

**THE 760th MEETING
of
THE MINERALOGICAL SOCIETY
OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**

**7:30 p.m., Friday May 11, 2001
Geology Building E Room 210
Pasadena City College
Pasadena, California**

**Featuring a Talk
by
Robert Verish and Ron Hartman**

"METEORITES OR METEOR-WRONGS?"

"Calling All Meteorites!!"

MAY PROGRAM

This month's special guest lecturers are Robert Verish and Ron Hartman. They will be presenting a program on the identification of meteorites.

Mr. Verish, who works as a contractor for JPL's Deep Space Network (DSN), is one of the few people who has found, and eventually identified, a rock from another planet - two pieces of a meteorite - composed of a type of rock from Mars known as a shergottitic basalt. While traveling home from his work site at NASA's Goldstone Tracking Station in the Mojave, Bob would take side trips to do some rockhounding. Over the past 20 years he has amassed a large collection. On one of these side trips, Bob picked up and took home some odd-looking, glassy rocks. At least 18 years would pass until he would see these rocks again while cleaning out his rock collection. In the intervening years Bob had earned a degree in geology from Cal State University at Los Angeles and developed an interest in the space sciences. Upon recognizing the rocks as being possible meteorites, he took samples of them to the Cosmochemistry Lab at UCLA, where their analysis eventually would show that these rocks had come from MARS!

Bob, also known on the Internet as "Bolide*chaser", has recently appeared in a segment of "Hunt For Amazing Treasures" on The Learning Channel. This video segment is a mini-documentary about his recent pursuits to try and find the original location and more of the Mars rock meteorite that he found while rockhounding.

Although Bob hasn't found any more Mars rocks, his efforts have resulted in several other new, stony meteorite finds for California and Nevada. Currently in his spare time, Bob is the Principal Field Investigator for the Meteorite Recovery Foundation.

Ron Hartman is Professor of Astronomy at Mt. SAC, Walnut, CA. He is in charge of that school's Planetarium. He regularly presents shows to all grades of science classes and tours. In the lobby of the Planetarium are several displays of meteorites, all from his personal collection. The school kids are always quite impressed, since these displays rival those at the Griffith Observatory.

Ron is noted as being the first person to have gone to a desert dry lake to purposely LOOK for meteorites, AND (on his first trip) to actually FIND one. Later, he found several more. He published a paper in 1964 based upon these finds, which are now called the Lucerne Valley Meteorites. In 1999, 36 years after making his first find, Ron found the 17th Lucerne Valley Meteorite. Ron Hartman along with his son, Jim, are noted meteorite specimen preparers. Their web site is: <http://www.themeteoritesite.com/>

Bob has offered to inspect any and all suspect meteorites. So come to the next meeting and bring your 'space rocks' with you.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

If the speaker listed in this Bulletin seems familiar, he is. Due to a misunderstanding there was no speaker at the last meeting. Robert Verish has kindly consented to give his presentation at the May meeting. As you can see, he has added Ron Hartman as his associate.

PRESIDENTS COLUMN

by Dave Smith

As I indicated in the March meeting, I consider the filling of the Committee chair positions of the utmost importance for this society. It is fairly difficult to sell these positions because we haven't always a clear idea what duties each position entails. Most of these positions don't require a huge amount of time or work from an individual.

I would like to compile descriptions of these tasks and make them available for the membership to read. This task has been undertaken before and many of these descriptions currently exist. The problem has been a lack of a durable repository for these valuable documents.

I have spoken with our Webmaster, Bill Besse, and we have agreed that these descriptions could easily be incorporated into the web page, giving us a location to retain the information and provide the most accessibility possible at the same time.

I would like to request anyone that has any of these descriptions to send them in to me, or the society. Additionally, if some of our fine members who have held these positions in the past could write up what they used to do as part of their job, we could utilize that input to create descriptions for any positions that don't have one written up yet.

This society was described by one of our most recent life member honorees, John Sinkankas, as "the most active and productive earth science organization in America". In order to live up to such high praise, we need to reactivate these essential functions and I consider this to be the first step. We will revisit this topic in future Bulletins for updates and some previews of some job descriptions of chairmanships we would most like to fill.

