



Ore-Cutts

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Woodward Ranch Adventure

By Bess and Dick Shields

Woodward Ranch was originally established as a cattle ranch in 1883, and the family still has a small herd. Today it is the destination of countless rockhounds from around the world. Its reputation is well deserved as a premier collecting area for the wide variety of agates, precious opal, and an assortment of mineral world rarities. It was a MUST GO destination for the two of us on our vacation.



Woodward Ranch agate hill with Cathedral Mountain, an extinct volcano

Somewhere between Van Horn and Marfa, TX, we received a call from Amanda, our youngest daughter, informing us about the 6.5 quake near Paso Robles CA. She was afraid that we would turn around and head back to California. We were on day 3 of a 2 1/2 week vacation, and planned to spend it rockhounding our way to Boerne TX, visiting family, then collecting on the way home. After reassuring Amanda that we were making an overnight stop at the Woodward Ranch, then continuing

to San Antonio the next day, she felt much better.

We first met Trey and Jan Woodward, the third generation resident hosts of Woodward Ranch, at the Fredericksburg TX Gem Show two years ago. Trey and Dick share a love of fluorescing, and Jan is a jeweler/beader. Their unlimited supply of red and black plume agate and over 70 other gemstone types give Trey and Jan a distinct advantage since they get "first dibbs" on specimens for their museum and gift shop displays.



Red and yellow agate from Woodward Ranch

The Woodward Ranch is located sixteen miles south of Alpine on Highway 118. The visitor area, RV parking, and Rock Shop are located two miles to the west of the turnoff on a county maintained access road, and is well marked. RVs, 2 and 4 wheel drive vehicles, and trailers will have no problem on this road. Please contact Trey or Jan prior to arrival since the Ranch is closed to rock collecting on days when hunters are present.

Winter is the best time to collect since snakes are hibernating, grasses are dormant, and open patches make it easy to spot specimens. Take a rock hammer, screwdriver for prying out stubborn specimens from the red lava rock, a collecting bag, and a bottle of drinking water. Before doing any collecting, check in with Trey or Jan.

There are a few RV sites on the property, and hotel rooms are available in Alpine, 16 miles to the north. Big Bend National Park and Terlingua are about 100 miles to the south on highway 118.



Pegasus, the winged horse (head to the left), aragonite in iris agate

The Rock Shop and Museum are quaint, and authentic. You will find no touristy stuff here. The Woodward's have collected lots of rough materials that are housed in outdoor bins, and have an abundance of finished pieces available for purchase in the shop. They also have some interesting traded materials that other visitors left behind in the bargaining process.

Hill after hill of first-rate materials are plentiful within walking distance of the rock shop. Tons of collected materials are available to buy, or you are invited to collect your own materials nearby for a small fee per pound. Trey will help expert and novice alike identify the nu-

merous types of materials, and assist you in high-grading your selections.

The ranch houses are unique, and built from local stone. Some now house visiting international researchers, others are in the process of being refurbished (like the huge barn whose roof flew off in a high wind), and the main house which is currently occupied by Trey and Jan. The fireplace in their home is 16' x 21', and contains prize specimens collected by the three generations of Woodward's who have called the Ranch "home".



30X microscopic view of Pegasus's head

Trey informed us that one of the researchers stated, "more than 70 different types of agate and minerals are to be found on the Ranch". There are more different types of quartz family gemstones on the Ranch than in any other one locality in the entire world. Some of the materials found at Woodward Ranch include:

- petrified wood
- agates: red and black plume (the only location for this unique agate in the world!), flower garden, banded, iris, picture, lace, Pom-Pom, cathedral, moss, and sunburst
- fluorescent calcite
- quartz
- geodes
- aragonite crystals
- bloodstone
- wulfenite

- carnelian
- jaspers
- amber
- citrine
- amethyst
- chalcedony pseudomorphs after aragonite (marshmallows with caramel sauce)
- precious opal in rhyolite cavities
- stalactites and stalagmites
- clear, facet quality gem labradorite (loose in igneous soil)
- Potato Hill andasite

The Ranch is located in the heart of the northern extreme of the Chihuahuan Desert at an altitude of 5000 feet. The lavas that produce the Woodward Ranch gemstones are 750 feet thick and are exposed over the 2400 acres of the main ranch, and other family holdings in the Terlingua area near Big Bend National Park.

Trey and Dick spent a long time fluorescing the whole rock shop and workshop as I strolled the hills in search of specimens. Old Blue, the ranch dog, is the friendly greeter to numerous visitors. Goldie, the resident horse, followed me around as I collected specimens in the hills near the ranch house. Goldie would enjoy being hostess to your favorite horse, and accompanying you on a trail ride.

