
SMOKE SIGNALS

"Great Spirit, grant that I may not criticize my neighbor until I have walked a mile in his moccasins."

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June 2009

Puffs from the Chief....

I am back from vacation and prepared to assume my responsibilities as President of our Tule Gem & Mineral Society. My appreciation to Betty Hayward for standing in for the president's job at our May meeting. I have heard the food served was delicious. Sorry to miss out on good vittles. Thanks to all of the Club members in attendance for the food preparation.

This seems an appropriate time to add appreciation to the following members who are donating their time and expertise to help our Club continue to be successful, educational and fun.

Leila Parkinson~~~Tule Library, Betty Hayward & Family~~~~Meeting venue, Joe Navarro~~~Faceting teacher for many years, Fereleen Schultz & Corene Keys~~~Meeting Welcome Committee, Patrick Harrison~~~Outstanding Directory (2009, 10) & prompt Treasury reports, Marshall Havner & Tony Hart~~~Student geology education & Club Awareness, Ed Smith~~~Silent Auction & Rock Identification Contest, Gary Robertson~~~Tule Workshop repairs. There are many other hard working members who eagerly donate many hours to our Club helping to make it strong and I apologize for neglecting to thank you personally .

Don Vieira, Pres.

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Get your stories and information to the Newsletter Editor

Call 735-9984, email: rlnpirate@att.net

Due entirely to editor error, there was no May Newsletter.

Sale of Sharktooth Hill.....

BAKERSFIELD, Calif. -- Last week, scientists said they solved an enduring mystery about the origins of a prehistoric boneyard of gigantic marine creatures in the desolate desert here.

But another mystery has arisen: Will the looming sale of the land mean the end of research into the one of the largest finds of mid-Miocene fossils? "There is so much we still need to learn about how all of these things fit into the overall evolutionary history," said Jere H. Lipps, a UC Berkeley evolutionary biologist who has been studying this ancient seabed since he was a UCLA student 50 years ago.



Two years ago, Robert Ernst, the amateur paleontologist who owned the property, died unexpectedly and without a will. Since then his widow, Mary, 53, has suffered through heartache, probate and a back injury, which is forcing her early retirement next month from the Bakersfield Parks and Recreation Department. She said she is selling the site on Sharktooth Hill to pay her husband's loans, taxes and legal fees. "To the right person, it could really be special. Like it was to Bob," said Ernst, who with her attorney, Stephen Boyle, sent out 35 prospectuses to potential buyers, including some of the nation's top paleontology museums. They decline to say how much they are seeking for the 342-acre site, appraised at roughly \$132,000 as marginal grazing land. The land--which has yielded priceless intact specimens, such as the ancient sea lion Allodesmus--is slated to go July 17 to the highest bidder. "How do you assign a value to that?" Doyle asked. "Is there another one out there?" The parched hills east of Bakersfield, better known for the oil rigs that pump crude from even deeper

TGMS SHOP SCHEDULE

Visit the Tule Gem and Mineral Society rock shop in Visalia. This shop is full of great equipment for members to use. Not sure what to do with that great specimen you picked up? What about making a cabochon? Let the master craftsmen of TGMS show you how. Here is a class schedule

Faceting – Tuesday 9 am – 12 pm with Joe Navarro
Call Joe for more details 747-1824

Cabochon – Cutting and Polishing
Tues 6pm – 8pm Mike Obert 733-2543
Thurs 6pm – 8pm Don Vieira 732-7739

Silver Piercing and Wire Wrapping
As requested call Judy Link 747-3288

OPEN SHOP HOURS:

TUES	6PM – 8PM	MIKE OBERT 733-2543
WED	6PM – 8PM	JUDY LINK 747-7739
THURS	6PM – 8PM	DON VIEIRA 732-7739
FRI	4PM – 6PM	STEVE HAYWARD 734-3843

TGMS shop is located at the northern end of the Visalia Sales Yard in a modified single wide mobile home.

Take advantage of the great equipment and vast wisdom of the TGMS masters.

SILVER SMITHING DEMONSTRATION BY CHARLES REED.....