CFMS 2001 SHOW

Greetings from Santa Lucia Rockhounds

Bea and Sherm Griselle, Co-Chair Show Committee-2001

The Santa Lucia Rockhounds, the host society for the CFMS 2001 Show, is pleased to welcome you to the Federation's 62nd Annual Gem, Jewelry, and Mineral Show. As you meet in Paso Robles, we are confident you will thoroughly enjoy a splendid three-day show. Come and meet with hundreds of other gem, jewelry, and mineral enthusiasts who will gather at our California Mid-State Fairgrounds.

The three-day show will feature over 150 excellent exhibits of some magnificent minerals, fossils, petrified wood, gems and jewelry. You will learn from demonstrators experienced in lapidary arts, fossil preparation, and use of tools and machinery utilized by rockhounds. There will be an extensive youth education and games area for young people. There will be 50 dealers offering a wide selection of quality items for sale to amateur rockhounds and experienced collectors. Attend the free Cracker Barrel get-together on Friday evening, which is open to all and will be an entertaining evening. The Banquet Saturday evening promises to be a very congenial event this includes the presentation of awards. The Editor's Breakfast on Sunday morning will be educational and entertaining and is a "must attend" for all society bulletin editors.

Extend your visit while you are in Paso Robles so you can enjoy our magnificent Central Coast with its natural attractions. Our beautiful rolling hills and valleys hold historic small towns, rivers and lakes, gorgeous oak forests, dozens of vineyards with wine tasting opportunities, golf courses, and ocean beaches, fishing, and cruises. Other attractions include California Missions, Hearst Castle, and the

coastal towns of Cambria, Cayucos, and Morro Bay. The area's restaurants, motels, and mobile home parks are the best.

Get your Calendar 2001 out and write-in the CFMS 2001 Show, June 22 / 24, along with some extra days to visit our Central Coast and its many entertaining, historic and educational places and activities. I know that when you return home you will take with you wonderful memories of the show and your visit to the Paso Robles area.

MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND FIELD TRIP

The Blanchard Mine, Bingham New Mexico

Carolyn Seitz will be hosting a field trip to the **Blanchard Fluorite mine** over the Memorial Day weekend, **May 26, 27, & 28**. Some of the finest fluorites in the world have come from The Blanchard. In addition to fluorite, it is also possible to find **galena, selenite, smoky quartz, amethyst, wulfenite, linarite, brochantite** and other minerals.

The flyer in the center of the Bulletin gives more information on the trip. For more reading on The Blanchard Claim, see Mineralogical Record's New Mexico issue - Volume 20, #1. You can also visit Bob's Rock Shop online and their posted information about New Mexico collecting. The website is :

www.rockhounds.com/rockshop/nmsites.html

If you plan to attend please contact Carolyn by e-mail (cmseitz@mindspring.com) no later than Monday, May 21 with information about the number of people in your party and your expected arrival time.

The easiest route is via Interstate 40 to Albuquerque, South on Interstate 25, then east on US 380 to Bingham. The distance from Pasadena City College to Bingham is 900 miles with a driving time of 13 hours 45 minutes. This assumes no stops and an Interstate speed of 70 m.p.h. Your time will vary depending on stops, and speed. There are several attractions along the way such as the Grand Canyon, Meteor Crater, and the Petrified Forest. In addition, if time allows, we recommend that you make plans to visit the New Mexico Museum on the campus of New Mexico Tech in Socorro.

What: We will be collecting at the very well known Blanchard Mine over Memorial Day weekend. Some of the finest Fluorites in the world have been found at The Blanchard. We will be collecting on the dump, in many exposed cut areas and it is possible the mine owners will allow collecting underground. MSSC does not sanction underground collecting at any time. If you choose to collect underground, you will do so at your own risk.

Accommodations: Dry camping is available at the base of the mine. You must bring all of your own supplies, food and plenty of water. There is room for RV parking and tents.

Children? Yes, you may bring children on this trip, but they must be well supervised and well under control.

Safety Equipment: Hard hats and miner's lights are a must for underground collecting. For collecting on the surface, sunscreen, wide brimmed hats and gloves are recommended. Fluorite collecting is always hard rock mining. Bring appropriate collecting equipment – hammers, chisels, gads, pry bars, etc. No power tools will be allowed.

Snakes? Yes. Rattlesnakes are common in this area. No scorpions have ever been observed. Please do not bother the snakes and please do not kill or injure them unless you are in direct jeopardy. They serve a valuable purpose in this micro-environment.

