

# **CFMS Publicity Manual**

**13 November 2001**

**Prepared by Brad Smith  
brad@greenheart.com**

## APPENDIX E - PSA Cover Letter

# Aknowlegements

This manual has been developed through the collective efforts of the California Federation of Mineralogical Societies Ad-Hoc Committee on Publicity and Public Relations. Also, special recognition goes to Judith Gustafson, the 1992 CFMS Media Publicity Chairman, who published an excellent series of articles in the Federation Newsletter laying out a basic strategy for how to handle publicity at the Club level. A number of the topics covered in this manual draw heavily from her work. Other ideas and tips of the trade have originated at various clubs and may not include a complete acknowledgement.

**Ad-Hoc Committee**  
on  
**Publicity and Public Relations**

Jo Anna Ritchey, Chairman	626 359-1624	j.ritchey@verizon.net
Teresa Masters, Secretary	760 940-9225	tam2819@home.com
Bill Gissler	408 241-0477	wgissler@juno.com
Beverly Moreau	714 577-8038	bcmoreau@4dnet.com
Don Ogden	909 598-2456	donogden@aol.com
Brad Smith	310 472-6490	brad@greenheart.com
Jim Strain	760 356-2361	

Shown below is a sample cover letter to request a Public Service Announcement be made for your club gem show on a local radio station. Be sure that the letter is sent out on club letterhead.

Gentlemen,

The Fiesta of Gems mineral and jewelry show will be held July 7 & 8 in Culver City. This is a free event open to the public and includes lots of games, prizes and educational activities for the kids.

We would appreciate a mention of the event on your station as a Public Service Announcement. Suggestions for content are enclosed.

The Fiesta of Gems is run by the Culver City Rock and Mineral Club, a non-profit, tax exempt, organization sponsored by the Culver City Human Services Department. A copy of our IRS 501 (C-04) designation letter is enclosed.

Thank you in advance,

Brad Smith  
President, Culver City Rock and Mineral Club  
[brad@greenheart.com](mailto:brad@greenheart.com)  
310 555-1234

## APPENDIX D - Public Service Announcements

For Immediate Release

Contact: Brad Smith  
310 555-1234

### Public Service Announcement

#### CULVER CITY ROCK & MINERAL CLUB, INC 40<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL FIESTA OF GEMS

- **10 seconds:** The Culver City Rock & Mineral Club presents Fiesta of Gems, Saturday, July 7 and Sunday, July 8. For more information phone (310) 836-4611
- **20 seconds:** The Culver City Rock & Mineral Club presents Fiesta of Gems Rock and Mineral Show, Saturday, July 7 and Sunday, July 8 at the Veterans Memorial Auditorium in Culver City. For more information phone (310) 836-4611
- **30 seconds:** The Culver City Rock & Mineral Club presents Fiesta of Gems Rock and Mineral Show, Saturday, July 7 and Sunday, July 8 at the Veterans Memorial Auditorium in Culver City. Exhibits by J.O. Crystal Co, designer jewelry, mineral specimens and fossil collections. Demonstrations in wire working, gem carving, jewelry repair, glass beadmaking, faceting, and more. For more information phone (310) 836-4611
- **60 seconds:** The Culver City Rock & Mineral Club presents Fiesta of Gems Rock and Mineral Show, Saturday, July 7, 10 am to 6 pm, and Sunday, July 8, 10:00 am to 5:00 pm at the Veterans Memorial Auditorium located at 4117 Overland Ave in Culver City. Exhibits by J.O. Crystal Co, creators of the Ramaura Ruby, the first synthesized gemstone to enter the Smithsonian Institution's Gem & Mineral Hall, designer jewelry, mineral specimens and fossil collections, petrified wood, and dinosaur bone. Demonstrations in wire working, gem carving, jewelry repair, glass beadmaking, faceting, and more. Admission and parking are free. Games and crafts for children. Sponsored by the Culver City Human Services Department. For more information phone (310) 836-4611

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## Terminology

Publicity, Public Relations, Advertising, Marketing – these are not the activities you typically associate with a rock & mineral club, yet they are a subject that is critical to the health and continued prosperity of all the clubs in the Federation.

While most of us consider our rock & mineral clubs to be a hobby activity, the fact is that they would quickly die away if they were not run like a business. Each club, and the Federation that unites them, is a distinct business entity that will expand and prosper or shrink and die away depending on its business decisions and levels of effort.

To maintain a healthy growth and to be successful in providing services to its membership, a club must continually recruit new members and promote and increase its sources of revenue. In business they call this activity marketing, telling the public about your products and services. In the context of our rock & mineral clubs, marketing has several components:

Publicity	Disseminating information by newspaper, radio, newsletter or other media to attract public notice and to get people interested in the activities of your club. While not always true, publicity is usually thought of as requiring no outlay of money.
Public Relations	Developing good connections between your club and other activities or causes in your community, your city, or your state for the purpose of building good will or increasing the notoriety of your club.
Advertising	Attracting public attention to your club's activities or to your rock & gem show through efforts such as direct mail, signs, banners, flyers or by paid announcements in print or on the air.

Marketing encompasses all of the above activities. But with club budgets being somewhat limited, this manual focuses on the first two areas of marketing – Publicity and Public Relations.

