

**THE 782nd MEETING
OF
THE MINERALOGICAL SOCIETY
OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**

7:30 p.m., Friday April 11, 2003

**Building E, Room 220
Pasadena City College
Pasadena, California**

Featuring a Talk by

Wayne Leicht

on

**Moving the Rocks
- The Trials and Tribulations
of International Shows**

April Program

The MSSC and Kristalle invite you to an All Leicht Mineralogy Weekend. The weekend will start with a presentation by Wayne Leicht at the regular meeting of the MSSC, and will continue with an Open House at Kristalle on Saturday April 12. The Open House is open to all MSSC members and their guests. If you wish to attend the Open House you must RSVP to Kristalle.

Our speaker for April is the very distinguished Wayne Leicht. Wayne has quite a history and he has participated in and with MSSC for many decades. Wayne was President of MSSC in 1971-72. During that same period Wayne and Dona Leicht opened a business selling fine mineral specimens and jewelry. Kristalle is undoubtedly the most prolific and successful gold specimen traders in the history of the planet. These two appear at the big shows all around the world and Wayne's talk will be "Moving Those Rocks; The trials and Tribulations of an International Mineral Dealer." He should know!

So, plan to be there! See the attached flyer for details and map.

Topanga Sparkles in Unexpected Places

by Larry Bruce

Well, I don't know why anyone would ever think that I am only the second best rockhound in my house. I find nice stuff a lot of times, after all. Why, I am certain that at least once, I have found the rock of the day, during the past five years. So there really isn't much question of who has the "specimen eyes" although I am convinced that it has a lot more to do with Mrs. Rock Puppy's height that is significantly less altitudinous than my own. Hence she is closer to the rocks and that accounts for it. Simple logic one would think.

Just at the end of February in beautiful Topanga Canyon, I'll claim the credit of thinking "That road cut right there on the Boulevard that I've passed a thousand times. That looks like rock similar to the conejo volcanics usually found north of this canyon." In reality, the thought actually arrived in my consciousness as a huge and reverberating "Huh?" I have learned to pay attention, however, to those messages from within. With me it is the equivalent of messages received from the trolls under the bridges of my brain.

Perhaps it was the recent heavy rains that had collapsed several areas of the basalt face. I almost could see vugs even though my more rationale self was sure that they couldn't be. Nonetheless, I had prospected a lot of similar looking basalt, maybe ten of those crow miles past Malibu Canyon. There was interesting quartz in those other walls and often presented as little cavities filled with botryoidal agate-like pods. Sometimes datolite was found in such matrix in this area. Thin seams would widen slightly and present thousands of tiny sharp clear crystals. This had to be worth taking a quick look at and we were not in a hurry that day.

We parked and walked up the side of the road. Traffic is heavy along this section of Topanga Canyon Blvd. almost all the time. When we arrived I could not extend the vision of vugs with which I had commenced. I scrambled up the scree and poked about in the cavities nonetheless. I managed to slide back down amidst a rainfall of little rocks and dirt. The local landowner didn't take too charmingly to the clatter of rocks that once were hers and now were the property of the highway department. I could understand that. I assured the harpy that I would remain off the rock face and began to desultorily poke about along the edge of the highway.

The next thing I heard was Mrs. Rock Puppy exclaiming "I found some quartz". Well, I had seen the thin bands of chalcedony running through the matrix up on the wall and didn't think very much of it. But she with the discerning eye was holding up a fist-sized chunk of matrix and it was fully covered with bright, perfect and clear quartz points.

"Look, there is the other half" she yelled and pointed to a spot about a millimeter in front of my right toe. It was the other half indeed and probably the lesser of the two pieces. I attempted to console myself with the idea that I had really "found" the second one since I picked it up. I just knew that the idea didn't feel like it fit very comfortably. Still if I hadn't seen the potential, we would have never stopped. She

laughed when I expressed that for that reason I should share co-credit for the discovery. She laughed harder when I put on my saddest face.

