

# Orcutt



*The FEBRUARY monthly meeting  
will be held at the - -*

**Atkinson Center  
1000 North Railroad  
Santa Maria**

(across from the Boy's and Girl's Club) near the intersection of  
Donovan and Railroad.

**\*The March meetings will be back at the Mussel  
Senior Center\***

# A FOSSIL INFECTION!!

Wayne Mills, Member FFF

I was about 10 when I was given my first fossil. My Dad was a publisher's representative who traveled through Southern California, Arizona, and Nevada, and after one trip brought me a pretty, fist-sized piece of yellow, black and red *Araucarioxylon* with white druzy quartz in the now rotted core. I really became infected with the fossil mania that has characterized my life to the present when I went to Alaska in the summer following my high school graduation in 1963. I spent the summer commercial fishing for salmon with my uncle and cousin, and during one of our breaks, Uncle Mel took us to Tuxedni Channel on the west side of Cook Inlet, in the shadow of Mounts Illamna and Redoubt. He said he knew an interesting place called Fossil Point where I could pass some time. I was later to discover that the area was a Jurassic aged marine limestone, but then I was just fascinated by the marine fossils frozen in the hard gray rock. With my primitive tools, I chipped out 2 and a half ammonites (all different species) and a couple of marine shells in the 45 minutes my uncle allowed me. Later I realized that the place was well described by a sonnet I had composed about 4 months earlier for Senior English Class. The poem was entitled "On a Deserted Coast", and won Special Mention in the National Poetry Anthology that year. *"The sea pounds and thunders on the coast/ and from dark, obscure cliffs the seagulls screech/ as roaring inward pounds the ageless host/ reaching for driftwood that lies on the beach..."*

After I began college in Iowa, classes were so consuming that I did not take advantage of the nice location to actively pursue fossils (the pursuit of girls was more attractive to me at the time.) But even so, one day in a cornfield I picked up an unusual looking rock that turned out to be a productid brachiopod (*Linoproductus* sp). 7 years later, I found myself in Ohio in my last year of active duty in the Air Force. One day, I stopped to talk to some people who were scratching away at a gray road-cut, and when I saw the neat brachiopods, coral, bryozoans and gastropods that they were finding, had to get into the act and find some of my own. I spent several pleasant weekends exploring the Ordovician and Silurian limestone formations in southwestern Ohio. One weekend on a canoeing adventure, I found (and collected) a nicely exposed *Orthoceras* sp. on the banks of the Little Miami River.

In 1972 I joined the Southern California Paleontological Society (SCPS), and went on several pleasant field trips with that group. One of my favorite was to Lone Pine where we collected several nice Lower Triassic ammonites (0.5 to 5 inches in diameter) from the Union Wash Formation, and Ordovician corals and crinoids from Mazourka Canyon. Another favorite was the trip to Delta, Utah where we camped in lovely surroundings near Antelope Springs, and collected several different trilobites from the Lower Cambrian shales and limestones. I was surprised recently to discover that 500 species of trilobites had been found in that area! I have only found about 10 different species there, including *Perinopsis*, *Elrathia* and a great *Asaphiscus wheeler* tail (the head is still buried in matrix). Another of the SCPS fieldtrips that will long remain in my memory was the annual November trip to Ocotillo in San Diego County. In 1972, I took along the young lady whom I had been dating for about a year. I told her that the prize fossil at this location was a sea biscuit called *Clypeaster bowersii*. I described it as a fat stone biscuit about 6 inches in diameter, with a star shape on top, and added that if she found one, I just might marry her! My lady friend spent much of the afternoon wandering the washes and looking closely at the many exposures. After a few hours later she called me over to a spot beside a sandy wash (the only kind of wash in Fossil Canyon), and pointed to a little round bump sticking out of a waist high sandstone exposure (Pleistocene Ocotillo Formation). She said "get that out for me". I placed the chisel, and with one whack of the hammer, the capstone popped off revealing a perfect, inverted *Clypeaster*. The fossil was appraised by many who had collected in Ocotillo before as one of the nicest they had seen. A year later we were married. When she decided to end our partnership of 21.5 years, Nancy left me the *Clypeaster*—I guess she felt I had earned it. I have recently become more interested in echnoids, and have a couple of interesting stories about collecting them in San Francisco and Santa Cruz Counties, but that's another story.

