



May Program

Larry Ragle will present the program on May 25th: We will discuss some of the differences in display technique based on the DVD we saw of the stones from Vietnam and what we have seen at other exhibits and in the literature. [See **Larry's** column on the right.]

➔ We need three volunteers to give programs: August, September and October are open.

Stone of the Month



We are always looking for something either interesting, educational or just plain fun. This month we thought it would be nice to try for all three. We want to see stones suggestive of a human shape. [OK, these 3 are truly famous

ones.] **Covello** and **Yoshimura** wrote that, "Some of the most popular subjects for these stones are fishermen, farmers, maidens, Buddha, Kannon (goddess of mercy), and Buddhist monks." **Matsuura** wrote that such stones



"not look too literally like what it is supposed to represent." *Challenge:* these stones will be human shaped, not stones with a human pattern on them. These stones must be in a *daiza*.

Photos from *Suiseki Meihin Taikan* by Arishige Matsuura and Kinichi Yoshimura

What a Difference a Dai Makes

From the reaction of our members everyone really enjoyed watching the Vietnamese DVD on stone appreciation at our last meeting. One of the questions from the group was what is the difference between their approach and was it more related to the Chinese or Japanese styles. It was apparent that they, like us, are inspired by both the Japanese and Chinese and certainly the Korean style, particularly, the *dai*. At least from my prospective their *dai* are somewhere in the mix of Korean-Chinese. This is something we can discuss at the next meeting.

The message I was left with is, although we are a world apart in almost every aspect of our lives, we experience the same level of pride when we display our stones and even more important, we share the excitement, the anticipation and the thrill of the hunt; finding a masterpiece in the wild. And we use the same hunting techniques- wade, dive or dig. And I don't think there was a stone in the show that I would send back to the river... and they appear 100% natural.

It seemed like the principal purpose of the DVD was to show the viewers as many stones as possible in the allotted time. And that was my only real disappointment - it went too fast. The quick zoom in/out and morphing one stone into another was artistically beautiful - much like today's Hollywood celebs' programs like *Access Hollywood* or *Extra* where 3 to 5 seconds clips are the rule. I've heard that 3 to 5 seconds is the attention span of people today (and the length of a tweet). The explanation was in the title of the DVD or what I thought was the title: "Hang Phim Truyen Hinuh, Thang Pho Ho Chi Minh". I recognized Ho Chi Minh but I needed to Google the whole title to learn the name of the club. Turns out it is the site of the feature film company that made the DVD, not the club's name nor was it the title. And their website looks like the *Extra* website but with promos lasting 2 to 3 seconds- just like the DVD.

Well, I've solved that problem. We can look at the stones as long as we want and we can answer the question; what are the differences in the methods of display, comparing the Vietnamese approach to our own and others with which we have become familiar. [Hint: I developed my own technique for "freeze frame".]

Larry Ragle

April Meeting Notes *by Linda Gill*

ANNOUNCEMENTS: A guest, **Art Ragazzi**, who is in the Whittier Rock and Gem club and is a friend of **Kathy Boehme**, attended.

We talked about whether we want to have a viewing stone display at the 55th Anniversary CBS Convention next year and we said yes. We will need to decide if it should be a stand alone exhibit or be in the same hall as the bonsai, security being an issue.

Stone of the Month; Stones from the Yuha Desert (sizes are in inches: w x h x d)



Kyra Haussler 12 x 7 x 8 (3B's: big, black and beautiful)



Bruce McGinnis 6 x 3 x 3 (Looks like Ayers Rock)



Emma Janza 5 x 3.5 x 2 (Emma made the daiza for this stone)



Chris Barry and this was his first collecting trip: 9 x 3 x 4



Sharon Somerfeld 5.5 x 3.5 x 4 (Botroidal jade, not from the Yuha!)



Hanne Povlsen 4 x 4 x 2.5 (Hut)



Richard Aguirre 6 x 2.5 x 4

The 1 inch wide inner margins are designed for use with a 3 hole punch.



April Program Notes *by Linda Gill*

Larry Ragle showed the DVD we purchased from **Chiara Padrini** on Vietnamese Stones and Collecting. The DVD was professionally produced and set to music. The narration was in Vietnamese: It opened with a garden with a wind chime made of rocks suspended on strings, then showed them in a fish bowl, and on to rocks on stands.



