

The Sierra Pelonaagram



January 2011

... Member of the California Federation of Mineralogical Society Inc. ...

The Sierra Pelona Rock Club is a non-profit organization founded in 1959 with the objective to sponsor activities and promote interest and education in: mineralogy, lapidary, geology, paleontology and related subjects.



Message from the President

Here we are at the start of a brand-new year. We have a lot going on, so buckle up.

We need to fill several chairs to help keep the club at its current level of education and information.

Diane Southwell would like to pass the torch on publicity. Mainly it is making sure that the monthly meeting is announced in the events section of The Signal.

Bonnie would like someone to take her place leading field trips.

We need a program chair, to set up the programs we do at the monthly meetings.

Every one of these persons have said that they wouldn't just drop the job on anyone, they would have plenty of backup. So please, if you have any time at all, we need you.

The Sierra Pelona Rock Club
would like to welcome new
member Diane Mahle.
Welcome Diane.

You may notice that there are no January minutes in this issue of the Pelonagram due to technical difficulties. If available, they will be posted in the February issue.

January Birthdays

Bonnie Forstner
Diane Henry
Earl Kangas
Debbie Meredith
Bud Sabatino
Susan Sabatino
Martin Schreiner
Barbara Schaffer



Officers:

President – Bill Webber
Vice-President – Ron Strathmann
Secretary: Minutes-Nancy Hilliard
Treasurer – Greg Mazourek
Federation Director (CFMS/AFMS) – Shep Koss

Chairpersons:

Pelonagram Editor – Heidi Webber
Claim - Mike Serino
Donation Rock Table - Al Brown
Field Trips – Bonnell Forstner
Historian - Frank Humelbaugh
Hospitality – Evelyn Velie
Membership – Ron & Akiko Strathmann
Programs – Mike Serino
Publicity – Diane Southwell
Storage - Mike Moreno
Sunshine - Evelyn Velie
Web site – Bud Sabatino

The Sierra Pelona Rock Club, is a member of the California and American Federation of Mineralogical Societies, Inc. (CFMS/AFMS). The general club meetings (Open to the public) are at 7:30 PM, on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at:

**The Clubhouse of the Greenbrier
Mobile Estates EAST
21301 Soledad Canyon Rd
Canyon Country, CA 91351**

Contact the Club or the Sierra Pelonagram Editor at:

**Sierra Pelona Rock Club
P.O. Box 221256
Newhall, Ca. 91322**

Or E-mail: hwebber@pacbell.net

Visit the SPRC website <http://www.sierrapelona.com/>

Below is an article about our Shark-Tooth Hill. It sure doesn't look good...

Bakersfield widow sells off fossil collection

The Associated Press

Posted: 12/29/2010 11:42:16 AM PST

BAKERSFIELD, Calif.—The widow of an amateur paleontologist who amassed a massive trove of exquisite marine mammal fossils gathered from his property near Bakersfield is selling off the collection.

Poor health and financial problems have forced Mary Ernst to auction off fossils gathered by her husband, Bob Ernst, who died in 2007.

The couple lived next to Shark-tooth Hill, a national natural landmark. The property is home to one of the richest known deposits of marine mammal fossils, said University of California, Berkeley professor Jere Lipps.

Its parched hills east of Bakersfield, better known for the oil rigs that pump crude from even deeper ancient seabed, were part of a tropical oasis 15 million years ago.

The fossils, which include sharks' teeth and the skeleton of an ancestor of the sea lion, had been on display at a small Bakersfield museum that was started largely to house the fossils.

Ahead of an auction earlier this month, the Buena Vista Museum managed to raise \$24,000 to buy a portion of the collection, including an ancient whale vertebrae, a dolphin skull and teeth from an array of sharks.

But other items were out of reach for the museum, including some of its signature pieces such as the skeleton of an allodesmus, a precursor to the modern sea lion. That item had a price tag of \$150,000, far beyond the budget of the museum, which raises money through donation jars and restaurant nights.

No one bought the skeleton, and another auction is set for this spring, though it's not clear if Ernst's items will be offered again.

Some experts are upset that key pieces of the museum's collection will no longer be available for scientific scrutiny.

"The loss is horrendous," Robin Turner, a paleontologist and archaeologist who is on the museum's board of scientific advisers, told the Los Angeles Times.

Attempts to find a telephone listing for Mary Ernst were unsuccessful.

Ernst has previously said she wanted to sell her land too, though it was not clear if she was going ahead with the plan.

Paleontologists, who have catalogued 125 one-of-a-kind species during more than 80 years of unfettered access, say Shark-tooth Hill should be a park on the order of Dinosaur National Monument.

Information from: Los Angeles Times, <http://www.latimes.com>

Shep's Response:

The auctioned items, of which the Buena Vista Museum bought back just a few, were originally in that museum but then taken back by the Ernst family for auction. If you've visited this museum then you've seen many of these items. The museum itself was founded by Bob Ernst for display of his fossils and grew from there.

While a very small portion of Shark-tooth Hill is protected by the National Historic Register, the rest of the Ernst property is for sale at highly inflated prices with Mary Ernst hoping it to be purchased and protected for future collecting. It is doubtful it will be purchased by any development company due to lack of available water on the property (as related to me by BVMNH).

