



MICROMOUNTERS OF NEW ENGLAND NEWSLETTER

April, 2000

no. 222

The MMNE was organized on November 8, 1966, for the purpose of promoting the study of minerals that require a microscope

PRESIDENT

Jim Warner
23 June Street
Auburn, MA 01501
(508) 752-8328

VICE-PRESIDENT

Jim Cahoon
31 Parker St.
Maynard, MA 01754
(978) 897-8221

SECRETARY

Patricia Barker
P.O. Box 810
Campton, NH 03223
(603) 536-2401

TREASURER

Janet Cares
18 Singletary Lane
Sudbury, MA 01776
(978) 443-9180

EDITOR

Johannes Swarts
PO Box 846
Bradford, VT 05033-0846
(802) 222-4875
email:
johannes_swarts@gdt1.com
fax: (603) 643-6808

Next Meeting

May 20th, Moose Lodge –
Marlborough, MA. Doors
open at 9 AM.

Dues are \$7.00/year and due
on January 1st, payable to
the Treasurer.

New items for the *Newsletter*
are welcome and should be
submitted to the Editor.
The *Newsletter* may be quoted if
credit is given.
The Club address is c/o Editor.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the MMNE will be held April 15th at the Public Library in Northborough, MA. Doors open at 9:30 AM.

The program at this meeting will be a workshop on Palermo minerals. Members are asked to bring any and all Palermo material they may have for looking and identification. Please remember to label or otherwise mark your specimens with respect to owner.

Another microscope source

Mike Swanson has sent in the following address as a source for used microscopes. He says he was very happy with the prices and service.

Conneaut Lake Scientific
315 High St.
PO Box AY
Conneaut Lake, PA 16316
(814) 382-1604
FAX (814) 382-8349

Mike also sent along an interesting note.

"I had an interesting bit of information from Steve Cares at the last meeting. He was looking at a tiny mount on a pedestal when the specimen flew off the mount into space. Presumably this was from acute overheating. Lesson to be learned is that even fiberoptic light sources can create significant heat at the point of illumination, especially when they are focused!"

Mont Saint-Hilaire, Quebec collecting dates

The collecting season at Mont Saint-Hilaire will open next month. Collecting dates are as follows:

May 27th & 28th
July 1st (July 2nd - Saint-Amable sill, Varennes)
July 29th
August 26th
September 23rd
October 21st

The gates to the quarry are opened promptly at 9 AM and closed at 4 PM. The fee is ten dollars.

New visitors to this remarkable mineral locality should keep a couple of things in mind. Hardhats and sturdy boots are mandatory. Collecting is forbidden within 25 feet of the quarry walls. No power tools (drills, etc.) are allowed.

A message from our President – Jim Warner

Spring is here, which means three things to MMNE members. One, in April we will be holding our Annual Elections for the officers in the club. Two, we are getting closer to our annual May gathering of friends. And three, spring is the beginning of another collecting season.

First, I should mention that **Jim Cahoon** (V.P.), **Janet Cares** (Treasurer) and **Johannes Swarts** (Editor) will most likely remain at their prospective post, as their seats are unchallenged at this point. **Pat Barker** will continue as Corresponding Secretary, and I am pleased to announce that we now have a new volunteer to act as Pat's assistant as Recording Secretary. His name is **Christopher Hubley**. He will take over the position once Pat breaks him in, giving Pat a much-needed break. I am also pleased to announce that **Brian Porter** has volunteered as Membership Chairperson. We will be voting on Christopher's position and possibly Brian's as well in April. We are still looking for someone to help with scheduling the calendar for the monthly meeting venues and also someone to help arrange people to give the talks each month.

Now, for the President's office, I was a bit discouraged to see the space for the position was left blank. I was told it was because there were no volunteers. Anyone interested in this position is urged to contact Janet Cares, Jim Cahoon, or myself before the April meeting. Our phone numbers are listed on the left side of the front page of the newsletter. In the absence of volunteers, it will fall on me to continue until I am challenged. So, if you are disappointed with my performance, please feel free to step in and take charge. It is not that I am displeased with the post; on the contrary, but I have been President for two years now, and was V.P. a year before that. If anyone wishes to assume the reigns, I would be happy to give the club a deserved break from my brash approach. I realize that my loud and sometimes forceful demeanor can come across as dictator-like and it has offended some people. I certainly do not want to come across that way, but it does seem to make some of you uneasy. I apologize for that! However, let it be known that the position is open for anyone who would like it.

