

# The Sierra Pelonaagram



January 2012

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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.

### CFMS Shows

#### January 21 - 22: EXETER, CA

Tule Gem & Mineral Society,  
Visalia

Exeter Veteran's Memorial  
Building

Highway 65, 324 N Kaweah  
Avenue

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

Contact: Steve Hayward, (559)

734-3843, cell (559) 967-1084

Email: smhay734@aol.com

Website: www.tulegem.org

#### January 27 - 28\*: REDLANDS, CA

Mineralogical Society of Southern

California/Micro-Mineralogists

Pacific Micromount Conference

San Bernardino County Museum

2024 Orange Tree Drive

Hours: Fri. 4 - 10; Sat. 8 - 10

#### \*Field Trip Sunday, January 29

Contact: Dr. Robert Housley, (626)

697-4435

Email: rhousley@its.caltech.edu

Website: www.mineralsocal.org/  
micro/index.html

FEBRUARY 2012

#### February 17 - 26: INDIO, CA

San Gorgonio Mineral & Gem  
Society

Gem & Mineral Building, Bldg #1  
Arabia Street

Hours: 10 - 10 daily

Contact: Bert Grisham, (915) 849-  
1674

Email: bert67@verizon.net

MARCH 2012

#### March 2 - 4: NEWARK, CA

Mineral & Gem Society of Castro  
Valley

Newark Pavilion

6430 Thornton Avenue

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

Contact: Cathy Miller, (510) 887-  
9007

Email: info@mgscv.org

Website: www.mgscv.org

### January Birthdays

Starting the year off right; we wish  
you a great year to come.

Bonnie Forstner

Diane Henry

Earl Kangas

Barbara Shaffer

Quinn Shaffer

Bruce Velie

Austin Williams



### Officers:

President – Ron Lawrence

Vice-President – Bill Webber

Secretary: Heidi Webber

Treasurer – Greg Mazourek

Federation Director (CFMS/AFMS) – Shep Koss

### Chairpersons:

Pelogram Publisher, Editor – Heidi Webber

Claim - Mike Serino

Donation Rock Table - Akiko Strathmann

Field Trips – Greg Langewisch

Historian - Frank Humelbaugh

Hospitality – Evelyn Velie

Membership – Janelle Williams

Programs – Open

Publicity – Ron Strathmann

Storage - Vlad Litt

Sunshine - Evelyn Velie

Web site – Earl Kangas

Facebook--Greg Langewisch

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/>

## President's Message

Named after a mountain range just north of here the Sierra Pelona Rock Club is one of the best rock clubs in the California Federation of Mineralogical Society. Our club has been around for over fifty years and has been a standard for other clubs to look up to. In past years the club was very much involved in community events from park clean-ups to helping to move the Saugus train station to its present location.

All of our clubs' founders have gone on to other collecting areas but a few of the young people they brought into the club are still around like Mike Moreno and Frank Humelbaugh. The days of the SPRC are not over, the club continues to grow and the tradition of great programs and field trips goes on.

We not only have the travertine claim that has been in the club for well over thirty years but a new onyx claim. We have equipment for members to use and are setting up workshops and classes to train members in lapidary and mineral identification. It seems only a few years ago that I was shown the difference between agate and jasper and discovered that quartz, even though very pretty, wasn't the only thing to collect.

I've pretty much stuck with the collection aspect of the hobby but I want to challenge myself and the other officers of the club to find out the various interests of the members and to find ways to demonstrate and educate in all areas of the hobby.

Please, all members need to work with the officers and chairs to move this club forward for the benefit of all of us.

Ron Lawrence  
President, SPRC



## Drop of Water Test for Topaz

Quartz and topaz are not easy to separate by eye, and are sometimes impossible when the quartz is a true topaz color. There is a big difference in price between the two and anyone describing quartz as topaz, however innocently, may well be in trouble.

Topaz is quite a different mineral, which is harder than quartz. Because of this, a drop of water will not spread on topaz, but will spread on quartz.

Clean the stone as effectively as possible with a cloth or handkerchief to remove all trace of grease. It must be dry before the test. Then place a spot of clean water on it with a thin glass or metal rod. On stones with a hardness of less than 7 on the Mohs scale, the water is dispersed. On harder stones it will remain a globule. The harder the stone the more rounded will be the globule.

*Reference: MoRocks Newsletter*



## Pallasite Meteorites

The name Pallasite is after the German naturalist Peter Pallas (1741–1811), who studied in 1772 a specimen found earlier near Krasnoyarsk in the mountains of Siberia that had a mass of 680 kg. 680 kg is equal to about 1500 lbs. At that time the tales of meteorites falling to earth were considered fairytales. Pallasites are a rare type of meteorite. Pallasites contain peridot/olivine as well as nickel and iron. Only 61 are known to date, including 10 from Antarctica, with four being observed falls. The following four falls are in chronological order:

Mineo, Sicily, Italy. A luminous meteor was observed and an object seen to fall with a loud roar in May 1826. Only 46 g are preserved in collections.

Zaisho, Japan. 330 g were found on February 1, 1898, after the appearance of a fireball.

Marjalahti, Karelia, Russia. After the appearance of a bright meteor and detonations, a large mass was seen to fall and 45 kg were recovered in June 1902. At this date the fall site belonged to Finland, and the main mass of Marjalahti is now at the Geological Museum of the University of Helsinki.

