



BULLETIN of the Mineralogical Society of Southern California

The 1,054th meeting of the Mineralogical Society of Southern California

Volume 99 Number 9 September, 2026

With Knowledge Comes Appreciation

A ZOOM Meeting
September 11, 2026, at 7:30 P.M.

Program: It's The Little Imperfections That Make Natural Fancy Color Gem Diamonds Special
Presented By Christopher Michael Breeding, Ph.D., G.G., Senior Manager, Analytics; Senior Research
Scientist, GIA Laboratory , Gemological Institute of America (GIA)

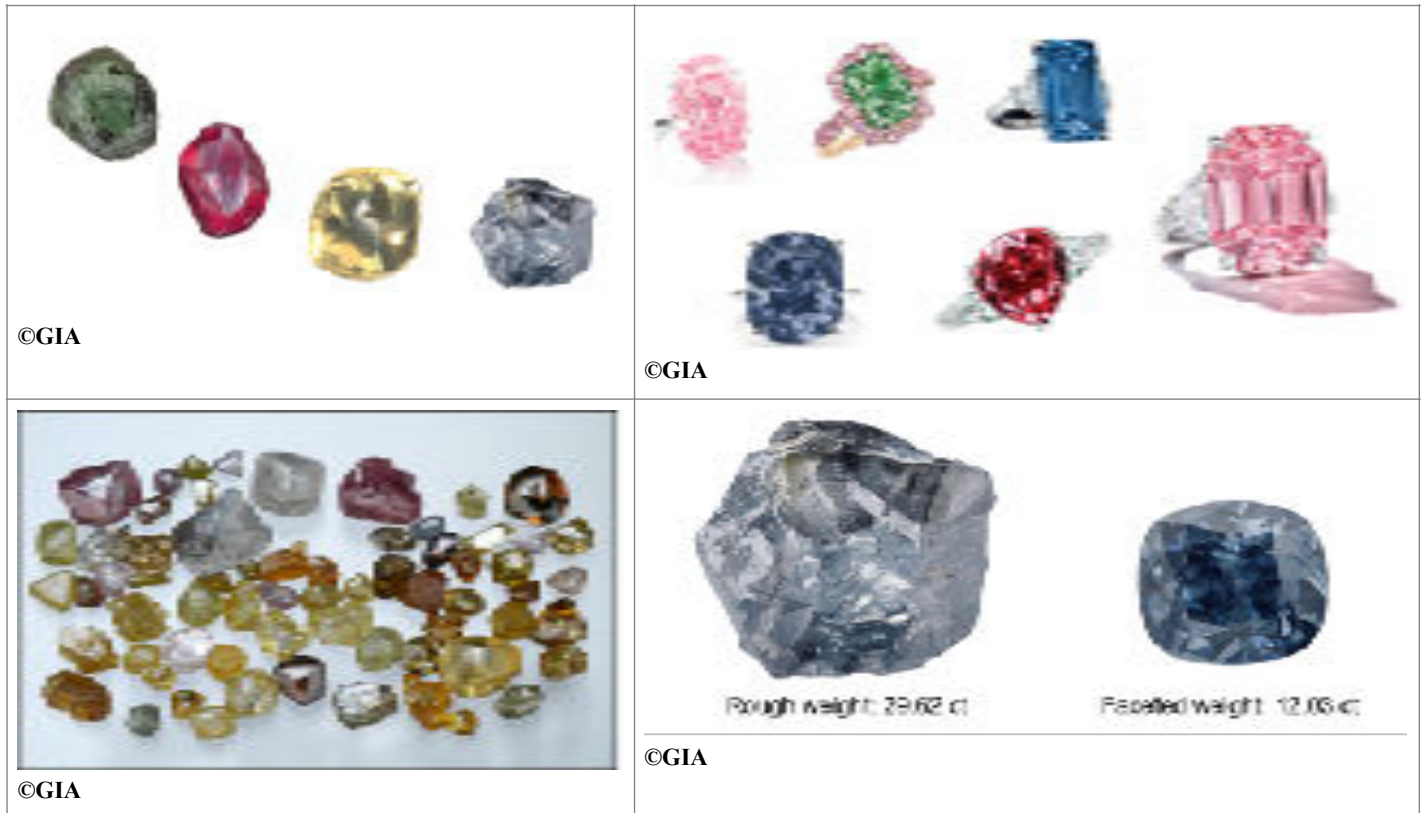
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Remember: If you change your email or street address, you must let the MSSC Editor and Membership Chair know, or we cannot guarantee receipt of future Bulletins

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Come to the meeting to find out more!

How to Join our ZOOM Meetings

MSSC members are automatically included in the invite list each month.

For non MSSC Members who want to attend this meeting. You must respond to our Programs chair, Carolyn Seitz speakers@mineralsocal.org. no later than the Thursday prior to the next scheduled meeting. Please include “*current month ZOOM Meeting*” in the subject line of your response. This response date will allow time for us to send you the information needed to participate in the ZOOM meeting.