When I returned with my beauties (and two artifacts), Dick chattered on and on about the abundance of fluorescent specimens. Trey showed me numerous glowing finds, calcites, iris agates, and fluorite from a broad area, including Marathon, Marfa, Terlingua, and northern Mexico.

Trey showed us biscuits (his name for agates the shape of an English muffin) he had recently collected. He slabs and polishes the agates to sell in his Ranch Rock Shop. He can also mail order you a 5 pound selection of assorted plume, green moss, and PomPom agates if you can't make a trip to see him.

One of the most extensive explanations on this ancient string of Texan volcanoes is found in the Geo-Texas book. Hundreds of volca-

noes covered the trans-Pecos area, Austin, Uvalde, Knippa, Alpine, Big Bend National Park, El Paso, Davis Mountain (home of the McDonald Observatory), and Van Horn (to name a few).

The agates found on the Ranch were formed in gas pockets in the repeated layers of lava flows. Each intrusive igneous flow contained a slightly different chemical mix, hence the different types and colors of agates in the area. The massive volcanic eruptions, volcanic flows, and volcanic ash covering (which sometimes exceeded 1000 feet in thickness), created an oozing, hot, molten mix.

The red lava rock covering Woodward Ranch was penetrated from above by water, silica, and trace elements which seeped down through the ash. Vents from below worked their way to the surface and riddled the lava with another diverse mix of trace minerals.



Chalcedony pseudomorphs after aragonite in the fireplace wall

Three large pieces of the chalcedony pseudomorphs after aragonite (marshmallows with caramel sauce) have been found on the Ranch. One is now residing in the Smithsonian Institute, one lives in Trey and Jan's fireplace showplace, and the third is on display. The crystals are enormous, and are covered by a deep caramel colored coating that honestly looks good enough to eat!

Now that we have returned from our adventures, we'll get our tumbler going with those biscuits, and work with the other gifts provided by Mother Nature. Dick and I bought and traded for an ample supply of Woodward Ranch specimens, but will definitely gather more on our next trip east. We left our Wilderness trailer in Boerne TX with Amanda, so this gives us an excellent excuse to visit the Woodward Ranch again later this spring when we retrieve the trailer – Yee Haw!

References:

1. 36" x 28" Geological Highway Map of Texas, American Assn of Petroleum Geologists, 1962.
2. Geologic Atlas of Texas (Fort Stockton Sheet), Bureau of Economic Geology, University of Texas at Austin, revised 1995.
3. Geologic Atlas of Texas (Emory Peak-Presidio Sheet), Bureau of Economic Geology, University of Texas at Austin, 1979.
4. Topographic Map of Big Bend National Park TX, National Geographic Trails Illustrated, 1996.
5. *Geo-Texas, a Guide to the Earth Sciences*, Eric R. Swanson, Texas A & M, 1995.
6. *Rockhounding Texas*, Melinda Crow, Falcon Publishing, Helena, Montana, 1994.
7. Laminated 8 1/2" x 11" map, "Geology of Texas", Bureau of Economic Geology, University of Texas at Austin, 1992.
8. *Gem Trails of Texas*, James R. Mitchell, Gem Guides Book Co., Baldwin Park CA, 1987.

You can see more about the ranch on the web page at <http://www.woodwardranch.net> or send an e-mail to Trey and Jan at woodward13@earthlink.net.

Orcutt Mineral Society

Board Meeting
Mussel Senior Center, Santa Maria CA
2 December, 2003

Call to Order at 7:05 p.m. by President Wayne Mills. Board members present were Sharon Duncan, Debbie and Bill Hood, Wes Lingerfelt, Wayne Mills, Marshall Reeves, Geary Sheffer, Bess Shields, and Dick Shields, Immediate Past President. Guest was Lucky Virgin

Trip reports:

Wayne Mills reported on a trip to Blue Lady Mine for indicolite, schorl, and pegmatite minerals. Sharon Duncan traveled to Avila, Refugio, and Gaviota beaches for limb casts, agates, and bone. Dick Shields reported on the trip to see Rick Kennedy in San Jose. Dick stated that Rob Bullock had just returned from a successful collecting trip to the Purple Passion Mine in Wickenberg AZ, and a visit with Bill Gardner. Wes Lingerfelt scouted out the area where Elaine Von Achen's brother wants to take us on a collecting trip for jasper, actinolite, chert, low temperature quartz, and various fossil shells.

