

Bulletin of the Mineralogical Society of Southern California



Volume 77 Number 11
November 2007

The 837th Meeting of The Mineralogical Society
of Southern California

**Geology and Mining History
of
Joshua Tree National Park
by
Dr. D. Trent**

Friday, November 16, 2007, at 7:30 p.m.

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

Featuring:

- Geology and mining of Joshua Tree National Park**
- Garnets from Garnet Hills**
- Remembering Al Ordway**
- Visiting the Smithsonian**
- Member volunteers needed**

Geology and Mining History of Joshua Tree National Park

By Janet Gordon

De. Dee D. Trent will speak on *Mines of Joshua Tree National Park* at our Friday, November 16, meeting at 7:30 p.m. in room E220 of the Geology Department of Pasadena City Collere. **Please note that this meeting is on the 3rd Friday of the month!**

Mining is an integral part of the history of the region of Joshua Tree National Park. There are 288 abandoned mining sites with 747 mine openings within the boundaries of Joshua Tree National Park. Gold was the commodity of greatest interest. In the Pinto Mountains, immediately outside the Park, are two mining districts with numerous abandoned mines. As recently as 1998, there were eight claimants having mining claims in Park: the sites include mill and mine sites, gravel pits, some open pits, but most were underground operations.

Mining activity in the region began in the 1870s, and reached its peak in the 1920s and 1930s. The ore produced by the many mines came mainly from gold-bearing quartz veins that intruded Mesozoic granitic rocks and Proterozoic metamorphic rocks.

There are eight mining districts in and adjacent to Joshua Tree National Park, the 1) Twentynine Palms, 2) Dale, 3) Rattler, 4) Monte Negras, 5) Eagle Mountains, 6) Cottonwood Spring, 7) Piñon, and 8) Gold Park. The mines most easily visited are the Mastodon in the Cottonwood Spring District, the Lost Horse, Gold Coin and the Silver Bell in the Middle Piñon District, and the Desert Queen in the northern Piñon District.

Dee D. "Doc" Trent is a geologist with degrees from the University of Southern California and the University of Arizona. He worked as an oil company geologist in California, Utah, Arizona, and Alaska before becoming a college professor. Writing and research have been his main thrust in recent years since retiring from teaching at Citrus College. He has publications on mines and mine remediation in California, Alaska, Nevada, and Montana, and he is one of the authors of a college-level textbook, *Geology and the Environment*, now

in its fifth edition, and *Mines and Geology of the Randsburg Area*.

Minutes of the October 12, 2007 Meeting

The 835th meeting of the Mineralogical Society of Southern California was held on Friday, October 12, 2007, at Pasadena City College. Director Jo Anna Ritchey brought the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

She then announced the recent death of Al Ordway, an avid and knowledgeable mineral collector with decades of field experience and many spectacular finds. Rock Currier described Mr. Ordway as “a down-home, salty guy,” who will be missed very much.

It was also announced that material is still needed for the annual Micro-Mount Conference.

The speaker of the evening was Dr. Bob Housley, who has a Ph.D. in Physics and is affiliated with the Caltech Physics Department. Dr. Housley has many, many years of field experience, and numerous unusual and rare mineral finds to his credit.

Dr. Housley gave a presentation entitled: “Exploring the California Gold Country.” In a weeklong trip to the Angels Camp, CA area, which has twelve mines within its confines, he was able to explore Garnet Hill and the surrounds of New Melones Lake. Dr. Housley was able to obtain impressive specimens of garnets and axinites, which he displayed at the meeting (for pictures of garnets and axinites see Show and Tell section). He further described nearby gold mines, California Cavern and Black Chasm Cavern. During the talk, Dr. Housley showed several slides that he had prepared.

Walt Margerum announced that the positions of President and Treasurer still needed to be filled for the coming year, and requested volunteers for the respective offices.

Shou-Lin Lee stated that the next monthly meeting would be held on the 3rd Friday of November.

Jo Anna Ritchey brought the meeting to a close at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted Pat and Geoff Caplette

Your Society Needs You Opening in 2008 Offices President and Treasurer

Current present Ilia Lyles recently relocated to northern California. Her new residence makes it difficult for her to attend MSSC monthly meeting on a regular basis. According to past president Jo Anna Ritchey the duties of MSSC president includes: hold monthly meetings, board meetings etc.

Current treasurer Walt Margerum has been in the post for the past four or five years. The MSSC treasurer's duties include: keeping the book, file tax form, etc.

