



Sacramento Valley Detecting Buffs

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Day-in-the-Park

Volunteer

Detecting Buffs

*A Nonprofit Organization
The Public is Invited to Attend
SVDB Newsletter
Issue Date: May 2005*

Secretary's Minutes for Meeting of April 2005.

- The April meeting was called to order at . Great turnout by the membership and guests!

Treasurer's Report: Chuck Klein

- New Balance: \$2998.45

Secretary's Report: Rick Costello

- Nothing to report – everything is fine!

Librarian Report: Tom Schweppe

- Everything is fine – a great selection to be had. There are other really great books to check out – new ones, too! Check it out.....

Hunt Master Report

- There was a Club Hunt – more later in this issue.

By now, yearly dues should have been paid. Thank you to all returning members and all new members. Remember, with your dues and other contributions, the club keeps operating, keeps the annual hunt, keeps the raffle prizes, and keeps on truckin'.

Meetings are now on the FIRST THURSDAY OF THE MONTH!

Same place and same time, but A !

New Business

- Every member now has a nametag. Come to the meeting to get yours. Now you don't have to play at knowing someone's name – it will be right there for you to see!
- The April Club Hunt was a success. Although the weather gods tried to put a damper on the day, we all showed up, planted coins and tokens and had a great hunt. 2000 coins were planted – 1600 silver. Plus Ike silver dollars with numbers painted on that were the tokens for prizes awarded at dinner. Alan Wagner, his friend Sunny, and brother Norm put on great spaghetti feed, complete

with salad, wine, and desert. A great time was had by all. And some nice silver was found by the hunters. Thank you, Ron!

• **I'm running this again – a great idea:**

This is from our President: I have accepted on behalf of the SVDB to participate during this event - **Gem and Mineral Blast 2005 this and 12 at the Fairgrounds**. The SVDB Club will host the "Learn to Metal Detect Booth" For those who went to Forest Hill Heritage days, it is just like that event.

We will charge \$5 per customer and they will get a quick 10-15 minute lesson on "How to Metal Detect". We will have a planted hunt area that will be taped off for our use. Our Club members will assist the customer in finding and recovery a silver coin or two or three.

This is a great opportunity for our club and I expect everyone to participate.

I need an Event Coordinator/Committee that I can work with to organize this event and this person(s) will be in charge of the event in June. I am not the event coordinator!! Please email me or call ASAP. If more than one member is interested that is GREAT!!

We will have the booth for three days. We will need 5 people at the booth at all times. I was thinking 4-hour shifts will beak the day into 2 shifts. So that is 10 people per day minimum. 30 people for all three days (last day will be 3 hours shifts) Or whatever we decide.

Let's get the ball rolling as we have some time to get prepared before this event. Let's look at his opportunity as a way of raising funds for the club but also as a way of shedding positive light on our hobby!! If anyone wants to create a "Finds" presentation or a "Junk removed from our Parks" board I am all for it!!

- For those who want to have some fun and see great gems and minerals – the Reno Gem and Mineral Society will be having their annual show on May 8th and 9th.
- The AMDA – American Metal Detecting Association – web site is: www.amdaonline.net. Go for it!!!!!!!

SVDB Day-In-The-Park

As our intrepid leader has decided to just hunt along with the rest of us, we need a volunteer at every hunt to take notes, suggest a place to hunt, and provide some comedy - at least some jokes for Ron at the meetings. Please step up.

There are two day-in-the park hunts per month. The hunts are on the first Sunday and the third Sunday of each month. Breakfast at with the hunt starting at . See the following for meeting place:

- 1st Sunday Hunt: Meet at Denny's at Watt and
- 3rd Sunday Hunts: Meet at Pancake House at 21st and Broadway

Web Sites

Now, this is the site to go to:

<http://www.sacramentovalleydetectingbuffs.com>

It's our Club site. Loaded with information and goodies. Another one to check out!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

This is a great site:

<http://www.thetreasuredepot.com>

Photos of great finds, forums, classifieds. Check it out.

Interested in gold? Want to find it locally? Here's a great club in :

<http://www.goldhounds.com>

SCIENTIFIC TREASURE FINDING

by Lambert Dolphin

Treasure legends abound in the western hemisphere---there are hundreds of stories in print. They tell us about lost Spanish galleons, buried pirate gold, of Wells-Fargo robberies, the rediscovery of long, lost mines, and of the mattress-hordes of eccentric old prospectors. Most of these stories have little basis in fact. They make exciting bedtime reading but would not be wise financial investments as far as search and recovery is concerned. Unfortunately even the most improbable tales of the old west has its diehard adherents, and often a bevy of snake-in-the-grass con artists waiting in the wings, eager to sell shares to the rich city slickers from back east. Renowned treasure salvor Robert Marx, who researches all his dives carefully, once said to me that only one or two shipwreck stories in a hundred could be verified and substantiated by such efforts as a thorough search of the colonial archives in . One has only to add up the total of the alleged treasure loot said to lie in , or to realize the national debt could be paid off quickly if only a fraction of it was ever found.