Treasurer's Report was read by Wes Lingerfelt, and accepted as read.

Minutes of the previous Board Meeting were approved as written.

Committee Reports:

Abused Children: Debbie Hood bought \$300 in gift certificates from WalMart for the Abused Children project.

Adopt-a-Highway: Marshall Reeves has a new encroachment permit that will expire next September. We can get a new 5 year permit at that time.

Bulletin (Ore-Cutts): Bess Shields reported that the Ore-Cutt was published and distributed yesterday. Submissions to CFMS and AFMS competitions for our newsletter were sent out.

Refreshments: Sharon Duncan said that the refreshments will be handled by committee, and will consist of DeeDee Magri, Christine Clason, and Sharon.

Sunshine: Debbie Hood reported that Diana Credilich is homebound, and would appreciate cards. Molly Kerlick's son, Walter, has cancer. Vic Jonas was in the hospital with cancer. John Mock was diagnosed with cancer.

Correspondence:

- *Dinny's Doins* newsletter.
- Lapidarian newsletter from Santa Cruz Mineral & Gem Society.
- *Metal Stone & Glass* magazine.
- Correspondence from Fossil News, the Journal of Avocational Paleontology.
- Letter from Child Welfare Services.
- Fred Ott, CFMS letter about Gem Show insurance.
- Sir Paul Howard Christmas greetings.

Old / unfinished business:

1. Wes Lingerfelt explained the determination by CFMS concerning equipment owned, and loaned out by the club. Much discussion followed.
2. Wes Lingerfelt paid the insurance for our August Gem Show already. We will pay member dues and insurance next month.
3. Bill Hood announced the proper schedule for the Annual Meeting on Saturday. 12:30 p.m. is lunch, with Sweet Adelines starting at 1:30 p.m.

New business:

1. Wayne Mills will be submitting OMS for the AFMS "All American Club" award. This goes to the "Best of the Best" club.

The January Program is being presented by Wes Lingerfelt, and is entitled "Proper use of Diamond Wheels", and the new Highway Cleanup safety video will also be viewed.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m. by President Mills.

Respectfully submitted,
Bess Shields, Secretary, OMS

Orcutt Mineral Society

Annual Meeting
Maria del Sol
6 December, 2003

The annual business meeting of the Orcutt Mineral Society was held at Maria del Sol, 1405 Main Street, Santa Maria CA on December 6th, 2003. The meeting was presided over by President Wayne Mills who opened the meeting at 12:20 p.m. The invocation, "Advent Call", was given by Bess Shields. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Wayne Mills. There were 38 members and 12 guests present.



Incoming President Debbie Hood

Prior to the business and entertainment portion, a buffet of baked ham, roast turkey, numerous accompanying dishes, and dessert were prepared for us by the Maria del Sol chefs.

The President's Annual Report was given by outgoing President Mills. Wayne cited a solid financial foundation, the successful Gem Show, and great participation in the monthly general meeting displays. He thanked our membership for support of field trips, Debbie for the high quality programs, Bess and Dick for our excellent bulletins, and all members for participating in numerous donation/community service opportunities.

Minutes of the previous General and Board meetings will appear in the January *Ore-Cutts*.

Debbie Hood reminded people to deposit their Salvation Army donations at the hostess table. She then circulated through the room with the Abused Children Fund donation can.

Wes Lingerfelt delivered the December Treasurer's Report. Wes presented the Proposed Budget for 2004. The motion to accept the 2004 Budget was made by Lucky Virgin, and seconded by Rob Bullock. The motion passed unanimously.

Wes Lingerfelt asked for a moment of silence in memory of Lynda Virgin, a longtime member of OMS, who passed away earlier this year.

Debbie Hood announced that Social Services received the OMS yearly donation, and thanked the membership for our generosity.



Al Wilcox receives the Golden Bear award for his devoted service to the Orcutt Mineral Society

The Sweet Adelines entertained us with a medley of holiday tunes.

The outgoing Board Members and Officers receiving pins and bars in recognition of their service for 2003 were: Bill Hood, Geary Sheffer, Sylvia Nasholm, Sharon Duncan, and Marshall Reeves Wes Lingerfelt (Federation Director and Treasurer); Bess Shields (Secretary); Deborah Hood (President-elect), and Wayne Mills (outgoing President). (Geary and Sylvia were unable to attend and will receive their pins in January). Wes Lingerfelt administered the oath of office to the Board members who were present:

Incoming President, Deborah Hood, spoke of the successful 2003 Gem Show, our strong community

service projects, and growing membership. She looks forward to more field trips, giving more scholarships, and attending some entertaining programs in 2004.

