com).

ROCK SALE*Kathy Boyne, Library Director*

October 12-14, 2020 and October 18-20  
Call ( for location and times.

Rocks constitute a 50-year collection from Western States--Nevada, definitely.

Request social distancing and masks and will limit the number of persons in rock areas. RGMS Members wearing their RGMS name tag, bring your own 5-gallon bucket and fill one up for free. Your 2nd bucket will be \$5.00. If you just have to have a third container, it will be \$10.00.

If you are not a member or do not wear your name tag: the first container will be \$5.00 and the second container will be \$10.00.

I have wooden rocket crates and metal 5-gallon buckets that are already filled with rock/specimens/minerals. The crates and metal buckets will count as your own containers.

I have some 5-gallon plastic buckets for sale \$5.00 each.

OFFICERS' REPORTS

The Board minutes are posted on the bulletin board at headquarters monthly. Treasurer's reports are available to any member on request. **Steve Norman** , Secretary; **Robyn Howard**, Treasurer

MINERAL OF THE MONTH

OPAL

*D. W. Webb Varnum*

There are three types of Opal—precious opal (e.g. black, boulder), common opal (opaque, splintery), and fire opal (red, orange, yellow), all composed of SiO<sub>2</sub>·nH<sub>2</sub>O. It has a white streak and a conchoidal or sometimes a splintery fracture, a Mohs hardness of 5.5-6.5 and a specific gravity of 1.9-2.3. It is brittle and transparent to translucent with a vitreous, waxy, greasy, or dull luster. Precious Opal is best known for its variety of color which can flash red, yellow, orange, green, blue in a white, black, or brown background. It is most often found in altering volcanic tuffs, basalt and deep water sediments formed at low temperature and pressure. The gem variety has considerable value as a semi-precious gem stone. Opal is found in several places in Australia, Brazil, Peru, Mexico, and the US. Fire opal has been found in Oregon and Louisiana, in addition to Mexico, and black opal occurs in Nevada. There are several mines in northern Nevada where collectors can dig for a fee, and opal has also been found in the Tonopah region.



Tonopah Opal—image, Webb Varnum



Nevada Black Opal: Image from Webb Varnum

Opal is the birthstone for October, and if we are lucky enough to have an opal, there are steps to take to safeguard it. If our opal is a solid stone, it will not be damaged by water, but it can be fragile, so avoid activities where it might be knocked. Opal for jewelry is frequently used as a doublet or triplet, and those stones can be damaged by prolonged exposure to water. Clean an opal with a soft cloth and mild detergent. If your opal becomes dull, take it to a professional for polishing. To store your opal, protect it from contact with other jewelry by keeping it in a cloth bag. If it is to be stored for a length of time, “place our opal in cotton wool with a few drops of water, then into a sealed plastic bag

just to be safe. The water is not intended to soak into the stone (as opal is impervious) but will prevent water coming out of the stone if it is exposed to very low humidity environments .”

Sources, Mindat, Gemdat, Opals Down Under, and personal knowledge.

RGMS ARTISAN CRAFT FAIR

*Theresa Langhans, Coordinator*

I know that you all are wondering about the status of our upcoming craft fair in November. I have been monitoring the opening and closing of venues all around the area. The Reno Town Mall has been open due to the State offices being located there. But the library, a draw to our craft fair, is closed. In addition, the book sale from which we also draw a number of our customers, is being strictly limited with few customers allowed in the facility.

With ongoing restrictions being imposed by the Governor, mandating continued social distancing practices as well as limiting the numbers of individuals at gatherings, I am concerned about safety for all of us as well as about limited numbers of customers who may be in attendance. Although I don't have a crystal ball and can't predict what will happen, I truly feel that it is best that we don't risk anyone's safety or health. So it is once again, with a heavy heart, that I feel it best to cancel our Fall Craft Fair. As everyone else, I am certainly hoping that at some time in the near future we will be able to go back to our usual activities, including hosting and participating in craft fairs.

Many of you have paid your reservation fees for our craft fair. I will be asking you your preference for refunds. I will be in contact with the library in an attempt to determine dates for 2021 shows.



## COPROLITE, OR THIS DUNG IS FOR YOU

Brett Whitenack

This article deals with a subject that some people find rather offensive and vulgar. Others find it quite amusing. There are few people who find it extremely fascinating and worthy of study. What could exhibit so many varied reactions? I'm speaking of petrified poop, Dino doo, fossilized er, ah, pardon me. I don't wish to offend anyone reading this article. I'm talking of the much maligned, the lowly, the humble, coprolite.