Well, I had to try!



Here is the point of this little tale which actually did happen in late February after a rain on a highly traveled main highway in Topanga Canyon. Collecting opportunities abound wherever you are if you but would look and see. I'll not pinpoint this locale more than in a rough sense because (1) I haven't explored the wall more than casually and think I ought to and (2) there should be some challenge to this. The wall is located between the crest of Woodland Hills and Topanga Village. The wall is immediately adjacent to a side street that bears a street sign (rare in those parts). The wall is adjacent to the highway.

What isn't important is whether you can find this particular outcropping. You have twenty such sites near where you live right now. You drive past them all the time because we have been conditioned to think that all quality mineral sites have to be hours away and entail long hikes to locate. If the matrix rock looks "different" in some way from the rest of the outcroppings, there is probably a reason. You don't need one of the geological guidebooks that list overworked and dried up locales. What you need is your eyes and a freedom from preconceptions. Look in your own backyard. Look just down the street. Look with an expectation that there are things to find and you will likely find things.

I have driven five hundred miles to look for quality quartz and I have traveled to some foreign countries to dig for the same. I'll stake the quality of Vicki's little handful of quartz points against the take from any of those others. Its urban origin makes it very sweet. It is undamaged and appears to be an epimorph that grew over a calcite scalenohedron.

Once you see what it is that you wanted to see, you will see it over and over again all around you. I believe it to be a law of the universe. Go and see if I am right.

Junior Activities Report

Partnering with Your Local College or University

(Reprinted from the March 2003 CFMS Newsletter)

By Jim Brace-Thompson, Junior Activities Chair CFMS

While recently exploring web sites of college geology departments throughout California, I was amazed by one in particular. The Geological Sciences Department web site of the University of California at Santa Barbara not only contains the usual links introducing faculty, describing curricula and courses, etc., but also had one link labeled simply, "Outreach." With a single click, a wonderful world of opportunities opened!

For instance, I learned that the department promotes classroom visits and department tours and provides educational resources for earth science teachers. They encourage teachers and other youth leaders to bring kids to visit the department to see displays of minerals and fossils and to enjoy a presentation by a faculty member. Presentation topics include rocks and minerals, Santa Barbara geology, fossils and the history of life, plate tectonics and mid-ocean ridge geology, earthquakes, and volcanoes. Presentations are customized for students' age and areas of interest. The department has a teaching collection of rocks, minerals, and fossils, and maintains lab equipment and materials. Can't bring your group of kids to the school? No problem! They'll make arrangements to send a faculty member to you.

As if this wasn't enough, they also offer "freeware"-a whole assortment of computer software developed by faculty and freely available for downloading or obtaining as CD ROMs. These include QuickTime movies illustrating plate tectonics and the changing face of Southern California over the past 85 million years; a "Dynamic Planet" CD showing topography, quakes, volcanoes, etc.; a "MacOrogeny" program illustrating mountain-building activities that have shaped North America; and an "Origins of Life" program animating the chemical reactions that may have led to life on earth.

A third feature provides "Geoscience Links" to web resources with particular appeal for earth science educators as well as to other major geology programs in the University of California system (Berkeley, Davis, Irvine, LA, Riverside, San Diego, and Santa Cruz).

Finally, the UCSB department is home to the Edward R. Bancroft Collection, an internationally recognized collection of gem crystals and minerals. Teachers and other youth leaders can arrange for their kids to tour this spectacular collection at Webb Hall. If you're unable to get to the university itself, you can still share this amazing collection with your kids simply by clicking on a link in the web site that takes you on a tour of 67 minerals with vivid color photos and info on the properties of each, maps of their source areas, and pictures of the mines from which they came. (For anyone wishing to see this site right away, the address is <http://www.geol.ucsb.edu/L2/Outreach.html>)

Take some time and explore similar educational outreach opportunities at colleges and universities near you. You'll find that it's not just for your juniors, but for your

club as a whole. For instance, the Fossils for Fun Society has forged links with Sierra College. As a result, members sometimes accompany college faculty on scientific digs, faculty provide presentations at club meetings and are available to help members identify fossils they find, and educational and volunteer opportunities have emerged with the college and its natural history museum. Forging a link with your local university or college is a great way not only to open doors but also-as always-have fun!