We got to see several Vietnamese hunting for stones in a river. Although some had masks the river was so muddy that they often had to dive and bring up a rock to evaluate it. (I wonder; if it felt interesting to their feet, or what was the impetus to visually inspect it?)



Later on the video showed the hunters headed through the hills. They had backpacks and crowbars. Often they would sit in the river and pull out stones one by one and some would float down stream with their mask on. They also hunted on rocky beaches.

There were a number of stills of rocks that were in a show. They were displayed on wooden stands and most were figure stones and picture stones. The stones in the show were judged but we could not discern the winning stones. The *daiza* were more substantial than the Japanese *daiza* and some of them had labels to the front. Some rocks were displayed as fruit in a basket. They had 'stems' attached to reinforce the image of fruit and some real fruit appeared to be in the basket also.



Face stones were popular and many of the stones were black with a good patina.



Copies of the European Suseki Association newsletter were shown along with a number of books on stones; one was by **Willi Benz**. This was followed by shots of gardens; Ryo-anji in Japan and several flower gardens with stones, some from China. A few of the figure stones shown (not in the gardens) were decorated with necklaces. There was also a set of Zodiac Stones.



Thank you, Mr. **Bui Duc Tam**, for making this video available to us. Everyone enjoyed it.]

Ask Guy Jim

Dear Guy Jim,

Rumor has it that stones have been migrating from Santa Monica to San Marino. What is happening with your proposed American Viewing Stone Resource Center project? How can we help?

Red D. Turock

Dear Red,

As of January, the AVSRC and Huntington Botanical Gardens have embarked on an informal working relationship with the goal of integrating the AVSRC into current activities and the future expansion of the Japanese Garden at the Huntington.

The AVSRC is working with **Jim Folsom**, Director of the Botanical Gardens, and **Dave McClaren**, Curator of the Asian Gardens, in continuing support of on-going Huntington efforts, including the annual Bonsai-a-thon. Following suggestions of Mr. **Yoshiaka Nakamura**, the highly respected Japanese architectural renovator who is undertaking the refurbishing of the original Japanese House and soon-to-be installed tea house, we will be working with project consultant, **Andrew Mitchell**, on ways to integrate use of viewing stones within the renovated structures and grounds.

In February, the AVSRC assisted with the transfer of a gift of Chinese stones from **Ralph Johnson** to the Huntington. More recently, we initiated an effort to coordinate databases to ease the anticipated transition of the AVSRC Collections to the Huntington and to keep records compatible with those being developed by **Michelle Bailey** to manage the Pepperdine University's gift of 5,000 items for the Tea Ceremony (as well as other Chinese and Japanese art, display items and stones). One of the first joint projects will be to inventory and create database entries for stones given to the Huntington over the past decade, including those from the **Melba Tucker** Collection.

Recently, the Huntington generously provided temporary work and storage space including a secure outdoor area that will ease logistical problems. This outdoor storage is adjacent to the bonsai collection work area and will initially be used to store and evaluate raw stones for potential use including material for educational workshops. As the stones are evaluated and culled, those of lower quality will be set aside for potential use in landscaping. To date we have moved enough stone from ...

NEWS FLASH: Cal Tech has reported that the amount of stone moved from Santa Monica to San Marino has resulted in minor earthquake tremors and an uplifting of the Pacific Plate!

We are excited to announce a unique trial project: the creation of a section of artificial California 'riverbed' to be made with collected and subsequently rejected would-be viewing stones. Close your eyes and imagine the rich blacks, flashing quartz, beautiful greens and colorful jaspers. Visitors will be able to enjoy the beauty of the rocks as few but those who have collected in the field have been privileged to see! This project will include an experimental expanse of 'riverbed' designed to be seeded with small stones and then made accessible for actual collecting as part of proposed parent-child viewing stone workshops to be developed based on experiences at the U.S. Bonsai & Penjing Museum, Washington, DC and Westmont College, Santa Barbara. Who knows? Success might encourage the Huntington to develop an annual Easter-egg-hunt type of event: Find your stone in the morning and leave with it displayed in a *suiban* in the afternoon! Possibly we might be ready to try an experimental stone workshop in conjunction with next year's bonsai-a-thon. **[Please contact me if in your yard or garage you have suitable stones that you know you will never display. While some collectors eventually return their unwanted stones to their source, most simply get 'plowed under'. It would likely be a lot more rewarding and far easier to clear that path along the side of the house by contributing them to this project. The more good stones of all sizes that we can accumulate, the greater the chance for a successful outcome.]**

