



February 2016

Antelope Valley Treasure Hunter's Society

Lancaster, California

Volume 36 Issue 02

Meeting held 1st Monday of every month at 7:00 PM (unless otherwise noted in newsletter).

Prez Sayz, Don Duncan said he's not much of a writer, but will let me know when he has something to say. Meanwhile, I'll keep you updated with the activities.

From the Editor:

First and foremost, I want to apologize for being so late with the newsletter this month. Just as I was going in to write my article, a nasty virus took over my computer! It was like having a bunch of ladies singing a round, like "Row Row Row your Boat" but with many more than three starting points. I had to take my computer in and have Best Buy manually remove any suspicious files/folders and hope that would solve the problem without slowing down my computer too much. The alternative would have been to reset the computer to original settings then reload ALL my programs! OUCH! So, here I am, Monday morning Jan. 25 knocking out the rest of the newsletter. My sisters were visiting over the weekend and I couldn't get this out before Monday, anyway, so I'm putting this on the front burner to get everything completed and mailed by last pick-up today!



Mike Snowden reported that there was a decent turnout, considering the potential for bad weather, for the January outing at Ventura Beach Harbor. But I guess I didn't note the meeting place quite as we had discussed in the dual board meeting, so there was a little confusion there. But it looks like at least Mike and Ed Dorroh were there, as well as Kirk Hansen, Robert Weaver, Wes Weathers and Larry Blair. Mike said that he found a key that appeared to go to a padlock, but nothing else was in sight. He and Ed decided to check to see if it

unlocked the lifeguard station—and it DID! Amazing! He said that other than that, most of what they found was the usual fare at the beach—coins and trash. I wasn't able to go as not only was I put off by the possibility of rain, but I was also in the throws of getting ready for my fast approaching Garage Sale Blow Out! It was much harder going through my stuff than I had anticipated (physically, not emotionally!) But I'm happy to say it was the most successful yard/garage sale I've ever had! I made a huge dent in my garages, shed and house (though still plenty more to hold a second one in another couple of months.) I have to recoup physically from this one, first, though. Several AVTHS members showed up and helped *Larry Blair* make it the success that it was! A huge thank you to those who came out! There were many areas that I missed—items up in the rafters of my garage, a few shelves in the shed and a few other nooks and crannies around the place—and will hit those to add to what was left over from this one. I made well over \$1,000 at this one and had a constant flow of people all three days. I guess my BIG bright signs paid off. I also advertised on Craig's List, but not sure if that was the biggest contribution to traffic or just my signs. I got many compliments on the easy to read signs, so I'm thinking that was the biggest draw. That being said, I hope this next one is the last one I ever have. I've got to stop accumulating STUFF!

In February we have the ever popular Zuma Beach outing! We will be meeting at the 4th building PAST the heliport. It's the one with picnic tables and a white container on the north side of the building. Please park in the parking lot on the SOUTH side of the building. We usually set up our food in the south section. Be

sure to be prepared for anything—cold, heat, rain, wind—this time of year Mother Nature can throw just about anything at us! I went online to see if there are any other events going on that weekend, but can't find anything official. The one time we had a problem was in early fall when Zuma was our second choice after the fires in the East Fork area where we had planned to hold a prospecting outing kept us away. That day, Zuma was the place for a major triathlon! It was very difficult in the beginning, but after 11:00 a.m. it cleared out. But we've never (to my knowledge) had an issue with this outing in winter. Keeping my fingers crossed! The club often holds a hunt at this beach, but this year we will leave it up to the participants as to whether they want to do a hunt or just use the whole day for beach hunting. If a hunt is held, it will probably be just before our meal so that everyone is gathered close by. It would be for coins and tokens for prizes. We will have our meal around noon back at the picnic meeting area. I'm not 100% sure what the plan is—my notes at the Dual Board Meeting are...somewhere! (My next project is to clear out my office of all the piles so I can find stuff!) In the past, we have had hot dogs boiled on premises or big sub sandwiches. I think everyone at the Dual Board Meeting was leaning toward hot dogs, but we can discuss at the February meeting for clarification. Participating members should bring side dishes of salads, veggies and desserts, chips, cookies C-H-O-C-O-L-A-T-E would be Vicky's preference (LOL!) I'm planning to go and look forward to seeing a big group. This is always a well attended outing.

