

“CUTTING REMARKS”

The Official Publication of the Old Pueblo Lapidary Club
520-323-9154

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Please join us January 14th, at **9:00am** for the monthly meeting. There is an optional social hour that begins at 8:00am followed by the monthly business meeting. Visitors are always welcome.



Articles or news to be included in the *Cutting Remarks* should be emailed to your Editor, Wayne Klement (wayneklem@aol.com) or call him at 520-954-6298. Submission deadline is the 25th of each month. Thanks!

THE PREZ SEZ by Victoria Fila, President

Hello everyone, I hope everyone is enjoying the holidays. Looking forward to a new year.

Working on some field trips for 2023. We have the one on 7th for geodes. Corral Nuevo Geodes Trip leader Paul Hardenberg Ph# 320-279-0864. Going to try to put something together at the end of February.

The Gem show is just around the corner, we need volunteers to help out at the booth. The shifts are 4 hours and you get to walk through the show for free. Starting this year we will be covering the cost of parking. So please hold onto your parking receipt so you can get reimbursed.

For our display we need to show off what we can do so if you are willing to loan a piece you worked on, we'll have who to contact at the next meeting. Please take a picture of what you will display, description name and phone number so your item can be returned to you after the show.

I want to thank everyone for participating and bringing in food for our Christmas luncheon. Everyone made it a day to remember.

Next board meeting will be on 01/03/23 5:30 pm all are welcome to join the meeting.

Next general meeting is on 01/14/23

Until we see each other again, take care to stay healthy and safe.

Victoria Fila
OPLC President



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS



Rick & Mona White Ortega
Jake Mehlhoff

Charlotte Potter
Margaret Vroman

DONATIONS

Thanks to those that have made donations to help keep this club running! We welcome donations so if you have lapidary related items, please contact Dan Harmsen at (520) 721-8452 to arrange a pickup or drop-off. Recent donations:
Wolfgang Mueller - slabs and rough

Cutting Remarks, Volume 2023, Issue 1, January 2023. Published monthly by the Old Pueblo Lapidary Club, 3118 N. Dale, Tucson, AZ 85712. Telephone: (520) 323-9154, a non-profit organization.

January 14, 2023 OPLC speaker – Helen Serras-Herman
**The Mitchell & Merrick Silver Mine and 10 Canyons on
or near Navajo Land**



We are in for a treat for our January 14, 2023, OPLC monthly meeting. Our very own OPLC member and Program Chair, Helen Serras-Herman, will share her latest presentation **The Mitchell & Merrick Silver Mine and 10 Canyons on or near Navajo Land**.

Helen's rich visual presentation will take participants first to Monument Valley where the story of the silver mine takes place, and then to nine canyons on or near Navajo Land, exploring their history. These canyons include Mystery Valley, Grand Canyon National Park, Grand Canyon West, Wupatki National Monument, Sunset Crater Volcano National Monument, Glen Canyon Dam in Page, Upper Antelope Canyon, Canyon DeChelly, and Petrified Wood National Forest.

From the colorful and spell-bounding landscapes, to the Native American Navajo culture behind these sites, the mine explorations, and the tours available for visitors, we will do an armchair travel in northern Arizona and southern Utah and dive into the legends and history.

Helen's article **The Mitchell & Merrick Silver Mine —Legend or Real? In Spell-bounding Monument Valley** was published in the October 2021 issue of Rock & Gem magazine. It is re-published here with kind permission.

Helen Serras-Herman, a 2003 National Lapidary Hall of Fame inductee, is an acclaimed gem artist with 40 years of experience in unique gem sculpture and jewelry art. Her award-winning, one-of-a-kind, distinctive artwork has been exhibited world-wide and published in over 300 trade magazines and books. Her remarkable carved gems and vibrant contemporary jewelry are recognized for the selection of unusual gem materials, modern organic compositions, masterful workmanship, and the ability to blend the mineral world with the art world. See her work at www.gemartcenter.com and her business Facebook page at Gem Art Center/Helen Serras-Herman

Looking forward to seeing you in the New Year 2023, Helen

OPLC SPEAKERS FORECAST

Here is the latest list for our upcoming speakers.

