
THE 746th MEETING
of
THE MINERALOGICAL SOCIETY
OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

7:30 p.m., Friday, March 10, 2000
Geology Building E Lecture Hall
Pasadena City College
Pasadena, California

Featuring A Talk On

“California Gold”

By
Wayne Leicht

MARCH PROGRAM

We are pleased to welcome MSSC Life Member Wayne Leicht speaking on “California Gold” at our March meeting. Wayne, along with wife Dona are the proprietors of Kristalle in Laguna Beach, California. Wayne specializes in gold specimens and his commentary and collection have have been prominently featured in many fine mineral publications.

PRESIDENT’S COLUMN

by Bob Housley

Our luck held and we were able to get Steiner Nordrum, the curator of the Norwegian Mining Museum at Kongsberg to speak at our February meeting. The talk was absolutely facinating. I regret that some of you missed it because we did not have confirmation in time to be definite when the Bulletin went to press. The silver there was discovered in 1623 and was actively mined until 1958. Nearly all was native silver frequently in beautiful wire and crystal forms. Until the mines closed in 1958 these excellent specimens could be purchased for slightly more than their silver value. Now they have increased hundreds of times in price.

The Museum now owns the largest mine, known as the King’s Mine, and all the associated buildings and equipment. They lead various types of tours, which are so popular that they employ 25 guides. Collecting is

allowed on the dumps and three smaller mines nearby are still being worked for specimens. For anyone thinking of going there I now have e-mail and web site information.

The last part of the presentation consisted of a fantastic selection of slides of Kongsberg specimens. There were nice wire silver groups up to seventy pound in weight, then wire silvers with silver crystals on them and silver crystals alone. This was followed by wire silver groups with calcite, pyrite, fluorite, acanthite, and other minerals.

On the local collecting front the Kanan Road site that I have mentioned before still is very productive. A couple of weeks ago when I stopped to check it they had just opened up a two foot pocket of calcite and I loaded up my car with the best stuff I have collected there to date.

Al Wilkins and I also recently got to a piemontite locality near Victorville that I have been anxious to see for years. The necessary information was supplied by Rich Torres as a detailed set of maps and was relayed to me by Carl Biggs. The first time I tried to go there I did not follow the map correctly and was chased away by a miner that had the area I got to under claim. This time we were more successful, but had to walk about half a mile and then break really hard rocks. The piemontite ranges from pink through wine red and is in nice sharp crystals. Unfortunately the pockets we found were small and the crystals only got up to a few millimeters in size, so the area is probably of most interest to micro mineral collectors.

In other local news the Blue Bell Mine continues to yeild surprises. Garth Bricker has recently found a couple of previously unreported minerals there.

MINUTES OF THE 745th MEETING OF THE MSSC

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m. on February 18, 2000 by President Bob Housley who introduced the speaker for the evening, Steiner Nordrum from the Norwegian Kongsberg Museum. The subject of the talk was a slide show of the Silver Mines in the Kongsberg area.

The business meeting started at 9:00 p.m. Previous meeting minutes were reviewed, a correction made, and a motion made to adopt the minutes as corrected by R. J. Pellar, seconded by J. Schlegel and adopted without dissent. Bob Housley gave a report on the Pacific Micromounters Symposium.

Jim Schlegel gave a field trip report and announced a trip in May to Petersen Mountain. Jim Schlegel gave a show pitch asking for more volunteers.

Bob Housley reported on the California Mining Museum and that it is now a California State Park.

The door prize was won by Dave Smith.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Ronald J. Pellar
Acting Secretary

MARCH BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING

An MSSC Board meeting will be held on Saturday, March 11th at 2 pm at the home of William Besse. A major item of business will be the adoption of budgets for the Society and for the Show Committee. We will also discuss how to fill vacancies on the Board and among the officers.

As usual all interested members are urged to attend.

DUES ARE DUE !!

Members whose dues are unpaid will be delinquent and will not receive the Bulletin. Next month's issue will feature a new article by Bob Housley and Al Wilkins on Tick Canyon. Please send your dues to the Post Office Box, Attention, Ron Pellar, Treasurer.

MARCH FIELD TRIP

Beginning with this trip on the weekend of March 25th we hope to resume an active MSSC field trip program. Jim Schlegel is very busy with Show Committee work, but still plans to lead trips to Crystal Ridge and Peterson Mountain. To fill out the program beyond that, those of us active in field collecting all need to help. I [Bob Housley] will lead the March trip and probably at least one other during the year, but we will need more volunteers. If you are willing please contact Jim or me and we will arrange specifics. Also as far as possible we will try to pick meeting spots that are easy to find, so the leader will not have to go out ahead of the group and put out signs.

The main objectives on this trip will be vugs containing nice clear, clean colemanite crystals and vugs containing clear celestine on yellow calcite or chert. They both occur in similar formations close to each other. There will be about a quarter mile walk from the cars and one will need to dig and break hard rocks in order to have a good expectation of getting the better material. I will have examples at the March meeting to show. In the same area one can also find howlite, selenite, zebra agate, and concretions containing insect fossils, but the howlite is not as good as that from Tick Canyon.

