

Bulletin of the Mineralogical Society of Southern California

Volume 77 Number 6

June 2007

**The 832nd Meeting of The Mineralogical Society
of Southern California**

New Directions in Gemology

by

Richard Hughes

Friday, June 8, 2007, at 7:30 p.m

Geology Department, E-Building, Room 220

Pasadena City College

1570 E. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena

Featuring:

- **Calcite crystal collecting at Missouri and Tennessee**
 - **Field Trip to San Andreas Fault**
 - **The Jade Symposium**
 - **Hemimorphite with calcite**
-

About the June Meeting

Date: Friday, June 8, 2007

Speaker: Richard Hughes

Topic: New Directions in Gemology

Richard W. Hughes will give a multimedia presentation entitled "People and Places: New Directions in Gemology" to the MSSC on Friday, June 8, 2007 at 7:30 p.m. This promises to be a fascinating and though-provoking evening for all who love the beauty of gems and minerals. Mr. Hughes has provided the following introduction for the talk.

Gemology is tired. Weary. Stumbling.

Gemologists are privileged to work with some of the most stunning and romantic objects on the planet – singular marvels of extraordinary beauty and wonder. And yet all we do is analyze. Break it down. Torture beauty until the extraordinary is reduced to an entirely ordinary set of chemicals, numbers and digits, abstractions with no relation to the reasons why people purchase precious stones. At this point, we have broken the butterfly upon the wheel.

Attention! We are told if a Paraíba tourmaline is really a "Paraíba tourmaline," we must analyze it. And yet no one has ever gazed upon a fine Paraíba tourmaline and declared: "Oh sweet Jesus, look at that copper content!" No instrument can see with our eyes, none can detect our emotions, and yet we surrender our senses to these abstractions simply because they possess the faint whiff of "science."

Which instrument feels feeling? What tool measures emotion? Precisely what implement can detect the response one gets when viewing a fine Burma ruby and a lesser stone from Thailand?

Few are willing to ask these questions because the answer falls outside the realm of scientific gemology. And yet the answers are crucial to our field.

Gemology is not simply science. Much of it involves plunging into a pool where depth cannot be fathomed, where one floats not upon intellect, but raw emotion.

People acquire precious stones because of passions, not properties. If we wish to understand desire, we must look to art, not science, we must make a connection with the people and places these gems come from.

Richard Hughes will delve into these issues via a dramatic multimedia presentation that covers ground all the way from Manhattan to Russia's emerald mines, Madagascar's sapphire and Tajikistan's remote ruby and spinel deposits.

It will provide inspiration, a new direction into the neglected, nether regions of gemology. The butterfly is broken, but it can fly again if we are willing to patch those gilded wings.

A native of the United States, Richard Hughes has spent many years in Asia, where his interest in precious stones was first kindled. Richard graduated from Bangkok's Asian

Institute of Gemological Sciences in 1979; shortly thereafter he was invited to join their staff. He was later appointed executive vice-president, a position he held for close to a decade. Today he is Gemological Administrator and Webmaster at the American Gem Trade Association Gemological Testing Center.

Traveling to scores of countries in search of precious stones, Richard Hughes has authored two books and more than a hundred articles on all aspects of the gem and jewelry trades. His work can be found at ruby-sapphire.com, palagems.com, ganoksin.com and agta-gtc.com.

Richard is not afraid to speak his mind, displaying an uncanny knack for touching upon controversial subjects, including politics. Agree or disagree, there is no question his writings and lectures are among the most passionate in the world of gems, which is perhaps why his work has attracted such a strong following.

Minutes of the May 11, 2007, Meeting

The 831st meeting of the Mineralogical Society of Southern California was held on Friday, May 11, 2007, at Pasadena City College. Vice President Janet Gordon brought the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

She then introduced the speaker of the evening, Mr. Joe Kielbaso, who gave a presentation entitled: "Collecting Underground at Brushy Creek, Missouri and Elmwood, Tennessee." Mr. Kielbaso has been an avid mineral collector for 50 years and a dealer for about 20. He and his wife, Susan, are the proprietors of Gemini Minerals in San Diego, CA.

Under contract to collect calcite crystals at the Brushy Creek location, Mr. Kielbaso and his team were able to extract the incredible amount of 80,000 pounds over a nine-month period. Mr. Kielbaso's descriptions of the ingenious raft and other collecting and safety devices and equipment created for the venture, as well as the trials and tribulations involved in the actual collection process, were most interesting.

