

Bulletin of the Mineralogical Society of Southern California



Volume 77 Number 12
December 2007

The 838th Meeting of The Mineralogical Society
of Southern California

Namibian Mineral Adventures by **Dr. Tony Kampf**

Friday, December 14, 2007, at 7:30 p.m.

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

Featuring:

- Namibian mineral adventures
- Gold and silver mining at Joshua Tree National Park
- Passing of two members
- Herkimer "Diamond" mine
- Field trip to Cascade Canyon

Namibian Mineral Adventures

By Janet Gordon

Tony Kampf will be the speaker for the December 14, 2007, MSSC meeting. His topic is: *"Namibia: Wonderland of Rugged Scenery, Exotic Animals and -- Oh Yes -- Minerals."* The meeting will be held, as usual, at 7:30 p.m. in Room E220 in the Geology Department (E-Building) of Pasadena City College. Tony just returned from three weeks in Namibia (and a bit of South Africa). During the first two weeks, he led a museum tour to the mineral deposits in the north, including Erongo, Brandburg, Uis, Kleine Spitzkoppe, Okorusu and Tsumeb. He spent the final week visiting the diamond mines in the south. His presentation will be a mix of scenery, animals, geology and minerals.

Dr. Anthony R. Kampf is the Curator of Mineral Sciences at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County where he has worked for nearly 30 years. His education includes a B.S. in chemistry and M.S. in mineralogy and crystallography from the University of Illinois, Chicago, and a Ph.D. in mineralogy and crystallography from University of Chicago. He is affiliated with numerous professional organizations and has made substantial contributions to the Mineralogical Record and Friends of Mineralogy. He received the AFMS award for "Distinguished Service in the Earth Sciences," is a Fellow of the Mineralogical Society of America, and in 2001 the barium silicate carbonate mineral, Kampfite, was named in his honor. He has more than 140 scientific publications to his credit.

Minutes of the November 16, 2007 Meeting

The 836th meeting of the Mineralogical Society of Southern California was held on Friday, November 16, 2007, at Pasadena City College. President Ilia Lyles brought the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Vice President Janet Gordon then introduced the speaker of the evening, Dr. D. Trent, who gave a presentation entitled: "Mines of Joshua Tree National Park."

Dr. Trent is a geologist with degrees from both the University of Southern California and the University of Arizona. He has worked as an oil company geologist and a college professor, is the author of a college-level textbook, and has published articles on mines and mine remediation in California.

Dr. Trent stated that there were 238 “mines” (mostly prospects) and over 700 openings within the boundaries of Joshua Tree National Park, mostly involving the pursuit of gold. He illustrated how the gold at Joshua was formed, defined certain mining terms, and discussed early mining equipment, including primary crushers, stamp mills, mercury tables and concentrating tables. He stated that in Joshua Tree National Park one could find 19th century milling technology in the place actually used.

Dr. Trent also discussed specific mines, such as the Desert Queen, the Lost Horse and the Desert Cliff, and related interesting stories about the colorful characters who engaged in mining in the early days. He accompanied his presentation with numerous slides and brought mineral specimens to the meeting.

It was moved, seconded and approved that the following individuals serve as officers for 2008: Geoffrey Caplette, President; Janet Gordon, Vice President; Patricia Caplette, Secretary; and Herman Ruvalcaba, Treasurer. Jo Anna Ritchey was approved as Director.

Walt Margerum reminded members about annual dues, and the Pacific Micro-Mount Conference to be held January 25-27, 2008. He and James Imai discussed the planned November 18th field trip to Cascade Canyon.

Janet Gordon announced the recent death of Bill Moller, and the services to be held in Santa Barbara. She also stated that the annual banquet would be held in January, 2008, and that the Jewel Tunnel open house would take place in December, 2007.

Dr. Anthony Kampf, Curator, Gems and Minerals, at the Natural History Museum, Los Angeles, will be the speaker for December.

At show and tell, Shou-Lin Lee displayed a specimen from Sonora, Mexico.