"What is coprolite?" I'm glad you asked. Coprolites are fossilized feces, dung, scat! Yes, ladies and gentlemen, coprolites are the extruded remains of meals that prehistoric animals deposited. "But how can these be fossils?"



Dinosaur coprolite: source—ripley.com

The oldest coprolites date some 400 million years ago from the Silurian Period and are from fish. The most recent coprolites are from Ice Age animals and may still contain much original organic matter—a fact your nose may discover if the coprolite gets wet!

Coprolites form just like any other fossil. They must have been buried rapidly in fine grain sediment and kept away from biological agents that could destroy them, such as scavengers or the environment. Ground water percolating through a potential fossil must be of a correct nature, not too acidic, and full of minerals that can replace the soft materials. Of course, these requirements only pertain to those coprolites that are petrified. Some younger coprolites have been found desiccated in southwest caves and date from the last Ice Age.

Being of a soft nature, dung doesn't preserve as readily as bones, teeth, or scales. However, coprolites aren't exceedingly rare by any means, and you too can easily own a piece of this most interesting geo-logic wonder. Given its detached nature, a coprolite can't be identified with the exact species of animal that left it. In some instances, coprolites from sharks can be determined from the grooves and markings on them, as sharks have distinctive spiral valves in their intestines.

By studying the makeup of a coprolite, one can tell if the animal was a carnivore (meat eater) or herbivore (plant eater). It is interesting to note that carnivorous coprolites are more readily preserved due to their higher mineral content from the bones the animal ate. Other things that can be told by studying coprolites are such things as the paleo environment where the animal lived, other organisms that were associated with it, and how this animal interacted with its surroundings.

The name *coprolite* has two sources as to how they were named: one fact, the other fiction. During the great "bone wars" of Professor O.C. Marsh and Professor Edward Drinker Cope during the latter years of the last century [1890s], Professor Cope's men apparently stole an allosaur skeleton from a quarry of Professor Marsh's. This incensed Professor Marsh, and to "immortalize" Professor Cope, Professor Marsh named the fossilized fecal remains "coprolites" to get even with his arch enemy, a quaint legend, but entirely untrue.

The name *coprolite* has more humble and mundane origins. The English geologist, William Buckland, deduced their true nature and named them from the Greek *kopros*, "dung," and *lithos*, "stone," literally *dungstone*. Buckland thought they would be important in agriculture as a source of fertilizer due to their high calcium phosphate content. In addition to the information they can tell us, coprolites have become fashionable as a cutting material. Believe it or not, some coprolites exhibit beautiful colors when cut and polished. It has been said that the reds are from the meat the animal ate, brown from nuts and seeds, green from plant material, and black from the juices of blackberries.



Source: Pinterest; AZ coprolites

Actually, these colors come from the minerals deposited by ground water that percolated through them as they were fossilized.

Ref: BEMS Tumbler, 04-07; via West Seattle Petroglyphs, 8/06; via Carny Hound, 3/06; via The Southwest Gem, 2/04; via Stoney Statements, 1/04; from The Stone Chipper, 8/03

SCHOOL REPORT

Julie Hilsabeck, Director

Want to take or teach a new class? Have any ideas or suggestions? E-mail **Julie Hilsabeck** [RGMS.school at gmail.com](mailto:RGMS.school@gmail.com) or talk to her at the general meeting! All official information regarding scheduling and class details is published in *The Conglomerate*. ~~Register and pay for classes at the general meeting.~~ We accept cash or check made out to RGMS!

Children may register for classes only at the discretion of the teacher. Wear protective shoes or boots to work in the shop—NO open toe shoes, sandals or slippers. **Please Note: To register for classes you must either be a member or have \$1 million of liability insurance naming RGMS as the certificate holder. Non-members must present a valid insurance certificate at registration. Otherwise, you may not register for classes until the next general meeting after you join. Your insurance is included in your dues.**

BE NICE! Each class using headquarters is responsible for leaving the premises clean and tidy. Any tools belonging to RGMS should be put away securely and headquarters locked.

**MONDAY OPEN HOUSE**

Make your own projects! You must take at least 2 months of lapidary classes before you will be cleared to attend open house and must have your name on file as approved to work on your own in the shop. Speak to the lapidary instructors to be added to the list. Please be sure to follow shop safety rules. **At 8:45 please start clean-up so chaperones can go home.** Supervised by **Daniel Ellis** and others. 7-9 PM Shop fee \$5/hour.

