

# The Sierra Pelonaagram



November 2009

---

*... 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.

## General Events from the CFMS Web Page

**November 7-8 2009, Concord, CA**  
Contra Costa Mineral & Gem Society  
Centre Concord  
5298 Clayton Road (Corner of  
Ygnacio & Clayton Rd)  
Hours: 10 - 5 both days  
Harry Nichandros  
Email: [show2009@ccmgs.org](mailto:show2009@ccmgs.org)  
Website: <http://ccmgs.org>

**November 6-7-8 2009, Eureka, CA**  
Humbolt Gem & Mineral Society  
Redwood Acres Fairground  
3750 Harrie Street  
Hours: Fri. 9-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5  
Tony Tyson (707) 502-9574  
Email: [bluiis911@msn.com](mailto:bluiis911@msn.com)

**November 7-8 2009, Lancaster, CA**  
Palmdale Gem & Mineral Society  
Antelope Valley Fairgrounds  
2551 W. Ave. H, Hwy 14  
Hours: 9 - 5 both days  
Susan Chaisson-Walblom (661) 943-1861  
Email: [SLChaisson@yahoo.com](mailto:SLChaisson@yahoo.com)  
Website: [palmdalegemandmineral.com](http://palmdalegemandmineral.com)

**November 7-8 2009, Ridgecrest, CA**  
Indian Wells Gem & Mineral Society  
Desert Empire Fairgrounds  
520 S. Richmond Rd.  
Hours: 9 - 5 both days  
John DeRosa (760) 375-7905  
Email: [schiller@ridgecrest.ca.us](mailto:schiller@ridgecrest.ca.us)

**November 14-15 2009, Victorville, CA**  
Victor Valley Gem & Mineral Society  
San Bernardino Co. Fairgrounds  
17800 - 7th Street  
Hours: 9-5 daily  
Vigil Melton (760) 900-0507  
Website: [www.vvgmc.org](http://www.vvgmc.org)

**November 14-15 2009, Yuba City, CA**  
Sutter Buttes Gem & Mineral Society  
Franklin Hall, Yuba/Sutter Fairgrounds  
442 Franklin Ave.  
Hours: Sat. 9-5; Sun. 9-4  
Bruce Roberts (530) 675-2864

**November 21-22 2009, Livermore CA**  
Livermore Valley Lithophiles  
At the "Barn"  
Pacific Ave. at So. Livermore Ave.  
Hours: Sat. 10-5; Sun. 10-4  
Email: [info@lithophiles.com](mailto:info@lithophiles.com)  
Website: [www.lithophiles.com](http://www.lithophiles.com)  
Show Flyer: [click here.](#)

**November 21-22 2009, Oxnard, CA**  
Oxnard Gem & Mineral Society  
Oxnard Performing Arts Center  
800 Hobson Way  
Hours: Sat. 9-5; Sun. 10-4  
Norb Kinsler (805) 644-6450  
Email: [info@oxnardgem.com](mailto:info@oxnardgem.com)  
Website: [www.oxnardgem.com](http://www.oxnardgem.com)

**December 5-6 2009, Barstow, CA**  
Mojave Gem & Mineral Society  
Community Center  
841 Barstow Road  
Hours: 10-5 daily  
Gene Haines (760) 256-0595  
Email: [janetwentz@earthlink.net](mailto:janetwentz@earthlink.net)  
Website: [www.mdgms.org](http://www.mdgms.org)

### **Officers:**

President – Ron Lawrence  
Vice-President – George Lawrence  
Secretaries: Minutes-Colleen Clough  
Treasurer – Greg Mazourek  
Federation Director (CFMS/AFMS) – Shep Koss

### **Chairpersons:**

Bulletin Editor – Heidi Webber  
Claim - Ralph Hyde  
Donation Rock Table - Al Brown  
Field Trips – Shep Koss  
Historian - Frank Humelbaugh  
Hospitality – Karen Kubota  
Membership – Ron & Akiko Strathman  
Programs – Mike Serino  
Publicity – Diane Southwell  
Storage - Mike Moreno  
Sunshine - Sarita Hyde  
Web page – Debbie Merideth

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* designed by Earl Kangas  
<http://www.sierrapelona.com/>

## President's Message for November

I feel that I'm out of the loop. Our trip to Arizona and New Mexico caused me to miss the Business meeting and I have to play catch up on what was covered.