FYI, as a new member of the AV GPAA club, I will be volunteering at the Pomona GPAA Gold and Treasure Show on the weekend *Butch Burrows* of February 20-21. I hope to see many of you there! I'll also be volunteering for the Gold Show in Vegas! It should be fun! Remember, I won a BIG NUGGET last year in the PLP drawing! It was the biggest one given out that day—I forget the size, but it was beautiful and came from Australia. Here's a shot of it:



See you at the Feb meeting and outing!
Connie Smith
Editor, The Loop

Month	Meeting Date	Outing Date	Location	Notes
January	1/04/2016	1/09/2016	Ventura Harbor Village	BYOF
February	2/1/2016	2/6/2016	Zuma Beach	Club food/potluck (Hunt?)
March	3/07/2016	3/12/2016	Lovetta's Mystery Hunt? Lancaster City Park	Club food—Costco pizza/potluck
April	4/04/2016	4/09/2016	TBD Relic Hunt	BYOF
May	5/02/2016	5/07/2015	Map Hunt—Lancaster City Park	Club food (breakfast) (Hunt)
June	6/06/2016	6/11/2015	Kernville park	Club-hot dogs/potluck
July	7/11/2016	7/09/2016	Castaic Lake (lower)	BYOF
August	8/01/2016	8/6/2016	Silverwood Lake	BYOF
September	9/12/2016	9/09/2016	Cajon Creek (sluicing/prospecting)	BYOF
October	10/03/2016	10/08-10/2016	Chili Cookoff—Rocky Road	Chili/potluck (Hunt 1 free, 1 paid)
November	11/07/20156	11/12/2016	AVT claim off 395	BYOF
December	12/5/2016	12/10/2016	Christmas Party	Medrano's Mexican Restaurant

Miners stand their ground—and win

ARA backs two suction dredge miners to achieve legal victory

By SARAH REIJONEN For the GPAA

A lot can be learned from suction dredge gold miners Jim Urrutia and Ron Decker.

Lesson No. 1: Know the law.

We're not just talking mining law, but property rights, search and seizure and the right to bear arms.

Urrutia, Decker and American Mining Rights Association members from Fresno, Calif., used that knowledge to their advantage when the U. S. Forest Service and California Fish and Wildlife came knocking in May 2014. But, they didn't just come knocking—agents rifled through their belongings and confiscated their mining equipment.

"First of all, they can't just come up on you and search your stuff," said Urrutia. "They have to have a court order warrant to search any private property, and they came with no warrant to search anything."

The sheriff recommended Urrutia and Decker take the property issue to court, so that's just what the miners did and in Nov. 2015 their case was dismissed "in the interest of justice."

"I know I will be back in the water," said Urrutia, a self-employed Fresno State University student who used the money he makes from small-scale suction dredging to pay for tuition.

Because neither of the miners had \$25,000 lying around for the legal fees, AMRA stepped up to foot the bill for their case.

"We made a promise to Jim and Ron when they were cited, to defend them with every ounce of our being, and we did precisely that," said AMRA President Shannon Poe. "The victory is a huge one, but we caution people about courts. It only takes one activist judge to upset the apple cart as evidenced by Judge [Gilbert] Ochoa not granting injunctive relief after his very strong language on the San Bernardino case."

The whole story: Miners stand their ground in Fresno County

Both Urrutia and Decker had had run-ins with the Forest Service and California Fish and Wildlife prior to their 2014 citation, all of which had been dismissed, as well.

