Micromineralogists of the National Capital Area, Inc.

The Mineral Mite

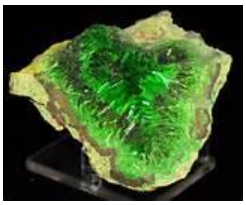
Vol. 46 – No. 8 **Washington D.C. – A Journal for Micromineralogists October 2013**

Meeting: October 23 Time: 7:45 p.m. – 10 p.m.

Long Branch Nature Center, 625 S. Carlin Springs Rd. Arlington, VA 22204

Program: Radioactive Mineral Classification

Presenter: Jim Kostka, IBA MOLECULAR



Club member, Jim Kostka will present the radioactive mineral classification. He will include a tour of his Radioactive Collectables. Club members and guests are invited to bring in their HOT ROCKS too. Bring your microscopes for viewing of these incredible minerals.

Jim's biography is continued on page 3.

Photo of the Month

Plancheite - Kamoya South Mine, Kamoya, Kamboye District, Democratic Republic of Congo, Africa. Photomicrographer -Rodney Lee.
Photo provided by Maureen Campeau

President's Message:

By: Dave MacLean

We have an opportunity to demo at the NVMC show Saturday-Sunday, November 23-24. We need volunteers. I am aware that many of us will work at the show. Perhaps some of us can split our time between NVMC show duties and work at demonstrating microminerals.

The kids and some adults love to look at the wonders under our scopes.

Jim Kostka with a student

Volunteer:
Sat. 10 am - 6 pm
Sun. 10 am - 4pm

We have an opportunity to buy microscopes from JMU. If we buy a few of them, we need to decide how and where we will store them and how to make sure they are brought to our meetings. I do not know if the scopes come with cases.

We are close to volunteers to be nominees for all four officers slots.

Our Atlantic Micromounters' Conference 2014: Kathy Hrechka, Conference Chairperson is making magnificent progress on our conference April 4-5, 2014. I will let her tell that story at our Wednesday October 23 meeting.

Previous Meeting Minutes: 9/25/13

By: George Reimherr, Secretary

The business meeting began at 8:15 p.m., presided by the Treasurer, Michael Pabst, acting for the club president who was unable to attend the meeting. Twenty persons were present, including 4 guests. Two past presidents were present -- namely, Cynthia Payne and Tom Tucker -- and were recognized. The minutes for the previous meeting were approved, as printed in the Mineral Mite. The treasurer gave his report.

Old business -- The place and date for our conference in 2014 has not yet been settled -- "We're working on it." Another work in process is completing a slate of candidates for the club officer positions for 2014.

New business -- The date for our November meeting has been advanced to November 20th. We need members to demonstrate micromounting at the Northern Virginia Mineral Club show on November 23rd and 24th. Jim Kostka volunteered to set up a duty list for the task.

Announcements -- Our next annual visit to James Madison University is scheduled for February 22, 2014. Tom Tucker has planned a field trip to the Stoutameyer Branch, Augusta County, VA, on the Tuesday and Thursday before the BMS micromount symposium, held on October 18 - 20, 2013.

The business meeting ended at 8:42 p.m.

Previous Program Reviewed 9/25/13

Club member David Fryauff gave a program describing his recent collecting experience at the New Street Quarry in Paterson, New Jersey. (Extra information: An article describing the minerals and the mineral localities of the Paterson, New Jersey area, appeared in the Mineralogical Record issue for May - June, 1979, pages 157 - 179).

Micromineralogists of the National Capital Area
Meeting: The 4th Wed. of each month 7:30 -10 p.m.
(Except Easter & December)
Long Branch Nature Center,
625 S. Carlin Springs Road, Arlington VA 22204

MNCA Purpose: To promote, educate and encourage interest in geology, mineralogy, and related sciences.

President:DaveMacLean,dbmaclean@maclean-fogg.com
Vice President: vacant
Secretary: George Reimherr, greim@cox.net
Treasurer: Michael Pabst Michaeljpabst@yahoo.com
Editor: Kathy Hrechka, kshrechka@msn.com

The society is a member of:
* Eastern Federation of Mineralogical and Lapidary Societies (EFMLS) www.amfed.org/efmls
*American Federation of Mineralogica1 Societies (AFMS) www.amfed.org

Dues: MNCA Membership Dues for 2013
$15 (single) or $20 (family)
Payable to MNCA
Michael Pabst
270 Rachel Drive
Penn Laird, VA 22846

Editors' Notes:

Kathy Hrechka

AFMS Editors Award
1st Place - 2011 Mini Bulletin

Each month we will feature a club member's original article. Also, if you enjoy a particular article in an electronic form, forward it to us to be included in the next *Mineral Mite*. Photos are great too.