Our March meeting in the newly renovated (and quite nice!) Sudbury Library had quite a large turnout of members. So much so, that we really didn't have enough tables. It was awfully nice to see an old friend, **Steve Cares**, pop in. His presence proved quite beneficial to the entire club. We had just brought up and voted on purchasing a spare microscope for any guest who may drop in to see what micromounting is all about. Steve then offered to donate a scope to the club for this purpose. It was also voted on to purchase an appropriate light for it. Janet told me she believes that she and Steve have one for this scope. We all thank the Cares for these generous donations. It was also nice to spend some time with Steve and enjoy his humor and sense his enthusiasm that he has for micromounting and the club's well being in general.

It was suggested during the discussion on how best to utilize the microscope - the best way to offer the help to newcomers so they can get to know how to use it and understand just what they are looking at. One suggestion was that we place the scope at a different table each month, as we all tend to pair up in usual groups each time. This way, we all take turns helping the guest. Good idea? Let us know!

The subject of workshops was again broached. Janet made a very important statement: "There is a definite generation gap within the club". More to the point, there is a definite knowledge gap between new members and the more experienced "old hats". No doubt this is true. When I first thought about starting a workshop, I figured that we would have one table set aside each month and have a theme for the month. Anyone interested in that months theme would gather at that table and benefit from those who were conducting that workshop. After a bit more discussion, it was voted to at least have a trial workshop. **Jim Grandy** and I have chosen Palermo I.D. to be the first workshop. Janet suggested it would be nice to invite Palermo's owner, **Bob Whitmore** to help us get started and to begin to achieve our goals in having the workshops. Janet said she would contact Bob and invite him - thanks!

What I'd like everyone to do is bring in any of your usual and your not so usual material from Palermo so we can learn what we should be looking for. But, a word of caution ... please make sure your specimens are clearly marked as to ownership. The last thing we need is to ruin the concept of the workshops by not having the material returned to its rightful owner.

One item that wasn't brought up in March was that Steve and Janet are uncomfortable with the May meeting being called the "Annual Steve and Janet Cares Reunion" and wish to change it. I feel it is well within their rights to want the change, as they were never consulted about the re-naming until it came up for vote last May. It was done to honor them for all the hard work and lifelong commitment they've made to the hobby. We can do one of two things to make amends. We can either return to the old name (dropping Symposium, because we don't have more than one speaker as the word symposium suggest), or we can come up with another name. If you have suggestions, please let us know!

Lastly, as the snow (at least down here in Massachusetts) is gone and the warmer weather is trying to re-emerge, I wish you all a safe and prosperous micro-collecting season. Thanks everyone!

Collecting at Mont Saint-Hilaire in 1999 – Laszlo and Elsa Horvath

(reprinted from *MICRONES*, vol. 34, no. 1 (Jan-Feb 2000), bulletin of the Canadian Micro Mineral Association)

The recent article in *MICRONES* by Tony Steede, "Just How Bad Was the Collecting at Mont Saint-Hilaire in 1999" alluded to what collectors "generally conceded" was a rather bleak collecting year. Many collectors who drove long distances once or twice a year to MSH were understandably disappointed with the material available at the field trips last year, especially when compared with collecting in the previous three or four years which may be considered as good to great years. To balance the impression of bleakness, we would like to offer a few observations and some specific details of our own collecting experience in 1999, and those of the local (Montreal area) collecting community.

