

Rockonteur

Volume 28, Issue 12

December 2018



NAME THAT ROCK

The banner photo (above) changes each month - can you identify what type of rock it is? Answer is on last page but don't peek until you've tried to guess!

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HOLIDAY DINNER

At the end of every year, we gather to enjoy good company, reminisce on fun field trips and all the things we learned at the monthly meetings, enjoy good food by the Culinary Arts Academy, and have tons of fun during the gift exchange game!

*Join us this year on
**December 17 at
the Culinary Arts Academy,
6:30 pm***

for more fun! Bring a gift if you want to participate in the gift exchange game.

The 2019 Club Officers will be thanked and the 2019 Club Officers will be installed. Without their selfless service, we would not have a club. Be sure to show them your appreciation during this event!

thank
you!

&





Santa Lucia Rockhounds (SLR)

is a non-profit public benefit corporation with the specific purpose to promote the study of mineralogy, including (but not limited to) the fields of lapidary, metal working, jewelry design and fabrication, geology and conducts field trips for collecting and education. We encourage learning and good citizenship in a congenial atmosphere. We respect both private and public property, and we strive to protect natural resources. Meetings are held during the third Monday of each month, except December, at the Templeton Community Center.

We are a member of the California Federation of Mineralogical Societies (CFMS) and affiliated with the American Federation on Mineralogical Societies (AFMS). Santa Lucia Rockhounds, Inc. is also a member of the American Lands Access Association (ALAA).

Annual dues are \$20 for the first adult and \$8 each for every additional member of the same household. Annual dues are payable between August 1 and the third Monday of December, in person at club meetings or by mail to P.O. Box 1672, Paso Robles, CA 93447.

The Rockonteur

This is the official monthly newsletter of the SLR and an independent publication containing news and information consistent with the mission of SLR and of interests to its members. Circulation is approximately 100 copies per issue.

Member submissions are encouraged and may be sent to the editor. We reserve the right to accept or refuse submissions inconsistent with the objectives and purpose of the SLR. Submissions may be edited as needed without consent. Deadline are due by midnight of the last day of the month but early submissions are highly appreciated and strongly encouraged.

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Birthstones



DEC



December's birthstones are tanzanite, zircon and turquoise – all of them known for the beautiful shades of blue.

The common story of **tanzanite's** discovery tells of Maasai herders who found blue crystals in the Merelani Hills near Arusha, Tanzania, while tending livestock in 1967. Tanzanite may not have the long history of other gems, but with such limited supplies and rapidly growing popularity, it is highly prized for its rare beauty.

Zircon is the oldest mineral on earth, dating back more than 4.4 billion years. During the Middle Ages, people believed that zircon could induce sound sleep, ward off evil and bring prosperity and wisdom. Blue zircon, in particular, was popular during Victorian times, and frequently adorned English estate jewelry from the 1880s.

The earliest evidence comes from ancient Egyptian tombs, which contain elaborate turquoise jewelry dating back to 3000 BCE. The oldest turquoise mines are located in the Sinai Peninsula of Egypt. Egyptians called turquoise mefkat, which meant "joy" and "delight."

Learn more fascinating information on these three stones at: <https://www.americangemsociety.org/page/decemberbirthstones>

Words from the President

*After the much needed rain dries up and the skies turn blue,
you should be ready to explore and uncover
new earth treasures in our area.*

*Winter months can be long and cold so I recommend
you take a trip in January to Quartzsite, Arizona.
Thousands of people from all over the world gather to socialize.
sell their wares, and go on field trips in the desert.*

*Many of our members make it a yearly
vacation and I hear they have a wonderful time.
Our January meeting on Monday, January 21, 2019,
will be a Show N Tell program. Last year we
asked you to bring in your favorite rock and talk about it.*

*This is a good way to get acquainted and share a story
or just relax with friends. As your President for 2018, I want to
thank all our Board Officers, Committee Chairpersons and
Club Membership for all your support and contributions to keep
our club alive and well. It has been a pleasure to work with
you, and with your help, 2019 will be Spectacular!
We wish you all a joyous and Healthy Holiday Season*

*Rock on Christmas
- Mary*

CLUB MEETINGS & EVENTS

December 3 @ 7pm **Board Meeting**

Rabobank Meeting Room, Templeton
NO DECEMBER GENERAL MEETINGS

Holiday Dinner **December 17 from 6 to 9 PM**

The menu will include a buffet featuring salmon and tri-tip. Adults will cost \$15 per person and children under 16 will cost \$10 per person. Culinary Arts Academy in Paso Robles. Must RSVP. Bring a gift if you want to play the gift exchange game.