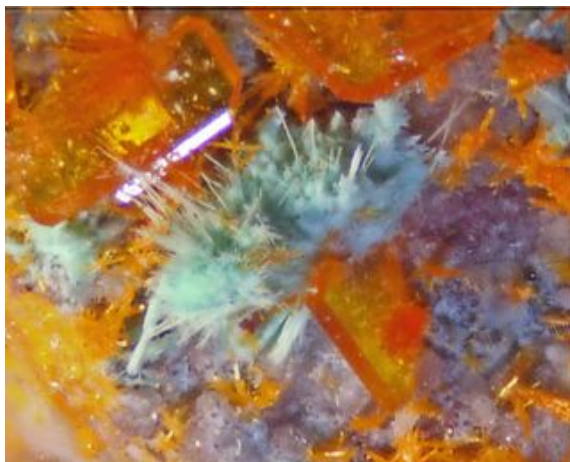
Those who are interested in filling the Offices please contact Nomination Committee Chair Walt Margerum

**It's Dues Time Again
Membership dues are due again
Look for your due notice in the mail
Please reply promptly**

Pacific Micro-Mount Conference

The 43rd Pacific Micro-Mount Conference is scheduled for January 25-27 at the San Bernardino County Museum in Redlands. You will receive registration information either with your dues notice or in a separate mailing. All members are welcome even if you do not own a microscope!

Plan to be there!



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.

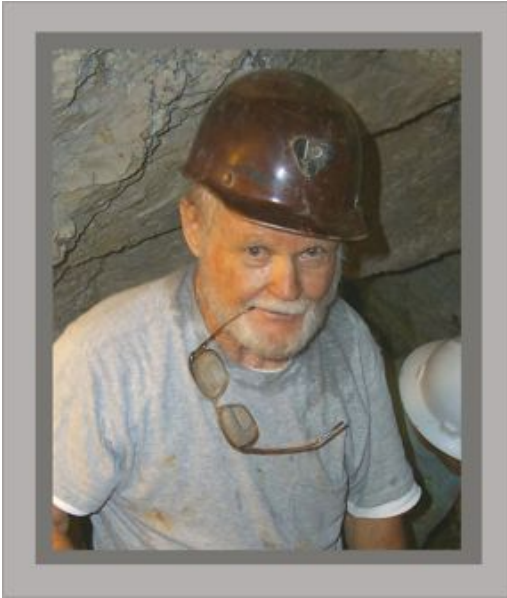
Passing of a Member

Email from Mrs. Ordway: Al passed away as a result of an apparent heart attack on Saturday, September 29 as he was collecting at Soda Lake in San Luis Obispo County. It was a place we had enjoyed spending many happy hours at, and he was doing what he loved most. It had been 13 years since his last attack, and from that time up until the present, he was in remarkably good health and continued to stay active, field collect and do the things he enjoyed, so we have much to thank God for. We are honoring Al's request that no services be held.

Al deeply appreciated your friendship and shared interest in mineralogy.

Remembering Al Ordway

It is with great sadness that we report the passing of long time MSSC member Al Ordway. Al was a life-long mineral



enthusiast and an extraordinary field collector. Specimens he personally collected are displayed in several international museums. Articles that he wrote appeared in several mineralogical publications. For many years he was also a mineral dealer, sharing his expertise and collecting stories with those who stopped by his booth at shows. Al was passionate about mineral collecting. He was a mentor to many. His loss will be felt

greatly by his many friends in the mineral community.

(Picture above: Al at Cryo-Genie Mine taken by Jon Page)

Al is survived by his wife and best friend of 48 years, Elizabeth (Betty) Ordway. Brother: Carl Ordway and wife Jenness. Daughters: Carol Marsh and companion Tony Marsh; Barbara Flores, Linda Horton and husband John. Grandchildren: Nicole , April, Sarah, Robert, Monica, Jonathan and Melina, and great-grand-daughter, Josylinne.

Show and Tell



of axinite. The single crystal measures more than an inch long.

Picture above is the flat of garnets Dr. Housley collected at Garnet Hill. Some of the garnets are large single crystals measuring up to 2 inch in diameter. Dr. Housley also brought a large cluster and a single crystal



Pictures above show different sides of the same crystal. You can see the growth pattern of same crystal on the picture to the right.

Below are pictures of axinites.

