

Bulletin of the Mineralogical Society of Southern California

Volume 75 Number 8

August 2005

The 810th Meeting of The Mineralogical Society of Southern California

MSSC Annual Picnic featuring

“Traveling into Namibia”

by Justin Butt

**Sunday, August 21, 2005
from 2:30 to 7:00 p.m.**

**Arcadia Woman’s Club
Corner of First Ave. and Diamond
Arcadia**

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It's time to picnic ... and listen to mineral tales of Africa!

When: Sunday, August 21, 2005 from 2:30 to 7 p.m.

Where: Arcadia Woman's Club, Corner of First Ave. and Diamond, Arcadia (It's air-conditioned!)

What: Mineral swap, program on Namibian minerals, and Kid Rock and show flyer work party followed by a pot luck dinner at 5:00 p.m. (Appetizers will be available beginning at 3:00.)

Details:

Food-- All members who attend are asked to bring some sort of appetizer, main dish, salad, or dessert to share. Also, bring your own serving utensil and beverages. Alcohol is allowed because of the private club setting. MSSC will supply ice, cups, utensils, plates, and napkins. A large refrigerator will be available to keep food cold until serving time.

Minerals—bring 'em to swap, sell, give away, brag about, or donate to Kid Rock for the show.

Program—MSSC member Justin Butt will speak on "*Traveling into Namibia – Micromount locations I now know and love and how to get it all home.*" Taking a break from the addressing of the show flyers, Justin will show us fresh samples of minerals from his recent trip to Namibia. Come hear about his adventures buying specimens and the even more exciting adventures of getting them back home! He will show us pictures from his trip and give us an in-depth look at Goanikotes boltwoodite locality and the Aris phonolite quarry, which produces such hard to pronounce minerals as tuperessuatsiaite, villiaumite, makatite, and sazhinte.

Volunteers--Jim Kusley would like a few members to volunteer (especially board members) to help him set up tables and chairs at 2:00, take them down again at 7:00, and do any last minute clean up. Any questions? Contact Jim at 818.240.7022. He looks forward to seeing all of you there for a GREAT afternoon.

Driving Instructions--The Arcadia Woman's Club is on the northeast corner of Diamond and First in the City of Arcadia. Take the Huntington Drive exit on Interstate 210. Go southwest on Huntington until you reach First Avenue. Turn left (south) on First and travel a short way to Diamond where there is a four-way stop. The club is on the northeast corner. Turn left onto Diamond and park on the street. Enter the building from Diamond.

Minutes of the July Meeting

The 809th meeting of the Mineralogical Society of Southern California was held on Friday, July 8th in the Geology Department at Pasadena City College. President William Besse brought the meeting to order at 7:35 pm. The speaker for the evening was Dr. George Rossman. George gave a lively and informative description of the rare mineral painite, its mineralogy, and the recent discoveries in Myanmar (Burma).

At the conclusion of the presentation there was a brief business meeting. JoAnna Ritchey gave a rundown of the recent CFMS meeting including information on changes to the available insurance coverage. Justin Butt said the 2005 Show was proceeding as planned.

There was a brief show and tell period given by a few of the members including Herman Ruvalcaba who brought in some nice neptunite he recently collected from the Gem Mine in San Benito Co. The meeting came to a close at 8:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted for the Secretary, by Walter Margerum

Minutes of the July Board Meeting

A brief board meeting was held after the regular July meeting. Justin Butt expanded on the information provided at the regular meeting. He stated that he had sufficient finances to handle expenses to date without need from assistance from the general fund. Walter Margerum brought up the subject of Officers for 2006, stating that it is not too early to consider the possible slate. Since no one volunteered to head the Nomination Chair it was decided to handle the task by committee. Walter Margerum stated that the Society's finances were on plan.

Respectfully submitted for the Secretary, by Walter Margerum

“Minerals of the Southwest” Part 2

A series on current collecting activities coordinated with the theme of this year's show.

