

# THE ORANGE COUNTY FORTY-NINERS

# GOLDEN AURA

May 2011

Volume: XXIX Number: V



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**DON'T FORGET OUR NEXT MEETING IS  
May 17th, 2011**

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**THIS MONTHS OUTING IS AT  
RM26 Road Side • May 28-29, 2011**

# **GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS**

**When:** 3rd Tuesday of each month

**Time:** 7:30 p.m.

**Where:** Garden Grove Woman's Club  
9501 Chapman Avenue  
Garden Grove, California 92841  
(Corner of Chapman and Gilbert)

**Check us out on the Internet  
at  
[www.oc49ers.com](http://www.oc49ers.com)**



## **CLUB OUTINGS**

**Regular scheduled outings take place the last full weekend of the month. "Regular" Club outings in November, December and January are scheduled around the Holidays and/or inclement weather.**

# The PRESIDENT'S MINUTE

May

Our April general meeting was well attended. We had over 40 Members and 10 visitors. Our speaker, Bob Hirsch entertained us with his “privy digging” stories. I believe all of us were amazed at what can be found in those little houses, and what is more amazing is the value of his finds. He spoke of finding coins, porcelain pots and countless small bottles, but the real valuable finds are the rare whiskey bottles. Bob said, the more ornate the bottle, the higher the value. He spoke of one whiskey bottle that he and his partner found was only the 13<sup>th</sup> one known and had a “5 digit” value. It sure makes one think and reevaluate dry-washing out in the Mojave Desert.

**April Outing:** A member said he counted 25 people at our Outing. It was a beautiful time in the desert, sunny, not hot and enough breeze to keep the dust away while one shoveled. That’s assuming you set up your dry washer down wind from you. I know everyone found gold, but probably not as much as they would have liked. The ground is still damp and once you dig down about a half-a-foot or so, and this will probably hold true for our May Outing, nothing a seasoned prospector can’t handle in the pursuit of that yellow metal.

**Condor 2 Claim:** We received notification from the claim holder (Jerod Austin Claim) down river from the Condor2 that we have filed over them. After doing our research, they are correct. We will be filing an amendment to reflect the true boundaries. For those of you who go to the Condor2 on Rose Creek, our claim ends approximately where the “old” bridge crossed over Rose Creek. Please be aware of the boundary and respect the other club’s claim.

**Day Outing in May:** By the time you read this edition of the Aura, the outing will have been held and I will have a short review in the next Newsletter. Our prior Day Outings have been enjoyed by all those who have attended, so we have scheduled another one for June.

**June’s Day Outing** will be Sunday the 12<sup>th</sup>. It will be held again at Huntington Beach, the City Beach, just South of the pier. We will again meet at 8:00 and don’t forget your quarter for parking.

**Annual May Outing:** Our annual May Outing will be held over

Memorial Day weekend. As we are running low on raffle tickets, please remember to bring the ones we sent to all Members. You don't want to miss out on the gold, as the Club will be given away a couple thousand dollars of the yellow stuff in the raffle.

**Donations:** James "Jim" Klein the renowned author of "Where to Find Gold in the Mother Lode" and numerous other publications on locating gold has made a donation to the Club. Jim does a number of field tests on various gold prospecting and related equipment, which are published in the GPAA magazine. He donated to the Club: a Promack dry-washer; a Keene Super Concentrator; and Rockabilly (7x24) sluice. These items will be for sale and viewed be on our Web page under the Trading Post tab in the near future. The Club wishes to thank Jim for his donations.

**Speaker for May:** Our speaker will be Walt Lombardo of Nevada Mineral & Book Company. He will be speaking on meteorites. To learn more about Walt go to our web page and click "news" where you will find detailed information about our speaker.

**Speaker for June:** Our speaker will be Bill Samarian. He will show and demonstrate a small portable trommel that he manufacturers. This is a viable solution for prospecting while there still is a ban on dredging in California.

