

MAGS EXPLORER



Memphis Archaeological and Geological Society Youth Newsletter

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Thundereggs

MIKE BALDWIN--As you know, we are going to hunt for geodes this month, near Livingston, Tennessee. Geodes are round, hollow nodules, which are filled with crystals most of the time. The crystals can be smoky quartz, druse quartz, rock quartz, citrine, amethyst, calcite, or any number of other minerals. If you have been in MAGS for a while, you know about geodes . . . but do you know about thundereggs? Thundereggs look like geodes on the outside, but they are very different on the inside. Thundereggs are solid. Read on to find out more about thundereggs.

How Thundereggs Form

Thundereggs are agate-filled nodules found in various parts of the Western United States. They range in size from about a 3 inches to over 5 feet in diameter; generally, however, they are about the size of oranges. All are similar on the exterior, but no two are alike in the interior. In spite of their superior general quality, only one in about every 20 cut, makes a really good specimen. These show vivid scenes of land and sea fantasies which, besides the bright hues, reveal the appearance of depth and dimensions of distance. Cut and polished Thundereggs are beautiful to behold. They are indeed, one of the marvels of nature and are sought after and highly prized the world over.

These unique, agate-filled mud balls are found in layers of rhyolite lava flows which spread over the land an estimated 60 million years ago. This was long before man appeared on Earth and thousands of

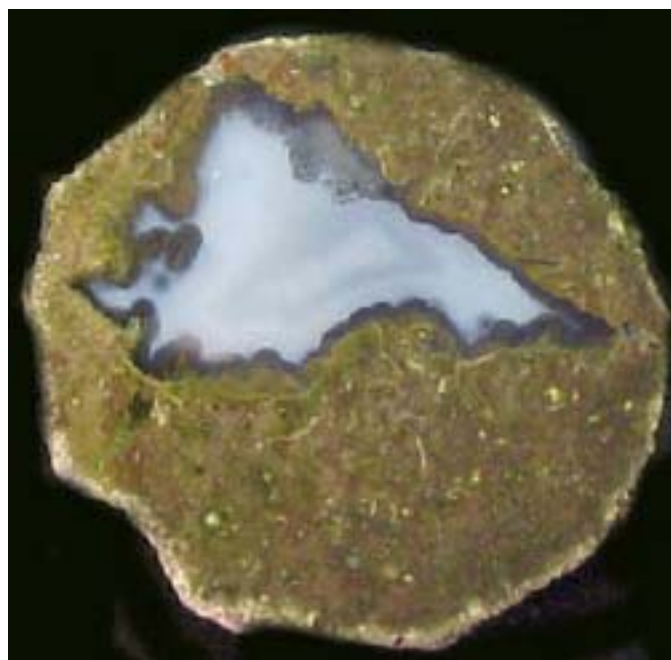
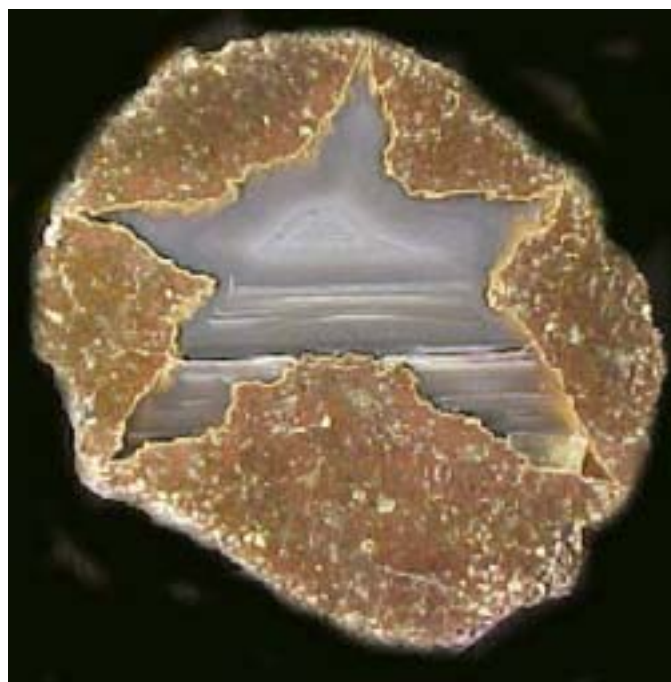
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centuries before the Cascade Mountain Range were formed and pushed upward, due to tremendous stresses beneath the surface of the globe on which we dwell. Geologists think that Thundereggs were formed in gas pockets, serving as molds, left in the lava flows of the Eocene Geological Age. They say further, that, over long periods of time the gas pockets were filled by water actions, percolating through the porous rock formations. Water (hot/cold) oozing into the cavities, carrying rich quantities of silica (quartz) in solution, lined, and in many cases, filled the cavity molds, first with the darker matrix material, then, the inner core of agate or chalcedony. The beautiful colors were derived from nearby minerals present. They also form with agate, jasper, common opal, precious opal, fire opal, ect....



Reference:
 Article and images from *Hinkle's Rock Shop Thunderegg Information Page*; <http://www.djwd.net/members/Thundereggs/info.html>. Reprinted for educational purposes under the "fair use" provision of the U.S. Copyright Act.

<p>Composition: SiO₂ Hardness: 7 Fracture: Conchoidal Crystal Form: Prismatic Luster: Vitreous (Glassy) Streak: White Color: clear Location: Potosi, MO</p>	<p>Druse Quartz</p> <p>Specimen of the Month</p> <p>October 2003</p> 
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