

The Sierra Pelonagram



November 2019

... 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.

Sierra Pelona Rock Club
General Meeting
Greenbriar Estates Clubhouse
October 15, 2019

The meeting was called to order by Bill Webber at 7:30. There was one guest and 19 members in attendance.

Bill spoke about our upcoming fundraiser weekend at Gilchrist Farms.

Julie Tinoco gave some information about the November 16 field trip to Kramer Corners. More information will be given as the date approaches.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 for the presentation by John Wheeler about the trip to the Silver Queen mine.



Gilchrist Farms Report

What a few days that was! You see, there was this fire in Tick Canyon. Which rapidly became a really big fire. Many club members were evacuated and some of us stayed—not always a smart move in a fire, but we were assured we would be OK by one of the firefighters.

If you were in an evacuation zone, you couldn't get back to your home if you left. Those that did evacuate, like Julie Tinoco, slept in their cars in a parking lot like thousands of other evacuees. Most roads were closed in the area and by late Friday afternoon (and before I lost cell service too, which has happened with each power outage so far) Bill and I decided to cancel the Gilchrist event. I wasn't even sure if they would be open as roads leading to them were also closed. Better luck next year!



November

Shana Brunes-Ruiz
Frank Humelbaugh
Nick Miller
Rati Strong
Diane Southwell

December

Mark Scott

Dues are due as of January 1 and late as of the February Board Meeting. The Holiday Party is a good time to pay, but Shana will be accepting payments at the November General Meeting.

Officers:

President – Bill Webber
Vice-President – Julie Tinoco
Secretary: Heidi Webber
Treasurer –Shana Brunes-Ruiz
Federation Director (CFMS/AFMS) --Evelyn Velie

Chairpersons:

Claim--Mike Serino
Donation Rock Table--Ron and Akiko Strathmann
Equipment--Bill Webber
Field Trips – Julie Tinoco
Historian -Open
Hospitality – Ron Rackliffe
Membership – Heidi Webber
Website-- Larry Holt
Pelonagram Publisher, Editor – Heidi Webber
Programs –Tina White
Publicity –Bruce Velie
Sunshine--Brigitte Mazourek

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

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Or e-mail: hwebber@pacbell.net

Visit the SPRC website www.sierrapelona.com



Hi All

It is so hard to believe that the year is almost over! Thanksgiving is almost upon us and before it, Christmas and the New Year.

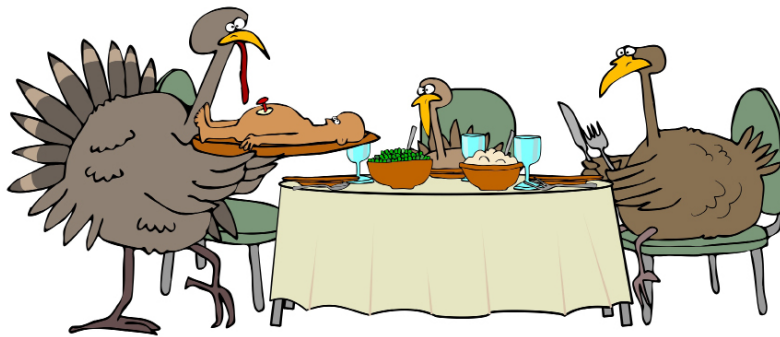
This is the time to start thinking of our elections and new leadership. A good strong team makes for a good strong club. So think about what you can do to keep us that way. Joining the board isn't all that hard, and so many of you can bring new ideas to keep us strong. And you will never be flying alone, all you need is to ask and we will have your back. So think about it! We need you!

Another way to keep the club strong is dues. I know, that nasty word, but we are not only looking at the Holiday Season, we are looking at insurance coming due, equipment maintenance and of course paying dues to the CFMS, our parent organization. So please, take a moment and mail Shana your dues check, or catch her at the November or December meetings.

The Holiday Dinner is on December 14 and this year it is being held at my motorcycle club's clubhouse. It is a building on Sierra Highway that is over a century old; some of you may sort of know it, there is a life-sized cement camel kneeling in front. He may be wearing a hat, lei or a Santa Hat, depending on the time of year and the whim of his dresser. This is a potluck and the club will supply all you need to eat on, plus turkey and ham. You bring the rest.

So I hope to see you all at the next General Meeting on November 19.

Bill Webber
President, SPRC



Sierra Pelona Rock Club

Board Meeting

November 5, 2019

Greenbriar Estates Clubhouse

The meeting was called to order at 7:05pm. In attendance were Bill and Heidi Webber, Julie Tinoco and Ron Lawrence. Minutes: Julie motioned to approve as presented. Heidi seconded. Motion passed.

Treasurer Report: Bill motioned to approve as presented. Julie seconded. Motion passed.

Elections will be held at the December meeting, which is also the Holiday party.

Julie said she is in the process of planning a special field trip on April 18, which will be announced at a later date. The November 16 field trip is to Kramer Corners. More detail will be given at the November General Meeting, with follow-up emails as needed.

Holiday Dinner: Will be held December 14, 2019. The address is 13800 Sierra Highway, Agua Dulce, CA 91390. The club supplies a turkey and ham, all paper goods and plastic cutlery, table covers, etc. The rest is potluck. A signup sheet will be supplied.

Elections will also be held at the dinner. If you are interested in holding an office, please contact Heidi Webber. The position is for one year. There will also be a Silent Rock Auction and a raffle for rock or lapidary-related items.

Membership: There were no new applications.

Dues: Dues are due as of January 1 and late as of the February Board Meeting. The Holiday Party is a good time to pay, but Shana will be accepting payments at the November General Meeting.

