

Bulletin of the Mineralogical Society of Southern California

Volume 75 Number 9

September 2005

The 811th Meeting of The Mineralogical Society of Southern California

"A Taste of Italian Geology and Mineralogy"

by Dr. Janet Gordon

Friday, September 9, 2005, at 7:30 p.m.

Geology Department, E-Building, Room 220
Pasadena City College
1570 E. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena

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"A Taste of Italian Geology and Mineralogy"

The Friday evening, September 9, 2005, meeting will feature Dr. Janet Gordon sharing adventures associated with the 32nd International Geological Congress held in Italy last summer. Although some aspects of these travels were reported in previous numbers of this bulletin, much has been left untold. Now it is time to learn about the recently discovered diamonds in the Italian Alps, visit a few mines that have been worked since Roman times, glimpse how ancient and modern Italy was reshaped by mundane and catastrophic geologic processes, view mineral-related

art, and just have fun checking out places that geologists take their friends in Italy.

Janet is Professor Emeritus of Geology at Pasadena City College and a long-time MSSC member. She and her husband, Paul, had a great three weeks roaming Italy with groups of geologists from around the world in 2004. They even succeeded in returning from Dante's historic entrance to hell with pictures of this scenic country still intact to share in the talk.

It's Show Time!

by Justin Butt, Show Chairman

The time is soon approaching for our annual mineral show, and I am REALLY excited about the event this year. Hopefully I can instill some of my excitement in you and convince you to come and lend a hand this year in Long Beach!

Last year we moved the show to Long Beach, and with help from all of the participating club members, we pulled off a fantastic event. While it might take months of preparation by club members such as Janet, Walt, Bill, Ken, Jim, and me, the show needs all club members to assist with several last-minute jobs, lest we have to pay someone else to do them!

On Friday, the 14th of October, we are going to need LOTS of people to help set up display cases and to drape vinyl covering over the tables. Since we are going to have over 80 dealers we are going to need lots of hands to help get the booths ready for the dealers to set up. Dealers load in is between 9 am and 5 pm, so the majority of the work will be done between the hours of 9 am and 3 pm. Thanks to our exhibit chair, Ken, we will have a few dozen display cases to set up as well.

On Saturday and Sunday we will need outgoing club members to help with the door, as well as staffing the MSSC booth that is located right next to the entrance to the show. This year we will be having a free limited giveaway to the first 300 people in the door, so Saturday morning should be very busy, as well as all day on Sunday, which shares the date with the Long Beach Marathon. We expect several thousand people to cross over to our show, and we will need to double staff the door on Sunday to make sure that people fill out the mailing list forms so we can capture them for postcards next year. It is ALWAYS in the clubs best interest to ADVANCE the study of minerals, and this year we are getting a great chance to do just that! For most people crossing over from the marathon, this will likely be their first mineral show. Maybe they remember how their parents or grandparents were into rock collecting, agate licking, or other fun nature activities back before video games and 200 channels of cable television sucked out their connection with the outside world. One of the biggest problems facing most mineral clubs is the decline in membership numbers. If we can ignite that spark for just a small percentage of these people we will be doing something great for the whole mineral science community!

And of course, on Sunday we will be spending the late afternoon/evening taking all of the display cases apart, putting them back on the trailer, cleaning up the hall and congratulating ourselves for another job well done!

The club asks for so little from the majority of the club members; this is your chance to pitch in when the club needs you! This is OUR show! Take part in it!

The show is at the Long Beach Convention Center, easily accessed from the 710 freeway and parking on Friday is FREE to all club members. Just inform the parking attendant you are there to help with the set up. Alternatively, take the Metro Blue Line to the Long Beach Transit Mall station (end of the line), and walk south for two short blocks south on Pine Ave. to the convention center.

You get a flashy T-shirt for helping out as well!

You can sign up in person at the next club meeting, or by checking out the show page on our website <http://www.mineralsocal.org> or contacting me personally at 520.207.9958

See you then!
Justin
2005 Show Chairman

Wanted: YOUR Mineral Display!

by Ken Raabe, Display Chairman

Our 2005 MSSC Show is fast approaching, and I have received only a few exhibitor request forms from members so far. Where is our member-support? I am still sending out invitations to display to numerous prominent collectors and institutions. We need to fill the 50 or so available display cases this year with quality exhibits. The display/exhibits part of the MSSC Show has always been regarded as one of the best in the country. We need to work hard to continue this tradition, and every member's display counts from the beginner to the most sophisticated collector.

Trophies will be awarded for best exhibit (H.Stanton Hill Trophy), best individual theme specimen (Gus Meister Trophy), and best gem crystal (Hyman Savinar Trophy). The Kristalle Trophy will be awarded for the best junior exhibit, along with a \$300 cash award. In addition, cash awards of \$50 will be awarded for outstanding exhibits in the categories of Non-dealer Theme, Non-dealer Non-Theme, Dealer Theme, Dealer Non-Theme, Museum Theme, Museum Non-Theme, Junior Theme, and Junior Non-Theme. For more information or to reserve a case, contact Ken Raabe, Display Coordinator, at 213-452-3596. Also, entry forms and information can be found on (and printed from) our website, www.mineralsocal.org.