Other activities will include intensified efforts to secure historical stones and information on and from early collectors. We will seek to enlist local 'representatives' to assist and coordinate efforts in geographic areas outside of Southern California. In conjunction with the Huntington's celebration of the 100th Year of the Japanese Garden, we are preparing a publication and small exhibit honoring **Robert Watson**. 'Bob' was the curator responsible for the previous expansion of the Japanese Garden (Zen Garden, Original Bonsai Court, etc.). Perhaps more significantly for us, he was one of the earliest non-Japanese practitioners of *suiseki* in North America and a pioneer in opening the California desert to collecting.



Bob Watson in 1974

The **Bob Watson** Exhibit is tentatively scheduled to open at the February 2012 Bonsai-a-thon and continue through the reopening of the refurbished and expanded Japanese Garden in early summer. **[If you have a stone found by Bob or any old photos, historical information or anecdotes, please contact me ASAP for potential inclusion in the book and/or exhibit!]**

GuyJim

The views expressed in this column are personal, perhaps irreverent, irrelevant or just plain wrong and do not reflect the consensual view of California Aiseki Kai. Send your viewing stone questions (or comments) for GuyJim to jimgreaves@roadrunner.com or 1018 Pacific Street, Unit D, Santa Monica, CA 90405 (310) 452-3680

AVSRC Recent Acquisitions

Within the past two years, the AVSRC has been fortunate to receive six stones collected by **Robert Watson**. **Bob**, an original founding member of California Aiseki Kai, was one of the earliest non-Japanese practitioners of *suiseki* in North America. He is well remembered for opening the California desert to viewing stone collecting, initiating other early collectors, among them, **Cliff Johnson** and **Melba Tucker**. Less known, **Bob** was also one of the earliest collectors to explore possibilities in British Columbia (1974 or 75).

Each of these stones passed on to **Cliff Johnson** upon **Bob's** death. Subsequently, stones 1 - 4 were purchased by **Ralph Johnson** who, after several years, gave them to **Nina** and **Larry Ragle** saying "they would know best what to do with them." In 2009, aware that I was seeking historical stones and planning to do a publication honoring **Bob's** contribution, they, with **Ralph's** approval, gave the stones to me. **Ralph** later uncovered #5 and presented it to me directly.



1. 'Magic Smoke' Embedded-image Stone (*Monyo-ish*)
 Cascade Range, British Columbia
 7" W x 6" H x 2" D (17.8cm x 15.2cm x 5.1cm)

The title "Magic Smoke" is found on an old label. I have always found the stone to be compelling, if not quite decipherable. *Daiza* by Bob Watson.



2. Beautiful Stone (*Biseki*)
 Cascade Range, British Columbia
 5 3/4" W x 6 1/4" H x 3" D (14.6cm x 15.9cm x 7.6cm)

Of all the stones found by Bob, this is the only one of which I am aware that he experimented with working/polishing. Certainly the results make for a stunning *biseki*. His label indicates that he considered it to be a 'thread stone'. *Daiza* by Bob Watson.





3. Monument (*Sabaku-ishi*)
 Lake Hill, California
 5 ¼" W x 8" H x 4" D (13.3cm x 20.3cm x 10.2cm)

While not as elegant as some of his others, this stone has an inherent sense of movement and strength. *Daiza* by Bob Watson.



