

Bulletin of the Mineralogical Society of Southern California

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The 863rd Meeting of The Mineralogical Society of Southern California

Why Take a Mineralogy Class

By

Bruce Carter

Friday, March 12, 2010 at 7:30 p.m.

Geology Department, E-Building, Room 220

Pasadena City College

1570 E. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena

Featuring:

- March program
- Pictures seen in February Program
- Visiting Quartzsite in January
- The Boss Mine past and present

March 12 Program

Why Take a Mineralogy Class

By Bruce Carter

At the first meeting of a class, students often are full of questions such as: "Why do I have to take this class?" "What good is it?" "Is it hard?" "I want a class that is relevant-not to just study minerals people have known all about for hundreds of years." "This class probably doesn't have anything to do with the real world." "I want to get involved in research on cutting-edge science-so why do I have to take an arcane course like mineralogy?"

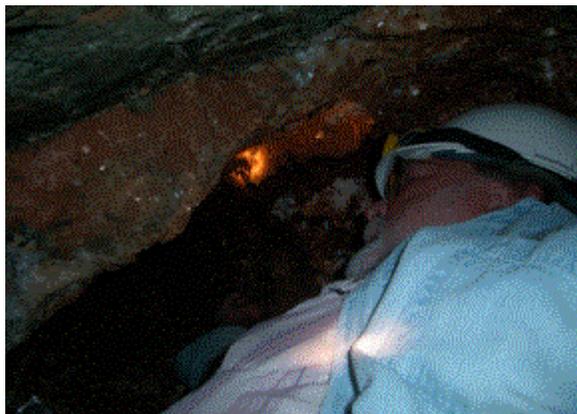
Bruce Carter taught geology at PCC for 35 years as well as serving as dean of Natural Sciences for almost 20 years. His all-time favorite course was Introduction to Mineralogy and Crystallography, which he taught for 12-15 years. On March 12, he will give the presentation he might make at the first class meeting if he were teaching the course this spring. Rather than using books (as in a class) or PowerPoint slides (like most of our speakers) he will use the February 13, 2010 issue of Science News for his presentation. If you would like, please bring a copy to the meeting-it is still on the newsstands.

**Submission
deadline**

Due to editor by the 20th of
the month, unless the 20th is
on the weekend, then the 18th
is the due day. Email to
shoulin.lee@yahoo.com

The 45th Pacific Micro-Mount Conference and field trip was held on January 29 through 31. No report was submitted as of the publication of this bulletin.

Pictures Seen in February Program



Above: newly discovered (two years ago) tourmaline pocket in the Himalaya mine located in a very cramped place. Left: a very nice multi-colored tourmaline specimen from the pocket. Below: a large red apatite of museum quality was also recovered from the pocket.



Mr. King also invited MSSC members to participate in the tailgate at Vista. To get the application please contact him at (619) 991-2226.

Visiting Quartzsite in January

By Shou-Lin Lee

Of all the years I have gone to Quartzsite, I had never visited the famous Quartzsite Improvement Association Annual Pow Wow Gem and Mineral Show (Pow Wow) because I preferred to visit Quartzsite as early as possible. The early bird catches the worms. The first customer gets to pick the best stone. The shows that open early are the Desert Gardens Annual International Gem, Mineral and Jewelry Show and the Tyson Wells Rock and Gem Show. So these were the two shows that I would always visit when I said that I went to Quartzsite. This year I decided to attend the annual Editor's Get-Together sponsored by S.C.R.I.B.E. The meeting was held on the weekend after the Martin Luther King holiday, way after the Tyson Wells Show ended. Fortunately, I found that there was the Pow Wow show held on the same weekend.

A little digression here for those who do not know the organization called S.C.R.I.B.E. S.C.R.I.B.E., which stands for Special Congress of Involved Bulletin Editors is a society for past, present and future bulletin editors of amateur gem, mineral, and earth science societies. An MSSC member first told me about the organization sometime after I assumed the responsibility of MSSC Bulletin editor. I checked their website and was not sure to commit myself to another society. Between my more than fulltime job, and trying to fill 12 pages of bulletin every month, my favorite pastime, cutting stones, had already been shrunk to the minimum. Then last year at Billings, Montana, while attending the AFMS Editor's Breakfast, I met the secretary of S.C.R.I.B.E. and decided maybe joining S.C.R.I.B.E. can help my editing work rather than just be another responsibility to take up more of my time.

