

# Bulletin of the Mineralogical Society of Southern California

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## The 833rd Meeting of The Mineralogical Society of Southern California

**Micro-minerals – Mostly**

by

**Fred and Linda Elsnau**

**Friday, July 13, 2007, at 7:30 p.m.**

**Geology Department, E-Building, Room 220**

**Pasadena City College**

**1570 E. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena**

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### **Featuring:**

- Pictures by Fred and Linda Elsnau
  - Some anecdotes from Kay Robertson
  - Collector-friendly online mineral atlas
  - The 68th CFMS annual tri-state convention and show
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**July Meeting**

**Micro-minerals – Mostly**

Presented by Fred and Linda Elsnau

Fred and Linda Elsnau will present the MSSC program on Friday, July, 13, 2007. Their topic is "Micro-minerals – Mostly." Fred has been collecting rocks and minerals for over 60 years, and he has been taking pictures since his days in the Air Force. These two interests eventually merged as he, and now Linda, began to specialize in taking pictures of minerals, gems and wildflowers. In the 1980s, he and Linda had the opportunity to do the photography for a gem dealer in Fallbrook, CA. They did both the advertising photography and the pictures that accompanied articles submitted for publication. Although they are officially "amateur" photographers, many of their pictures have appeared on the covers and within "Gems and Minerals" as well as other magazines. They also did the photography for the CFMS State Mineral/Gem/Fossil & Rock poster.

Just before he retired in 1996, Linda bought Fred his first stereo-microscope and the world of micro-minerals was opened to them. A micro-mineral is defined as any mineral that is best viewed under magnification. Many minerals never occur large enough to be collected in the more common "macro" world, where crystals can be proudly displayed on shelves or cabinets. Also, many more perfect and unique crystal shapes occur only at the microscopic level. Fred and Linda began actively collecting and mounting these tiny wonders of the mineral world. Fred's philosophy of micro-mounting is that micro-minerals should look as good when mounted as we expect to see "macro" minerals when on display. Naturally, they began to photograph micro-minerals to better share these unique and beautiful minerals with more people. This program, "Micro Minerals – Mostly" is presented to show the beauty that can be found in the world of "Micro-Minerals".

The erythrite on quartz from Schneeberg District, Saxony, Germany (ex Willard Perkin collection} is an example of the photographs to be featured in the talk.



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## Minutes of the June 8, 2007, Meeting

The 832nd meeting of the Mineralogical Society of Southern California was held on Friday, June 8, 2007, at Pasadena City College. President Ilia Lyles brought the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

She then introduced the speaker of the evening, Richard Hughes, who gave a multimedia, philosophical presentation entitled: "New Directions in Gemology." Mr. Hughes, a graduate of Bangkok's Asian Institute of Gemological Sciences, is the Gemological Administrator and Webmaster at the American Gem Trade Association Gemological Testing Center.

During his discussion, Mr. Hughes stressed the importance of provenance, and traveling to the respective sources of gems and minerals to make connections with the people and the areas. As a result of his own extensive journeys, Mr. Hughes was able to describe not only the gems found at various exotic locales, but also the people, customs, and living conditions of such regions. In the Ural Mountains in Russia, emeralds with thin film inclusions and mica flakes, and heavily fractured but beautiful change-of-color alexandrites, were mined under the watchful eyes of government officials. In Tajikistan, spinel and ruby mines were almost inaccessible to foreigners due to the presence of KGB agents and nearly insurmountable permit procedures. Mr. Hughes described the wealth and variety of minerals in Madagascar, including rubies, sapphires, beryls, alexandrites, and even diamonds. However, his discussion of newly formed villages near mining finds, mining work involving entire families, unpredictable road conditions, varied landscapes and endemic animal species, was just as interesting.

It is Mr. Hughes' hope that gemologists look not only to science, with its numbers and abstractions, but also to art and the reasons people desire precious stones.

Graphics, recorded commentary and numerous photographs accompanied the talk.

*Editor's note: If you would like to know more about Mr. Hughes please check out his web site at [www.ruby-sapphire.com](http://www.ruby-sapphire.com).*

At show and tell, Marek Chorazewicz displayed a 35 power Trekker Microscope, which can be ordered on the internet ([www.looksmall.com](http://www.looksmall.com)).