Yet amateur treasure hunters abound in the western today. Looking for lost artifacts is loads of fun and surely a healthy and exciting form of adventure---provided the searcher understands clearly that his odds of striking it rich (or even paying expenses) is much lower than was old fashioned gold-prospecting in early or . However, not all legends of the old west are fake or fictional. The historical account of the original discovery of gold and treasure under in 1937 and the many subsequent affidavits and testimonies from individuals who claim to have seen the gold, raise the validity probability of the Doc Noss story considerably above the ranking of most other stories of lost artifacts in the . Ground-penetrating radar corroboration of the existence of the caverns adds further evidence supporting the belief that contained at one time lost artifacts. There are many good reasons why this particular treasure story should be checked out thoroughly up to and including complete underground exploration of the mountain to settle the matter once and for all. It is to the great credit of the Ova Noss Family Partnership that their own commitment to the solution of the mystery of involves careful historical research and an intelligent scientific exploration program. (This search is currently still underway as of March 1996).

All too often the cold, hard facts about the rarity of real treasure finds and actual recoveries are forgotten once "gold fever" sets in. Accounts of once-enthusiastic treasure seekers who ended up spending thousands (or hundreds of thousands) of dollars, but who wound up disillusioned---would fill a big book if the stories were ever told. For the past twenty years this writer has been privileged to take part in a number of credible and not-so-credible treasure searches at home and abroad. Countless inquiries about a scientific approach have come to me by phone and by mail. From my own experience I have observed that treasure hunting can be a serious and respected profession, or a fascinating hobby for all sorts of people young and old. But, the serious treasure hunter should do as much advanced homework as possible before investing money or going to the site with pick and shovel.

Here are a few suggestions for putting together a careful research project based on my own experience. A bit of planning and research can do much for the serious searcher who wants to improve his odds and spend his time and money in the most effective manner possible.

First, get a good set of maps. In addition to local county or state maps showing roads, title and claim boundaries, buy a topographic map on of the highest resolution available from the nearest United States Geological Survey (USGS) office. Earlier versions of the same topo map often show when changes were made at your site. If the site is important to you and your topo map is old or low in resolution, you might want to hire a local aerial-survey company to make a new topo map for you from stereo aerial photography. This can often be done for a few thousand dollars. You'll have a good set of high-resolution aerial photos of your site as a bonus. The State geologist, or the USGS, can also get you a geological map of your area which can often be helpful in understanding the rock types, faults, strata and expected sub-surface features of your area. A visit to local libraries or historical societies often yields old maps, early photos, and even early aerial photos of an area. These can be most helpful if you are looking for a lost mine or a treasure site that has been reported for more than a few decades. Don't neglect to make your own map of your site, which shows surface features and workings. If there are underground workings, map them also, preferably using a transit. If the site is extensive you might want to hire a professional surveyor to do this for you.

Second, aerial photos of the area may show you many features not noticeable to the observer on the ground. Old trails, roads, and ancient mine tailings can often be detected from the air, especially in desert areas where vegetation recovers very slowly from human activity. Color photos by a commercial mapping firm can often be blown up by a large factor so that even very small surface features are readily discernible. In many localities aerial photos already exist and can be ordered from government or commercial mapping agencies for a few dollars each. I've been to sites in the desert where old mines are claimed to exist but where aerial photos show undisturbed mature desert plants and desert-varnished rocks and soils for miles around. At other sites just a little homework could show that the local geology completely precludes any mineralization.

Third, if you are searching for an old mine, consult your state Bureau of Mines or the US Federal Bureau of Mines for historical mining records on the area of interest. Pay attention to the actual recorded production of an old mining district. Talk to a reputable local geologist about mineralization expected in the area based on the modern day geological knowledge he'll probably have at his fingertips. You might want to have him visit your site to specifically delineate the actual geology at your site.

Fourth, talk to old timers in the area and visit local historical societies. You may be able to track down retired miners who once worked now-abandoned mines in your area. If nothing else, their stories can give you wonderful insights into local history. Take a tape recorder if possible or write down all details in a logbook. [It is inherent in treasure stories that the amount of gold tends to grow spontaneously with each retelling of the tale]. University and college professors often specialize in local history and may be able to shed additional light on the legends you are investigating. Retired city or county officials often can recall the more colorful aspects of the past history of their area especially with regard to lost mines or treasures legends.