## APPENDIX C - Show Advertising Contacts

Announcements of show dates should be sent to the following:

Dee Clason  
10100 Laurie Avenue  
Bakersfield, CA 93312-2330  
Email : [wirely360@aol.com](mailto:wirely360@aol.com)

Show Calendar Editor (note - 8 months in advance of show)  
Lapidary Journal Magazine  
60 Chestnut Avenue, Suite 201  
Devon, PA 19333-1312

Show Calendar Editor (note - 6 months in advance of show)  
Rock & Gem Magazine  
2660 East Main Street  
Ventura, CA 93003

"I allow the kids to cut, trim and grind the stones themselves, under my close supervision," Chavez says. "Sometimes they even get to keep the one they polished."

But Chavez adds that nobody in his young audience leaves empty handed. "Every kid gets a little bag of tumbled, polished rocks."

Chavez prefers the non-profit, Fiesta of Gems show because of its family orientation and its variety of attractions. This is his fifth year.

The show, sponsored by the Culver City Human Services Department, features free admission, free door prizes and specimens, children's games, jewelry repair and a grand prize drawing. Exhibits include gem and fossil collections, designer and student jewelry, petrified wood and dinosaur bone.

This year's 40th annual Fiesta of Gems opens Saturday, July 7, from 10 am to 6 pm and continues Sunday, July 8, from 10 am to 5 pm. at the Veterans Memorial Auditorium, Overland at Culver Boulevard., Culver City. Free admission and ample free parking.

For more information: Brad Smith 310 555-1234

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## Importance of Publicity and Public Relations

Have you ever wondered why some clubs seem vibrant and involve themselves in a host of interesting activities while others seem stale and more like a group of friends getting together each month to chat? One clue as to the difference can usually be seen in the membership statistics. Active clubs typically have an expanding membership that continually brings in fresh ideas and new energy.

Clubs get new members by sharing their enthusiasm for similar interests with those in the surrounding community and by inviting them to attend a club event. Press releases, events calendar listings, demonstrations and talks before other groups are all methods to spread the word about your club and to attract interested parties to join. Activities like this are called publicity.

Publicity is one aspect of a club's overall "marketing" agenda - public relations being the variety of ways in which we present ourselves to the larger outside community. A publicity effort is aimed at getting the word out about our clubs and about our activities in order to generate interest in learning more about what we do.

We urge each club to do an honest appraisal of its strengths and weaknesses with respect to how it interacts with their community.

Ask yourself:

- How does your club publicize its regular meetings?  
(not to your membership – but to the general public)
- Do you provide incentives or recognition for members who bring guests to meetings or to field trips?
- Who has the responsibility to do the publicity for your club?
- Has your club ever written an article for your local newspaper reporting on some event or activity?
- Does your club bulletin include recognition for members' contributions and achievements?
- Does your club's hospitality committee introduce visitors who come to your programs?

Recognizing the importance that a publicity effort could have in shaping the future of our Federation as an educational and recreational force, incoming CFMS President, Bob Stultz announced the formation of an

Ad-Hoc Committee on Publicity when he took office in November 2000. The group's main focus was to assist all member clubs to publicize their activities and to attract new membership. The committee developed a mission statement, set goals for the year, and developed a tentative list of project ideas that included development of this manual.

The concept of a publicity/public relations effort in the CFMS is not new. In 1992 Judith Gustafson from Ojai headed such an effort and wrote a monthly column on media publicity. This excellent series of articles forms the basis for several of the chapters in this manual.

All good marketing efforts have three elements:

1. Setting a goal (increasing membership or show attendance)
2. Developing the materials and executing the plan
3. Measuring the results

This manual presents ways to plan your effort, write effective press releases, and tips for how to effectively use each advertising media including newspapers, radio and Internet services like email and web sites.

Chapters 3 and 4 are designed to help you in setting your goals and developing a detailed plan. The remaining chapters and the examples in the appendices focus on how to develop the materials you need and how to economically and efficiently carry out your plan.

The last element of measuring results is left to you. Do make an effort to measure how well you do. Count your members from year-to-year (perhaps the number in your roster or the number you send in for Federation insurance), count show attendees, count visitors, etc. Numbers are important here because they will tell you if your efforts have been worthwhile.

A final note on your plans – advertising is most effective when it is repetitive. The more times someone sees or hears your ad, the better the chance they will remember it. Build repetition into any marketing plan you undertake.

A commitment to improving your club's public relations activities energizes your membership, helps to attract new members from the community, and contributes to a healthy and vibrant club.

## APPENDIX B - Example Press Release

Shown below is a sample of the format which is typically used in the trade for press releases.

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**19 May 2001**

**From: Culver City Rock & Mineral Club**  
**Subject: News Feature With Photo**  
**Contact: Brad Smith 310 555-1234**

### For Immediate Release

#### Local Stoneworker Demos Gemstone Polishing

(Culver City, CA - May 1, 2001) By day, hidden from public view, Anthony Chavez saws and shapes giant slabs of flagstone with a 36-inch blade to build skyscrapers and homes for the rich and famous.

At night, behind unmarked concrete walls, Chavez slices thumbnail size stones with a six-inch saw to teach his adult class lapidary, and jewelry making.

But once a year, at the Culver City Rock & Mineral Club's annual two-day show in July: "I come out of hiding to give hands-on demonstrations how to turn rough rock into polished specimens worthy of jewelry. The kids love it," remarks Chavez. This year, Chavez will demonstrate from 10 am to 5 pm on July 8<sup>th</sup>, at Veterans Memorial Auditorium, Overland at Culver Boulevard, Culver City.

