

Bulletin of the Mineralogical Society of Southern California

Volume 76 Number 3

March 2006

The 817th Meeting of The Mineralogical Society of Southern California

**"Two Years of Science Results
from the Robotic Exploration of Mars"**

by Dr. Robert Anderson

Friday, March 10, 2006, at 7:30 p.m.

**Geology Department, E-Building, Room 220
Pasadena City College
1570 E. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena**

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March Talk Explores Mars

On Friday, March 11, 2006, Dr. Robert Anderson of JPL will present "Two Years of Science Results from the Robotic Exploration of Mars" at 7:30 p.m. The Mars Exploration Rover Spirit landed successfully in Gusev Crater on January 4, 2004 (UTC), followed three weeks later with the successful landing in Meridiani Planum of its twin, Opportunity. Having survived long passed their design lifetime (over 700 days of operation for each rover), at the present time, both rovers are in excellent

health and all the instruments are working properly as we head into the second winter on Mars. The talk will feature the following sites:

Gusev Crater: The landing site at Gusev Crater lies on a densely populated rock-strewn plain. Since the initial landing, Spirit has traveled over 6 km up the Columbia Hills and is presently heading up to the top of McCool Hill.

Meridiani Planum: The Opportunity landing site lies inside a 20 m diameter impact crater. The lander came to rest near an exposed layer (roughly 12 m long; 0.5 m high) of bedrock in the crater wall. Opportunity has begun its long journey to a new, larger crater called Victoria, approximately 3 km south of its present position.

Bob Anderson received a Master of Science from Old Dominion University in geology with emphasis on structural geology and mapping tectonic features surrounding the Tharsis region of Mars. In 1995, he received a Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Pittsburgh in geology with emphasis on visible and near-infrared remote sensing. His current science research is centered on unraveling the geologic history of Mars with emphasis on understanding the tectonic, structural, and paleohydrologic evolution of the Tharsis region.

He is a Research Scientist at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory and is currently employed as the Investigation scientist for the Mars Exploration Rovers and the Mars Science Laboratory 2009.

Boron Field Trip

by Walter Margerum

The U.S. Borax field trip is scheduled for March 25, 2006. We will meet at the Borax Visitor Center at 9:00 AM. All participants will be notified either by e-mail or by phone.

As described last month, hard hats, safety glasses, sturdy boots, and gloves are the minimum personal protective equipment (PPE) required in the pit. No shorts allowed, long pants only! This goes for both men and women! All the above are the responsibility of the participant. If you do not have a hard hat, gloves, or safety glasses please contact me, so arrangements can be made.

The US Borax front gate is 2 miles north of Hwy 58 at the end of Borax Road. The Borax Road-Highway 58 junction is 30 mi. east of Mojave (Hwy 14) and 8 mi. west of Kramer Junction (Hwy 395). If you do not arrive within 15 minutes of 9:00 you will be left behind.

In addition to the standard liability waiver form, US Borax has a safety form. Both forms will be filled out and signed by each participant. Safety is a major concern of both MSSC and US Borax.

This year we will concentrate on collecting zeolites from the basalt layer.

Again I want to thank US Borax Co. for this opportunity. I especially want to thank Joe Siefke for organizing the trip.



Borax Visitor Center. Photo by Walt Margerum.

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Minutes of the February 17, 2006 Meeting

The 816th meeting of the MSSC was called to order at 7:40 p.m. on Friday, February 17, 2006, by President Ilia Lyles. Jim Kusley introduced the speaker, Dr. Bruce Carter, who shared thoughts about the state of science education in the USA, and tied this to the history of the geology department at Pasadena City College. This included a DVD presentation with photos of many past PCC geology field trips. He also discussed the importance of getting young kids interested in science with mineral collecting and other hands on activities. Joe Siefke added to the program by describing how he had taken a geology class at PCC that ignited an interest in minerals and led to a 35-year career in mining geology. He also added that there is a shortage of mining geologists at the present time.

Walt Margerum announced that there was still room for more participants on the March 25 field trip to Boron. He also spoke about the proposed merger between the Southern California Micro-Mounters and the MSSC, reporting that the boards of both groups and the general membership of SCMM had all voted for the merger. MSSC members will have the opportunity to vote at the March meeting or via a ballot in the March Bulletin [see page 13]. The MSSC board recommends voting for the merger.

Several members shared minerals they had purchased in Tucson including Shou-Lin Lee, Ken Raabe, and . Bob Griffis won the door prize. The meeting was

adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted for the Secretary by Janet Gordon.

Visiting Russian Mineralogists Welcomed

Monday, February 13, 2006

To My Fellow Mineral Enthusiasts,

I wanted to share some thoughts with all of you about an extraordinary few days I had with Igor Pekov, Ph.D., and Anna Turchkova, our guests from Russia. I'll begin by saying that my time with them, for now, is over, but saying good-bye to them this evening when they left my house was much like saying good-bye to a much loved family member or friend after one of those wonderful moments in time that leaves all involved feeling the warmth and fulfillment of meaningful connection, mutual respect and admiration and love.