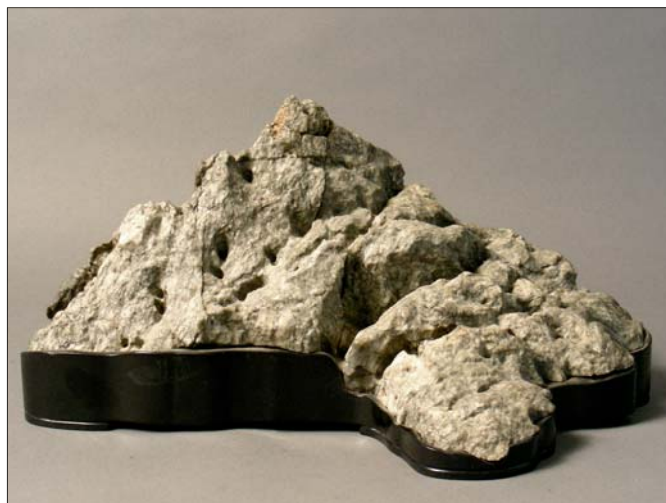
4. Fish-shaped Stone (*Uogata-ishi*)
 Garnet Hill, California
 10" W x 6 ¼" H x 5 ½" D (25.4cm x 15.9cm x 14cm)

There is no certainty about what specific form Bob may have seen in this animated stone, but everyone who has seen it has immediately reacted with "fish" – a rockfish of course! *Daiza* by Bob Watson and dated 1973.



5. Desert Mountain Range (*Sabaku-ishi*)
 Lake Hill, California
 8" W x 4" H x 7" D (20.3cm x 10.2cm x 17.8cm)

A series of desert peaks shaved to thin blades by sand-blasting from multiple directions. *Daiza* by Bob Watson.



6. Mountain Stone, Garnet Hill (Palm Springs, CA), Bob Watson
 15 ½" W x 7 ½" H x 11 ½" D (39.4cm x 19.1cm x 29.2cm)
Daiza by Johnson/Watson

Before moving to New Mexico in 2010, Cliff Johnson generously gave me this relatively large granite ventifact from Garnet Hill, where Bob began collecting in the late 1960's. One quickly notes that the stone material is a light colored granite with numerous deep cracks—certainly not acceptable for traditional *suiseki*; also, the form projects awkwardly towards the viewer. However, this stone is one of the earliest American 'suiseki' to be given national exposure, first in a b & w photo in the *International Bonsai Digest – Bonsai Gems of 1976* (pg. 86) and more importantly, a color photo in Covello and Yoshimura's *The Japanese Art of Stone Appreciation*, 1984 (pg. 126). Note that C & Y classified this as a near-view mountain stone, remarking on the presence of "deep indentations suggesting ravines and gorges" that are here dramatically delineated with raking/ tangential light. In the earlier 1976 *Gems*, Bob, himself, had categorized the stone as a mountain range. The stone had special personal significance for Cliff in that it was his and Bob's first attempt at carving a *daiza* for a large, irregular, uncut stone.

Deaccession and four more “D” words by Peter Aradi

Over the last four decades a new word appeared in the jargon of museum professionals and the art business community that serves them: *deaccession*. It means to sell or in some other way to get rid of an object that is the property of a museum. It does not sound right because museums, like stone collectors, are always looking to add and expand their collection. Why would a museum sell a piece of art? While there are many possible reasons, I will tell you a case that I witnessed a few years ago at a museum that should remain nameless.

Mrs. X, a wealthy widow, has been a great supporter of the museum, donating money and dozens of paintings to the collection. In one of her larger donations there were several pieces that were below the high standards of the Department of Western Art, but the pieces in question could not be rejected or accepted and quickly resold, without deeply offending the donor, thereby making future donations unlikely. Thus, the pieces were accepted and put into storage taking up precious space until such time as the benefactor left us to that great painting collection in the sky. The day finally came and the museum was ready to *deaccess* the paintings.

Stone collectors are also getting into situations where they may need to decide to donate, sell or otherwise get rid of one or more stones. Why would they do that? The main reasons are the four “D” words in this article’s title: *disinterest*, *debt*, *divorce* and *death*.

Disinterest: some in our collecting circles get tired of one or more stones, even of their whole collection, because the stones may have lost their magic, attraction and interest. The owner is ready for another collecting adventure, for example, collecting English colonial stamps and therefore needs the money the old stones will bring in.

The second “d” stands for debt, and it can hit us any time. We are forced to cash in and recover at least part of our investments in stones to erase the red ink.

Divorce, the third “d,” is closely related to the second. We need money, have no room for our stones after we have to move into our new single place or our future significant other may not share our mania. Anyway, the result is the same: “Out with the stones.”