Saturday, June 20, 2009
9:00 am – 12:00 pm
Tule Workshop



Shark tooth fossil from Shark Tooth Hill

Ancient Woolly Mammoth Tusk Found

PIXLEY, Calif.
Science News, AP - 4 years ago

The fossilized tusk of an ancient woolly mammoth has been discovered near a dairy farm in Tulare County. The 10-foot-long curved tusk is estimated to be 100,000 years old, according to Roger LaJeunesse, an anthropology professor at California [State University](#) in Fresno.

The single tusk is all that was found of the giant animal, an ancestor of the Asian elephant.

The area was once the site of the confluence of two prehistoric rivers, where archaeologists have recovered the bones of mammoths, saber-tooth cats, giant sloths, camels and prehistoric horses.

Earlier this week scientists confirmed that fossilized bones and a tusk found in Silicon Valley were likely those of a Columbian mammoth that roamed the area between 10,000 and 40,000 years ago.

After Tulare dairyman Joey Airoso found his tusk, some neighbors urged him to keep quiet about it.

But he gave a chip of the white fossil to his [college](#)-student daughter, who took it to the anthropology department at Fresno State.

LaJeunesse said he knew right away it was the real thing.



**REMEMBER.....
WHEN ROCKHOULDING DON'T
FORGET TO COLLECT SMALLER
SAMPLES TO BE INCLUDED IN 2010
GEMBOREE GRAB BAGS.
And turn in any leftover show cards.
TGMS recycles these as labels for
2010 grab bags.**



Please, Please, Please

I need your stories, pictures or ideas for the newsletter.
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ancient seabed, were part of a tropical oasis 15 million years ago. Extinct species of manatees munched on marsh grasses, elephant-like gomphotheres roamed the shore beside pre-evolutionary horses, and 70-foot Megalodon sharks with seven-inch teeth ripped into a teeming seafood buffet that included sea lions and sea turtles the size of minivans. The place should be a park on the order of Dinosaur National Monument, say paleontologists, who have catalogued 125 one-of-a-kind species during more than 80 years of unfettered access. But the reality in a cash-strapped state, experts say, is that skeletons worth potentially millions of dollars make the land more valuable to private collectors and well-endowed museums. Lipps was part of a team that announced June 6 it had solved the mystery that has puzzled scientists since the site was discovered by railroad surveyors 150 years ago. Why did boundless bones mixed with shark teeth accumulate so heavily here? The prevailing thought was that everything died at once in a volcanic eruption or some other cataclysmic event.

But Lipps' team studied the layers of bones to conclude the opposite: That the animals died over a period of 700,000 years, and rising sea levels kept silt from covering them. Over the years, people have removed countless fossils. Some went to the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco and the Museum of Paleontology at UC Berkeley, but others were taken by thieves who ignored the law against taking fossils from private land. The most famous skeleton found there -- the only fully articulated *Allodesmus* sea lion in the world -- is displayed in a glass case at the Buena Vista Natural History Museum, which occupies the old JC Penney building in downtown Bakersfield. Ernst founded the museum in 1984 to house his fossil collection, which his widow now owns and was recently appraised for about \$600,000. "These are all part of Kern County's history," said the museum's part-time executive director, Koral Hancharick. Mary Ernst says she does not know whether she will sell any of the museum collection, but she wants to sell Sharktooth Hill. This week she ventured the site to show off her husband's last find -- a baby baleen whale that his meticulous work had left half revealed. She bounced her Jeep along unpaved roads and through locked gates to the sun-baked spot. She froze as she realized the baby baleen was gone-- stolen-- a half dozen plastic water bottles left in its place. "Where is she?" Mary Ernst said, kicking at the dirt, then sighing. "They could have at least taken their litter."

2009 Meeting Schedule

January 5, 2009

February 2, 2009

March 2, 2009, Installation Dinner

April 6, 2009

May 4, 2009

June 1, 2009 Annual Picnic

July 6, 2009

August 3, 2009

September 14, 2009

(one week later due to Labor Day Holiday)

October 5, 2009

November 2, 2009

December 7, 2009 Christmas Party

Every Meeting and Every Member is important....Hope we see you soon!!