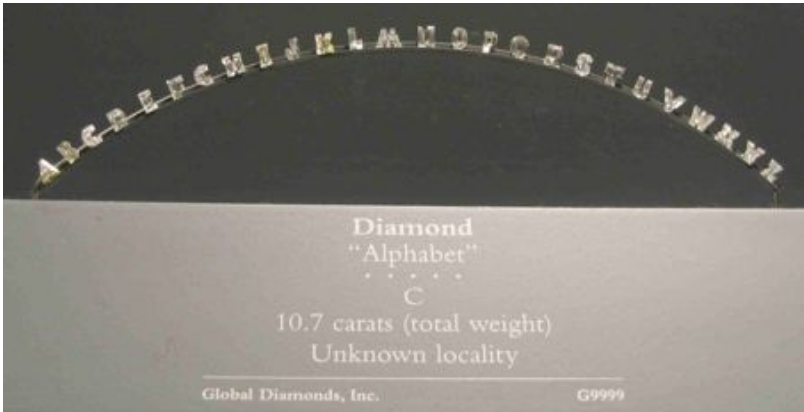


Visiting the Smithsonian

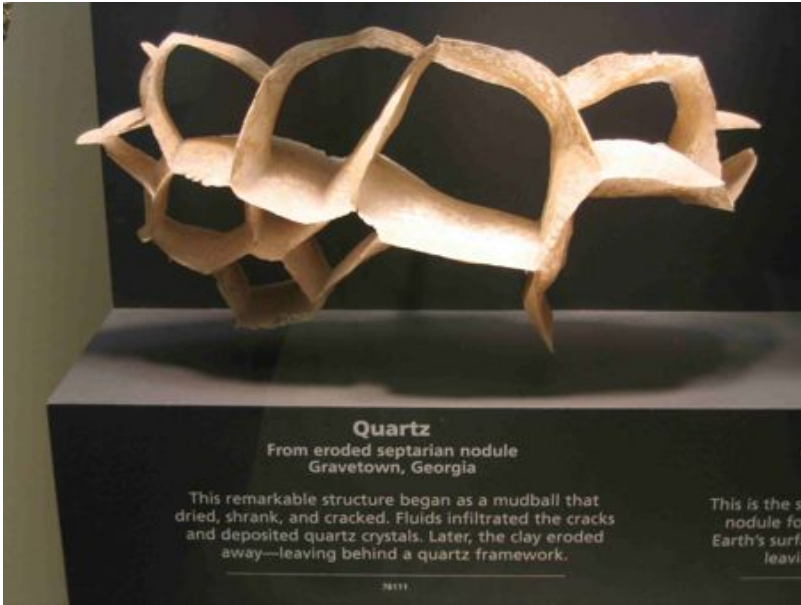
The Smithsonian, home of the Hope diamond. That's how I know the Smithsonian. But of course, being the National museum, Smithsonian is much more. Smithsonian is also the home of one of the largest natural red diamonds. Before I visited Smithsonian I had no idea what to expect. I was aware that there was more than just the Hope Diamond in the Smithsonian, but I was not aware of the vast amount of non-gem minerals that the museum also has.

The curators of the Gem and Mineral Department of Smithsonian not only show off their prized collection of famous gems and jewelry, they also tell the story of the earth from how it formed, when it formed, and what it formed, to what can be found on earth. The exhibit starts with from meteoroids from various celestial bodies, such as from the Moon, Mars, etc. then moves on to the formation of the earth. There are room size samples of earth formations. There is also a piece said to be the oldest earth crust on display.

The combination of gems and minerals displayed is a dream come true for me as a gemologist to study. Not only are most of the specimen large and of high qualities, the grouping of minerals by species/groups, for instance: beryl,



corundum, quartz, feldspar group, garnet group, etc., with the finished gems placed next to the mineral specimens are most helpful. It helps to see what a gem looks like before it been cut and polished. Unlike some museums where the labels are often small and crammed with information, the fonts on the labels are large, which made it easy to read and take pictures. By the way, taking pictures is welcome at the Smithsonian. A suite of diamond “alphabets,” all 26 letters, caught my attention. To me the diamond alphabet spells ultimate opulence. I was delighted to find a display case devoted to asbestos. It turned out that asbestos is not a single mineral, It is a term used for several minerals, all of which have fibrous structure. Chrysotile, crocidolite, and tremolite are all referred to as asbestos. There is also a newspaper made of asbestos. I was a little disappointed when I saw a huge alexandrite on display but it was not set up to show its color change phenomena. A single piece of native copper measured about 10 feet by three feet got a “whah” from me. How did the miner get it out? I was told that in the old days, miner used hand tools to chisel out the copper.



