

The MOROKS NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2016

The Monrovia Rockhounds founded 1957

Volume 59, Issue 12

Upcoming Meetings

November Board Meeting, December 6th
2 pm at 224 Oak Ave.
Monrovia, Ca. 91016

General Meeting, November 15th
6:30 pm Coco's Restaurant
1150 W. Colorado Blvd. in Arcadia, CA 91007
For the Moroks Holiday Dinner
Please come and join us!

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT: Jo Anna Ritchey

**VICE
PRESIDENT:** Thomas Witt

TREASURER: Jim Lloyd

SECRETARY: Coleen Chestnut

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A WORD FROM THE PREZ

Jo Anna Ritchey, President

November and December are a busy time of year. I went to the Fall Business Meeting (see report in bulletin) and had a good time catching up. Part of the entertainment was a talk by Jim Brace-Thompson on Rockhounding in Scotland. He had to go to Scotland last year because his daughter got married at the Courthouse and this year decided she wanted a church wedding. He went rockhounding with the Edinburgh Club and to went to see mineral collections in a couple of museums. Very fascinating. Shows that you can rockhound in other countries.

Nov. 19th, I went to Jewel Tunnel this morning. What a wonderful place. They have re-arranged it a little, so everything was really displayed well. JTI was very busy during the Open House. We did some shopping, of course, as well as catching up with friends. I am so glad they have kept up the tradition.

Attention All Members

2017 Membership Dues

Start thinking about paying your 2017 Dues! For existing members, remember that dues are \$20 for the calendar year. Because we won't have an official meeting in December, if paying in person you have the next meeting in January and February to get your dues paid. Paying by check, mail to

MOROK'S

P.O. Box 553 Monrovia, Ca. 91017

Thank You

Update on the Mojave Trails National Monument (MTNM) Management Plan.

As many Rockhounds are aware by now, during the interim period while a Management Plan is being drafted for the MTNM, state BLM Director Jerry Perez authorized rock Collecting to continue as previously within the Monument. The LM officially inaugurated the planning process by hosting three "envisioning Sessions" in Barstow Yucca Valley, and Needles, on August 30th, 31st, and September 1st, respectively. The events featured posters showcasing different special interests, with presenters available to discuss them. The sessions also provided opportunity for the public to provide written input about what should go into the Management Plan. Many questions were returned with copious comments. The Bartow meeting had an overflow crowd, with 30-40 rockhounds attending from as far away as San Diego and Chatsworth, BLM field officer Mike Ahren was asked how long the drafting process might take--he estimated 18-24 months for completion of the Management Plan. To ensure that collecting areas and vehicular access to the will be incorporated into the final LUPA, Rockhounds will need to submit detailed comment letters citing specific collecting areas and travelways to reach them. Places and trails and roads not specifically included in the Final Plan will be off limits ever after. (be sure to use BLM Road numbers)

Many favorite collecting areas are now within the Monument's boundaries, including Afton Canyon, Cady Mountains, Cady (Siam Siding), most of Lavic Siding, Jasper Hill and other localities. Because there are so many collecting areas and roads and trails, Rockhounds should not wait to gather information for their letters, but instead, should start working on them now and have them ready to submit when the official comment period opens. The window of opportunity to submit comment letters will be brief.

A linked PDF in the November CFMS Newsletter (www.cfmsinc.org) will discuss this topic and specific suggestions on what to include in an effective comment letter.

Report by Lisbet Thorensen,
emphasis by Jo Anna Ritchey

The November 17, 2016 General Meeting of the Monrovia Rock Club

The General Meeting was called to order at 7:05PM.

Officers present were:

Jo Anna Ritchey, president,
Thomas Witt, vice president,
Jim Lloyd, treasurers
Colleen Chestnut, secretary.

The flag salute was led by Jo Anna Ritchey.

Thomas Witt:

Tonight's program will be: Janie Duncan presentation on Ammonites. .