"It's really magical how the kids and their parents, too, run over when I start the demonstrations," says Chavez, a manager for Bourget/Coast Flagstone in Santa Monica. Chavez also is an instructor in the adult vocational program of the Los Angeles Unified School District.

## Long Form

July 7 and 8

The Fiesta of Gems will offer exhibits, demonstrations, children's games, grab bags, door prizes and 26 dealers of rocks, minerals, fossils, gems, jewelry, gifts and hobby supplies. Other craftsmen will be on hand to demonstrate details of gem carving, wire wrapping, faceting, cabochon-making, carving, jewelry repair, and sphere-making.

Door prizes will be offered every hour, and snacks, drinks and lunch will be available on site.

Show hours are from 10am to 6pm on Saturday, July 7th, and 10am to 5pm on Sunday, July 8th. The Fiesta of Gems is held at the Veterans Memorial Auditorium, Overland Avenue and Culver Boulevard, Culver City, CA. Admission is free, and ample free parking is available.

For more information please see <http://www.gembiz.com/ccrnc/fiesta.htm> or call 310 555-1234

## Plan For A Year-Long Marketing Campaign

To get your club's events out in front of the public at large you need a plan for how and when things need to be done. Having a plan enables you to clearly focus on targets that contribute to your club's long-term goals. This "big picture" approach enables you to serve immediate needs, like getting people to your show or to your meetings, and be mindful of longer term goals, like attracting and retaining new members.

To develop this plan, begin by listing the year's anticipated events which your club sponsors or participates in - events such as meetings, field trips, workshops, picnics, silent auctions, annual show and conferences. Use a large twelve-month planning calendar for this, and fill in the exact dates as they become known.

Long term planning involves deciding at the beginning of the year what marketing actions are necessary to support your club's needs and goals, and then scheduling them. Such actions include:

- Getting local newspapers to cover a club event
- Printing club business cards
- Placing public service announcements on the radio
- Sending out email notices of a upcoming speaker
- Placing paid advertisements in local newspapers
- Issuing press releases about club events
- Starting a club web site
- Direct mail invitations, postcards or flyers
- Posting signs and banners
- Distributing brochures

The most basic action you will take is to send monthly announcements about your meeting program to your local newspaper(s) to be listed under "community events." These can be very effective. Appendix A includes a sample announcement to follow. Make sure to use your club letterhead and include a contact person's phone number for more information.

Contact each newspaper to learn how they want such items submitted, to whom they should be addressed, and the pre-publication deadline for submitting each kind of item. To help with this repetitive job, make up a page of address labels for the newspapers you will send to each month.

For the special events in your club, you will need to prepare a press release. This is a short article containing all the details of your event. Press release should follow a professional format. Appendix B includes a sample to follow. Be sure to print it on your club letterhead or business stationery.

When writing your press releases, get all the key information in the beginning of the story. Your first paragraph should have the complete Who-What-Where-When-and Why. The lead sentence is particularly important because it's the only opportunity you'll have to grab the editor's and reader's attention. Newspapers will edit from the bottom up to meet space limitations. Remember that anything the newspaper prints will be in the "voice of the newspaper," so write your story in the third person ("they," not "we").

It's essential to include a person to contact (with a daytime phone number) in case the newspaper wants to verify what you've written, or needs more information.

Examine your local newspaper(s) to see what other departments might carry news items about your club. Be sure to check each day's issue for appropriate columns that run only once a week in a daily paper.

As an example, you might send a press release about the installation of your new officers (with photo) to the editor of the "names in the news" section; or send an item about your club's participation in a high school science fair to the editor of a "school news" column. Perhaps there's a "society column" that would print an item that "Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Rockhound of Upper Peapack enjoyed a visit from their grandson Michael, who accompanied them on a fossil-hunting trip to Dinosaur Lake with the Peapack Gem & Mineral Club."

## APPENDIX A - Example Event Announcement

Events Editor  
Culver City News  
Culver City, CA

The Culver City Rock and Mineral Club will present its annual Fiesta of Gems mineral, lapidary and jewelry show on July 7 & 8. This is a free event open to the public, and we would appreciate a mention in the Calendar section of your newspaper.

Details of the show are included below.

The club is a non-profit, tax exempt, organization sponsored by the Culver City Human Resources Department. Our IRS 501 (C-04) letter can be provided if you require it.

We have also prepared a feature article of one of the craftsmen who will be giving demonstrations at the event. I would be glad to send it along with a photo if you are interested.

Thank you in advance,

Brad Smith - President    brad@greenheart.com    310 555-1234

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### Short Form

July 7-8, Culver City, CA, Culver City Rock & Mineral Club  
Free admission to the 40th Fiesta of Gems Show featuring 32 dealers and demonstrators. Saturday, 10am to 6pm, and Sunday, 10am to 5pm.  
Veterans Memorial Auditorium, Overland Ave and Culver Blvd.  
Info Contact 310 472-1234    www.gembiz.com/ccrmc/fiesta.htm



At the 1999 show, this question resulted in the names, addresses, phone numbers and (in 40% of the cases) email addresses of 146 people who said they were interested. At the 2000 show, the number climbed 13% to 165 people. These people are your hot prospects.

