
THE 743rd MEETING
of
THE MINERALOGICAL SOCIETY
OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

7:30 p.m., Friday, December 10, 1999
Geology Building E Lecture Hall
Pasadena City College
Pasadena, California

Featuring A Talk By

Walt Bowser

on

"Mexico: Treasure House of Minerals"

December Speaker

Walt Bowser is well known as both a mineral dealer and the leader of Mineral Search Safaris. Twice a year Walt leads a group of geologists and collectors to Mexico's finest mineral producing regions. Safaris last 16 to 17 days and follow an ambitious itinerary. Through a network of local contacts in the mining and mineralogical community, they are able to get access to caves, working mines and little-known sites for quality minerals. The areas in which they collect include Santa Eulalia, Chihuahua, Naica (including the Cave of Swords), Parral, Santa Barbara, Durango (Mapimi and Gomez Palacio), Zacatecas, (Concepcion del Oro, Terminal, San Martin, Sombrerete, Fresnillo and Pinos), San Luis Potosi, (Tepatate, Charcas, Guadalcazar and Catorce), and Coahuila.

Editor's Note: Recently, Walt traveled to China where he has nurtured some relationships. He returned with some very interesting specimens and optimism about future opportunities. Visit his site at www.mineralsearch.com or e-mail him at: geologo@earthlink.net

IT WAS SHOW TIME!!

And if you missed it, you missed a really great show. No amount of thanks can come close to expressing the Society's appreciation to Jim Schlegel and Carolyn Seitz for the effort they expended and the result they achieved. Many other members contributed both in the planning as well as the execution, but it would not have happened without Jim and Carolyn who have been working tirelessly (tiredly?) since November a year ago. I spoke with most of the dealers as we wrapped up Sunday evening and they were universally pleased.

They were particularly complimentary about the pleasant up-beat atmosphere, the outstanding quality of the displays, and the quality of the dealer offerings. Everyone seemed pleased to be back in Pasadena. Hopefully Jim and Carolyn will have recovered sufficiently to give us a detailed report at the meeting.

SHOW AWARD WINNERS

Awards - Trophies

| | |
|--------------------|--------------|
| H. Stanton Hill | Chuck Houser |
| President's Junior | Chad Stevens |

Awards - \$50

| | |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Non-Dealer Theme | Martin Zinn |
| Non-Dealer Non-Theme | Bill & Elizabeth Moller |
| Dealer Theme | Kerith Graeber |
| Dealer Non-Theme | John Siebel |
| Museum Theme | LA County |
| Museum Non-Theme | Jurupa Mountain Cultural Center |
| Junior Theme | Kelsey Stevens |
| Junior Non-Theme | Mike Schlegel |

JANUARY BANQUET

It is time to start your calendar for the new millennium by entering our Annual Initiation Banquet January 15. It appears that the Pepper Mill Restaurant will be replaced by condominiums, so we will be hosted by the same folks at their restaurant Beckam's on Walnut just east of the 210 Freeway. Reserve the date, details in next month's Bulletin.

MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 17, 1999 MSSC BOARD MEETING

A meeting of the MSSC Board of Directors was held on October 17, 1999, at the home of Ron Pellar at 2:30 p.m. Board members in attendance were: Ron Pellar, Jim Schlegel, Carolyn Seitz, Bob Housley, Steve Shailer, and Dave Smith.

The Board reviewed the progress of the Donnie Rice case. No actions are required at this time.

The Board then discussed nominations for the upcoming elections. The offices not covered by the tradition that officers serve two terms are the 2000-2001 Directors and the fatigued Secretary.

The nominees, pending acceptance by potentially shanghaied members, are:

Directors 2000-2001

Jim Schlegel
Charlie Freed
Dave Smith

Secretary Bill Stutz

Bob then brought up a request from Peter Weigand at CSUN that we contribute \$50.00 annually to a Fall scholarship for the best Geology student. The contribution was to be matched by the Geology Department and the Los Angeles Mineralogy Society. He wished to name the scholarship the Donnie Rice Memorial Scholarship.

With litigation pending on the accident, Bob will ask Peter to change the name until after the case is settled. Several board members also feel there are many more significant persons who could or should be honored.

The Board of Directors meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted
David Smith, Secretary

MINUTES OF THE 742nd MEETING OF THE MSSC

The 742nd meeting of the Mineralogical Society of Southern California was held on November 12, 1999 in the Lecture Hall, Geology Building, Pasadena City College. Bob Housley called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. and Bill Rader introduced Professor Ling O'Connor who spoke on "Metamorphism Associated with the Emplacement of a Mesozoic Pluton in the Clark Mountains."

Bob then made some announcements with the first and foremost being that the California Federation has solved their Insurance problems. We are once again covered for field trips. The insurance will also cover the Show. Bob additionally made several announcements from the calendar section of the Bulletin.

Bob then opened up nominations for election of officers. The Nominating Committee was not represented at the meeting. Those nominations will be presented at the December meeting before the elections. Members in attendance were encouraged to consider serving. While Officers traditionally serve two terms, the Secretary is on his third term and will willingly relinquish the office. Also there are three Director positions to be filled for the 2000 – 2001 term.

