

Bulletin of the Mineralogical Society of Southern California



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The 842th Meeting of The Mineralogical Society
of Southern California

How to Increase the Half-Life of Your Collection!

**by
Rock Currier**

Friday, April 11, 2008, at 7:30 p.m.
Geology Department, E-Building, Room 220
Pasadena City College
1570 E. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena

Featuring:

- Cataloguing and labeling mineral collections**
- Minutes of board meeting**
- 2008 Tucson Gem and Mineral Show**
- What you can find at Antelope Valley**

April Meeting

How to increase the half-life of your collection!

Rock Currier, mineral dealer and collector extraordinaire, will present the program for the Friday, April 11, meeting at 7:30 p.m. His topic will be "*How to increase the half-life of your collection.*" Rock promises a lecture and audience participation event on how to better catalogue your collection and to make labels for your specimens. He will also demonstrate a state of the art cataloguing and label making program and show how it can be used to generate reports and appraisals of the specimens in your collection. He offers the following to get you thinking about the subject:

What is the half-life of your collection? How many years will it be before half of your specimens have been thrown in the trash? If you have labels for your specimens, and especially if you have labels glued on your specimens, the half-life will be greatly increased. If you make your collection look important, that will also increase the half-life of your collection.

Given the ability for data handling and the storage of modern computers, once you enter the data about a specimen into a database, the generation of labels for those specimens and the generation of reports about subsets of those specimens should be only a matter of clicking a few buttons with your mouse. Labels that are created for specimens are often abbreviated to cut down on the time it takes to write in the data for the labels. With new programs you can, if you wish, put all the data in your database catalogue on the label with no extra effort.

Did you know that there are basically three kinds of labels you can make for your collection? In order of importance they are specimen labels, box labels and display labels. The specimen label is a small label that you should glue on to your specimen. The minimum information it should contain is the

locality for the specimen. You can always find out what mineral species are on the specimen through testing, but there are no tests that will tell you for sure where the specimen is from. These locality labels I sometimes call life saver labels, because they will save the "life" of your specimen when the box label gets separated from the specimen.

The next most important kind of label is the box label, which is also sometimes called a tombstone label. This kind of label usually stands up against one wall of the box that is used to store the specimen, a little like the tombstone at one end of a grave. These labels are distinctive in that all their data is printed as high as possible on the label so that the person viewing the specimen will not have to move the specimen to see the species names and especially the locality data which is usually printed further down on the label. This will reduce the moving and handling of the specimen. Many specimens shed crumbs when they are handled and moved and this should be minimized whenever possible.

The third kind of label is the display label and here the data on the label is usually centered left to right as well as top to bottom. Labels for micromounts are the most challenging kinds of labels to make because they generally have less space for placing information than labels for larger specimens. See how at least one program has addressed this problem.

Minutes of the February 22, 2008 Meeting

The 840th meeting of the Mineralogical Society of Southern California was held on Friday, February 22, 2008 at Pasadena City College, Pasadena, CA.

The meeting was brought to order at 7:30 p.m. by President Geoffrey Caplette. Vice President Janet Gordon then introduced the speaker of the evening, Dr. Michael McKibben, who gave a presentation entitled: "Hydrothermal Minerals and Metals in the Salton Trough."

Dr. McKibben, who is a Professor at U.C. Riverside, with specialties in geochemistry and economic geology, has published numerous articles on the Salton Sea and other hydrothermal systems. He is also a Life Fellow of the Society of Economic Geologists.

Dr. McKibben discussed the Salton Sea geothermal system characteristics, and the variety of hydrothermal mineral deposits, including gold, located in the Salton Trough. In a proposed model, he described how varied events in different geological periods, the Jurassic, the Cretaceous, the Tertiary and the Quaternary, gave rise to the gold deposits in the Trough.

He further discussed both successful power plant operations in the area, and failed efforts to recover zinc from the hypersaline brine in the Salton Sea geothermal field. Such efforts were unproductive because of project mismanagement and the relatively low price of zinc at the time.

Dr. McKibben accompanied his presentation with color slides, diagrams and charts, and displayed specimens of precipitates from the Salton Sea sediments, wellbores and power plants.

Janet Gordon announced that about fifteen to twenty world-class mineral specimens, donated by an MSSC member in about 1962, were on display at a state museum in Phoenix. She requested any input from members regarding both the donation itself and the minerals contributed.