Needless to say, this has presented somewhat of a problem. How many guests could you reasonably invite to your next club meeting? Typically, only 30-40 invitations are sent out for each of the next few meetings, and luckily, not all show up! Now when have you heard a club complain about having too many membership prospects?

To effectively deal with numbers like this, Culver City created an automated meeting announcement system for everyone who had given email addresses. The system uses an email mailing list furnished free by Yahoo (see <http://groups.yahoo.com>).

In operation, a notice of an upcoming event or a description of the speaker for the next meeting is drafted and sent to the list address. All messages sent to the list address are automatically copied out to every member on the list. Each message usually includes a link to the club's web site where a map shows how to get to the meeting location. Presently, there's over 120 people on the list representing the last two club shows

There are several major advantages of this system:

- Member prospects receive reminders about all club activities.

- Club marketing is repetitive. Prospects receive club messages once or twice a month.

- Club members can be added to the same events notice list.

- List maintenance is automated. People can add or delete their names themselves.

- There is no direct cost for the service and management is easy.

An email events reminder mailing list is a great tool for any club looking for new members. The amount of effort it takes to send a notice of an upcoming meeting is trivial, and cost is next to nothing.

## Keeping Your Club In The Public Eye

Successful clubs have an active publicity campaign that focuses their efforts on ways to keep their club in the public eye all year long. This gives them visibility in their community and provides a stream of new member candidates. The following suggestions are proven techniques used by various clubs in the Federation.

### Club Information Cards

All members of your club should have a supply of "Club Information Cards" or brochures that include the time and place of your meetings with the names and phone numbers of contacts for more information. These can be offered to anyone who expresses an interest in the hobby or given out whenever a club member gives a talk to an outside group.

### Event Calendar Announcements

Local newspapers, community centers, and local TV stations are among the many sources who keep track of local events as a service to their community. Try to get each one of your club's meetings listed, and send a notice of all your special events.

### Local Displays

Local libraries, banks, businesses and museums are often willing to have displays of minerals, fossils or other earth science information, with brochures or fliers about your club and its programs (or show) left nearby for the public to take. Be sure to arrange for these displays well in advance. If the display is in a library, suggest that a shelf of books relating to rockhounding be placed near your display. Include with your display some kind of card or flyer with information about how to attend a club meeting.

### Chamber of Commerce Listing

The Chamber of Commerce of your city keeps a list of all the organizations there. Be sure you are listed, and include the name and phone number of a current member to contact for inquiries about your club. This is an excellent way for newcomers to locate you. Chambers also publish a periodic listing of community activities and events. This makes an excellent vehicle for publicizing your show.

## Festivals and Fairs

Community festivals, craft shows, and parades are excellent times to advertise your club and your show with possibly a table display or a demonstration of lapidary arts.

## Schools

Science teachers in the schools are usually delighted to have a program on some phase of the hobby which fits in with this curriculum. Contact the schools with a listing of topics you can address and the name and phone number of a contact.

## Essay Contest

Sponsor a district-wide elementary-level essay competition (perhaps for 5th and 6th graders) on an earth science topic. Award prizes (savings bonds, etc.) for winners and provide a small fossil or polished rock for all entrants. Have the award ceremony at your annual show, and invite all participants and their parents to attend. Don't forget to take pictures to send out with a press release following the event to announce the winners.

## Craft Classes

If the college near you has a Geology Department or jewelry class, they will appreciate knowing about your club. Invite the instructor to set up a class display at your show. As the class is ending invite everyone to join your club. They may be interested in continuing their education via your monthly speakers or in using your workshop to work on new projects.

## Summer Activities

During the summer, some clubs have taken a picnic lunch to a local park and set up a table to work on lapidary or jewelry craft items. It's easy to attract quite an audience. Be prepared for plenty of questions when you're giving people their first look at lapidary or jewelry arts. Have plenty of Club Information Cards available to hand out.

## Workshops

Some clubs hire instructors or ask a club member to teach special workshops on various techniques. Attendees pay a fee to cover basic costs. Guests are invited on a space-available basis and quickly see how much fun your club can be. Have membership brochures ready.

## Using Email to Build Membership

Aside from the sheer fun of it, we run shows for two reasons - to raise money and to attract new members. The Culver City Club would like to share with you a new tactic that has produced some great results for new membership over the last two years.

All attendees at the show are asked to fill out a short registration form as they enter.

Name _____
Address _____
City, State & Zip _____
Email _____
How many are in your party (including yourself)?
Would you like to attend one of our club meetings?
If so, please give us your phone number.
How did you learn about our show ? (Check all that apply)
Postcard in the mail
Street banner
Library display
Magazine Listing
Another show or dealer
Newspaper (which one?)
Store (which one?)
Word of mouth or friend
Club meeting
Other

Culver City originally started using these forms to collect data to analyze the effectiveness of their show advertising. The numbers give a rough count of how many people attended, where they saw the advertising, and where to send them a postcard about next year's show.

Starting two years ago, one simple question was added to the form, and it has created a gold mine of new member prospects that can be used all year long. The question was simply "Would you be interested in attending one of our club meetings?"

Your final task is to make up a cover letter requesting the PSA to be aired. In the text it's useful to stress your non-profit status, your long-term community involvement and anything like local government sponsorship. A sample of a PSA cover letter can be found in Appendix E.

