

The Green Valley Rocker

February 2012 Vol. 52, No. 2

A tidbit from Mike Reason: **Once a Month**

Did you know that the fees for shop rent (\$19,200) and utilities (\$2,236) totaled more than \$21,000 in in 2011? What does that mean for a club with about 230 members? It's simple: if every member visited the shop once a month, the gross annual session fee would total \$19,320. Sprinkle in another 3 visits during the year, and utilities are covered. Think about it: you pay \$7, experience camaraderie with fellow rock hounds, and walk away with a completed project. You pay more than that to see a movie, where you must be quiet in a dark room full of strangers and you walk away with nothing but memories. Make a commitment for 2012: visit the shop at least once a month! (Editor's Note: WELL SAID Mike!!!!)

It's that time of year again! Locker Rental Fees are payable at the shop and Club Membership Dues are due to Hank!

Membership dues can be paid any time meeting, by mail, at the shop or when you take Hank out to dinner, lunch or breakfast. (Hint Hint!) They are: per person \$15 with email newsletter, \$20 with USPS newsletter; per family \$25 with email newsletter, \$30 with USPS newsletter.

For those members who rent shop lockers, please pay at the shop. Large locker rentals are \$20 and small lockers are \$10. Sorry but Dan says there aren't any currently available!

2012 Display Themes by Aimée Fitch

Since we are still without a Display Chairperson, here is a list of display themes for 2012 (subject to change if the new Chairperson so chooses):

February – Newest acquisition – show off your latest rock, cab, slab, jewelry piece or what not!

March – Blue

April – Geodes and Purple (in honor of Easter)

May – Green

June - Agate

July – Red

August - Quartz

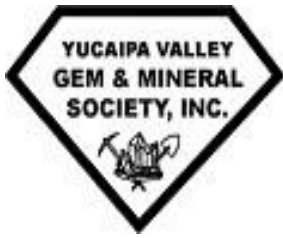
September - Jasper

October – Pink

November – White or cream (as we head into Winter!)



This is **my** latest acquisition: Druzy and Agate purchased at the Rock Bin shop in Lake Elsinore!



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We have classes on the schedule!!!



CASTING CLASS Silver Only

Bural LaRue will be the Instructor.

6 nights: 6:30 p.m. until 9:30 p.m.

Tuesday, February 14th

Thursday, February 16th

NO CLASS, February 21st

Thursday, February 23rd

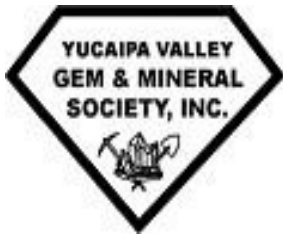
Tuesday, February 28th

Thursday, March 1st

MAKE UP CLASS IN MARCH

Class fees total \$60.00, plus wax and silver

You *must* sign up ahead of time for this class and fees are to be paid at sign up!!



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Jeannette Brooks Where Are You???

Calling all rock hounds, we have not seen Jeannette of late.....have you? We all miss you and hope to see you soon!!!!

We had to say Goodbye to LaVone!

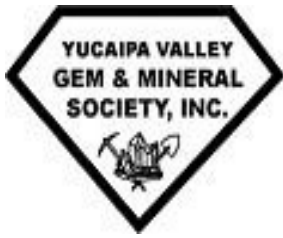
LaVone was at the shop on Saturday, January 7th for a farewell gathering. Many from the club stopped by to wish her well on the new chapter of her journey. Below are some of those folks who popped by:



Cynthia and Walt Harrison with LaVone



Robert Lopez



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**We are *still* in need of volunteers for the below listed jobs.
Please talk to Janice Torres for information.**

Hospitality-- welcome guests at meetings, plan 2 parties per year and send out cards members when needed.

Membership--maintain records of new members, order name badges, make calls to new members

Mini-Silent Auction --help Rainy Baldwin with washing and preparing the rocks for the meeting silent auction

Display-- sets up the display case each meeting; keeps the “secret” log of who's displayed what number; counts the voting beans and announces \$5 winners

Refreshments-- have people sign up to bring refreshments for the monthly meeting, call them to remind them

Show Chairpersons--many people are needed organize and direct people to do the different jobs that need to be done for the show. Such as silent auction, raffle, shop demonstrations, raffle prizes, hospitality, security, and set-up.