Mr. Kielbaso also discussed the sometimes foggy conditions at the Elmwood location, where gemmy, honey-colored calcite was gathered, the fact that one could drive underground into the mine, and the significant differences in appearance between first generation and third generation crystals. Numerous photographs accompanied the talk.

At show and tell, Fred and Linda Elsnau presented a specimen of hemimorphite with calcite from the Ojuela Mine in Mexico. Geoff Caplette displayed amethyst crystals he collected locally in the Kingston Mountains (see photos at pages 11-12 Show and Tell section).

Janet Gordon reminded members about both the San Andreas Fault field trip, to be conducted on May 12, 2007, and the West Coast Gem and Mineral Show, to be held May 18-19-20, 2007 in Costa Mesa, CA. Jim Imai referred members to the May bulletin for details about the upcoming field trip to the Cerro Gordo Mines.

The meeting was brought to a close at 8:40 p.m. by Janet Gordon.

--Respectfully submitted, Pat and Geoff Caplette



Faulty Trip a Success

By Janet Gordon

Geology enthusiasts from the MSSC and Fallbrook Gem and Mineral Society joined together on May 12 for a day of exploring the San Andreas fault from Palmdale to Wrightwood. The FGMS contingent including Gail and Jim Kerry, Alex Conley, Garth Bricker, Joe Cusimano, Larry Miller arrived early at PCC for a look at the Geology Department's museum. They were joined for the day by MSSC members David Lynch, Christine Urbach, Alicia Segel, Lou, Carol, John, and Matthew Rector, Hal and

Carol Beesley, Bob and Sarah Griffis, and Paul and Janet Gordon. *(Photo above: Inspecting alluvial fan deposits that have been folded by fault motion in the Devil's Punch Bowl. Paul Gordon photo.)*

Under the leadership of Janet Gordon, trip stops included the famous Antelope Valley Freeway road cut, a tour of wrinkle ridges and sag ponds, analysis the right-lateral offset of Little Rock Creek, examination of alluvial fan deposits and what they indicate about fault motion, discussion of the great 1857 earthquake, a quick tour of deformed rocks in the fault zone at Devil's Punch Bowl, a side trip to the enigmatic Bob's Gap, and a close-up look at huge slivers of fault gouge. The trip ended with collecting actinolite at Wrightwood,

and everyone left with their hands and buckets full of shiny green bladed specimens. The enthusiastic group and the good weather made it an enjoyable day.



(Photo left: Musing over the ruins at Bob's Gap before looking for small graphite crystals in the local marble. Paul Gordon photo.)

Don't Forget the only chance of this year to collect at Cerro Gordo Mines

Location: Cerro Gordo Mines,

Date: Sunday June 24,

Hosted by the Lone Pine Gem and Mineral Club.

Direction: The mine trip begins at Lee's Frontier Service Station on the west side of the highway, just south of the town of Lone Pine, precisely at 8:00 am. The expedition will leave promptly, so do not be late.

Contact: Francis Pedneau at (760) 876-4319.

Fee: \$5 per person. Proceeds help with the restoration of the mining town.

Welcome Our New Member

Rubin Acosta

200 Stockbridge Ave.

Alhambra, CA 91801

The Fifth Annual Sinkankas Symposium

Place: GIA World Headquarters

Time: Saturday, April 21, 2007

By Shou-Lin Lee

The subject of the fifth Annual Sinkankas symposium was jade. The announcement posted in the Pegmatite, the monthly newsletter of the San Diego Mineral and Gem Society, promised a wide range of topics on jade and they delivered. The 100+ pages program contained several articles on jade, along with many colored pictures of jade carvings, jade mining, and jade rough. At the symposium, there were jade jewelry, jade carvings, and jade rough on display. Also books on jade were available for purchase. Topics covered many questions about jade, like why do people like jade, what is jade, where to find jade, when was jade first used, who uses jade and how does jade get its colors?

The first speaker, Fred Ward, author of *Jade*, briefly explained the two rocks; jadeite and nephrite that share the name jade. Then he gave an overview of the various occurrences of both rocks and showed pictures of examples. Mr. Ward revealed that come the 2008 Summer Olympics, for the first time the Olympic medal will have more than just gold, silver or bronze. The Chinese authorities already announced that different color jades will be incorporated into the Olympic medal. Mr. Ward showed samples of the 2008 Olympic

medals.