**Outings for June and July:** The last four years these outing have been held at our Condor2 Claim on Rose Creek. Considering these facts: we can not dredge; the claim is 380 miles from Orange County; the price of gas is over \$4.00; and the last two years we have had poor attendance, the Board is considering other alternatives as an Outing.



If you have an idea that you believe will be attractive to the Membership please contact me so we can discuss it.

I will not be attending the May Outing, but do hope you have an enjoyable and profitable time over Memorial Day weekend.

Happy Prospecting,

Steve

# The TREASURE'S REPORT

## APRIL 2011

### INCOME:

50-50 Income.....	\$ 24.00
Club Merchandise.....	43.00
May Outing .....	275.00
Membership Renewal.....	0.00
New Membership.....	220.00
Raffle Income.....	402.00
Refreshments Income.....	0.00
<b>TOTAL INCOME.....</b>	<b>\$ 921.00</b>

### EXPENSES:

May Outing .....	\$ 1,097.00
Newsletters .....	473.58
Porta Potties .....	105.73
Postage.....	0.00
Raffle Prizes.....	230.00
Referrals.....	10.00
Refreshments.....	14.25
Rent .....	125.00
Supplies .....	0.00
Misc. GOLD .....	1,628.00
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES .....</b>	<b>\$ 3,683.56</b>

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### CHECKING ACCOUNT

4/01/2011, Beginning Balance.....	13,061.45	
4/30/2011, Ending Balance.....	12,061.89	
4 Outstanding Checks .....	1,888.00	
<b>CHECK BOOK BALANCE.....</b>	<b>10,173.89</b>	<b>\$ 10,173.89</b>

### CERT DEP

00/00 CD Balance .....	2,344.23	<b>\$ 2,344.23</b>
CD Statements are sent Quarterly		

**TOTAL CLUB ASSETS .....** **\$ 12,518.12**

**TOTAL INCOME YEAR TO DATE .....** **\$8,240.00**

**TOTAL EXPENSE YEAR TO DATE .....** **\$8,084.78 .....** **\$ 155.22**

# GENERAL MEETING

## APRIL 19, 2011

The meeting was called to order at 7:40pm by our President, Steve Reid, followed by the flag salute. Steve introduced our visitors and each of them told how they heard about the club.

Kathi gave the Treasurer's Report and it was approved as written. Steve called for a vote of the Minutes from the March meeting, and it also was approved as written.

Bryan DeGhetto talked about the upcoming outing to be held April 30<sup>th</sup> and May 1<sup>st</sup> at Puppy Feet. He also explained the Memorial Weekend Outing.

BA Skipper spoke on being aware of the snakes and what should be done in case someone is bitten.

Our guest speaker, Bob Hirsch, gave an informative speech on privies digging and brought numerous bottles and artifacts he has found. He also educated us on what to look for when you are collecting bottles.

Our 50/50 winner was Fred Curtis. Our monthly drawing winners were as follows: Leroy Kimoto won a Gold Nugget, Ralph Kolbush, Leroy Kimoto, and Jack Montoya each won Silver Dollars. BA Skipper, Clint DeFields, Bob Hirsch, Jim Dromi, Kristin Rowe, BA Skipper and Sandra Hoon won Silver Halves. The Gold Nugget membership drawing was won by Bryan DeGhetto.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45pm.

Secretary,

Sandy Hunt

# MEMBER INFORMATION

## NEW MEMBER

Poblano Jose  
5150 S. US Hwy 395  
Ridgecrest, CA 93555

# The WAGON MASTER'S REPORT



Memorial Weekend Outing Raffle

Well folks it is getting HOT out in the desert.  
Too hot to dig.

So what better way to get your hands on some  
GOLD Nuggets then our annual GOLD Nugget raffle.

As you all know our GOLD  
is some of the finest GOLD out there.

This year will be raffling off over  
\$2000.00 worth of GOLD.

So you don't miss out as we have  
a limited number of tickets.

Please remember to use the ones the club sent you.  
Make sure you bring your Tickets & Money to the next  
meeting or out to the outing.