*Wayne Mills is a recent member of FFF, and was just elected President-elect of Orcutt Mineral Society (for the second time). He lives in Arroyo Grande, San Luis Obispo County, and is usually willing to talk about, look at or dig for rocks, fossils, or minerals. His e-mail is [wwmills50@hotmail.com](mailto:wwmills50@hotmail.com).*

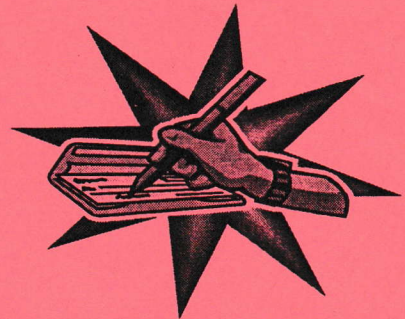
# - Membership dues -

## \*Dues are Due on January 1st\*

### Regular...\$ 15.00      Junior...\$ 7.50

Make checks payable to:  
**ORCUTT MINERAL SOCIETY**

# Thank You!



## RAFFLE!

Each month, right after the featured program at the General Meeting, the Club holds a raffle. Tickets are 3 for \$1.00.

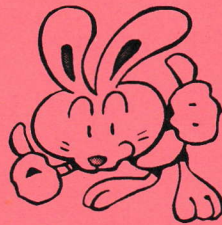
There is always lots of cool stuff!

You can donate any kind of items too!

Simply bring them to the raffle table on the night of our General Meeting.

Must be present to win.

*Marshall Reeves, Chairman*



## Campbell's Soup Labels

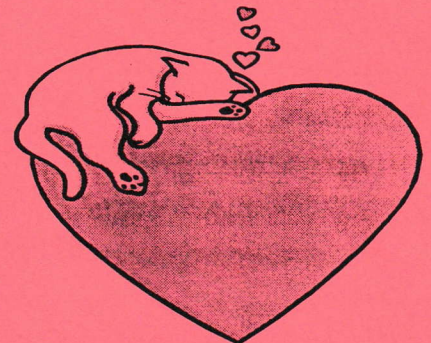
Wes Lingerfelt 929-3788

Campbell's Soup Labels are helping the Sun Valley Indian School in Arizona get many items they need for their school. **Keep the labels coming! Bring any Campbell's Soup label to Wes at the General Meetings. It's easy, AND one of our favorite causes!**