Death, the fourth “d,” is appropriately the last on the list. Most of us can avoid one or all of the first three reasons, but no one can escape the last one. Recently my wife and I discussed what happens to our small but

much loved collection after we are gone. Our two kids have no interest or understanding of “these rocks” and wished that we had used them to fill in the koi pond a few years back. Perhaps they will put them at the curb for pick-up at the next semi-annual major garbage overhaul.

We need to educate our heirs to realize the value and importance of our collection. We are only caretakers for the stones, not real owners. We inherited them from nature or from other collectors, and it is our responsibility to pass them on to the next generation to enjoy.

Here are some suggestions on how to *deaccess* or pass on our stones:

If we own exceptional specimens, we should offer to donate them to the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum, the Golden State Bonsai Federation’s North or South collections, the Weyerhaeuser Pacific Bonsai collection, the emerging Lone Star Bonsai Federation’s collection, the American Viewing Stone Resource Center, or to any number of public collections that are willing to share and educate a new generation of stone collectors. While the financial rewards are not great, we receive tax credit as all these organizations are non-profit and we will have the additional warm and fuzzy feeling that we have done something right by leaving a legacy.

If we own quality Chinese scholars’ rocks, many art museums have specimens in their Chinese collection. Give the local museum a call and you may be surprised at their interest. We found scholars’ stones exhibited at many art museums from the British Museum and Royal Ontario Museum to the Nelson-Atkins Gallery in Kansas City and the San Antonio Museum of Art. There are also several dealers in North America devoted wholly or partly to Chinese scholars’ rocks. Major auction houses, such as Christie’s, Sotheby’s, and Bonham’s accept assignments of stones to their Chinese antiques and art auctions.

All stone dealers are ready to buy collections or quality stones if they are priced right. Many bonsai nurseries will also make a deal with you if you realize that stones are only a part of their business and may not get top value. If you are adventurous and have a business sense, there is eBay if you wish to sell. There are good values and prices to be had, especially if you



have established yourself with a reputation as an honest and reliable seller.

National, regional and local bonsai conventions almost always have a vendor area. You can look for a vendor willing to deal with you, or you may get a table for yourself to sell your collection. The bigger the convention the larger your potential customer base; unfortunately, so are your expenses. The best stone market in North America is at the bi-annual International Stone Symposium in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, with the largest knowledgeable potential customer base in attendance. And if you happen to live near one of the major viewing stone clubs, such as California Aiseki Kai, San Francisco Suiseki Kai,

Potomac Bonsai Association, or Potomac Viewing Stone Group, their shows and annual auctions are excellent opportunities to sell.

Let me close this article by wishing you many more years of continuous enjoyment of your collection, and hope that you never have to resort to selling your stones.

Just remember that you can't outrun the fourth "D." Make provisions for the dispersal of your collection in your will and educate your heirs so they can make the right decisions when the time comes. While your time of caretaking will be over, make sure that another stone lover can take over caring and loving them.

Redlands Flower Show & Stone Exhibit ~ April 16-17

Aiseki Kai was asked to participate in this show. **Larry** and **Nina** exhibited 16 stones... just to "test the waters" for an all members participation at their 100th Anniversary Flower Show next year. If we are invited back, we can discuss the logistics at a future meeting. The flower committee members were all very helpful and enthusiastic but most attendees did not know we were there.

The room was bright with natural light from the many windows and the tables were off set with sage covers. Stones could be viewed from all sides since there were no backdrops. It was quite pleasant although bereft of an audience. Each stone had a label that included its basic style in English, place of origin and the club logo. We also included informational flyers about our club on the tables.





Ann Horton 6 x 3.5 x 3.5 (A cave)



Larry Ragle 7.5 x 3.5 x 3 (An island)



Hanne Povlsen 5 x 1.75 x 3 (An island)



Richard Aguirre 4 x 4.5 x 3 (A rabbit)



Nina Ragle 5 x 2.75 x 2.75



Bruce McGinnis 9 x 4 x 6 (Bruce prefers his island in a suiban)



Emma Janza 6 x 2 x 3



Kathleen Fugel 5 x 2 x 2.5 (An island)





Al Nelson 4 x 8 x 2.5 (His favorite so it gets to live inside the house!)