Ant Hill collecting is forbidden except for surface collecting only on the county portion of that area (mostly the flatlands) and the hills with the trenches are private property. One hilltop, well above the trenches, belongs to BLM. The private property, held by various development companies, have passed all county and city concerns and permits for development although actual start date is unknown.

Sadly, this richest Miocene marine fossil bed will one day be lost forever. This happened not that many years ago to another similar bed in Japan. That bed is now covered with homes, mini-malls and gas stations.

Guard your teeth and bones. Their value can only go up when this comes to pass. Some of the shark teeth species found here are found nowhere else in the world.

Shep



Field Trip Chair Report

We ended the field trip season for the year with a very successful outing Saturday. If I remember right we had seven cars with seventeen people including two visitors from Bakersfield. We gathered the group at three different locations and drove across the desert through some amazing scenery to the first location for some brecciated agate and then backtracked to Brown Butte.

Now some of us have been to Brown Butte a number of times and the last thing we needed was more brown agate but it's a great spot for new people. There is agate everywhere and it teaches us to be picky and look

for the glassier material and pass on the plain stuff.

Again, this is a spot we have been to many times but many of the new members had not been there and it is a major part of our club's history and every member should know how to collect travertine.

Our reason for going to the claim was to replant the North East corner post. Since the post we were replanting still had cement attached to the bottom of it, we dug a hole and set it in. I hope this lasts at least until we can get out there with a bag of cement and do it right.

This wasn't the end of the outing. We went to the visitors' center at the borax mine and after cleaning out the gift shop we saw the film on borax and the mine. We even dug in the piles of material in the parking lot and found a variety of samples to show off.

Bonnie has asked to be released as field trip chair but until someone volunteers to take over we will invite members and friends to go with us on some of our outings.

In fact we are going on two outings in January. I want to go back to Field Rd. and not only to the two areas where the good materials are but to explore for new areas. We also plan to take the over two-mile hike back into the strawberry onyx area and could use some help carrying the stuff out since no wheeled vehicles are allowed.

We hope someone will step up and take the field trip chair. I promise to help them and I know that Shep is a gold mine of ideas and information.

Bonnie and Ron

Chalcedony



A crypto-crystalline sub-species of quartz. It is generally of a milky brown colour, but there are also rarer blue (blue chalcedony), green (chrysoprase) and orange-red (cornelian) varieties. Very occasionally it may be transparent.

Agate is frequently stained to resemble types of chalcedony; so particular care should be taken when buying chalcedony that you are not, in fact, about to be sold an imitation.

The mineral is found in Madagascar, Brazil, India, China and the USA.

Name	Moh's	Specific Gravity	Structure	Cleavage	Refractive Index	Double	Disp.	Pleochro	Fluorescence
Chalcedony (Quartz)	6.5+	2.58-2.64	Hexagonal	None	1.544-1.553	up to 0.006	None	None	Blue-white

Alabaster



This substance is sulphate of lime or gypsum of a white or delicately tinted color. It is one of the softest minerals known to nature and is therefore used as an ornamental stone in sculpture, though only for internal work as it weathers easily. It is especially popular in Italy, its country of origin (Volterra, Tuscany).

It is very porous and easy to color, but too fragile to be a worth-while investment.

Name	Moh's	Specific Gravity	Structure	Refractive Index	Double	Disp.
Alabaster	2+	2.30-2.33	Microcrystalline?	1.520-1.530	0.01	None

CFMS Shows

January 28-30 - REDLANDS, CA

Mineralogical Society of Southern California

Micromounters Symposium

San Bernardino County Museum

2024 Orange Tree

Hours: Fri. 5 - 10; Sat. 9 - 10

Sun. Field trip time to be set

Dr. Robert Housley (714) 697-4435

Email: rhousley@its.caltech.edu

Website: mineralsocal.org (click on micromounters)

February 18-27 - INDIO, CA

San Geronio Mineral & Gem Society

Riverside County Fair & National Date Festival

Gem amp;& Mineral Building Bldg #1

46-350 Arabia Street

Hours: 10 - 10 daily

Bert Grisham: (915) 849-1674

Email: bert67@verizon.net

February 25-27 - NEWARK, CA

Mineral and Gem Society

of Castro Valley

Newark Pavilion

6430 Thornton Avenue

Hours: Fri. and Sat. 10 - 6;

Sun. 10 - 5

Lary Ham, show chair - (510) 887-9007

Email: showchair@mgscev.org

Website: www.mgscev.org

February 25-26 - NORTHRIDGE, CA

Del-Air Rockhounds

Northridge United Methodist Church

9650 Reseda Blvd.

Hours: Fri. 3 - 9; Sat. 10 - 5

Chris S. Ward

Email: chris_ward678@yahoo.com

Website: delairrockhounds.blogspot.com

March 5-6 - ARCADIA, CA

Monrovia Rockhounds, Inc.

Los Angeles Co. Arboretum &

Botanic Gardens

301 Baldwin Ave.

Hours: 9 - 4:30 daily

Jo Anna Ritchey (626) 359-1624

Email: vgms_editor@roadrunner.com

Website: www.moroks.com

March 5-6 - VENTURA, CA

Ventura Gem & Mineral Society

Seaside Park, Ventura Co.

Fairgrounds

10 W. harbor Blvd.

Hours: Sat. 10-5; Sun. 10-4

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