The holiday dinner is set for Sunday the sixth and it seems we will be doing it the same way as last year with the main items supplied by the club and the salads desserts etc, brought by pot luck.

I'm glad Shep has an Ant Hill trip planned before "they" close the area and all those fossils are lost to us. Please plan to attend just because it may be the last time to discover something of museum quality.

The club continues to grow with new members voted in at the business meeting and every general meeting we have visitors looking at what we do. I still think we are the most active club around with fun field trips and great programs available. This is a team effort and I want to thank all those who work so hard to keep our club going strong.

On my trip last week I learned that the Mojave area and the areas our club usually collects in are by far better than some other states. Yes, Arizona has petrified wood everywhere but the areas in their book for agate and fossils and even onyx don't compare to areas an easy drive from here. We drove all over western New Mexico and have little to show for the time.

Let's head for Lavic or Ludlow or Kramer or Green Ash Hills or Mule Canyon or many other places and bring back some colorful material to tumble. Which reminds me, we used all or our tumbled stones at Lombardi so get you barrels going.

I'm looking forward to a great program at the General Meeting on the seventeenth and remember dues are due for the New Year.

RON LAWRENCE  
PRESIDENT  
SIERRA PELONA ROCK CLUB

### Nov 22 Ant Hill SPRC Field Trip

A field trip to collect fossil shark teeth, whale bone and fossils from other Miocene marine life.

We will meet Sunday at 10am NE of Bakersfield at the Chevron station at the corner of Alfred Harrell Hwy & Lake Ming Rd. Alfred Harrell can be reached off the 178 although a shorter route is take route 58 west and exit Comanche Rd then head north about 7 miles. This crosses the 178 and becomes Alfred Harrell Hwy. The digs are about a mile from Chevron.

Bring a bucket, a small shovel or garden trowel, a spray bottle, something to collect your finds ( a ziplock bag) and a sifting screen or colander. A rock hammer and chisel or screwdriver are always good.

From the parking area it's a 3/4 mile hike uphill most of which is moderate except for the last few hundred feet which is steep.

Be aware that snakes are in the area (although may be too cool for them) and that this is a known Valley Fever area (wear a mask if concerned).

The fossils here are about 13-15 million years old.

Dress accordingly for changeable weather. Bring sunscreen, water and lunch.

For those coming up I-5 we can meet at my place if desired.

I will leave here at 9am (about 45 minutes from here).

Further questions please contact me, otherwise, happy hunting.

*Shep Koss*

*Sierra Pelona Field Trip Chair*

*CFMS Field Trip South co-chair.*



Various fossils found at Ant Hill on a previous trip

## Shell Picking in Randsburg

with  
Akiko and Ron S, Grisela and George Bryson, Bill Heidi and Kathryn Webber, Jim and Diane Southwell  
and Fearless Leader Ron Lawrence.



On Monday, October 19, a group of us went to a gathering spot near Randsburg to pick shells for our fund-raising events. We gathered enough for a couple years according to Ron Lawrence. It was a beautiful 75 degree day with mild desert winds. We had a great time making up stories about why the oyster, clam, snail and other shells were out in the middle of the desert. We could have been picking



through prehistoric clam-eating dinosaur scat or maybe it was a dump from an alien space craft or maybe drugs were smuggled in the shells and brought in by plane via a local small airstrip. Ron L. came up with that one, but I suspect he was cheating because when we had lunch in Randsburg the lady behind the counter told us the same exact story. Coincidence? I think not...

---

## Greenhorn Rose Quartz *A Trip with Shep*

The weather and temperatures were great on Oct 24 for a trip to the mountains. Eleven of us eventually joined up at the meet spot for the 20 minute drive to the quarry. Thankfully the wild grass and shrubs were not a problem since flora was getting ready for winter. Among the debris



(float) and on the wall many deep pink to light lavender pieces were found suitable for cabbing and sphering and much glass clear gemmy pieces were found that are facetable.

