

PRESS RELEASE

Rockhounds Host “Super Bowl” of Gem Shows at Ventura Fairgrounds

Event: The Golden Bear Gem & Mineral Show

Sponsor: California Federation of Mineralogical Societies (a nonprofit, educational organization)

Dates: Friday, June 27; Saturday, June 28, and Sunday, June 29, 2008

Times: 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM all 3 days

Location: Seaside Park, Ventura County Fairgrounds, 10 W. Harbor Blvd, Ventura, CA 93001

Admission fee: \$5 adults; \$4 seniors (60+); \$3 students; kids under 12 free with paid adult (note: the Fairgrounds also charges its own parking fee for anyone parking in Fairground lots)

Contact person: Bural LaRue, Show Chair, (909) 874-5664, bplarue@earthlink.net.

Society website: www.cfmsinc.org.

An estimated 3,000 rockhounds are expected to converge on the Ventura County Fairgrounds June 27-29 for “The Golden Bear Gem & Mineral Show,” the 69th annual tri-state convention and show of the California Federation of Mineralogical Societies (CFMS). Throughout California, Nevada, and Arizona are some 137 gem and mineral societies, including three right here in Ventura County (the Ventura Gem & Mineral Society, the Oxnard Gem & Mineral Society, and the Conejo Gem & Mineral Club). Most hold their own, small shows. Collectively, these groups are joined under the umbrella of the CFMS, and once a year, they come together for what’s often described as “the Super Bowl of gem shows” within our state. The setting for the show circulates around the state, and this is the first time in 5 years that it returns to Ventura County!

This year’s “Super Bowl” has been entitled The Golden Bear Gem & Mineral Show to honor our state mineral: gold! A beautiful specimen will be one of the featured displays. Discovered by a young girl in Placer County in 1871, the huge California Golden Bear gold nugget is one of the official emblems of the CFMS. Normally housed at the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History, it will be on temporary display at the show, alongside samples of our state gemstone (sapphire-blue benitoite), our state rock (satiny green serpentine), and our state fossil (the saber-toothed cat, *Smilodon*). Another special display will be the Moorpark Mammoth, a local celebrity unearthed during construction for a housing development in the town of Moorpark in 2005.

This year’s “Super Bowl” organizers invite the general public to come enjoy educational displays, superb dealers and demonstrators, exciting speakers, hourly silent auctions, and door prize raffles. There will be a strong focus on kids, with a section of the show set aside for children’s activities. Also, certified teachers will find free rock samples other educational materials to choose from.

The **Speakers Series** will feature illustrated lectures that currently include:

- Friday, 1:00 PM: **Bob Jones** (Senior Editor of *Rock & Gem* magazine and a world-renowned mineral lecturer, author, and videographer) on “**America’s Finest Minerals.**”
- Friday, 2:30 PM: **Greg Wilkenson** (Bakersfield office, Bureau of Land Management) on “**Desert Uses & Restrictions,**” followed by an open discussion period.
- Saturday, 1:00 PM: **Bob Jones**, once again, on “**Selenite Caves of Mexico,**” sharing his experiences in caves where crystals grow to the size of a bus!
- Saturday, 2:30 PM: **Walt Wright** (an authority on petrified wood, who gives seminars on plant evolution and wood identification) on “**Petrified Woods of the World.**”
- Sunday, 11:00 PM: Geologist **Mike Beaumont** on “**Planetary Geology of Jupiter & Its Moons,**” including earthquakes and other earth-like processes on the moons of Jupiter.

- Sunday, 1:30 PM: Geologist **Stephen Mulqueen** on “**Evaporite Minerals of Searles Lake,**” an area famous for pink halite and large, diamond-shaped hanksite crystals.

Kids love rocks, so they’re sure to enjoy the **Kids Booth!** Interactive displays will have activities to help Boy and Girl Scouts work toward earning merit badges right on the spot. Activities are either free or priced to match a child’s budget. These include:

- *Earth Processes & the 3 Rock Types:* help erupt a model volcano, get a free volcanic rock, and see a rock that floats on water! (free activity)
- *Mineral Identification:* try some common mineral ID tests yourself with this free activity and get a template to make a paper crystal. For just one dollar, kids and teachers also can purchase a book of crystal templates or coloring books on minerals from A-to-Z.
- *Fossils:* kids can paint fossil casts of trilobites, ammonites, and shark teeth in our “Paint-a-Fossil” station (50¢).
- *Earth Resources:* kids who take the free “Earth Resources Challenge” quiz on common products and the minerals that went into them will win a free shiny prize rock.
- *Lapidary Arts:* kids can make a necklace or bracelet with beads and tumble-polished stones (\$1.00 a packet).