Omolon, Magadan Region, Russia. A reindeer-breeder observed the fall on May 16, 1981, and found the 250 kg meteorite two years later. The fall was confirmed by a meteorological station that had observed a fireball on the same date.

This is a slice of the Esquel pallasite meteorite, clearly showing the large olivine crystals suspended in the metal matrix. This meteorite was found in Argentina.

*Reference: MoRocks Newsletter*



## The Agates of Northern Mexico

By Nova Wells

Did you happen to attend rock shows in the 50's and 60's and fall in love with the beautiful banded agates of Laguna and Coyamita? Did you dream of the day when you could take a trip to Mexico and hunt the agates yourself?

According to author Brad Cross, your best chance is to watch for estate sales from Texas rockhounds. The credit for discovering Mexican agates and Laguna, in particular, goes to Dr. Ralph Mueller and a reference published in *Lapidary Journal* in the late 1940's.

Most of the agates are named for the large ranches (Spanish land grants of over 35 million acres to seven families between 1884 and 1922) in the Mexican state of Chihuahua.



The state of Chihuahua includes migrating sand dunes, the Mexican portion of the Sonoran Desert (grassy plains) and igneous mountains overlaying limestone deposits. Mining and cattle ranching are the two primary businesses.

Each agate site produced distinctive banding, different from the others. Manganese compounds produced shades of violet and iron contributes reds and yellows.

When you first begin researching, it sounds like the supply of beautiful agates is never ending. They are produced in the gas pockets of volcanic flows that may be as thick as 500 feet and contain as many as 20 different flows.

More reading reveals that the agates occur in only the top layers, and not in all of them. Finally you learn that in the 40's and 50's when rockhounds first began collecting, the agates lay loose on the ground, product of countless years of weathering.

Once the ground surface had been cleared, local people began hand digging in the hard andesite matrix to free the agates. Most of the favorite and best known sites have been ex-hausted to the point only small and not particularly colorful agates are produced, if any. Geodes and crazy lace agate is still fairly plentiful.

The local people in Chihuahua are well aware of the value of the agates produced there, so don't kid yourself into thinking you can take a trip and get good agates cheaply! The mines are hand-dug with picks and shovels and rarely with bulldozers. Since they deal commercially with wholesalers they will probably not even show their best finds to the vacationing visitor.

Reference: *MoRocks Newsletter*



## January Birthstone

### Garnet

Garnet, the birthstone for January, signifies eternal friendship and trust and is the perfect gift for a friend. *Garnet*, derived from the word *granatum*, means seed, and is called so because of the gemstone's resemblance to a pomegranate seed. References to the gemstone dates back to 3100 B.C., when the Egyptians used garnets as inlays jewelry. *Garnet* is the name of a group of minerals that comes in a rainbow of colors, from the deep red of the pyrope garnet to the vibrant green of tsavorite. Today, the most important sources for garnet are Africa, Sri Lanka, and India.

Ref: *Americangemsociety.org*



## **SPRC Board of Directors Meeting**

Greenhouse Cafe

January 3, 2012

Attendees: Ron Lawrence, Vlad Litt, Greg Langewisch, Shep Koss, Mike Serino, Colleen Clough, Ron Strathmann, Akiko Strathmann, Karen Kubota, and Earl Kangas.

The meeting was brought to order by Ron Lawrence, President. Ron expressed his views on making the Club better and more enjoyable for members in 2012. Ron named committees, and suggested there may be some new ones that will get more members involved. One new committee suggested was a "Weekday Field Trip" committee.

Ron said the Club is still looking for a Programs chairperson.

There was a lot of discussion on providing incentives for members to wear Club shirts and their badge at various functions. It was finally approved that there would be an incentive for members to wear their badge at general meetings. Members who wear their badge at general meetings, and buy raffle table tickets will now get an extra ticket.

Ron Strathmann, Publicity chair, reported that he will be working with a local radio station to get some publicity for Club events.

It was agreed that the January general meeting will be a "Demo" format, but Shep said he will allow some supervised "hands on" with his equipment. There will be instructions on using equipment and how NOT to use equipment.

Ron Lawrence mentioned that we have a good supply for the donation rock table--for now, but anyone can donate items for the rock table. There was a suggestion that we buy more items at

Quartzite. Ron Strathmann mentioned we may be able to buy items for less at a dealer in Saugus, and the dealer handles a variety of materials we may be able to use for the Club. Ron S. said he will check into some pricing.

Vlad Litt has taken on the storage duties for the Club this year. Ron Lawrence outlined Vlad's duties.

Greg Langewisch is the new Field Trips chair. Greg said the field trip for January will be to the Rio Tinto Visitor Center at the Borax mine in Boron. The trip will take place on January 21st, and Greg will supply more info soon. Proposed field trip for February will be to Sheep Springs, and for March, Stoddard Wells. Earl Kangas said he will give Greg a copy of the Club's maps.

Mike Serino said he has some old rockhound magazines that he would like someone to scan for info that might be useful to the Club. Earl volunteered for the job.

Greg also edits the Facebook page for the Club. Earl Kangas, webmaster reported there are two links for Facebook on the home page of our web site.

Ron Lawrence asked if Earl could provide info on how many members who joined the Club during the last two or three years are still with us.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:30pm.