

**THE 783rd MEETING  
OF  
THE MINERALOGICAL SOCIETY  
OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**

**7:30 p.m., Friday May 9, 2003  
Building E, Room 220  
Pasadena City College  
Pasadena, California**

**Featuring a Talk by**

**Alfredo Petrov**

**on**

**The Viloco Tin Mine, Bolivia**

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**May Program**

The Viloco mine has long been the world's major producer of cassiterite specimens, and recently is the site of an interesting project to produce faceted cassiterite gems.

Alfredo Petrov is an international vagabond who dissipated his youth in England, Germany, Lebanon, and Ethiopia, and then studied geology in San Diego, California. Like Butch Cassidy, Alfredo discovered that Bolivia was the perfect place to hide out from bill collectors, tax agents and cuckolded husbands. Having escaped to that remote country, he fell under the dubious influence of an itinerant California mineral dealer with the unlikely name of Rock Currier. Under his expert tutelage Alfredo began to eke out a living crawling around miserable dirty rat holes in South America's steaming jungles and freezing peaks, collecting stones to feed the insatiable cravings of northern hemisphere crystal addicts. Recently he moved to the USA to spy on American mineral collectors in an attempt to discover what it is they actually DO with all those ugly and peculiar rocks he has been foisting on them over the years. He supports himself during this ongoing quest by selling minerals, translating mineralogical literature into English, and guiding groups of foolhardy collectors to places where they can energetically dig up crystals with their own eager grubby fingers.

## June Program

Our June Speaker will be Ken Gochenour who will talk on Recent Events and Future Plans at The Cryogenie Mine.

### The Brilliant Claim

by Walt Margerum

As part of a quickie survey of the Ord Mountains led by Bob Housley in January 2003 we briefly visited the Brilliant claim as darkness was falling. What I almost saw, it was getting very dark, made me want to revisit the claim. So in early February I packed my motor home and traveled to beautiful downtown Barstow for what I hoped would be a week of rock hounding. As soon as I started I knew all was not well. It rained all the way from the Los Angeles basin to the Cajon Pass where the wind nearly blew me off the road. After traveling three hours to go 126 miles, a 42 mph average, I finally got to Barstow. At least it was not raining; it was just cold, cloudy, and windy. But by the time I got my motor home set up at the RV park the rains started. It rained for two very long days. On the third day it started to clear, so I decided to go the Brilliant. Much to my surprise the roads were in good condition, and the mine area was damp but not soggy.

Weber (1963) describes the Brilliant claim as follows: *Brilliant blue crystals of azurite as long as one-eighth inch occur as druses in vugs and cracks in keratophyre of the Ord Mountain group at the Brilliant claim of the Ord Mountain mine..... The Brilliant claim covers the extreme north end of the Brilliant Ledge of the Ord Mountain fault zone, and thus encompasses the extreme north part of the mine. The Ledge is in sheared and chloritized keratophyre of the Ord Mountain Group. At the surface it dips 70°-75° west. The principal gangue minerals are quartz and barite. Azurite and malachite are common in surface exposures of the Ledge and chrysocolla is very common in parts of the Ledge exposed underground. Chalcopyrite is said to be disseminated sparsely through the gangue in the now inaccessible lowest level of the workings.*

*Within the claim the Brilliant Ledge is developed chiefly by the Brilliant shaft and a series of shallow cuts.... The Brilliant shaft is inclined about 70° on the Ledge at the surface and has a total depth of 182 feet (Tucker and Sampson, 1930). In 1953 and 1955, the shaft was filled with water below a depth of 142 feet, and 100 feet of level workings reported to be below that level were inaccessible. Level workings above the water line, and accessible from the shaft by ladder in 1955, consist of a short drift near the surface and a drift about 50 feet long driven south from a point 128 feet below the collar of the shaft. The last mining on this property was in 1942, when about 80 tons of ore was mined from the Brilliant shaft by the Symons Brothers Company of Los Angeles, for H. J. Stevenson.*

Housley and Adams (1999) give the following report of the claim: *The Brilliant Claim is principally developed by a long trench along the vein (referred to as a*