# Lost Gunsight Mine

## THE TALE

Death Valley has always been a land steeped in legend. Many factors have combined to make it so. The valley is extremely remote and incredibly barren. The westbound 49'ers who used the Death Valley trail had to cross the arid Basin and Range province of southern Nevada and then the Amargosa Desert before they even reached the eastern ramparts of Death Valley. When the emaciated Argonauts stumbled out of the Amargosa Desert and dragged themselves to Furnace Creek Wash, they realized that the worst lay ahead of them as they gazed down at the inferno of Death Valley.

The valley has also attained legendary status in the mining world by virtue of its many mines. These include those that were found and developed (such as the mines at Panamint City, Ballarat, Harrisburg, Greenwater, Skidoo, and Chloride City), and those that were found and then lost. The list of Death Valley lost mines is indeed impressive. Some of the most famous lost mines of the Old West reside in the Death Valley area. These include the Lost Dutch Oven Mine, John Galler's Lost Mine, the Lost Chinaman Mine, the Lost Breyfogle, and the most famous all, the Lost Gunsight Mine.

The 49'ers who chose the untested Death Valley route were divided into a number of companies. These included the Manly-Bennett party, the Jayhawker party, a group of southerners from Georgia and Mississippi, the Towne-Martin party, the Wade party, and a small group of Argonauts led by J.W. Brier. The various parties split up and made their way westward across the Death Valley depression, through the forbidding Panamint Range, and then across the Panamint Valley to the Argus Range beyond. When the 49'ers emerged from the cauldron of Death Valley, they carried away with them the memory of a hellish and unforgiving land.

Something else was carried out of the valley that winter of 1849. It was fixed to the end of a rifle barrel owned by one of the Argonauts. Some accounts mention a member of the Jayhawker party as the owner of the rifle; other accounts claim that the rifle was owned by Captain Towne of the Towne-Martin party. All accounts agree on one thing. The homemade rifle sight was fashioned out of pure silver.

During the passage from Furnace Creek Wash to the Panamints, the owner of the rifle was out hunting when he stumbled on a low-lying hillock or mound of pure native silver! The owner used some of the silver to mold a primitive gunsight for his rifle. This rifle with its silver sight created quite a stir in the mining camps of the Mother Lode. Indeed, within a year one of the prospectors returned to Death Valley to search for the hill of silver.

The Lost Gunsight Mine generated a flurry of prospecting that lasted through the 1850's and 1860's. Many gold and silver strikes were made in the Death Valley area as a consequence of this prospecting frenzy. While searching for the Lost Gunsight Mine in 1860, a prospector named Alvord found gold in the Panamint Range. Dr. Darwin French, who named many of Death Valley's features, discovered silver veins in Wildrose Canyon and in the Coso Range while searching for the Lost Gunsight Mine. Prospectors found silver in the Panamint Range and the Slate Range, but none of these deposits



matched the fabulous Gunsight Mine. Many of the original members of the Jayhawker party and the Manly-Bennett party returned to the Death Valley area to search for the hill of silver, but all in vain. It was never found.

## **MINING HISTORY**

The history of mining in the Death Valley region of California really begins with the discovery of incredibly rich silver deposits in the Panamint Range, near the head of Surprise Canyon. The discovery occurred in January of 1873; by the following year a horde of prospectors had descended on the Panamints. A rough and tumble mining camp called Panamint City sprang up near the silver mines.

The new silver camp quickly acquired a bad reputation for lawlessness and hell-raising. And no wonder. The canyon had long been used as a hideout for local outlaws. Indeed, the first silver strikes in Surprise Canyon had been made by outlaws hiding out in the canyon! The Panamint City silver mines began to play out after only 3 years of operation. By 1877, Panamint City was a dead camp.