A panel of 3 experienced MSSC judges is also required to award the trophies and cash awards. In addition to the awards, the panel traditionally provides an

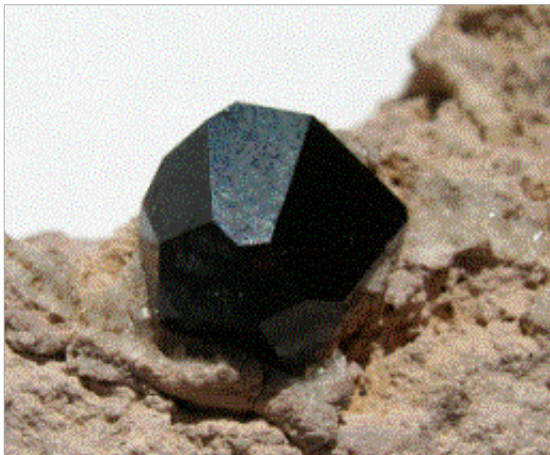
optional display judging service to assist exhibitors who would like to participate in CFMS/AFMS or Tucson Competitions. Please contact Ken if you would like to volunteer your services as a show display judge.

Minerals of the Southwest, Part 3

by Steve Knox

In its third installment, minerals of the southwest will focus on minerals to be self collected in Nevada and Utah. All of Steve's photos herein are of his self-collected specimens.

Nevada



Garnet in rhyolite collected from Ely, Nevada in 2001. Garnet diameter is 1.1 cm.

Nevada is known as the "Silver State," but also for its gold production and fine turquoise. Despite the perception of being mostly desert, Nevada is a mountainous state filled with varied landscapes and mineral concentrations. For collectors, several areas are well known, including garnet at Ely, opal at Virgin Valley, and sceptered quartz at Peterson Mountain.



The ends of these opalized twigs from the Royal Peacock claim, Virgin Valley, Nevada, show vivid orange, yellow, and green flashes. Twigs are 2-3 cm long and were collected in 2001.

Just west out of Ely, garnet (var. spessartine) is abundantly found in a pinkish rhyolite. One can drive up to the site, and with little effort, split the host rock and find small cavities. Many of these cavities are host to a single garnet that are up to ¼" on average, dark red, and gemmy. They appear faceted and the crystal surfaces are typically sharp and lustrous. On rare occasions, multiple garnets may be found in a vug. Surface collecting will still turn up the occasional crystal, however, splitting the host rock is the best way of finding the garnets.

In the very northwest corner of Nevada lies Virgin Valley. Within this area is some of the world's best opal. Also unique, is that much of the opal is a replacement of wood. Some of the wood's structure and shape is often intact, and complete opalized twigs are nice additions to one's collection. The work is tough, sometimes yielding nothing, which can be frustrating since the digging areas are fee digs. However, a single find can more than make up the fee. Most specimens are placed in water in order to keep the opal from cracking and crazing due to the high water content in the opal. This attribute makes most of the opal unsuitable for jewelry purposes. For collectors, it would be recommended to spend at least several days here. First, there are several different claims/fee digs to explore, but more importantly, spending more time will increase the chance of discovering a great specimen.



Amethyst scepter on smoky quartz collected at Peterson Mountain in 1996. Length is 1.5

About forty minutes to the northwest of Reno is Peterson Mountain. Situated on the CA/NV border, this location is one of the premiere quartz scepter locations in the world. The mountain is composed of granite filled with fissures and pockets containing multiple generations of quartz. Some of the initial crystallization produced smoky quartz, being colored by radiation. Afterwards, etching of the quartz took place, and then another generation grew over the original crystals forming scepters. These scepters are usually clear, although amethyst tops are sometimes present. In addition, large amethyst crystals, commonly called "turkey heads" are found in the pockets. The pockets range from several inches across to over several feet, and can produce hundreds of crystals and quartz shards.



A methyst "turkey head" from Peterson Mountain collected in 1996. Length is 18 cm.