Reviewing our collecting log for 1999, we noted that we ended the year just under the 100 species mark, certainly not exceptional but not bad. It is interesting to note however, the reappearance in our log of species we had not seen in recent years, such as *wohlerite*, *tundrite*-(Ce), *leucosphenite*, *epidote*, *steacyite*, *vesuvianite* (yellow tabular crystals) and the tadzhikite-like mineral, all of them in very small local concentrations. In the early summer, we have seen some excellent specimens of *labuntsovite* and *catapleite* (up to 1.5 cm rosettes) being collected by several collectors and in the fall Giles Haineault found some very impressive *smoky quartz* crystals, intense blue *carletonite* (mostly massive) some unidentified pseudomorphs. The Haineaults and other collectors, including ourselves, have found superb specimens of *UK106* (the best specimens for the species to date, with sprays up to 2.5 cm long); *eudymite* (rich aggregates of sharp, twinned tabular crystals up to 10 mm); *horvathite*-(Y) (some of the best with water-clear crystal groups); *elpidite* (spherical groups of lustrous greenish yellow, prismatic crystals); *thomascarkite*-(Y) (rich specimens); *leifite* (compact spherical aggregates up to 6 cm in diameter of opaque, white prismatic crystals); and *gaidonnayite*. We, as well as others have also found good specimens of *gypsum*, *lepidocrocite* (some included in gypsum), *epididymite*, *neighborite*, *monazite*-(Ce), *montegianite*-(Y), *narsarsukite* (crystals up to 1.5 cm), *petersenite*-(Ce), *polythionite*, *pyrochlore*, *rontgenite*-(Ce), *fluorapatite* (the best and richest specimen in our collection), *hilarite* (pink), *sodalite* (var *hackmanite*) crystals and a number of potentially interesting but as yet unidentified minerals. Of the new MSH species, in addition to *UK106*, we have collected *khomyakovite*, *oneillite* and another new but unpublished eudialyte group mineral, as well as *almandine* (new for MSH). Perhaps the most remarkable specimen we have collected is 5 x 4 x 3 cm in size that contains *petersenite*-(Ce), *donnayite*-(Y), *gaidonnayite*, *UK106*, *thomascarkite*-(Y), *horvathite*-(Y) and possibly *calcioburbankite*. Six or possibly seven species for which MSH is the type locality!

In the final analysis, we have added many items to our collection - some new species as well as some significant and "best-in-our-collection" specimens, and consider 1999 an interesting and very satisfying year. Many local collectors, including the Haineaults, concur that while it was not a "great vintage" year, it was a pretty good year.

Member biography – Johannes Swarts

Johannes Swarts was born in the Netherlands in 1953. In 1957, his parents decided to immigrate to Canada, so Hans and his sisters accompanied them on a steamship headed for the New World. Another move in 1960 took them to New England. At an early age, Hans became interested in astronomy, fossils, bugs, and rocks. Early acquisitions included quartz crystals and pyrite seams in rocks found along New England dirt roads, followed by specimens purchased from Wards Natural Science Establishment. A memorable field trip was a visit to Beryl Mountain in South Acworth, NH with his father in 1962. At that time huge beryl crystals could still be seen in the quarry walls. After high school and a short time spent at the University of Vermont, Hans hitchhiked to Fairbanks, Alaska in 1973 and on to Kodiak Island for a short stint in the fish canneries. California was next, where Hans managed to get a degree in geology. He supported himself by working diverse jobs, including dishwasher, car wash attendant, and woodworker. Summers were spent hitchhiking back East to visit family and friends.

Moving back to New England in 1982, Hans attended Dartmouth College for graduate studies in geology, focusing on economic geology. Fieldwork included a three-month stay in Zimapan, Hidalgo, Mexico, where activities included a daily trip underground into a silver mine for sampling purposes. Some beautiful micros of hemimorphite on conicalchalcite in his collection are momentos of this trip. Traveling seems to be in his blood, as Hans has also visited India (Kashmir), Thailand, Bali, and Italy.

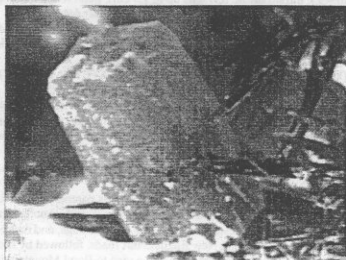
For the last fourteen years, Hans has been working at Geographic Data Technology in Lebanon, NH. His work includes programming and facility with various GIS (Geographic Information System) packages. He currently resides in Bradford, NH with his girlfriend Karen and two cats. Roughly a ton of untrimmed material and several thousand pieces awaiting mounting keep him busy with 'curating' his micro collection.

A video microscope...

The following article was sent to me by Jack Nelson, editor of the Mineral Mite, newsletter for the Micromineralogists of the National Capital Area (Washington, DC). MMNE member Steve Ruetlinger also sent me a copy. I promptly went to K Mart and found this "toy" near the video game section. At \$99, it was a bit steep for just after Christmas, so I deferred...