January 3 @ 7pm **Board Meeting**

Rabobank Meeting Room, Templeton

January 17 @ 7pm **General Meeting**

Show & Tell
Templeton Community Center

2019 CLUB OFFICERS NOMINEES

President

Mary Caparone

Senior Director

Mary Beatty

VP Membership

Cathy Clarke

Assisted by Karen Hilchey

VP Education

John McCabe

VP Communications

Amy Phillips

Assisted by Ron Rusconi

Secretary

Rachael Denny

Treasurer

Laurie Wylie

Junior Director

Lisa King

Past President

Tina Clark

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Pete Duckworth

Merchandise

David Nelson

CFMS Director

Wayne Mills

Museum

Barbara Bilyeu

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Rock & Gem Show

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Library

Barbara Bilyeu

A 5,655-Carat Emerald Just Turned Up in Zambia

[Story Christian Cotroneo, MNN.com](#)



The recently unearthed Lion Emerald boasts 5,655 glimmering carats. (Photo: Gemfields)

If there ever was a real Emerald City on this planet, it might just be in the heart of Zambia, where a certain mine seems to be producing one bewitching stone after another.

The latest? A 5,655-carat stunner that weighs around 2.5 pounds and glows so blue-green, you might swear it has its own source of unearthly light.

According to a press release from Gemfields — the company that owns the mines in Kagem, Zambia — the emerald was discovered Oct. 29 by geologist Debapriya Rakshit and emerald miner Richard Kapeta.

"The discovery of this exceptional gemstone is such an important moment for both for us and for the emerald world in general," gemologist Elena Basaglia noted in the release.

The find has been christened Inkalamu, which means Lion in the local Bemba language, and it's estimated to be worth around \$2.5 million.

Although it may seem like only the latest in a line of eye-popping emeralds recently unearthed, the truth is these stones are very rare — making them even more precious than diamonds. But emeralds also get a lot of at-

tention for their sheer size — typically growing much larger than other precious stones. In fact, for all its glorious girth, the Lion isn't even close to the biggest emerald we've seen.

Back in 2010, a 6,225-carat emerald was hauled out of the same Gemstones mine. Appropriately, it was dubbed Elephant. But even the Elephant seems downright pipsqueakian compared to the beastly Bahia Emerald — an 800-pound stone that's said to contain about 180,000 carats in emeralds.

(Don't start planning the heist yet. It's also said to be cursed.)

Of course, not even a Kardashian could bear the strain of that kind of bling. Most of the big emeralds eventually fall to the gemcutter's saw.

And in turn, they will become spectacles in their own right.

Consider the emerald-encrusted tiara that cast its own spectral light at last month's royal nuptials between Princess Eugenie and Jack Brookbank. No less than the queen herself lent the Greville Emerald Kokoshnik Tiara — adorned with 12 of the glittering stones — to Eugenie for the special day.

And among U.S. royalty, Jacqueline Kennedy's storied engagement ring glimmers with 2.8-carat emeralds alongside a pair of diamonds.

Likewise, the mighty Lion will also soon be tamed. Gemstones plans to break it down into several smaller emeralds that will be auctioned off in Singapore in November.

"We expect a number of large, fine-quality cut emeralds to be borne of the Inkalamu crystal," Adrian Banks of Gemfields explained.



The 25.86-carat Marcial de Gomar Star Emerald is believed to be the only double-sided star emerald in the world. (Photo: Guernsey's)



Photo by the [Government of Alberta/flickr](#)

THIS "MUMMIFIED" DINOSAUR IS ALMOST PERFECTLY PRESERVED

By [Reuben Westmaas](#)

Since the dawn of paleontology, scientists have struggled to confirm what dinosaurs and other prehistoric creatures may have looked like when they were alive. Now, a team at Royal Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology in Alberta, Canada has brought us closer than ever to understanding our massive planetary ancestors.

They discovered a dinosaur fossil that has guts, armor, and even some skin intact. In fact, it is so well-preserved, some have dubbed it a "dinosaur mummy."

Meet *Borealopelta markmitchelli*.

The discovery of the dino-mummy was purely accidental. On an otherwise-average afternoon in 2011 at Alberta's Millennium Mine, heavy-equipment operator Shawn Funk was manning an excavator when he hit something hard. Funk was used to striking minerals or old marine fossils, but this was different. Over 7,000 man-hours later, the discovery now lies in the Royal Tyrrell Museum of Paleontology. It's an incredibly well-preserved armored herbivore called a nodosaur (a close relative of ankylosaurs, those spiky armored low-riding lizards with a mace-like tail) that lived 110 million years ago. A team carved through a 15,000-pound rock to dig out the dinosaur's body, from its snout to its hips.

By the way, those 7,000 man-hours we

mentioned? That was all one man: Royal Tyrrell Museum technician Mark Mitchell. Over the course of six years, he painstakingly chipped away the stone, spending eight months on the skull alone. But it wasn't until after he was finished that he learned his work would be immortalized in the name of the creature.