From the Editor: Linda Elsnau.

It is with thanks to Angie Guzman and Pat Stevens for the two excellent articles included in this month’s Bulletin. Angie for writing “Kudos for Miko” and Pat for recommending the article on “Alexander von Holdt”. Also to the author, Tom Howald who took time out of his trip to Iceland to grant me permission and help me get a word doc of his article so it could be included here.

We have an interesting presentation for our September meeting, one where a picture is worth a thousand words! Come join us.

From Our President Leslie Ogg

I have here in front of me, a large jar containing some hanksite crystals that I collected at Searle's Dry Lake in Trona in 2001. It's a place I have collected many times and I'm sure some of our members have as well. The Gem-O-Rama was held in Trona every year along with access to the dry lake for mineral collection. It ran for over 75 years, ending in 2018 due to earthquake damage to the town of Trona and the dry lake. In addition to hanksite you could find nice pink halite, thenardite, sulfohalite and borax.

Hanksite is an anhydrous sulfate-carbonate mineral; 99% of the world's supply is found at Searle's Dry Lake, which is the type locality. Identified by George Hidden in 1885, it was named in honor of the first California State Mineralogist Henry G. Hanks (1880-1886).

Hanksite, formula $\text{Na}_{22}\text{K}(\text{SO}_4)_9(\text{CO}_3)_2\text{Cl}$, is a hexagonal, colorless to grey, yellow or almost black, water soluble evaporite mineral. It has a hardness of 3-3.5 and a dull vitreous luster. It is both fluorescent and phosphorescent.



Hanksite crystals collected from Searles Dry Lake,
Trona, CA by Leslie Ogg

Some additional information about Searles Dry Lake

<https://mojaveproject.org/dispatches-item/gem-o-rama/>

<https://ecency.com/@rt395/mineral-mondays-68-gem-o>

[Gem-O-Rama NY Times Article](#)

Reminders

1. Annual picnic next Saturday August 29th
2. MSSC members will be at the GemFaire in Costa Mesa August 30th

If you missed the talk in August, or didn't get the link, Aaron Celestian has a free iPhone app for cataloging all collections: mineral specimens, jewelry, art, etc. Go to the App store and search for Specimen Pro

MSSC Membership ZOOM Meeting Minutes, Friday, August 14, 2026

President Leslie O. called the Mineralogical Society of Southern California's 1053rd membership meeting to order at 7:30 PM, with 26 members present and 2 guests.

The meeting began with the approval of membership meeting minutes from July 10th as published in the August bulletin, with Bert V. making the motion to approve and Tony K. providing a second. Motion carried.

President Leslie O. reported updates on mineral species, noting that Mindat had approved 6,239 approved mineral species (an increase of 12 from the previous month), with additional 3334 rock names, and 419,226 locations. Tony discussed a new mineral called flatimerite discovered in a Colorado uranium mine.

Of the 13 new minerals listed by IMA Commission on New Minerals, Nomenclature and Classification (CNMNC) for June/July 2026- Member Tony K. was involved in five of the identifications. They are:

Agujaite $\text{Na}_6\text{Al}_6(\text{H}_2\text{O})_{15}(\text{OH})_3(\text{AsO}_4)_5(\text{AsO}_3\text{OH})_3 \cdot 3\text{H}_2\text{O}$

Petfordite $\text{ZrW}_2^{6+}\text{O}_7(\text{OH})_2(\text{H}_2\text{O})_2$

Zincocabrerite $\text{ZnMg}_2(\text{AsO}_4)_2(\text{H}_2\text{O})_8$

Hugotibergite $\text{Ca}_6\text{CaPb}_2(\text{Si}_3\text{O}_9)_2(\text{SO}_4)_2(\text{OH})_2(\text{H}_2\text{O})_4$

Flatimerite $[\text{Al}_{13}(\text{OH})_{24}(\text{H}_2\text{O})_{24}][\text{V}_9^{5+}\text{V}^{4+}\text{O}_{28}] \cdot [(\text{SO}_4)_4(\text{H}_2\text{O})_{24}]$

President Leslie O. encouraged members to RSVP and sign up for the annual potluck on August 29 and be sure to bring items for the auction. Potluck/auction begins at 10:00 AM.

President Leslie O. asked the board members to stay after the general meeting for a brief board meeting afterward to discuss exhibition matters regarding the Gem Fair.

Carolyn S. introduced Aaron Celestian who presented “Something Chose This Garnet” findings on garnet formations in rhyolite rocks, explaining how they formed from volcanic steam 20 million years ago and discussing the differences between black and green-coated garnets. He described his analysis of the green coating, which revealed the presence of hematite and organic material through Raman spectroscopy, suggesting multiple layers on the garnet surface. The discussion focused on understanding why some garnets have coatings while others do not, with Aaron proposing the possibility of different vapor pulses from the magma chamber as a potential explanation.

