



The Rockhound Record

Mineralogical Society of Arizona - 1935 - 2011

June 2011 - Volume 77, Issue 6

JUNE 2011 MEETING

**JUNE 8, 2011 - 7:00 P.M.
WEDNESDAY
(NOT FRIDAY!)**

**Arizona American Italian Club
7509 North 12th St.
Phoenix, AZ 85020**

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Recently I received a call from a woman that had inherited a collection when her 92 year old father passed away. She said that his grandfather and father both had been avid collectors and had items from around the world.

Among the items are dinosaur eggs, Snowflake obsidian, and thousands of other pieces of interest. Ed and I are going out to her place to see just what she has. She is wanting to set up a sale of the items in the near future. We will keep the club apprised of the time of the sale and hopefully be able to take some pictures for members to look at. She said that up for sale would be a lot of old collecting tools that her dad had used on his trips. One of his favorite hobbies was to go to schools and show samples of his collection to school children.

NOW TO THE MATTER OF THE MUSEUM CLOSING:

Governor Brewer is thinking about running again for Governor, if she can find a loophole that would allow her to do so. Since it was at her bidding that the Museum closed, I think we should keep this before the public eye as much as possible. I, for one, am going to try to make every public meeting she has and try to ask the question, **“Why she is allowing the bill she signed into law, stating that the mineral collection be kept intact and in one place, be broken and allowing the Arizona Historical Society to parcel out the collection to different organizations?”** Also, I am contacting as many of the Arizona Historical Society donors as possible and asking that they withhold their donations until the Society comes back into compliance with the law, keeping the mineral collection at one site. You all can do what I am doing, or let this ignoring of the law to go unchallenged. I am, of course, doing this as an individual, not as someone associated with the club.

On another front, BLM laws governing collecting minerals and rock on their lands have become a little worse for rock hounds.

I will let Ed tell you about that, since he knows more than I about the new laws. However, I will say from what Ed tells me, the new laws make it nearly impossible for clubs to go out hunting as a group anymore. Some fees and permits apply to groups of two or more people.

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Bob Holm
David Lay

NOTICE!

The Coalition Field Trip scheduled for Saturday, May 28, 2011, to Date Creek is being cancelled due to hot weather.

President's Message - Continued from Page 1

SCORODITE: Phosphates Arsenates Vanadates: This mineral appears as crystals pyramidal, tabular or prismatic in form. Large crystals are rare. Crusts of micro crystals more common. Color variable ranging from shades of green through colorless, blue violet, and yellow.

PHYSICAL PROPERTIES: Semi-hard (3-5) heavy, with indistinct cleavage and subconchoidal fracture, Streak white. Loses water when heated in closed tube. Soluble in most acids.

ENVIRONMENT: A secondary mineral formed by the oxidation of arsenopyrite and other arsenic-bearing minerals. Occurs in the oxidation zone of copper-zinc deposits.

OCCURRENCE: The finest scorodite crystals in the world occur at Tsumeb (Namibia), where sharp, lustrous cobalt-blue crystals up 5 cm (2 in) on edge have been discovered. Very fine crystals have been found at Zacatecas (Mexico) and Ouro Preto, Minas Gerais (Brazil). In the USA small crystals (usually micro crystals) have been found at Tiger, Arizona, and Merajuba Hill, Nevada.

AS ALWAYS, HAVE A SAFE AND FUN SUMMER. **TAKE PLENTY OF WATER WHEREVER YOU GO.**

Roger Deming

ARIZONA MINERAL COLLECTOR NUMBER 139



By Dr. Raymond Grant

This is more an editorial than an Arizona Mineral Collector column. I have been reading through the old Rockhound Records looking for historical information for a chapter in the new *Mineralogy of Arizona*. I also am getting the first 100 "Arizona Mineral Collector" columns for which I don't have copies. (Changes in computer programs, etc., and I lost all the originals.)

A. L. Flagg, who started the M.S.A. 76 years ago, said that the club might have been the largest in the United States in the 1950's. The M.S.A. had 277 members during some of the early years.