Si Frazier showed photos of jade and non-jade and related a story of a rare find of blue jade. The story goes back to when Mr. Frazier and his wife owned a rock shop, and had a bin of mixed slabs for sale. One day, a lady asked him about a \$2 dollar slab she picked up from the bin. When shown the slab, Mr. Frazier realized that the slab was a rare blue jadeite and secretly hoped the lady would not buy it. To his relief, the customer put the slab back. To this day, Mr. Frazier often wondered what happened to the other slabs that were cut from the same rock.

Mary Lou Ridinger, owner of Jades, S.A., talked about her rediscovery of five ancient jade quarries in Guatemala and the line of jade rough and jade jewelry carried by Jades, S.A. Mrs. Ridinger explained why Jades, S.A. provided reproductions of ancient artifacts and sold them as such. Mrs. Ridinger said that when she started her business back in the Seventies, she made it her mission to revive Guatemalan Jade production, both mining and carving and to stop people from raiding ancient jade artifacts. Mrs. Ridinger was proud to announce that her efforts in stopping the antique smuggling ring proved to be working. In one unusual occasion when she worked as a government decoy in a sting operation, she met an antique dealer. The dealer, who was unaware of who she was, complained to her about his declining clientele because some “business” was selling reproductions!

Don Kay, owner of Mason Kay, covered practical aspects of the jade business. How much is the cost of jade? Mr. Kay showed photos of different qualities of Jadeite and their price range. He also demonstrated how to distinguish a natural untreated jade bangle from a jade bangle made of jade which was bleached, colored, and polymer impregnated. Also, according to Mr. Kay, as a gem, green jadeite from Burma commanded the highest price of all gems based on auction houses records.

Richard Hughes opened his session with a show of pictures and music. Mr. Hughes’ story of his trip to the Hpakangyi jadeite mine in Burma in the 90’s was both amusing and thought-provoking. First he got permission from the government to travel to the mine, but was told that while he had permission he could not go because it was the rainy season. When finally got the go-ahead, the story did not end there. He told us about how his supposedly 22 hour car trip turned into a several day adventure in the mud and mosquito infested jungle. First, he traveled in a government-issued jeep with three other guys. The rainy season and the muddy road forced him to abandon the jeep because it got stuck in the mud along with several other jeeps. What do you use to get a four-wheel drive out of the mud when all the other four-wheel drives are stuck in the mud? You use the four-legged “drives.” Elephants came to the rescue. The way Mr. Hughes described how the native communicated with the elephants made me cringe. Once the jeep was hooked up to the elephant’s harness, the person who sat on top of the elephant, waving a machete, hit the elephant’s head with it. The elephant let out a loud cry then charge forward without much success. Another elephant was brought in without much success. Mr. Hughes decided to walk.

Then Mr. Hughes showed pictures of the mine where ten thousand workers were employed and worked all day carrying jade boulders to earn a mere quarter (or was that a nickel?) a day.

Dale Blankenship, an accomplished jade carver, quietly spoke of why and how he carved jade sculptures. Mr. Blankenship won the Trophy for Best Single Carving in the Master Class at the Gem Carvers Guild of America show in 1982. Several of Mr. Blankenship's works were on display. His subjects covered daily life, like Saturday Night Bath, or Chicken Dinner to an Aesop's fable of The Ant and the Grasshopper. They were diverse and often humorous.

John Koivula talked about inclusions in jade. His findings were surprising. Besides the usual suspects of feldspar and omphacite, he found chromite, zircon, vesuvianite, native copper and lawsonite. This was the first time ever that lawsonite was found as an inclusion in mineral or rock.

Last, but not least, was our own George Rossman, who was dubbed "The Color Doctor," talked about the cause of colors in jade. Dr. Rossman briefly explained the instruments and methods used in the study of chemical compositions in minerals. He talked about why his quest of lavender jade took him from the jade distribution center in the Burmese capital to the remote city of Hpakangyi, because the distribution center sold only green jade. After he flew to Hpakangyi, visiting several mines and seeing the tantalizing lavender jade in the walls of the mines, he offered to buy some, only to be told that the jade could not be sold at the mine site. All jade mined in Burma must be sent to the distribution center to be priced. Just when Dr. Rossman thought he would leave the jade mines without any lavender jade, some military personnel came to bid him farewell and presented him with some lavender jade rough as a goodwill gesture from the government.

The cause of the lavender color—manganese.

At the end of the symposium, the master of ceremonies Roger Merek, announced that the subject for next year is going to be garnet. So, all you garnet enthusiasts mark your calendar for next year April.

Show and Tell

Subject: Hemimorphite with calcite

Location: the Ojuela Mine in Mexico

The piece measures about 12 inches across. Fred explained that the hemimorphite are the small crystals in the cavity. The dark yellow coat is crumbly when touched.



