

Bulletin of the Mineralogical Society of Southern California

Volume 81 Number 7

July 2010

The 866th Meeting of The Mineralogical Society of Southern California

Pearls: A to Z

By

Francis Lau

Friday, July 9, 2010 at 7:30 p.m.

Geology Department, E-Building, Room 220

Pasadena City College

1570 E. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena

Featuring:

--July program

--Mr. Grundke's Commesso

--AFMS/CFMS 2010 gem show

--ALAA Report: Why I do what I do?

--The Darvaza Well

--Visiting a Turquoise Museum

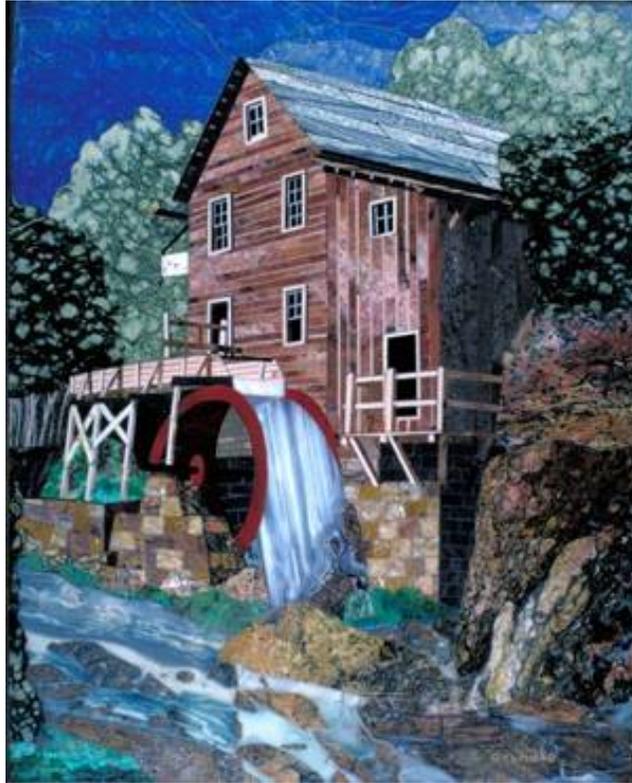
July 9 Program

July's speaker is Mr. Francis Lau who is a GIA graduate gemologist who has been in the jewelry business since 1964. He has taught gemology for 11 years in Torrance and Monterey Park and is the founder of the Monterey Park Gem Society. He currently operates a freshwater pearl farm and a jade cutting and carving factory in China.

His lecture will cover how pearls are formed, how they are cultivated and the finishing process after cultivation. He will describe different kinds of pearls: cultured, mabi, South Sea, freshwater and natural pearls. He will show the different colors of pearls: pink, yellow, white, blue, black and dyed. He will go on to tell what you should look for when buying pearls and how to take care of your pearl jewelry. Finally, he will summarize the structure of the pearl market and its current situation.

June Program Brief

The subject of the June program was agates. Mr. Grundke's presentation included a brief description of many minerals that have the chemical composition of silicon dioxide, followed by a slide show of fine agate slices. Most of the agate photos were by Pat McMahan and Gene Mueller. Mr. Mueller's photos can be seen at www.thegemshop.com and Mr. McMahan's photos can be seen at www.agateswithinclusions.com.



Mr. Grundke is a second generation artist of the art form commesso. Both intarsia and commesso are pictures made with various rocks and minerals. The major difference between the two is the backing. Intarsia employs inlaid technique while commesso is accomplished by cutting and fitting pieces of sheet rock into a picture. Mr. Grundke brought one of the commessi he made to the meeting (see page 4 picture from www.americanmasterofstone.com). The picture took many months of manual labor to carefully cut and fit each piece, not to mention the time spend in looking for the right slab for each piece.

Pictures of Mr. Grundke's commessi can be seen at www.americanmasterofstone.com. He can be reached at cgrundke@dslexreme.com.

From the Editor.....

A big "THANK YOU" to all of you



The Bulletin of Mineralogical Society of Southern California won the second place in California Federation of Mineralogical Societies Bulletin Competition. Thanks to all of you for your emails, and contribution of articles. Without your support for the past three and a half years, I would not be able to get this certificate.

AFMS/CFMS 2010 Gem Show

By Shou-Lin Lee



Walt Wright's petrified wood slices display.