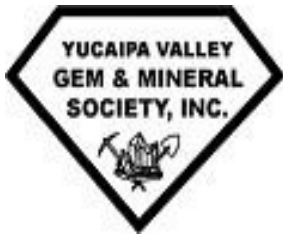
Librarian--maintain the library at the shop.

Workshop-- there is a need for a few more members to help out with some cleaning jobs at the workshop

A note from Mike Parker: To all of those members that aren't aware, we need **volunteers** to chair some of our **committees** or to be a small part of a committee for our BIG and upcoming Gem and Mineral Show in May. We need all the help we can get! Think about it, it could be a lot of fun and a very rewarding adventure.

The more bodies we have to help or lend a hand, the less time each of us will have to sacrifice.

Our President asks that you contact her with any questions and she will tell you where and when to report.



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Adam and Teresa's wedding November 7, 2009 - Cady Mountains, CA

Program for our February meeting

Submitted By Linda Gibbs

February 9 - Adam and Teresa Dean will present "Agates".



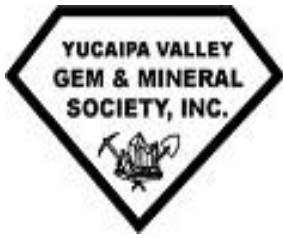
Metal Detector's Corner By Hank (Henry) Cobb

We had about 18 members show up for the program, it was well received.

Jim Bowden gave a nice Power Point presentation on Big Bear during the Gold Years. Jim always gives an informative program. Thanks again Jim.

Bural is working on a field trip in March with another club who has a gold claim. We will talk about it at the February meeting. He also wants to set up a special fun hunt in the near future. If you have any ideas, please share them with us.

Hank



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News about our members from the Pres!

Beth Bobbit, has agreed to keep track of the books as our librarian. Thank you, Beth.

Barbara Kennedy, will be doing the door greeting at our meetings. Thank you, Barbara.

Bural LaRue has donated sterling silver rings for our meeting ways and means raffle. They have all been casted by him and each one is gorgeous. Tickets are 5 for \$1.00 at the meetings. Be sure to look for information on his classes in this news letter. Thank you, Bural

Jim Bowden gave a very interesting program on early Big Bear area to the metal detector group last month, be sure to read you news letter to keep up on their programs. Thank you for sharing with us, Jim.

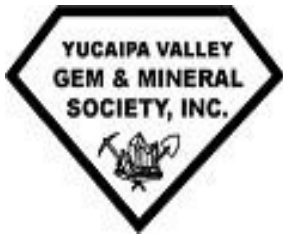
Ken Baron

Just a bit of news on Ken's health. As many of you know Ken had a heart attack after our show in May. In December Ken's heart gave him problems once more. Tim Jones said "it was just to get out of the field trip". Ken said "it would be nice if that were true". Anyway, as of mid January Ken was still at home taking it slow. He was not sure of his limits, but was sure of the importance of diet and keeping fit. We wish you a fast recuperation, Ken.

Meeting minutes were not available at press time. Sorry!

Want to see color photos in your copy of the newsletter? Sign up for electronic delivery of the newsletter, and enjoy an added bonus by saving the club postage cost and a reduced membership fee! Simply contact Aimée at aimée@fitch.com

Note from the Editor: If you have an article, idea or anything you want put in the newsletter, please e-mail it to aimée@fitch.com.



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President's Message By Janice Mae Torres

Reminder that your dues are due. Your membership is tremendously important. We enjoy having this relationship with you.

CFMS News

CFMS yearly show will be in Riverside this year. The show will be held July 13-15 at the Riverside Municipal Auditorium. Flyers about the show are at the shop. You may enter a display case of your own or go in with others as a combined effort. There are many different opportunities at this show to learn and grow from. You will find full information at the shop or on the CFMS web site.

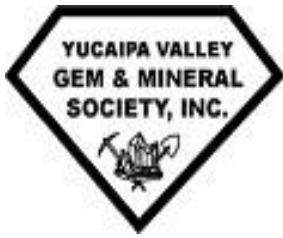
Party Time

May 5th will be a daylong of celebration for the Yucaipa Blvd. road work grand opening. We have been invited to join in with this. You may sell items or display your work. This will be a good time to have an open house at our workshop as well. More information coming soon.