Photo by Shou-Lin Lee

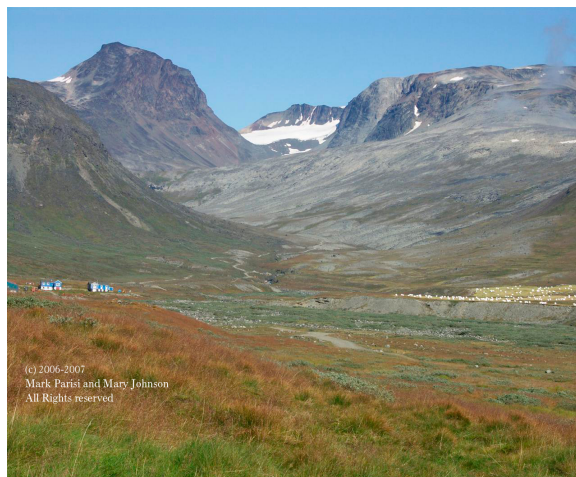
Subject: Amethyst crystals

Location: locally in the Kingston Mountains



Photo by Shou-Lin Lee

Location: Greenland. Kvanefeldt valley, with the uranium mine (not visible, just past the curve) on the hill on the lefthand side.



Congratulations to Wayne Leicht

Mr. Leicht was chosen by California Federation of Mineralogical Societies (CFMS) as the 2007 honorary awardee of American Federation of mineralogical Societies (AFMS) Scholarship Foundation. As an honorary awardee of Scholarship Foundation, Mr. Leicht will select two graduate students from the schools of his choice, to receive the AFMS Scholarships. Each graduate student will receive \$2,000 for two years, for a total award of \$4,000 per student.

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2007 Calendar of Events

June 1-3--LAS VEGAS, NEVADA: Bead Renaissance Show; J&J Promotions LLC; Palace Station Hotel/Casino, 2411 W. Sahara Ave.; Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; free admission.

June 2-3--GLEN DORA, CALIFORNIA: Show; Glendora Gems; 859 E. Sierra Madre; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-4; contact Bonnie Bidwell, (626)963-4638.

June 2-3--LA HABRA, CALIFORNIA: Annual show, "Jubilee of Gems"; North Orange County Gem & Mineral Society, City of La Habra; La Habra Community Center, 101 W. La Habra Blvd.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; free admission; dealers, demonstrations, exhibits, youth activities; contact Don Warthen, 15455 Tetley St., Hacienda Heights, CA 91745, (626) 330-8974.

June 2-3--SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA: Show, "San Francisco Crystal Fair"; Jerry Tomlinson; Laguna Ave. and Marina Blvd.; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-4; contact Jerry Tomlinson, (415) 383-7837; e-mail: sfxtl@earthlink.net; Web site: www.crystalfair.com.

June 8-9--PRICE, UTAH: 1st annual show; Castle Country Rock, Fossil & Mineral Club; College of Eastern Utah, Student Center, 526 North 300 East; Fri. 12-7, Sat. 10-7; free admission; contact Patrick Braun, P.O. Box 236, Ferron, UT 84523, (435) 384-2211.

June 15-17--LANCASTER, CALIFORNIA: 68th annual convention and show, "50 Years of Rock 'n Gems"; Palmdale Gem & Mineral Club; 2551 W. Avenue H; Fri. 9-5, Sat. 9-5, Sun. 9-4; adults \$5, children under 15 free with adult; lectures, seminars, dealers, lapidary demonstrations, kids' crafts, jewelry making demonstrations, beads, minerals, rough and cut gems, books, equipment, supplies, competitive and noncompetitive exhibits, metal detecting treasure hunt Sun., field trips; contact John Martin, (661) 942-8336; Web site: www.palmdalegems.org.

June 15-17--NEWPORT, OREGON: Show; Oregon Coast Agate Club; Lincoln County Fairgrounds, 633 NE 3rd St.; Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-4:30; adults \$2, students 50 cents; contact Juli Dahl, P.O. Box 2439, Waldport, OR 97394, (541) 563-7495; Web site: www.deltaonelapidary.com.

June 16-17--CAYUCOS, CALIFORNIA: Annual show; San Luis Obispo Gem & Mineral Club; Cayucos Vets Hall at the Pier, Cayucos Vets Hall at the Pier; Sat. 9-5, Sun. 9-5; Web site: <http://mineralofthemonthclub.org>.