We only spent about three hours there which was enough time to fill bags and buckets although the wall was still reluctant to give up its treasures since quartz is harder than steel. The hard rock mining was still a challenge. Late afternoon the winds picked up blowing in mountain clouds causing the temps to drop rapidly.

Many of us collecting large pine cones well over a foot in length as well. Once again, however, deer and quail hunters were abundant as well.

Overall though, it was a good time. A long drive for quality material but worth it nonetheless.

Shep Koss - FTC - Sierra Pelona Rock Club

### Welcome to the Club!

We would like to welcome new members Barbara and Quinn Shaffer, Phil and Suzie Rizzo and Dick and Deana Cattermole.



### Happy Birthday to Youuuuu...

Felicitades to Grisela Bryson,  
Frank Humelbaugh and Diane Southwell.

## Actinolite



Greenschist is a rock of a metamorphic grade that results in green minerals like epidote, chlorite and actinolite. This specimen is almost entirely actinolite



While we were busy loading our buckets with shells, Jim Southwell wandered off exploring. He came back with an interesting rock specimen that was identified as actinolite. We found quite a few nice-sized pieces. So I Googled actinolite and this is what I came up with:

Actinolite is a relatively common mineral in some metamorphic rocks. It belongs to a series with the minerals tremolite and ferro-actinolite. A series occurs when ions can freely substitute between each other. In this case, when iron is predominant the mineral is ferro-actinolite and when magnesium is predominant the mineral is tremolite. Actinolite is the intermediate member.

A variety of actinolite is composed of microscopically fibrous crystals (asbestos) and is called *byssolite*. Other minerals also form asbestos such as serpentine and the minerals of the series mentioned above. Serpentine asbestos is more widely used and of a better grade in general. Although asbestos has been shown to cause cancer in humans when inhaled in high enough concentrations, it still has many valuable applications. Asbestos is used for fire retardant materials and brake shoes and pads. Its prior use as insulation has been all but eliminated due to health concerns.

A variety of actinolite, *nephrite*, is one of the two minerals called jade. The other jade mineral is jadeite. Jade has been used for eons in China and Central America as an ornamental and religious stone of deep significance. The nephrite jade was used mostly in China, although both have been used in both regions. Nephrite is more abundant than jadeite and has few color varieties, ranging only from creamy white to green.

Simple actinolite occasionally forms interesting crystal habits and specimens. Crystals can be similar to hornblende, but are always translucent or even transparent. Typically they are prismatic, flattened and elongated. Crystal specimens of actinolite can make very interesting mineral specimens.

### PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS:

- Color is usually green, white or gray.
- Luster is vitreous.
- Transparency: examples are translucent to transparent.
- Crystal System is monoclinic; 2/m
- Crystal Habits include the flattened prismatic and elongated crystal with a dome-like termination that is actually a two of the four faces of a prism. Also as a fibrous mass (asbestos) and as a fibrous and very compact mass (nephrite jade).
- Cleavage: is perfect in two directions at close to 60- and 120-degree angles.
- Fracture is splintery to uneven.
- Hardness is 5.5 - 6.
- Specific Gravity is approximately 2.9 - 3.3 (very slightly above average for translucent minerals).
- Streak is white.
- Associated Minerals are quartz, lawsonite, epidote and glaucophane.
- Other Characteristics: the compact nephrite variety is extremely tough and is actually stronger than steel.
- Notable Occurrences include the Lake Baikal Region, Russia; China; New Zealand; British Columbia, Canada and Taiwan.
- Best Field Indicators are toughness (nephrite jade), fibrosity (asbestos), typical green color, crystal habit and hardness.

### LITHOPHYLLOSIS?

Do you have LITHOPHYLLOSIS? There is NO cure!!! The word comes from Latin: *lithos* meaning rock; *phyl* an attraction to; and *osis* meaning condition. Put them all together and you get a condition where the victim has an uncontrollable attraction to rocks. The disease can strike anyone, at any time, at any age and....IS EXTREMELY CONTAGIOUS!!!!

Sounds like common old ROCK POX to me, we have had that for years anyway! It is often caught at, and symptoms may become aggravated by, but may also for some be relieved by: attending rock shows, club meetings, and field trips. Although be sure to use caution as all these things are HIGHLY addictive!!! And are usually passed on to your children and friends, who will then be lifelong sufferers as well.

