

Pandemic Protocol Relaxed - Come Healthy - Sign In - No Temp Checks - Masks Are Optional



JOIN US FOR THE DECEMBER GENERAL MEETING

On ZOOM — Friday December 1st at 7pm

“Intarsia Gemstone Impressions”

With Nicolai Medvedev



Dear members and friends of the San Francisco Gem and Mineral Society: Our December program will feature renowned artist **Nicolai Medvedev**, who creates marvelous masterpiece lapidary boxes. Using a long-forgotten technique from the 16th century called *gem intarsia*, he cuts and assembles the finest gems and minerals in complex patterns that excite the eye and delight the mind. Medvedev's elegant boxes are superlative in every way. Their designs are splendid, the gems are opulent, and their workmanship is impeccable.

The geometric designs and vibrant colors in Medvedev's gem intarsia boxes are reminiscent of those found in the carpets, fabrics, jewelry and tilework of his native Turkmenistan. Trained as an artist, Medvedev graduated from the Art Institute in Moscow.

Wherever you are, settle in with a favorite drink or snack and enjoy! After Nicolai's presentation a general discussion will follow.

Register in advance for this meeting:

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZAqcO2qqz8rGNJN_OsFq-AWCDX4tAMOfMau

SAVE THE DATE: Year-End Celebration Saturday Dec. 16th

MINERAL G



(415) 564-4230

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SAN FRANCISCO GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY, INC.



Part 158

Masthead by Kevin Anderson

In Pursuit of Knowledge...

A friend of mine recently expressed the desire to take up ceramics as a hobby. I decided to join her, as I took a ceramics course in college and I loved it. However that was a million years ago, and I've forgotten most of what I learned.

Truth be told, I was never a good student in that class; I was too young and too lazy. So, I recently bought a book on the technical side of ceramics: I studied it and proceeded to get completely flummoxed. The book barely touched on the details, did not explain the terms, and left more questions than it answered.

I once had a friend who wanted a partner for pinochle, so she decided to teach me the game. She started to lecture me with, "You want to take tricks and you must meld your suites when you blah, blah, blah..." Or, something like that. I looked this up on the computer and one site I found said, "Collect melds and the pips or eyes gained by trick-taking." Huh?

"Jargon," It means special words or expressions that are used by a particular profession or group and are difficult for others to understand."

My answer to my pinochle playing friend was, "I hope your boss doesn't have you training new-hires!"

A couple of months ago I wrote an article called "Grolite" making fun of Wikipedia's desire to confuse, or so it seems. Too many big words force me to skip from site to site trying to make some sense of it, but as I continue to study the ceramics book I find google extremely helpful by filling in the details.

A "clay body" is a recipe for a type of clay. Recipes for cookies can include flour, sugar, and butter, but a "clay body" uses minerals. One clay body in the book called for "Grog." No explanation. When I googled the word I got many recipes for an alcoholic drink, but "Ceramic grog" gave me "fired clay, broken, and ground up." Oh good, I was making progress. It also called for feldspar, ground quartz, and kaolin. What's kaolin? I checked google, it's another type of clay. Thanks google.

Clay is used to make tableware...you know, cups and plates, dental porcelain, and "sanitaryware"...toilets. And of course, flower pots, vases, wall tiles... Clay contains a lot of aluminum and this sounds weird to me; when I think of aluminum, I think of Diet Coke cans. Porcelain, as you all know, is a beautiful white clay, (think of those toilets). It can be translucent; the light can shine through it.

This caused me to look up "feldspar" a name I've heard many times around our club. Feldspar is a natural group of minerals containing potassium, sodium, calcium, and aluminum. Wikipedia says feldspar includes illite, smectite and kaolinite. Smectite has been detected on Mars. So, when we get to Mars we'll find SMECTITES waiting for us. That's exciting, but what in the heck are smectites?

Wikipedia's answer: Chemical weathering of feldspars happens by hydrolysis and produces clay minerals, including illite, smectite, and kaolinite. Illite is essentially a group name for non-expanding clay-sized, DI-OCTAHEDRAL, MICACEOUS MINERALS! It is structurally similar to muscovite in that it's basic unit is a layer composed of two inward-pointing silica tetragonal sheets with a central octahedral sheet. If you can understand any of that, God Bless you!