Fat Jack Mine Field Trip

By Walt Margerum

In the February Bulletin I announced a potential field trip to the Fat Jack Mine. To say the response has been underwhelming would be an overstatement. As of this date I have received two inquiries. Since the trip requires at least 10 people, I have concluded there is not sufficient interest to pursue this matter further. I am still interested in getting possible field trip information from the membership. So if you know of a location, fee or free, please contact me.

MSSC Board Meeting

The next MSSC Board Meeting will be held Sunday April 6, 2003 at 1:30 pm. at Rock Curriers house. Members Welcome.

Minutes of the February Meeting

The 780th meeting of MSSC was called to order by president JoAnna Ritchey at 7:35 pm, who then immediately turned it over to the evenings speakers. The program was a two part presentation with me giving a talk on Thailand with emphasis on a visit to the S. A. P. sapphire mine for the first part and George Rossman giving a talk on gold mining in adjacent Burma for the second part. In the Thailand part I first described the Petchaburi area and showed slides of king Rama the 4th's summer palace and the cave of the Buddhas. This is a large limestone cave, which was made into a shrine and is the home of hundreds of gold coated Buddha figures.

I next discussed and showed slides of the Kanchanaburi area which is the site of the famous bridge over the River Kwai. The bridge was bombed out the day after completion so was of no use to the Japanese. After the war they had to repair it though. Now the tracks have been taken up a short distance past the city. Four trains a day go over the bridge, two in the morning and two in the evening, just for tourists. The rest of the day tourists walk over it.

Less than an hours drive from Kanchanaburi is Bo Phloi, which is the center of the Thai sapphire mining area. Many of the mines are now exhausted, but the S. A. P. Mine is still going at full speed. They operate 24 hours a day 7 days of the week

and process 300 to 500 truck loads of gravel a day. From this they recover 3 to 5 kilograms of sapphire a day. The pay gravel is 60 feet below the surface of the ground. They have now mined an area of about 15 square miles.

Their cutters polish these stones free hand. We asked about that and they said that an experienced cutter could work much faster that way and still do a good job.

I also showed slides of a Khmer temple complex we visited near Kanchanaburi that was built in 1157 ad. The buildings were made of laterite bricks, which is the tropical equivalent of adobe, and they are still in pretty good shape until today. That amazed me.

George described a gold mining operation in Burma and showed the whole process from the mining through the recover of the gold, the separation from mercury with a blow torch, and the sale to a dealer. He finished by showing the artists working to convert the raw gold into beautiful jade/gold jewelry.

Following the program Carolyn Seitz discussed preparations already underway for next years Show. The “kid rock” was a popular feature and much more needs to be readied for next year.

Respectfully submitted by Bob Housley, Secretary

In Memoriam

It is with great sadness that we report the death of
longtime MSSC Member
George “Fred” Croad

Calendar of Events

April

5-6 Hacienda Heights, CA **Puente Hills Gem & Mineral Club**
“Magic in Rocks”

Steinmetz County Park; 1545 S. Stimson Ave.
(between Gale Ave. and Halliburton Road.)

Hours: 10 – 5 both days

Bob Hess (562) 696-2270 / rpsthess@earthlink.net

12-13 Boron, CA **Mojave Mineralogical Society**

Boron High School, 26831 Prospect

Hours: Sat. 9 – 7; Sun. 9 – 4

Derek English djenglish@ccis.com

David Eyre (760) 762-6575 or 762-6861

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Visit our booth at most major mineral shows!

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