David L. said the plans for the Gem Faire, where they will display minerals and rocks, would be similar setup to their Natural History Museum exhibit but with half the materials, focusing on better-quality minerals that will be protected in display cases. Parking arrangements for the upcoming Gem Faire were discussed. Also, membership recruiting options for the upcoming Gem Faire event were discussed, with David proposing to offer free or discounted memberships to recruit new members. Leslie O. said these items will be discussed at the Emergency Board Meeting to follow this meeting.

Merek C. said he would like to plan a field trip to look for silicates.

The next membership meeting will be at 7:30 PM on Friday, September 11, 2026, via ZOOM.

The next board meeting will be on Sunday, December 6, 2026, at 1:00 PM.

Meeting adjourned at 8:32 PM

Submitted by Marcia Goetz

List of Upcoming MSSC Events : Mark your Calendar!

Event	Date	Comments / Scheduled Program (if known)
	ZOOM October 9, 2026	TBA

Meeting Dates::	ZOOM November 13, 2026	TBA
	ZOOM December 11, 2026	TBA
Board Meeting	Sunday, December 6, 2026	ZOOM at 1:00 PM
2027 Installation Banquet	Saturday, January 16, 2027	Hoff's Hut in Seal Beach
Field Trip		No News At This Time

Note: Dates and programs shown above are subject to change. Check your bulletins to confirm final information each month.

MSSC Board Minutes August 2, 2026

Attending: Leslie O, Renee K., Angie G., David L., Pat C., Bob H., Marcia G., Carolyn S.

Leslie O. opened the meeting at 1:06 PM

Approval of the May 3rd, 2026, Board Meeting minutes. Note: These minutes were approved by the general membership during the July membership meeting, however, they need to be approved by the board. A motion was made by Angie G. to approve the May 3, 2026, Board Meeting minutes, seconded by Carolyn S. Motion carried.

Leslie O. said that the election of officers is coming up soon and she wanted to talk about the co-secretary position. Since Ahni D. needed to drop the Co-Secretary position, Marcia G. has done the job all year. Leslie O. said she could contact Ahni D. and see if she would help this coming year.

Renee K., Vice President, has let Leslie O. that she needs to take time off next year. The discussion was that we could leave that position empty if we needed. Leslie O. and Renee K. said that the position requires minimal work, and the main job is to chair the meetings if the President couldn't attend. The By-Laws say the Treasurer can also fill in for the President if needed. It was decided that if we don't have a member volunteer to fill the V.P. then we should be ok for next year. Leslie O. said she was willing to serve as President for another year. Also, Pat confirmed he would continue as Treasurer, Angie will continue as the CFMS Director, and David L, Carolyn S. will continue as Board Directors, and Marcia G. said she would be willing to be Secretary again. We will need a few more of the offices to fill the slate when we vote on the positions.

Pat was asked if the scholarships to Paolo Sanchez for \$1,000 and Mindat for \$1,000 had been paid. Pat said he had not paid them yet due to tax considerations, but he would get them paid soon.

Pat said he printed the By-Lays out to review and update if needed. It seems as if there are a few items that might need changing.

There is no official email for members to sign up for the picnic on August 29, but a link for signups will be on the website soon. Leslie O. will send out an email message reminding members to place the picnic on their calendar. There was a short discussion on whether to look for a different location to hold the picnic, mostly because it is always hot in August when we have it. Pat S. said we pay \$175 now for a four-hour slot at the park. If we move the venue could be a lot more expensive.

There was discussion on picnic planning and Carolyn S. confirmed she would provide paper plates, napkins, and utensils, Leslie O. and others offered to bring additional tables. David L. said he will bring items from Robert Ray and Joanne Ray collection for the auction.

David L. said this year's Gem Faire will be at the Costa Mesa Fairgrounds on the weekend of August 28-30, 2026. We have been invited to represent our society at a table being offered for free if we give them space for ads in our monthly bulletin. Since our picnic is on August 29th, David L. said he would be willing to go on Sunday, August 30th. Pat and Renee said they could help also. Pat said he would like to have a locking display case at the show.

A discussion followed about having club information handouts to give those attending the Faire to generate interest in our society. Marcia G. said she had been working on a quarter sheet flyer. Leslie said she would send the club's logo and a QR code to put on the flyer. Marcia G. said she would get it finished and send it to Leslie.

Leslie said the bulletin was smaller this month due to Linda having a difficult time with her computer which was preventing her from sending large PDF's.

Pat S. reported that MSSC has \$18,000 in funds and confirmed he filed the required forms with the Secretary of State and the Federal Form 990 for taxes. Pat reported we have 74 members of which 18 are family memberships, 3 honorary and 7 lifetime.

There was discussion about an October event at Orange County Park which the society has participated in before. Last year it was cancelled. We will reach out and see if it will be held again this year as we would like to participate.

It was discussed a possible alternative to increase membership would be to place information on Facebook in addition to Instagram which is what we use now.