Borealopelta markmitchelli translates as "Northern shield of Mark Mitchell," and when the preparator found out, "I was very excited ... I put my hands up in the air and cheered." So, why was *Borealopelta* so intact while with most other fossils paleontologists find are just a few teeth or bones?

Scientists believe that after death, it was buried so quickly under the sea that minerals infused its skin and body parts to preserve it. Then, centuries upon centuries of rock and sediment piled up on top.

In an interview with National Geographic, University of Bristol paleobiologist Jakob Vinther was shocked by the quality of the specimen. It was in such good shape, Vinther says it looks like it "might have been walking around a couple of weeks ago ... I've never seen anything like this."

Story from: <https://curiosity.com/topics/this-mummified-dinosaur-is-almost-perfectly-preserved-curiosity>

Submitted by Wayne Mills

NOVEMBER 5, 2018

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

The meeting opened at 7:03 P.M. with the Pledge of Allegiance. Present were Mary Caparone, Rachael Denny, Tina Clark, Lisa King, Galen Moyer, Barbara and Gene Bilyeu, Kristie Terry, John McCabe, Roberta Hall, Ron Rusconi, and Mary Beatty.

The minutes of the Club's October meetings were approved by the Board.

Correspondence: the Club received the AFMS newsletter, an e-mail reminder that it is time to renew the domain name (which has been done), and an e-mail from Kyle Womanek inviting the Club to participate in a Pioneer Day-related fundraiser in Santa Margarita on May 25-27. Mary Caparone will forward this e-mail to the Board for further consideration.

Board election: The Club's annual election will take place at this month's general meeting, and the slate of officers awaiting approval is as follows: President-Mary Caparone, Vice-President of Communications-Amy Phillips (assisted by Ron Rusconi), Vice-President of Membership-Cathy Clarke (assisted by Karen Hilchey), Vice-President of Education-John McCabe, Treasurer-Lori Wylie, Secretary-Rachael Denny, Senior Director-Mary Beatty, Junior Director-Lisa King, Past President-Tina Clark.

There was some discussion of possibly amending the by-laws in order to create a position of Future President, or President-Elect, and there will, very likely, be further discussion of this possibility in the future.

Membership: Dues need to be paid by the end of the month, and Galen Moyer will remind everyone at the general meeting. The Club's website will need a link to the 2019 membership list.

Juniors: John McCabe reported that he will not be able to attend this month's general

meeting. David Nelson will give a presentation on fluorescent minerals for the Junior members, but he will need some help. John also proposed buying backpacks for the Junior members, as well as boxes for their collections. Tina Clark moved to approve the purchase, Lisa King seconded the motion, and the proposal was approved by the Board.

Treasurer's Report: Last month, the Club's total income was \$560. Tina also mentioned that the Club has received a request for form 109 for 2016. At present, the Club's end-of-year financial report does not include interest income. Tina made a motion to add the interest income to the report, and to streamline some of the categories into a simple profit/loss statement. Lisa King seconded the motion, and the changes were approved by the Board.

Tina also brought up the fact that the Club's CD ends on December 19th, and that, if it rolls over, it will earn 1.5% interest over the next 12 months. After some discussion, Galen Moyer moved to let the CD roll over for another 12 months, Barbara Bilyeu seconded the motion, and the action was approved by the Board.

Programs: Gene Bilyeu reported that the featured speaker for this month's general meeting will be Bruce Mundt, who will talk about his favorite collecting sites in the Western states. In December, we have the Club's annual holiday dinner, with the installation of next year's officers, and January will be the Club's annual Show and Tell. Ron Rusconi suggested a possible future field trip to Skyline Road, off Highway 41.

The Club's annual holiday dinner will take place on December 17th at the Culinary Arts Academy, from 6:00 to 9:00 P.M. There will a buffet dinner with Salmon and tri-tip, followed

(Continued on page 8)

by the installation of next year's officers, and the traditional gift exchange. Anyone who has not yet signed up for the dinner will have a chance to do so at the general meeting.

Special note: It should also be mentioned that Cliff Brewen will have his annual tailgate sale on November 17th, starting at 8:00 A.M.

Rock Show: It appears that there will not be a Show Committee meeting this month. Kim Noyes is looking into which dealers to invite, and how much space to give them. It was suggested that the applications should be sent out as soon as possible, that prospective dealers be notified that the dates have changed, and that the postcards be prepared. It was also suggested that, at future Board meetings, the second hour be given over to discussing the show. The proposed theme for the upcoming show is crystals.

The meeting adjourned at 8:48 P.M.