January 14, 2023 - Helen Serras-Herman – **The Mitchell & Merrick Silver Mine and 9 Canyons on Navajo Land**

March 11, 2023, Chris Osterman – **His recent Mining trip to Portugal, Romania, and Bulgaria**

May 13, 2023 – Dr. Art Friedman – **Minerals & Gems with Unusual Physical & Chemical Properties - Part 2**

THE ROAD REPORT

BY HELEN SERRAS-HERMAN

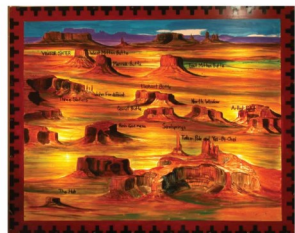
ROAD REPORT

THE MITCHELL & MERRICK SILVER MINE Legend or Real? In Spell-binding Monument Valley

Monument Valley is one of the most magical and majestic places I have ever visited. It is located on Native American Navajo land in the northeast corner of Arizona and southern Utah, at 5,564 feet elevation. The region is part of the Colorado Plateau. The Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park was established in 1957 and includes 91,696 acres within the approximately 16-million acres Navajo Reservation. The Navajo people prefer to be called Diné, which means The People. In their language, Monument Valley is known as Tse'Bił'Ndzisgaaí meaning Valley of the Rocks.

Monument Valley is famous for its towering sandstones and fragile rock pinnacles that rise 400 to 1,000 feet from the desert floor, surrounded by miles of mesas and buttes. These rock formations are the result of wind and water erosion during the past 50 million years. Their bright red coloration is due to iron oxide exposed in the weathered siltstone. Depending on the time of day, season, sun, shadows, and scenic clouds, especially during the summer monsoon rainy season, the scenery can be spell-binding. In addition to the pictorial landscape, an eerie silence with only the wind whistling between the buttes, chimes the ancient history of rocks and people.

My husband and I have visited Monument Valley twice – once during the August summer monsoon season and another time in snowy December. Both times we took the



A beautiful scenic painting of Monument Valley's famous butte landmarks. ALL PHOTOS BY HELEN SERRAS-HERMAN & ANDREW HERMAN



The Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park was established in 1957.

guided tour with Navajo guides, the best way to really appreciate Monument Valley and the adjacent Mystery Valley, which, along with some of the famous landmarks, is only accessible by guided tour.

Standing at the visitor's center one can see the world-famous Mitten Buttes and Merrick Butte, and the Mitchell mesa, all part of the renowned panorama featured in many photographs and western movies. The long list of movies shot within Monument Valley includes Director John Ford's 1939 famous *Stagecoach*, *My Darling Clementine* (1946), *Fort Apache* (1948), and other films as recent as 2011.

A small uranium-vanadium mine, the Mitchell Mesa Mine, was located on Mitchell Mesa. Mining permits and leases for this mine were issued by the Navajo tribal Council and approved by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The mine was exploited between 1965 and 1966 when mining was still permitted. It permanently closed in 1966 (AZ Geological Survey, 1965). But about a century earlier a silver mine, known as the Navajo Pishlaki mine, became the center of a legend.

THE STORY OF MERRICK AND MITCHELL

In 1863, two army soldiers, Jack Merrick and Ernest Mitchell, served under Army Col. Kit Carson, detailed to round up and relocate the Navajo people. Merrick and Mitchell admired and examined the silver jewelry worn by the Navajo. In 1879, assuming the silver for that jewelry



Monument Valley is one of the most magical and majestic places I have ever visited. The scenery can be spell-binding. The Merrick Butte is on the right.



(Left) The best way to appreciate Monument Valley, and the adjacent Mystery Valley, is by guided tour. (Right) Army soldier Ernest Mitchell joined Merrick and prospected for silver at the Mitchell Butte.

came from a near-by mine, they returned as prospectors to search for a rich silver mine.

According to a slightly different version of the story, Jack Merrick first found the silver alone. After he returned to Durango, Colorado, he had his silver assayed to over one thousand dollars per ton. He then asked young Mitchell to join him on his return trip to the mine, and supposedly went as fur trappers.

Continuing the story's first version, Merrick and Mitchell carried on looking for the silver ores until they were successful. They collected their silver samples, but the Navajo warned them to leave the land and never return. After they headed east to Cortez, Colorado, Mitchell and Merrick kept re-telling their story, looking for investors to refine their silver, until a man named Jarvis agreed to finance the prospectors with the stipulation that they would go back for additional samples (Silent Witnesses, Mitch Pieronek, *Treasure Trails of the Old West*, Spring 1973).

Ignoring the Navajo warning, the miners returned to the mine in 1880, and resumed collecting silver specimens. But the Navajos had been watching and attacked them. Merrick was killed instantly, and Mitchell was wounded and killed the next day. When the investors' posse returned to Monument Valley, the Navajos led them to the prospector's graves, but denied the killings, and said that a renegade

band of Paiutes killed them. The posse found rich silver ore samples next to Mitchell's body.