"A year earlier, my dad and I were mining a different claim and the Forest Service turned us into Fish and Wildlife and said we unlawfully diverted a river," said Decker, who is now under a contract for hard rock mining. "We went to court and got that case dismissed."

But the Forest Service had Decker's number and was watching for him after that, Decker said.

"They saw it was my truck so they started watching for us and apparently they saw where we went in and out to go mine, and hiked down in and took pictures and stuff of our equipment," Decker said. "Then it might have been another week or two after that, that they came down while we were actually mining and confronted us."

Decker and Urrutia were actively mining when the U.S. Forest Service ranger and Fish and Wildlife game warden showed up at Decker and Urrutia's federal mining claim in the mountains of Fresno County in May 2014.

I was running the nozzle when they came down, and I stopped. Well, I kind of stopped. I looked up and saw that they were there and went back to work," Decker said.

Urrutia said he and Decker informed the ranger and game warden that the sheriff would need to be present if the officers insisted on confiscating their equipment, which is what the state and federal employees were threatening to do.

"We had met with the sheriff a couple of months prior, and she said if they come to us, to call. So, we did. We made them call," Decker said. "They sent two sheriff vehicles and a helicopter, only because the helicopter [crew] were bored."

The law sided with the miners, but urged them to take the matter to court, Urrutia said.

"We talked to them and told them that the sheriff is the one that has jurisdiction over property and we were on a mining claim. And, it was a property issue and we didn't believe they had the authority to take the equipment. The sheriff figured the best thing to do was to settle the matter in court," Urrutia said. "But, the sheriff—they're on our side—felt that it was ridiculous."

The 4th Amendment, prohibiting illegal search and seizure was also in the miners' favor. Not only did Fish and Wildlife and the Forest Service seize Urrutia and Decker's suction dredge, but the officers also searched through the rest of the miners' gear, unloading their firearms in the process, Decker said.

"While we were in the water, they searched all our stuff. In fact, when they stopped us, they asked if we had firearms. We said, 'yeah, we have a sidearm each,' and they confiscated those and had taken and unloaded them," Decker said.

Urrutia said he and Decker were not treated as law-abiding citizens, but instead like convicts—guilty until proven innocent, instead of the other way around.

They were treating us like we were criminals, Urrutia said. "They tried to tell me not to load my weapon when I got it back. What are you, stupid? There's bears up here."

Not only did the ranger and the game warden take their equipment, but they also wanted Urrutia and Decker to help them haul it out.

"They had to use our tools because they didn't have any. We told them, 'Well, we're not helping you pack it out.' It's down in a canyon," Decker said.

Besides having to climb up out of the canyon with Urrutia and Decker's equipment without any help, the two miners took the ranger and game warden along the "scenic route," Urrutia said.

"We took them the long way. He's walking in front of me and I leaned forward and said to Ron, 'Hey, take the long way.' We went through all the Manzanita without trails," Urrutia said.

As far as the court case goes, it was laughable, Decker said.

"On day one of the court case, we ran into Deputy District Attorney, and he said he really had no interest in the case," Decker said.

However, the California attorney general got involved and tried to create a speed bump, Decker said.

"Kamala Harris got involved and started writing letters to the court against us, but the judge could see through it," Decker said. "The judge was waiting for the [Brandon] Rinehart decision, but he said he would dismiss it in six months no matter what, and he did, no qualms. It was kind of funny in court because he turned to the D.A. and said, 'You do object to this, right?'"

And, he said, 'Well, yeah.'

" 'To bad.' "

The judge not only honored his promise to dismiss the case, but ordered the miners equipment be returned on their second court date.

"He told us it was a waste of time. He told the criminal attorney it was a waste of time, but it all changed because of the state's totalitarianism," Urrutia said.

Miners face further harassment from federal agencies after case dismissal

Even after their case was dropped, Urrutia and Decker faced harassment from the Forest Service.