The meeting proved to be helpful. I got answers to some questions that had been nagging me for a long time. During the discussion of ways to promote S.C.R.I.B.E., someone mentioned that Quartzsite had a very large and active rock and mineral club. The club held field trips every week and had several buildings as workshops, including several faceting machines. This was very interesting considering how small the population in Quartzsite was.

The day before after we arrived in Quartzsite, we drove around looking for the Pow Wow show without success. So before leaving the meeting, I remembered to ask for directions. The directions were "turn left on Main Street, pass the big RV show. It should be on your right side. If you reached Sweet Darling, you went too far." Sounded simple enough, but we drove up and down Main Street, passing the RV show, reaching Sweet Darling then turned back three times, but just could not find the Pow Wow show. After several phone calls, we finally found the dirt road leading to the Pow Wow Show. There were no signs of any kind on the road.

Parking was brutal. Supposedly there was a parking lot with shuttle buses to take people to and from the show, but we did not find any signs or directions. After a frustrating half hour of trying to find the location of the show, we were unwilling to risk getting lost on the road again and decided to pay five dollars to park at a private parking lot nearby. I could not believe it. Pay for parking in Quartzsite!

The AFMS/CFMS 2010 Gem Show will be held on June 18 through 20 at 16200 E. Amber Valley Rd., Whittier. For those interested in participating, the Competitive Entry Form and Certification for Exhibitors are included as a center insert.

The show was huge. And true to its name, it did have many rock and gem dealers, unlike some other shows that mixed in crafts, and used items. I did not see many familiar faces or business signs. This was a good sign. It meant that I might find some new stuff. But first things first. It was lunch time. Here and there were catering trucks emitting enticing smells. The smells were different, but they all sent out the same message: "Eat me. Eat me." We were reminded that we had only some pastry and coffee from the complimentary continental breakfast offered by the motel. Before we could decide what to eat, we heard some loudspeaker announcing something at the cafeteria. Cafeteria? There was a cafeteria in this place? We decided to give it a try.

The line was long but moved fairly fast. Before the main course section there was desert section. Several kinds of pie and cheese cakes lined the glass shelves, an efficient way to sell more food. Before reaching the main course some people already filled up their trays with sweet. For seven dollars, we had the choice of chicken or boneless pork rib, along with mashed potatoes, salad and bread. They were generous with the meat. We both thought the price was well worth it.

Not far from the cafeteria, we saw a group of people demonstrating flint knapping, bead stringing, stone cutting, etc. A big banner read: "Quartzsite Roadrunner Gem and Mineral Club." So the club had a presence in the Pow Wow show, too. I asked one of the members if they had the show right there. The member was very helpful. She led me to the same building where cafeteria was, but through a different door. Inside there were several rows of display cases and some dealers selling mostly beads and finished jewelry. The Roadrunner Club had a very impressive case of knives. All had flint knapped blades (see picture on page 8). Some of the display cases were advertisements for the dealers outside.

The day before, at the Desert Garden show, I found some Idaho garnets from a dealer who was from Washington State. He told me that he was a lumber jack by trade, only to turn rock dealer recently because he was out of work for two years. He showed me a star garnet cabochon he cut and explained to me how he located the star. He seemed hopeful that I knew Idaho garnets. "People don't know Idaho garnets. I have been here for two weeks and you are the first one to ask about the garnets," he commented several times during our conversation. He showed me a cabochon that he cut from the lot. The cab measured more than one inch in diameter, with only a few cracks, but no visible star. Garnet stars required strong lighting and it was a cloudy day. He explained that under the sunlight there was a star in the center, because he followed a seasoned lapidary's advice by positioning the point of the crystal in the center. His method of locating the star was different from another lapidary, who once told me that the star was located in the center of a flat face of the crystal. Star or no star, I had already been sold by the fact that his garnets were large and were from Idaho. Just the kind I had been looking for. If money had been no object, I would have offered to buy the whole lot. But it was the first day at Quartzsite for me, so I walked away with only a few garnet crystals. Still, I felt mission accomplished.

Finding the garnets the previous day somehow curbed my desire to spend money. As we were strolling from dealer to dealer, I become more critical about what I was willing to part with my money for. Kind of like if one is not hungry, one tends not to buy every food in sight in the supermarket. However, the flood gate of self control was broken when I saw several buckets with the sign which said "Bubble Opal from Utah." I could not believe my luck! This dealer was selling the bacon opal/satin sheen opal/hyalite in preformed cabochon form with the price that I paid for my rough.