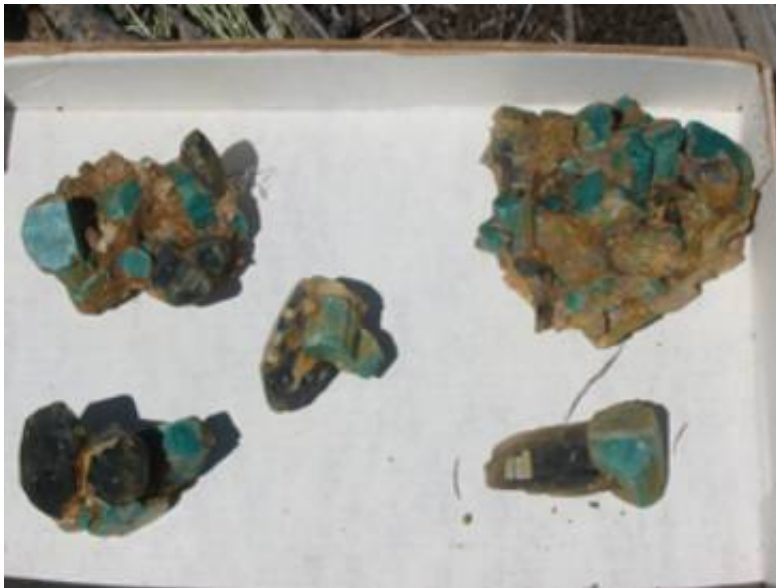
by Steve Knox

Collecting at the Smoky Hawk Claim, Colorado

Amazonite, the blue-green variety of microcline feldspar, and smoky quartz has been collected for over a hundred years in the Lake George, Colorado, area. The region continues to produce good specimens. In June of 2005, the Smoky Hawk claim was worked commercially and produced numerous crystals and plates of amazonite with smoky quartz, fluorite, and cleavandite. Pockets discovered during this time ranged from a few inches to about two feet across. The following snapshots give a feeling for a weekend's activity.



Newly dug amazonite and smoky quartz pair is ready to be cleaned. Smoky Hawk claim. Steve Knox image.

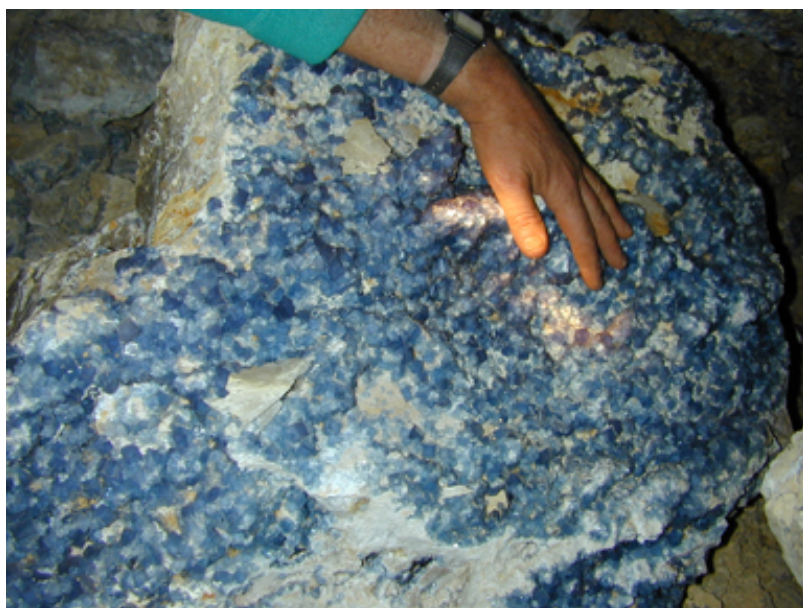


A promising flat of amazonite and smoky quartz from the Smoky Hawk claim. Steve Knox image.



Remains of a typical amazonite-bearing pocket in the Lake George district, Colorado. Steve Knox image

Collecting New Mexico Fluorite and Staurolite



Blue fluorite and barite from the Portales tunnel at Bingham, New Mexico. Steve Knox image.

New Mexico, like Arizona, is known for its copper minerals, however, two of the minerals most collectors can still find abundantly in good crystals are fluorite and staurolite. Fluorite is widespread in various parts of the state, but is probably best known coming from the Blanchard Mine and the various mines and prospects near Bingham, New Mexico. The area has a long history, but major mining has always had a problem due to the lack of water in the area. The surrounding area is arid, and summers are typically hot. Despite the conditions, numerous mines and

prospects exist in the area. These include the Royal Flush, Sunshine Tunnels, Desert Rose and others. The region continues to produce not only fluorite, but a host of other minerals including brochantite, linarite, galena, barite, wulfenite, selenite, smithsonite, and quartz (clear, smoky and amethyst). This is not a complete list, but covers the major minerals that can be found, often in combination. Currently, the mines are privately owned, but permission is usually granted from the claim

holders. The MSSC has held field trips here that have allowed access for surface collecting and underground access in some of the tunnels. Hopefully, with the generous nature of the claim holders, clubs will continue to be allowed access to this excellent and prolific location.