"The Forest Service ran into me this last summer and tried to say that we couldn't use pumps in the water. This was all part of Senate Bill 637 that hadn't even gone through yet, so I told him I want you to write all that information down. I want your name and your badge number because we're just going to sue you personally because you can't

be making things up—you're under the code of law," Urrutia said.

You can't use your authority for something like this. Also, jurisdictionally, you're supposed to be sticking up for us. You're a public servant. You're supposed to be protecting me against the state, because I'm on federal land and have a federal mining claim, and they've got no jurisdiction here."

The Forest Service also allegedly hassled Urrutia and Decker about not having permits to dredge, Decker said.

"They confronted us again and asked if we had a permit, and I said, 'Well, not at this time. I plan on getting one in June' because of the Rinehart case decision," Decker said. "And Jim asked, 'Why, are you issuing them?' And, the Forest Service guy said, 'Well, no,' Then why ask 'Do you have a permit?' Who has one"

It was that follow-up confrontation that got the Forest Ranger involved Decker said.

"They backed down pretty fast. They knew we weren't going to be pushed around," Decker said. "In fact, we found out later that the supervisor for the forest ranger got chewed out because they turned us in. His supervisor told them, 'Stay out of the area, and leave the miners alone'"

"I think we raised enough stink. You have to. Most people call us or post on Facebook and say, 'We had a run-in and had to leave.' No, make them leave," Decker said.

Knowledge is power

Like Decker, Urrutia had been cited for dredging prior to May 2014. Urrutia turned to the late Public Lands for the People President and mining rights advocate Jerry Hobbs for help.

"I knew nothing and Jerry taught me everything. He told me just to go in to court, state my court case and object and say, 'I don't have a law library at my disposal,'" Urrutia said. "They ended up dismissing the case and I didn't have to go in. At that time, I only knew the Mining Law of 1872 and 43 CR Subpart 3809, but now I know all the major case law."

Lesson No. 2: Know your enemies

Not only was mining law foreign to him, but Urrutia had just jumped ship. Before getting into small-scale mining back in 2009, Urrutia was a part of the environmentalist camp.

"I was a fly fisherman. I was a Trout Unlimited member and I was for the Sierra Club," Urrutia said. "I didn't know what they were doing."

Both Trout Unlimited and The Sierra Club are known foes of small-scale mining and have launched propaganda campaigns against

gold mining.

Now Urrutia and Decker are both active miners and well versed in not just the surface-level mining laws, but also the inner workings of the laws and how they pertain to them. And, their knowledge has paid off time and time again, including their most recent clash with the Forest Service.

"We put them through the ringer and we read them the riot act as far as mining laws. I got kind of indignant with the Forest Service guys."

Miners have to stand their ground, and they also have to know what they're talking about and why they are in the right camp, Urrutia said.

"The difference is that I had been doing research on my own, because I was going to dredge no matter what, but I wanted to learn everything I could to combat then," Urrutia said.

"We both had done all this research, so we knew exactly what to do. We know exactly what to tell them, and we know what laws are in our favor. Nothing really is in their favor—nothing.

"I think they ran into the wrong people," Urrutia said.

Sarah Reijonen is a freelance writer based in California. She can be reached at sarahreijonen@yahoo.com

Miners sue in federal court to overturn SB838

The legal wrangle over Oregon's suction dredging moratorium continues, but instead of do-si-doing with the state on its playing field, Oregon miners are taking their lawsuit straight to federal court.

Galice Mining District filed its complaint Oct. 19, 2015, in the United States District Court for the District of Oregon, Medford Division against State Bill 838.

SB 838, which went into effect Jan. 2, not only puts a halt to suction dredging, but all motorized placer mining located in essential salmon habitat streams—close to 90 percent of all lode bearing streams in Oregon, said Waldo Mining District President Tom Kitchar.