December 15th is the club Christmas dinner party and gift exchange. Thomas is trying to contact Dr. Carter for January 17, 2017.

Jim Trace Thompson will do a presentation at the February 16, 2017 meeting.

Treasurer, Jim, told us we have 26 paid members.

Field Trip chairman was absent. Jo Anna reminded us of the open house at Jewel Tunnel this Saturday, November 19th. In January or February some members will carpool to Quartzite. We need geodes for the March show.

Fellowship chairman was absent. Jo Anna said we have 8 members present and 1 guest. She introduced Janie Duncan who is our speaker tonight.

Jo Anna gave a report on the Visalia Show. More than \$6,000.00 was given to CFMS.

The show was very successful. CFMS collects cancelled postage stamps and sells them. Jo Anna asked our members to save the cancelled postage stamps for CFMS.

Jim reported that the total made at the MAFA show in October was \$517.90.

Despite the rain on Sunday we had a good time. Thank you to all who helped.

Bulletin Editor, Thomas Witt, is moving to Apple Valley on December 12th. He

bought a house there. He plans to commute on the 3rd Thursday to attend the meeting. He is doing a fantastic job on the bulletin.

Members asked questions about the Christmas party and gift exchange on

December 15th. The questions were answered and there will be information

in the December bulletin. Colleen took a count of who will be attending. She

will call some members who were not present at the meeting. At the meeting

9 members confirmed that they will attend. Guests are welcome.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:34PM.

Thank you Janie Duncan for providing delicious cookies and hot apple cider. We enjoyed your informative talk on Ammonites.

Colleen Chestnut

Moroks Club Information

Mission Statement : Our Purpose is to promote popular interest and education in the earth sciences, including geology, mineralogy, paleontology, the lapidary arts, and related subjects; to sponsor and provide means of coordinating the work and efforts of persons and groups with similar interests; and by and through such means to strive toward greater community and international good will and fellow-ship. We also support promoting and ensuring the right of amateur hobby collecting, recreational rock hunting and the use of public and private lands for educational and recreational purposes related to the earth sciences. We are a registered 501 C 3 education non profit organization.

Affiliations & Accreditations: The Monrovia Rockhounds is affiliated with the California Federation of Mineralogical Societies, Inc. (CFMS), the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies (AFMS), and the American Lands Access Association (ALAA).

Membership: Dues are \$20.00 per member per year due by April 1st and \$10.00 per each additional member at the same address. Initiation Fee is \$10.00 per name per new member and includes membership packet and MOROK name badge.

Meetings: Meetings are held on the 3rd Thursday of each month. at 7:00 pm, in the basement of the United Methodist Church of Monrovia, located at 140 E. Palm Ave. Monrovia CA 91016. The building is on the corner of Ivy & Palm Ave. We use the door where there is handicapped access in the alley on the west side of the building. Do not try to enter from the front of the building. Guests are al-ways welcome at our General Meetings. Please come and share our love of rocks.

Information: Monrovia Rock Hounds Inc. was founded August 28th, 1957. The club colors are green & white. The club is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing knowledge of the lapidary arts, geology, mineral logy, and other related fields. Members enjoy slide shows, lectures, demonstrations, displays, lapidary classes, as well as field trips for exploration, study and collecting specimens.

Newsletter: We reserve the right to edit all material submitted for publication. If you have any submissions for this newsletter or need to contact the editor Thomas Witt (760) 552-2404.

Rock of the Month

Turquoise



Turquoise is an opaque, blue-to-green mineral that is a hydrated phosphate of copper and aluminium, with the chemical formula $\text{CuAl}_6(\text{PO}_4)_4(\text{OH})_8 \cdot 4\text{H}_2\text{O}$. It is rare and valuable in finer grades and has been prized as a gem and ornamental stone for thousands of years owing to its unique hue.