Carolyn S. reviewed the speakers scheduled through December, with Jim Mills confirming for January of 2027. December of 2026 is still open.

Leslie O. shared Facebook demographic data showing the audience skews slightly older, with the highest engagement from San Diego, Apple Valley, and Bakersfield areas.

Angie G. reported she received historical MSSC bulletins dating back to 1931 from Mike Evans. Marek C. said he has a box of bulletins and David said he also has some. We would like to digitize the bulletins.

Angie G. reported the CFMS Annual Show and Convention will be in Reno, NV on September 19-21, 2026, and she plans to attend, representing MSSC as our society's Director.

The Annual Banquet and Installation in will be on January 16, 2027, at Hoffs Hut in Seal Beach.

Meeting adjourned at 2:53 PM..

Submitted by Marcia Goetz

Minutes of the MSSC Emergency Board Meeting

Friday, August 14, 2026, 8:32 PM

Leslie O. called the emergency board meeting to order at 8:32 PM

Attending: Leslie O, Renee K., Angie G., Marcia G., Carolyn S., Pat S., Merek C., David L., Bert

This meeting is to discuss reimbursement for parking at the Gem Faire in Costa Mesa, October 30th. Marcia G. made a motion that since the club is invited to have a table to advertise the club at the Gem Faire by volunteering they should be reimbursed for their parking fees. Carolyn S. second the motion. Motion carried.

Membership recruiting options for the upcoming Gem Faire event were discussed, with David L. proposed offering free or discounted memberships to recruit new members. Angie G. emphasized the importance of following existing Bylaws and Operating Procedures regarding membership and that this may be an item for discussion when the Bylaws are reviewed. It was settled that anyone who signs up at the Gem Faire will get 50% off the annual membership as stated in the current Bylaws for new members who sign up July through December. MSSC information will be available as handouts at the Gem Faire.

Meeting adjourned at 9:16 PM

KUDOS for MIKO By Angie Guzman

Miko Sujatmiko has been a member of the Mineralogical Society of Southern California for a number of years. “Miko” lives in Bandung, Indonesia. He is a geologist, a gemologist and a trailblazer in his country.

Early in his career he advocated for the accommodation and conservation of raw precious stones being exported widely abroad. His work led to the importance of preserving and raising the status of native precious stones and wood fossils. The result of his advocacy is two-fold: No *raw* gemstones are exported. They are faceted, polished, graded and exported as best quality gems. The second benefit is economic. High-quality gems are sold/exported at premium prices which contribute to the overall economy of Indonesia. By way of tribute to Miko’s efforts, the country featured some of his gemstones on first-day covers and postage stamps, immortalizing his hard work.

Miko has been collecting meteorites and associated materials for years. It was thought that there was no meteorite field in Indonesia. However, Miko with the help of a few colleagues was able to confirm such a field in West Java. The field contains “... *meteorite boulders (ranging from 20cm to over 100cm), found within the volcanic hornblende andesite of the Oligo-Miocene Jampang Formation, these samples exhibit shatter cone structures in silicate minerals, Widmanstätten patterns, Thomson structures and magnetite crystal networks characteristic of iron meteorites, suggesting an asteroidal origin.*” [Excerpts are from the Abstract: Preliminary Investigation of Meteorite-Related Rocks in A Strewn Field Discovered in Sukabumi Area, West Java, Indonesia: Andir Subandrio, Taufiq Hidayat, Prihadi Sumintadireja & Sujatmiko]

Miko is the Chairman of the Indonesian Gemstone Association, Director of Gem-A (Indonesian Gemstone Promotion Center) and owner of a “gemstone garden” north of Bandung that houses and preserves thousands of metric tons of gemstones from across the Indonesian archipelago.

Most recently, and with recommendations provided by MSSC President Leslie O. and Board Director Carolyn S, Miko’s membership into the Global Meteorite Association (GMA) has been accepted. Congratulations, Miko!

Alexander von Humboldt (1769-1859)

By: Tom Howald, Middle Tennessee Rockhounds

(Reprinted here with permission of author Tom Howald and the Middle Tennessee Rockhounds)

This article was suggested by my reading of The Invention of Nature, Alexander von Humboldt’s New World, by Andrea Wulf, a book whose title needs some explanation, and a book which begins, like several other treatments of Humboldt, by deploring how underappreciated he is. Humboldt lived from 1769 until 1859, a long lifespan which allowed him to write and travel extensively. Humboldt was sufficiently positioned in society and adequately supported by inheritance to support his interests. His childhood collections (plants, shells, insects, rocks) and his fascination with Robinson Crusoe presaged his professional life. As Wordsworth remarked, “The child is father to the man.”

The early death of his father and the emotional distance of his mother (neither he nor his brother attended her funeral) allowed him to set his own course, namely the investigation of nature, or rather “Nature.”