"The Oregon moratorium is more all-encompassing than the California moratorium, which was just on suction dredging," Kitchar said, though SB 637 changes that.

The defendant, which is the State of Oregon, was supposed to have a response filed in late December, but got an extension, Kitchar said.

"The state's response should have been due by Dec. 28 or so, but instead the judge gave them until Feb. 5," Kitchar said.

In the midst of the federal lawsuit, Kitchar received word that the Oregon Supreme Court has decided to hear Waldo Mining District's case against Oregon's Department of Environmental

Quality, which Waldo has been suing for 10 years. The mining district originally filed suit against the DEQ in 2005 for requiring the "illegal suction dredge permit" - illegal, Kitchar said, because it is tied to the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System permit under 402 of the Clean Water Act. The permit is needed for the addition of pollutants into waters, but Kitchar stressed that miners do not add pollutants, but instead take what is in the water and put it right back where it came from. In other words, there is no discharge from dredging, only "incidental fallback."

Kitchar said they received a decision for their 2005 lawsuit four years later, in 2009, but it did not address all the miners' concerns, so they appealed to the Oregon Supreme Court.

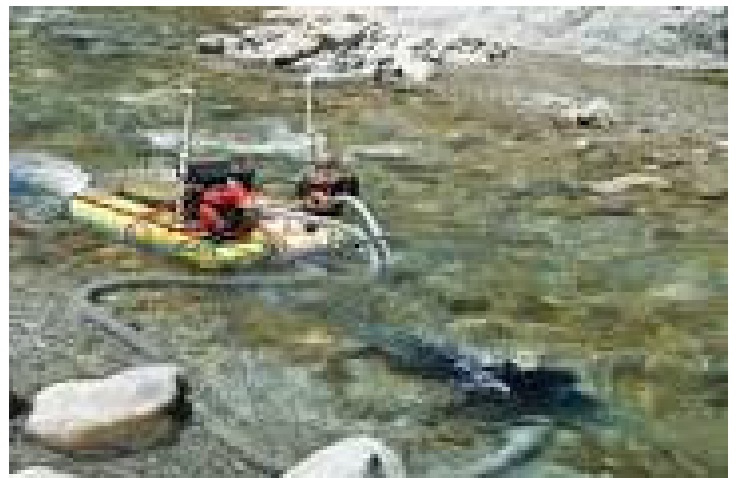
Because of repeated delays the plaintiffs of the SB 838 federal suit asked the judge to speed up scheduling, which was originally due in late December.

We were only given three weeks to file an opening brief to the Oregon Supreme Court, which means ... we won't even hear the response from the state yet on that issue," he said.

Kitchar and fellow miners, who are acutely aware of the state's stonewalling tactics is pushing for a ruling of the federal court.

"I think what the state is trying to do is just delay, delay, delay as long as they can," Kitchar said. "We want the federal court to rule. We want a ruling that says the state can't ban mining on federal land."

- Compiled by Sarah Reijonen for the GPAA



Generic picture from internet—not tied to either article.

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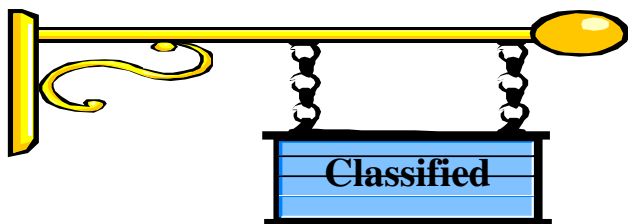
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All members will be receiving *The Loop* via E-mail to save on printing and postage costs, unless they don't have e-mail. If they are currently receiving it by snail mail and later get an email account they can send their request to me at avthnews@gmail.com and I would be happy to send it as a .pdf file. It is generally about 2mb for the issue.