Photo by Shou-Lin Lee.

After attending the American Federation Show in Billings, Montana last year, I was looking forward to the Federation Show in California this year. Late last year the

word was out that the North Orange County Gem and Mineral Society would host the show. After much anticipation, this day finally came. The show was held at the Southern California University of Health Sciences located in Whittier. There were two rooms for vendors, two rooms for displays, several outdoor activities (which I did not investigate) and a large plant sale. Of the two rooms for displays, one was filled with Walt Wright's one hundred or so petrified wood slices, a very impressive display. However, my overall impression of the show is that the show was bigger than the CFMS show last year, but not as impressive as the show in Billings.

Attendance was better than at most other local shows I have been to. I was glad to see several rock clubs members from the San Diego area visiting the show. The plant sale was very impressive. The vendor participations were good. But there was not much participation in display cases, particularly not many mineral collections. I noticed that there were several cases with only one single item on display. Having been a display chair before, I wonder if the single-item cases were a result of some participants back out at the last minute.

There is definitely a difference in the style of displaying among the different regions. At both the Agate Symposium in Wisconsin and the Federation Show in Montana, most of the display cases were packed full of specimen or finished gems. But in this show many cases had only a few pieces on display. Is this a sign that mineral collection is in decline in Southern California, or collectors here are more cautious about showing their precious babies for safety reasons? I hate to think that California has fewer collectors than in the northern states. After all the gem and mineral business seems to be very prosperous in California. Almost every weekend there is some rock and mineral show somewhere in the state not to mention the jewelry mart in downtown Los Angeles that covered several street blocks.

ALAA Report

Why I Do What I Do

(reprint from C.F.M.S. Newsletter, XLVI#6 June 2010)

By Marshall Havner, President Tule Gem & Mineral Society & Dick Pankey

I must confess that five years ago I did not know that American Lands Access Association (ALAA) even existed. I had just retired from a long and mutually beneficial career as an employee of the State of California. I was ready and willing to become one of the willingly ignorant members of society who reaps the profits of accumulations and blindly ignores the sufferings of others. My first resolution was to stop reading newspapers and watching the news on television as they were just too depressing. All that travail the news medias continually focused on was upsetting my peace of mind. After all, I reasoned, it was only right that I should enjoy the comfortable lifestyle I had worked hard to accomplish.

I started looking around my community and talking to friends and acquaintances about events and activities that were fun to do that required little input on my hard earned retirement time. I heard about a local trip to look for jade and decided to go. During the trip I was invited to visit the workshop of a local rock club and I accepted. At the rock workshop I discovered a host of lapidary equipment that I could use to make jewelry out of rock that I had collected. This was what I was looking for as I liked rocks and had already used them to decorate the flower beds around my house. I fondly remembered that as a boy I always had a pocket full of rocks. I joined that local rock club and in no time I was turning plain rock into beautiful polished pieces I used to make jewelry.

After I had been in the Tule Gem & Mineral Society for two months I received a telephone call from the present President Don Vieira informing me that I was going to become an officer. I replied that I had just joined the club and had no experience with the club's management and that I needed time to get informed of club policies and just to think about this proposal. His only response was "don't argue with me" to which I had to reply simply "yes sir." Don Vieira had been one of my High School teachers who I have a great deal of respect for and a man I can not say no to. It was also Don Vieira who at the Tule Gem & Mineral Society November 2009 meeting proposed I be a TGMS Representative for ALAA.

After becoming actively involved in ALAA I realized and became inspired by a host of members who individually were making a huge difference in ALAA's goal of preserving multiple use and access of our public lands for our and future generations. I remember a Math Professor who stated that for every problem there is a minimum of seven solutions. In ALAA it has been my experience that for every difficult situation I have been in I have had a minimum of seven dedicated individuals I can turn to for advice and inspiration. I can only hope to walk in the shadow of these individuals who are making a life's practice of service for others. Therefore, I dedicate all that I do and all that I will accomplish for American Lands Access Association to all the individuals who mean so much to me.

-Marshall

(I first met Marshall last November when I gave a presentation on ALAA and Claims to the Tule G&MS. The society had just joined ALAA and Marshall was to be the society representative liaison. Marshall is what ALAA is looking for as an "involved member" and demonstrates what can be done and how to do it. I hope Marshall's testimonial will serve as an example and inspiration to others to get involved. Dick Pankey, President, ALAA)

-Dick

Editor's note: Mr. Richard Horstmeyer would like to share the following entry about Darvaza Well with others. The pictures were part of a slides show. The story was from the caption of each picture.