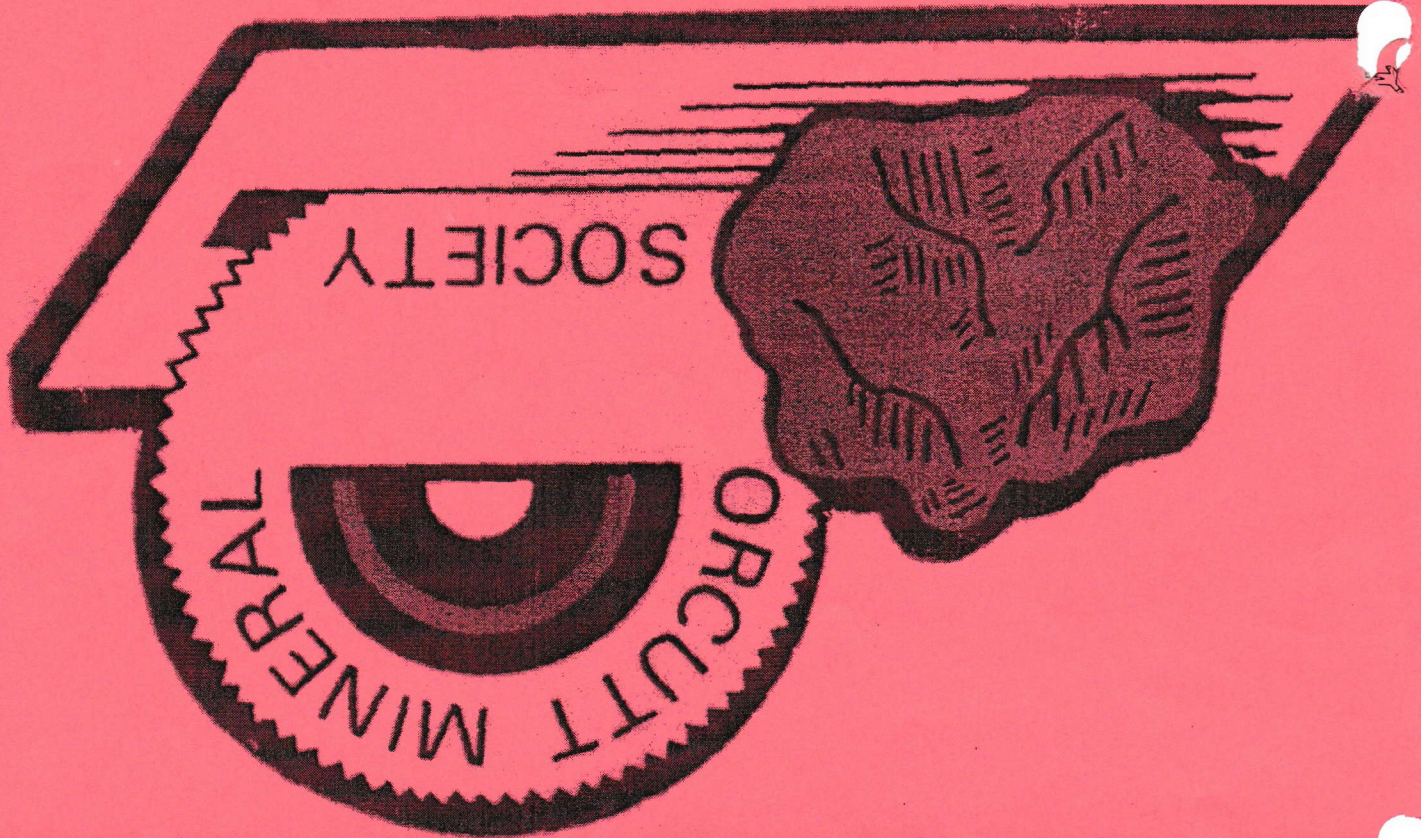
Wes receives their newsletter to share at the general meetings.

**MEMBERS! BE SURE TO WEAR YOUR NAME BADGE TO ALL MEETINGS & CLUB EVENTS!**

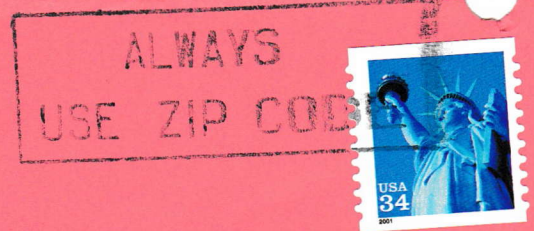
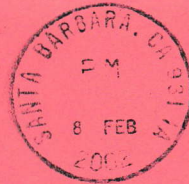
*Or it will cost you a 25cent fine! --- Our Sheriff will be on the prowl!*



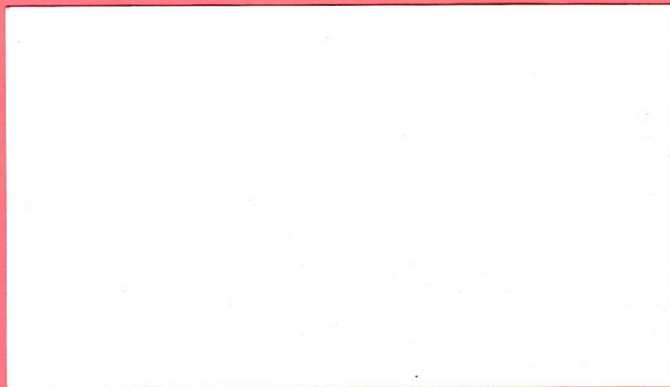
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