Janet Gordon received confirmation from MSSC members that the Oak Tree Room would be an acceptable location for next year's annual banquet. Jo Anna Richey announced that the CFMS Show would be held June 15-17 in Lancaster, CA.

The door prize was won by Jim Imai.

The meeting was brought to a close at 9:20 p.m. by Ilia Lyles.

Respectfully submitted by Pat and Geoff Caplette

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### Some Anecdotes from a Micromineralogist

--by Kay Roertson

*Editor's note: Kay Robertson is a long time member of the society and an avid collector of mineral specimens. Her collection has more than 13,000 specimens. Her biography and collection was featured in March-April 2007 issue of Mineralogical Record. The following*

*are excerpts from a letter written by Mrs. Robertson earlier this year.*

I was a charter member of the “Micromineralogists” as a matter of fact. It was named that because I was studying minerals under the ‘scope, but did not break up specimens because I was interested in the entire paragenesis of the specimens, and insisted that [the name] “micromount” would leave me out, as I did not “mount.”

When Dr. Pough, who was then the minerals curator at the Santa Barbara Museum, offered us those facilities for the first symposium, I drove to Santa Barbara with Juanita [Curtis], we were the only ones free to go there, as neither of us was working at that time. I remember the drive very well, on a gorgeous, clear winter day. We stopped to watch ships, fairly far out, “depth bombing” and sending huge geysers of water into the air. They were “sounding” for oil, where the platforms later appeared.

We went to several motels; some did not have adequate rooms for the evening slide programs, (the day program was held at the museum). The one we liked best refused their large meeting room, “because they will not have conventions, too much ruckus!” We tried to convince them that this was a scientific meeting with lectures, but to no avail. After the second year, the motel that did take us on State Street proved too small and we moved to the “Surfrider” in Santa Monica for a couple of years. There, the large room had a floor that shook slightly when someone walked by the table, shaking the micros under the scope. We then moved to the top (I think 7th) floor of a hotel on Pico and Lincoln. It was a wonderful place, but the hotel was turned into a retirement place after 2 years and that was that.

I do remember that Fred Pough complained after 2 years that all the lectures were by Easterners (they thought they were “above” us hicks from the provinces, especially Neal Yeollin “Mr. Micromounts,” a real New Yorker even though he lived in New Haven.) We became good friends. Fred said “why don’t some of you give a talk?” I was working at that time on the magendorf and plegsdicn pegmatitic minerals. So I worked up a one hour talk with 120 slides on that subject. Paragenesis, the minerals, the history etc. Never was so terrified, John White sitting right in front of me. I can hardly read a formula, never had chemistry or physics or algebra but I was fluent in German (still am) so just took it from the books. Pough was more than satisfied and I was glad I had elevated us Westerners in the eyes of the “grand old men of micromounting.” Lou Perloff, deaf as he was, must have gotten something he liked from the talk. He was a phosphate lover as I was. We became close friends and from that time on, he went to Tucson with me every year. He would fly out from North Carolina to LAX and we would go to Tucson in my car. He loved the desert and we did it until his very last trip. Both of us looked forward to it.

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## Welcome Our New Member

## Ahni Armstrong



Ahni Armstrong is a North Carolina native. She moved to Southern California in 1983. Ms. Armstrong earned her Ed.D. at USC in 1993 and has been a Business Administration professor at Pasadena City College (PCC) for 17 years. She learned about our society from Dave Douglass. Mr. Douglass, a PCC geology professor, told her that our society was a very good group for mineral enthusiasts. Ms. Armstrong attended our May meeting and was impressed by the Bushy Creek mining slide show, and the friendliness and knowledge of members. After the meeting she signed up as a new member. Ms. Armstrong's other interests include music, movies and dining out with friends.

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## Gem Collection Featured at Bowers Museum

By Janet Gordon

The extraordinary Michael Scott Collection of gems is on display at the Bowers Museum of Cultural Art from June 17, 2007 to June 16, 2008. The show, *GEMS! Colors of Light*, features the most important private gem collection in the United States. In addition to the major gem species in a variety of colors, examples of rare color varieties, such as green tanzanite, are on display.