Vitally Important

I am in need of someone to take charge of the show raffle. This does take time to do. There are letters to send out, they are written already. There are requests to be made, the letter of requests are written already. We have the lists of who and where to go, but a person to do it is needed. If you have some time and can keep a few things in order please call me. This is a very big need that is crucial to be filled right away.

Many other areas of the show also is in need of volunteers. If you are a new member and do not know much about the show you still can help. If you are one that has done many shows, your skills are still needed.



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It's ROCK BAG SEWING TIME! Yes...already!

Submitted by Janice Mae

It is time to start sewing rock bags. Two weeks ago I started up the tumblers, and the polishing is going as I type. But we need the bags sewn. Material is at the shop cut and ready for you!! Just come by and pick some up. I'll have some at the next meeting also.

From U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management: Please try to attend this meeting. The more Rockhounds that support these meetings, the more support the Rockhounds and Rockhounding will receive from the BLM. It is your land and you need to be involved in its management, access and usage.

News Release: BLM Desert Advisory Council to Meet in Primm

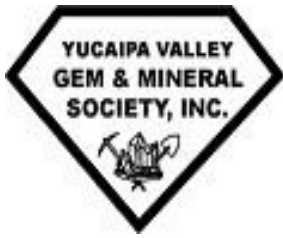
The next field trip and meeting of the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) California Desert Advisory Council (DAC) will be held Feb. 10-11 in Primm, Nev., just across the California-Nevada border. The council will participate in a field tour of nearby BLM-managed public lands on Friday, Feb. 10 from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and meet in formal session on Saturday, Feb. 11 from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Primm Valley Resort, 31900 South Las Vegas Boulevard, Primm, NV 89019.

The meeting focus topic will be the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP) and the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). Agenda topics for the formal session on Saturday will include a DRECP/CDCA overview briefing, updates by Council members, reports from the BLM District Manager and five field office managers, as well as reports from DAC-appointed subgroups. Friday tour information and final agenda topics will be posted on the BLM California state website, www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/info/rac/dac.html.

All DAC meetings are open to the public. The public will be invited to comment at the beginning of the meeting Saturday morning, during the presentations at the discretion of the DAC chair, and at the end of the meeting. While the meeting is tentatively scheduled to conclude at 4:30 p.m., it could wrap up earlier should the council conclude its presentations and discussions.

Written comments may be filed in advance of the meeting and should be addressed to the Desert Advisory Council, c/o Bureau of Land Management, External Affairs, 22835 Calle San Juan de Los Lagos, Moreno Valley, CA 92553. Written comments also are accepted at the time of the meeting and, if copies are provided to the recorder, will be incorporated into the minutes.

For more information regarding the DAC meeting, contact David Briery, BLM California Desert District External Affairs at (951) 697-5220 or dbriery@blm.gov.



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YUCAIPA VALLEY GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY, INC.

Post Office Box 494, Yucaipa, CA 92399

2012 OFFICERS

President.....Janice Mae Torres.. (909)795-7178
 Vice President..... Linda Gibbs..... (909)338-0413
 Secretary..... Rainy Baldwin....(909)790-2792
 Treasurer-CFO.....Hank Cobb.....(909)795-3716

Fed. Director..... Bural LaRue.....(909) 874-5664

2012 DIRECTORS

3-Year.....Dan Norcross
 2-Year.....TBD - the remainder of Brian Ragsdale's term
 1-Year..... Mike Reason stepping in for the remainder of Linda Gibbs' term
 1-Year..... Mike Parker

2012 COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

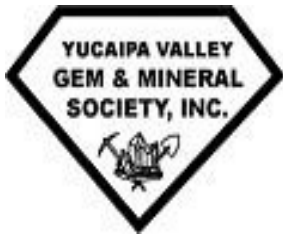
Bulletin Editor.....Aimée Fitch(858)229-5793
 Constitution & By Laws.....
 Lee Peterson..... (909)794-0731
 Display **OPEN**
 Door Greeter.....Barbara Kennedy.....(909)790-4076
 Field TripKen Barron(909) 794-6561
 Hospitality **OPEN**
 Librarian.....Beth Bobbit.....
 Membership **OPEN**
 Metal Detecting...Phil Alford..... (909)795-8284
 Mini-Raffle.... Margaret Theilemann....(925) 998-6520
 Mini-Silent Auction..... **OPEN**
 Publicity KT Gates-Waldrup.. (909)797-9816
 Refreshment **OPEN**
 Sgt at Arms..... Mike Parker..... (951)769-1855