The last few years the M.S.A. has been struggling. A few dedicated people have worked to keep it going. What has changed? Are mineral clubs a thing of the past?

One big change is field trips. It is really hard to find a place that a large number of people can go and find something good. I think that the field trip chairman has the hardest job in the club. Back in the 1960's there were trips to the Lavender pit in Bisbee, where Phelps Dodge bused people into the pit to collect azurite and malachite, to the dumps at Tiger where the company bulldozed them for the trip, and to Miami to collect in the Inspiration pit. Even when I first joined the club in the early 1970's we had trips to Ajo, Christmas, Lake Shore, and other mines. But it is almost impossible to get into any of these mines today, and I have tried to get permission.

Second, the club had a show every year. These were big events and lots of hard work, but were a way for club members to work together and bond. One year, we even had one at the Phoenix Civic Plaza, which was too big a venue for our club.

There was also a large juniors group, 18 juniors at one time in the 1960's. What children are interested in today would be a whole book. The club had a micromount group, a Dana Study group, and Paleontology group that all met once a month.

I propose we give a simple questionnaire to every member with two questions. First, what do you expect from this club, what can we do for you? Second, what can you do for the club, what skills or interests do you have that can contribute to the success of the group?

Record Gold Nugget Found!



Tuesday, March 15th, 2011 - The discovery in Nevada County, California, of a nearly 7-pound gold nugget last year has been called a one-in-a-billion lucky find. Now, on the eve of the auction of the so-called “Washington Nugget” in Sacramento, its finder has told the story. In addition to a little bit of luck, it’s a tale of geological knowledge, use of modern technology, elbow grease—and fear. He’s afraid to keep his find at home! “I’m just a little paranoid about people knocking on the door, putting a gun to my head and saying, ‘Where is it?’ ” said the finder. Hence, he demanded anonymity until the treasure sells.

The find was far from total luck. The Nevada County resident had a piece of undeveloped property - not far from the old gold mining town of Washington, California - assayed by a professional for possible gold deposits. “Just to see what gold would be down to the first 10 feet,” he said.

There was some fine gold, and a hint that there might be more in the bedrock beneath the old mining tailings. Knowing how Gold Rush lodes were found in similar bedrock, “it led us to think there may be some,” he said. A friend brought in a piece of equipment known as ground-penetrating radar. Similar equipment is used to locate sewer lines underground, or potential archaeological sites buried beneath centuries of dirt. In this case, it revealed the lay of the land buried beneath a yard or more of old mine tailings.

“We found an anomaly - a crevice or crack that indicated that it would be a good target,” he said. Such crevices sometimes trap nuggets. And this one was less than 10 feet down - the depth limit for their rented backhoe. After digging, they used a metal detector that can distinguish between gold and ferrous (iron-based) metals. “We started to use the gold detector, and we got a very strong signal,” he said. It told them where - within a square foot - to target.

All the time they were working through ground water that seeped in as they dug. The nugget they found, weighing 100 ounces and about the size of a small loaf of bread, is worth more than \$100,000 at current gold bullion prices. “We weren't expecting to recover anything that size!” the finder said. They did, though, and also two smaller nuggets of less than a pound - about 4 and 10 troy ounces each.

The finder took it to Fred Holabird, an experienced mining geologist and appraiser in Reno, Nevada. The nugget’s size makes it unique. “The Washington Nugget may be the sole remaining authenticated large gold nugget of 100- troy-ounce caliber from the California gold region,” Holabird said. Holabird draws a distinction between nuggets and gold in crystalline form, of which there are larger California pieces. By way of comparison, the largest California nugget still in existence, which is on display at the Smithsonian Museum, weighs 80 ounces.

The Washington Nugget is expected to draw bids of \$250,000 to \$400,000, at the Sacramento Convention Center on the final day of the Golden West Auction. The finder, meanwhile, has hopes of returning to his land when the snow is gone to see if there are more. If it doesn't sell at auction, “It may go in a museum,” the finder said. “I just don't want to have it in the house.”