Let's try to make it simpler. Take a bunch of minerals which are natural combinations of elements such as sodium, calcium, and aluminum, put the right ones together, add water, and you get clay. If it's nice and squishy and molds easily like kid's modeling clay, you've got it. If it gets in your carpets and upholstery and makes a real mess...that's clay. If there's millions of tons of it in our gardens causing us to spend a fortune on soil amendment...THAT'S CLAY.

I was over at my friend Suki's house not long ago, and she had her TV tuned in to local news. It showed hundreds of people lined up for many hours to get... Taylor Swift Swag. Suki is a recently retired high school teacher, and when she saw the young minds of tomorrow waiting for hours to buy that junk, she looked like she wanted to cry.

👉 SPECIAL NOTICE 👈

San Francisco Gem and Mineral Society Year-End Celebration and Townhall Meeting • Saturday December 16th from 4 to 8 pm

Members of the San Francisco Gem and Mineral Society, you are invited to the year-end celebration at the clubhouse. We need your participation for the club election of officers - two open positions listed below. Come to the meeting and nominate yourself.

Corresponding Secretary – Manage correspondence to and from the club at the direction of the board. Explore the use of social media to promote our club.

Entertainment Director – Coordinate club events that relate to food and drink at club functions.

We will also vote on the **Beautification Front Room Project** to make the west side match the east side with more functional use of space. This is roughly a 55-60K project and has been reviewed by the committee made up of the instructor, Board members and interested members.

*****We need club approval to move on with this project*****

See photo below: To the left is the side to be updated to match the newer side of the club house on the right. Improvements will be made to make room for the library and more storage and display areas.



PLEASE RSVP – signup list below or email tonythetm@aol.com with your name and what you will be bring to the potluck, and you will be added to the list:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1eZUjI_L9UH4jcZPgRfgduCZ10IAETASxrQeB5VLWtCI/edit?usp=sharing

From Entertainment Chair, Mary Sue ...

Bring food! No, not that huge turkey or ham, just finger food, wine and beer if you want. Soda pop, deserts, chips and dips, whatever is yummy and sensible. No soup, we don't have soup bowls. Ice cream wouldn't be a good idea, even at this time of year...it melts. Left-over wedding cake, forget it, stale cookies from last year—not a good idea.

AGENDA:

4 to 5 pm – Happy Hour – please bring a beverage to share and enjoy

Sign-in/register as a member to vote and to be eligible for possible door prizes

5 pm Call to Order – Business meeting – Election and Beautification project.

5:45 pm – Enjoy food, drink, and conversation

6:30 pm – Live Auction Ongoing – Silent Auction and door prizes

To help make this event successful we need your help to set up and clean after the event.

We also have a wish list for finger food such as cupcakes, cookies, finger sandwiches, meatballs, fruit kabobs, cut up veggies, pigs in a blanket, baked pork buns, cheese crackers, Deviled eggs, sushi rolls, pizza rolls, chicken nuggets, stuffed mushrooms, egg rolls/lumpia, 7-11 mini tacos ...etc – you get the idea.

Hope to see you Saturday the 16th.

Tony DeLeon – Club President
tonythetm@aol.com



Be sensible, not a lot of that going around nowadays, is there? Candy is fine, I like candy, I really, really like candy.

Come early and of course, parking sucks; the N Judah street car goes right by the club. PS, our last open house of the year is the next day, Sunday, Dec. 17 at 11:00 am. Lot's of real good last minute gifts to buy. See you there...



One Journey, Many Museums

Story and photos by Robin Crabill, Mineralog Editor

There is something captivating about museums, at least when field trips can't be arranged...

I can now say that I have survived a museum marathon — perhaps not running 26.2 miles, but traveling many more miles than that in the East and Midwest, and visiting 27 museums in a bit over 5 weeks.

Field trips for minerals and gems often seem to involve long drives, sketchy directions, fading maps and memories and navigating by “dead reckoning,” your own internal sense of direction (Why is it called that? you might well ask) leading you down and up dirt roads, sheer slopes, dusty and rocky trails, all for the admittedly wonderful thrills of discovery and being the first to unearth a certain rock, crystal or flakes of gold.