**BEADING AND BEAD WEAVING**

**Must sign up.** Beading in the rest of 2020 may be offered on a **Saturday** from 10-2. Class is taught by **Sue Webb**. **Projects: October 10/10: Russian spiral;** \$2.50/hour (\$10/class) payable at class. To sign up for October, email Sue at [rgms.bulletin at gmail.com](mailto:rgms.bulletin@gmail.com). Materials: 2 15" strands each of 3 complementary colors of 4x3mm crystal rondelle beads (total of 6 strands or at least 150 beads each color), 2 strands of coordinating 4mm glass pearls (or 150 pearls), 1 tube size 11 contrasting seed beads, 1 pair of 10-12mm cup-style end cones, two eye pins, 6# fireline, needle.

**CASTING**

**Casting is currently on hiatus until an experienced instructor is found.** When offered and weather permitting, casting is taught in two classes held on Friday evenings. Classes enroll a maximum of 4-6 students. Sign up at the general meeting when classes and meetings resume.

**KNOTTING AND STRINGING**

Learn to string natural stones and beads handle beading wire, use silk for knotting pearls and craft wire for wire linking as well as stretchy cord for bracelets. The different tools involved in each project as well as different gauges of craft wire will be explained. You will be supplied with all you need to make bracelets. \$20.00 material fee. First and third Mondays, 7-9 PM. \$5 course fee. Taught by **Laura Jackson** when Covid regulations permit.

**LAPIDARY**

**Must sign up.** Lapidary is limited to 4 new students, but a **daytime class** is now available. **For shop safety, an absolute limit of eight people may work in the shop at one time.** First time students **must** attend a one-time **shop safety seminar on the Tuesday following the general meeting date at 10:30 am or 6:30 pm.** Drop-ins are welcome on a first come, first served basis. Registered and pre-paid students always take precedence over drop-ins. Materials for your first two projects are included in your class fee. When Covid regulations permit, evening class taught by **Lloyd Raymond & Barbara Hartman, 7-9 pm;** daytime class taught by **Barbara Hartman and Julie Hilsabeck. 11am -1pm , Tuesdays, \$5/hr.**

**SILVER FABRICATION**

**Must sign up.** Beginning classes are structured classes. The first two projects are specifically designed to teach you the fundamentals of silver fabrication (making jewelry). Therefore, you will not be able to do other projects until you complete the two projects. RGMS provides tools to use on your first two projects. There is a \$20-\$25 fee for the silver which we provide for the first project. Stones are not included; however, we do have some for sale. For these two projects, **only oval stones** will be used. Suggested size for the first project is 18 x 13mm, and 30 x 32 mm for the second project. The stone size does not have to be the exact size but should be very close. You can purchase silver from the instructors for the second project, or you can use our own. Upon completion of the two projects, if you wish to continue, you will need your own basic set of tools. **The tools that RGMS provides are for new students only.** Before purchasing any tools, talk with your instructors. When Covid permits all classes to resume, Thursdays. 6-9 PM Instructors: **Jay Logue, Jill Atkins and Al Bolshazy.**

**WIRE ART**

Drop in to work with wire the second and fourth Monday. Classes vary by the month, so check this space to see what will be offered next. Brass wire only and tools available to lend in class to new students. Taught by ?. 2nd and 4th Monday, .6-8 PM \$2.50/hour (\$5/class), payable in class. Instructor(s) needed; email Julie if interested.

# OCTOBER 2020

Mc Dermitt  
Trip

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

				1	2 Field Trip Austin	3 Field Trip Austin
4 Field Trip Austin	5 Open House 11am-1pm 7-9 pm	6	7 No General Meeting	8	9	10 Bead Weaving Russian Spiral 10-2
11	12 Open House 11am-1pm 7-9 pm	13	14 Board Meeting? 7pm	15	16	17
18	19 Open House 11am-1pm 7-9 pm	20	21	22	23	24
25	26 Open House 11am-1pm 7-9 pm	27	28	29	30	31 Hallowe'en

**MINERAL IDENTIFICATION**

**Must sign up.** Contact Julie by email. And watch Calendar and Facebook. For a small fee, identification kits are available for purchase ahead of the class. Taught by **Webb Varnum**

**LOST WAX CARVING**

Cost is \$50/month **Please note this class is on Saturdays and Sundays!** Bring your lunch and beverages. Nott offered in summer.