The Darvaza Well

(from www.slideshare.net/ngwk/the-darvaza-well-2758643)



In the middle of the Karakoum (Turkmenistan) desert, close to the disappeared village called Darvaza, there is a crater of about one hundred meters of diameter and more than twenty meters of depth, called “the hell’s door”. Inside this well, a fire has been burning for dozens of years, a fire that looks endless. The Darvaza well is not a work of nature, but the result of an unfortunate soviet mining prospect started in the 50’s. In 1971, a drilling provoked the collapse of an underground cavity, so revealing a gaping hole leaking enormous quantities of gas. The geologists decided to torch the well to eliminate such toxic gas. The soviets grossly underestimated the dimensions of the cavity: the gas that should have burned out within a few weeks has actually kept burning without interruption since 1971! It is unknown for how long “the hell’s door” will keep on burning.



Even though the well of Darvaza is located in a region difficult to access, a lot of people gather there to observe this fascinating phenomenon. The intense heat coming from the crater allows approach to the place only for a few minutes because of the unbearable temperature. At night the show is Dantean: the fire burns in all its magnificence, giving the well the look of a volcanic burning crater.

Visiting a Turquoise Museum

By Shou-Lin Lee

If you were at Albuquerque, New Mexico, and had a few more hours than you knew what to do with, what would you do to amuse yourself?

Recently, we visited New Mexico. We flew in to Albuquerque, drove to Santa Fe, and checked out the Palace of the Governor, many art galleries, and the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum. Then we drove to Taos, visited the Governor Brent Museum, Taos' Pueblo Indian Reservation, and the Rio Grande Gorge. On the last day in Albuquerque, we woke up bright and early. We already visited their tourist attractions: Old Town, and the New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science and still had about six hours to kill before our flight home, but didn't know what to do. I opened the Arizona & New Mexico Tour Book from Triple A. There were The Albuquerque Aquarium and The Rio Grande Botanic Garden, the American International Rattlesnake Museum, The Petroglyph National Monument, and the UNM Meteorite Museum. All within manageable distance, but not in the same general area. Then I spotted "The Turquoise Museum." The entry read "...A mine tunnel provides entrance to this museum, which features rare turquoise specimens from around the world. Interactive silversmith and lapidary demonstrations are offered." So Turquoise Museum it was.



The GPS guide in the rental car took us to a strip mall. "This cannot be it. Where is the Museum?" Just when we thought the GPS guide failed us, we saw it. The museum was part of a jewelry store which occupied three store fronts. After we

stepped into the store I saw several glass display cases filled mostly with turquoise jewelry. To the left there is a tunnel like entrance with two waist height swinging doors. I guessed that was the entrance to the museum. As I was wondering where to purchase tickets, a guy behind the glass counter asked if he could help us. After we paid for the tickets, he opened the swinging doors and ushered us into the tunnel. True to the advertisement, the tunnel had some turquoise embedded in the wall. The actual museum had four rooms. Two of the rooms had floor-to-ceiling glass cases filled with turquoise from different mines in Arizona, Nevada, and New Mexico. Each sample had literature explaining the key identifier of each mine. I was amazed at the collector's ability to distinguish the turquoise from different mines and wished to record all that, but was frustrated by the "no photos allowed" signs everywhere. I normally take pictures to help me to remember later. Fortunately, the store also had on sale a book called "Turquoise Unearthed: An illustrated Guide," written by the store/museum owner by Joe Dan Lowry and Joe P. Lowry. The book repeated all the literature in the museum with some pictures of the specimen, and more.



2010 Calendar of Events

July 10-11, Culver City, Culver City Rock and Mineral Club Veterans Memorial Auditorium and Rotunda 4117 Culver Blvd Hours: Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5

August 6-8, Nipomo, Orcutt Mineral Society St. Joseph's Church, 298 S. Thompson Ave., Hours: 9-5 daily,

August 7-8, San Francisco, San Francisco Gem & Mineral Society San Francisco County Fair Building (Hall of Flower) Ninth Ave. at Lincoln Way Hours: Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5 Website: www.sfgms.org