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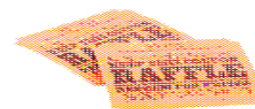
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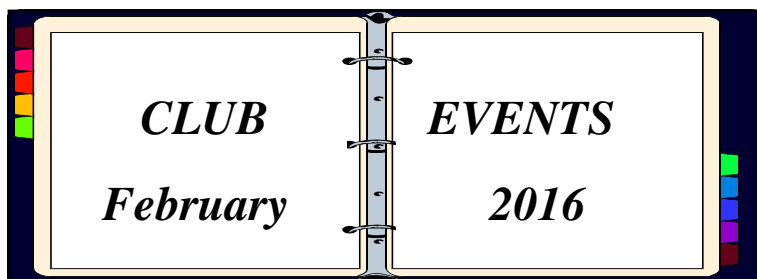
Support your Club by purchasing one of our new hats or shirts.



FREE RAFFLE TICKET

If you find your name in the newsletter and it looks like this: *Your Name* You get a free raffle ticket at the next general meeting. Bring it to the attention of the ticket seller. If two names appear (i.e. husband/wife) ONE ticket is given out.

Refreshments volunteers for 2016	
February:	Dan Petrossi
March:	Rick and Vickie Wyatt
April:	Mary Black
May:	Mike Snowden
June:	Connie Smith
July:	Harry Surtees
August:	Linda Bravo
September:	Gary Spain
October:	Don Duncan
November:	Jay Zeigler
December:	Steve and Peggy



- Feb 1, 2016 **General Meeting - 7:00 pm**
Leisure Lake Mobil Estates
48303 20th St. West
Lancaster, CA 93534
- Feb 1, 2016 **Board Meeting following**
immediately after the General
Meeting

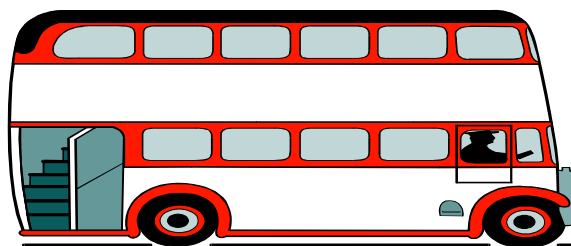
1st/ Qtr. 2016 Scavenger Hunt

Scavenger Hunt items for January 5, 2016 to April4, 2016***

- 1 - bobby pin
- 2 - bottle cap - King Cobra
- 3 - bottle opener
- 4 - earring - any metal
- 5 - earring - stud
- 6 - mirror
- 7 - nail - square
- 8 - necklace
- 9 - nickel - 1980
- 10 - ring - toe
- 11 - weight tire
- 12 - Quarter - Nebraska
- 13 - Quarter - Massachusetts
- 14 - Quarter - Maine
- 15 - Quarter - Kentucky

Finds must be brought to the April 4, 2016 General Meeting or earlier if all found. Display owner must be present to win. First member that finds all 15 items will win a Silver Half Dollar *If there is a tie, the winner will be decided by the cut of a deck of cards and runner-up will receive a Silver Quarter. If all items are not found, the member finding the most will win a Silver Quarter. If there is a tie, a cut of a deck will decide the winner. Members finding at least 10 items will get a Silver Dime. *** Only Items found between Jan, 5, 2016 meeting and the April 4, 2016 meeting, qualify to be displayed. All items must be found ***in the act of*** treasure hunting or while prospecting. Items found with the naked eye qualify. ***No purchased items or planted hunt finds allowed.***

CLUB OUTINGS



Feb. 6, 2016—9:00 a.m.

THE CLUB MAY PROVIDE A HUNT WITH TOKENS FOR PRIZES at around 10:00 a.m. depending on conditions and interest.

Take Hwy 1 from whatever direction you are traveling. From south, Exit Hwy 1—Pacific Coast Drive—at Busch Drive to the right and loop around under Hwy 1 to the entrance of Zuma Beach. From north, just exit at beach entrance. There is a parking fee of about \$3-8/car in winter, per the internet. Take Zuma Beach Access Road north to the picnic tables next to the large white container. This is between the 7th and 8th parking lots (see picture on last page of The Loop.)