The museum is located at 2002 N. Main St., Santa Ana. More information is available at (714) 567-3600 or [www.bowers.org](http://www.bowers.org).

*Editor's note: If you missed Bowers Museum's exhibit of Michael Scott's Collection several years ago, this is your second chance. Right now there are three exhibits at the museum: the Michael Scott's collection, Chinese Artifacts from the Shanghai Museum, and Mummys from the British Museum. And if you do go, check out the diamond crystals and the green tanzanite crystal next to a faceted yellow tanzanite and a faceted green tanzanite. The crystal appears to be green from one direction, then if you turn 90 degrees, the crystal appears to be yellow.*

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## Collector-Friendly Online Mineral Atlas

*by Janet Gordon*

If you wander off to the web site [www.mineralatlas.com](http://www.mineralatlas.com), you will have a delightful time browsing through mineral photos and easily accessing a variety of interesting mineral data. Although the site title, "Vibrational Spectroscopy and Photo Atlas of Minerals" and the fact that it's hosted by the Queensland University of Technology might seem intimidating to the casual collector, rest assured that there are lots of interesting things for anyone who enjoys minerals.

A fun place to start is the "Minerals of Australia and New Zealand" section that specializes in minerals with localities in these countries. The minerals are illustrated with excellent photographs that have been provided by mineral dealers, collectors and well-known mineral photographers. A quick click on the mineral name takes you to a table that gives data about the mineral, such as chemical formula, crystal class, hardness, luster, cleavage and the like. For example, in the New South Wales section, I wandered across the mineral marshite that appeared in four nice microphotographs by Lou Perloff. This mineral from Broken Hill was new to me, and I enjoyed discovering that it was CuI, rather soft and that it fluoresces dark red.

The alphabetical mineral database part of the site is very extensive and easy to use. Just click on the name and a list will highlight what kinds of data (photos, physical properties, thin section, various spectra) are available. From there, browse what you are interested in.

I particularly like this alphabetical list because it includes questionable, historical and discredited mineral names as well as those that are internationally sanctioned. It also includes mineral group names. It is possible to look up minerals of the apatite group as apatite, rather than having to specify chlorapatite, fluorapatite, or hydroxylapatite as required in some alphabetical lists. The garnet group section has ten pages of excellent photos from an international cast including Rob Lavinsky, Pieter Stemvers, Axel Emmermann, Dan Weinrich, John Veevaert, Steve Rust, and Diederik Visser. The tourmaline section has 50 pages of eye candy, if you've got the time. Yes, a specimen of rossmanite is included.

Take a look at this site and have some fun. It's worth a bookmark.

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### Attention!!!

### We are taking a poll

### POSSIBLE FIELD TRIP: Thomas Mountains, Utah

### Labor Day Weekend, September 1-3

We are taking a preliminary survey of interest in a field trip to collect topaz, bixbyite, and

other minerals from this famous, but remote locality. The topaz is transparent and gemmy, euhedral, prismatic with diamond shaped cross-section, terminated at one end in a sharp point, typically about 1- 2 cm. in length. It is usually sherry colored, but fades rapidly in strong sunlight. These crystals occur in vugs in rhyolite, but can be collected as freed specimens, usually broken loose at the basal pinacoid, mixed in many of the gravels. Topaz is the standard for Moh hardness value of 8, so that intermittent stream tumbling does not significantly diminish the brightness of the crystal faces. A more detailed description will follow as the time draws near.

The nearest large town is Delta, and examination of a large scale map will show that about two days drive is required, each way. It can be done in one day, alternating drivers, but it is a long drive. The roads are good, and only the last few miles are unpaved. There are numerous collecting sites en route, and others nearby, including excellent trilobites; which provide rest stops and diversions.

The purpose of this announcement is to determine the level of interest. If this trip appeals to you, please contact James Imai or Walter Margerum via e-mail or telephone.