Nonetheless, the technology is intriguing. A few years ago, I fiddled around with a cheap video camera (\$30!) that was meant to enable teleconferencing. It sits on top of one's computer and sends a real-time image over the phone lines to the person at the other end - like telephone with video. The device actually capturing the image is a CCD (charge-coupled device), which is essentially a computer chip. The owner of the camera, a coworker and amateur astronomer, had removed the chip from the camera housing and placed it at the focal point in one of his telescopes. With some experimentation, he was able to capture decent images of the Moon, the images going directly to his computer. With image processing software, he could then resize, rotate, sharpen, or manipulate contrast.

I borrowed the camera and carried out similar experiments, only using my microscope. The result is depicted below. The crystal is a yellow thomascarkite-(Y) about 2 mm long from Mont Saint-Hilaire. The needles are aegirine. Since the eyepiece was removed to position the chip, I'm uncertain as to what magnification I obtained. Although it's a bit fuzzy, the image quality reflects the low cost of the device. Just like most other electronic hardware, the quality of these devices is sure to improve over time, while prices drop. Someday, a collector might be able to email or publish pictures of his favorite specimens, or even share them in real-time over the Internet... (Johannes Swarts, ed.)



From: Jack Nelson <nelsonja@erols.com>

Hi, all. Here is an item from the upcoming December issue of the Mineral Mite, newsletter for the Micromineralogists of the National Capital Area here in the Washington, D. C. area. Betsy Martin said I could post it to you all. Sounds intriguing and should provide great fun for rock, mineral, fossil and micromount collectors and for those who might like to use it in lectures and teaching presentations. Just thought you might like to know about this.

MEMBER BETSY MARTIN REVIEWS THE NEW INTEL VIDEO MICROSCOPE.

Mike bought me the Intel toy video microscope two days ago and I've been having a ball playing with it. It cost \$99.99 at K Mart (and other similar stores). It makes real-time video images on my computer and makes JPEG and bitmap files, "slides shows" with music, and I can edit it any way I wish. Now I can have easy color photos in my Morefield Mine "handbook"! It's really limited (for us micromounters) by its magnification (10X, 60X, and 200X), and also by the nature of the video resolution - but it's so easy to create pictures and work with the lighting! Kids would go berserk over this. The interface is a stitch. I've sent one of the photos of a gorgeous albite crystal from the Morefield Mine in JPEG format to Jack Nelson in an e-mail.

One of its neatest features is that it is real time and has adjustable lighting - really fun. I use an extra light source to jiggle the reflections, but the built in light is adjustable, too. It has a stage light, also. The most important thing to remember is that this is a TOY. It's easy to want it to fulfill all my exacting micromounter expectations! But if you wanted to send somebody a picture of something you found or wanted to print out a picture for another purpose, this is just great.

The bitmap or JPEG images can be edited in any image editor program. The one that comes with the video microscope is heavily geared to kids, although I made a complete Morefield slide show, complete with music in only an hour, including all the photography and mineral handling. Best part was being able to re-shoot images endlessly! Since it is a video camera, you can shoot "movies" or time lapse "movies". It will print posters and stickers. You can add text to the images and do elaborate special effects. The slide show will run a loop of up to 50 images, set to music. The camera detaches from the frame with a long cord - which introduces all sorts of possibilities.

Windows 98 is necessary; as is Direct X. You can work off the CD that comes with it or install the program on the hard drive. It's USB, so plug and play! The 60X magnification has the expected depth of field problems and is too extreme a magnification for most average micros. Somebody needs to figure a way to put a doubler of some kind on the 10X setting. I've tried and I can't make it work. Resolution is typically video/monitor quality, but, hey, this is so much fun and so easy, I'll just enjoy it for what it is. Kids would go bananas for something like this - what a great introduction to magnification at a very reasonable cost.

Regular price is \$99.99 - Mike got it for me on sale at K-Mart for \$89. And it's built to take rough handling. Their web site is <<http://www.intelplay.com>>, and it has a list of stores there, too.

Another club's perspective...

The MMNE newsletter is exchanged with about eight other clubs, most of them in the northeast. One exchange, however, is with the South African Micromount Society (SAMS). A letter received recently from **Horst Windisch**, editor of the society bulletin, was most informative in the light of the discussions and changes going on within our own club.

