

# The Sierra Pelonaagram



June, 2011

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

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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.

## ARE YOU SURE IT'S JADE?

1. If a chip is knocked off, the freshly broken surface should not sparkle in the sun. If it does, it's not jade.
2. If you can scratch it with a knifepoint, it isn't jade.
3. It will be much heavier than a common rock of similar size.
4. Tap the specimen with a hammer. If a moon shaped fracture appears, it is agate or jasper, but not jade.
5. If it is jade, it will have a smooth, waxy almost greasy look.
6. The more milky the water is when cutting jade, the better the grade of jade. If the water isn't milky, then you don't have true jade. You have something else.
7. The only positive test for jade is x-ray analysis and specific gravity tests.

*From Rockhound Ramblings via the Sequoia GMS Rockette May 2011 via the South Bay Lapidary & Mineral Society Agatizer Feb 2011, Rock Chips, March 2011, The Rock Collector 9/04, Rock Writings, 7/04, Chips'n Splin-ters 12/00, Rockhound Rumblings 11/00, Chips'n Splinters 12/00, via Rock Writings, 7/04; via The Rock*



### June Birthdays

Carole Degenfelder  
Connie Flores-Reisbeck  
Paul Hobbs  
Steven Hobbs  
Diane Mahle  
Paul Real  
Akiko Strathmann  
Heidi Webber  
Janelle Williams

### July Birthdays

Charles Ferguson  
D.J. Gervais  
Jeannine Kinney  
Phil Rizzo

### August Birthdays

Ralph Hyde  
Karen Kubota  
Ron Lawrence  
Vlad Litt  
Jennie Real

Remember, no Pelonagram for the months of July and August. We also take the summer off. *Heidi*

### **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 – Open  
Historian - Frank Humelbaugh  
Hospitality – Evelyn Velie  
Membership – Ron & Akiko Strathman  
Programs – Open  
Publicity – Open  
Storage - Mike Moreno  
Sunshine - Evelyn Velie  
Web site – Earl Kangas

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](mailto:hwebber@pacbell.net)

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

**Business Meeting  
Greenhouse Café  
June7, 2011**

The meeting was called to order by Bill Webber at 6:45pm. In attendance was Bill and Heidi Webber, Greg Mazourek, Ron Lawrence, Frank Humelbaugh, Mike Serino and Ron and Akiko Strathmann.

The club financial status was discussed. Talked about upcoming shows (get those rock tumblers going) that we would present at. It was mentioned that the Placerita Canyon Nature Center Open House was a big hit. Not only money wise, but Frank mentioned that he heard others talking about the club when he was walking around away from the booth. The open house was a good exposure for the club.

Discussed getting a projector. Talked about which type (DLP, bulb or other), brand (like Optima), and where to buy (CDW on-line, Best Buy).

The club does not appear to have any rings (stands) for the eggs and spheres. Due to extra purchases of eggs and spheres without buying rings, the club has none left. The suggestion was to purchase more when the club makes a buy from a vendor (such as grit or other material).

Greg brought up a suggestion from Shep for a fund raiser. Shep suggested the club put together bags (or packages) of 'healing' stones. The Chakra uses seven stones, the club could put together fewer with items like red jasper, black agate, quartz crystal, amethyst, rose quartz, etc. Some could be bought at a cheap rate (amethyst and sodalite for instance). We would include the stones and a printed sheet with the healing properties (easily found on the internet). One member mentioned we should put in a disclaimer as well.

Ron L talked about field trips. He wasn't sure if the club wanted to do the Green Hills rose quartz this year. He will not be able to lead the September trip and may need a replacement a few months this coming year. Ron S suggested that several members wanted to do a metal detector trip to the beach. It was suggested we do that in September. Ron talked about maybe doing a trip for the Ballarat Marble in Happy Canyon (across from the new claim).

Ron mentioned the LA County Museum trip was August 3rd with the Girl Scouts. The museum should have their new dinosaur exhibit and the club would be given a more detailed tour of that.

Evelyn is going to do the general meeting presentation for October and November on diamonds. September would be the usual show and tell. So it is recommended that everyone bring in a few items to show the club.

There was a discussion about doing a social dinner at the El Presidente. It was suggested that we do another place, so it was tentatively agreed upon to have a social dinner at RATTILRS on August 9th. Maybe we could have that on their patio area. Heidi will make arrangements.

Ron S presented three new members (Greg & Christine Miner and Bruce Velie). All members were voted in.