If you're not going that route, but want to see unusual spots, adjust your travel plans, or even build them around places featured on sites like atlasobscura.com and, especially for oddball human creations, www.roadsideamerica.com. There are books about the mineral museums of Europe too. I'd gathered some ideas on museums to visit from GIA online talks and also from a booklet I'd bought over 40 years ago about a Midwestern collection of rare types of arrowheads; the internet helped me find its current home.

You can let others assemble the goodies, for sale either at the remaining rock shops of America or at the ephemeral weekend pop-up gem and mineral shows, plus those giant gatherings like the Tucson shows in February or Denver in September.

If you've decided your collections are complete (Never!) or if your lack of space or resources are increasingly hard to ignore, become a visitor, be a tourist, let the gazillionaires gather up the treasures for you, wait them out and then bring your digital camera or phone. We visited the estates of several moneyed culturati like General Foods heiress and businesswoman Marjorie Merriweather Post, whose Washington D.C. property “**Hillwood**,” houses “the most comprehensive collection of Russian imperial art outside Russia” plus important holdings of 1700s French art and antiques, a greenhouse and gardens on 26 acres. Post, who patronized all the major jewelry firms and especially loved emeralds, made major donations of jewelry and gemstones to the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History. In the diplomatic corps in 1930s Russia, she was well situated to acquire that country's antiques, religious metalwork, jewelry and objets d'art by Fabergé and others.

It was refreshing to see that Ms. Post, or at least her agents and buyers, fell for a jade substitute: a pale green carving in bowenite, the gem variety of serpentine, displayed among genuine nephrite and jadeite carvings in a small unlabeled wall case between major rooms. Or maybe she just fell for odd knickknacks now and then; I seem to remember seeing a “jade tree” assemblage there too. Returning to form, her mansion's entry hall features an imposing, dazzling French rock crystal chandelier which the staircase curls around as you make your way upstairs. Our guide mentioned that it is so heavy that it was suspended directly from the beams in the attic above in the name of safety.

(continues on page 5)





Dumbarton Oaks, in the wooded hills above Washington's tony Georgetown neighborhood, is the legacy of Robert & Mildred Bliss, collectors of art and patrons of the humanities. A photo seen years ago in one of my many books about jade led me to seek out this museum and research institute set among acres of gardens and woods. I was truly amazed at the beautiful Pre-Columbian jade, gold, shell inlay and stone carvings on display in a curving series of small, round glassed-in rooms around a central fountain.



Unfortunately, I still haven't seen the object of my pilgrimage, a blue-green jadeite marvel which is not currently on display. So I can't call "my" small jade portrait carving of a woman the finest prehistoric jade from the Americas, but I'd sure like to see a finer one! It is from Olmec Mexico, from the Middle Preclassic period, 900-300 BCE, and it does not look stylized but seems to be a depiction of an actual person.



Club Scenes: Wednesday Night Faceting Class

Photo by Heather



From left to right: Jim, Joseph, Mariana, Kirk, Cassandra, Shannon, Daniel.

GIA DECEMBER VIRTUAL EVENT

Empowering Artisanal Gemstone Miners in East Africa

Wednesday, December 6

6:30pm Meet & Greet | 7:00pm Presentation

By SFGMS Instructor, Will Ajoy

GIA's artisanal mining program aims to provide gemstone miners in East Africa with basic education. It empowers them to negotiate better prices from buyers. GIA has delivered the program in Tanzania, Kenya, and Zambia, leading to demonstrable improvements in miners' lives for many of them, particularly women.

The GIA Alumni Collective, Golden Gate Chapter invites you to a virtual event with Robert Weldon to learn more about this vital program and partnership with the NGO, Pact. You will also hear how the program has led to other related programs, such as Pact's Moyo Gems, which brings together gem miners, brokers and buyers.

Robert Weldon is director of GIA's Richard T. Liddicoat Library in Carlsbad, California. Among his duties, he pursues writing assignments at gem localities and often leads gem photography projects in those global locations. Weldon has visited gem sites around the world. He was a senior editor at JCK, and later Professional Jeweler magazine before returning to GIA in 2006.



Robert is the recipient of the 2020 Antonio C. Bonanno Award for Excellence in Gemology.