*ledge in this district) and two near vertical shaft..... The trench itself looks promising with much azurite exposed in places. However, we have not seen many sharp azurite crystals in material dug out of these shallow workings. In general the most interesting material seems to be found by breaking up large rocks that came from deeper in the deposit and were dumped below the shafts. Nice malachite sprays, chrysocolla after malachite, and plates of malachite needles several inches across can easily be found this way. This is a very productive site for malachite and azurite.*

*Much of the gangue material here is massive barite and occasional nice micro crystals of barite are also found. We have seen only one sample with small clear fluorite cubes on malachite from here. Unaltered sulfides are still present in some of the larger blocks. In one such block we noticed an 80 mm crystal of Bi, Cu sulfide, with the SEM. This ties in with other evidence we have discovered, apparently for the first time, of Bi mineralization in the area. Conspicuous yellow circles on one fracture surface seem to be very fine grained cerianite-Ce (CeO<sub>2</sub>).*



A View of the Brilliant Claim

The azurite truly is in brilliant blue crystals to one-eighth inch. I have several specimens that match that description. The malachite I found occurs as sprays, single straws, and bundles up to one-quarter inch. In some ways it is more interesting than the azurite; some being altered to chrysocolla. In several specimens you can see one end as malachite and the other as chrysocolla. In others the alteration is complete. Most of the barite is massive, but there are occasional millimeter sized tabular crystals. All of the chalcopyrite I found was

massive. I did not find any cerianite or fluorite, but I did find an unidentified mineral that may be calcite.

A note for anyone wanting to go to the area. The Brilliant, as of February, was not posted, but the roads into the Copper Junction, and Gold Banner have been posted. I followed, on foot, the Brilliant vein south until it came to the valley across from the Copper Junction claim. Although I did not encounter any no trespassing signs, I did come across one recent (October 2001) claim.

## **Bibliography**

Housley, Robert M. and Adams, Paul M. (1999) "Toward a Mineralogical Investigation of Ord Mountain, San Bernardino County California", San Bernardino County Museum Quarterly 46, p. 75-79

Tucker, W. B. and Sampson, R. J (1930) "San Bernardino County", California Division of Mines Report 36, p. 217-218, 249, 305

Weber, F. Howard (1963) "Geology and Mineral Deposits of the Ord Mountain District, San Bernardino County, California" California Division of Mines and Geology Special Report 77, p. 27, 31-33

## **Minutes of the April Board Meeting**

After a session of preparing Kid Rock samples, the MSSC Board meeting was called to order about 2 p.m. on Sunday, April 6, at the home of Rock Currier. Larry Bruce, Rock Currier, Janet Gordon, Bob Griffis, Bob Housley, Jim Kusley, JoAnna Ritchey, and Dave Smith were present. Because Bob Housley's arrival was delayed, Janet Gordon agreed to take minutes. The meeting began with a report about the Society's web page by Bill Besse, who had stopped by but did not stay for the meeting. Bill reported that the web page is up to date and that he will continue as Webmaster. However, he would appreciate having an assistant and is willing to train a Society member interested in helping.

The Board reviewed the dues increase proposed at the last board meeting. Input from the members indicated that this proposal was too high. It was moved seconded and carried to revise the proposal as follows: Beginning in 2004 dues for an individual member will be \$20 and family dues will be \$30. The student dues category will be dropped due to lack of use and the difficulty in defining "student." This proposal is to be presented to the membership by President JoAnna Ritchey at the April meeting so that it can be voted on by the membership at the May meeting. The principal reason for the dues increase is higher insurance costs included in our California Federation dues.

Janet Gordon presented the treasurer's report. There are currently 128 members in the Society. Those who had still not paid 2003 dues were dropped from the membership list.

Larry Bruce and Jim Kusley discussed up-coming speakers and open houses. Larry has been promoting our meetings on the LA Rocks website. PCC Dana Club students were given flyers inviting them to the April meeting and Kristalle open house. Janet Gordon will contact Walt Margerum to review his current mailing list for meeting flyers. Alfredo Petrov has agreed to speak for the May meeting. Casey Jones will be the June speaker, and the Joneses will host an open house the following Saturday.

