

Sacramento Valley Detecting Buffs

A Nonprofit Organization
The Public is Invited to Attend
SVDB Newsletter
Issue Date September 2005

Sacramento Valley Detecting Buffs

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Day-in-the-Park

Volunteer

Secretary's Minutes for Meeting of August 4, 2005

- Ron was out of town – looking for silver? – and Lee presided over the meeting. After introducing himself he had all guests introduce themselves and tell the members of any experience they might have had with treasure hunting, Thing, etc.

Treasurer's Report: Chuck Klein

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- New Balance: \$3,129.55

Secretary's Report: Rick Costello

- Rick was on vacation.

Librarian Report: Tom Schweppe

- Tom was on vacation. Please bring in your overdue books and tapes to the next meeting

Member Report: George Magann

- We now have 153 members.

Membership Drawing: Miles Zany, President William McKinney Coin

AMDA Business Carolyn Garrett

- Oct 22-23 Hunt Dayton, OH

Carolyn is retiring this is her last meeting she will be going to Colorado

New Business:

Another Sad Day for the Club: Our hobby of metal detecting has truly lost a gallant fighter! Betty Weeks passed away, and because of her dedication and many hours devoted to the hobby, she will be remembered for many years to come by hobbyists throughout the country. Rest in peace, Betty, as you deserve it!!

Carolyn

I received this today from Jim Weeks. This is the message as I received it.

Please pass the word around to anyone who knew Betty, and that would be a

lot of people. This lady lived and breathed to protect the hobby and I, for one shall miss her greatly.

Larry

Sept 3-4 — FORESTHILL, CALIFORNIA: Foresthill Fall Festival

California State Gold Panning Championships;

Old Foresthill Memorial Park

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Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5 free admission

annual pig roast and Foresthill Heritage Celebration, family events, crafts, gold panning, **metal detecting**, lumberjack contest;

contact Foresthill Chamber of Commerce, (530) 367-2474 or (530) 367-2891;

e-mail: info@foresthillchamber.org or golddust@direcway.com.

The GOLDHOUNDS will be conducting a Metal Detecting Booth and any volunteers to assist would be greatly appreciated. It is similar format to last years event and the event at the Gem Show in Roseville.

Please help if you can!! Support the GoldHounds and the hobby of metal detecting.

Day in the Park:

- McClatchy Park, Oldest Coin 1929 Wheat Penny – Dave Sturdivent

- **Meetings are held at the New/Old place. The SMUD Building at the intersection of Elkhorn and Don Julio in North Highlands.**

SEE YOU A THE NEXT MEETING!!

SVDB Day-In-The-Park

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 8:00am with the hunt starting at 9:00 am. See the following for meeting place:

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

SVDB Finds of the Month:

The Show and Tell format seems to be a hit. Lots of "finds" are shown and there are prizes for those who show and tell.

Congrats to all the hunters for their nice finds!!

SVDB Raffle:

Lots of great coins are now being offered up for the Club Raffle at the meetings. These are very nice coins that would do any collection proud. Of course the amount of coins is in direct relation to the mount spent on the prior month's raffle. **BUY THOSE TICKES AND WIN!!!**

Permits—we don't need no stinkin' permits!

A reminder

If you plan on hunting in RENO, make sure you get a permit.

Roseville requires a permit to hunt. Get it at the Park and Recreation Office

San Jose Parks also require permits.

And beaches in Oregon? Does anyone know for a fact?

Web Sites:

<http://www.ca.blm.gov> The Bureau of Land Management in California. Pretty neat web site!

<http://www.jimmysierra.com>. This is where Carolyn is now finding the coin of the realm.

<http://www.calsign.com/mining>. This is a database for mining, prospecting metal

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detecting, and treasure hunting in California.

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/gmdhtml/gmdhome>

The Library of Congress
Map Collections from 1500-2003

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 Spain. One has only to add up the total of the alleged treasure loot said to lie in New Mexico, Arizona or Utah 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 United States 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 California or Colorado. However, not all legends of the old west are fake or fictional. The historical account of the original discovery of gold and treasure under Victorio Peak 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 Western United States. Ground-penetrating radar corroboration of the existence of the caverns adds further evidence supporting the belief that Victorio Peak 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 Victorio Peak 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

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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 log book. [It is inherent in treasure stories that the amount of gold tends to grow spontaneously with each

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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, seismics 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 lay 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 Sacramento Valley Detecting Buffs

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 III:

"The best ore is always to be found in flooded,

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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](#)"

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