At the beckoning of John Watson, Janet Gordon and I thought it would be a terrific idea to support Igor and Anna's visit to the United States. At first, I wasn't really sure why I wanted to contribute. I just knew I did. The invitation came from John Watson whose enthusiasm and information about his dear friends, Igor and Anna, made a very persuasive invitation. I forwarded the email I received from John to Janet Gordon, and Janet also responded with enthusiasm to the opportunity to welcome Igor and Anna to our part of Southern California.

By the time we got involved in the planning for their visit here, many others had also agreed to support the effort, beginning with John and Claudia Watson and members of the Fallbrook Gem & Mineral Society. Janet printed information in the MSSC bulletin, inviting others to have a chance to meet and interact with Igor and Anna. Igor is one of the most well known and becoming one of the most respected mineralogists in Russia.

Many parts of their visit to the United States were planned or in process by the time Janet and I got involved. Our opportunity with them extended from Saturday morning, February 11 in Tucson and draws to a close when they leave the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County tomorrow, February 14.

I drove Igor and Anna from Tucson to Pasadena and had the pleasure of their company for a very long trip home, and interestingly enough, not one of us was exhausted from the long journey, we were all enlivened by it. They wanted to stop frequently to take photos - of a volcanic neck very close to Interstate 10, an ocotillo in brilliant red flower, opuntia in full bloom, wildflowers and scenic vistas. At each stop, their enthusiasm and appreciation for what they saw was evident in their wide smiles and expressions of delight.

I found that not only moving and contagious, but impressive, as they were familiar

with the names of most plants, trees, shrubs, cacti and succulents we saw along the way. I also learned from them which parts of the deserts of our southwest were familiar to them because of their similarities to deserts of southern Russia and Asia.

Over the years of developing friendships with people who share my love of minerals and geology, I've found that many people who love minerals and geology also have a passion for other earth sciences, and Igor and Anna were just as enthusiastic and curious about weather patterns, seismic activity, cacti, succulents, native plants, trees, as they are about mineralogy and geology. Many of us also share an interest in history and here again, Igor and Anna do, as is evidenced by Igor's book, "Lovozero Massif, History, Pegmatites, Minerals", and by the discussions we had on our drive to Pasadena.

We finished the day on Saturday by enjoying a wonderful visit and dinner with George Rossman. Igor and Anna love fish, but getting fresh fish is nearly impossible in Moscow and based on what they said, frozen fish there can be hazardous to your health.

On Sunday, Igor and Anna walked the short distance to Caltech to spend the morning with George in his lab and office. Next, they found their way to the Huntington Gardens and Library, then found a Japanese restaurant for another great dining experience.

Monday morning, they were picked up by Dr. Bruce Carter and Dr. Janet Gordon for a visit to the San Andreas Fault and the anorthosite body in the San Gabriel Mountains. They also saw beautiful scenery, both mountain and desert, and again I'm told, their enjoyment and appreciation was evident on their faces. The day for them finished with a potluck here, with shared stories, with many who came here for the evening having a chance to review Igor's books and marvel at them. Igor and Anna left here tonight with a piece of the San Andreas fault, generously contributed by Bruce Carter to an enthusiastic and appreciative Igor Pekov. That piece of the San Andreas fault will be added to the teaching materials at Moscow University.

I would like to thank the following people associated with MSSC who shared generously - their enthusiasm, food, friendship, time, effort, funding, or good wishes, all of whom contributed in one way or another, and made it possible for me to make new friends:

- Janet and Paul Gordon
- John and Claudia Watson
- George Rossman
- Casey and Jane Jones
- Bob and Sarah Griffis
- Gus Meister
- Ann Meister
- Jim Kusely
- Bruce Carter and Kathy Mufitch
- Vicky Bruce

- James Imai
- Bill Besse
- Ron and Peg Pellar
- Bob Housley
- Steve Knox
- Al and Betty Ordway

Others were also willing to help as hosts but were constrained by commitments at the Tucson show.

Their day tomorrow will start with a visit to the La Brea Tar Pits, the George C. Page Museum, with Janet Gordon, and then to the Natural History Museum to be hosted by Tony Kampf, Dorothy Ettensohn and Jean Brandt where Igor and Anna will finish their time in our part of the world, at least for now, before they head to Fallbrook with John Watson to continue their trip in the United States

Many thanks to John Watson for extending the invitation to meet Igor and Anna and to Janet Gordon who is always willing to give generously of her time and resources; to George Rossman who is also always willing to give generously of his time and knowledge; to those among you who contributed money, or food for the great feast we shared tonight and for those not able to be with us but who expressed your best wishes.

To my new friends, Igor and Anna, thank you for sharing your youthful, wide-eyed enthusiasm for each experience, small and large over the last few days, for sharing your plentiful knowledge and for your kindness and sincerity. I look forward to seeing you again soon.

Carolyn Seitz



Anna Turchkova (center front) and Igor Pekov (far right) with some of their new friends in the MSSC. Paul Gordon photo.