"Are these opal from.." "Milford Utah," the dealer answered, before I finished the question. I started picking through the buckets. I asked how he got the opals. He told me that he had owned the mine for twelve years. Although he no longer owned the mine, he had dug up enough stuff. If I was interested, he had more at home. According to him, the area that produced the opal was very small. During the time he owned the mine, some geologists from the University of Utah had visited the mine and did some studies. Their studies concluded that the opal was formed hydrothermally. He said that the correct name of the material was opalized silica sinter, because "sinter" was the **last name** of the person who first found it. I thought "sinter" was a verb not a noun.

Finding the Idaho garnets and the opals from Milford Utah, attending the S.C.R.I.B.E. annual meeting and seeing Redlands covered in snow, all in one single trip. What a trip!

Congratulations to Ahni Armstrong

On December 7, Ms. Armstrong married a history professor. Ms. Armstrong is now Mrs. Dodge.

Editor's note: MSSC member Richard Stamborg found the article below in the Ghost Town News about the Boss Mine in Nevada. He would like to share it with other members.

Lost – A Platinum Mine

(Reprint from Ghost Town News, Volume 3, Number 14 December, 1943)

By Will Strong

One day, shortly before the beginning of the first World War, a smelter chemist noted a peculiar reaction in a shipment of copper ore he was assaying. On further tests this chemist discovered that this ore was rich in platinum.

Checking on the shipment was an easy matter and it was found that the ore came from the Boss mine in Southern Nevada, from a locality known as The Yellow Pine Mining District, the hub of which was the camp and post office of Good Springs.

The Boss mine had been discovered by Joseph Yount, a Nevada pioneer, in 1882 and worked for copper with more or less financial return depending on price of copper, up until this time.

The owners of the Boss were notified and told that the grayish yellow material, in their copper shipment, was high grade platinum ore worth from 70 to 90 dollars an ounce when refined.

Very soon the mine dump was worked over and thousands of dollars worth of platinum recovered. A special "chlorination" mill for the treatment of the ore was built and more miners were added to the pay roll for systematic working of this wonder mine. Some idea of its richness can be estimated when a single carload of ore netted 135 thousand dollars.

It should be explained that nearly all platinum discoveries have occurred in placer mines in association with gold bearing deposits. So this occurrence of platinum in a lode

or "dolomite limestone bed" was something new to the miners of the Boss. "I been inhaling' dust from that stuff for two years," said one old timer. "I'll bet my lungs are platinum lined."

The story of this strike soon spread and a platinum rush began. All the ground in a mile radius of the Boss was staked out but no new mines were discovered. Two or three nearby prospects claimed that their assays showed a trace of platinum. If so, trace was the right word for no strike was ever reported.

The Boss was owned by The Boss Gold Mining Company, a stock corporation, most of which stock was owned by a few individuals. However, a few shares were owned by merchants and others who had taken those shares in part payment for goods or services in the lean days, the B. P. or before platinum period.

One of these stockholders proved to be a lady who had worked for some time at the Boss as a cook. Ads were placed in various papers and the lady was finally located in Los Angeles. Was she surprised to learn that the stock she had taken in part payment of wages was no worth its weight in platinum. There had been sickness in her family and the tidy sum she received was very welcome.

With the systematic working of the mine came the problem of development. The mine was located on the side of a hill that rose abruptly from the floor of the desert canyon. A tunnel was run from a point slightly above this floor with the object of cutting under the ore body, provided it went down. Cross cuts were made from this tunnel but no ore was found.

Likewise, exploration work, in the form of tunnels and raises, from the mine itself proved disappointing. No ore other than the huge original pocket was discovered. Geologists are of the opinion that the Boss was the remains of a huge deposit that, through the centuries, had yielded to the natural process of erosion and that buried somewhere in the desert canyon floor there may be rich deposits of platinum.

Today the Boss is a ghost mine. The platinum, if any remains, is a desert secret and the desert guards its secrets well.



The Boss Mine Today

By Shou-Lin Lee

A quick search on the Internet found that it seems that there has been renewed interested in the area where the Boss Mine was located. There were several news releases dated 2003, 2008 and 2010 mentioning the Boss Mine. All the news releases were about a Canadian company, Boxxer Gold Corp. conducting some exploration projects on the mineral contents of the Boss Mine and the Oro Amigo mine. One of the articles entitled "Boss sampling returns 1.15% copper, 1.09 g/t gold, 1.37 g/t PGE and 13.72 g/t silver over 100.0 m interval." Apparently, the percentage of the minerals were high enough, because the article stated "Boxxer Gold Corp, was very pleased to announce the result."