Club Article Deadline is 10th of each month.
***The Mineral Mite* will be emailed on 15th.**

October articles:

* Michael Pabst
* Patrick Haynes
* Tom Tucker

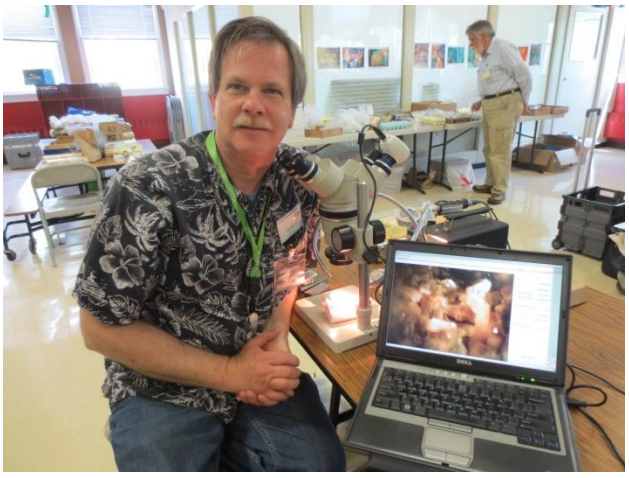
Speaker, Jim Kostka's Biography:

Having worked in nuclear medicine supply chain since 1994 (IBA MOLECULAR), Jim picked up his hobby relating to radioactive minerals as a curiosity and an off-shoot of his radioactive employment. (In this case, curiosity irradiates the cat.)

Ten or twelve years ago, Jim attended, then joined the Gem Hunters of Northern Virginia, which was meeting at the Manassas mall. Later he joined the NVMC.

Intrigued by the wonderful micro crystals of uranium minerals, Jim also joined the MNCA. His first scope was a craigslist bargain - duel head Nikon - which you may have seen it at our clubs micro demonstrations - is usually set up in the basement of his home in Leesburg, specifically to temp his children into looking. Thou the children have been caught looking at bugs, alas no Kostka child has taken up Dad's itch for rocks...

Jim regularly attends four DC area clubs meetings - and is also a member of the GLMSMC and the Baltimore based Chesapeake club. One area of specialization is - recycle old rock collections and selling Uranium ores and lapidary equipment on EBay. Jim K has helped with education outreach to schools, scouts, and micro demonstrations at area show. Jim is also the Co-Chair for the NVMC GMU show.



Jim Kostka, Micromounters' Confertence 4/13

September Mineral Inquiry

By Tom Tucker

I noticed among specimens that Bob Dunning recently gave the Club, several copper specimens that are covered with what I would describe as "silver bloom". It looks like the acanthite fuzz that rapidly appears on native silver specimens. But these are copper specimens from Cornwall, Pennsylvania; Russia; and Broken Hill, NSW. Australia. Does anyone have any idea what the "bloom" is ? Tom

October Mineral Answer for Tom

SEM-EDS analysis of the black fuzz on one of those copper specimens from Bob Dunning, and the analysis showed only copper, sulphur and oxygen. So this "bloom" on the native copper seems to be analogous to the common "bloom" seen on silver specimen a post-collection natural alteration of the native metal. Cross one off of the list of "unknowns".

Welcome Robert Cooke ! Newest Micromounter for MNCA

The A. E. Seaman Mineral Museum

By Michael Pabst


Michael & Karen

During a recent automobile trip circling Lake Michigan, we made a detour to visit the A. E. Seaman Mineral Museum at Michigan Technological University. I had read that it was an excellent museum and would be well worth a detour to Houghton, Michigan up on Lake Superior. As its reputation predicted, the A. E. Seaman Mineral Museum is worth a journey! The museum contains fabulous native copper and silver specimens from the Keweenaw Peninsula of Upper Michigan, where billions of pounds of solid copper have been mined since the mid 1800's. The museum has grown since 1885, and has acquired first-class specimens from all over the world. Recently, the museum moved into a new building, which is spacious and well-lit. They have a large gift shop that includes specimens that a serious collector would buy.

. I took many photos of museum and cabinet size specimens, shooting through glass cases with my pocket camera. Thanks to the excellent lighting and well-designed displays, I actually got some good pictures. I particularly tried to get close-up shots of some miniature and thumbnail specimens, hoping that a photographic enlargement would allow me to see details that would be hard to appreciate just looking into the cases with the naked eye.

Cavansite and Pentagonite specimens have become so common that I hardly look at them anymore. However, the miniature specimens at the museum were so perfect and so beautiful that they made me appreciate again what wonderful minerals these are.