Of course your cover letter should be on club letterhead, and enclosed with it should be the PSA text sheet also on letterhead. Perhaps not as necessary, you might also enclose a copy of your club's IRS letter granting non-profit status.

Letters should be sent out approximately one month in advance of your event.

## USEFUL HOOKS

Use this list of news hooks to spice up your publicity.

**HUMAN INTEREST.** Include the stories of real people and their skills, adventures and accomplishments.

**TRENDS.** Stories that suggest new opinions, behavior patterns and attitudes. Find at least three examples to show that a new trend is emerging.

**NEW ANNOUNCEMENT.** "Unprecedented" or "first-ever" stories attract attention. This is new news, not old news. Make your press releases fresh.

**SPECIAL EVENT.** A workshop, conference, speaker or demonstration. Stress the relevance and importance.

**STRANGE BEDFELLOWS.** Have unlikely allies come together in solidarity in your story.

## Library Listing

Many public libraries maintain a listing of organizations that exist in their communities, along with information and a contact name and phone number. Be sure to check with your local library, and keep the information current as things change.

## Web Site

A growing number of clubs are going online to publicize their activities via a web site on the Internet. The CFMS Internet Committee maintains a list of these sites and is available to help answer questions on how your club can use this new media.

## Junior Rockhound Programs

Contact the headquarters staff of young peoples' organizations - Scouts, 4-H, Camp Fire, "Y", etc. and let them know that you have members available to assist in programs. Leaders of these groups are always looking for different activities. Information about your club can be given to the staff and to the individual groups after a program.

## Email Announcements List

Email is a low cost method for reaching your members or for notifying a long list of people in your community who have shown an interest in your club's activities. Mailing lists can be set up to help automate the sending of routine messages. Chapter 9 contains more detail about how email can help your club send reminder announcements before each event.

## Getting Mentioned on Radio and TV

Think how effective it would be to have your next club meeting or your annual rock show mentioned on local radio stations, TV stations and cable systems. Too expensive you say? Not so if you qualify for what is called a Public Service Announcement.

Public Service Announcements (PSA) are messages put out on radio and TV stations to let the public know about charitable events, government sponsored meetings, and activities with a cultural, educational or safety theme. Most rock clubs are organized as non-profit entities or are sponsored by a charity or local governmental body, so they qualify for PSA's. Furthermore, gem and mineral shows are open to the public and are basically educational in nature.

Radio stations will give you short timeslots for PSA messages about your event. Times are set by each station but are generally in the range of 10 to 45 seconds. You provide the text copy and they will have an announcer read it on the air.

Keep in mind that the time is very short, so it's critical that you choose each word carefully. Writing an effective PSA is difficult. Guidelines are to state the most exciting element of your message in the first sentence. Include some kind of "hook" to grab listener's attention. You only have a few seconds to get your message across and make it memorable. Most of that time will be taken up with the dates, times and location, or where to call for additional information.

A set of example PSA's for a club show are included in Appendix D. Sample wording is given for spots of several different durations – from 10 seconds up to 60 seconds.

After creating the script, it's time to send the PSAs to each station in your community which will air your spot. There are two good sources for addresses, a web site and your local phone book. The web site is

<http://windowsmedia.com/radiotuner/default.asp>

From these sources you can develop a mailing list and phone numbers for all possible stations. Call each station and ask if they do Public Service Announcements. If so, ask for the address of the person you should send it to.

## **Benefits of Running a Club Show**

Annually the Federation and its affiliate clubs sponsor 76 gem, rock, and mineral shows in California, Arizona and Nevada. These are a great public relations mechanism for us because they expose our hobby to the general public. Shows also provide a good revenue source for the sponsoring clubs as well. But there is a growing pressure from commercial shows with their large advertising budgets. As a result, some of our Federation shows are already experiencing lower numbers of guests, decreased revenues and disappointed dealers.

Publicity, advertising, and promotion are the real keys to success, and letting the public know that you are having a show is not that difficult. This is the story of how one CFMS club significantly increased their show attendance and revenue by a renewed publicity effort. If they could do it, so can you.

At the close of their 44th annual show on March 21, 1999, the members of the Santa Clara Valley Gem & Mineral Society were dejected. Four days of hard work and a year of planning and preparing, all for only \$1000 and an attendance of 650 people. They might as well have assessed their 120 members \$10 each and been done with it. If the club was to continue to have an annual show, a change was needed. The show had to be run more like a business. Expenses had to be cut, but more importantly, a structured and varied marketing program was needed. A single newspaper ad, two small banners, some fliers and a postcard mailer wasn't doing it.

So for about the same amount of money, a new and diversified marketing effort was undertaken for the February 2000 show. In place of the single advertisement in the regional newspaper, ads were placed in seven local community newspapers and a metro publication for one-third the cost. One hundred and fifty double-sided street signs were contracted for design and installation. Targeted mailers and inserts were used in addition to the postcard mailer. Local Scout groups were contacted, and over 1000 complimentary passes were distributed.

As a result of this publicity effort, show attendance in 2000 doubled to 1,500. Revenue jumped 470% through a combination of structured publicity, expense cuts, and dealer and ticket cost increases. Dealers were pleased with the attendance and money spent. They quickly signed

up for the club's next show in 2001, and the money earned let the club abandoned plans for a membership dues increase.