The door prize was won by James Imai.

President Lyles brought the meeting to a close at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted Pat and Geoff Caplette



*Above pictures are two gold in quartz specimens that Dr. Trent brought to the meeting. According to Dr. Trent, the one to the right is a very good sample of gold in quartz.
Photos by Shou-Lin Lee*

Auction Specimens Needed!

The MSSC January banquet will once again include a silent auction as a Society fundraiser. Its time to start thinking about what you might donate! The event is Saturday evening, January 12. Please contact Janet Gordon to coordinate your donation, and plan to come for a fun evening.

Pacific Micro-Mount Conference

The 43rd Pacific Micro-Mount Conference is scheduled for January 25-27 at the San Bernardino County Museum in Redlands. If you didn't already received the registration information please contact Walt Margerum at (310) 324-1976.

Micro's Needed

Micro's are needed for the Pacific Micro-Mount auction. Send your specimens to: **Walt Margerum, 14892 Sutro Ave., Gardena, CA 90249**

Jewel Tunnel Open House

**An invitation for the members and friends of the
Mineralogical Society of Southern California
to attend an openhouse at**

Jewel Tunnel Imports

Saturday, December 15, 2007, 10 AM to 4PM

13100 Spring St., Baldwin Park, CA 91706, 626-814-2257

Map available at jeweltunnel.com

Refreshments will be served.

Jewel Tunnel Imports is a leading wholesale distributor of mineral specimens, crystals, fossils, tumbled stones and many different kinds of lapidary items like balls, eggs, jewelry etc. made from different minerals. We have a warehouse in excess of 10,000 sq. feet full of mineral related natural history items, perhaps the largest of its kind in the United States.

Historically Jewel Tunnel Imports has had limited open house parties for mineralogically and geologically oriented groups such as the students and faculty of various university geology departments and members of certain gem and mineral societies. These open houses, by invitation only, on a few weekends just preceding Christmas, offer a chance for individuals belonging to these groups to buy minerals and crystals at wholesale prices and to learn something about the wholesale gem and mineral business.

The owner of Jewel Tunnel (Rock Currier) is also interested in learning about new sources of mineral specimens and has been known to buy and trade such items. He is a micromounter and always interesting in trading for good micromount material not represented in his collection.

because the pools are nearly inaccessible and there is an abundant supply of insects; and next year's crop of blackberries shows great promise.

Passing of two Members

Email from Larry Tillman, Bill Reifel's son-in-law: I am



sending this to inform you and the membership of the passing of a longtime member and big time supporter, William Reifel (Bill). Bill died September 26, 2007, in Joshua Tree California. The official reason was metastatic colon carcinoma and respiratory failure. It was totally unexpected. Anyone that wishes more information can contact the family at email address lotillman@verizon.net.

Remembering Bill Moller

By Janet Gordon



MSSC Life Member and mineral collector extraordinaire, Bill Moller, passed away on November 10, 2007. Bill was an important mentor to many mineral collectors, and he will be missed greatly. Over the years he served the Society in a number of capacities including editing the bulletin, giving talks about his collecting experiences, and supporting the group in countless other ways. He and his wife Elizabeth often invited members to their home to examine their outstanding collecting. Parts of the collection were also displayed regularly at MSSC shows and at Tucson, and it received numerous awards over the years.

Bill's reach in the mineral community went far beyond the boundaries of the MSSC. He was an avid field collector who personally collected fine specimens from many localities around the world including Prince Edward Island, the Yukon,

Spain, and many localities in the western United States. His success was due as much to careful research and preparation at home as to hard work and persistence in the field. He enjoyed sharing the stories of his adventures (and misadventures) with all of us. Some of these stories were good lessons in what to do or not to do in the field. Others have become legends.

We extend our sympathy to Elizabeth Moller, who has been a supportive accomplice in Bill's mineral adventures for many decades, and to his children and their families. Those of us who knew Bill Moller were certainly blessed.

