

THE 734th MEETING
OF
THE MINERALOGICAL SOCIETY
OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

7:30 p.m., Wednesday, March 10, 1999
The Arboretum of Los Angeles County, Arcadia

Featuring A Talk By

Rock Currier

"Into The Heart Of Darkness"

A recent collecting trip to Zaire

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

by Bob Housley

At the February meeting we heard some exciting reports from Tucson. Carolyn Seitz was able to line up a great group of speakers for our Pasadena Show in November so now we know we will have an outstanding program to offer. She also found a very enthusiastic response from dealers so we also expect to have an excellent representation of dealers with the best new material.

Several members reported on interesting activities at Tucson and new mineral finds from around the world. The find that most caught my attention was a "cave" of pink fluorite on quartz that has recently been discovered and mined in the Alps. The locality can only be reached by rock climbing techniques and the material sounds simply beautiful.

Talking about fluorite we also had a brief field collectors' forum as part of the meeting and Carolyn showed us some very nice green fluorite thumbnails she had recently collected at the Felix Mine in Azusa. That reminds me of something I have planned to call attention to in the Bulletin for some time.

The Felix Mine is generally listed as a locality for minim, a rare mixed valence state lead oxide. It was first put in CDMG Bulletin 173 based on a

personal communication from a person named Clarke. From there it was picked up by Dana, since there are few localities known for the mineral. However in CDMG Bulletin 189 it is mentioned that nobody at that time knew who Clarke was nor how the identification was made. Based on lack of documentation the locality has been dropped from the most recent edition of Dana. I have been unable to locate any confirmed specimen.

One of my strong interests as a collector is to collect complete suites of minerals from a locality, not just the showy ones. I have been working on the Felix for a number of years. I have found galena inclusions and badly weathered free galena crystals. I have found abundant limonite pseudomorphs after chalcopyrite or sphalerite, both as inclusions and free crystals. I have found inclusions of cerussite and malachite in fluorite. Recently Steve Shailer gave me a nice fluorite with inclusions of unaltered sphalerite. I have also found decent free microcrystals of malachite.

Over the years I have tested a number of orange powdery samples from fluorite inclusions and found free in cavities. None have been minim. About half have been cinnabar and about half have been mottramite. My conclusion is that nobody should label orange material or orange inclusions in fluorite from the Felix as minim without testing that specific sample. If anybody is interested I will volunteer to do some tests.

My other strong interest is in exploring new or little known areas as a field collector. I have recently found some nice varicite in the San Gabriel River canyon near Morris Reservoir and will bring some samples to the meeting to show.

DUES ARE DUE !!

Don't be left out...This will be your last bulletin if your dues are not current. Then, no need to renew until 2000 !

MORE MINERALOGICAL TERMS

by John Schwarze

This time I'd like to discuss some of the terminology used to describe the shape of mineral specimens. Believe it or not, a crystal's shape is not just "awesome" or "grungy". I'll try to do this in alphabetical order; so that Ron Thacker has a tougher time shortening the piece.

Acicular (a sick u lar): Needle like crystals, either singular or in groupings. Many zeolites, such as Natrolite, Mesolite, or Mordenite take this form. Do you remember your Latin? The word is from acus, or, that's right, needle.

Bladed: Pretty obvious. The mineral takes the form of a knife blade. The mineral Kyanite takes this form and, since it's blue, it's a good addition to any collection.

Botryoidal (boy tree oyd el): These look like bunches of grapes or small marbles glued together. The classic example of this shape are the specimens of Hematite from Cumberland, England. The name is Greek and means a “bunch of grapes”. By the way, that same mineral from the same locality also serves as a classic example of Reniform, which, for some reason, means kidney shaped. (Actually, it’s from “renis”, Latin for kidney).

Columnar: Have you seen the Devil’s Postpile up near Mammoth Mountain? Well, that’s the shape; standing like the columns holding up Tara in Gone with the Wind. Best examples are any Beryl or Tourmaline crystal.

Dendritic: Tree like and/or branching. You’ll commonly see various Manganese minerals coating rocks in this fashion. However, those spectacular gold specimens featured in the Mineralogical Record in Kristalle’s ads are frequently in this form. This one’s Greek, from “dendron” or tree.

Druse: A coating of well formed crystals so tiny that it looks like the underlying rock or mineral is covered with sugar. The mineral that typically forms this coating is clear quartz, although it can be any mineral and can be any color. Believe it or not, this is a German word, a rare break in the Greek/Latin scientific name monopoly.

Fibrous: The appearance is that of threads or fibers all bound together. Serpentine (asbestos) is the best example. If the crystals look like threads or fibers but are single crystals rather than aggregates, then the preferred term is Filiform or Capillary. The best examples of these are Millerite from Hall’s Gap, Kentucky.

Massive: Showing little or no structure; but consisting of only one mineral species. If it’s composed of more than one species, then you’re looking at a rock, not a mineral.

Micaceous: To me this always looks like the scales of a fish; but, obviously, it’s from the word and mineral Mica. I prefer Specular minerals, which also look like fish scales; but are opaque and shinier. Hematite can look great this way.