The Craft Faire at Placerita Canyon Nature Center is being held December 7 & 8. You make your own wreaths, yule logs, and other crafts. All supplies are provided. This is the only fund-raiser of the year for the docents.

With no further business, Julie motioned to adjourn. Heidi seconded, passed. The meeting was adjourned at 8:25.

Respectfully Submitted
Heidi Webber
Secretary, SPRC



The Altamura Man

The calcite-encrusted skeleton of an ancient human, still embedded in rock deep inside a cave in Italy, has yielded the oldest Neanderthal DNA ever found.

These molecules, which could be up to 170,000 years old, could one day help yield the most complete picture yet of Neanderthal life, researchers say.

Although modern humans are the only remaining human lineage, many others once lived on Earth. The closest extinct relatives of modern humans were the Neanderthals, who lived in Europe and Asia until they went extinct about 40,000 years ago.

Recent findings revealed that Neanderthals interbred with ancestors of today's Europeans when modern humans began spreading out of Africa — 1.5 to 2.1 percent of the DNA of anyone living outside Africa today is Neanderthal in origin.

In 1993, scientists found an extraordinarily intact skeleton of an ancient human amidst the stalactites and stalagmites of the limestone cave of Lamalunga, near Altamura in southern Italy — a discovery they said had the potential to reveal new clues about Neanderthals.

"The Altamura man represents the most complete skeleton of a single non-modern human ever found," study co-author Fabio Di Vincenzo, a paleoanthropologist at Sapienza University of Rome, told Live Science. "Almost all the

Altamura Man is the oldest Neanderthal to have his DNA extracted.

The remains of the so-called Altamura Man, now considered a Neanderthal, encrusted with calcite formations in Altamura, Italy. Credit: Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities, Superintendent of the Archeology of Puglia.

bony elements are preserved and undamaged."

The Altamura skeleton bears a number of Neanderthal traits, particularly in the face and the back of the skull. However, it also possesses features that usually aren't seen in Neanderthals — for instance, its brow ridges were even more massive than those of Neanderthals. These differences made it difficult to tell which human lineage the Altamura man might have belonged to. Moreover, the Altamura skeleton remains partially embedded in rock, making it difficult to analyze.

Now, new research shows that DNA from a piece of the skeleton's right shoulder blade suggests the Altamura fossil was a Neanderthal. The shape of this piece of bone also looks Neanderthal, the researchers said.

In addition, the scientists dated the skeleton to about 130,000 to 170,000 years old. This makes it the oldest Neanderthal from which DNA has ever been extracted. (These bones are not the oldest known Neanderthal fossils — the oldest ones ever found are about 200,000 years old. This isn't the oldest DNA ever extracted from a human, either; that accolade goes to 400,000-year-old DNA collected from relatives of Neanderthals.)

The bone is so old that its DNA is too degraded for the researchers to sequence the fossil's genome — at least with current technology. However, they noted that next-generation DNA-sequencing technologies might be capable of such a task, which "could provide important results on the Neanderthal genome," study co-author David Caramelli, a molecular anthropologist at the University of Florence in Italy, told Live Science.

Whereas previous fragmentary fossils of different Neanderthals provided a partial picture of what life was like for Neanderthals, the Altamura skeleton could help paint a more complete portrait of a Neanderthal — for instance, it could reveal more details about Neanderthals' genetics, anatomy, ecology and lifestyle, the researchers said.

"We have a nearly complete human fossil skeleton to describe and study in detail. It is a dream," Di Vincenzo said. "His morphology offers a rare glimpse on the earliest phase of the evolutionary history of Neanderthals and on one of the most crucial events in human evolution. He can help us better understand when — and, in particular, how — Neanderthals evolved."

Can You Extract DNA from a Fossil?

DNA can occasionally be extracted from very old remains that haven't fossilized or haven't fossilized completely. Same thing with Neanderthals, whose DNA has been extracted from remains that have not yet fossilized. When it comes to very old fossils, such as dinosaur bones, there is no DNA to find. It's all rock.

The study was published in the *Journal of Human Evolution*.

Read more at <https://www.geologyin.com/2017/02/oldest-neanderthal-dna-found-in-italian.html#9JLUuocKEYFJM9Q.99>



Rose Quartz Field Trip

by Julie Tinoco

It was a beautiful day on Saturday, October 12, 2019 when Sierra Pelona Rock Club, together with the Antelope Valley Gem and Mineral Club, went on its field trip to collect Rose Quartz.

We went to the Southern Sierra Nevada mountain range, in the Mojave Desert, located in Kern County.

Both clubs met up in Wofford Heights, before heading up the mountain to look for rose quartz.

The weather was comfortable, just perfect for the hard work that it takes to hammer and chisel pieces of rose and purple quartz from the mountainside. There were about 20 of us combined. It was great visiting with those that we don't see often and meeting some rock hounders for the first time.

A great time was had by all with plenty of rose quartz to last until the next trip!

Many thanks to Ruth Hidalgo for getting permission from the property owner and setting up the trip.



The Holiday Dinner will be held December 14, 2019. The address is 13800 Sierra Highway, Agua Dulce, CA 91390. The club supplies a turkey and ham, all paper goods and plastic cutlery, table covers, etc. The rest is potluck. A signup sheet will be supplied. The dinner is for members and their guests only. Photos below are of the site for ease in identifying the building--and the camel!

Elections will also be held at the dinner. If you are interested in holding an office, please contact Heidi Webber. All 5 positions are open each year. The term is for one year.

There will be a Silent Rock Auction and a raffle for rock or lapidary-related items. This was a great success at the Summer Picnic and we would like to do it again. You can donate hammers, picks, specimens, collecting buckets, safety glasses, aprons, gloves, finished pieces and so on. You get the picture. This is a fund raiser so bring your stuff and also a check or smaller bills.