Tucson Tidbits

Anyone who has been to the Tucson show knows that there is so much to see that

it can be overwhelming. As always the hotel shows had plenty of minerals to purchase or covet, but the main show in the convention center presented by the Tucson Gem and Mineral Society has more to offer the serious mineral collector with talks and extraordinary displays from private collections and museums. The "Minerals of Canada" theme was supported by excellent talks, and classic and new Canadian minerals were present both in special displays and dealers' stocks from serandite from Mt. St. Hilaire to diamonds from Lac de Gras.

Bill and Elizabeth Moller, who celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary at the show, displayed the rare phosphate and other minerals they had collected in the Yukon several years previously. Canadian museums brought their best to wow their neighbors to the south, and prominent private collectors presented their best Canadian pieces.



Diamond (about 4 carats) in kimberlite core sample from Lac de Gras, Canada, as displayed at TGMS show. Paul Gordon photo.



Acnathite and Proustite from Kelly mine, Cobalt, Ontario, displayed by the Royal Ontario Museum at the TGMS show. Paul Gordon photo.



Self-collected minerals from Yukon Territory displayed at Tucson by Bill and Elizabeth Moller included ludlamite, wardite, augelite, apatite, whiteite, and lazulite. Paul Gordon photo.



Serandite, analcime, manganoneptunite, and aegirine from Mt. St. Hilaire, Canada, on sale at Tucson by A. MartandMineraux. Paul Gordon photo.

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Final Dues Notice

If you have not paid your dues for 2006 they this will be your last Bulletin. Dues rates are listed on the front inside cover.

You may send your dues to:

Mineralogical Society of Southern California
 P.O. Box 41027
 Pasadena, Ca.. 91114-8027

MSSC-SCMM Merger

As reported in the February Bulletin, the Boards of Director of the Mineralogical Society of Southern California (MSSC) and the Southern California Micro-Mineralogists (SCMM) voted to merge the SCMM into the MSSC. At the SCMM meeting on January 28, 2006 the membership of the SCMM agreed to that merger. The MSSC now needs to vote on the merger. The voting will be consummated at our March meeting. Family memberships have two votes. Enter the number of votes for / against in the appropriate space.

The boards of directors of both societies, as well as the membership of the SCMM recommend a positive vote.

Merger Ballot

I agree ____ Disagree ____ with the merger of the SCMM into the MSSC*.

Member's name _____

This Ballot can be sent to:

Mineralogical Society of Southern California

P.O. Box 41027
Pasadena, Ca.. 91114-8027

e-mailed to mssc@mindspring.com

or voted at the March meeting.

2006 Calendar of Events

Mar. 4-5, Arcadia, Monrovia Rockhounds, Inc., Los Angeles County Arboretum and Botanical Garden, 301 North Baldwin Ave., Hours: Sat. & Sun. 9-4:30, Janie Duncan 626-358-8157 or Jo Anna Ritchey j.ritchey@verizon.net, www.moroks.com.

Mar. 4-5, Ventura, Ventura Gem & Mineral Society, Seaside Park, Ventura County Fairgrounds, Hours: Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-4, Jim and Nancy Brace-Thompson (805) 659-3577, www.vgms.org.

Mar. 11-12, Salinas, Salinas Valley Rock & Gem Club Annual Show, Spreckels Veterans Memorial Bldg., 5th and Llano Street, Hours: 10-5 both days. Jim Bassett (831) 758-5830.

Mar. 11-12, San Marino, Pasadena Lapidary Society, San Marino Masonic Center, 3130 Huntington Dr., Hours: Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5, (626) 355-6964 or (626) 914-5030, Todd Neikirk (323) 256-4992.

Mar. 18-19, Bakersfield, Southern San Joaquin Lapidary Society, Kern County Fairgrounds, South P Street & Bell Terrace gates 28,29, &30, Hours: 9-5 both days, Lew Lynne Helfrich (661) 872-8230, lewsrocks@netzero.net.

Mar. 25-26, Roseville, Roseville Rock Rollrs, Placer County Fairgrounds, 800 All America City Blvd., Hours: Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-4, Terry Yoschak (916) 630-1000, rockrollers@hotmail.com, www.rockrollers.com.

April 15-16, Mariposa, Mariposa Gem & Minerals Society, Mariposa County Fairgrounds, Peggy Ronning (209) 742-7625, mineralmuseum@sti.net.

April 1-2, San Jose, Santa Clara Valley Gem & Mineral Society, Santa Clara County Fairgrounds, 344 Tully Road, Hours: 10-5 both days. Marc Mullaney (408) 971-6651.

April 21-22, Desert Symposium, Theme: Dinosaur Track Ways, Desert Studies Center, Zzyzx, California. Contact William Presch,, 714-278 2215 or wpresch@fullerton.edu.

April 22-23, Lancaster, Antelope Valley Gem & Mineral Club, Antelope Valley Fairgrounds, 2551 West Avenue H, Hours: 9-5 both days. Pamela Birge (661) 264-3502, birgep@att.net, www.geocities.com/av_gem.

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Contact: Bill Besse (wbesse@altrionet.com, 626.359.4488) or Walt Margerum (wmargerum@earthlink.net, 310.324.1976).



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