In spite of the legendary Gunsight Mine and the great silver discoveries of the 1870's, the Death Valley region would ultimately be famous for its gold deposits. The great Death Valley gold strikes occurred late in the mining history of California. Not until 1897 did the first of the big discoveries take place. It was during that year that extremely rich gold deposits were located only 7 miles south of the old site of Panamint City, in the heart of the Panamints. A mining camp called Ballarat sprang up on the western edge of the mountains, near the mouth of Pleasant Canyon. The gold mines at Ballarat yielded nearly 50,000 ounces of the yellow metal before the veins gave out. In 1903, prospectors stumbled on equally rich gold deposits in a small basin in the Funeral Range, near Chloride Cliff. A mining town known as Chloride City sprouted up near the mines in 1905. The district produced some 60,000 ounces of gold, most of which came from the famous Keane Wonder and Chloride Cliff mines.

1905 was a watershed year in the mining history of the Death Valley country. It was during that year that the Harrisburg gold deposits, the Leadfield copper and lead bodies, and the Greenwater copper deposits were all discovered. Unfortunately, all three were extremely short-lived. Greenwater lasted but 4 years, Harrisburg 3, and Leadfield barely 2 short years.

But the biggest strike of all was still left to be made. In 1906, massive lode deposits of gold were discovered only 6 miles northwest of Harrisburg, near Emigrant Canyon. The mining town of Skidoo sprang up nearby. Named for the popular aphorism "23-Skidoo", the mining camp of Skidoo was one of the last of the old-time boom towns. The "Skidoovian" gold deposits poured out a river of the yellow metal; nearly 200,000 ounces of it! But like most mining towns, Skidoo's days were numbered. By 1917, most of the mines had closed down and the town faded away.

## **GEOLOGY OF THE AREA**

The Death Valley depression harbors the lowest point in the United States (about 260 feet below sea level) and extends roughly 120 miles in a northwest-southeast direction. The valley and surrounding mountains and deserts constitute some of the most forbidding country in North America. At its northern end, the valley is bounded by

the Last Chance Range (on the west) and the Grapevine Mountains (on the east). Both ranges are composed mostly of Paleozoic marine sediments. As one travels southward, the Cottonwood Mountains and Panamint Range rise up on the western side of the valley, while the Funeral Mountains and Amargosa Range loom up on the eastern side. The Cottonwood Mountains, like the Last Chance Range and Grapevine Mountains, are mostly composed of Paleozoic marine sediments, but in the southernmost part of the range a large Mesozoic granitic intrusion is exposed. This Mesozoic granite is one of several similar plutons that intrude the ancient Precambrian to Cambrian metamorphic and sedimentary basement rocks of the Panamint Range.

The Funeral Mountains are an uplifted block of ancient Precambrian to early Devonian metamorphic and sedimentary rocks. These rocks represent a virtually unbroken sequence of deposition extending some 220 million years.

The Amargosa Range marches southward from Boundary Canyon (the southern terminus of the Grapevine Mountains) to Copper Canyon (located about 7 miles south of Badwater). To the north, the Amargosa Range and the Funeral Mountains are very closely associated; indeed, there is really no intervening valley between them until one goes south of Echo Canyon and Death Valley National Monument. In this area, the Amargosa Range and the Black Mountains are similarly very closely associated. Further south, past Copper Canyon, only the Black Mountains form the eastern wall of Death Valley. The Black Mountains are an uplifted, northwest-southeast trending block of ancient basement rock wedged between the Death Valley and Furnace Creek fault zones. They are made up of Precambrian to Cambrian metamorphic and sedimentary country rock which is intruded and overlain by younger Mesozoic granite plutons and younger still Tertiary volcanic rocks. Tertiary volcanics include basalts, rhyolites, and pyroclastics; one deposit of pyroclastic rocks consists of brecciated tuffs 500 feet thick! These pyroclastic rocks bear witness to the violent history of this part of the Black Mountains during early-Tertiary time.

As one travels southward, the valley constricts somewhat as the Owlshead Mountains crowd in on the southern end of the Black Mountains. The Owlshead Mountains form the western wall of Death Valley in this area and are mostly composed of Mesozoic-age granites. The southern spur of the Black Mountains is made up of Precambrian to Cambrian metamorphic and sedimentary rocks.