There also will be a spinning wheel where each spin yields a prize of a mineral or a fossil (50¢ a spin), sand sifting (for 50¢, kids can sift out 6 prizes to start their own rock collections), grab bags (\$1.00 each) containing an assortment of polished stones, minerals, and fossil specimens, and a free coloring activity corner. Plus, we’ll offer rock samples, posters, and other educational materials free to certified teachers.

Organizers are hoping to have as many as 150 **Educational Displays and Exhibits** of hand-crafted jewelry and carvings, gemstones and crystals, minerals, fossils, petrified wood, meteorites, and fluorescent minerals from private collections and craftsmen from throughout California. A number of these will be competitive exhibits vying for trophies, and such displays are often of museum quality. These individual displays will be augmented by large special exhibits, such as the Moorpark Mammoth and the Golden Bear gold nugget. Another special exhibit will be installed by the Fluorescent Mineral Society: a darkened indoor tent housing nearly a dozen cases of fluorescent minerals that glow in brilliantly garish colors under special short- and long-wave ultraviolet lamps.

For people who like to plan ahead and get a jump on Christmas shopping, 25 to 50 **Dealers and Vendors** are expected, selling all manner of rock-related materials:

- rock chunks and slabs of material such as agate, jasper, marble, onyx, pink rhodochrosite and green jade for lapidary artists to cut, carve, and polish;
- gemstone rough (amethyst, opal, emerald, sapphire, tourmaline, etc.) to cab or to facet;
- the lapidary tools and equipment with which to cut, carve, and polish (including a wide variety from the Diamond Pacific Tool Corporation of Barstow, such as rock tumblers, grinding and polishing machines, slab and trim saws, and other assorted lapidary supplies);
- both common and rare mineral specimens, fossils, gemstone crystals, and meteorites from around the world for beginners through advanced collectors;
- gem-, mineral-, and fossil-related publications and fieldtrip guidebooks;
- beads of all sorts;
- stone carvings, gemstone spheres and eggs, bookends; and other sculpted works; and
- fine custom jewelry ready to wear, including pendants, earrings, necklaces, bolas, belt buckles, and bracelets.

As many as two dozen **Demonstrators** will be on hand to illustrate on how rough stones are crafted into gleaming gems. You'll be able to watch these artists at work and question them up-close-and-personal for tips to try out yourself. They'll be demonstrating varied lapidary arts, including:

- gemstone cutting, cabbing, and polishing,
- faceting of precious and semi-precious stones for rings, earrings, and necklaces,
- silversmithing and silver chain construction,
- basic wire wrapping with materials such as brass, silver, and gold,
- colorful glass bead forging,
- bead stringing and techniques for other beaded jewelry,
- glass fusing with dichroic glass,
- stone carving and sculpting and contour polishing, and
- sphere-making.

Many of these artists will have materials and tools (as well as finished art pieces) for sale at their booths, and local artist Michele Chapin of Stoneworks Studios in Ventura will even have a table with files and rocks where show visitors can take a first-hand stab at trying some stone carving techniques themselves.

In addition to the professional vendors, the three local rock clubs of Ventura County will conduct an **Hourly Silent Auction** for some great rocks and slabs and other lapidary materials to cut and polish into gleaming gems, as well as minerals, geodes and nodules, petrified wood, and fossils. Auctions will held continuously throughout the show, with all proceeds going to the CFMS Endowment Fund to honor the memory of long-time Ventura resident and community volunteer Ray Meisenheimer, a past member of all three clubs who passed away in 2007. Ray was active not only in the local rock club activities but also in the annual county science fair, in giving talks about rocks and fossils to local elementary school classes and in retirement homes, in judging fossil and mineral displays and demonstrating fossil cleaning at the annual Ventura County Fair, and promoting the hobby wherever and whenever the opportunity arose.

Finally, there also will be a **Door Prize Raffle**. Those purchasing winning tickets will be able to take home high quality jewelry and mineral specimens, a metal detector for gold prospecting, and more!

The California Federation of Mineralogical Societies is dedicated to encouraging interest in geology, mineralogy, paleontology, the lapidary arts, and related areas through education, activities, and exhibitions, such as this annual show. CFMS is composed of clubs from throughout California, as well as parts of Nevada and Arizona. The CFMS and its 137 member societies are all 501(c)3 nonprofit, educational organizations, and proceeds from shows like this go toward educational endeavors, such as a scholarship fund. During an awards dinner Saturday night, not only will trophies be given for best competitive displays exhibited at the show, but also scholarships will be awarded to college students working toward degrees in geology, the earth sciences, and/or lapidary arts.

For further information, contact the Show Chair, Bural LaRue, at the phone number and email address listed above, or contact Show Publicity & Kids Booth Chair, Jim Brace-Thompson (805-659-3577, jbraceth@roadrunner.com).