Show Chairperson.....**OPEN**.....
 Ways & Means.....Judy Christopher....(909) 798-1746
 Webmasters..... Frank Fitch(858) 229-6870
Mike Reason.....(909)795-2540
 Workshop Chairman...Dan Norcross....(909)790-9749
 Workshop Classes.....Margaret Theilemann.....
 (925) 998-6520
 Workshop Phone.....
 (Hank's cell phone)..... (909)238-8143

Workshop Committee Members: Dan Norcross, Hank Cobb, Frank Fitch, Bill Jochimsen, Margaret Thieleman, David Dickinson, Janice Mae Torres, Mike Reason, Dan Gray.



Much Luck LaVone!
 You will be greatly missed!



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Lapidary of the Month

This entry was posted on January 2, 2012 at 1:00 am and is filed under [Articles](#), [Lapidary of the Month](#) @ <http://www.rockngem.com/articles/lapidary-of-the-month/>



by **Christopher Wertenberger**
January 2012

“My project started with an end piece of jade (jadeite) that I found many years ago in Clear Creek, California,” writes January Lapidary of the Month Christopher Wertenberger. “A member of my rock club offered a class on carving stones using an arbor unit. In 40-plus years of doing lapidary, I had occasionally carved lines onto the top of my cabochons, but not to the extreme of using an arbor unit.

“The first step I took was to mark where I wanted the ridges on the top of the cab with a marking pen. I used the edges of an 80 and a 220 diamond hard wheel to grind it into the shape I desired. I found it difficult to work the stone using a Genie unit, due to the wheels being so close together. I took the stone home to work it on my Lortone units, which are spaced 1 1/8 inches apart. When doing this type of carving, you must use caution because the adjacent wheel can catch your stone and throw it.

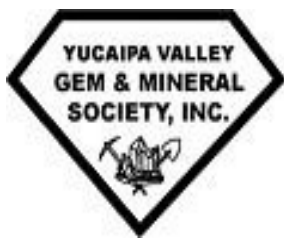
“After shaping the stone, I used 220, 400, 600, 1200, 1800, 3000, 8000, 14000, and 50000 diamond flex wheels to remove all scratches at each stage of sanding.

The Clear Creek jade will start to take a shine at about 1800 grit. To finish up with a higher polish on the carving, I used my end wheel with a leather pad that protrudes 1/8 inch from the wheel[. AND Alumina “A” polish ?] is used for the final step of the carving.

“Since I have been a silversmith for about the same amount of time that I have been doing lapidary, I decided to make a simple setting for the stone. I decided to use 24 gauge sterling silver for the backing, a standard 1/8-inch bezel wire to hold the stone, and a 4 gauge low-dome wire for the bail.

“The first step in creating the silver setting was to fit the bezel wire around the stone, mark it where the ends met, solder it with hard solder, and then dip it into the pickling solution for cleaning. Then, I placed the bezel wire around the stone to ensure that it was the same shape as the carving. Removing the bezel wire from the stone, I placed it on the 24 gauge backing and soldered it with easy flow solder. When that was done, I placed it back into the pickling solution for cleaning. Next, I used three pieces of scrap silver to make some small nugget shapes to enhance the mounting. I soldered them on with easy flow solder and the piece went back into the pickling solution for cleaning. Now it was time to trim away the excess backing down to 3/16 inches away from the bezel and nuggets. The final steps were to solder the 4 gauge low-dome bail using easy flow solder, then put it back into the pickling solution for the final cleaning.

“After oxidizing (or blacking) the mounting, I used the buffing unit with bobbing compound to remove the firescale and unwanted oxidation. This gives the project a 3D effect. For the last step of the polish, I used Zam compound to give a high gloss finish. Now it was time to set the carving into the mounting, which is done last so that the lighter-color jadeite will not be discolored by the Zam compound. To finish off the project, I hung the pendant on an 18-inch silver link chain.”