Our speaker stated that he needs donations of massive, relatively pure scheelite in connection with his study of tungsten infiltration into groundwater.

Janet Gordon also announced that the subject of the March presentation would be new finds at the Oceanview Mine.

At show and tell, Geoff Caplette displayed the morganite he assisted in digging out of the Cryo-Genie Mine. Shou-Lin Lee brought an unusual agate, and requested members' help in identifying some of the formations within the agate.

The door prize was won by Geoff Caplette.

The meeting was brought to a close at 9:15 p.m. by Geoff Caplette.

Respectfully submitted, Pat Caplette, Secretary

Minutes of the February Board Meeting

The February 2008 Board Meeting of the Mineralogical Society of Southern California was held on February 22, 2008, at Pasadena City College, immediately following the regular meeting. President Geoffrey Caplette brought the meeting to order at 9:15 p.m. In attendance were the following MSSC members: Janet Gordon, Walt Margerum, Fred and Linda Elsnau, Jim Imai, Leslie Ogg, Herman Ruvalcaba, John Moore, and Pat and Geoff Caplette. Topics discussed were as follow:

Regular Meeting Dates for 2008: Janet Gordon provided the following dates for the remainder of 2008: March 14th, April 11th, May 9th, June 13th, July 11th, September 12th, October 10th, November 14th, and December 12th.

Annual Picnic: The date and the location of the annual picnic in August are yet to be determined. It would be advantageous to hold the picnic in a venue where a mineral swap and a silent auction could be held. Also, it was suggested that volunteer members could give a five-minute talk on their respective, most memorable field trip adventures.

Budget for 2008: The proposed budget was submitted by Herman Ruvalcaba. It was moved and seconded that the proposed budget be approved, and a unanimous vote followed.

Display Cases: It was agreed that the MSSC would retain twenty of its display cases, in the event that an MSSC show, on a reduced scale, is held in the future. A notice will be posted in the April bulletin announcing the sale of the remainder of the cases, on an “as-is” basis, for the price of \$30.00 each to nonmembers and \$20.00 each to members. To avoid costly trailer related charges and facilitate the sale of the

trailer, MSSC members will be requested to store as many of the retained cases, as reasonable, at their respective homes. Some volunteers have already come forth.

Field Trips: Geoff Caplette will arrange a trip to the Kingston Mountains to locate amethyst deposits. Walt Margerum suggested that a trip to the American Girl Mine (kyanite and andalusite, among other minerals) would be worthwhile.

The meeting was brought to a close at 10:00 p.m. by Geoffrey Caplette.

Respectfully submitted, Pat Caplette, Secretary

Minutes of the March 14, 2008 Meeting

The 841st Meeting of the Mineralogical Society of Southern California was held on Friday, March 14, 2008, at Pasadena City College. President Geoffrey Caplette brought the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Janet Gordon then introduced the speaker of the evening, Walter Mroch, who gave a presentation entitled: "The Oceanview Mine, Overview of a Real Operating Pegmatite Mine with Local Geology, History & Minerals."

Mr. Mroch, who is a certified underground miner, has been involved with numerous mines and mine-related projects, including the Himalaya and Oceanview mines, the Solar Wind Bixbyite Mine and the Maynard Topaz State License in Utah. He is also the owner of the Gem and Mineral Exploration Company.

Mr. Mroch stated that the Oceanview Mine was the only operating mine in the Pala District. The District itself comprises a number of mines, including the Elizabeth R, the Stewart, the Tourmaline Queen and the Katarina.

Findings at the Oceanview Mine have been mainly beryls, including morganite, aquamarine (the first recorded find of aquamarine in the Pala District), and goshenite. The discovery of the large, gemmy Prince of Pala Aquamarine was a

particularly notable accomplishment. Other minerals mined at the Oceanview were small specimens of blue or purple apatite, quartz clusters, feldspar crystals, citrine, kunzite, elbaite tourmaline and mica.

Mr. Mroch discussed not only exciting mineral finds, but also the labor expended and capital required to develop and run the mine. The operations of drilling, dynamiting, stopping, slushing, mucking, and the related equipment and materials, were also described.

Mr. Mroch accompanied his presentation with photographs, and displayed minerals recovered from the mine. He additionally brought copies of the Topaz Mountain Field Guide (a very useful, detailed guide to the minerals and locations in the area).