The curious phrasing of the title of Wulf’s book, the *invention* of nature, recognizes the fact that Humboldt had a very comprehensive and somewhat idiosyncratic sense of nature, reflecting the broader educated culture of his time, as we shall see. Also it would lead to his being called by later generations the father of

environmentalism, the father of ecology, and an early investigator of human-caused environmental change. He particularly warned of the dangers of deforestation. In this matter he was in agreement with Benjamin Franklin, as Humboldt eventually learned.

Humboldt was an admirer of Captain James Cook and sought to imitate Cook in his own voyages (and so, by the way, did the creators of Star Trek, whose captain's name, James Kirk, echoes the name of Cook; as well the Star Trek ship name, the Enterprise, echoes Cook's ship, the Endeavor).

Humboldt studied at the Freiberg School of Mines (subject of a previous presentation) under the "Neptunist," Werner. Neptunists claimed that, with the obvious exception of volcanic activity, all rocks (including what we now call metamorphics) were caused by sedimentary processes. This was (at least at Freiberg) a claim based more on the prestige of Werner than on the testimony of the rocks.

In 1790, age 21, Humboldt published his Mineralogic Observations on Several Basalts on the River Rhine, which gained him some acclaim including appointment by the Prussian government as an inspector of mines. He took the appointment seriously and greatly enhanced Prussia's output of gold. Also, at his personal expense, he opened a school for miners. One might expect that the curriculum would be narrow and technical, but Humboldt wanted to improve their lives, not merely their job prospects; the curriculum was comprehensive. His travels around Prussia as an inspector allowed him to explore beyond mining, and in 1793 he published a botanical survey which attracted the attention of Germany's most famous intellectual (then and now), Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, whom Humboldt met, and with whom he corresponded for some time. The acquaintanceship led him to another of Germany's literary greats, Schiller, whom Humboldt met in 1797. Hence Humboldt was tuned into the literary scene (even beyond his homeland). And the literary scene meant Romanticism, not only that of Goethe and Schiller, but also the English writers Blake, Wordsworth, Shelley, Coleridge, Keats.

These associations were not merely incidental to Humboldt's scientific development. Indeed, they underwrote his whole sense of nature, as "cosmically unified." His final work, to look ahead a bit, was Kosmos. If you have seen the television series, "Cosmos," you will have a sense of the keenly aesthetic sense of nature—presented with a Hollywood-worthy sense of grandeur, scale, majesty, unspoiled beauty, etc., and accompanied by soaring music. Is this an accurate depiction of nature, or is it wishful thinking?

It is difficult to justify sweeping generalizations about nature. The poets claimed that "special insights" were available through poetry which justified their visions. Wordsworth called it a "natural negative way"; Keats called it "negative capability." Blake called it a "divine visionary force." Shelley claimed that the poets were "The unacknowledged legislators of history." There were more, but you get the point.

Humboldt loved, memorized, recited poetry and coveted the outcomes the Romantics advertised. But as a scientist, he required a more down-to-earth route to the sublime. He boldly claimed that nature, scientifically studied, was the route to "cosmic vision" and was the source of humanity's sense of self-knowledge. This is the "Nature" that Humboldt "invented", and he was not, as we have seen, without collaborators. Thus was born a research project of encyclopedic scope, and if anyone were to accomplish it, Humboldt was surely the best candidate. (Orchestra swells to loud crescendo!)

In 1797 we find Humboldt in Salzburg, measuring the height of the Alps. From 1799 to 1804 he was in the New World, beginning his trek in New Grenada, South America (today's Venezuela and Ecuador). The tumult of the Napoleonic Wars in Europe made departure advisable and made getting a passport difficult. Finally he was able to get permission from Spain for himself and a colleague, Aimé Bonpland, to travel to "New Spain." The year 1800 was spent trekking through jungles, raft-poling up streams, dealing with dangerous animals, enduring constant plagues of mosquitos, and lugging quite a variety of scientific instruments (both heavy and delicate). It was a true odyssey. **Figure 1** maps his journey.

Fig 1



Fig 2



As a consequence—after his return and compilation of notes—we see that Humboldt’s comprehensive insights were always in play. He was particularly adept at seeing connections others might miss. He watched a number of five-foot-long electric eels attack a small herd of horses as the horses attempted to cross a river. **Figure 2** shows a painting of Humboldt and Bonpland in the jungle. The painting was done well after the trip.

Humboldt’s response to it was simply that he wished the scientific instruments were more accurately presented. Humboldt’s notes describe carefully the incident with the horses and the eels. Not only did he comment on the brutalities of nature, but he also related the event to electrical theory, a developing field in Europe (p. 71—*all in-text page citations refer to Wulf’s book*). He asserted that competition kept populations of various species in balance--six decades ahead of Darwin (p.77). He recorded the event when he and Bonpland crossed the magnetic equator—his own discovery (p.104). And after the voyage, he realized that he and Bonpland had described 3000 new plant species, doubling the then-known number.