The MexTex mine, Bingham area, New Mexico. Steve Knox image.

In contrast to the desert landscape of Bingham, the location of the staurolite is high up in the mountains near the town of Pilar to the north between Taos and Santa Fe. This is a good place to escape the summer heat and collect beneath the pine forest. The staurolite crystals are typically uninteresting brown, single crystals found in a matrix of schist. The schist is widespread, and in some areas, the crystals commonly twin. Most are in the shape of an "X", twinning at approximately 60°. On occasion, they form at 90° angles, forming crosses. It is these crosses that most collectors look for during their search. In addition, small red garnets are scattered throughout the schist ranging from 1-5 mm. The most sought after staurolites are the ones that form complete crosses dotted with small red garnets embedded within the crystal's surface.

Primer on Graphite

A web-page review by Janet Gordon



Staurolite and garnet in schist from Pilar, New Mexico. Steve Knox images.

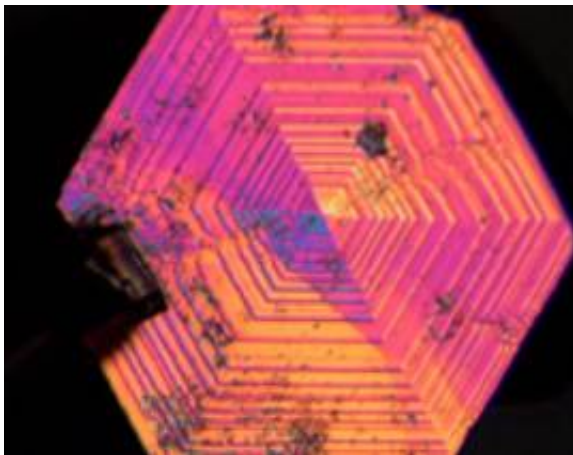
Got a few moments (or more) to learn something new about graphite as a mineral? Then I recommend a visit to the graphite page posted by Dr. John A. Jaszczak at <http://www.phy.mtu.edu/~jaszczak/graphite.html>. Dr. Jaszczak is a professor of physics and an affiliate of the A.E. Seaman Mineral Museum at Michigan Technological University. He has published several articles on graphite mineralogy, and has compiled a web page with lots of graphite information and images that mineral collectors would enjoy.

Basic information such as good crystal structure diagrams of hexagonal graphite, rhombohedral graphite and diamond is included, but most interesting is the annotated assortment of images of graphite from localities around the world. There are millimeter-sized spheres from Ontario, Canada; a hand specimen of amygdaloidal graphite in gabbro from Japan; radiating graphite fibers from a pegmatite in the Kola Peninsula, Russia; hollow spherical graphite from the Narsarsuk pegmatite, Greenland; to name a few.

For those with interest in the really small scale, there are images of growth spirals on graphite crystal faces. Some of the most interesting are on graphite crystals from Crestmore, California. One of them would make a suitable mineralogist's valentine.

Links to other graphite related pages are worth pursuing. The graphite in meteorites section links to an example of large graphite nodules in a Chinese meteorite with an accompanying discussion of the related "out of this world" mineralogy.

The link to the story of wad (graphite) mining the Borrowdale valley, Lake District, England (<http://www.cumbria-industries.org.uk/wad.htm>) tells of exceptionally pure and rich graphite deposits that formed in pipes and veins associated with an igneous intrusion. The deposit was mined for centuries and became an important source of pencil lead.



Growth spiral on 0.5 mm graphite crystal from Crestmore quarry, California. Image by John A. Jaszczak from www.phy.mtu.edu/~jaszczak/graphite.html. Used with permission.

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Self Collected Minerals for the 2005 Show

by Walt Margerum

I know many of our members have enough quality specimens to fill an entire case, and that you intend to do so. But, for the few poor souls like myself that do not, I am soliciting the membership for **self collected** minerals. If you have such material that you are willing to exhibit please provide me with the following information:

1. Mineral name,
2. Where collected, and when,
3. Your name,
4. size of the specimen (LxWxH).

Please respond before mid September to allow me time to set up one or more cases. The minerals can be provided any time before the show, and will be returned after the show.