Utah

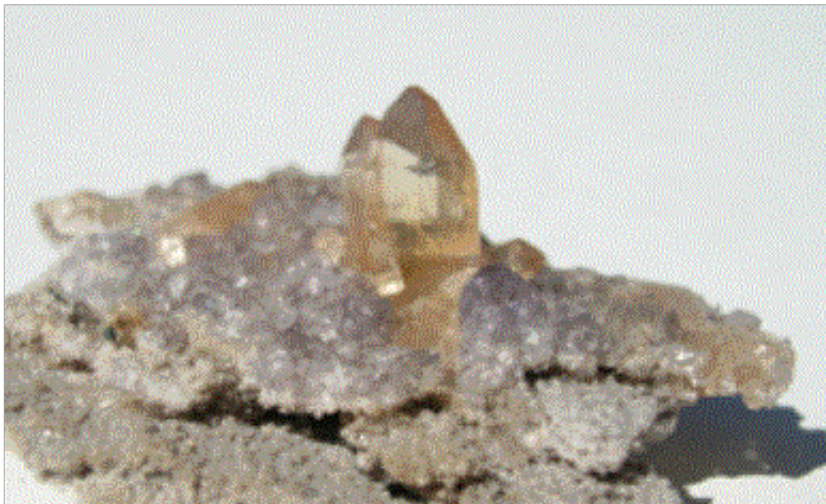
Utah is known for its fossils as much as for minerals. Most have seen the thousands of trilobites collected from the state, and perhaps just as numerous are the topaz crystals found in the Thomas Range.



Topaz/bixbyite combination collected from the Thomas Range, Utah in October 2000. Length is 2.3 cm.



Topaz with bixbyite collected October 2000, Thomas Range, Utah. Size is 3.5 cm,



Sherry-colored topaz on amethyst collected from the Purple Octopus pocket, Thomas Range, Utah, in 2001. Width is 5 cm.



Red beryl from the amphitheater or cove in the Thomas Range, Utah. The 0.6 cm crystal was collected in 2005.

Situated about forty minutes drive time northwest of Delta, the Thomas range is composed of highly mineralized rhyolite, containing innumerable vents and pockets with sherry colored topaz. The crystals typically form up to an inch tall, although some are larger and may form clusters of crystals. They are often included at the base and clear toward the tip, but some are so heavily included that they are called "sand topaz." Larger crystals can be faceted into gemstones, but they fade to clear upon exposure with ultraviolet light, so care must be taken to keep them away from sunlight. However, at some locations, the crystals fade to a light pink.

In addition to the topaz, other major minerals include garnet, pseudo-brookite, bixbyite, hematite (blades), red beryl, and amethyst. Most pockets are small, averaging a few inches or less, and contain only a few crystals. On occasion, a vent or larger structure forms which can contain hundreds of crystals. When encountered, such areas can produce single crystals as well as matrix pieces with more than one species on the rhyolite. Combinations exist with topaz, pseudobrookite, and bixbyite all together. In other areas, small amethyst crystals up to ¼ inch line the pockets and form tubes several feet or more in length with topaz grown on the amethyst. Despite being heavily collected, the Thomas Range continually produces specimens with hard work, patience, and a little luck.

Minutes of the MSSC August Picnic

The fun, food and fanfare of the annual MSSC August picnic took place at the Arcadia's Woman's Club on Sunday, August 21st. The picnic began at 2:30 pm, many of the members appeared with various food delights and shared them with others. Vice President Jim Kusely introduced the day's speaker, our own Show Chair, Justin Butt. Justin then presented a talk on his recent trip to Namibia, which was his first trip abroad. During his talk he described his tour through Namibia as well as his discoveries there and interactions with the locals along with his keen skill

of obtaining a bargain when he sees it. The pictures displayed included those of Pseudo-Cubic Quartz Pella from the Orange River as well as other minerals.

After the talk Justin gave a brief show report indicating that the MSSC Show on October 15th and 16th should go off without a hitch. The detailed floor plan created by Walter Margerum was shown to group to indicate that the show should be even better than last year with more wholesale dealers and well placed tables.

All of the members during the picnic worked very hard to place stamps on postcards for the upcoming show as well as aiding in Kid Rock. The efficiency of the MSSC members is unparalleled, well done.

The picnic officially adjourned at 5:21 p.m., but thanks are due to the clean-up crew who lingered longer.

Respectfully submitted by Ilia Lyles, Secretary

In Sunny Long Beach!

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Minerals of the Santa Monica Mountains

The Southern California Chapter of the Friends of Mineralogy will host its Fall Mineralogy Symposium on Saturday, October 22nd at the headquarters of the Conejo Recreation and Park District in Thousand Oaks, California. The co-host of this meeting is the Conejo Gem and Mineral Society. The topic for this fall's symposium is "Minerals of the Santa Monica Mountains."

Topics to be covered will be: "Zeolites of the Santa Monica Mountains" by William Wise, PhD, "Industrial Uses of Zeolites" by Doug Peeler, P.G. and "Prominent Geologic Units of the Santa Monica Mountains" by Dave Perry, P.G. We will conduct a field trip into the Santa Monicas on Sunday, October 23rd to look for zeolites and other minerals.

Visit our web site at <http://www.mineralsocal.org/scfm/index.html> for additional information, times and directions to the meeting site as they become available.

2005 Calendar of Events

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, Mud trip on Sat. at 9 am; blow hole trip Sat. at 2:30 pm; pink halite trip Sunday at 9 am. See www1.iwvisp.com/tronagemclub for details or phone Bonnie Fairchild (760) 372-5356.

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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