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THE 747th MEETING  
of  
THE MINERALOGICAL SOCIETY  
OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

7:30 p.m., Friday, April 14, 2000  
Geology Building E Lecture Hall  
Pasadena City College  
Pasadena, California

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**APRIL PROGRAM**

MSSC Vice-President Bill Besse will give a short tour of the MSSC web site ([www.mineralsocal.org](http://www.mineralsocal.org)) after which there will be a discussion of the site and what members would like to see added to and done with it.

This will be followed by a forum of "Tales of Tucson," a show, tell, and discussion of what members saw, bought, and did in Tucson during the show. Please bring your purchases and recollections to the meeting.

**PRESIDENT'S COLUMN**

by Bob Housley

Our March program on California Gold by Wayne Leicht was excellent and was thoroughly enjoyed by the good crowd who attended. The first half gave the highlights of the history of gold discovery and mining in California, with lots of slides of historical places and events. The second half described the current status of specimen gold mining in California. Only six of the more than ten thousand gold mines that have operated in California are known to produce good crystalline gold specimens. The techniques for removing them intact were illustrated. I believe only one mine in California has produced good wire gold. Many slides of beautiful specimens were shown and Wayne explained the factors that go into determining value. It was a nice follow on to the February talk on Norwegian silver.

The Mineral Collectors Workshop sponsored by Southern California Friends of Mineralogy at the Riverside Municipal Museum the following Saturday the 18th was also very interesting and a big success. In the morning we heard an overview of mining in Riverside County by Bob Reynolds and a fascinating exposition on how to prospect for and mine pegmatite minerals in Southern California by Al Ordway. Even though this whole area was heavily prospected many years ago Al's discoveries provide proof that all the good pockets near the surface have still not been found. Just to drive home the point he found a pocket the Sunday before his talk while out taking pictures for slides.

In the afternoon the Gochenhour brothers Ken and Dana entertained and enlightened us with three talks. Ken first humorously described the heroic work that went into their efforts to rediscover the famous corundum

locality on Mt. San Jacinto. They succeeded just in time to get some fabulous specimens prepared for Tucson, where they sold out, so Ken only had one specimen to show us, but it was indeed a beauty. Then Dana recapped highlights from their mining experiences in San Diego and Riverside Counties and even pointed out areas that might be worth further exploration. Then Ken finished up with a history of the Fano mine, and described some of the fantastic specimens that it produced both during the time that they mined it and also before and after.

The following day on Sunday the 19th Garth Bricker lead a field trip to the Pacific Silica Quarry. About thirty people attended and reports are that everybody did well. Some people brought portable Geiger Counters to help locate samarskite and monazite and found plenty. I also heard that at least one new crystal pocket was found. I was not able to go. I discovered a flat tire when I was ready to leave the house that morning.

## MARCH FIELD TRIP REPORT

by Bob Housley

I would say our recent field trip to Old Borate was a big success and got our new millennium of MSSC field collecting off to a great start. Twelve people joined me for the trip on Saturday the 25th Half were MSSC members and half were from other clubs. Gary Mason came down from San Mateo and Mike Evans came up from Vista. The weather was perfect. We parked a short distance from the head of Little Borate Canyon and worked three freshly exposed colemanite seams in that area. Walter Margerum I believe had the first find when he broke open an eight inch colemanite chunk exposing a cavity full of sharp clear colemanite crystals. Then it seemed like every rock that Karen Boggus and Charles Edmonds broke had good celestine or colemanite and Rick Seng and Steve Knox were following separate seams of good celestine and selenite.

Meanwhile back at another colemanite seam Jim Schlegel and Steve Shailer were putting the rest of us to shame, digging out nodule after nodule of good colemanite. Mike Evans working on some nodules that had rolled down the hill also came up with some great celestine. In the end there was more good colemanite found than we could take, so we had to leave some pretty good pieces for the next collectors.

The general area in which we were collecting also produces many of the stromatolite concretions that contains the world famous silicified insect fossils. Jim Schlegel found a neat one with the tail end of the insect sticking out. John Seibel and Carl Biggs spent most of their time collecting a bunch of these concretions.

Four of us camped over and spent a nice evening looking at stars and then swapping stories in Carl's camper. The next day five of us went to Lead Mountain and tried our luck on the barite veins that criss cross the area. Here we got a few interesting pieces, but the rewards were not near as good as on Saturday.

## MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

The meeting was called to order by President Bob Housley at 2:20 p.m. at Bill Besse's home on March 11, 2000. In attendance were Robert Housley, President, Ronald J. Pellar, Treasurer, Acting Secretary, Past President, Charlie Freed, Director, Jim Schlegel, Director, Rock Currier, Director..

Ron Pellar moved to fill the Vice President position with Bill Besse, seconded by Rock Currier, and accepted unanimously.

Ron Pellar presented the Treasurer's reports for 1999 MSSC, the 1999 MSSC Show, and a 2000 MSSC Budget. Rock Currier moved to accept the budget, Bill Besse seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The Board of Directors authorized Bob Housley to find board members to fill the one vacancy. Ron Pellar, moved to allow the show chairman to open a checking account of show expenses and the Treasurer to issue checks in block amount to fund such checking account on behalf of the MSSC with oversight by the Treasurer, seconded by Bill Besse. Motion accepted unanimously.

Bill Besse moved that \$400 donation be made to the Los Angeles County Natural History Museum for mineral acquisition and that \$400 be donated to Pasadena Community College at the discretion of the Geology Department and the President of the MSSC, seconded by Charlie Freed. Motion passed unanimously.