UPDATE: The largest piece of Californian gold in existence sold for \$460,000 at the auction on Wednesday, March 23rd, 2011. The identity of the buyer has not been released as of press time for this bulletin.

*Reprinted from May 2011 issue of
THE ROCKCOLLECTOR
Via Rockhound Ramblings, April 2011*



Minutes of the Earth Science Museum Steering Committee
May 18, 2011, at Burton Barr Library, Phoenix, Arizona
By Dr. Raymond Grant

Harvey Jong called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.. He stated that he had registered the website earthsciencemuseum.org and would set it up so the committee could add ideas over time.

Bob Hendrix pointed out a website with the topic "Big Ideas for Small Museums" which can be found in the newsletter at: www.aaslh.org/SmallMuseums.htm

Harvey stated that we need a business plan and a fact sheet to start fundraising activities, but first the goals need to be established.

End Goal

A. Space

1. Building space - ideal would be about 30,000 square feet

- a. exhibits
- b. gift shop - 1000 sq. ft.
- c. office -400 sq. ft.
- d. meeting room/class room - 3000 sq. ft.
- e. storage room - 3000 sq. ft.
- f. work room - 500 sq. ft.
- g. break room, rest rooms, etc.
- h. lapidary shop - 1000 sq. ft.

Note: Doug Duffy reported present equipment was in bad shape and about \$50,000 would be needed to equip a new lapidary shop.

2. Outside space - ideal up to 2 acres

- a. parking - space for 3 buses and 150 cars
- b. outside exhibits - 12,000 sq. ft.
- c. storage/boneyard

Note: Charlie Connell stated that of the current outside exhibits all belong to the State except the train, head frame, and hoist house that are on loan from Freeport.

B. Services

- 1. Educational Programs at Museum
- 2. Outreach to schools
- 3. Events - symposium, family day
- 4. Gift Shop
- 5. Meeting space for clubs or other groups
- 6. Classes - lapidary, silversmith, wire wrapping etc.
- 7. Artist in Residence

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May 18, 2011, Minutes - Earth Science Museum Steering Committee

C. Path to achieving end goal

1. Trying to get funds for the whole project with an endowment.
2. Incremental approach - try to find a smaller space that could expand later or a temporary place to get started. Discussion of minimum space needed (5,000 to 10,000 sq. ft.?)
3. City of Mesa is trying to build a Museum District, Shea Joachim indicated that some small space available now. Representatives of West Mesa Development Corporation stated old Post Office across from Arizona Natural History Museum must be a Museum.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m. and the next meeting will be Wednesday May 25, 2011. It was suggested that all the clubs be contacted to indicate if they had a future interest in supporting a new museum.



June 14, 2011

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Sunday
June 19, 2011

LET'S GO TO A SHOW!

July 16-17, 2011
Flagstaff Gem and Mineral Show
Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-4,
Radisson Woodlands Hotel
Sharon Szmanski 480-671-6191

It has been said that a picture is worth 1,000 words, but somehow I think the picture below is worth even more words than that! - Lois Splendoria



**PARTING
SCENES
FROM
THE
MINERAL
MUSEUM**



**Thank You,
Betty Deming,
for these
pictures!**

LOIS SPLENDORIA
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Address Correction Requested

EXCHANGE
EDITORS: Please
send all newsletters
to the return address
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Mineralogical Society of Arizona
Founded 1935
A Non Profit Organization
www.mineralogicalsocietyarizona.org

Purpose: To promote popular interest in the various Earth Sciences, and particularly the fields of Geology, Lapidary, Mineralogy, and related subjects. ID badges are available from the Treasurer.

Meetings: 7:00 p.m. *on the second Friday of the month, September through June (except February, which is the third Friday).*

Dues: Families & Couples - \$20.00, Single Adults - \$12.00, Juniors (18 yrs. and under) - \$2.50. Please mail your dues to:

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