Janet Gordon agreed to contact Carolyn Seitz about progress on the show. The board would like to be sure that flyers are ready for the Costa Mesa and Federation show. Bob Griffis volunteered to distribute flyers at the Federation show. Ron Thacker agreed to update the Society's voice mail message. The Board will request that Carolyn provide a projection of show dealers and expenses for their July 13 meeting.

Respectfully submitted for the Secretary by Janet Gordon

### **From the Desk of the Editor**

As was mentioned in both the January and April Board Meeting Minutes, the Board has proposed increasing the membership dues. Their rationale is present dues do not cover current costs. One of these costs is this Bulletin. It costs about \$.75 to print and mail each standard 12 page Bulletin, giving a minimum yearly cost of \$9.00 per mailing. Special Bulletins such as the pre show issues and those with flyers like the April issue cost even more. Our California Federation dues (includes insurance) presently use up more than the remainder of the dues. These costs are increasing yearly. When you add the costs of Honorarium's for the monthly, and show speakers, and our support for local educational institutions you can see that our costs are greater than our income. In the past the annual show has provided the difference. It is no secret that the last show did not turn a profit. The show committee is presently working to solve this problem. But even with this it is necessary to either cut back services or increase dues. The Micro-Mineralogists were forced to reduce their meetings from every other month to quarterly.

When the dues increase was brought up at the April meeting someone suggested that we e-mail the Bulletin. Both the Southern California Micro-Mineralogists, and the Southern California Friends of Mineralogy presently do this.

Here is my offer. For those that are willing I will e-mail them the Bulletin instead of sending it via the Post Office. The Bulletin content will remain the same, and it will be transmitted in Microsoft Word (.doc) format. If you do not have Microsoft Word I can transmit it in Adobe Acrobat format, but the file will be more than twice as large. Acrobat reader is furnished free with both the Windows and Macintosh operating systems. If for some reason you don't have it you can download it free from Adobe at [www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/main.html](http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/main.html). If that doesn't work I will e-mail you a copy. What are the advantages. First you will get the Bulletin earlier. I will e-mail them at least three days earlier than I will snail mail them. Second you will have a

digital copy that can be either printed or saved for future use. Thirdly all the pictures and artwork will be in color. And finally you will be helping your Society. So if you are willing, send me an e-mail ([wmargerum@earthlink.net](mailto:wmargerum@earthlink.net)).

## Calendar of Events

### May

#### **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](mailto: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](mailto:djenglish@ccis.com)

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

### June

#### **5-8 Ventura, CA SEASIDE GEMBOREE; AFMS/CFMS Show**

On the Beach in Ventura, CA: The National and Calif. State Show is almost here and we will have a lot of interesting things going on. We will have 5 large buildings of Dealers, Displays, Demonstrations, Dino Hall, and Many Hands on Displays for you to try. We have two Field Trips planned during our show one to an uncollected area in Horse Canyon and a family beach trip for Fossil Whale Bone. There will be a Dino Hall, with many fossil Dinosaur Exhibits, including a full size model of a Triceratops. Also, a Dino Dig area, where you can dig your own Triceratops fossil bone. We will have a speaker on “Collecting Mars Meteorites” and a Hands on JPL Mars Rover Exhibit, for you to run, just like on Mars. Pre-Registration Forms for camping, eating events, admission, display, demonstrations, Mermaid Contest, and more may be taken from our web site - link to the Federation site; [www.afms-cfmsgemshow.org](http://www.afms-cfmsgemshow.org). We hope to see you all at this great show. Del Air Rockhounds

### **ORDWAY'S MINERALS Costa Mesa Show, May 16-19 Room 116**

In the early 70's, spectacular pockets of kunzite were found near Jacumba, California. Loren Beebe made this discovery and the mine became known as the Beebe Hole. Many specimens were available to collectors at that time, but when

the flood of Afghan spodumene came onto the market in the late 70's, Mr. Beebe decided to store the rest of his material. Much of his material has now been removed from storage and will be available at Ordway's Minerals. This will be a great opportunity for collectors of California or United States minerals to acquire one or more of these historical pieces.

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