Further south, the southern terminus of Death Valley is finally encountered. The valley is bounded to the south by the heavily faulted Avawatz Mountains. These mountains consist of an uplifted core of ancient Precambrian metamorphic basement rock intruded by small Mesozoic granitic stocks. The Ibex Hills and Saddle Peak Hills pop up along the southern end of Death Valley. Both consist of Precambrian to Cambrian metamorphic and sedimentary rocks.

Many small hills and buttes in the Death Valley basin (and also in the surrounding deserts) are composed of Tertiary volcanic rocks. Examples include Shoreline Butte (located near Ashford Junction) and the Dublin Hills (located near Shoshone).

## **PROSPECTING POTENTIAL**

The area of interest for the Lost Gunsight Mine presents some daunting problems

for the prospector in that it is extremely barren and remote and encompasses a vast area. On the other hand, it's a prospector's delight in that it has virtually no vegetative cover and the remoteness of the area precludes thorough and detailed prospecting by anyone. Small deposits may still lie hidden in the area.

Prospectors may want to concentrate on the country paralleling the route of the 49'ers through Death Valley. For example, the Manly-Bennett party journeyed southward from Furnace Creek Wash to Bennett's Well, and then southwestward along the eastern edge of the Panamints to the Six Springs Canyon area. They headed west across the Panamints here. Prospectors may want to focus on the eastern foothills of the Panamints, especially the area just east of Panamint City. This includes

Johnson Canyon, which drains the eastern slope of the Panamints and heads less than 2 miles from the Panamint City silver district.

The Jayhawker party traveled northward from Furnace Creek Wash to the area near Stovepipe Wells. Here they turned west, passing around Tucki Mountain and into Emigrant Wash, which they used to climb out of Death Valley. Again, the eastern flank of the Panamints seems to offer the best potential for prospectors. The Panamints are the most heavily mineralized of all the Death Valley ranges. Consequently, they have been heavily prospected, but nevertheless still offer some potential for future strikes.

Many small hills, buttes, and mounds in the Death Valley basin (and also in the surrounding deserts) are composed of Tertiary volcanic rocks. The lost hill of silver may be hosted in one of these.

Geology Park LLC 2000

## Thanks Linda Starbird



*Just wanted to say "Thanks so much for last months refreshment furnished by Linda Starbird. It was an Easter Theme with homemade cupcakes and candies and few clever decorations, made our meeting very special.*

# April Outing Photos



# ADVERTISEMENTS



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# SCHEDULED OUTINGS 2011

**DATES AND LOCATIONS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE!**

Meetings	Outing	Claim	Access	Rest Rooms
January 18	29-30	Puppy Feet	Easy	Yes
February 15	26-27	Puppy Feet	Easy	Yes
March 15	26-27	Puppy Feet	Easy	Yes
April 19	30, May 1	Puppy Feet	Easy	Yes
May 17	28-29	RM26 Road Side	Easy	Yes
June 21	24-25	Condor or TBA	Easy	No
July 19	30-31	Condor or TBA	Easy	No
August 16	2-4	TBA	Easy	No
September 20	24-25	Hidden Gulch or TBA	Easy	No
October 18	29-30	TBA	Easy	Yes
November 15	Dec. 3	Day Outing	4-WD	No
Dec. 13 or 20	Holiday Party	Club House	Easy	Yes



Access Easy	Good access for Passenger Car, 2 Wheel Drive, RV, and Trailers.
Access Medium	Can be accessed by 2 Wheel Drive. RV's, Trailers and 5th Wheels check with other members!!!
Access Tuff	Serious 4 Wheel Drive Trail/Dirt Road.
Restrooms	Are Chemical Toilets (Porta-Potties) that we rent for specific outings.

It is highly recommended that you attend the meetings and check with other members to discuss accessibility to these claims before going.

**ORANGE COUNTY 49ERS**



**Orange County 49ers, Inc.**  
**P.O. Box 1491**  
**Orange, CA 92856-1491**

**GOLD NUGGETS - MAY OUTING RAFFLE**