In 1882, another prospector from Missouri, Cass Hite, befriended the Navajos in Kayenta, and taught them how to identify gold, silver, and copper ore, in the hopes they would share with him the location of the lost silver mine, which they never did (Pishlaki – Lost Silver of the Navajo, Ben Traywick, *The Tombstone News*).

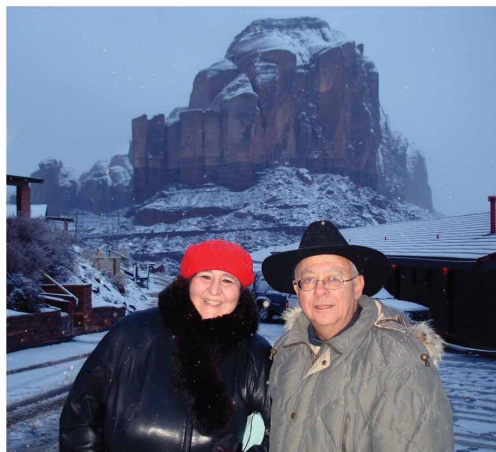
Even though Navajos admit that silver mines do exist within Monument Valley, they say that only a few tribal leaders knew the location, and since the last chief who knew the location died a few decades ago, the Navajo silver mine's location remains a secret and mystery. The two towering buttes, where the miners' bones are buried, still bear their Anglo names.

Is the Mitchell and Merrick story true, or just a legend? The story is reminiscent of the Lost Dutchman Gold mine legend in the Superstition Mountains. The reality is that a recent discovery

of massive silver boulders near Globe was unearthed (read my article, Silver Boulders, in the July 2020 *Rock & Gem* magazine). But, since no mining or rockhounding is permitted in Monument Valley, the legend will live on.



We purchased this gorgeous turquoise brooch, made by Navajo jeweler, Jasper Wilson. This piece is potentially similar to the Navajo turquoise jewelry Merrick admired.



Our second visit to Monument Valley, covered by snow in late December.

GETTING THERE

The nearest town to Monument Valley is Kayenta in Arizona, on scenic route AZ 163. The park's entrance is in Utah. The park is open daily from 6 am to 8 pm May through September, and 8 am to 5 pm October through April. Admission is ten dollars per person, or twenty dollars per car with up to four passengers. A visitor's center, gift shop, and restaurant are near the entrance. Please remember this is a Tribal park and not a National park; so, National Park passes are not honored. (The Navajo Tribal Parks are currently closed due to COVID-19, please check before you go). Visit their website at www.navajonationparks.org/tribal-parks/monument-valley/



Helen Serras-Herman, a 2003 National Lapidary Hall of Fame inductee, is an acclaimed gem sculptor and gemologist with over 38 years of experience in unique gem sculpture and jewelry art. Visit her website at www.gemartcenter.com and her business Facebook page at Gem Art Center/Helen Serras-Herman.

Article re-published courtesy of R&G



2023 HOB NOB



Hosted by Old Pueblo Lapidary Club
3118 N Dale Ave., Tucson, AZ

February 4, 2023 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM

Meet some of the best faceting and most interesting people in the world!

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For questions

Tickets available in advance or at the door.

Final event of the Symposium

US Faceting Guild Tucson Faceting Symposium

February 2 - 4 at Old Pueblo Lapidary Club, 3118 N. Dale Ave., Tucson, AZ 85712

Special Events

Faceting Class February 1 - 2

Cost is \$85.00 for USFG member, \$110.00 For non-members.

Limited to six students.

Pre-Registration is required

Facet Rough Tour

Details to follow.

Pre-Registration is required

Symposium February 2 - 4 (Registration is not required)

Dopping demos and instruction. (a variety of dopping techniques will be shown.)

Faceting machine demos of various machines including fantasy machines.

Presentations include:

Cutting for value

Analyzing rough

Heating techniques

Polishing

Understanding index gears

Victor Tuzlukov World Heritage Collection

Door prizes will be given after each presentation

Final event is the HobNob hosted by Old Pueblo Lapidary Club

MINUTES OF OPLC MEMBERSHIP MEETING

December 10, 2022, 9:00 AM at OPLC
William Penrose, Secretary, wrp0143@comcast.net

Prior to the holiday dinner celebration, a short business meeting was held. There was no presentation.

The business meeting was brought to order at 10:00. A quorum of the membership was present. The minutes of last month's meeting were accepted by the members present.

A brief financial report was given by Victoria in the absence of Mark Davidson. Program Chair Helen Serras-Herman discussed the list of presentations for 2023. Victoria presented the 2023 budget to the membership. The budget was approved without dissent or comment. Members with outstanding receipts were urged to submit them immediately before close of books in this month.