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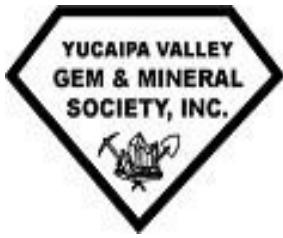
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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
2 Ken Barron 14 David Thielemann & Steve Williams	18 Tim Miller 23 Libby Plsek	4th Barbara & Joe Pawlowski 28 Lloyd Freeman	1 SHOP: 5 – 9PM Bill Mavis	2 * Metal Detecting Mosley Museum 7 pm	3 SHOP: 5 – 9PM Frank Fitch Robert Hughes Allen Rigdon	4 SHOP: 9AM-1PM Jeannette Brooks Pamela Peterson
5 SHOP: 1-5 PM	6 SHOP: 5 – 9PM	7 Board Mtg 6:30 pm @ the Shop Jack Templeton	8 SHOP: 5 – 9PM	9 GENERAL MTG 7:00 PM Mosley Museum	10 SHOP: 5 - 9PM Frank Heiser Jerry Kennedy Loren Murphy	11 SHOP: 9AM-1PM
12 SHOP: 1 PM-5 PM Lee Peterson	13 SHOP: 5 - 9PM	14 Casting Class 6:30 pm – 9:30 pm Valentine's Day!	15 SHOP: 5 - 9PM Ron Headlee	16 Casting Class 6:30 pm – 9:30 pm	17 SHOP: 5 - 9PM Mike Reason	18 SHOP: 9AM-1PM Workshop committee meeting-2 pm
19 SHOP: 1 PM-5 PM	20 SHOP: 5 - 9PM Glenda Toews	21 NO Casting Class	22 SHOP: 5 - 9PM	23 Casting Class 6:30 pm – 9:30 pm	24 SHOP: 5 – 9PM	25 SHOP: 9AM-1PM Paula Parton
26 SHOP: 1 PM-5 PM Summer Rogers Becky Rudkin	27 SHOP: 5–9PM Denise Reason	28 Casting Class 6:30 pm – 9:30 pm	29 SHOP: 5 – 9PM LEAP DAY!	March 1 st Casting Class 6:30 pm – 9:30 pm		* Youth Night discontinued as of Jan. 1 until further notice.

YVGMS Events, Holidays, Birthdays, and Anniversaries.

February 29th: The leap day was introduced as part of the Julian reform. The day following the Terminalia (February 23) was doubled, forming the "*bis sextum*"—literally 'double sixth', since February 24 was 'the sixth day before the Kalends of March' using Roman inclusive counting (March 1 was the 'first day'). Although exceptions exist, the first day of the *bis sextum* (February 24) was usually regarded as the intercalated or "bissextile" day since the third century. February 29 came to be regarded as the leap day when the Roman system of numbering days was replaced by sequential numbering in the late Middle Ages. (From Wikipedia)

Leap Day tradition – Women can propose to men; In 1288 - Scotland established this day as one when a woman



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could propose marriage to a man! If he refused, he was required to pay a fine.



YUCAIPA VALLEY GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY,
INC.

Post Office Box 494 Yucaipa, CA 92399

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

The specific purpose of the Yucaipa Valley Gem & Mineral Society, Inc. is to promote the earth sciences, paleontology, and the lapidary arts within the community. The objectives are to have educational meetings, earth science field trips, and exhibitions with members and the community invited.



Member of California Federation
of Mineralogical Societies

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



Member of American Federation
of Mineralogical Societies

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

REGULAR MEETINGS

Meetings are held at 7:00 p.m. on the second Thursday of the month (except in December) at the Mousley Museum, on the corner of Bryant Street and Panorama between

Date Street and Oak Glen Road.

BOARD MEETINGS

Board Meetings are held at 6:30 p.m. on the first Tuesday of the month at the Workshop, 34861 Yucaipa Blvd, across from Del Taco, between Second and Third Streets.

MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

An applicant must file an application which can be obtained from the Membership Chairman.

Annual dues are required: Individuals - \$20.00 Families - \$30.00. If you elect to have the bulletin sent to you by email, your dues are reduced to \$15 single or \$25 family.

WORKSHOP

Our workshop is located at 34861 Yucaipa Blvd, across from Del Taco, between 2nd and 3rd Streets.

Workshop Hours:

Monday, Wednesday and Friday 5pm to 9pm

Saturday 9am to 1pm & Sunday 1pm to 5pm.

Workshop committee meetings are at the workshop on the 3rd Saturday of each month at 2:00 p.m.

METAL DETECTOR GROUP Meetings
are held at 7:00 p.m. on the first Thursday of the month at the Mousley Museum, on the corner of Bryant Street and Panorama, between Date Street and Oak Glen Road.