There were no announcements. The door prize was won by Ann Meister.

The meeting was brought to a close by President Caplette at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Pat Caplette, Secretary

2008 Tucson Show—Made in the USA

by Janet Gordon with photos by Paul Gordon



Rhodochrosite and fluorite from the Sweet Home mine, Colorado, assembled from museum and private collections.

Anyone who has been to the expansive mineral event that is evoked in the word “Tucson” knows that no comprehensive report of that affair would fit in the pages of this bulletin, should someone be foolish enough to attempt to write one. However, this year’s Tucson Gem and Mineral Show (TGMS) in the convention center was extraordinary, and this report is an attempt to give those who could not attend a bit of the special flavor of this show.

The theme was “American Mineral Treasures,” and although dealers had material from all over the world, as usual, the display cases were indeed filled with American treasures. Over forty cases, each dedicated to a specific USA mineral locality, contained the finest specimens put forward by twenty museums and over three hundred and fifty private collectors. Each locality had a coordinator who organized the assembly and display of specimens. For example the Sweet Home mine case organized by Paul Harter was a reunion of famous specimens from the Colorado locality. Each display had a short description about the history of the locality, and uniform labels that included the owner of each specimen tied the displays together

Seven of these special cases displayed Arizona localities and reminded visitors that this indeed was Tucson. But who can quarrel with assemblages of classic specimens from the Ray mine, Morenci, Old Yuma mine, Glove mine, Tiger, Red Cloud mine, and Bisbee? Those who went to the symposium on Saturday and heard the talks on Bisbee by



Emerald with calcite and muscovite, North American Emerald Mines, Alexander Co., North Carolina, displayed by the Houston Museum.

Richard Graeme and on Tiger by Les Presmyk returned to view these cases with new appreciation. Richard Graeme explained how miners at Bisbee viewed mineral collecting as one of their birthrights. The mining company tolerated or encouraged this activity, and thus many fine specimens were preserved instead of going to the mill.

The recently mined emerald with calcite and muscovite from Alexander County, North Carolina, was the perhaps the most popular new specimen in the them cases. It also served as the poster child for this year's show. Productin at the North American Emerald Mines has put the Hiddenite area back on the map. Symposium talks explained that these emeralds are hosted by metamorphic Alpine-type quartz veins that may contain muscovite, hiddenite, rutile, carbonates, and other minerals.



This remarkable case of minerals from the Mammoth-St. Anthony mine at Tiger, Arizona, includes a leadhillite belonging to Rock Currier.

Other eastern localities included Mount Mica and the Pulsifer Quarry in Maine; Herkimer, New York; Franklin/Sterling Hill (glowing in fluorescent light), New Jersey, and Grave's Mountain, Georgia.

The Midwest was represented by spectacular fluorite and celestine from a number of localities. There were also diamonds and quartz from Arkansas, and stunning Michigan copper.

Western localities dominated the show, however. In addition to the previously mentioned Arizona localities, three cases contained California pegmatite minerals including a royal family reunion of blue-capped tourmalines from the Tourmaline Queen mine assembled by Bill Larson. Mike Gray assembled a case of benitoite and neptunite from San Benito County, and Wayne Leicht produced a popular case of California gold. Colorado was well represented by cases of



Strontianite and fluorite from Cave-in-Rock, Illinois.

Mount Antero aquamarines and other minerals, Sweet Home mine rhodochrosite, barite from various locations, Pike's Peak amazonite and smoky quartz, and gold.

The Butte, Montana, case contained classic specimens of covellite

and rhodochrosite, and fine Kelly mine smithsonite from New Mexico was also featured. The sparkling epidote from Green Monster Mountain, Alaska, was impressive both for the size of individual crystals and crystal groups. Jane Jones compiled a case of barite from the Meikle mine, Nevada, which included fine specimens belonging to



MSSC members Bob and Sarah Griffis, and Mike Mizutani and Arline Nakanishi.

The list locality cases could be continued, but those interested in early Americana found treasures in the case of minerals and artifacts that had been in the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Science collection. Amber collected by General Tadeusz



Barite specimen belonging to Bob and Sarah Griffis in the Meikle mine locality case coordinated by Jane Jones.

Amazonite and smoky quartz from Teller county, Colorado.

Kosciuszko, the Polish patriot and American Revolutionary War soldier, specimens possibly from the Lewis and Clark expedition, and an asbestos purse belonging to Benjamin Franklin were among the interesting items on display.