Victoria discussed a planned field trip to the Nuevo Corral Mine near Ruby, AZ in January.

The new executive and board were voted in by voice vote as proposed by the Nominating Committee without contest. Two proxy ballots also voted for the proposed slate.

President – incumbent Victoria Fila

Vice President – incumbent Dave Richardson

Treasurer – incumbent Mark Davidson

Secretary – incumbent Bill Penrose

Board 2 year term – incumbents David Schulte and Donovan Wagner

Board 1 year term – incumbent Elizabeth Boccardo

The meeting was adjourned at 10:45.

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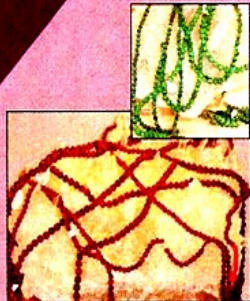
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Mike Tucker (520) 400-9656

Pete Petersen (520) 886-9021

PROGRAMS

Helen Serras-Herman (520) 761-9907

CLASSES

Victoria Fila (520) 664-0302

FIELD TRIPS (COMMITTEE)

Victoria Fila (520) 664-0302

HISTORIAN

Twink Monrad (520) 297-9454

JUNIOR EDUCATION

Teresa McCabe 520-490-7850

RAFFLE/DOORPRIZE

Kim Filips (520) 743-8070

KITCHEN

General Membership

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Bill Cascio (520) 638-8144

MEMBERSHIP

Janet Keisler (520) 333-3398

SECURITY

John Poole (520) 777-5588

BUSINESS MEETING REFRESHMENTS

Twink Monrad (520) 297-9454

Victoria Fila (520) 664-0302

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- **DAH Rock Shop** - 10% on most items, \$10 minimum purchase.
520-323-0781 **3401 Dodge Blvd, Tucson. See ad in newsletter.**
- **Kent's Tools** - 10% discount except for net priced merchandise.
520-461-1350 - **2745 N 1st Avenue, Tucson 85719. See ad in newsletter.**
- **Tucson Mineral & Gem World** - 10% 520-883-0682 Web address:
www.tucsonmineral.com **2801 South Kinney Road, Tucson**
- **Arizona Lapidary** - Arizona Lapidary & Gem Rough - 5817 E Speedway Blvd.
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- **Silver Lining Gemstones** - 20-35% discount on most items.
520-203-8430. Mike DeMeritt on his Instagram Store (IG Name:
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\$4.00 per month

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SURE THAT THEY HAVE SPACE FOR YOU.**

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Tuesday 9am - 12pm Dan Lilly (801) 995-9692
1st and 3rd Tuesday 12pm-3PM Liz Williams (818) 300-5262
2nd and 4th Tuesday 1pm-3:30pm Liz Williams (818) 300 - 5262
3:30-6pm Margarete Harris (520) 561-2315
6pm-9pm Brian Peterson (520) 449-2660
Wednesday 6pm-9pm Keith Haubert (520) 784-8283
Thursday 1pm-4pm Wendy Huber (206) 669-6002
Friday No Labs scheduled currently.
Saturday 2nd and 3rd Saturdays Victoria Fila (520) 664-0302
4th Saturday 9am-2pm Ron Bryan (619) 495-7967
Every Week 2pm-5pm Peter Moma (907) 947-6768
Sundays 9pm-12pm Gloria Shenanaquet (520) 396-9715
12pm-2PM Paul Fickle

Silversmithing

Monday 10am-1pm Jane Morris (727) 743-0883
Tuesday 9am-12pm John Poole (520) 777-5588
Wednesday 10am-4pm Elizabeth Keller Boccardo (520) 245-0923
6PM-9PM Bill Penrose (520) 780-1143 - On Hiatus
Thursday 10am-4pm Sloane Padilla (520) 808-8699 (text only)
6pm-9pm Bill Cascio (520) 343-9927
Friday 9am-3pm Giac D'Acquisto (520) 444-4143
Saturday 9am-12pm David Schulte (520) 945-8554
Sunday 10am-3pm Giac D'Acquisto (520) 444-4143

Faceting

Monday 9am-12pm Dave Richardson (520) 245-2172
Wednesday 5:30 - 8:30 Dave Richardson (520) 245-2172
Sunday 12:30pm-3:30pm Dave Richardson (520) 245-2172

Casting

Tuesday 9am-Noon Liz Williams (818) 300-5262
**New Classes start in September on the first Wednesdays 4 to 7
and will run 4 weeks and start every other month from there.
The off months will be open labs.
Call Chuck Lundstrom (520) 241-9262**

Saw Room

Sunday 9am-Noon Mike Tucker (520) 400-9658
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2022 GEM SHOW ✨ January 26 - February 14, 2022 - 9am - 7pm



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OPLC BOARD MEETING MINUTES

January 3, 2023

Meeting started at 5:30 PM

Board members present: Victoria Fila, Dave Richardson, Mark Davidson, Mike Tucker, Ted Rupp, David Schulte, Elizabeth Boccoardo

Treasurer: Final report is not ready. Will be given at the general meeting.