Weather: You can expect daytime temperatures to be relatively high – as much as mid 90's. Be prepared for cool evenings as it cools off quickly when the sun goes down.

Vehicle Access: High clearance four-wheel drive vehicles are a must for access to the collecting areas at the Blanchard. They are not necessary for access to the dry camping area.

Cost: The cost for collecting will be \$5 per day per person. All persons in your party are expected to pay this \$5 per day – in cash - even if they are not directly involved in collecting activities. **There will be no exceptions.**

Mandatory Meeting: All people who wish to have access to The Blanchard for any or all of these three collecting days must be at the Blanchard Rock Shop in Bingham, New Mexico at 8:30 am on Saturday, May 26 to complete liability waiver forms and pay the collecting fee. If you do not think you can make it to the Rock Shop on Saturday morning, but expect to attend this field trip on Sunday and/or Monday, please make advance arrangements with Carolyn Seitz. **PLEASE NOTE: PROOF OF CURRENT MEMBERSHIP IN THE MSSC MUST BE PRESENTED TO CAROLYN SEITZ PRIOR TO COMPLETION OF THE LIABILITY WAIVER FORMS. NO ACCESS TO THIS FIELD TRIP WILL BE ALLOWED WITHOUT PROOF OF MEMBERSHIP IN EITHER THE MSSC OR ANOTHER CFMS MEMBER CLUB OR SOCIETY. THERE WILL BE NO EXCEPTIONS.**

After all paperwork is completed at the Rock Shop in Bingham, we will caravan to the collecting site. At the collecting site, there will be a **mandatory safety meeting** before anyone is allowed to collect.

If you are planning to attend, please inform Carolyn Seitz, email at cmseitz@mindspring.com, no later than Monday, May 21 with information about

your expected date and time of arrival in Bingham and the number of people in your party.

CAVEAT: The claim owners for The Blanchard have made a request that no mineral dealers be allowed to participate in this field trip. Since they will not expect us to pay for the specimens we find on their claim, they do not want to be faced with having to compete with dealers when they are ready to sell their material. We have agreed to respect this request.

COLLECTOR'S NOTES

The Olgiby Kyanite Quarry

by Walt Margerum

While kyanite is the main reason to go to the quarry, there are many other minerals to be collected if one is willing to spend some time and effort. Most are found in small amounts, and are not spectacular, but some are rare and unusual. The following minerals can be found in the deposit; **kyanite**, **limonite** (goethite) pseudomorphs after pyrite, **magnetite**, specular **hematite**, **rutile**, **pyrophyllite**, **wollastonite**, and **scorzalite**.

The Quarries were operational intermittently from 1925 throughout the 1950's. They were initially operated by the Vitrefrax Corporation, hence the name for the formation, and then later by the Aluminum Silicates Corporation of Los Angeles. The ore was milled near the quarry, at the Blue Bird Mill, and the concentrates shipped for further refining. Total production exceeded 10,000 tons valued at more than \$80,000. The kyanite area is presently inactive, and there are no signs of recent operations. It should be noted that the American Girl gold mine claims are very close to the kyanite area. The cyanide leach pits are clearly visible, and should be avoided. Most of the kyanite was mined from the taller hill, called Blue Bird hill, but there was a small amount of mining on the shorter hill just to the North. I will refer to these as the main hill and the small hill.

Kyanite is found as light to dark blue bladed crystals up to 2 inches long in a matrix of granular Quartzite. The crystals are rarely terminated and interlock to form a compact mass. It is also found as a light gray material in one area of the main hill. **Scorzalite** is found as small dark blue to blue black inclusions scattered in the Kyanite. There is no obvious crystallization. **Magnetite** is found between the Kyanite crystals and also filling fracture zones in the Kyanite. It is shiny black, magnetic and shows an occasional crystal face, but no complete crystals were found. The **hematite** found here is specular, that is it is shiny black, and can be distinguished from the magnetite by its lack of magnetism. It is found under the same conditions as the magnetite, leaving me to believe that one is the alteration product of the other. The **pyrophyllite** is greenish white, and is found as radiating clusters of crystals to 1 inch in association with the sericite. It is uncommon in this

deposit, but was found in abundance at Micatac Hill inside the American Girl claims. **Limonite** (goethite) pseudomorphs of pyrite are found in one area of the main hill. They are brown to yellowish brown, and range in size from less than a quarter of an inch to greater than an inch on a side. The original pyrite formed as cubes in the quartzite, and was later altered by weathering to limonite. I have tentatively identified them as goethite based on their streak and color, but this is only an educated guess.