Playing Tourist at the Herkimer “Diamond” Mines

by Janet Gordon

There it was in small print on the New York state map: Herkimer. Our route across the state was going to take us within 20 some miles of the town, and if we got an early start the next morning we could swing by for a look. Apparently much of Herkimer County has produced the famous gemmy quartz crystals, but we didn't know where to look on the spur of the moment. Our guidebook assured us that there was a tourist “mine” that would be open and happy to take our money in exchange for some time on their outcrop. It was just a few miles north of the town, and how could we resist visiting such an historic mineral locale?

The next morning was one of those brilliant days after a rain. We pulled into the Herkimer Diamond Mines Resort, one of the two tourist mines in the area. The museum and rock shop were welcoming. Bins of colorful rocks for kids were abundant, but there was not much for the sophisticated collector. We paid our collecting fees and carried our rented small sledgehammers upstairs to watch the video on how to collect at the “mines.” Although the video mostly advertised the many facilities at the resort (camping, swimming, snack bars, etc.), it did give basic collecting safety information. There were no hints about how to collect effectively.



One of the “mines” at the Herkimer Diamond Mines Resort. The “diamonds” occur in vugs in the cliffs of Cambrian age Little Falls Dolostone. Paul Gordon Photo.

Then we drove the few hundred yards to one of the cuts into the local outcrop that passed for a mine. Ledges of dolomite cropped out on the hillside. Tons of broken rock covered the ground below. It didn't take long to realize that the only rocks worth breaking up were those that had some vugs for the quartz crystals to be hiding in. The vug-bearing rock also typically has flecks of tarry hydrocarbon. An alternative to hammering was to search for loose crystals in the freshly washed dirt between the rocks. Many of the kids seemed pleased to hammer on just about anything, and there were more kids than adults on the rock pile even though it was a week day in October. Young voices often proclaimed “I've found one,” egging the flagging parents on.

The serious collectors were excavating the bedrock face. One was giving tips to a teenage boy and his father. They were working hard but could use a little more success and soon had some. The excavation holes in the bedrock made it clear that crystal-containing vugs were stratigraphically controlled.

From chatting with the locals it sounded like a good day's work with hammers, chisels, and pry-bars reliably yields satisfying specimens if one works the correct layers.

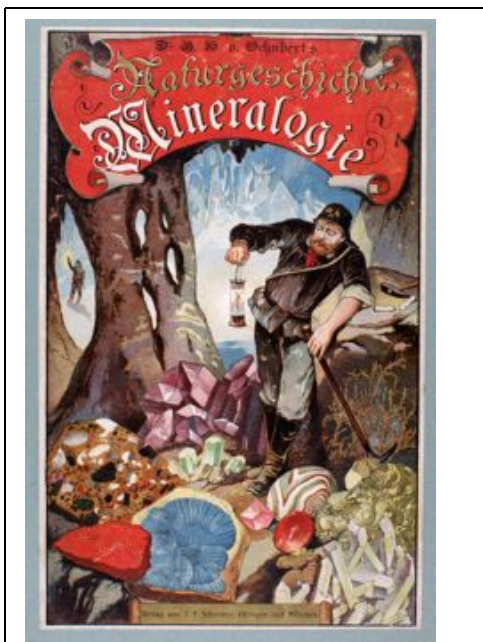
Collectors were free to keep whatever they found. The mine obviously made its money from the large number of visitors who paid to beat on rocks for a short while and then bought something from the shop. How did we do in the hour or so we spent at the mine? We opened up a lot of small vugs lined with drusy quartz and/or dolomite crystals. Some of them had intriguing spots or drips of "tar" in them. I couldn't help but wonder if many of doubly terminated floaters that Herkimer is famous for don't pop out of the vugs and disappear as the rock is split open. We did find a number of small floaters in the dirt, but I suspect that most of these are taken home by sharp-eyed kids who are closer to the ground.