In addition, there were the usual invited and competitive displays, including a personal Red Cloud mine wulfenite display by Garth Bricker, and effective pseudomorph displays. But the TGMS is to be especially congratulated on

their special effort to assemble the extraordinary locality cases. Special thanks goes to each case coordinator and all the curators and private collectors that filled the cases with the best of the best for everyone to enjoy.

Field Trip Announcement:

Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve. A wonderful opportunity to collect beautiful impressions in photos or in your memory. This year is promising to have an

exceptional bloom. If you have been there before, you will want to go, and if you have not, you have missed one of the finest displays of nature at her best. Yes, these are flowers and not minerals, but think of them as thin plates of splendid crocoite or perhaps vivid realgar. In addition to poppies, there are amethyst violet Owl Clover and bright autunite yellow tiny ground flowers. The actual minerals in the area are an apparently magmatically differentiated, very coarse K-feldspar and quartz, similar to the ridge east of Saddleback County Park in Palmdale. There are also extrusives, apparently andesites, capping the local hills.

The time is uncertain because these are wildflowers. The probable date is within the next few weeks, although the bloom generally lasts for nearly a month, beginning with south facing slopes and progressing to north facing. An exact date will be set as the bloom peaks, and will appear on the MSSC website.

Equipment: Bring a tasty picnic type lunch, cold drinks and warm clothing (it is often windy). A hat with tie cords is desirable. There is a visitor center, but it is highly congested during the bloom; participants are advised to visit a toilet before coming to the area or to use “open air” facilities. The preserve site is surrounded by blooming poppies in all directions, and the best viewing and solitude is often just off the park grounds.

Directions: drive north on highway 14 thru Palmdale and exit Avenue J or K westbound. Continue west about 15 miles, to 120th St. W, then north to Lancaster Road and west to the Reserve. The south boundary of the bloom is Lancaster Road and the north boundary is approximately highway 138 west (Avenue D exit), which continues on to Quail Lake and the Gorman area. All exits in between Avenues J and D converge onto the preserve and eventually highway 138. Our best experience has been to cruise the dirt roads in the bloom area until we locate a likely spot. Good hunting!

Sale of Display Cases

The MSSC is selling excess show display cases, on an “as-is” condition basis. The price for each case to MSSC members is \$20.00; for non-members, the price is \$30.00. The cases are constructed of good quality wood and components, but may need minor repairs. Display cases of comparable sizes, but incorporating aluminum instead of wood, have been recently advertised in the \$120.00 range.

Please contact an MSSC officer promptly, if you are interested.

WEST COAST GEM & MINERAL SHOW

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2008 Calendar of Events

- April 4, 5, & 6 2008, Bakersfield, CA** San Joaquin Valley Lapidary Society
6th Annual Rock & Gem Rendezvous Indoor Show/Outdoor Tail Gate
Kern County Fairgrounds 1142 South P Street Hours: Fri. 9 - 8; Sat. &
Sun. 9 - 5
- April 4, 5, & 6 2008, San Jose,** Santa Clara Valley Gem & Mineral Society
Santa Clara County Fairgrounds 334 Tully Road Hours: Fri. 9-5, Sat. &
Sun. 10 - 5 both days
- April 12-13 2008, Mariposa,** Mariposa Gem & Mineral Club Mariposa
County Fairgrounds Hours: 10 - 5 both days
- April 12-13 2008, Paradise,** Paradise Gem & Mineral Club Elk's Lodge Note
(new location) 6309 Clark Road, Paradise CA Sat. 10 - 5; Sun. 10 - 4
- April 19, Carlsbad, Sixth Annual Sinkankas Symposium on Garnet,** by San
Diego Mineral & Gem Society and Gemological Institute of America. Pre-
registration required. \$65 for early bird, \$75 after April 1. Limited to 125.
Registration form is not required with the check but due to popular
demand, contact Anne Schafer at (858) 586-1637 or annes@san.rr.com for
available seat first.
- April 26-27 2008, Lancaster,** The Antelope Valley Gem & Mineral Society
Lancaster High School 44701 32nd St. W. 9 - 5 both days
- April 26-27 2008, Santa Cruz,** Santa Cruz Mineral & Gem Society Santa Cruz
Civic Auditorium at Corner of Center & Church Streets 10 - 5 both days