

**THE 751st MEETING
of
THE MINERALOGICAL SOCIETY
OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**

**AUGUST PICNIC
and
SWAP MEET**

**10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Saturday, August 19, 2000
Geology Building E Lecture Hall
Pasadena City College
Pasadena, California**

AUGUST PICNIC and SWAP MEET

This month instead of a regular meeting we will have our annual picnic and swap meet. It will be from 10 am until 5 pm on Saturday, August 19th at Pasadena City College, Geology Building. For the most part we will copy last years very enjoyable event. One laboratory room will be used for the potluck and eating area. Another will be a swapping and talking area. We will have one talk in the lecture room in the morning at 11:00 a.m. Hopefully we will be able to get Tony Kampf to tell us about his recent adventures in Brazil. In the afternoon at 2:00 p.m we will hold a free ranging Field Collectors Forum in the lecture room. Participants are encouraged to bring slides, maps, and specimens from recent trips or to illustrate places suggested for future field trips, and also any questions or ideas concerning sample cleaning and preparation. We will also try a couple of minor innovations this year. We hope to find space where members wanting to bring microscopes and exchange microminerals can set them up. We also will try setting aside an area for give away, as opposed to swap material.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

by Bob Housley

The column this month will be short since I have not really found anything worth reporting. For the most part I have been exploring mines in the area just south of Fort Irwin. The reason is not because I know that there is something exciting to be found there, although there are some hints that there might be. The reason is that when the projected expansion of Fort Irwin is finalized the area will be inaccessible and no one would ever be able to find out. This does remind me of a philosophical point I want to make about old mines.

Although many people think about old mines and quarries largely as scars on the landscape and possible sources of danger or pollution, they also represent a unique scientific resource. Only a few of the 4,000 or so known minerals ever occur naturally on the surface of the ground due to erosion. Most minerals weather and decompose much faster than the surrounding host rocks erode. These exotic minerals survive and can be collected for periods of time ranging from days to hundreds of years in the rocks brought out of mines and quarries and in the walls of the excavations themselves.

Thus a well documented collection from a mine or quarry that produced unusual minerals is a valuable scientific resource and might be repeatedly studied over time as analytical tools continue to improve and geological questions to sharpen. However this cannot be done if the collections are not made and preserved.

Along with convincing the administrators of public lands that mineral collecting in general is a compatible use that does not damage ecological resources we need to educate them to the fact that they should actually encourage mineral collecting at old mines and quarries in the lands that they administer. Otherwise potentially valuable scientific material under their jurisdiction will just weather away and be forever lost.

MINUTES OF THE 750th MEETING OF THE MSSC

The meeting was called to order by R. Housley at 7:34 p.m., July 14, 2000. Pat Stevens introduced our speaker, Peter

Bancroft who presented highlights of his mineral collecting

activities over the years. A special door prize was donated by Peter Bancroft, a copy of his book "Gems & Crystal Treasures", which was won by Jackie and Bill Stutz. Peter

kindly autographed it for them.

The drawing for the guest door prize was won by Kelsey Stevens and the drawing for the general door prize was won by Carl Acosta.

A call for MSSC Show volunteers was made by Jim Schlegel.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Ronald J. Pellar
Acting Secretary

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING AUGUST 13

The next regular meeting of the MSSC Board is scheduled to be on Sunday, August 13th at 2:00 p.m. at the home of Charlie Freed. The Board meeting will be followed by a Show Committee meeting. As usual all interested members are cordially invited to attend. One item of business will be a discussion of how we can work more closely with other related groups such as Southern California Friends of Mineralogy and Southern California Micromineralogists for our mutual benefit.

LABOR DAY FIELD TRIP: TOPAZ MOUNTAIN

The Labor Day weekend field trip will be led by Carl Biggs September 2-4 to Topaz Mountain, Utah. This is a dry camp, so bring plenty of water and your own fire wood. Topaz can be picked up off the ground, but the best material is found through hard-rock mining. Be prepared for the possibility of thunderstorms.