*The Nugget 11/09:*

## Randsburg

*I know many members of the club have been to Randsburg, or maybe off-roading in nearby Jawbone Canyon. But do you really know anything about Randsburg? Read more about this historical town below:*



A visit to Randsburg, California is a visit to the past, when the mining camps of the Mojave were boomtowns and gold was being dug out of the hills. The community has survived the many perils the desert mining camps faced, and some of its residents still work the land for its hidden riches. It is a living ghost town, a

working mining town that likes having some -- but not too much -- company. There are no stop lights, gas stations or malls here; just an unpretentious, quiet little town that enjoys its place in desert history.

Randsburg is located on the western Mojave Desert, near the El Paso Mountains and not far from Red Rock Canyon State Park. It's high desert- - around 3,500 feet. With nearby Red Mountain (formerly known as Osdick) and Johannesburg, Randsburg is a must-see for anyone interested in prospecting or the Mojave's fascinating history. The area is not only famous for mining gold, but also for mining silver and tungsten.

In the late 1800s, the Rand Mountains hadn't been named yet. They'd been prospected a little, but passed over by most Rainbow Chasers. In the early '90s, 3 gold hunters discovered that one of the peaks in this small mountain range was a mountain of gold.

These 3 prospectors -- John Singleton, F. M. Mooers and Charlie Burcham -- were down on their luck. They barely had enough food and supplies to keep them alive while they established their claim, and each day they used the gold they found to finance another day's digging. They were almost to the point of selling their claim to a developer when Rose Burcham, Charlie's wife, arrived and saved the day -- and their fortune. She wouldn't allow the sale, and found a way to finance the mine's development.

To her husband and his partners, this was a woman who was worth far more than her weight in gold. The Yellow Aster became one of the biggest gold mines on the Mojave.

The prospectors called their discovery the Rand. The town that sprung up became Rand Camp, then Randsburg. The mountains they were in became the Rand Mountains, and the owners changed the name of the mine to the Yellow Aster. The town and the area boomed. Soon over 2,500 people inhabited Randsburg making it a beehive of activity. Gold mines blossomed on the hillsides, and the boom was on.

The boom faded, as they do around here; but the town would not die. Both silver and tungsten were discovered in the nearby hills, just as the area was beginning to die. Today, a few hundred hardy souls remain and keep the spirit of Randsburg alive. The town survives off a little mining, and a little tourism, as do the nearby communities of Red Mountain and Johannesburg.

The heart of the town hasn't changed much since the first solid buildings went up. It's a little desert community built on the side of the mountain, a few strings of false-fronted buildings, lackadaisical sidewalks and collages of old cars, trucks and mining equipment. There isn't a straight street or right-angle corner in the entire town; built on the hillside, the roads meander with the lay of the land.

History is important here. A museum, open only on weekends, houses a surprising amount of mining artifacts and memorabilia. The general store has a long counter and malt machines dating from the 1930s. There's a rack with treasure maps, books on hunting gold and locally-published histories, all great reading.

There are a couple of good saloons still operating. Like the old days, here in Randsburg a good saloon is a lot more than a watering hole -- it's the heart of a community and a meeting place where business gets done, as well as socializing and problem-solving. The White House sits on the main drag (Butte Street), across from The Joint.

The Joint is a Randsburg landmark. Olga has run the place since the 1950s, and she's still working, long after her son has retired from a government job in Visalia. She opened The Joint in the 1950s with her husband, who died in 1969.

The Joint has an old rock wall for a front, backed by whitewashed clapboard, and an old, old neon sign hanging from the false front. Inside, there are no pretensions; it's just a bar, with a few tables and a wooden floor that echoes every footstep. Along the wall are maps to rockhound sites and gold mines, as well as pictures and newspaper clippings from better days. Olga works behind the bar that stretches along the left wall. It is dark, and cool, and the restrooms are down a tiny hall in the very back of the long, narrow building. Mining is still the number one topic in Randsburg. Not just gold; many local residents work at the 20 Mule Team Borax mine in Boron, or at the salt flats, or other mining operations on the western Mojave. Some still prospect, searching out the earth's treasures just as did the founders of this community a century ago.