Another entry about the Boss mine in www.gbrwv.org was less favorable. The caption for a picture of the Boss Mine read: "the pit lake at the abandoned Boss mine in Esmeralda County has high concentrations of heavy metals and other contaminants that exceed all of Nevada's water quality criteria and standards." I was unable to open the photo.

2010 Calendar of Events

February 26 - March 7 2010, Imperial, CA Imperial Valley Gem & Mineral Society California Midwinter Fair & Fiesta G&M Bld Hours: 2/26-2/28 & 3/6-37 noon-10p.m.; 3/1-3/5 4p.m.-10p.m.

March 5-6-7 2010, Newark, CA Mineral and Gem Society of Castro Valley Newark Pavilion 6430 Thorton Avenue, Newark, CA 94560 Hours: Fri & Sat. 10-6; Sun. 10-5

March 6-7 2010, Arcadia, CA Monrovia Rockhounds, Inc. Los Angles Co. Arboretum & Botanic Gardens 301 Baldwin Ave. Hours: Sat. & Sun. 9-4:30

March 6-7 2010, Ventura, CA ventura Gem & Mineral Society Seaside Park, Ventura Co. Fairgrounds 10 W. harbor Blvd. Hours: Sat. 10-5; Sun. 10-4

March 12, 13-14 2010, Victorville, CA Victorville Valley Gem & Mineral Society Stoddard Well Tailgate (Stodrard Wells) Bell Mountain/Stoddard Well exit from I-15 Hours: 8-5 daily

March 13-14 2010, San Marino, CA Pasadena Lapidary Society San Marino Masonic Center 3130 Huntington Drive Hours: Sat. 10-6; Sun. 10-5

March 13-14 2010, Spreckels, CA Salinas Valley Rock & Gem Club Veteran's Memorial Hall 5th & Liano Streets Hours: 10-5 daily

March 13-14 2010, Turlock, CA Mother Load Mineral Society Stanislaus Co. Fairgrounds 900 N Broadway Hours: Sat. 10-6 Sun. 10-5

March 19-21 2010, San Bernardino, CA Orange Belt Mineralogical Society Western Regional Little League Ball Park 6707 Little League Drive Hours: 9 a.m. - Dusk daily

March 20-21 2010, Escondido, CA Palomar Gem & Mineral Club Army National Guard Armory 304 Park Avenue, Escondido, CA 92025 Hours: Sat. 9-5 Sun. 9-4

March 20-21 2010, Fallbrook, CA Fallbrook Gem & Mineral Society Fallbrook Gem & Mineral Society Meeting Hall 123 W. Alvarado Street Hours: Sat. Symposium 9-3 Sun. Field Trip 9 a.m.

March 20-21 2010, Vallejo, CA Vallejo Gem & Mineral Society vallejo elks Lodge 2850 Redwood Parkway Hours: 10 - 5 daily

March 27-28 2010, Angels Camp, CA Calaveras Gem & Mineral Society Calaveras Co. Fairgrounds (Frog Town USA) Hwy 49 in Angels Camp Hours: Sat. 10 - Sun. 10-4

March 27-28 2010, Lemoore, CA Lemoore Gem & Mineral Club Lemoore Trinity Hall 470 Champion Street, Lemoore CA Hours: 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

March 27-28 2010, Roseville, CA Roseville Rock Rollers Roseville (Placer Co.) Fairgrounds 800 All American City Blvd. Hours: Sat. 10-5 Sun. 10-4

March 27-28 2010, Torrance, CA South Bay Lapidary & Mineral Society Torrance Recreational Center 3341 Torrance Blvd. Hours: Sat. 10-5 Sun. 10-4

March 27-28 2010, Vista, CA San Diego County Council Antique Gas & Steam Engine Museum 2040 N. Santa Fe Avenue Hours: 9-5 daily

June 18, 19, & 20 2010, Whittier, CA Combined AFMS/CFMS Show, Hidden Treasures Southern California University of Health Sciences 16200 E. Amber Valley Dr. Hosted by the North Orange Co. Gem & Mineral Society Cost: Adult daily admission - \$6 Three day admission - \$15 *Juniors 14 and under are free when accompanied by an adult.*