Humboldt and Bonpland did not go directly back to Europe, however, as the map shows. They crossed Mexico, stopped at Cuba, all the while collecting and describing. And they headed toward the United States east coast, hoping eventually to meet the already world famous Thomas Jefferson. When they got to Philadelphia, they wrote Jefferson, who already knew of their expedition, knew Humboldt by reputation (it has been claimed that he was at least as well known as Napoleon, from whom Jefferson had just purchased Greater Louisiana). Jefferson replied (p.116) that he couldn’t wait to meet him.

Jefferson had just doubled the size of America and had sent Lewis and Clark to document what he had bought. Humboldt and Bonpland just missed Lewis and Clark, whose odyssey would certainly compare with their own. Jefferson and Humboldt found each other’s company highly agreeable, and they certainly shared a view of nature. Indeed, impossible to anticipate at the time, the landscape paintings of the American West would inspire (and does still inspire) countless artists to depict the towering mountains, vast distances, and Big Sky—to the delight and sometimes disbelief of those “back east.” We particularly recall Thomas Cole, Remington, Russell—but there were countless others, helping to convince the poets that here at least they could find the Sublime they wrote about.

Fig 3



Fig 4



Figure 3, “A Miracle of Nature,” by Thomas Moran (1837-1926) shows a view of the Grand Canyon, a site not yet known to Jefferson but a painting typical of Jefferson’s taste. Note the ethereal quality provided by the fog. **Figure 4**, “July Sunset,” by Frederick Edwin Church (1826-1900) demonstrates another characteristic of American Romantic painting, namely that the human figure, lower left, is hardly obvious, indeed diminutive.

Fig 5



Figure 5, “Shroom Lake,” by Thomas Cole (1801-1848) a member of the Hudson River School, shows a parallel development in eastern American landscape, in the Adirondacks. In June of 1804 Humboldt left Washington for Paris. To his great disgust, France had become a dictatorship under Napoleon. There he met the young Simon Bolivar who, like Napoleon, set out to become the great liberator and eventually became a dictator. In Paris Humboldt began to write his magnum opus, Voyage to the Equinoctial Regions of the New Continent. This work would take him decades to complete—it filled 34 volumes. His volumes, penned in various European capitals as he dodged the Napoleonic wars, created a new genre of nature writing: the magic of scenery stimulating the imagination, healing the loss of what he called “the connective powers of

understanding” (the phrase is from Coleridge). So we are back to the Romantics. Nature as therapy.



And here's another connection: in (today's) Ecuador, Humboldt and Bonpland had had a kind of spiritual experience, a comprehensive synthesis, when they climbed the highest mountain in the world, Mt. Chimborazo, **Figure 6**. Chimborazo was at the time the highest known mountain in the world, Everest's grandeur at that time being unappreciated.

But, by a curious twist of logic, Chimborazo is, by one definition, taller than Everest. Because Chimborazo is equatorial, and because the earth is not a perfect sphere but is flattened, bulging at the equator, Chimborazo is the mountain whose peak is farthest from the center of the earth. Amusing.

Wordsworth and Coleridge had made a similar claim, a comprehensive spiritual synthesis, at the Simplon Pass in the Swiss-Italian Alps. They both wrote about this. As an aside, I too have had a sense of euphoria when climbing in high altitudes. I've always attributed it to the low oxygen supply. Maybe I'm just not spiritual. But for Humboldt, the experience contributed to his "sense of nature as a living organism animated by dynamic forces." (p. 202, and see the Goethe quotation below).

When Humboldt and Bonpland returned to Europe, the "bloom was off the rose" in more ways than one. First, as mentioned the euphoria surrounding Napoleon was turning sour. Beethoven's Third Symphony was originally titled "The Napoleon." Disgusted with what Napoleon had become, Beethoven tore up the dedication and renamed the symphony, "Eroica" (Heroic).

Second, Humboldt would live to see the deaths of many of the Romantic poets and the beginning of the Victorian poets (whom he did not know). The Victorians' view of nature was much more sober. Tennyson, in "In Memoriam" described nature as "red in tooth and claw"-- hardly euphoric.

Fig7

And third, there was Darwin, who claimed he “almost adored” Humboldt, called him the greatest scientific explorer. Darwin’s theory of nature was inspired by Humboldt, as was that of Henry David Thoreau. However Thoreau went to Walden Pond to devote himself to the meticulous study of nature, i.e., he did not have a preconceived idea about what nature “meant.” He returned from the pond a somewhat chastened disciple—less euphoric about nature. Darwin built on Humboldt’s theories of ecology, competition, etc., but he too was less than confident about Humboldt’s comprehensive optimism.

So what happened to the great Humboldt that his name is not more celebrated? First, in one sense, it is or has been widely celebrated. In more than one source I have found the claim that more natural features are named for him than for any other person. For examples, there is the Humboldt Current along the west coast of South America, Humboldt Bay in California, and Humboldt Glacier in Greenland. There are 300 plants and 100 animals named for him. As well there is a mountain, Pico Humboldt, in Venezuela, and other mountains in Australia, Tibet, and New Zealand. There is a “plain”, the Sea of Humboldt, on the moon. And an asteroid. To name a few!

