

# The Sierra Pelonagram



May 2020

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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.

**Due to Covid-19 Isolation**  
No meetings were held in May. No  
minutes generated



#### **News from the Claim**

Bill and I were recently at the claim to install a new fire pit. Now you won't need to worry about the side of the pit falling apart and dodging hot coals. When we pulled into the claim, we saw a trailer and tent set up. So who was visiting us?

We were happy to meet Patty Miller and Mark Murodian, Tule Gem and Mineral Society out of Visalia, along with their friend Michael. They were in the process of pulling a huge boulder from the pit and getting it up a ramp into their van. It was quite a process but got done. What a beauty! Mark said this would be a specimen piece for their property.



#### **Birthdays**

##### **May Birthdays**

Therese Colvin

Mike Serino

##### **June Birthdays**

Connie Flores-Reisbeck

Tim Gunter

Paul Hobbs

Akiko Strathmann

Heidi Webber

Janelle Williams

Dianne Wohlleben



#### **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--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**

**Newhall, Ca. 91322**

Or e-mail: [hwebber@pacbell.net](mailto:hwebber@pacbell.net)

Visit the SPRC website [www.sierrapelona.com](http://www.sierrapelona.com)



## Message from the President



Hi Everyone,

I trust you are all well and not too bored. I have been working through the “Honey Do” list Heidi has been keeping for many years. It still seems pretty darned long, though! We have been keeping busy while adhering to the Stay at Home order for the most part. Heidi and I went to the claim to install a bright new fire pit we bought many moons ago and felt this would be a good healthy and isolated project to do before it got too hot. Photos follow.

When we got to the claim, a couple members from the Tule Gem and Mineral Society were there pulling out the largest travertine boulder we have seen come out of that pit! They had a wench to pull it up a ramp of their van to get it home.

I know a few of you are doing your collecting in a safe manner also. Keeping active safely is so important right now. It looks like any collecting or gatherings of the club are on hold at least until August. We are on summer break at that time and our next meeting would be September in normal circumstances. At this time, we know nothing! As soon as meetings are allowed and the clubhouse is available, we will let everyone know.

So in the meantime, stay busy and stay healthy!

Bill Webber  
President, SPRC



## What is Petoskey Stone?

Petoskey stone is a rock and a fossil, often pebble-shaped, that is composed of a fossilized rugose coral, *Hexagonaria percarinata*.

## Why is it called the Petoskey Stone?

The name Petoskey Stone likely came about because it was found and sold as a souvenir from the Petoskey, Michigan area. The name Petoskey appears to have originated late in the 18th century. Its roots stem from an Ottawa Indian legend. In 1965, Petoskey stone was named the state stone of Michigan.



## How was the Petoskey stone formed?

So, what is a Petoskey stone? It is a fossil colonial coral that lived in the warm Michigan seas during the Devonian time around 350 million years ago. The name *Hexagonaria* (meaning six sides) *percarinata* was designated by Dr. Edwin Stumm in 1969 because of his extensive knowledge of fossils. This type of fossil is found only in the rock strata called the Gravel Point



Formation. This formation is part of the Traverse Group of the Devonian Age. The stones were formed as a result of glaciation, in which sheets of ice plucked stones from the bedrock, grinding off their rough edges and depositing them in the northwestern (and some in the northeastern) portion of Michigan's lower peninsula. In those same areas of Michigan, complete fossilized coral colony heads can be found in the source rocks for the Petoskey stones.

During the Devonian time, Michigan was quite different. Geographically, what is now Michigan was near the equator. A warm shallow sea covered the State. This warm, sunny sea was an ideal habitat for marine life. A Devonian reef had sheltered clams, cephalopods, corals, crinoids, trilobites, fish, and many other life forms.

The soft living tissue of the coral was called a polyp. At the center of this was the area where food was taken in, or the mouth. This dark spot, or eye, has been filled with mud of silt that petrified after falling into the openings. Surrounding the openings were tentacles that were used for gathering food and drawing it into the mouth. The living coral that turned into the Petoskey stone thrived on plankton that lived in the warm sea.

Calcite, silica and other minerals have replaced the first elements of each cell. Each separate chamber, then, on each Petoskey stone, was a member of a thriving colony of living corals. For that reason the Petoskey stone is called a colony coral.

### Where can you find the Petoskey stone?

Petoskey stones can be found on various beaches and inland locations in Michigan, with many of the most popular being those surrounding Petoskey and Charlevoix. The movement of the frozen lake ice acting on the shore during the winters is thought to turn over stones at the shore of Lake Michigan, exposing new Petoskey stones at the water's edge each spring. Petoskey Stones are also commonly found in Iowa, Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, New York, Canada, Germany, England, and even Asia.

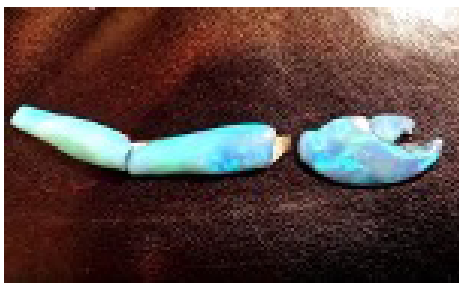
Pleistocene glaciers (about two million years ago) plucked Petoskey stones from the bedrock and spread them over Michigan and surrounding areas. This is why Petoskey stones can be found in gravel pits and along beaches far from the Petoskey area.

The best time to find the Petoskey stones is early spring after the ice on Grand Traverse Bay has melted along the shore. Each year as the ice is broken up and the winds push the ice in different directions, it pushes a new crop of Petoskey stones towards the shores.

*Reference: The Amazing Geologist*



### How Do Opalized Fossils Form?



*This is a crab claw that has been opalized in the same way that petrified wood is. This is a very rare and awesome find. Photo: Peter Cuneo*

Opals are highly sought-after rainbow precious stones that are showcased in jewelry or decorative art.

These are no ordinary fossils (if there is such a thing): these incredible relics are made of solid opal, sometimes with rainbows of shimmering color.

Opal forms in cavities within rocks. If a cavity has formed because a bone, shell or pinecone was buried in the sand or clay that later became the rock, and conditions are right for opal formation, then the opal forms a fossil replica of the original object that was buried. We get opalized fossils of two kinds:

#### 1. Internal details not preserved:

Opal starts as a solution of silica in water. If the silica solution fills an empty space left by a shell, bone etc. that has rotted away – like jelly poured into a mold – it may harden to form an opalized cast of the original object. Most

opalized shell fossils are a 'jelly mold' fossils – the outside shape is beautifully preserved, but the opal inside doesn't record any of the creature's internal structure.

#### 2. Internal details preserved:

If the buried organic material hasn't rotted away and a silica solution soaks into it, when the silica hardens it may form an opal replica of the internal structure of the object. This happens sometimes with wood or bone.

*Reference: The Amazing Geologist*