Charles Schoeltlin announced that the Gem and Mineral Council of the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County is holding an Auction and Holiday Party on Sunday, December 5. Members in attendance were given invitations.

For the Show Committee, Carolyn announced the Speaker lineup and gave brief biographies on each of the speakers. Jim Schlegel said that we would need volunteers – more than before – to run the show. For those interested in participating in the show, they may sign up on the Volunteer Signup Sheet at the meeting or contact Dave Smith at

(310) 334-1669 or dave_topaz@yahoo.com.

Dave Smith won the Door Prize and chose a Pyritized Ammonite from Germany., The Guest Door Prize was won by Michael Spencer who chose a sample of Grossularite from Bishop, California.

The 742nd meeting of the MSSC adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
David Smith, Secretary

INTERNET WEB SITE UPDATE

If you have not visited the Society's web site lately, do so. Bill Besse has given it a completely new look. It was very good before, but it is even better now. Visit at:

<http://www.mineralsocal.org>

FEDERATION DIRECTOR'S REPORT

I attended the CFMS Directors meeting in Visalia on

November 13, 1999. The items of particular note from this meeting are;

- 1) There will be an increase of \$3.00 per head in the CFMS Dues, due to increased insurance cost. The total dues per head is now \$4.50.
- 2) The Donnie Rice litigation was settled out of court for an undisclosed amount.
- 3) Member Societies owning or responsible for property (meeting place, club house, etc.) will need to be listed on the CFMS Insurance policy. Forms are available for this.
- 4) Field trips are automatically covered.
- 5) CFMS is looking into Errors & Omissions coverage (Directors Insurance) for the Federation Directors. Individual clubs or societies will be able to obtain coverage for their own directors for an additional \$175 per year

(Cheap for this kind of insurance!).

Respectfully submitted,
Ronald J. Pellar
MSSC Federation Director

THE TUNNEL!

By Bill Moller

The Tunnel! Ominously it stood there, its concrete ringed entrance daring us to enter. If we accepted the challenge, would it produce a thundering railroad locomotive, ready to smash us into oblivion? Or would it be benevolent, allowing us to scurry through it to its opposite end, some two blocks away?

Already the silence had been punctuated on three different occasions by behemoths struggling with long strings of freight cars, their passage marked by enormous clouds of acrid black smoke.

Now all was peaceful. We stared down its length. A tiny patch of light at the opposite end marked safety. But how long would it be visible? Inspired, I put my ear to the rail, thinking the approach of yet another train would be audible through the steel. I heard nothing.

"To go over the top of this mountain would be a lot safer than going through it," my companion observed. "Yes, but it will take a lot longer to reach the rail cut that has the ferrierite," I replied. "Besides, if we get caught in the tunnel by a train, maybe we can crouch next to the wall and the train will pass by all right . . . maybe!"

Apprehensively we shouldered our back packs and headed down the long passageway for the tiny circle of light that meant safety. It was then that we encountered a peculiar phenomenon: the faster we went, the longer the tunnel seemed to become, and the more distant the light appeared to grow. We hastened our pace, ignoring the illusion.

Slowly the area of brightness increased in size, uninterrupted by the bulk of an approaching locomotive. With the spreading light our hope to complete a trip through the tunnel unscathed increased. Finally we were out in the open, clear of the menacing trains. Now we could continue down the track to our destination: the rail cut with all the ferrierite.

Our way led beside beautiful Lake Kamloops, whose water lapped at the track fringe. Stately trees punctuated the glades on the opposite side of the route. "British Columbia is sure a pretty place," I remarked. In a short while we reached our destination. The railroad shouldered its way between two low hillocks, slicing a sizeable chunk of earth from the face of the one furthest from the lake. It was there that the ferrierite in minute sprays had been discovered.

Close examination of the uncovered surface revealed it to be composed of the rock basalt which was filled with a multitude of bubble holes. Each bubble had been frozen in place as the molten rock congealed, yielding a very porous matrix. Later, rain water and other fluids derived from the surface percolated down through the rock and dissolved some of its chemicals. These substances were carried into many of the vesicles where selective combination built crystals of ferrierite. Typically the bladed crystals grew from a common point, yielding a radial pattern. They usually were white or cream colored with a reddish tinge from hematite coating.

Many of the holes carried chalcedony, too. Because this formed after the ferrierite, the latter appeared to pierce the amorphous masses of this silica. The latter was usually pale blue and translucent.

It was a happy duo which filled collecting containers full of excellent examples of ferrierite. On several occasions trains rumbled by at our feet, the train crews waving in surprise as they caught sight of us clinging to the hillside.

Finally it was time to leave and confront The Tunnel again. Just as I donned my knapsack and was climbing up to the track level, along came a track maintenance vehicle manned by two employees of the railroad. On impulse I stuck out my thumb, seeking a ride. To my surprise the car shrieked to a halt. They backed up. "Want a ride?" was the greeting.