Figure 7 shows Humboldt in his prime.

When he died in 1859 Humboldt was hailed as having been “the world’s greatest living man” (p.319). And again we must ask what has happened that he is not more celebrated? Let us return briefly to Thoreau. In the words of Andrea Wulf, “Humboldt allowed Thoreau to weave together science and the imagination, the particular and the whole, the factual and the wonderful” (p.306). “Allowed” here means “enabled,” not “permitted.”

By analogy, Alexander the Great put together one of the world’s largest empires. But it required an Alexander the Great to run it, and when he died, the empire quickly broke apart. Humboldt’s scope, his synthetic powers, were truly remarkable. After him, the vision for his grand design of a large scientific empire of nature proved too vast and complex for any “successors.” Specialization, especially after Darwin, quickly replaced the expectation of a universal vision. And there is an optimism about nature which, even for Humboldt himself, may not stand up to scrutiny. Humboldt was democratic. He abhorred absolutism and had to keep strict control of his speech during a research year in Russia. He was an abolitionist and carefully avoided the subject of slavery when in the company of Jefferson. Clearly, the human side of nature is not glorious.

In the long run--and I believe this is the answer to his being underappreciated—in the long run, the investigation of nature may not support the lovely claims about unity, beauty, harmony, etc., which typify Humboldt’s thinking. His comprehensive vision was somewhat lost on his successors. The day for encyclopedic thinkers, if indeed it had existed, gave way to an age of specialization. Nature may actually be, as

Humboldt claimed, a unified whole. But it also may be far too complex for any one person to encompass. Furthermore, given the complexity of nature, it is at least premature—vastly premature in my estimation—to conclude about its ultimate character. Nature may or may not uphold some universal optimistic claim, but at the very least, at this point in time, Nature has said, “Not yet.”

Also contributing to Humboldt’s obscurity is the fact that he is ‘not known for a single fact or discovery, but for his “worldview”’ (p.396)—which clearly lives on. It lived, for example, in John Muir, a devotee of Humboldt’s idea of the “breadth of nature.” (p.388). Muir carried Thoreau’s The Maine Woods and Man and Nature by George Perkins Marsh, himself a disciple of Humboldt. And Muir traveled with Teddy Roosevelt, himself a great outdoorsman who is credited with initiating the national parks system. Humboldt’s insight that we can only truly understand nature by using our imagination (p.397) is clearly still with us. While it may not finally unravel the “secrets” of nature, we still seem to find solace in it.

Above, reference is made to Goethe. Here is the quotation referenced:

Wolfgang von Goethe: “Close your eyes, prick your ears, and from the softest sound to the wildest noise, from the simplest tone to the highest harmony, from the most violent, passionate scream to the gentlest words of sweet reason, it is by Nature who speaks, revealing her being, her power, her life, and her relatedness--so that a blind person, to whom the infinitely visible world is denied, can grasp an infinite variety in what can be heard.” (Figure 8: Goethe)



Figures

- 1.Wulf, p.xii. all pagination in the text refers to this source.
- 2.Wulf, After p. 136
- 3.Detroit Institute, p. 33
- 4.Detroit Institute, p.19
- 5.Detroit Institute, p. 17
- 6.Wulf, After p. 136
- 7.Wulf, After p.136
- 8.Internet image

Bibliography

Detroit Institute of Arts and the National Gallery of Art, American Paintings from the Manoogian Collection. Exhibition Publication. Balding and Mansell International Limited, England, 1989.

Wulf, Andrea. The Invention of Nature: Alexander von Humboldt’s New World. Penguin, Random House, New York, 2015

2026 MSSC Picnic by Leslie Ogg

As usual the annual MSSC picnic was held on a very warm summer day! We decided to start the picnic at 10 AM to avoid the heat and we mostly succeeded (nobody fainted! everybody sweated!).

There were 20 members and guests present, and several of them were under the age of 40 and a few more were just a few years older.

We had smoked tri-tip, with rolls and hatch chilies to make sandwiches, caesar salad & potato salad, lots of fruits and vegetables. Some amazing chocolate brownies and delicious peanut butter chocolate chip cookies and mini-cupcakes. This feast was washed down with many bottles of ice cold water.

We had a very successful silent auction with specimens supplied by members. Everyone who wanted to went home with a new (to them) treasure.

I hope we can convince more members to join us next year; several of the guests were studying and /or interested in collecting and there were some stimulating discussions. Thanks to Paolo and Jeff among others for providing identification and information about various minerals in the auction.

All in all I would say a great time was had by all. I would like to thank the members that arrived early and stayed late until everything was packed up and cleaned up.

-your president Leslie



OTHER (FREE) THINGS TO DO...by Ann Meister

The **Watson Lecture Series at Caltech is on hiatus until the Fall semester**. It appears that the first Watson Lecture will be in November. The schedule is being announced in September. I presume the maintenance of Beckman Auditorium is completed. Find past Watson Lectures on [Caltech's YouTube channel](#).