Mining History. For an interval of time Borate was the biggest producer of borax in the United States. Colemanite was discovered there in 1884 and from then until American Borax Companies main effort moved to Death Valley in 1907 it is estimated to have produced about \$9,000,000 worth of borax. It was served by a narrow gage railroad. The ore is reported to have been largely discontinuous lens of colemanite in a borate rich shale. Visiting there in 1922, well after the main mining period, Foshag reported finding geodes up to more than four inches in diameter containing nice crystals of colemanite and celestine. Although he said these were abundant over a large area I have not yet seen one quite that large. More recently Bill Moller described a sulfate rich area in the same region that he referred to as the "Sulfur Hole".

Meeting Time and Place. We will meet at 10:00 a.m. Saturday morning March 25th at the ARCO AM/PM service station on the frontage road south of the I-15 Freeway at Ghost Town Road exit about 7 miles past Barstow. They have plenty of parking and it is a good place pick up last minute supplies or find a rest room. From there we will travel a few miles up Mule Canyon road to the collecting spots. An ordinary car should

have no trouble with the road. The area is still owned by U. S. Borax so we will need to sign releases and everyone should be a member of a CFMS club. The GPS coordinates of one of the colemanite seams are lat. 34.9536N,

lon. 116.8186W. Using these you can see a topographic map of the area at "<http://topozone.com>."

There are lots of good open desert camping areas along Mule Canyon Road so we can just pick a convenient place on Saturday evening. For those not wanting to camp Barstow is close. There are several nearby collecting possibilities for Sunday. We could go to Lead Mountain or the Barium Queen Mine for barite, or explore the Borate area further.

MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND FIELD TRIP

May means Petersen Mountain, and Hallelujah Mining and Exploration has agreed to host another dig! This will be the sixth annual trip to this location, and as always, we'll be digging for quartz, quartz scepters, and amethyst. Many fine specimens have been found on past trips, and this year will be no different. As always, there is a guaranty, and also the mine owners reserve the right to keep one specimen per day (this has not happened yet), but if they do, they will pay the finder \$200. The mine owners will also be hosting a BBQ on Sunday night, and all are invited. Ask anyone who has attended this trip, and they will tell you "it's a great time". Plan on camping with us (RV's ok) or stay in Reno, but remember that it is a holiday weekend so make your reservations early. Each year this trip becomes more popular, so send in your registration early. This is the first notice but I will be contacting people outside the MSSC soon.

To see pictures of past trips and specimens, visit the MSSC web page and go to the field trip page. There is a picture of a nice specimen at the bottom of the page. Click on Petersen Mountain on the map to see the other pictures

Dates: Memorial Day Weekend, May 27,28,29.

Time: 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily. We will meet at the campsite and caravan to the collecting site. Please be there a little early so we can get the registration handled and leave promptly. You must come to the campsite and go to the dig with the group.

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

Attendance: We can accommodate no more than 25 people per day.

Registration: Complete and return the registration form, with your check, to the address on the form by May 1, 2000. (FIRST COME - FIRST SERVE)

Vehicles: Any vehicle can get to the campsite but you must have four wheel drive to get to the claim. Every year the crowd gets bigger and it gets more difficult to get everyone up the hill. Please try to provide for your transportation before the trip.

Directions: From Reno, take US 395 north, 30 miles, to Hallelujah Junction (gas & food), and then 10 miles more to Red Rock Road. Turn right and go about a mile. The campsite is on the right. Look for the MSSC

sign. US 395 between Reno and Red Rock Road is a high enforcement zone for NHP & CHP. DO NOT drive over the speed limit.

Information: Jim Schlegel, (626) 449-9197
Fax, (626) 449-5484 jeschlegel@earthlink.net

CALENDAR

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

March 11 - 12: San Marino CA
Pasadena Lapidary Society
San Marino Masonic Temple
Sat 10 - 6, Sun 10 - 5
Alex Sergienko (323) 258-1394

March 25, 26: MSSC Field Trip to US Borax site, Mule Canyon east of Barstow

March 25 - 26: La Habra, CA
North Orange Cnty Gem & Min Soc
La Habra Clubhouse
200 W Greenwood, 10 - 5 both days
Don Ogden (909) 589-2456
donogden@aol.com

March 25 - 26: San Diego CA
San Diego Mineral & Gem Society
Spanish Village at Balboa Park
Al Bahr Shrine
5440 Kearney Mesa Rd
Sat 10 - 6, Sun 10 - 5

C. Everly, POB 208, Sun City, CA 92586

April 15 - 16: Boron CA
The Mojave Mineralogical Society, Inc
Boron High School Multi-Purpose Room
Sat 9 - 6, Sun 9 - 4

May 12: MSSC monthly meeting, 7:30 p.m., Geology Building, Pasadena City College featuring a talk on pseudomorphs by Si and Ann Frazier

May 27, 28, 29: MSSC Field Trip to Petersen Mountain, Hallelujah Junction, Nevada



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Visit our booth at most major mineral shows!

Tuesday-Saturday: 10-5; Sunday: 12-5 or by appointment-FREE PARKING!!