This living ghost town is a pleasant afternoon's stop, just off U.S. highway 395 about 20 miles south of Ridgecrest, California. It can also be reached from state highway 14 by taking the Redrock-Randsburg Road a few miles south of Red Rock State Park

## **Business Meeting**

November 3, 2009, Greenhouse Café

Greg Mazourek called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

The first item on the agenda was a new storage site. Ron and Akiko have been looking into various sites locally. Price, security and cleanliness were the criteria. The club can rent a nice, clean and secure 5' X 10' space at the storage lot across from Home Depot for a very reasonable price, only \$10 per month more than what we are now paying. It is centrally located and has reasonable access hours. The downside is that it is on the second floor and you can't drive right up to the door. However, because of the much-higher prices on similar spaces at other storage lots, it was felt that with a couple wagons, this shouldn't be an issue. The final decision needs to be made at the December meeting as the current shed lease expires on January 1.

The Christmas Party will be held the 6<sup>th</sup> of December, a Sunday, at the clubhouse from 1pm to 5pm. As in the past, Sarita will bring the meats (probably ham, turkey or tri-tip or a combination) and potatoes and members will supply the sides and deserts. Karen Kubota will be coordinating the potluck portion of the dinner, so please contact her to advise what you will be bringing: 661.251.6045 or [karenkubota@aol.com](mailto:karenkubota@aol.com).

A Trip with Shep: The Ant Hill Field Trip is confirmed by Shep for Sunday, November 22. For details, see the article in the Pelonagram.

General Meeting Topic: General Meeting Topic: Author David Lynch will give a presentation on the San Andreas Fault.

Don't forget dues are due by January 1 and late February 1, 2010.

New Members: Barbara and Quinn Shaffer, Phil and Suzie Rizzo and Dick and Deana Cattermole. Welcome to the club.

At this time, there are no nominees for the upcoming election. Ron and Shep have stated that these aren't hard gigs to do and you don't have to feel highly experienced in order to be effective and both are more than willing to assist and advise on field trips, etc. So step on up...

Shep sent word (he was unable to attend) that the club needs to invest in Dexpan (see [Dexpaninternational.com](http://Dexpaninternational.com)) to help break up material at the claim. It is a non-explosive agent that swells and forces cracks to separate the rock. The cost is \$99.80 per 44# box plus shipping and handling. It should last for many years.

One of the potential new claims has been eliminated because part of it was found to already belong to another group. Diane Southwell is researching the Trona Onyx claim in Panamint Valley.

The November Federation Meeting in Visalia will be attended by Frank, representing the SPRC, on November 7.

The meeting was concluded at 8pm.

## November's Birthstone:

### Topaz

Topaz is the birthstone of November (yellow topaz) and December (blue topaz), it is a talisman for the sign of Sagittarius and the suggested anniversary gemstone for the 4th, 19th or 23rd year of marriage. See the [birthstone tables](#) for additional references to this stone.

The name topaz comes from the Sanskrit and means fire.

Topaz occurs in a wide range of colors including red, orange, peach, pink, gold, yellow, brown and clear and is found in Brazil, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Russia. Naturally pale to medium blue topaz is enhanced by irradiation to produce a more intense blue color.

Red and pink topaz gems were used in the jewelry of the 18th and 19th Century Russian Czarinas and is why topaz is sometimes called "Imperial Topaz".

The most famous topaz is actually a colorless topaz that was originally thought to be a diamond. It is a 1680 carat stone known as the "Braganza Diamond" set in the Portuguese Crown Jewels.

Another beautiful topaz is in the Green Vault in Dresden which has one of the world's most important gem collections.

Although topaz is a very hard gemstone, an 8 on the [Mohs scale](#) of hardness, it can be split with a single blow and should be protected from hard knocks.

### Folklore, Legend, and Healing Properties:

During the Middle Ages topaz was thought to heal both physical and mental disorders and prevent death.

The Greeks believed it had power to increase strength and to make its wearer invisible while the Romans believed it had power to improve eyesight. The Egyptians wore it as an amulet to protect them from injury.



---

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