Profit from the 2000 show meant that ongoing club programs and club endowment fund contributions could continue. But the club's Board of Directors was concerned that the success might be a singular success experience. Could it be repeated at the February 2001 show?

So in the new year, Santa Clara again experimented with its marketing approach. Advertising in local community newspapers was doubled. Twice the number of front yard signs were placed. Postcard mailings doubled, 600 specially targeted mailers were sent to private home schools, and 1,400 were sent to two neighborhoods. Fifteen hundred complimentary passes and 6,000 discount coupons were distributed. The scout and youth programs were expanded with assistance from the County Office of Education.

Results as indicated by attendance increased by 13% to over 1,700 and as indicated by revenue increased by 18%. Dealers, noting the big ticket item sales, were very satisfied. Club members congratulated themselves on a great marketing job – the numbers proved it. This is why being able to measure the results of your marketing efforts is so important.

Club rock, mineral and gem shows are one of the best public relations programs and revenue sources that a club can have. Shows provide revenue to run your club for the rest of the year. They generate a significant number of new club members. They promote a team effort among your members. Really they're a lot of fun to put on. But for shows to be successful, they must be supported with an active (some would even say aggressive) marketing campaign.

Experimenting with new marketing techniques and carefully measuring the results certainly helped the Santa Clara Club. Hopefully it will improve your show attendance as well. The next chapter will focus in on many of the details for promoting and advertising a club show.

## Email Discussion Lists

Many rockhounds keep in touch via email discussion lists where every message sent to the list address is copied back out to all who have subscribed to the list. A short announcement sent to these lists a week before your event can be a useful reminder for those who will be in the area. Give just the event name, date, time, web site address and contact information.

Here are some of the relevant lists:

Rockhounds Discussion List	<rockhounds@drizzle.com>
Lapidary Digest List	<lapidary@mindspring.com>
LA-Rocks Field Trip List	<la-rocks@yahoogroups.com>
Yahoo - Rocks & Fossils	<rocksandfossils@yahoogroups.com>
Petrified Wood List	<PetrifiedWood@yahoogroups.com>
Topica - Rocks & Fossils	<rocks-and-fossils@topica.com>
WorldStd - Rocks & Fossils	<rocks-and-fossils@world.std.com>

## Direct Email

It's useful to send a personalized email invitation to everyone in your address book that might be in the area of the event. This includes all the rock club email contact addresses listed on the CFMS web site at <http://www.cfmsinc.org/> Be sure to summarize what makes your event different from all the rest.

You might even send an email copy of the announcement to each of your fellow club members and ask them to forward it out to all their friends in the local area. If you know ten and they in turn know ten, you've reached another hundred people.

Then there are the regional association show calendars. Be sure when you submit to your own federation that you ask for the event to be listed in their electronic calendar (if they have one). Here are the addresses for Federation sites with show calendars.

California Federation Show Calendar  
<http://www.cfmsinc.org/cfmsshow.htm>  
Midwest Federation Show Calendar  
<http://www.commean.com/rocks/mwf/shows/>  
Rocky Mountain Federation Show Calendar  
<http://www.galstar.com/~mela/rshows.html>

Each of the above calendars has a different way of adding your event data, so be prepared to spend a little time fiddling around learning what email address to send it to or how to correctly enter your text into a web form. Follow-up in a week or so to make sure your event data has been placed online and is complete and correct.

#### Show Calendars Via Email

Some magazine show calendars have started to accept submissions via email. Check all your local magazines, civic newsletters, newspapers, radio and TV stations for email addresses. Submitting to them electronically is quick and avoids errors when copy is retyped.

Timing is important with calendar listings. It's best not to submit too early as some copy might be lost. Rather, you should time your mailings so each publication gets your listing with ample time before they go to press with the issue that comes out just before your event. But note that this might be five months or more in the case of a quarterly publication.

There's one important rock show related magazine that accepts email. Lapidary Journal <LJeditorial@primediasi.com> Lap Journal has a long leadtime for calendar publication, so be sure to send your event listing at least 7 months before your event.

Rock & Gem Magazine show listings are downloaded automatically from the Rockhounds Show Calendar Web site above.

Rock & Mineral magazine offers an electronic listing of your show for \$180 per year - totally out of the question for club shows!

## Ideas for Advertising a Club Show

The success of every club show depends on the extent and the effectiveness of its advertising campaign. All forms of media should be considered including newspapers, magazines, radio, cable TV, email, a web site, flyers, postal mail, signs, posters, and banners. While it's possible to spend large amounts in each of these areas, it's also possible to get by quite inexpensively.

Shown below are a number of strategies used by the Culver City Rock and Mineral Club to advertise its annual show. None of the ideas are surprising or new, but each is well documented in the show Publicity calendar and is measured for effectiveness each year. Taken together these techniques bring a good return from a limited budget.

Two banners strung across major streets in town.

Club web site with a page devoted to the show and a list of dealers with clickable links to their email and web sites.

Postcard mailer (1800+) sent to each show attendee who filled out a registration form the previous year.

Postcards sent in bulk to dealers who do their own mailings.

Flyers printed (30,000 - 4"x 4" in pads of 200) for handout at

- Local handycraft shows and jewelry classes
- Local schools and colleges
- Lapidary and beading stores
- Dealers who want to distribute
- Town parks & recreation department
- Club members who agree to distribute

Cover letter and ten flyers sent to 80 rock clubs in the area.