Details: Take Interstate 15 north to Holden, Utah, about 520 miles. Take Highway 50 and then US 6 west to Delta. Go over the bridge at the west end of Delta and bear right off of US 6. Go one block to the T- intersection, and that's 1000 Street. Go right one mile, the road curves left. Now, you're on 1500 Street. Go 0.4 mile to Jones Road and turn right and go north about 10 miles to Highway 174. This puts you in front of the power plant. Go west on 174 for about 29 miles to the "TOPAZ MOUNTAIN" sign and then turn right. Go about 2 miles and then left and watch for MSSC signs.

SPECIAL BULLETIN

From the Gemological Institute of America

Message from the President: Reporting from the World Diamond Congress in Antwerp

This has been a seminal week in the history of the world diamond industry. I want to share with you, our astute Insider readers, some perspectives on three key issues affecting the diamond trade.

De Beers's Newly Stated Direction

As a result of a highly publicized strategic review by the consulting firm Bain & Company, of Boston, De Beers announced to its sightholders on July 12 that it would abandon its role of controlling world diamond supply and instead focus its energies on building global diamond demand. De Beers's key strategy is to be the "supplier of choice" in the industry. Although it will not abandon the market to its own self-interest, it will abandon its former broad-brush "custodial" role of matching worldwide supply to demand in order to become "a more finely calibrated instrument designed primarily to serve the interests of De Beers and its main clients," as announced by Nicholas Oppenheimer in his recent Chairman's Message.

In addition, De Beers will be discontinuing the use of "Central Selling Organisation (CSO)" in favor of "Diamond Trading Company (DTC)," and will allow its clients to leverage this name along with their own individual branded names. DTC and the famous slogan "a diamond is forever" will appear in new diamond ads. However, De Beers will reserve its super-brand "De Beers" name for the De Beers Group of Companies alone. A set of "best practice" principles has also been established for sightholders to ensure continued consumer confidence in the allure and mystique of natural, untreated diamonds through their commitment to the highest professional and ethical standards.

A key goal for De Beers is to increase shareholder value, and one way to do this is to reduce its diamond stockpile. With the emergence of new diamond producers in recent years, this aspect of the diamond industry has become much more competitive. Too often we use the cliché "competition is good." Yet De Beers's new strategy may very well propel the world's leading diamond organization into an even stronger leadership position. Clearly, De Beers's stated new direction is one of the most monumental decisions ever cast by the group, and it will no doubt have a huge impact on every level of the diamond pipeline for years to come.

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IN MEMORIAM

We are saddened to note the passing of MSSC member William T. Shailer, father of MSSC member Steve Shailer.

The CFMS Newsletter reports the passing of past MSSC member Jessie Hardman of Long Beach, California. Jessie was a member and officer of several clubs including the Southern California Micro-Mineralogists and the Long Beach Mineral and Gem Society.

Notes From The Editor's Desk

Who says the Internet doesn't work? Well, sometimes me, particularly when I cannot quickly find information using search engines. I shouldn't, because it is well known that the engines are overwhelmed....but I do.

But a few weeks ago I was absolutely flabbergasted (that is still a word, isn't it?) to receive an e-mail from one Larry Hughes, a geophysicist living in Tennessee. Larry is authoring a book on carbonates and had somehow found the short comments in an earlier Bulletin about the optical calcite near Anza-Borrego. He wrote to ask if I had any more information on that locality and John Hilton as he intends to devote a chapter to that material and its uses in the early 1940's. I was pleased to refer him on to Chuck Heald and Geroge Rossman, both of whom had subsequently commented on the original article.

The shock was that he found that article, buried as it is on our web site, using search engines. Weeks later, I am still impressed. And biting my tongue. This Internet thing may just work out after all.

Larry says the book will take five years to complete, after which he will write a summary for our Bulletin (No, don't even think that). If you have interest in contacting him, let me know. Here is a brief of his project: The Rhombohedral Carbonates, 350 pages, profusely illustrated, the roles carbonates have played in civilization building and the scientific revolution. There is a lot more, but I am out of space.

I recommend we all read again Bob Housley's very profound observations in this month's column. And then write some letters.

-Ed.

FROM THE NETSURFER DIGEST

Ever want to just go crawl into a cave somewhere? Here's a great way to learn about cave exploration before you get down and dirty. This site offers excellent information for first-timers and family visits, with material that more experienced spelunkers will find useful, as well. Speleothem? Say what? This place will tell you.

They even offer some solid photo tips.

<http://www.goodearthgraphics.com/virtcave.html>



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