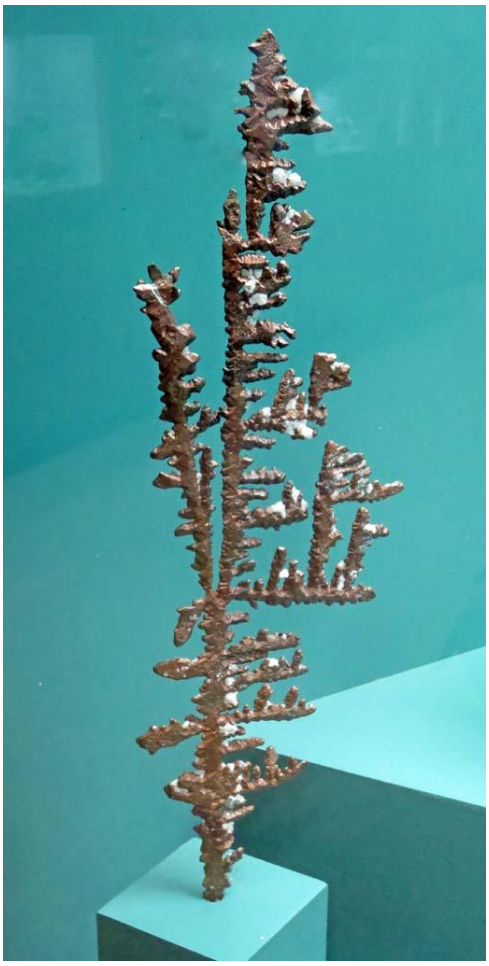
For true micro crystals, I was struck by the Roselite crystals perched on pink calcite, which the camera enlargement allowed me to see better than I could see in person. Perhaps the most noteworthy item for a micromineralogist was a display of Azurite and Malachite from Bisbee, Arizona. A cabinet specimen, a miniature specimen, a thumbnail specimen, and a micromount specimen were shown together, along with a photo of the micromount, which clearly shows that the micromount is the most beautiful specimen!

Pentagonite from Wagholi Quarry, Poona, Maharashtra, India

Roselite from Bou Azzer, Morocco

Photography by Michael Pabst

Cavansite from Abanagur, Poona, Maharashtra, India



Copper Keweenaw, Michigan

Azurite and Malachite from Bisbee, Arizona (shown in the picture)

Copper Keweenaw, Michigan

Archuleta Prospect, Cerrro Colorado, Bernalillo County, New Mexico

By Patrick Haynes

This was one of the most unique collecting localities I have ever been to.

Photo
Carnotite - Harvey Black Mine, New Mexico

Carnotite, $K_2(UO_2)_2(VO_4)_2 \cdot 3H_2O$, is a bright yellow mineral. It is a principal ore of uranium and vanadium. It is always microscopic and it rarely forms visually distinct crystals.

Although I had lived in New Mexico at various times I had never visited the Archuleta prospect, at Cerro Colorado (Red Hill). I had always assumed that its proximity to Albuquerque would render it to being an "extinct" locality. The hill is located 20 miles west of the I-25/I-40 intersection in Albuquerque, southeast of a casino adjacent to I-40 at the Rio Puerco exit. There is an abandoned uranium mine located on the northeast side of the hill, which is known for its microscopic aggregates of carnotite. Dirt roads are common and they meander to various sides of the hill. Four wheel drive may not be necessary, but high clearance is a must, as the arroyo north of the hill sometimes floods and eliminates any road crossings. The hill may actually be private property, but that does not keep people from coming to the hill to use it as a shooting range. If you are a gun enthusiast you can come out here, eliminate shooting range fees, throw trash everywhere, drink beer, shoot your weapons, legal and otherwise, and have a great time.

We saw 6-10 vehicles when we arrived around 9:30 am on Sunday, October 13. Most of these cars were on the north side of the hill. We parked below the mine, which faces east. There was a vehicle parked out on the flats to our east 1,000'-1500' away. They were shooting at some targets that they had set up and, although they could have redirected their aim towards us, we were clearly visible and felt somewhat secure. We parked below the mine. There were thousands of plastic red, green and yellow shotgun shell carcasses lying about.

We walked up to the mine. On the way up we came across dozens of beautiful orange, black, white and gray feathers. Sometime that morning a northern flicker had become breakfast for a critter, probably a coyote or, less likely, a bobcat. There is a declined tunnel that penetrates into the gray to reddish-tinted rhyolite. It goes about 30', but it ends abruptly due to mud having flowed into the decline and filling the mine before one can get to the mineralized fault that hosts the carnotite. That was unfortunate. However there has been some dozer work above the tunnel, which exposed carnotite-ore. Certainly some ore was removed, but now the trench/cut has caved a bit. I brought a scintillometer with me, having learned long ago that it is particularly well-suited as a tool for locating uranium-rich minerals. Ventilation on the surface was good. The New Mexico the wind blows most of the time. One gets used to it (one time the wind was not blowing and I kept falling over).