The club will be providing main dish — TBD (hot dogs??). Members will need to bring sides, such as fruit, salads, chips, cookies, cake or some other dish. Remember to bring plenty to drink, a chair and sun screen. Oh, and your DETECTORS! Hopefully, the recent storms have stirred things up for us!!

Those who wish to caravan from Antelope Valley will need to be at the Park & Ride, west of the 14 freeway on Avenue S at 6:45am. We will leave promptly at 7:00. See ya there!

Treasure Hunters Code of Ethics

I will always check federal, state, county and local laws before searching; it is my responsibility to know the law.

I will respect private property and will not enter private property without the owner's permission. Where possible, such permission will be in writing.

I will take care to refill any holes and try not to leave any damage.

I will remove and dispose of any and all trash and litter that I find.

I will appreciate and protect our inheritance of natural resources, wildlife, and private property.

I will, as an ambassador for the hobby, use thoughtfulness, consideration and courtesy at all times.

I will work to help bring unity to our hobby by working with any organization of any geographic area that may have problems that will limit their ability to peacefully pursue the hobby.

I will build fires in designated or safe places only.

I will report to the proper authorities any individuals who enter and/or remove artifacts from federal parks or state preserves.

"THE END OF THE LOOP"

January Finds of the Month *Member must be present to display finds*

Most Unique

? - Bear License tag

Best Gold Item

Brian Skerston—Gold ring w/green stone

Best Natural Gold

None

Best U.S. Coin

Ron Renter—?

Best Foreign Coin

Ben Molstad—1912 English penny

Best Silver Item

Ben Molstad—Silver ring

Best Overall

Ben Molstad

Attendance Drawing

Thomas Baker—not in attendance - \$40 next
month

50/50 Draw

Didn't get name



February Birthdays

***Joe Covey, Sherri Renter, Robert Sams,
Gordon Stocks, Anna Valenquela***

Please note: If your birthday isn't listed in your birth month, you probably didn't give us your information. This information is gleaned from the active membership roster. Contact Linda Bravo to update.

OFFICERS

President:..... **Don Duncan**
H 661-478-2409

Vice-Pres..... **Lovetta Burns**
E-mail - lburns57@att.net
H 661 256-1654 C 661 428-0797

Treasurer..... **Linda Bravo**
E-mail - lsb7203@yahoo.com 661-480-5642

Secretary..... **Lorelei Paland**
661-273-3932

MEMBERS AT LARGE

Robert Weaver..... 661-948-8350
Connie Smith 661-526-7494
Mike Snowden..... 661-269-2937
Rick Wyatt..... 661-943-1124
Vicky Wyatt..... 661-943-1124
Linda Reitz..... C 661-478-7938
Jerry Paland..... 661-273-3932