Mohs scale hardness: 5–6

Crystal class: Pinacoidal (1);

H-M symbol: (1)

Crystal system: Triclinic

Crystal habit: Massive, nodular

Turquoise is perhaps the oldest stone in man's history, the talisman of kings, shamans, and warriors. It is a stone of protection, strong and opaque, yet soothing to the touch, healing to the eye, as if carved from an azure heaven and slipped to earth. Its unique shade of blue, often blue-green, lends it name, Turquoise, to all things of this tranquil hue. The delicate veining or mottled webbing in cream or brown is inherent to the stone and serves to enhance its character. For nearly a thousand years, Native Americans have mined and fashioned Turquoise, using it to guard their burial sites. Their gems have been found from Argentina to New Mexico. [Simmons, 419] Indian priests wore it in ceremonies when calling upon the great spirit of the sky. Many honored Turquoise as the universal stone, believing their minds would become one with the universe when wearing it. Because of its ability to change colors, it was used in prophesy or divining. To the prehistoric Indian, Turquoise, worn on the body or used in ceremonies always signified the god of the sky alive in the earth

OMG it's Quartzsite, Arizona

What happens in Quartzsite, Arizona? If you pass through in the summer, the answer is, "Absolutely nothing." You'll see a lot of flat desert, some roadside businesses, tumbleweeds – and that's about it. But the answer is quite different come winter when the flat desert bustles with activity. RVs by the thousands camp in fairly primitive desert conditions. It's warm during the winter, and Quartzsite offers pretty inexpensive camping. But there's another reason people descend here in droves in the winter, and it doesn't have anything to do with the weather. It has to do with geology.

No matter why you're visiting or thinking of visiting Quartzsite, here are a few tips that can make your trip more convenient and enjoyable.

So What's the Attraction?

Quartzsite has been a rock hound's paradise since the 1960s. It swells in population each winter thanks to well over a million visitors, most of whom converge on the small town in a wave of RVs during January and February. It's dusty out there in the desert, and most shopping is outdoors in makeshift tents along rows of RVs. The wind can pick up or a rain storm can move in suddenly, so be prepared with a jacket, sturdy outdoor clothes and walking shoes.

Known as the "Desert Phenomenon", Quartzsite is truly the gem of La Paz County. Situated 125 miles west of Phoenix at the junction of Interstate 10 and U.S. Highway 95, it enjoys a close association with the Colorado River, just 18 miles to the west. The Sonoran Desert setting, just 879 feet above sea level, holds its own mystique. The surrounding mountains add to the overall appeal, creating a scenic environment that is known for pristine desert views and glorious sunsets.....

Quartzsite is the choice' for literally millions of adventurer seekers, as well as the vendors who bring a vast array of treasures from all over the world to sell. Those who come to work obviously enjoy the region's many offerings as much as the vacationers.

The town of [Quartzsite, AZ](#) turns into the biggest RV gathering on earth! What follows is a feast of sellers, flea-markets, rummage-sales, gem shows, artists, professionals and every knick-knack shack you can possibly imagine.



Amethyst from Brazil, opals and crystals from Australia, turquoise from Africa and the U.S., fossilized geodes and ancient bones from everywhere. If jewelry is your thing, there are hundreds of vendors selling handmade and commercially made necklaces, earrings, brooches, etc. .

Upcoming Events

Gem Faire Costa Mesa
OC Fair & Event Center
December 9, 10, 11
Friday 12pm to 6pm
Saturday 10am to 6pm
Sunday 10am to 5pm

Dec. 15th Moroks Christmas Party

**Date: Thursday December 15, 2016 at
6:30PM**

**Location: Coco's Bakery Restaurant
1150 W. Colorado Blvd.
Arcadia, CA 91007**

January 2017 Quartzite Begins
Possible field trip to pick up material.

On January 19, 2017 we have invited Alfredo Petrov to come and give a talk. I have heard him before and he is excellent. He suggested a talk of Collecting Minerals on the Edge of a Live Volcano (Japan), but he has a list of other talks we can choose from. So we shall see exactly what is chosen. No matter what, his talks are not to be missed.