Cover letter and flyers sent to Boy Scout and Girl Scout organizations in the community.

Display placed in the local library for the month before the show with flyers available as handouts.

Posters printed (500 - 8.5 x 11) for display in local stores, at libraries, on senior center bulletin boards, at church functions and at farmer's markets.

When possible, live demos are given at local bookstores or malls.

Events Calendar notices sent to:

- Lapidary Journal (8 months in advance)
- CFMS Show Calendar (6 months in advance)
- Rock & Gem magazine (5 months in advance)
- Other rock/gem/mineral related magazine calendars
- Local newspaper and magazine event listings
- Radio station and cable TV company calendars
- Internet rockhound show calendars
- Regional AFMS Federation calendars
- Internet rockhound discussion lists

A press release is prepared with a "human interest" story and is sent with a picture to all local newspapers.

A special reminder message is sent by email a week before the show asking everyone to forward it on to several of their friends with a personal invitation.

All the above is accomplished within a \$700 budget. However, there is an initial cost in purchasing the street banners.

It's important to try and gauge the effectiveness of each of the above efforts. That allows the show to capitalize on things that work and save time and money on areas that don't produce results. One way to get feedback is to have a post-mortem meeting to talk about the show before memory fades. Another is to send the dealers a thank-you note and ask them a number of questions. Finally, we like to ask the show attendees a few questions. Each year as people enter the show they are given a registration form to fill out. Key questions asked are:

- Where did they hear about the show?
- Would they like to be notified about next year's show?
- Would they be interested in attending a club meeting?

In addition to giving each of our advertising efforts a numerical score (how many saw the ad in ...), the forms give us a great list of potential new club members. Last year we got over 120 addresses and phone numbers!

A couple techniques in the above listing make use of advertising on the Internet. The Net offers many advantages, but it's a different media that is quite new to some of us. The next Chapter includes some pointers on do's and don'ts for using Internet services like email and web sites.

## Advertising Club Shows on the Internet

Every club that runs a gem show knows the importance of advertising, and with 60% of all US households now connected to the Internet, it's becoming quite important that we include the Net in any plan for show advertising. It can be a very effective complement to existing methods like newspapers, direct mail, radio, cable TV, flyers, and signs and banners. With a little effort you can reach thousands of people without spending a cent of your advertising budget.

There are several ways to get your event advertised on the Internet. These include

- Show calendar Web sites
- Show calendar email addresses
- Email discussion lists
- Direct email

Before you start, you should spend a little time getting prepared. This includes writing brief copy that gives the Who, What, Where & When of the event and, if possible, developing a web page to itemize all the details including a map of how to get there.

For examples of catchy ad copy, see local newspapers and magazines, and for examples of good web page design, browse other show sites to see what they've done.

Now with an electronic copy of your event advertising text and your new web page address, you're ready to start posting to the Net. First stop will be several event calendars. Submit to these as early as possible.

### Show Calendars Via The Web

Several Web sites have nationwide show calendars that will be seen by numerous people browsing the Net. The most popular are:

- Gemdata Show Calendar  
<http://www.gemdata.com/>
- Rockhounds Show Calendar  
<http://www.rockhounds.com/rockgem/showlist.html>
- Treasure Net Show Calendar  
<http://www.geosearchengine.com/webcal/>



# Advertising in Large Population Markets

Bt Stephen Blocksage  
CFMS Publicity/Public Relations Committee

**See summary at the end of document for highlights**

Coincidental to the show in Ventura in 2003 were the efforts of several people on the Del Air publicity committee, myself included, to obtain advertising space without cost or with little cost. Ventura and the associated Los Angeles area represent one of the largest media markets in the U.S. with the exception of New York. While these efforts were admirable because of their zeal the payback was minimal for the effort expended. Here are the lessons learned: In order to have a successful show there needs to be a advertising budget established based on the real cost of advertising in such a market. Such costs may include Television, Street advertising, Newsprint and other local methods of attracting attention. In advertising there is a rule that says that potential client/customer/attendee will need to see references for any show at least 4 or more times.

As I mentioned, successfully putting on a show were all parties benefit requires real planning beginning with what will it take to follow the rule of advertising and in what area will it be necessary to do the advertising. Therefore a portion of the cost of the entry fee to any vendor wishing to sell at the show must contain a well thought out advertising charge. In the case of the Ventura show such was not the case and a budget was established independent of any knowledge the true cost of advertising such a show. As was mentioned, much was done that was without cost but proved to be of little use in reaching the market or was late in sending out the message. Inclusive were advertisements from the Ventura Convention Bureau, a nice article on Friday of a show that started Thursday in the local Newspaper and articles in the local papers of small communities. Much work was done in this area in time but little actual result came from it. Many other club shows were visited as well prior to our show to advertise our show as well as two traveling cases to show off our work.