Radiating: The crystals grow outward from a central point, forming a circular specimen. Most of the literature uses Pyrite or Wavellite as examples; but I’m partial to the Ulexite that used to come out of the mines at Boron when they were underground and not a large, open pit.

Reticulated: Minerals that form in aggregates of lattice like structures. Some of the Cerussite from Bisbee, Arizona forms this way and can be quite attractive in its strange back yard trellis way.

Does this exhaust all possibilities? Of course not. With the thousands of distinct mineral species that exist, the possibilities magnify. For example, there’s a mineral(?) called Cylinderite that forms in little, you’ve got it, cylinders; the only one I know of. However, there’s some dispute as to

whether or not it's a distinct species or just something else in a disguise. In the long run, just describe the shape of your specimens the way they look to you. Chances are you'll be on the same page as everyone else.

As usual, I write these pieces to stimulate interest and comment on things mineralogical. I'd appreciate hearing from you.

Memorial Day Weekend Field Trip

Last year we got such a good response to our Petersen Mountain field trip that I committed to Jon for another trip this year. Of course the things to collect are smoky quartz, quartz scepters, and amethyst. Last year some spectacular specimens were found and nobody had to pay a cent extra for their finds. As last year, the claim holders reserve the right to keep one specimen per day (not from each collector but from the group (this is not likely to happen)) but if it does, he will compensate the finder \$200.00. Collectors will also sign a lease agreement and a liability waiver. There will be a toilet on site as well as a first aid tent. The claim holders will be operating a backhoe most of the time to aid collecting. It's a guaranteed good time.

Dates: Memorial Day Weekend, May 29, 30, 31

Time: We will meet at the campsite and caravan from there to the collecting site. We will leave promptly at 9:00 a.m.

Please do not drive to the collecting site alone. Come to the campsite first. We will pass out information packages and collect signed waivers. We may also need you to help transport people without four-wheel drive. Last year a few drove up alone, and the rest of us waited and waited for them to show up at camp, not knowing that they were already at the collecting site. For this reason, as well as for safety reasons, anyone who fails to comply with this requirement will have their fee refunded and they will be denied access to the claim for that day.

Fee: The fee to collect is \$50.00 per person per day.

Attendance: Jon would like to have 15 to 20 people per day

Registration: Complete and return the sign-up form, with your check, to the address on the form by April 30, 1999. I will confirm your registration when I receive it.

Vehicles: Any vehicle can make it to the campsite but you **MUST** have four-wheel drive to get to the claim. Last year we had no trouble getting a ride for anyone who needed it.

Directions: Take U.S. 395 north to Reno, Nevada. Continue 30 miles more to Hallelujah Junction, and then about 10 miles more to Red Rock Road. Turn right and the camp site is just up the road. Watch for MSSC signs. If you

plan to stay in Reno, make your reservations early, it is a holiday weekend. U.S. 395 between Reno and Red Rock Road is a high enforcement zone for both CHP and NHP. DO NOT drive over the speed limit.

For information: Jim Schlegel, phone: (626) 449-9197, Fax: (626) 449-5484, e-mail: jeschlegel@earthlink.net

Martin L. Stout Memorial Quiz

by Randy Hurst

1. I am defined as the "work of snow and ice beyond the limits of glacier action." Who am I ?
2. During the middle ages a man who was born of "superior breeding," was thought to be this. This name also has been given to a group of elements that make "superior alloys." Who or what are we?
3. What is the name for the practice of naming allied groups of plants, animals, and minerals?
4. The gradual increase of sodium towards the outside of a plagioclase crystal is called?
5. When crystals are grown by synthetic means a seed kernel is placed into the super saturation mix to begin this?
6. Avalanches and volcanic gas clouds both travel by the same means but only the volcanic form is called this?
7. John Stutter found one of these?
8. I am often defined in planer geometry and am also found in the Martin L. Stout quiz's? Only the first part of my many names is necessary to identify me.
9. I am a black substance that has a very diverse past. I have been traded for deer skins and grain, worn as jewelry, and even used in war, but am not a metal. Who am I?

Answers To The February Quiz

1. Inclinator
2. Index fossil.
3. Joints
4. A nonconformity.
5. Ordovician.
6. Orogeny.
7. Yes to both, paint pots are colored mud holes.
8. Thank God for something smooth to walk on.

CALENDAR

March 20, 21: Mineral Collectors Workshop: Searles Valley, by San Bernardino County Museum. Lectures on Solution Mining Techniques, Borates from Searles Lake. Pot-luck supper. Sunday field trips to Calico led by Bob Housley, and Crestmore Quarry led by Curt Forrester.

March 27, 28: Boron Rock Bonanza by the Mojave Mineralogical Society at the Boron High School. Sat 9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m., Sunday to 4:00 p.m.

April 7: MSSC monthly meeting.

April 11: MSSC Board of Director's Meeting

April 23-26: 1999 Desert Research Symposium, San Bernardino County Museum.

June 18-20: CFMS Show, County Fairgrounds, Turlock.