The **UCLA Meteorite Gallery** located in room 3697 of the Geology Building on the UCLA campus is open to the public on weekdays from 9 am to 4. Admission is always free. The monthly lectures seem to have been discontinued but the gallery is well worth exploring. Visit the website and check on events, videos, and other neat things including resources for teachers, Go to <https://meteorites.ucla.edu>

Calendar of Events:

Only S. CA shows are listed here. Other CFMS Club shows can be found at: <http://www.cfmsinc.org/>

2026 Shows

Sept 18-20, 2026 – CFMS Show - Reno, NV
Reno-Sparks Convention Center, 4590 South Virginia

Street, Reno, Nevada 89502
Reno Gem and Mineral Society
Hours: Friday and Saturday 9 AM – 5 PM, Sunday 9 AM – 4 PM

Website: renogms.org

Sept 19-20, 2026 - Arcadia CA

Arcadia Masonic Center, 50 W. Duarte Rd., Arcadia CA 91007

Pasadena Lapidary Society

Hours: Sat. 10 AM - 5 PM, Sun. 10 AM - 4 PM

66th Annual Gem & Mineral Show

Website: pasadenalapidary.org

Sept 19-20, 2026 – Monterey, CA

Monterey Fairgrounds, 2004 Fairgrounds Road, Monterey, CA 93940

Carmel Valley Gem & Mineral Society

Hours: Saturday and Sunday 10 AM – 5 PM

Website: cvgms.rocks

Sept 26, 2026 - Lake Elsinore, CA

32113 Corydon Road, Lake Elsinore, CA 92530

Lake Elsinore Gem and Mineral Society

Hours: 10am-4pm <https://www.facebook.com/groups/530281757337262/events>

Sept 26-27, 2026 - San Luis Obispo, CA

Alex Madonna Expo Center, 120 Madonna Rd, San Luis Obispo, CA 93405

San Luis Obispo Gem and Mineral Club

Hours: 10AM - 5PM

\$5 Admission (Children, 12 and under free).

Free parking

Website: slogem.org/gems-by-the-sea/

Oct 11, 2026 - Fallbrook CA

123 W. Alvarado St., Fallbrook CA 92028

Fallbrook Gem and Mineral Society

Hours: 9am-4pm

Website: fgms.org

Oct 17, 2026 - West Hills, CA

First United Methodist Church, 22700 Sherman Way, West Hills, CA 91307

Woodland Hills Rock Chippers

Hours: Saturday, 10 am - 5 pm

Website: rockchippers.org

Oct 31-Nov 1, 2026 - Orange, CA

Velvet Rose Event Center, 300 S. Flower Street, Orange, CA 92868

American Opal Society

Hours: Sat 10am-6pm; Sun 10am-5pm

Admission \$5 Adults; Students with ID and Children under 15 FREE

FREE Parking

Website: opalsociety.org

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Comes Appreciation*

MSSC Advertisement Policy:

Mineral-related ads are allowable in the MSSC bulletin. Below is the price per month

Business Card	\$5.00
One-third page	\$10.00
One-half page	\$20.00
Full Page	\$35.00

In addition, any advertiser who purchases 12 months of space in advance will receive a discount of 12 months for the price of 10 months. The copy for the ads should be mailed to the editor at bulletin@mineralsocal.org and the payment should be sent to the

MSSC Treasurer 2231 Golden Circle, Newport Beach, CA 92660

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About the Mineralogical Society of Southern California

Organized in 1931, the Mineralogical Society of Southern California, Inc. is the oldest mineralogical society in the western United States. The MSSC is a member of the California Federation of Mineralogical Societies and is dedicated to the dissemination of general knowledge of the mineralogical and related earth sciences through the study of mineral specimens. We are a scientific non-profit organization that actively supports those endeavors through public outreach, field study and related programs. The Bulletin of the Mineralogical Society of Southern California is the official publication of the Mineralogical Society of Southern California, Inc.

The MSSC meetings are held on the second Friday of each month, at 7:30 p.m., MSSC meetings are conducted via ZOOM conferencing until further notice. The annual Installation Banquet occurs in January, and the annual Picnic and Swap Meeting are in August. Check the Society website for details.

The Society also sponsors the annual Pacific Micro mount Symposium held at the Fallbrook Mineral Museum during the last weekend of January.

Annual Membership dues for the MSSC are \$30.00 for an individual membership, \$40.00 for a family membership. Bulletins are sent by email; there is an additional annual fee if you prefer paper bulletins mailed to your address. The Society's contact information:

Mineralogical Society of Southern California

13781 Alderwood Lane, 22-J, Seal Beach, CA 90740

E-mail: treasurer@mineralsocal.org

Website: www.mineralsocal.org **The Mineralogical Society of California, Inc.**

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Glendale, CA 91214

To:



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