Text and photos by Shou-Lin Lee--

FIELD TRIP ANNOUNCEMENT

By James Imai

Cascade Canyon, Sunday November 18, 9:30 AM.
Meet at the first large turnout on the right, about ½ mile past the tunnels on the Mount Baldy Road. Look for the flag made of a teal and a yellow MSSC T-shirt. The canyon offers an opportunity to collect euhedral corundum crystals, mostly micro, about 2mm long, but some larger minis, on matrix. The crystals are typically translucent, a soft pink color, in hexagonal prisms, terminated in sharp pinacoidal faces. There are other associated minerals, including pyrite, dravite (magnesium tourmaline), green muscovite, etc.

There are several potential problems: the weather, the height of the stream and whether it can be safely crossed, and thick brush. The walk is about a mile. The climb up the canyon is steep, but it is possible to collect from fallen boulders well below the outcrop. Bring a lunch, as the country is spectacular. Even if you've been there before, it promises to be a wonderful outing, and the drive is short. Please note that

a National Forest Adventure Pass (annual or one day) must be displayed in any parked vehicle.

Participation is limited to members of the MSSC or an affiliated CMFS club; eye protection is required when breaking rocks, helmets if seriously climbing; liability disclaimer forms will be distributed.



Fallbrook Gem and Mineral Museum Opening Ceremony

With Mayor of Fallbrook, museum curator, Garth Bricker, assistant curator, Mike Evans and the president, of Fallbrook Gem and Mineral Society, Gina Palculich by her side, Miss Fallbrook cut the ribbon and officially opened the museum door to the public on October 6. The ribbon cutting ceremony was followed by a Black and Gold Gala. Members of the society, dressed in their finery, attended a cocktail party.

Entertainment included a silent auction of gems, minerals, jewelry, gift baskets and gift certificates and a wheel of

**Wendy's Minerals
Victor Valley Gem and Mineral
Show
At the fairgrounds
just off of 7th Street in Victorville
November 17 & 18. Sat 9-5, Sun 9-4**

fortune.

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

- November 3-4 2007, Concord,** Contra Costa Mineral & Gem Society Centre Concord - 5298 Clayton Rd. Clayton Fair Shopping Center Hours: 10 - 5 both days Sam Woolsey (925) 837-3287
- November 3-4 2007, Anaheim,** American Opal Society Clarion Hotel Anaheim Resort 616 Convention Way (off Harbor Blvd.) Hours: Sat. 10-6; Sun 10-5 Jim Lambert (714) 891-7171
- November 3-4 2007, Lancaster,** Palmdale Gem & Mineral Society 2551 W. Ave. H, Hwy 14 Hours: 9 - 5 both days Susan Chaissin-Walblom (661) 943-1861
Website: pgms@antelecom.net
- November 3-4 2007, Ridgecrest,** Indian Wells Gem & Mineral Society Desert Empire Fairgrounds, Mesquite Hall 520 S. Richmond Rd. Hours: 9-5 both days John De Rosa (760) 375-7905
- November 3-4 2007, San Diego,** San Diego Mineral & Gem Society Al Bahr Shrine Center (behind Hampton Inn) 5440 Kearny Mesa Road Hours: Sat. 9:30 - 5; Sun. 10 - 4 Anita Smith (619) 291-7382-1637 Email: jazzsmith@sbcglobal.net Website: www.sdmg.org
- November 10-11 2007, Yuba City,** Sutter Buttes Gem & Mineral Society "Festival of Gems" Grace Franklin Hall 442 Franklin Avenue Hours: Sat. 9 - 5; Sun. 9 - 4 Cliff Swenson (530) 272-3752
- November 17-18 2007, Oxnard,** Oxnard Gem & Mineral Society 800 Hobson Way Hours: Sat. 9 - 5, Sun. 10-4 Miriam Tetrault (805) 642-5779 Website: www.OGMS.net
- November 17-18--Victorville,** 32nd annual show; Victor Valley Gem & Mineral Club; San Bernardino County Fair Grounds, 14800 7th St.; Sat. 9-5, Sun. 9-5; free admission, Web site: <http://fosse.shema-root.org/vvgmc>.
- 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