Bill Besse moved that Speaker fees to vary between \$75 and \$200 per speaker including expenses without authorization by the Treasurer or President, seconded by Jim Schlegel. Motion was accepted unanimously.

It was announced that Michael Schlegel had resigned from the Door Prize Chairman position.

Future Board of Directors meetings were scheduled:

May 21, 2000, Costa Mesa Show, 10:00 No Host Breakfast.

August 13, 2000, Charles Freed's home, 2:00 p.m..

November 5, 2000, Jim Schlegel's home, 2:00 p.m.

January 21, 2001, Rock Currier's home, 2:00 p.m.

Jim Schlegel moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Charles Freed. Motion passed unanimously at 4:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Ronald J. Pellar

MSSC Secretary (Acting)

### **LET'S GO DIGGING**

Field collecting is major part of what makes the M.S.S.C. the organization that it is. With that in mind, we have decided to try a new approach to the way we conduct field trips. Many of our members go "digging" regularly, and if one (or more) of you would invite us along.... **BINGO!** ... A field trip.

It's easy, just contact the field trip chairman or the Bulletin editor 30 days prior to the trip and provide a description of the trip and driving instructions or meeting place. See inside cover for contact information. By the time you read this, the first trip of this type will have passed, but the next approaches. See the March and April bulletins for examples of how it works, and join in and try it.

Jim Schlegel, Field Trip Chairman

### **Inyo Mountains Quartz**

April 22-23 we will be visiting one of my favorite collecting locations, Crystal Ridge and surrounding area in the Inyo mountains. Over the past ten years, I have collected in this area about twenty times, and I still enjoy

each trip like the first. The quartz is abundant, if you have the patience to locate it, and the quality is excellent.

Take US 395 north to Independence. About seven to eight miles further north, on the right, is the Black Rock Fish Hatchery. The sign is small so watch for it. The road is pretty good except for the Owens River crossing. The river has been diverted into the aqueduct so there is no water in the riverbed but it may not be possible to get RV's or passenger cars across. This time of year, the nights may be cold and windy so be prepared. There is no water so bring plenty, and fire wood is scarce. Some of the quartz veins are quite easy to work, but others may require heavy tools and a strong back. Come to the April meeting to see some samples of the material you may find. Hope to see you there.

Jim Schlegel, Field Trip Chairman

## TICK CANYON

*by Al Wilkins & Bob Housley*

January 2000

**Note: This article has been moved to [Tick Canyon](#)**

## SYMBOLS OF SPRING

by John Schwarze

As you are all aware Spring means the return of Daylight Savings Time, Passover, Easter, Baseball, the opening of the Sierra Trout season, and the annual journey of Jim Schlegel to "Crystal Ridge". There are probably directions elsewhere in this bulletin to Mr. Schegel's campsite, and, typically, Jim does not turn away good company.

The Crystal Ridge locality is well known for quartz crystals, both clear and smoky. Jim would be the first to tell you that where he camps is actually a good country mile or two north of the true site named in a zillion guide books dating back to the 1950's and beyond. As I recall, Jim went scouting for that original locality and found it under mineral claim. Rather than return to Highway 395 and home; he went exploring and discovered this alternate locality. For convenience he has used the same name.

I have joined Jim's camping group at least five times and always had a good time. Some of the reasons I return are:

The incomparable view of the Sierras from the ridge. They are usually still snow covered this time of year, while the Inyo Mountains are in the comfortable range of 72 degrees by day and 40 at night. It can get windy, and, once, it even rained; but this area is in the Sierra's rain shadow and does not seem to suffer from truly severe weather. You'll be looking at the eastern face of the Sierra stretching from Big Pine to the north down to Lone Pine to the south. Although you really can't see Mt. Whitney from here, you're looking at the true "high" Sierra with most of the peaks you're viewing topping 13,000 feet and a few, like Mt. Williamson, going over 14,000.

The array of wildflowers that are usually blooming at the campsite and on the surrounding hills. They do not form a carpet as at Anza Borrego; but are situated in scattered clumps of various varieties, including blooming cactuses. The most prominent are the daisy like Mojave Asters that grow in clumps out of cracks in the rocks.

And, yes, the quartz crystals. They're not lying around like pebbles, but are abundant enough that you can find them by just walking around. One should especially look for water courses and depressions and then follow the signs uphill to a likely place to dig. The productive veins are usually oriented in a northeast to southwest direction and dip into the hillsides at an angle of about 18 degrees. The crystals are a cloudy sort of smoky quartz and usually doubly terminated in a peculiar fashion. They appear to have broken off at the base; but if you look closely you will see that the broken end has typically attempted to heal by the addition of myriad small points. There are also true doubly terminated crystals, as well as distorted forms and the rare "faden" form (You'll have to ask Ron Pellar to describe one of those to you). The color is typically a gray or cloudy gray; with occasional clear or white crystals. I've never seen a black crystal from this locality. Most of us have also observed signs of Azurite, Malachite, and Epidote in the area; but I've never seen anything to brag about. Perhaps one of us will someday find something blue or green worth taking home.

One final note, I don't know if Mr. Schlegel realizes it; but the weekend he picks for his journey is also the opening weekend of the Sierra trout season. If you're so inclined, pack a pole, catch a few trout on the Sierra side, and use a campfire on the Inyo side to cook 'em up.



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