Just before we left, I opened a small vug featuring a nice 2-cm long gemmy crystal and assorted smaller ones. There are a few tar specks that could be cleaned off, but tucking it in my pocket was a satisfying way to end a pleasant interlude on a beautiful fall morning. We returned our rented hammers and continued on our journey.

Virtual Museum of the History of Mineralogy

reviewed by Janet Gordon

Interested in mineral memorabilia? Whether it's old mineral books, labels, instruments or crystal models, there will be something to see at the "Virtual Museum of the History of Mineralogy."



This cover from A. Kenngott, *Illustrierte Mineralogie*, may seem a bit romanticized today, but it was intended to appeal to school children and their parents. The book is a folio with an original size of 33 x 22 cm. It is the 4th edition from 1888 and it contains 24 plates, 23 of them are hand colored.

Image courtesy of the Virtual Museum of the History of Mineralogy. Used with permission

Opened on June 22, 2007, the site at www.mineralogy.be is the work of Paul Tambuyser and Claude Hootelé, Belgian mineral collectors with special interest in early mineralogy books and instruments. In their first newsletter they announced: “The purpose of the Virtual Museum is to bring together photographs and descriptions of representative historical objects and books related to the early mineralogical and crystallographic sciences.” With the cooperation of others who have made their collections available to photograph, they are off to a great start.

The virtual museum is well organized with four galleries of books from different centuries plus galleries for crystallographic goniometers, other mineralogical instruments, crystal models, and early mineral labels with their accompanying specimens. The book galleries each provide a commentary about the scientific climate of the period in which the books were published. Also the historic commentary about crystal models will be especially interesting to anyone who used beautiful pear wood models as a mineralogy student.

The section of goniometers is an excellent resource for learning how important these instruments were in the development of crystallography as a science. Other instruments include polarizers of various types, including “tourmaline tongs,” early polarizing microscopes, and a simple spectroscope.

Items may also be viewed grouped as collections where more detailed information about specific items is given. For example, photos in the “other instruments” collection show how the many parts of a “Society of Arts” blowpipe set fit together. It’s everything a 19th century prospector could need in a compact mahogany chest.

The authors encourage others to contribute to the museum and provide thoughtful guidelines for doing so, and a list of contributors to date is included. The Museum Shop is an opportunity for collectors to read and place adds for items related to the content of the site, and a future “download area” is planned where visitors will have the opportunity to download scans of old scientific instrument catalogs and texts. In the meantime, Paul Tambuyser has e-mailed a copy of an image featured in the book gallery for enjoyment in this bulletin. Stop by and see the Virtual Museum of the History of Mineralogy next time you are out surfing the web.

BY POPULAR DEMAND!

The Meister Trimmer is available again.

Contact Ann Meister

Email: meister_ann@hotmail.com

Phone: 626-794-3482

2007 Calendar of Events

December 1-2 2007, Orangevale, American River Gem & Mineral Society Orangevale Grange 5807 Walnut Ave.
Hours: 10-5 both days Florence Hansan (916) 955-5189 Evelyn Tipton (916) 791-4517

December 1-2 2007, Barstow, Mojave Desert Gem & Mineral Society Cora Harper Community Center 841 S. Barstow Road
Hours: 10-5 both days Gene Haines (760) 256-0595 Beth Pinnell (760) 255-1030

December 8-9 2007, San Bernardino, Orange Belt Mineralogical Society Inc. Rudy C Hernandez Community Center 222 North Lugo Ave (2nd and Sierra Way)
Hours: Sat. 10 - 5, Sun. 10-4 Lyle Strayer (909) 887-3394 Al Carrell (951) 961-5988 Emma Rose (951) 288-6182

December 16, 1:30 pm Santa Ana, Bowers Museum 2002 N. Main St. lecture: the Stories behind and within the world's most beautiful gems by Bill Larson and Dr. George Rossman
Admission: General \$10 Members \$8; (714) 567-3600

It's Dues Time Again

Membership dues are due again

Please reply promptly

**When you receive the due notice in
the mail**

HAPPY HOLIDAYS