My best specimens of kyanite were found in one of the many pits scattered about the small hill, as were the specimens containing, scorzalite, hematite, and magnetite. I think the reason for this is that the deposits are less pure in this area. Most was found on the south side of the hill. This same area also has several pockets containing sericite. The magnetite, and hematite were found on the east side of the hill.

I found a 1 inch limonite (goethite) pseudomorph of pyrite as float in the wash near the main quarry, and removed several others from an area about half way up the main hill on the side facing the road. Look for rusty brown quartzite containing holes where limonite crystals have either fallen or weathered out. Breaking open these pieces may reveal the limonite which most of the time breaks clean. It is hard work so it is best to spend some time looking for float before trying hard rock mining.

Small amounts of wollastonite can be found as float at the base of the main hill on the side away from the road.

MINUTES OF THE APRIL 2001 MEETING

The April meeting was called to order at about 7:45. Unfortunately the speaker for the night was unable to attend. The minutes of the March meeting were approved unanimously. Comments were then requested from the participants. Jim Schlegel stated that the Pasadena Show is progressing satisfactorily, and reiterated his need for help. He then talked about the Field Trip to Crystal Ridge, and showed some nice specimens of quartz that he has collected from that area. Several people expressed interest in the area.

Carolyn Seitz announced that she will be conducting a Field Trip to the Blanchard Mine at Bingham, New Mexico over the Memorial day weekend, May 26, 27, & 28. Various collecting areas were then discussed. Larry Bruce asked about pegmatites in the Atolia area. If anyone has information on them please contact him at exoner8r@earthlink.net. The meeting adjourned about 8:45.

Respectfully submitted by Walter Margerum for the Secretary

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MAY

5-6 Anaheim, CA **The Searchers Gem & Mineral society, Inc.**
Brookhurst Community Center, 2271 W. Crescent Ave.
Hours: Sat. 10-7 Sun. 10 - 4
Contact Connie Van Kampen

4-5 Bakersfield, CA **Kern County Mineral Society,**
Kern County Fairgrounds
Hours: 10-5 both days
Contact Manuel Fernandez

19-20 Newbury Park, CA **Conejo Gem & Mineral Club,**
Borchard Park Community Center, 190 Reino Rd.
Hours: Sat. 9 - 5; Sun. 10 - 5
Contact Don Bullard (805)

19-20 Yucaipa, CA **Yucaipa Valley Gem and Mineral Society,**
Schere Community Center, First and Avenue B
Hours: Sat. 10 - 6; Sun. 10 - 5
Contact Richard Crockett

JUNE

2-3 Glendora, CA **Glendora Gems,** Goddard Middle School,
859 E. Sierra Madre
Hours: Sat. 10 - 5; Sun. 10 - 4
Contact Mark Thompson

2-3 San Diego, CA **San Diego Lapidary Society, Inc.,**
Al Bahr Temple; 5440 Kearny Mesa Rd. (Behind the Hampton Inn)
Hours: Sat 10-6 Sun 10-4
Contact Richard Large

22-24 Paso Robles, CA
CFMS Show & Convention - Gem, Jewelry, and Mineral Show,
San Lucia Rockhounds,
California Mid-State Fairgrounds, 2198 Riverside Avenue, Paso Robles
Co-Chairs: Bea & Sherm Griselle

ORDWAY' S MINERALS

In the latter part of last year, a small seam of unusual crocoite was found just above the water table at the Adelaide Mine. These extraordinary specimens consist of short, stout, steeply terminated xls. I received about a dozen of these specimens from my contact in Tasmania. I saw only four of this type of crocoite for sale by Aussie dealers at Tucson. Ausrox had a piece, smaller than the flat of the hand, for a mere \$25,000! (Gads, I'm rich!). However, my prices will be under \$1500 for the best and they will be available only at the Costa Mesa Show, May 18-20. I will also offer a good selection of choice Chilean atacamite and much, much more!



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