The poinsettia centerpieces were given away by drawing tickets. The meeting was adjourned by President Deborah Hood at 2:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Bess Shields
Secretary, OMS

The Wanderer

Snapshots of our Texan Trip

Quartzsite AZ: Jim Suehr, manager of Hassler's RV Park, and Dick fluoresced everything in sight, then moved on to Jim's storage sheds for more adventures. Forget dinner, the fluorescent opportunity is more fun.

Deming NM: We visited Rockhound State Park to the southeast of Deming. The pull-through spots are clean, modern, and easy to access. Geode Kid's Rock Shop is nearby, but he wasn't home.



We chose NOT to eat here

Woodward Ranch TX: This is a premier, bountiful collecting spot! Please see the lead article for detailed information.

Boerne TX for the holidays, long visits with family, numerous dinners, rekindling friendships, gifts exchanged, and grandkids to hug! The time passed too quickly.

Balmorhea TX: famous for its deep blue agates, and deserves a full article sometime soon.

Las Cruces NM: spent the night, then off to visit the Geode Kid. Our visit with Paul and Chris was enlightening, entertaining, and educational. Dick is translating some German texts for Paul's research on geodes.

Phoenix AZ: Construction trip to Bill Gardner's home for assembly of new fluorescent units, and repair to one of ours that needed "adjustment" after a bad fall...

Wickenburg AZ: We collected geodes (some containing amethyst), and fluoresced Purple Passion Mine at night. Hogan Claim was also spectacular at night. (Yes, we got stuck on the mountain with a dead battery until 10:00 pm and ate at MickyD's just before they closed for the night.)

Another day in Wickenburg AZ: Collecting at Purple Passion Mine, and found small pockets of smoky quartz, fluorite, amethyst, and quartz. We trekked up to the Monarch Mine for quartz with malachite, azurite, tetrahedrite, and gold. Found a new spot to dig for clear quartz crystals.

Las Vegas/Henderson NV: We visited and traded with Walt Lombardo and fiancé Sandy Anthony at their Nevada Minerals and Books Shop. I'll have a lot more to say about this couple and their unique shop in a future Wanderer.

We finally made it home by late afternoon Sunday, January 4th.

The time passed so quickly. We had fun collecting minerals, busting apart boulders for tiny malachite crystals, stopping to gaze in awe at the panoramic views, and enjoying the company of fellow rockhounds. I'm glad that we have another trip to Texas planned later this spring, so we can have even more adventures.

Happy Hunting,
Love, Bess

Official Stuff

OMS Purpose

Founded in 1958, and is named after William Orcutt, a geologist and civil engineer who worked in the Santa Maria Valley as a district manager for Union Oil Company in 1888. In 1889, Orcutt discovered the fossil wealth of the La Brea Tar Pits, one of the most significant fossil finds in paleontological history. The Society is a non-profit club, dedicated to stimulating an interest in rocks and minerals. The club offers educational programs, field trips, youth activities, and other opportunities for families and individuals to pursue an interest in collecting and lapidary treatment of rocks, fossils, gems, minerals, and other facets of Earth Sciences. In addition, a goal of this Society is to promote good fellowship and proper ethics in pursuit of the society's endeavors. Operating rules have been set forth to guide the Officers and members of the Society in accomplishing these purposes.

Affiliations: California Federation of Mineralogical Societies and American Federation of Mineralogical Societies.



OMS Logo

A rock saw cutting a piece of stone was selected when the first bulletin, *ORE-CUTTS* (name-sake, William Orcutt) was first published in 1966. Member Helen Azevedo was the first editor.

2004 OMS Elected Officers

President	Debbie Hood	(805) 481-6860
President Elect	Lucky Virgin	(805) 929-9525
Secretary	Bess Shields	(805) 937-0357
Treasurer	Wes Lingerfelt	(805) 929-3788
Immediate Past President	Wayne Mills	(805) 481-3495
CFMS Representative	Wes Lingerfelt	(805) 929-3788

2004 OMS Board Members

Geary Sheffer	(805) 925-8009
Sylvia Nasholm	(805) 481-0923
Bill Hood	(805) 481-6860
Sharon Duncan	(805) 929-2209
Marshall Reeves	(805) 588-8932

Ore-Cutts Editors

Dick and Bess Shields	(805) 937-0357
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Webmasters