A display was built that was museum quality and placed in the Ventura County Hall of Administration for a yearly fee of \$25.00 with a geological display and advertising for our show, a year in advance. This display remains as permanent display rotated through the three clubs in Ventura County for advertising and display purposes. Because the budget for printing was tight graphics from a computer were relied upon to fill the graphics advertising needs that proved inadequate when using larger signage. This was also the case when going to many other shows to advertise our show inadequate. I decided that we needed to run a street campaign in Ventura and Portions of Los Angeles County. I made a master on my computer and plotted it on a large

format plotter on a transparency so that we could make signs. The standard size for such street advertising is 28" by 22" based on the size that outdoor board which is 28" by 44" as can be seen there is yield of two signs from each board. Two hundred signs were made at the cost of \$1.48 each. If 100 had been made the cost would have been \$2.10 ea and if 300 were made the cost would drop to \$1.34 ea. I made the stakes to display the signs, a big job, I suggest you buy the stakes already made and use the same material for the cross arm to stiffen the signs against wind. Nails with plastic washers are available to affix the signs to the wood. However drive the stakes and then mount the signs as the act of driving the stakes damages the signboard and can even knock it off the stakes or make it so it will fall later. These signs should be in place 3 weeks or so before the show date. This method proved itself because 25% of the people attending the show had seen these signs plus the vendors were very happy with the fact that there was advertisement for their show up to fifty miles away on strategic roads and highways.

When the print media was approached the papers said they would only run stories other than in amongst the free paragraph in the what's happening this weekend section that nobody seems to read. We found that to run a quarter page ad in the Los Angeles times was \$2,500.00 for a Friday Saturday, Sunday run. Therefore we had not budgeted to afford such and so were not going to be covered by the Times as a story. The Daily News was likewise in cost and also would not cover the story. The only paper to run the story was the local Ventura Paper who covered the story because it was in Ventura.

Local television advertising based on cable was not thought of at the time however it was later investigated. If we were to shoot our own 30 sec. spot in Beta SP, the format used by professional broadcasters for editing if necessary, we would need to rent a video camera at about \$300.00 per day. The cable network Adelphia who covers the major market portion the San Fernando Valley, whom we wanted to reach, stated that they would give us advertising spots on family orientated programming such as Animal Planet, Nickelodeon, ABC family etc for two weeks at around \$9.50 per showing and in some cases higher to \$12.50 per showing in the case of Nickelodeon. This advertising reached 310,000 homes. There is a second cable source in the valley with similar costs per showing and equal number of homes serviced, Time Warner. A two-week ad run with 250 spots run throughout the day is around \$3,500.00.

Another advertising method includes the use of hot air / helium balloons and inflatable of various sizes and shapes with signage to advertise. A five foot long balloon costs \$125.00 going up to a balloon 20 feet long at \$1250.00 that can carry an advertising banner 2' by 4' up to 6' by 14' with your event or your club's logo . Placed on a tether with pennants flying along the tether is most

effective in attracting passersby in cars. Rentals of various shapes including dinosaurs, gorillas and almost every other shape can be rented at about \$50.00 per week and the blowers to keep them inflated at a very low cost.

Banners from 2'x 4' starting at \$20.00 up to banners 4'x14' at \$60.00 these banners make a great visual statement and have really cool graphics if you have design capacity.

So what should our budget have been for such a show? Our desire was to get 5,000 people as a minimum to attend the show, 8,000 was what we hoped for. We got just over 4,000 people weather and distance did play a factor in the low attendance. We had 62 dealers and our advertising budget was \$3,000 including mailers that were sent out to past attendees of our club shows and printing cost for flyers and several banners, a website, business cards and hand out cards at other shows, the street advertising signs and stakes and other incidentals.

In reality we should have done the TV ad campaign and the print media so that we could get coverage in the newspapers. Without this media coverage we were a tempest in a teapot event though we were indeed putting on the National Gem Show. We should have budgeted \$4,000 for television, \$2,500 print media and the \$3,000 spent on the other items as a minimum of \$9,500. I feel that if we had charged our vendors and had more of them that could have easily done, say 75 as an example. Each vendor would pay \$126.00 ea however there will be vendors who will occupy more space and others who will not so the fee is usually based on a per table cost. A small vendor would then pay \$75.00 based on three tables at \$25.00 per table, whereas a big vendor with 12 tables would spend \$300.00 for advertising costs. This way the money is in hand when it is needed prior to the show and there is no need to cut corners since prices have been established.

The use of big media is a much less labor-intensive way of getting those 4 plus exposures needed to sell someone the idea of going to a gem show. We used that much money in going to other shows and the Northwest and California Federation shows just in gas and time alone and the people who came were basically the people who come most of the time.

### **Quick Summary :**

1. People who are not rockhounds need to see advertising 4 or more times to be influenced to attend at a show. I saw it on TV, I read about in the paper, I saw several signs on the street about it "it must be worth attending".

2. Advertising budgets must be based on the type of area the cost of the area and the size of attendance necessary to be profitable. And advertising vectors must meet the needs of the community at large
3. Prior calculation of the advertising budget must be determined so that vendors or others befitting from the ad campaign can be properly assessed for it.
4. Large media is not necessarily expensive
5. Creative advertising means going away from the norm to stand out in crowded field.
6. Do the things you can get for free and make sure that the local government is included in your loop. A display at a library, city hall, or county seat is most appropriate also don't forget school age children and schools as display locals.
7. Don't be afraid to think big, I know that the last several shows for the CFMS have netted less than \$10,000 for the clubs a lot of work for a little compensation. You need to let people know how great your hobby really is and if you can get the money from others who will also win by your wise advertising outlays, do so.
8. Make sure that you have good visual graphics that are legible from great distance do not rely on the abilities of club members for this task unless they are professional sign painters. 4" letters are the minimum with 12' and better for over 500 feet visibility.
9. You have to spend money to make money, that's business.