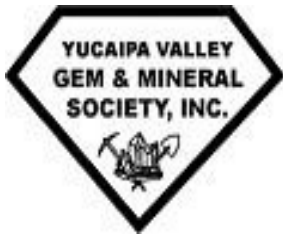
BULLETIN

Your contributions to the Green Valley Rocker are appreciated. Please submit your items by the 20th of each month to be included in the next month's issue.

Editor: Aimée Fitch: aimee@ffitch.com

Member Email: please visit

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/YVGMSbiz/>



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Teodora, the world's largest emerald, will be sold at auction on Jan. 28 by Western Star Auctions in Kelowna, B.C. Purchased in India by a Calgary gem hunter, the stone has been appraised at \$1.15 million. (Western Star Auctions)

World's Largest Emerald to Be Sold at Canadian Auction

By Justina Reichel
Created: January 20, 2012

<http://www.theepochtimes.com/n2/canada/worlds-largest-emerald-to-be-sold-at-canadian-auction-179051.html>

The world's largest cut emerald, purchased recently by a Calgary businessman, will be put up for auction at the end of the month, despite some doubts about its authenticity.

The 57,500-carat bauble weighs over 25lbs (11 kilos) and was brought to Canada by gem hunter Regan Reaney. The stone was mined in Brazil, but Regan purchased it from a buyer in India for an undisclosed amount.

Dubbed Teodora—Portuguese for “Gift of God”—the gem will go on the auction block on Jan. 28 at

Kelowna-based Western Star Auctions, with bidding to start at \$500,000.

Gemologist Jeff Nechka said he was initially doubtful that an emerald that size could be authentic, but after careful study he was sure it was genuine and appraised it at \$1.15 million.

“It is so large it's really unusual for an emerald to occur that way naturally,” he said.

“I tested out its barrel, and given some of the inclusion within the stone, some of the rock matrix in it, and given that the tone was very uneven all over, in my opinion I would say it is definitely emerald.”

Nechka is the owner of Calgary-based jewellery store Premier Gems. He trained at the Gemological Institute of America and is the only Western Canadian member of the International Coloured Stone Association.

He admits he did find evidence that the stone had been dyed, which he included in the appraisal.

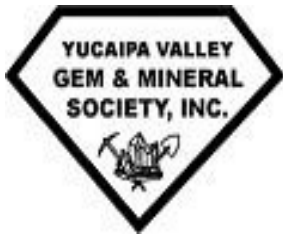
Emerald dyeing is a practice considered to be deceptive in the industry, because it is impossible to discern the gem's original colour after it has been treated.

“Each emerald variety is designated by colour. So intense green colour would designate it as emerald, but it's hard to say, being that it was dyed, how much dye was applied to the stone,” Regan said.

Emeralds are a rare form of the mineral beryl. However, white beryl is much more common than the green variety and virtually worthless. Nechka believes the emerald was green beryl that has simply been enhanced.

He added that the dyeing does not significantly affect the value of this particular stone because it's only of commercial quality. The value lies in its sheer size, being the biggest in the world.

(Continued on Page 13.)



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(World's Largest Emerald continued from Page 12.)

International Buzz

Regan said the value of the stone may also increase due to the media attention and international buzz it has attracted.

"It's getting so much attention, but it's really hard to evaluate something of this scale, and how much it's actually worth. The auction will decide what its market-condition value is worth," he said.

Since the emerald's arrival in Calgary two weeks ago, Nechka and Reaney have been interviewed by major international media including CNN, the BBC, and Discovery Network.

Nechka says Reaney has been getting offers to buy the gem from around the world, but has no idea who the highest bidder will be on Saturday.

Some gemologists and buyers who have not inspected the stone have expressed skepticism of its value and warned potential buyers to have an independent appraisal done before purchase.

Nechka says the nay-sayers are just trying to get some of their own media attention.

"I don't know if they just want to steal the spotlight or what."

Emeralds are one of the world's most valuable jewels, and were first recorded for sale in Babylonian markets around 4,000 BC.

Today Colombia, Brazil, and Zambia produce most commercial emeralds.

Although Brazil produces more emeralds annually than any other country, Colombia is considered to mine the world's finest, and sets the global standard for size and colour.