Dick Shields	(805) 937-0357
Wes Lingerfelt	(805) 929-3788

January 2004 Calendar

Tuesday January 6, 2004 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM	OMS Board Meeting -- Mussell Senior Center. All members are welcome at this business meeting.
Saturday January 10, 2004 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM	Field Trip to Jalama Beach -- Meet at Mussell Senior Center Parking Lot. We will depart at 0900. Entrance fee for each vehicle at Jalama. Walk over

	beach sand and rock to a travertine out-cropping. There is oil on the beach so bring old shoes for the walk. Bring a lunch or eat in the Jalama Café on the beach.
Tuesday January 13, 2004 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM	OMS General Meeting -- Mussell Senior Center. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program: Wes Lingerfelt on "How to Use and Properly Maintain Equipment" • Display: Green Stones • Refreshment: Donuts
Saturday January 17, 2004 8:00 AM - 10:00 AM	OMS Highway Cleanup -- Intersection of Hwy 101 and Hwy 166. After the cleanup we have coffee and pastry at "Omelets and More" in Nipomo. Contact Marshall Reeves at 733-2775 for details.
Saturday January 24, 2004 8:30 AM - 9:30 AM	Monthly OMS Breakfast – Girl's Restaurant, Arroyo Grande. Breakfast location alternates between Baker's Square in Santa Maria and The Girl's in Arroyo Grande. Call Dick Shields at 937-0357 for details.

February 2004 Calendar

Tuesday February 3, 2004 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM	OMS Board Meeting -- Mussell Senior Center. All members are welcome at this business meeting.
Tuesday February 10, 2004 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM	OMS General Meeting -- Atkinson Community Center, 1000 N. Railroad. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program: Ralph Bishop on "Fascinating Fossils" • Display: Heart-shaped Stones and Fossils • Refreshment: Cake and Cup Cakes
Saturday February 21, 2004 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM	Field Trip Jade Cove -- Meet at Mussell Senior Center Parking Lot or points further north by arrangement. Pray for surf (to stir the beach rock well). Call Dick Shields at 937-0357 for details.
Saturday February 28, 2004 8:30 AM - 9:30 AM	Monthly OMS Breakfast – Baker's Square, Santa Maria Restaurant, Breakfast location alternates between Baker's Square in Santa Maria and The Girl's in Arroyo Grande. Call Dick Shields at 937-0357 for details.

March 2004 Calendar

Tuesday March 2, 2004 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM	OMS Board Meeting -- Atkinson Community Center, 1000 N. Railroad All members are welcome at this business meeting
Tuesday March 9, 2004 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM	OMS General Meeting -- Atkinson Community Center, 1000 N. Railroad. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program: Dick Shields on "Fluores-

	<p>cence Made Easy”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Display: Agates and Calcites • Refreshment: Pie
<p>Saturday March 20, 2004 8:00 AM - 10:00 AM</p>	<p>OMS Highway Cleanup -- Intersection of Hwy 101 and Hwy 166. After the cleanup we have coffee and pastry at "Omelets and More" in Nipomo. Contact Marshall Reeves at 733-2775 for details.</p>
<p>Saturday March 27, 2004 8:30 AM - 9:30 AM</p>	<p>Monthly OMS Breakfast – Girl's Restaurant, Arroyo Grande. Breakfast location alternates between Baker's Square in Santa Maria and The Girl's in Arroyo Grande. Call Dick Shields at 937-0357 for details.</p>

Rockhound or Prospector?

From "Romancing the Stone" written by Denise Gamino in the *Austin American-Statesman* on Saturday, November 15, 2003.

Local Alpine TX rockhounder and teacher, Teri Smith, defines the difference between a rockhound and a prospector:

"A prospector is interested in making a fortune and doesn't want to share. A rock hound tells you where the good places are and takes you there. They'll dig the hole for you and hand you the rocks, and if those aren't what you want, they'll give you what's in their garage. At the end of the day, rock

hounds have two things: lots of friends and rocks, and the prospector has neither."

Web Sites of Note:

January 2004

Geo-Texas, A Guide to the Earth Sciences by Eric R. Swanson:

<http://www.tamu.edu/upress/BOOKS/1995/swanson.htm>

Woodward Ranch:

<http://www.woodwardranch.net>

Rockhound State Park, Deming, NM

<http://www.emnrd.state.nm.us/nmparks/pages/parks/rockh/rockh.htm>

John Muir Exhibit

http://www.sierraclub.org/john_muir_exhibit/index.html

Geocaching:

<http://www.geocaching.com/>

Earth's continents:

<http://dinosauricon.com/places/index.html>

UCSB Paleobiology Database

<http://flatpebble.nceas.ucsb.edu/>

American Federation of Mineralogical Societies:

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

California Federation of Mineralogical Societies:

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

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