Bill said the metal drums for the club tumbler needs to be replaced. He was going to look at replacing the rubber lining and top (6" lid gasket), or just buy another drum. A decision will be made after reviewing prices and then a group buy of several needed items will be made. Need to wait to buy several items (sphere rings above for example) to keep the shipping costs down. Bill is also going to buy some shrink wrap for the rotating rods to try and make the tumbler quieter. A decision was made to stock up on more grit over the summer if a good buy on it was found.

There was also some talk about local fossils (off the Old Road or off San Fernando Road in Sunland near Tuxford(?)).

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40pm.



## Credit Earned vs. Credit Due

*An observation by your Club Historian*

It might be said that history evolves in the light of a series of timely observations...I made note of my last historical (or hysterical) self inspection that my hearing was never worse, my eyesight now and then a bit fuzzier, and my shrinking muscles were in need of better toning. All of this I have more or less accepted as historical progression. In my younger days, while in “the service” we often had to line up for some sort of inspection. Master-Sergeant Robb would repeatedly drum us with the phrase “Remember men! What counts most is the impression YOU create!”. Once again, I am reminded of the wisdom in those words—for somewhere along the line I have given our club

membership the impression of my being around “forever”—which I guess must be the same thing as about 40 years.

Not only was I shocked to learn of this news, but also a bit frightened to learn that I was in danger of being “roasted” at our summer picnic. This I could foresee as about the same thing as being cast into the midst of a crew of rum-soaked sailors telling “sea stories”. I thought about this. Had I better hurry and tell the club their arithmetic is a bit off? It cannot be me? I thought some more; maybe it would be best to just shut up, be humble and get poked at to their heart’s delight. But then, I realized that in addition to the above debilitations of aging, I might be forced to confess to a senior moment of extraordinary duration—a span of ten or so years of unrecorded rockhounding. This could become grounds for dismissal as club historian as well as a personal embarrassment.

The recording of club activities is an important necessity. Events like the recent Placerita Canyon Nature Center Open House and the Scout Troop field outings to require some extra effort ahead of time but become a fine thing to have witnessed afterward. They are certainly one more reason to feel proud of our club’s record of community service. Credit for these successful showings (and most other club events) boils down to a team effort—no one-person deal.

As far as individual recognition goes, I believe that the longevity of membership alone does not equate with the degree of an individual’s repeated hard-working performance. Without naming people, I know of nearly a dozen who have repeatedly given of their time and talents above and beyond any contribution I might be recognized for. A reward system for outstanding individual efforts isn’t exactly a new idea—lots of organizations present special certificates. Scouts earn merit badges. Our military awards ribbons and medals. Both the CFMS and the AFMS have committees related to special awards and so does the Ventura Club with their Future Rockhounds program. Maybe our club should think about establishing a committee for this purpose too?

Well, enough said about all that! (Borrowed from Forrest Gump?) Befitting the job of Historian, I often search through “old stuff”. I recently came across a copy of my second grade report card, saved of course, by my mother. Way back then, they used “S”, “N”, and “U” to assess your school performance plus a space for teacher’s comment. My letter grades did not report anything too shameful; but written rather boldly in the other space was “talks too much”. I guess some habits just take a long long time to break.

(Sort of and Mostly) Respectfully submitted:

*Frank Humelbaugh*



# SPRC Picnic

# 2011





## Sedimentary Rock: Coal

### What is Coal?

Coal is an organic sedimentary rock that forms from the accumulation and preservation of plant materials, usually in a swamp environment. Coal is a combustible rock and along with oil and natural gas it is one of the three most important fossil fuels. Coal has a wide range of uses; the most important use is for the generation of electricity.



Coal Through a Microscope

### How Does Coal Form?

Coal forms from the accumulation of plant debris, usually in a swamp environment. When plant debris dies and falls into the swamp the standing water of the swamp protects it from decay. Swamp waters are usually deficient in oxygen, which would react with the plant debris and cause it to decay. This lack of oxygen allows the plant debris to persist. In addition, insects and other organisms that might consume the plant debris on land do not survive well under water in an oxygen deficient environment.

To form the thick layer of plant debris required to produce a coal seam the rate of plant debris accumulation must be greater than the rate of decay. Once a thick layer of plant debris is formed it must be buried by sediments such as mud or sand. These are typically washed into the swamp by a flooding river. The weight of these materials compact the plant debris and aids in its transformation into coal. About ten feet of plant debris will compact into just one foot of coal.

Plant debris accumulates very slowly. So, accumulating ten feet of plant debris will take a long time. The fifty feet of plant debris needed to make a five-foot thick coal seam would require thousands of years to accumulate. During that long time the water level of the swamp must remain stable. If the water becomes too deep the plants of the swamp will drown and if the water cover is not maintained the plant debris will decay. To form a coal seam the ideal conditions of perfect water depth must be maintained for a very long time.