The only secondary ore mineral that I observed was carnotite. Due to its yellow color one can find little bits of rock with weathered coatings and blebs/aggregates. One has to look closely to find these. I wanted some "fresh" material and was looking for carnotite in-place or boulders that I could break with a heavy sledge. I could not locate an in-place hot spot. The scintillometer "singed" on one particular boulder. Close inspection showed carnotite on two of its surfaces. Upon breaking up the rock there was plentiful carnotite. My thanks to the scintillometer. We broke down rocks to 12", a large size for a trimmed rock! We did not use respirators for lung protection. I felt that the wind was doing that job. Unfortunately I could not locate a second boulder as rich as the first.

Archuleta Prospect continued on page 7

Archuleta Prospect continued

We walked down to the truck to have lunch, first washing our hands (a necessity when collecting U minerals). There had been a few stray "zings" while collecting, but it would have been difficult for a bullet to come over a rise and then back down onto the hillside to the mine. Sitting at the truck we were more out in the open and we felt somewhat insecure. We heard all sorts of little explosive noises, from single shots, automatic weapon fire to something that sounded like mortar "whumps". There were probably a few illegal things being tested that day! During lunch there were also a couple of very close "zings".

Carnotite on matrix

We returned to the mine, wrapping up our breaking and trimming of the boulder. During the afternoon the shooting activity increased in intensity. Not a minute went by without the sound of gunfire. We started to have the occasional "zing" at the mine! We shouted many times, but that did not curb the bullets. We wrapped up what we had and we left, driving around the hill to our left, towards the north side of the hill

A "party" was going on! There were about 20 vehicles stretched out and it was a festive gun-shooting, pick-nicking, beer-drinking family affair! Toddlers and other young-uns were being taught about gun safety!

Summation. There is microscopic carnotite within about a 1/2 hour drive from down-town Albuquerque! Bring your Kevlar jacket and I recommend that you DO NOT go on a weekend.

Haynesite $(UO_2)_3(SeO_3)_2(OH)_2{\cdot}5H_2O$
Repete Mine, San Juan County, Utah.

Named after MNCA member, Mr. Patrick Haynes, geologist, formerly from Colorado, now living in Socorro, New Mexico. Patrick explored old mines in the Uravan belt and discovered several new mineral species.

Type Locality of Haynesite
Repete Mine, Blanding, San Juan Co., Utah 1991
patrickhaynes407@yahoo.com

American Federation of Mineralogical Societies

(AFMS)
www.amfed.org

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American Federation Show 2014
July 9 – 13 Tulsa, Oklahoma

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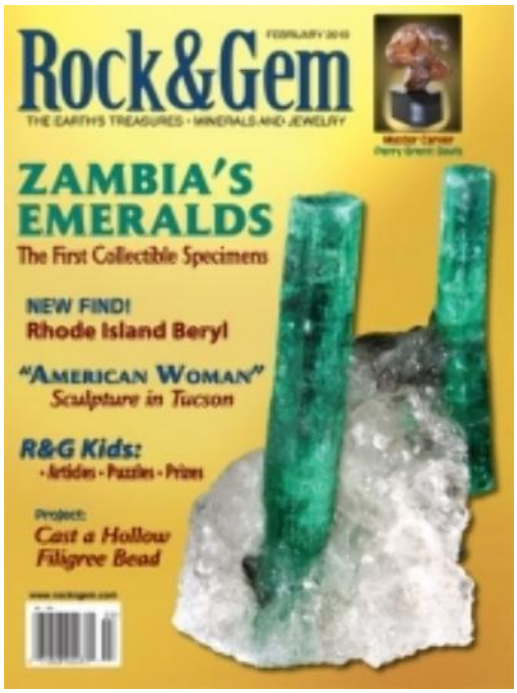

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Eastern Federation of Mineralogical and Lapidary Societies

(EFMLS)
www.amfed.org/efmls

Communication and Involvement Are the Keys to Our Success!

Geology Events:
By Matt Charsky

October:
18-20: Baltimore Mineral Society - Paul Desautels Micromount Symposium
Friends School of Baltimore,
5114 N Charles Street,
Baltimore, MD 21210

19: Annual Saco Valley Gem & Mineral Show sponsored by the Saco Valley Gem & Mineral Club. Albany Town Hall, Rt. 16, Albany, NH

November:
2- 3: 44th Annual Gemarama 2013: Shades of Red" sponsored by the Tuscarora Lapidary Society. The School at Church Farm, Business Rte. 30, 1/2 mile west of Frazer Rte. 30 Exton, PA.

23-24: 22nd Annual Gem, Mineral & Fossil Show sponsored by the **Northern Virginia Mineral Club**. George Mason University, "The Hub" Ballroom, Braddock Rd & Rt. 123; Fairfax, VA.
MNCA Micromounting Demonstrations

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Eastern Federation Show 2014
March 29 – 30 Plymouth Mtg. PA.

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