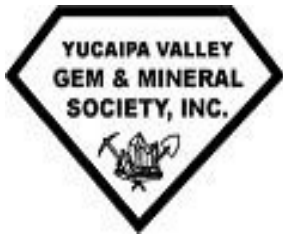
Want to see color photos in your copy of the newsletter? Sign up for electronic delivery of the newsletter, and enjoy an added bonus by saving the club postage cost and a reduced membership fee! Simply contact Aimée at aimée@fitch.com.

February Events:

17-26—INDIO, CALIFORNIA: Annual show; San Gorgonio Mineral & Gem Society; Riverside County Fair & National Date Festival; Gem & Mineral Bldg, Bldg. #1, 46-350 Arabia St.; Fri. 10-10, Sat. 10-10, Sun. 10-10, Mon. 10-10; adults \$8, seniors \$7, students \$6, children (under 5) free; contact Bert Grisham, 1029 N. 8th St., Banning, CA 92220, (951) 849-1674; e-mail: bert67@verizon.net

Anyone up for a road trip? I'd love to go home for this!!! 25-26—PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA: Annual show; Intergalactic Bead & Jewelry Shows Inc.; The Circuit Center & Ballroom; 5 Hot Metal St.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; adults \$5 Sat., \$4 Sun. (\$2 discount coupon on Web site⁰, children (12 and under) free; precious and semiprecious gemstone beads, sterling silver, findings, freshwater pearls, hand-blown glass beads, vintage beads, crystals, delicias; contact Tonya Nicholson, 3865 Lawrenceville Hwy., Ste. 107, Lawrenceville 30044, (888) 729-6904; e-mail: tonya.nicholson@beadshows.com; Web site: www.beadshows.com

March 2-4—DEL MAR, CALIFORNIA: Wholesale and retail show; Gem Faire Inc.; Del Mar Fairgrounds; 2260 Jimmy Durante Blvd.; Fri. 12-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; adults \$7, children (11 and under) free; jewelry, gems, beads, crystals, silver, rocks, minerals, exhibitors from all over the world; contact Yooy Nelson, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: info@gemfaire.com; Web site: www.gemfaire.com



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<http://global.christianpost.com/news/oldest-dinosaur-nursery-discovered-in-africa-67817/>

Oldest Dinosaur 'Nursery' Discovered in Africa

Paleontologists have discovered the oldest known site of dinosaur fossils in Golden Gate Highlands National Park, South Africa.

The details of the discovery were published Monday in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. Dating back to 190 million years ago, the site includes several dinosaur nests, eggs, hatchings, and remains of adults for the dinosaur species known as *Massospondylus*.

The plant-eating species was a predecessor of the largest animals to ever walk the Earth – the long-necked sauropods, such as a *Brachiosaurus*.

An international team of scientists and researchers excavated the nesting ground. Researcher Robert Reisz, a paleontologist at the University of Toronto at Mississauga, described the find to Discovery News.

"The eggs, embryos and nests come from the rocks of a nearly vertical road cut only 25 meters (82 feet) long," said Reisz. "Even so, we found 10 nests, suggesting that there are a lot more in the cliff, still covered by tons of rock. We predict that many more nests will be eroded out in time as natural weathering processes continue."

Very small footprints from young dinosaurs dotting the

area revealed significant clues about the growth and evolution of early dinosaurs, researchers said. The hatchery and prints offer the oldest-known evidence that dinosaurs remained in nests until they were at least doubled in size.

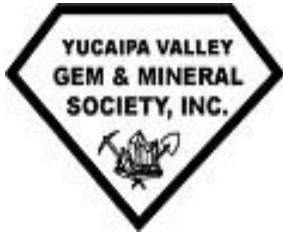
The skeletal remains indicate that the dinosaurs had a very small head and an extremely long neck, and while hatchlings walked on all four legs, adults were bipedal.

"The transition from four legs to two during an individual's lifetime is a very unusual growth pattern that we rarely see in animals, but we do see it in humans."

The eggs and nests were painstakingly unearthed as the eggshells are extremely delicate at less than 100 microns in thickness, or less than the width of a human hair.

"We literally spent days and days searching for the eggs and nests, spending most of our time on our hands and knees," said Reisz. "But once we were able to recognize what to look for, we found four nests within 10 minutes."

South Africa appears to have been a common region for *Massospondylus* to hatch, and possibly for other species as well. Paleontologists are slowly uncovering embryos within the eggs, and have several in different stages of development. They are currently in the process of comparing the embryos to those found in other nests, marking the first study of different embryological stages in a dinosaur.



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