If you are an astute reader you are probably wondering: “How can fifty feet of plant debris accumulate in water that is only a few feet deep?” The answer to that question is the primary reason that the formation of a coal seam is a highly unusual occurrence. It can only occur under one of two conditions: 1) a rising water level that perfectly keeps pace with the rate of plant debris accumulation; or, 2) a subsiding landscape that perfectly keeps pace with the rate of plant debris accumulation. Most coal seams are thought to have formed under condition #2 in a delta environment. On a delta large amounts of river sediments are being deposited on a small area of Earth’s crust and the weight of those sediments causes the subsidence.

For a coal seam to form perfect conditions of plant debris accumulation and perfect conditions of subsidence must occur on a landscape that maintains this perfect balance for a very long time. It is very easy to understand why the conditions for forming coal has occurred only a small number of times throughout Earth’s history. The formation of a coal requires the coincidence of highly improbable events.

### What is Coal “Rank”?

Plant debris is a fragile material compared to the mineral materials that make up other rocks. As plant debris is exposed to the heat and pressure of burial it changes in composition and properties. The “rank” of a coal is a measure of how much change has occurred. Sometimes the term “organic metamorphism” is used for this change.

Based upon composition and properties coals are assigned to a rank progression that corresponds to their level of organic metamorphism.

### What are the Uses of Coal?

Electricity production is the primary use of coal in the United States. Most of the coal mined in the United States is transported to a power plant, crushed to a very small particle size and burned. Heat from the burning coal is used to produce steam, which turns a generator to produce electricity. Most of the electricity consumed in the United States is made by burning coal.

Coal has many other uses. It is used as a source of heat for manufacturing processes. For example, bricks and cement are produced in kilns heated by the combustion of a jet of powdered coal. Coal is also used as a power source for factories. There it is used to heat steam and the steam is used to drive mechanical devices. A few decades ago most coal was used for space heating. Some coal is still used that way but other fuels and coal-produced electricity are now used instead.

Coke production remains an important use of coal. Coke is produced by heating coal under controlled conditions in the absence of air. This drives off some of the volatile materials and concentrates the carbon content. Coke is then used as a high carbon fuel for metal processing and other uses where an especially hot-burning flame is needed.

Coal is also used in manufacturing. If coal is heated the gases, tars and residues produced can be used in a number of manufacturing processes. Plastics, roofing, linoleum, synthetic rubber, insecticides, paint products, medicines, solvents and synthetic fibers all include some coal-derived compounds. Coal can also be converted into liquid and gaseous fuels; however, these uses of coal are mainly experimental and done on a small scale.

Source: *AboutGeology.com*



**Bituminous Coal:** Bituminous coal is typically a banded sedimentary rock. In this photo you can see bright and dull bands of coal material oriented horizontally across the specimen. The bright bands are well preserved woody material, such as branches or stems. The dull bands can contain: mineral material washed into the swamp by streams, charcoal produced by fires in the swamp, or degraded plant materials. This specimen is approximately three inches across (7.5 centimeters). Photo by the West Virginia Geological and Economic Survey.



**Lignite:** The lowest rank of coal is “lignite”. It is peat that has been compressed, dewatered and lithified into a rock. It often contains recognizable plant structures.



**Peat:** A mass of recently accumulated to partially carbonized plant debris. This material is on its way to becoming coal but its plant debris source is still easily recognizable.



**Anthracite Coal:** Anthracite is the highest rank of coal. It has a bright luster and breaks with a semi-conchoidal fracture.

The SPRC 2011 End of Year Picnic was a blast! There were tons of delicious foods, including Steve Hobbs' amazing lasagna. First, we need to thank Evelyn Velie for being in charge of the picnic and the set up. Her husband and new member Bruce was a big help too (did he have a choice?).

It was a chilly and overcast day, but around 30 of us braved this inclement weather (we ARE southern Californians after all) and were rewarded with the sun breaking through around 1pm. Soon after, coats and quilts were shed and people were moving their chairs to the shade.

After stuffing ourselves on lasagna, tri-tip, chicken, ham, biscuits, various fruits and salads and dessert, Bill brought us to attention for the "program".

In addition to our usual program, we came together to honor Frank Humelbaugh for his 40-some years of service and membership to the club. He has held every position on the board and several of the committee chairs. He is currently Club Historian. He did say that when he was secretary, he refused to shave his legs or sit on anyone's lap! A man with principals—I like that! His friend Martin Schreiner couldn't attend but Bill read a funny email he sent about Frank. By the way Martin—Frank said 900 steps per day. Other stories were told and we laughed to the point of tears.