**OPEN HOUSE ANNOUNCEMENT:**

*Julie Hilsabeck, School Director*

**This will be a trial run and will continue or not based on participation.** Beginning Monday, October 5th, we will be holding a daytime Open House for those Lapidary students that have completed at least 2 months of classes. You must be proficient in the use of the equipment (no instructor will be present), have your own dop sticks, screws, super glue, and material to work on. The shop will be open from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM. Costs are \$5.00/hour. We may have someone who can cut slabs but that is not guaranteed.

Face masks must be worn at all times and social distancing is required as well! Face masks are available in the shop for no charge.



**WRAPTOR DESIGNS**  
WIRE ART JEWELRY BY DENISE SIZEMORE

CELL : 775.378.1705  
EMAIL: WRAPTORDESIGNS@GMAIL.COM  
FACEBOOK: WRAPTOR DESIGNS BY DENISE

**UPCOMING CFMS SHOWS**

See additional information at [cfmsinc.org/shows-2/](http://cfmsinc.org/shows-2/)

**California shows were cancelled due to Corona Virus. Check with show contact for current status.**

**OCTOBER TO NOVEMBER**

**October 10-11; TRONA, CA Cancelled**

Searles Lake Gem and Mineral Society  
13337 Main Street  
slgms@iwvisp.com

**October 10-11; GRASS VALLEY, CA Cancelled**

Nevada County Gem and Mineral Society  
Nevada County Fairgrounds,  
11228 McCourtney Road, Grass Valley, CA 95945  
<http://www.ncgms.org>

**October 11; FALLBROOK CA**

Fallbrook Gem and Mineral Society  
123 W Alvarado St  
Michelle Shearer; 760-805-2184

**OCTOBER 17 – WOODLAND HILLS, CA**

Woodland Hills Rock Chippers  
First United Methodist Church  
22700 Sherman Way, West Hills CA 91303

**October 16-18; KNOXVILLE TN CANCELLED**

AFMS and SFMS Show & Convention  
Knoxville Gem and Mineral Society

**October 17-18; SANTA ROSA, CA CANCELLED**

Santa Rosa Gem & Mineral Society  
1351 Maple Ave., Santa Rosa, CA 95404  
Contact: 1 707 849-9551, santarosarockshow@hotmail.com

**October 24 – 25; SACRAMENTO, CA CANCELLED**

Sacramento Gem & Mineral Society  
Scottish Rites Center  
6151 H Street, Sacramento, CA 95819-2604  
Contact: (916) 662-5819,  
gemshow@sacramentomineralsociety.org

**November 7 – 8; RIDGECREST, CA CANCELLED**

Indian Wells Gem and Mineral Society Inc.  
Desert Empire Fairgrounds, 520 S. Richmond Rd., Ridgecrest  
Hours: Sat & Sun 9 am – 5 pm  
Contact: (760) 375-7905, jfrocks@dslextreme.com

**November 14 – 15; YUBA CITY**

Sutter Buttes Gem & Mineral Society  
Yuba-Sutter Fairgrounds  
442 Franklin Hall, Yuba City, CA 95991  
Contact: (916) 677-6696, horita@comcast.net

**November 21-22; ANAHEIM CANCELLED**

American Opal Society  
Business Expo Center, 1960 S. Anaheim Way, Anaheim 92805  
Contact: (714) 501-9959, aos.editor02@gmail.com

**Note; If the listing does not show a cancellation, it is best to check with the show chairs to be sure it is still being held. See the CFMS Website for additional information.**—<https://www.cfmsinc.org/shows-2/>

**2021 Shows**

**February 20-21, Antioch**

Antioch Lapidary Club  
Contra Costa County Fairgrounds,  
1201 West 10th St., Antioch  
Contact: (925) 301-6957, bren-da.miguel@yahoo.com

**February 27-28, Vallejo**

Valejo Gem & Mineral Society  
Solano County Fairgrounds, McCormack Hall,  
900 Fairgrounds Dr.  
Contact: (415) 254-1506,  
dduhonvgms@gmail.com

**March 6 – Ventura, CA**

Ventura Gem & Mineral Society  
Ventura County Fairgrounds,  
10 W. Harbor Blvd, Ventura 93001  
Contact: (805) 312-8467, info@vgms.org

**March 13-14, Arcadia CA**

Pasadena Lapidary Society  
Arcadia Masonic Center, 50 W. Duarte Rd.  
Contact: Ellen Ferrell 1-727-512-0381  
Email: ellenbf207@aol.com  
Website: pasadenalapidary.org

Geology by swiftxjustice



Source: memecenter.com