

# HOW TO GET THE MOST FROM SHOWS

*By June Culp Zeitner*

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Almost every weekend of the year most gem and mineral hobbyists are within a day's drive of a show. These shows include small single club shows, free educational type shows, larger and more comprehensive annual club shows, mall shows (which can be club or dealer sponsored), and professionally produced shows. (And for dealers there are also the trade shows.) Usually the big shows of the year are the Regional shows such as the Midwest show to be held in St. Louis in July, and the National AFMS show, this year scheduled in Austin in June, or such professional shows as the International in Washington, D.C. in April. All of the shows listed can be a great help to those who attend if the show goes observe a few basic principles. Here are a few ways to enjoy your next show more.

1. Have a primary goal in mind. Perhaps you wish to learn what current prices are on gem materials or mineral specimens you have in your collection which you purchased some years ago. Perhaps you want to see what is new on the market. Every year at Tucson, for example, some fabulous new finds emerge. Or you may wish to learn about the specific area you are visiting.

2. Determine to find out about a part of the hobby you have neglected. Maybe

you have always passed up the faceting demonstration, or the casting demonstration. Watch some demonstration all the way through and then ask questions until you feel an understanding of a new field of knowledge.

3. Look at all of the displays. If they are competitive look at the judges comments. Make comparisons. Learn to look for unusual specimens, new techniques, excellent craftsmanship.

4. Perhaps you can help someone. At several shows there have been items in cases with a question mark on. Or there may be something from your favorite locality in a case with the wrong information on the label.

5. Attend as many lectures as you can. This includes workshops, seminars, panel discussions or other programs.

6. Keep a list of gem materials, or minerals, or fossils, you would like to add to your collection and a list of lapidary ideas you would like to try.

7. Try to learn to identify several gems which have been unfamiliar to you.

8. The show will be more enjoyable for you if you participate. Perhaps your participation will be in the form of a display, a major purchase, or only a searching question at a lecture.

9. If there is a swap section take along

some good material and enjoy the swapping. Even if you don't make your dream swap you will probably make some new friends.

10. If the show is a Regional or National show attend some of the special meetings, council meeting, editor's breakfast, or banquet.

11. Perhaps you are on a show committee yourself. Decide what you like and don't like about each show and what you might have done differently. Even a small show may have a new idea for you.

12. Take note of the type of people attending the show. How would you change it? How could you attract more young people?

13. Get acquainted with someone in the field. You might want to know a dealer of a specific type of material a little better. You might want to encourage a novice, or if you are an old-timer you might like to tell someone "the way it was." You may want to get some pointers from an exhibitor you have admired. New friends are a great part of the hobby and every show provides you this opportunity.

14. While it is fresh in your mind assess what you have learned and what you have enjoyed about a show and prepare to get even more from the next one.