--by James Imai

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## **Picnic in Fallbrook**

### **Save This Date!**

**August 18, 2007 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.**

The MSSC has been invited to join the Fallbrook Gem and Mineral Society for our annual August picnic and a fun time. On Saturday August 18th we will be having a potluck in the Tourmaline Room of Fallbrook's Museum Complex. We are asking everyone to bring a dish of any kind to serve 6-8 people. This will also be a time to get out some of your minerals you were thinking about selling. Each person may bring 3-4 flats of material to sell. Consider donating specimens to be sold to benefit the MSSC! We will sell from 10:00-12:00 a.m. and then clear out the room and have our potluck at 12:30 p.m. Hope to see a lot of you there! If you have any questions please call Janice Bricker at 760-728-1333 or 760-728-1130. The FGMS Musesum complex is located at 123 W. Alvarado St., Fallbrook. Driving directions will be provided in the August bulletin or see [www.fgms.org](http://www.fgms.org).

--by Janet Gordon

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## **The 68th CFMS Annual Tri-State Convention**

### **and Show at Lancaster**

by Shou-Lin Lee



The California Federation of Mineralogical Societies 68th Convention and show was held June 15-17 at the Antelope Valley Fair Grounds in Lancaster, California. There were lapidary art demonstrations and displays in one building and gem and minerals sales in another building. Many societies and clubs entered display cases. On display were self collected mineral specimens, from various California locations, lapidary, craft objects (carvings, etc.) made with rocks and minerals. A gem chime (see picture above) by Verdugo Hills Gems & Mineral Society, which won the 1st award in 1966, made with agate and other translucent slabs using stain glass technique caught my eyes. Another unusual display featured petrified pine cones. Some pine cones were whole, some were cut in halves, and some were partial cones. The whole ones (below left) showed the outer shape of the pine cone. But the halves (below middle) and the partials (below right) showed the permanently preserved inner structure of the fruits.



At the sales area, I saw some familiar faces. At John Garsow's booth I spotted a full tub of "candy opal." "Candy opal? Where were these from?" Any rock that has "opal" in its name I have to have a sample of. "Oh, these are old material from Utah." "Really? From Utah?" Something click in my mind, could this be the bacon opal that Fred mentioned? "Are these the bacon opal?" John laughed. "I guess you can call them that." I could not believe my luck. Ever since Fred told me that an opal cabochon which looked like soap bubbles was bacon opal (see April bulletin Show and Tell section), I have asked every vendor I know, hoping to get some rough to play with. And here John had whole tub of it all along! I lost no time and offered to take the whole parcel. Holding the ten pound bag, I was poorer but happier. Later, I found that another vendor had some really cute and pretty rutile crystals from Minas Gerais, Brazil. Also, Diamond Pacific had the vibrating tumbler I had been eyeing. Too late. Oh, well!

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## Show and Tell

By Shou-Lin Lee



The majority of the candy/bacon opal rough consists of many thin layers of white, yellow, clear, and mauve colored opal. Each layer measured less than 0.5mm and are straight (see picture above), reminding me of some opals from Spencer, Idaho. Some others have thick layers of clear opal with bubbly formation within (see picture left).

Some have botryoidal structure (see pictures below)



#### Show and Tell is opened to all members

Part of the fun of collecting is being able to show and tell. In this new section called **Show and Tell**, I hope to generate some dialogue among all members, especially those who are unable to attend the monthly meetings.

Any member who is interested in showing the world

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## 2007 Calendar of Events

**July 14-15 2007, Culver City**, Culver City Rock & Mineral Club, Culver City Veteran's Memorial Auditorium 4117 Overland Avenue Hours: Sat. 10 - 6; Sun. 10 - 5 Website: [CulverCityRocks.org](http://CulverCityRocks.org) Phone: (310) 836-4611

**August 3-5 2007, Nipomo**, Orcutt Mineral Society St. Joseph Church 298 S. Thompson Ave. Wes Lingerfelt (805) 929-3788

**August 4-5 2007, San Francisco**, San Francisco Gem & Mineral Society San Francisco County Fair Bldg Ninth Ave. & Lincoln Way Hours: Sat. 10-6 Sun 10-5 Ellen Nott (415) 564-4230

**August 31 - Sept. 3 2007, Fort Bragg**, Mendocino Coast Gem & Mineral Society Town Hall, Main & Latural Hours: Sat. & Sun 10-6; Mon. 10-4 Don McDonell (707) 964-3116.