Membership: New year has started so membership is down. It will increase as members renew.

Printer will be replaced either by donation or purchase.

TGMS Show: Need to register with TGMS and plan on setup.

Field Trips: Victoria trying to schedule a trip at the end of February.

Cab Lab: New saws installed and running.

Faceting Lab: All equipment operational. Planning on adding new students.

Silversmith Lab: Everything OK. May start a new class soon.

Saw Room: Everything OK.

Refreshments will be provided by Wayne for the general meeting.

HobNob: Plan to order plaques and food.

Swear in is not necessary since the 2022 board is moving forward to be the 2023 board. No new board members.

Meeting adjourned at 5:53

Meeting minutes recorded by Dave Richardson.

And if you're tired of looking for rocks.....

Arizona Ghost Town Treasure Tales

Gillette Treasure Trove



Remains of the Burfind Hotel in Gillette

revealing where he had hidden the loot. After he was released from prison he dropped from sight and allegedly never returned to Gillette to recover his treasure. Gillette is now a ghost town with only the ruins of the Burfind Hotel left behind.

Gillette, Arizona, a milling town for the nearby Tip Top Mine began in 1876 and like so many towns of the Wild West was filled with lawlessness and violence. The town's blacksmith, a man named Henry Seymour, had a side job of robbing the Wells Fargo stagecoach outside of town. In 1882, he held up three different stagecoaches on the, obtaining a total of \$69,000. His lawlessness was suspected when he used some of his proceeds in a local saloon's poker game and soon he was caught trying to hold up a fourth stage. Seymour was then sent to prison, never

Bumble Bee Hidden Cache



A building in Bumble Bee, Arizona

could leave, a party of Apaches attacked them, killing one, while the other managed to escape. The surviving miner did not attempt to return to the site until the Indians had been subdued. However, he was an old man by then and before he could make the trip he fell ill, telling the story of the gold on his deathbed. Several years later, a Mexican sheepherder found the campsite in Bronco Canyon but didn't know of the mine or treasure. Other visitors to the area have reported seeing a crude arrastre in the same region. However, the mine and buried treasure, located about 4 miles east of Bumble Bee, has yet to be found. Bumble Bee is in Yavapai just north of Black Canyon. The old ghost town has many remaining buildings, some of which have been restored.

According to legend, two hundred pounds of raw gold lies at the bottom of a creek near the junction of Slate and Squaw Creeks close to Bumble Bee. In Bronco Canyon about four miles east of Bumble Bee, it is said that almost \$80,000 in gold lays waiting for discovery. In the 1800s two miners had set up camp in the canyon, prospecting the area. Soon, the prospectors got lucky, finding a rich vein of gold quartz. Mining the vein they began to take out loads of gold, storing it under a large rock near their camp. As winter approached, they began to make plans on returning to their homes. However, before they

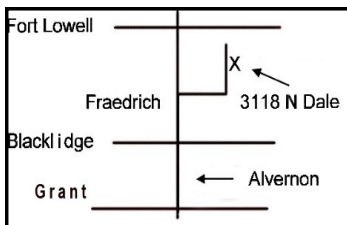
Old Pueblo Lapidary Club
 (Cutting Remarks - January 2023)
 3118 N. Dale
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 (520) 323-9154

OPLC MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

An application form can be downloaded from the Club website at: lapidaryclub.org/join_us.shtml
 The membership fees shown below are informational purposes only and are listed on the form:

Type of membership:	<u>1st Quarter</u>	<u>2nd Quarter</u>	<u>3rd Quarter</u>	<u>4th Quarter</u>	<u>Annual Renewals</u>
Single Member	\$30.00	\$23.00	\$16.00	\$11.00	\$25.00
Couple (same address)	\$40.00	\$30.00	\$23.00	\$16.00	\$30.00
Junior	\$15.00	\$ 9.00	\$ 6.00	\$3.00	\$10.00

Old Pueblo Lapidary Club, 3118 N. Dale, Tucson, AZ 85712



The Business Meetings are held on the 2nd Saturday of each month except for December. A pre-meeting social hour is at 8:00 a.m., followed by an educational program, and ends with the monthly meeting. Visitors are most welcome.