After we dried our eyes and Frank was presented with his certificate, we got on to the White Elephant Sale and some lively bidding. Several behind-the-scenes deals went down with the winner of an item being negotiated by a non-winner for the item to become the winner...??? You had to be there.

As usual, Ron was the bingo caller. Mike Moreno supplied the prizes as he has for years, much to the gratitude of those winners. Thank you Mike! Heidi especially loved the beautiful orangey-marbled-like sphere she won for the blackout. No one was sure what the stone was, but it is gorgeous.

It clouded over, it was almost 4pm and time to clean up and go. It was a wonderful day and now everyone is off to do their own thing for the summer. We plan to have an informal dinner at the Rattler on August 9. Emails will be sent out. Otherwise...

See you all in September.

*Heidi Webber*

#### CFMS Calendar

##### AUGUST 2011

##### **August 5-7 - NIPOMO, CA**

Orcutt Mineral Society  
St. Joseph's Church Recreation  
Hall

298 S. Thompson Ave.

Hours: 10-5 daily

Gloria Dana (805)929-6429

Email: [info@onsinc.org](mailto:info@onsinc.org)

Website: [www.omsinc.org](http://www.omsinc.org)

##### **August 6-7 - SAN FRANCISCO, CA**

San Francisco Gem & Mineral  
Society

Golden Gate Club

136 Fisher Loop, The Presidio of  
San Francisco

Hours: Sat. 10-6; Sun. 10-5

Carleen Mont-Eton (415)564-4230

Email: [publicity@show.sfgms.org](mailto:publicity@show.sfgms.org)

Website: [www.sfgms.org](http://www.sfgms.org)

##### SEPTEMBER 2011

##### **September 2-5 - FORT BRAGG, CA**

Mendocino Coast Gem & Mineral  
Society

Town Hall

363 N. Main St, (corner of Main &  
Laurel)

Hours: Fri-Sun 10-6; Mon 10-4

Jerry Sommer (707) 917-1833

##### **September 10-11 - DOWNEY, CA**

Delvers Gem & Mineral Society

Woman's Club of Downey

9813 Paramount Blvd.

Hours: Sat 10-6; Sun 10-4

Guynell Miller (562) 633-0614

##### **September 17-18 - STOCKTON, CA**

Stockton Lapidary & Mineral Club

Scottish Rite Masonic Center

33 W. Alpine Avenue

Hours: 10-5 Daily

Jan Bradley or Dorothy Tonnacliff

(209) 629-3837 / (209) 603-4539

Email: [slmcshow@juno.com](mailto:slmcshow@juno.com)

Website: <http://www.stocktonlapidary.com>

##### **September 24-25 - MONTEREY, CA**

Carmel Valley Gem & Mineral  
Society

Monterey Fairgrounds

2004 Fairgrounds Road

Hours: Sat 10-6; Sun 10-5

Matt Biewer (831) 659-4156

Email: [mattbiewer@aol.com](mailto:mattbiewer@aol.com)

Website: <http://www.cvgms.org>





### A Message from Your President

*Rock hound: a collector of rocks and minerals.*

This is what our club is about. Meeting other persons with similar interests is just the icing on the cake.

The Sierra Pelona Rock Club now boasts 65 members. This is fantastic and most of this growth has been over the last couple of years. I see you at meetings and love your continuing interest.

However, I only see a very small number of you on our field trips. This is a shame because part of belonging to a rock club is the collecting and gaining of knowledge of your chosen hobby. That means going on club-sponsored field trips—or even gathering as a group on an “unofficial” trip.

I realize there are many reasons you can’t make some of the trips; I too have conflicts with scheduling at times, or for health reasons. This is totally acceptable, but there are a lot of you who haven’t begun to dip your toes into the fun of finding your first geode, or learning to spot a bloodstone, or just knowing there is some onyx over there. THAT is

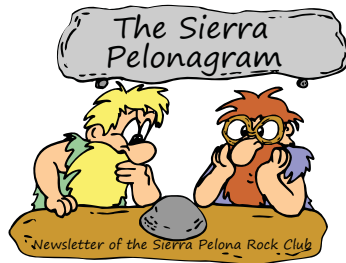
what our club is all about. Anyone can sit in a meeting and passively watch a video or listen to another’s description of the treasure they found.

So please, give it some thought, and plan to join us on our next adventure and start getting the most out of your membership. Our next outing should be in September as we take the summer off. However, if something is put together, there will be emails sent out.

I hope to see you soon—in the field!

Bill Webber  
President, SPRC

Welcome new members  
Greg and Christine Miner  
and Bruce Velie



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