On February 16, 2017 we have invited Jim Brace-Thompson to give a talk on Rockhounding in Scotland. He is a very entertaining speaker that I am sure you will enjoy. You must come to see pictures of agates found in Scotland.

March 4th & 5th
Monrovia Rockhounds
Gem and Mineral Show
@ the
LA County Arboretum

VP's Message

For November's General Meeting we received the report on the MAFA show earnings, \$517 was taken in, we had a very good weekend and enjoyed our time in the park. Thank you to all the volunteers for your time.

Janie Duncan gave this month's presentation on "Ammonites". She has a true love for her collection and gave a humorous presentation of her father's Ammonite find and how he procured the second half. I totally forgot to take photos.

So what is an Ammonite? Ammonites are related to a group of predators known as cephalopods, which includes their living relatives the octopus, squid, cuttlefish and nautilus. They are found all around the world. Ammonites are perhaps the most widely known fossil, possessing the typically ribbed spiral-form shell. These creatures lived in the seas between 24 - 65 million years ago, when they became extinct along with the dinosaurs. The name 'ammonite' originates from the Greek Ram-horned god called Ammon. Ammonites moved by jet propulsion, expelling water through a funnel-like opening to propel themselves in the opposite direction using the *syfuncler*: (Janie gets a good laugh using that term) a straw that runs through the chambers that allow the water to go up and down and that gives them their propulsion... .

November 19th was the Jewel Tunnel Sale, all are welcome to come, wear your Moroks name badge and represent. They had some wonderful specimens for sale and offer great discounts. A large crowd showed up.

Now the Holidays are upon us and the Moroks Christmas / Holiday Party is coming up and I would love to see some of our members show up to visit and celebrate with us. **Thursday December 15, 2016 at 6:30PM @ Coco's Bakery Restaurant 1150 W. Colorado Blvd. in Arcadia, CA 91007. Please come and join us!**

Thank you one and all for this past year, it has been a difficult challenge to hang on with our club. But we are still here. So please, don't give up on the Moroks!

Thank you Thomas Witt, VP Moroks



December Birthdays

Loretta Silva 12/21

Belated Birthday wishes

Judy Romine 11/13



December Birthstones

Zircon, Tanzanite & Turquoise

DECEMBER. December birthdays have claim to three gemstones; **Zircon**, **Tanzanite** and **Turquoise**. Each of these gemstones carries a unique blue tone making it a perfect birthstone for frigid December winters.

Zircon can be found in a variety of colors, but blue is the overwhelming favorite.

Tanzanite is a lush blue velvet. Rich royal purple. Exotic tanzanite is found in only one place on earth, near majestic Kilimanjaro!

Turquoise is an opaque, blue-to-green mineral that is a hydrated phosphate of copper and aluminium, and valuable in finer grades and has been prized as a gem and ornamental stone for thousands of years owing to its unique hue.



Tanzanite



Turquoise



Zircon

It's That Time of Year Again The Annual Moroks Christmas Party

This Year, we will be celebrating with a
meal out on the town.

Date: Thursday December 15, 2016 at 6:30PM

Location: Coco's Bakery Restaurant
1150 W. Colorado Blvd.
Arcadia, CA 91007
(626) 446-5611

Everyone is invited, Members and guest included
We are inviting any and all guest to also attend.
Diners will contribute for their own meals.

We will have a "Secret Santa Gift Exchange"
Please bring a new wrapped gift / rock, etc.
With a value of \$5 to \$10 from each person participating.

Please RSVP to Thomas Witt
email: fixit056@Hotmail.com
Phone: 760-552-2404

Holiday Food Drives

This is the time of year when many families need a little extra help for the holiday. If you would like to donate and find a local organization that can help someone in need, please "give a little bit of love".

To make a donation with some canned or dry goods or even a frozen turkey or ham, you can donate to a local Food Bank. If you need more information on finding a local charity.