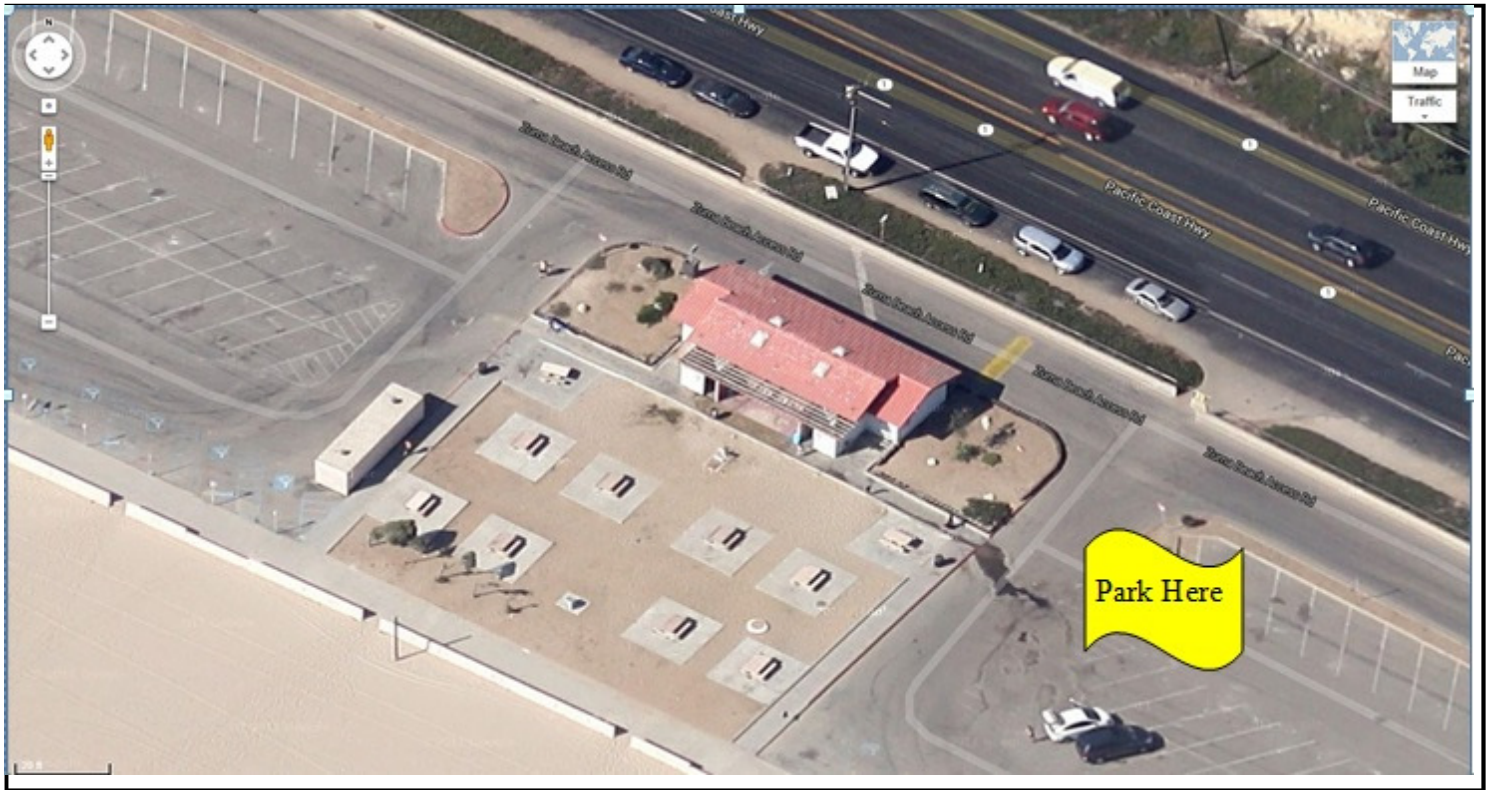
COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Welcome..... Vivian Sexton
Raffles..... Connie Smith, Harry
Surtees, Larry Blair
Club Photographer..... Anyone With Camera
Find of the Month..... Scott Sandahl
Claims..... Linda Bravo
Metal Detecting..... Scott Sandahl
Refreshments..... Volunteer for each meeting
Club Apparel..... Mike Snowden
Club Public Web Page..... Rick Wyatt
Newsletter..... Connie Smith
(H) 661 526-7494
(C) 818-414-6707
Membership..... Vivian Sexton
661 478-0174
Recycling..... Jay Zeigler
661-943-0397



Remember, as with the recycling collection, the proceeds from the sale of apparel are put back in the club to fund prizes and food at the outing.

Outing Map—Zuma Beach



Antelope Valley Treasure Hunter's Society
P. O. Box 4718
Lancaster, California 93539



This Month's Club Outing
Zuma Beach