Emma Janza 4.5 x 4.5 x 2.5 (Emma made the daiza)



Larry Ragle 8 x 3 x 4



Richard Aguirre 8.5 x 2 x 5.5 (A shore stone)



Nina Ragle 6 x 3.5 x 3



Buzz Barry 6 x 1.5 x 2.5 (Purple slope stone)



Sharon Somerfeld 5 x 3 x 3 (Known to the Chinese as a pig-dragon)



Bruce McGinnis 7 x 6 x 3 (Looks like an ox)





Nina Ragle 6 x 5 x 4



Sharon Somerfeld 6 x 6 x 5 (Looks like a kettle)



Sharon Somerfeld 6.5 x 1 x 2 (Island)



Larry Ragle 6 x 2 x 2



Buzz Barry 9 x 1.5 x 7 (Slope stone)



Richard Aguirre 6 x 3 x 4 (Colorful island)

California Aiseki Kai meets on the 4th Wednesday of each month at 7:30 pm at the Nakaoka Community Center located at 1670 W. 162nd St, Gardena, CA. Second floor. We do not meet in Nov-Dec.

Contact People

Programs: Larry Ragle	949.497.5626
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Refreshments: Lois Hutchinson	714.964.6973
Historian: Ray Yeager	760.365.7897
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Newsletter Committee

May Contributors: Peter Aradi, Linda Gill, Jim Greaves and Larry Ragle.
Mailing: Flash Partch
Editor: Nina Ragle

We hope you will participate. Please send any submissions to ragle@cox.net no more than 10 days following our monthly meeting. Thank you!

Ragle
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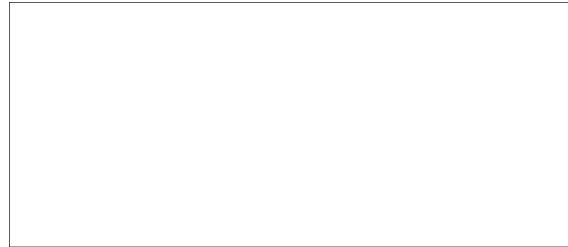
ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



Leaves no stone unturned

See our website:

aisekikai.com



Coming Events

SANTA ANITA BONSAI SOCIETY

49th Annual Show, May 27-29 at the L.A. Arboretum, 301 N. Baldwin Ave, Arcadia. 9:30-4. Demos 1:00 each day. Sales. Reception May 28, 6:30-9:30. Potluck. For more info: sabonsai.org

ORANGE COUNTY BONSAI SOCIETY

48th Annual Bonsai Exhibit, June 4-5, OC Buddhist Church, 909 S. Dale Ave, Anaheim. 10:30-4. Demos 1:00, sales & raffle both days. More info: ocbonsai@gmail.com or call **Ken Schloth** 714.553.7516

CALIFORNIA SUISEKI SOCIETY

16th Anniversary Suiseki Exhibition, June 11-12, 666 Bellevue Ave., Lake Merritt, Oakland. Sales. Info: email **Felix Rivera** at felixsuiseki@gmail.com

BONSAI IN THE BLUEGRASS

Louisville, KY, June 16-19, Fern Valley Hotel and Convention Center.

Chiara Padrini on suiseki:

See April newsletter, page 11.



Always check Golden Statements Magazine Calendar section for additional coming events

DESCANSO BONSAI SOCIETY

41st Annual Bonsai Exhibit, June 18-19, Descanso Gardens, 1418 Descanso Drive, La Canada. 9-5, demos 11 and 1 both days, sales. Reception 6/18, 7PM in Van de Kamp Hall. Auction and raffle. For more info: **Michael Jonas** 818.776.0813 or go to: www.descanso-bonsai.com

GSBF CONVENTION XXXIV

“Bonsai Full Circle” Oct 27-30, Marriott Hotel and Convention Center, Riverside. **Kathy Shaner, Ryan Neil, Pedro Morales, Roy Nagatoshi.** Go to: gsbf-bonsai.org



Refreshments

Thank you **Linda Gill, Akio Okumoto** and **Bruce McGinnis** for the April appetite appeasers; yummy carrot cake and apple strudel! May munchies will be provided by **Maria Atkison, Phil Chang, Emma Janza** and **Joseph Gaytan.**

★ This is a fun way to participate in our meetings, but some members names are rarely seen in this corner. Is that you? Sign up with **Lois** for a future month.