Submitted by Rachael Denny, Secretary



WATCH VIDEO (10:47 min) here: <https://youtu.be/QdNblaCqLlk>

Asteroid-sampling mission zeroes in on tiny space rock

US spacecraft aims to return the largest trove of space dirt to Earth since NASA's final Apollo mission in the 1970s.



The OSIRIS-REx spacecraft is named after an Egyptian god of the underworld. Credit: NASA

For the second time this year, a spacecraft is about to partner with an asteroid in an intimate dance.

In June, [the Japanese mission Hayabusa2 arrived at the 1-kilometre-wide asteroid Ryugu](#), from whose dusty surface it aims to scoop a sample early next year. On 3 December, the NASA spacecraft OSIRIS-REx will reach an even tinier space rock, named Bennu, in pursuit of the same goal.

OSIRIS-REx will spend the next few weeks buzzing over Bennu's poles and equator, gathering information to estimate its mass. If all goes well, on 31 December the probe will move even closer to its target — and the 500-metre-wide, diamond-shaped Bennu will become one of the smallest planetary objects ever orbited by a spacecraft.

In July 2020, after a year and a half of in-depth study, OSIRIS-REx will lower itself all the way to Bennu's surface, stick out a robotic arm and suction up at least 60 grams of asteroid dirt to bring home. If the dirt arrives on Earth in 2023 as planned, it will be the largest planetary sample retrieved since the last Apollo astronauts departed the Moon in 1972.

Finish reading story here: <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-018-07563-y>

Submitted by Rhonda Cooper

NOVEMBER 19, 2018

GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 PM by President Mary Caparone, who led the flag salute. This was followed by the badge check, performed by Frank Imhoof, and the celebration of November birthdays and anniversaries. Visitors were introduced and welcomed.

NOMINEES for club officers for 2019 were announced by Mary Caparone and voted on by acclamation. They are: President - Mary Caparone; Vice President of Communications - Amy Phillips, assisted by Ron Rusconi; Vice President of Education - John McCabe; Vice President of Membership - Kathy Clarke, assisted by Karen Hilchey; Secretary - Rachael Denny; Treasurer - Laurie Wylie; Senior Director - Mary Beatty; Junior Director - Lisa King; Past President - Tina Clark.

Mary thanked all officers from 2018 for their leadership, knowledge and generosity. The new Board will be installed at the December meeting.

MEMBERSHIP - Galen reminded people that dues are due for 2019. Lisa King counted around 56 people present.

JUNIOR ROCKHOUNDS - In the absence of John McCabe, Mary presented membership certificates and some badges to several of the Junior Rockhounds, after which the Juniors then went with David Nelson into the other room for a session on fluorescent minerals.

DECEMBER MEETING - Mary reminded the group that Julie Cannon and Brenda Obert were taking money for the dinner at the Culinary Arts Academy in Paso Robles.

PROGRAM - Gene Bilyeu introduced Bruce Mundt from Cambria, who gave a lively talk on four of his favorite collecting areas. They included Porcellanite from near Miles, Montana; Ventifacts from the Red Desert in

Wyoming; Grape Agates from the San Rafael Swell in Utah; and Banded Ironstone Formations (BIF's) from the North Platte River in Wyoming. He offered free samples to club members from several of these locations.

SHOW - Kim Noyes announced that the Show would be the weekend of April 13-14, 2019, a week before Easter. The show theme will be crystals, and Kim is looking for volunteers to help with the show. Don Huntington made a plea for someone to help with the People's Choice Awards for show exhibits. Member Mark Nelson brought a slant-face exhibit case to give to anyone who wanted to take it and fix it up for exhibiting. Thank you, Mark!

DRAWING - Karen Clark announced the drawing.

LIBRARY - Barbara Bilyeu announced that there were subscription postcards for Rock and Gem available at the library table.

AUCTION - Pete Duckworth announced the silent auction.

BRAG TABLE - Galen Moyer exhibited a fine collection of agates and thundereggs from Northern Ankara, Turkey.

CFMS - Wayne Mills reported on the annual meeting of CFMS directors in Visalia. Items of note included the need for a new legal advisor following the passing of the former advisor; Jim Brace-Thompson will continue as advisor to the Junior Rockhounds of America; Tony Fender will be president in 2019; and there are hosts for the next two CFMS shows in 2019 and 2020.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:22 PM.

Submitted by Barbara Bilyeu, filling in for Rachael Denny.



P.O. Box 1672

Paso Robles, CA 93447

PIETERSITE

"Pietersite is a rare dark-gray or reddish breccia aggregate (rock made up of fragments embedded in a matrix), comprised mostly of hawk's eye and tiger's eye. Pietersite from Namibia was first described in 1962 by Sid Pieters, who named it in his father's honor. The term "pietersite" is now used as a general term to describe brecciated tiger's eye." For more info: <https://www.gemselect.com/gem-info/pietersite/pietersite-info.php>