Call Thomas Witt, 760-552-2404

Thank You Moroks

**Whatever is beautiful,
Whatever is meaningful,
Whatever brings you happiness...
May it be yours this Holiday
Season and throughout the
coming year!**





DECEMBER 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6 Board Meeting 2 pm	7 Pearl Harbor Day	8	9	10
11	12	13	14 Full Moon	15 Moroks Christmas Party	16	17
18	19	20	21 Winter Solstice	22	23	24 Happy Hanukkah
25 Merry Christmas	26 Kwanzaa	27	28	29	30	31 New Years Eve

Opal Hill Mine Mule Mountains - California

By Dusty Rhoads

Tucked deep into the Mule Mountains not far from Palo Verde lies **Opal Hill Mine**. Opal Hill is well known for its beautiful and rare fire agate, opal eggs and quartz crystals. When one thinks of a mine, images of deep shafts or dark tunnels usually come to mind. The Opal Hill Mine can be better described as a claim established on a hillside which overlooks a valley. The mine consists of rock outcroppings and holes where agate has been extracted. The claim was abandoned/forfeited in 9/1/2011; it has now been reclaimed.



Opal Hill Mine History

The mine was managed by Helen Madden as a pay to collect site beginning in 1965, and continued that way for 18 years. The BLM had wanted the area managed and Helen was ideal for the job. She was an ex-merchant marine who was about 4 foot 7 inches tall, and she ran the collection area with an iron hand.

Madden sold the claim in return for five gold claims and \$10,000 in the early 1980s to Louis Meserole, who asked his partner Nancy Hill to run it for \$500.00 a month plus collection fees. Nancy fell in love with rockhounding and continued to work the mine for another 27 years with husband Howard. In 2011 Nancy left the claim.

Over the years desert heat, vandalism, and even a tornado has taken its toll on the camp area, leaving it in total destruction. The new claim owners are working on a plan for reopening the area to recreational rockhounds.

When we visited the Opal Hill claim back in 2010, Howard Fisher and [Nancy Hill](#) greeted us with open friendliness and made us feel right at home. They lived at the mine for many years and had created a cozy homestead at the entrance to the mine. That area has now been destroyed.

Removing the fire agate from the surrounding rock takes some work with a sledge hammer, chisel and pick. Howard demonstrated how to find an agate-filled vein and then gave us some helpful lessons on how to remove the agate from its resting place. He explained that agate is a type of quartz called cryptocrystalline, also referred to as chalcedony, which is formed from masses of fibrous or granular aggregates of quartz. Agate is one of many varieties of chalcedony and can range in color from banded patterns to the rare fiery red.

If you visit the mine, plan to stay a full day or longer. It takes some time to find a good spot to dig, and once you find a spot you'll need time to extract the agate. If you only want to spend a few hours, there are a few bits of agate to be found in the tailing piles and dumps left behind by others. You can find some beautiful treasures without the hard work and labor of digging out a vein.

You should have a 4-wheel drive vehicle if you go to the claim, the road is rocky and difficult in some places.

Location

From Interstate 10, take Wiley Well Exit and head south on the graded dirt road for 11.86 miles. A dirt road leads to the claim; it's no longer marked. (If you pass the entrance to the Coon Hollow Campground going south you've missed the road.) Go left on the cut off road and travel east for a about 2.3 miles on the rough dirt road. A high clearance vehicle is needed to navigate on the last dirt road to the mine. GPS 33°27'08.0"N 114°51'53.5"W



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The editor publishes content as presented with minor changes for continuity. Articles from this publication may be reproduced in whole or part in other lapidary newsletters if proper credit is given to the author and THE NEWSLETTER. Articles and pictures are due by the 25th of each month for the following months publication.

Advertising in the Moroks Newsletter

Business Card Size for 6 months: \$25

Quarter Page for 6 months: \$35

Half Page for 6 months: \$45

Full Page for 6 months \$75

Please contact
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First Class Mail