We happily climbed aboard and chugged down the track, headed straight for The Tunnel. "I suppose you have a time table," I said, hopefully. "You betcha," came the response. "And I suppose you can't have a cold beer while working," observed my companion.

A big grin answered the question. In moments we were back at our truck parked near the track. The beer was promptly broken out, and as we related our adventures to our companions, they proposed a toast: "Here's to The Tunnel!" A long salute to that structure was promptly consumed.

CALENDAR

December 10: MSSC monthly meeting, 7:30 p.m., Geology Building, Pasadena City College.

January 15: MSSC Installation Banquet

January 23: MSSC Board of Directors Meeting, home of Carolyn Seitz.

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

One of the many enjoyable things about our show is the opportunity to see friends we don't get to see often enough, and meet new ones. I had the pleasure of meeting two very nice ladies I had not previously met, the mothers of Rock Currier and Jim Schlegel. Rex Harris came from Utah, and just as I was about to sprint to the car for my checkbook, Rex one-upped me and exchanged his check for a magnificent emerald in matrix that I lusted for. Oh well...but it was good to see him. He reported that he is out of the red beryl mine and working on the next project.

And how nice to see Jack Streeter. Many of you know Jack was my father's dear friend, Best Man at my parents' wedding, and my mentor who took me to Trona for my first collecting trip, circa 1948 .

The Saturday evening reception for the dealers was very well attended and well received...a great chance for all to socialize.

Our speakers were world class and highly informative, and if the transfer to vcr tape is successful, we will have them on tape for future enjoyment. John Sinkankas graciously sent me his paper entitled "Tectonic Reopening of Mineralizing Channels in Granitic Pegmatites" that provided the basis of his talk on Saturday. It will appear in a future issue of the Bulletin .

Wayne and Dona Leicht: Thank you for your support for our show in the Kristalle News. Dona, you were missed.

"KJ" Werner is now: kjwerner@earthlink.net.

And, lest anyone be concerned, the Bulletin staff is pleased to announce that your

Bulletin is Y2k Compliant !!

(Note that there is a difference between being "Y2k compliant" and "Y2k certified." Your Bulletin is "compliant" but not "certified." We won't discuss about the Editor.)

Interesting article concerning our own Dr. Mary Johnson in the November 24 Issue of the GIA Insider:

"Look for your fall 1999 issue of The Loupe GIA World News, scheduled to hit mailboxes this week. In this issue, ...a special applied gemology Carat Point article, "Identifying Emerald Filling Substances," by Dr. Mary L. Johnson, GIA GTL, manager of research and development, looks at recent GIA research."

To subscribe to the GIA Insider send an email with only the word 'SUBSCRIBE' in the SUBJECT area to:

giainsider@gia.edu

And, to whet your interest about Mexico, here is an extract from Walt Bowser's safari itinerary:

“Day 7: Today we travel about 3 or 4 hours south to Mapimi. This area is famous the world over for its specimen materials. Some of the materials found here were found no where else. It is famous for its adamite, hemimorphite, fluorite, rosascite, aurichalcite, wulfenite and more. I have rarely come to Mapimi and not found many many specimens that I have wanted. It is sometimes overwhelming, and other times the pickings are slim. However, we always find several things we want there. We will spend the night at one of the finest hotels I have enjoyed in Mexico.

Day 8: We will leave after breakfast, we will go back to Mapimi and go up to the mine. There, with a guide, you will be taken across the suspension bridge to the Mina Ojuela, and into the tunnels there. You will be interested to know that

there are over 500 miles of tunnels in the mountain. The mountain is a huge piece of limestone which has been thrust up from the surrounding plain. There was later intrusive activity that leached the limestone away and implanted veins of zinc, lead, copper and iron minerals. The mine last worked actively in the late 50s. It is a wonderful place and I have photos of it when it was in the prime of its activity. The roofless houses and buildings you see here were the homes of many workers, managers and engineers. It was a bustling place.

The bridge is of interest, because it was built by the Roebling Company of New Jersey and New York. The company built this one after building the famous Brooklyn Bridge. The bridge over the canyon is about 600 yards long and about 300 yards above the canyon floor. It sways slightly in the wind and many folks cannot believe that it had a steam train which crossed it when the mine was working. The train was a narrow gauge, cogwheel railroad engine which pulled the ore cars out of the mine and down to the smelter in the valley below. The rails were removed after the closing.”

Your Editor was fortunate to spend two weeks in this mine in 1952. Regrettably, a camera was not included in my backpack, but hopefully Walt will have slides of this marvelous location. At press time, he was still searching.

Some other MSSC members have also collected there, it might be interesting to share some of the recollections of those who have collected at Mapimi. If you will send them, I will print them...and add some of my own. This is not exactly a “Forgotten Locality” nor is it a “Lost Locality” but it is a “Remembered Locality” that I suspect everyone would love to visit or revisit. I am working on Walt for a copy of his picture of the bridge, which I did cross, with its missing floor members. And, yes, it sways. I think I was a bit more adventuresome in my youth.

Ed.



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