Weldon's photography is published in international gemological, jewelry, and consumer publications and in several books. A Rough Guide for Artisanal Miners is an educational booklet which he has also lectured on and delivered to artisanal miners in Tanzania and other East African countries.

For more information and to sign up:

<https://community.gia.edu/collective/s/login>

Club Scenes: "Spooky" October Open House

Photos by Tony DeLeon



Club Scenes: Calpella California Field Trip

Photos by Tony DeLeon



WEEKLY SCHEDULE

**** PLEASE be sure to call the clubhouse (415-564-4230) before traveling ****

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
10 AM - 3 PM Lapidary, Silversmithing	10 AM - 1 PM Lapidary	9 AM - 10 PM Lapidary, Silversmithing, Spheremaking	9 AM - Noon Lapidary	9 AM - Noon Lapidary, Silversmithing	10 AM - 5 PM Lapidary	10 AM - 5 PM Lapidary, Silversmithing, Spheremaking
	7 PM - 10 PM Lapidary	7 PM - 10 PM Lapidary	6 PM - 9 PM Lapidary	6 PM - 9 PM Gem Carving		

SPECIAL DATES IN DECEMBER

December 1, Friday • 7:00 pm
General Meeting on Zoom

December 2, Saturday • 11:00 am
Instructors Meeting In-Person at the clubhouse
**Zoom option - Info: tonythetm@aol.com*

December 9, Saturday • 10:00 am
Board Meeting on Zoom
**Zoom Meeting - Info: tonythetm@aol.com*

December 16, Saturday • 3:00 - 8:00 pm
In-Person Town Hall Meeting & Holiday Celebration

December 17, Sunday • 11:00 am - 3:00 pm
SF Gem and Mineral Society Fair and Open House

December 17, Sunday • 5:00 pm
Mineralog January 2024 Submission Deadline

Clubhouse will be closed for the holidays:
December 25 - January 1, 2024

GIFT MEMBERSHIPS

This Holiday season, introduce someone you care about to the San Francisco Gem and Mineral Society. If they show interest, buy them membership to the club. Its a chance to enjoy a place to share valuable time together. Activities to share include:

- A general interest to learn more about minerals.
- Field Trips
- Club's mineral collection
- Access to equipment to cut, shape and polish stones.
- Members and instructors that are willing to show you how to get started.
- Monthly meeting and special events
- Participate in the monthly open houses.
- A chance to be part of a society that has been around since 1935.

Consider buying a gift membership for family and friends not only during the Holidays but any time of the year. See you at the club house!



BIRTHDAYS IN DECEMBER

Note: Going forward exact birth "DATES" will not be shared for privacy.

Peter Alexander
Nina Bazan-Sakamoto
Jeff Bickler
Mary Sue Bucher
Kasey Burt
Jaden Cadwising
Laurie Cannon
Yolanda Chavez
Penny Clifton
Squirrel Collins
Susan Comstock
Betty Conrad
Marcia D'Orazi
Sean Ellsworth
Joseph Ferrer
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Rudoy Mikhail
Charles Mo
Helen Morse
Natalie Muenster
Deanna Nielsen
Bridget O'Keefe
Len Pisciotta
Skip Prout
Tiffanie Ragasa
Austin Rodrick
Gina Sarti
Brandon P. Scott
Charles Shields
Michael Smith
Julie Ulmer
Amos Underwood
Janice Van Itter
Kathleen Wallace
Yu-Ann Wang
Karen White
Nick Wirtz
Fan Zhang

To add, update or change a calendar event, please contact mineralog@protonmail.com

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THE MINERALOG

We are always grateful for editorial and photographic submissions, especially from our members.

To contribute content, submit story or calendar additions, updates or corrections, please email the Editor:
mineralog@protonmail.com

Deadline for **January** Mineralog is 5:00 PM **Sunday, December 17**

Any submissions or changes received after the deadline will automatically be included in the following month's Mineralog.

Original material published in the Mineralog that is not copyrighted may be reprinted with all due and proper credits.

For Membership Info, contact the Membership Secretary:
tonythetm@aol.com

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Membership Activities Include:

Earth Sciences, Lapidary, Field Trips, Collecting, Jewelry Making, Shows

An Educational Non-Profit Organization Founded in 1935

Member, California Federation of Mineralogical Societies and American Federation of Mineralogical Societies