Fifth, consider using a modern geophysical method such as resistivity, seismic or ground-penetrating radar to show you sub-surface features of greatest interest. One of these methods may very well be cost effective if you are contemplating devoting more than a few days to excavation or digging. If your search area is large geophysical sensing may help you narrow the area of interest considerably. Even digging a very small exploration tunnel into the side of the hill may cost many thousands of dollars. Abandoned mines can be very extremely dangerous and very costly to repair---simply making an old shaft or tunnel safe to enter could well exhaust your budget unless you have lots of backing and a strong motivation to proceed. If you remain serious about your site, a local drilling contractor can drill holes in your area rapidly and at a cost below that of tunneling by at least an order of magnitude.

Sixth, you may wish to build transparent plastic model of your site if underground workings are extensive. Such a model could help you visualize underground features in three-dimensions and gain entry expeditiously. If the area is caved or your site has been obscured by bulldozing or by prospect holes try to reconstruct the original lie of the land and perhaps map the best original information onto your model. Locating old photographs of your site may be helpful.

Seventh, if you don't have a specific treasure site in mind but are looking for one, you might want to read some of the good books on treasure hunting that are frequently advertised in popular treasure magazines. Such books are also usually found in local libraries and often carried in coin or rock hound stores. Get as much verification of the better stories as you can. Do as much homework as possible by phone or mail before you go to the site and prior to the spending of any major amount of money. Find out your legal rights before you trespass on someone's private land and get in trouble with the law or an irate local rancher.

If searching for treasure is for you a hobby and not intended to become the principal source of income for your family, if you look for the principal rewards in terms of meeting interesting people and recovering a sense of history, if discovering a continuity with the past makes your own life more meaningful, then by all means find a way to get involved

Dolphin's Laws of Old Western Mines and Caverns

LAW I:

"Inaccessible caverns fill with gold automatically with the passage of time. The greater the lapse of time and the more inaccessible the cavern, the larger the amount of gold."

LAW II:

"The total value of loot in an inaccessible treasure horde will increase by at least thirty percent with each re-telling of the original legend--regardless of inflation or the current world price of gold."

LAW :

"The best ore is always to be found in flooded, abandoned old mines. The last miners to work in the mine are always willing to swear on a stack of Bibles that they stumbled onto a great lode of gold on the very same day the mine superintendent ordered the mine to be closed."

LAW IV:

"If you wait long enough, an inaccessible treasure cavern will generate an iron door over its concealed entrance and the gold will supplement itself with rusting Spanish armor, the bones of numerous Indian slaves, and a solid gold (or crystal) statue* of the Virgin Mary."

Note:

*In other parts of the world a solid gold statute of Buddha will do nicely.

The above laws are inspired by William B. Beatty's famous "[Hunt's First Law of Mineral Resources](#)"

Nail Keg Cache!

Most of the payrolls were made in coin, but coinage is what the area was short of. This forced the payrolls to be shipped in from by stage. Now with a large amount of gold being shipped out and payrolls coming in routinely, robberies became more and more frequent.

Well one paymaster, trying to outwit the robbers, came up with the idea to put his payroll, in Coin, into a nail keg and ship it simple freight. Now in those days, surrounded by the best of honest men Nothing was ever kept secret. Why most men of those days would snitch on their mother, when it came to gold. Now given the best of plans, the stage was stopped out side of , and nothing but the nail keg was taken, rolled off into the woods by two masked highwaymen.

A massive search was organized, but nothing of the gold, the keg, or the highwaymen were ever found. The excitement lingered for a while, but the story never the less soon died off and was soon forgotten by all. That is until an old dying miner up in a boom camp, before dying, confessed to robbing the stage of its nail keg in 1860. His statement was that he and another man took the keg and opened it. Inside they found \$20,000 in twenty dollar gold pieces for which they took \$1000 each and buried the keg Beneath a tall pine close by. Then soon after both men left the country to never return.

After the story worked its way down from , a rash of gold fever broke out all over the . Just about every tree near had been dug around. They even search the road near the stage station, but had no success. Then in 1882 a huge avalanche hit, destroying a part of , Carrying away countless trees on the surrounding slopes.

Now this may or may not have disturbed the gold, but discoveries of coins through the years have kept the story very alive. In 1916 a Genoa Blacksmith with his son were digging around the trees in search of the gold and found a chest with \$2000 inside. Then in 1948 while digging out for a basement an undetermined value of gold was found. Finally in 1961, about a hundred \$20 gold pieces were found in a nearby hillside. All of this has pushed the search even harder, but the \$18,000 in gold pieces may still await some lucky treasure hunter, if it will ever be found.

Sources: , Lost Mines and Buried Treasures
By Douglas McDonald
Published 1981

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