It is important to show the general public that good specimens can still be collected, even in this era of government over regulation.

I can be contacted at:

1. wmargerum@sbcglobal.net, or
2. Ph: 310-324-1976, or

I thank you in advance for your support!

In Sunny Long Beach!

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2005 Calendar of Events

August 5-7, Nipomo, Orcutt Mineral Society, St. Joseph's Church, 298 S. Thompson Ave., Hours: 9-5 daily. Lucky Virgin (805) 929-4525, lvirgin@impulse.net.

August, 6-7, San Francisco, San Francisco Gem and Mineral Society, San Francisco Co. Fair Building, 9th Ave and Lincoln Way, Hours: Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5. Ellen Nott (415)564-4230, ellen_nott@yahoo.com.

August 21, **MSSC Annual Picnic**, Sunday afternoon. Details on page 3.

September 2-5, Fort Bragg, Mendocino Coast Gem & Mineral Society, Town Hall at Main & Laurel, Hours: Fri.-Sun. 10-6, Mon. 10-4, Don McDonnell (707) 964-3116, 643 N. McPherson, Fort Bragg, CA 95437

Sept. 10-11, **Symposium in Agate and Other Forms of Cryptocrystalline Quartz**, Colorado School of Mines, Golden, CO. Details: Peter Modreski, U. S. Geological Survey, phone 303-202-4766, pmodreski@usgs.gov.

Sept. 14-18, **Colorado Mineral and Fossil Show**, Holiday Inn—Denver Central, Denver, CO, Martin Zinn Expositions, www.mzexpos.com.

September 17-18, Jackson, Fossils For Fun Society, 5th Annual Tailgate Gemboree, Kennedy Mine in Jackson, CA, Hours both days: 9-5, Dan Brown (209) 296-6466, danbrown@volcano.net.

September 17-18, Redwood City, Sequoia Gem and Mineral Society, Community Activity Building, 1400 Roosevelt Ave., Hours: 10-5 both days. Carol Corden/Preston Bingham co-chairs: Carol (650) 776-5990

ccordon@earthlink.net; Preston (650) 368-6351.

September 23-25 San Bernardino, Orange Belt Mineralogical Society – Tailgate, Western Regional Little League Park, 6706 Little League Drive, Hours: Fri., Sat. 9-6, Sun. 9-4, Mike Woolery (909) 882-6806, rockpick98@aol.com.

September 24, Los Altos, Peninsula Gem & Geology Society, Rancho Shopping Center, Corner of Foothill Expressway & Springer Road. Hours: 9:30-4:45, Dave Smith (650) 967-7392, rdsmeks@sbcgloval.net.

September 24-25, Downey, Delvers Gem and Mineral Society, Downer Women's Club, 9813 Paramount Blvd., Hours: Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-4, Earl Liston (562) 865-1348 ejliston5@juno.com.

September 24-25, San Diego, San Diego Lapidary Society, Bernardo Winery, 13330 Paseo Del Verano Norte, Hours: 10-4 both days. Kim Hutsell (619) 294-3914, sdlapidary@yahoo.com.

October 2, Fallbrook, Fallbrook Gem and Mineral Society, Fallbrook Gem and Mineral Museum, 123 W. Alvarado St, Hours 10-4, FGMS Board (760) 728-1130, FGMS@tfb.com.

October 8-9 Lakeside, El Cajon Valley Gem and Mineral, Lakeside Rodeo Grounds, Hwy. 67 & Maple St., Hours: 10-5 both days, Peggy Bowery (619)561-1823, Docsgirl9@aol.com.

October 8-9, Trona, Searles Lake Gem & Mineral Society, 13337 Main St., Hours: Sat. 7:30-5, Sun. 7:30-4, Bonnie Fairchild (760) 372-5356 jbfairchild@verizon.net.

Oct. 15-16, Long Beach, **The Southern California Gem and Mineral Show**, Long Beach Convention Center, presented by the Mineralogical Society of Southern California. Hours: Sat. & Sun 10-5, www.MineralSoCal.org.


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Contact: Bill Besse (wbesse@altrionet.com, 626.359.4488) or Walt Margerum (wmargerum@earthlink.net, 310.324.1976).



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