The SAMS has about 50 members (12 overseas), of which between 8 and 15 attend monthly meetings. Meetings are held at members' homes, so they don't have the (onerous) task of lining up monthly venues. Workshops have been a big success at their meetings, with subjects including crystallography (one system per meeting, with printed notes for each) and mounting techniques. SAMS members have also developed "Locality Data Sheets" (15 to date) describing for a locality both species collected and referenced. Personally, Mr. Windisch has produced a manual on the running of the Society, including all documentation and procedures, for future officers. Mr. Windisch also mentions that he currently fills the offices of President, Recording and Correspondence Secretaries, Treasurer, and Editor. And we thought Janet had it rough!

March 18, 2000 MICROMOUNTERS OF NEW ENGLAND

The meeting was called to order by President Warner at 12:40 p.m. Because the minutes of the February meeting were not published, they were read by Secretary pro tem, Janet Cares and were approved as read. Janet told us that the book Minerals by Robertson was donated to the Auburn Public Library as a thank you for allowing us to use their meeting hall.

The Treasurers Report for March 18th give us \$5,065.09 cash-on-hand

President Warner would like to place a small ad. in other bulletins of New England clubs inviting interested mineral collectors to attend our meetings.

The slate of officers to be voted on at the April included:

Jim Warner offered to stay on for a second year as President

Pat Barker said she could continue on as Secretary, but since she is unable to attend several meetings a year, she would be most grateful for an alternate Recording Secretary

Christopher Hubley has offered to be an alternate Recording Secretary

Janet Cares will stay on as Treasurer

Jim Cahoon said that he will stay on as Vice-President, if needed

Hans Swarts will be able to continue as Bulletin Editor

Other positions for the year 2000-2001 include:

Brian Porter has volunteered to be Membership Chairman

Josephine MacIndewar has offered to coordinate the refreshment table at the May Reunion Meeting with Betty Sevrens and Phyllis Leighton

Other positions are open, including that of Curator of Club Belongings

Janet would like to republish The Best of Micromounters of New England that she edited in 1993. Jim offered to type the parts that she wanted redone.

Janet Cares says that there is a generation gap in the Club, but she didn't expand on that thought. Jim Warner believes that "the gap" is between people who have been micromounters for a number of years and new members who are trying to learn about the hobby. He proposed that at each meeting we set aside a table with a learning theme which one member will supervise. For instance, a favorite collecting site or methods of mounting specimens or testing. This idea was unanimously approved on a trial basis. The first workshop table will be in April on the Palermo Mine in North Groton, NH.

Gene Bears reminded the membership present that we had voted to keep our treasury at around \$4,000, and that we are more than \$1,000. over that. He pointed out that he understood that more money would be donated to the color funds and more important gifts would be given to our host libraries. Gene also asked that the Club purchase a microscope so that visitors to the club would have the use of one during the meeting. Steve Cares volunteered a microscope with a case that could be used for this purpose. The members present thanked Steve for this generous gift and then voted and approved the purchase of a light for this scope, cost not to exceed \$300.00.

Several months ago Jim Warner and Chris Coolen went on a rescue mission to Rhode Island for a collection that they feared was being discarded. The asking price was two hundred dollars, but they were able to talk the seller down to \$100.00. This sum they paid, with the understanding that the Club would either reimburse them or return the minerals to them. However, most of the minerals have since been discarded, so the Club voted to reimburse them the \$100.00 that they had spent in Rhode Island.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

Pat Berry Barker, Secretary

MICROMOUNTERS OF NEW ENGLAND IN ARIZONA

The 46th Annual Tucson Gem and Mineral Show "Tucson 2000" was well represented by the Micromounters of New England: Josephine MacIndewar, Gordon Jackson, Bob Whitmore, Marcelle Weber, John Ebner, Phil Partington, and myself. The theme this year was "Minerals from Brazil".

Many of us attended the Arthur Roe Memorial Micromount Symposium on March 12th at the Convention Center. Six years ago when I last attended, I got the impression that everyone had brought their own scope, and so I didn't stay long. This time there was a bank of microscope positions on a raised platform (stage) with a vast array of give-aways on tables below. There always seemed to be an available scope, which was much appreciated.

Much of the give-away minerals were common (although attractive) Southwestern States material. There were, however several boxes or cards of more interest: barite, "Odell diamonds", Odell, Nebraska, Offretite (type locality) Mt. Semiole, Loire, France, and some interesting specimens being given away by a young mining engineer from the Nanisewik Zinc Mine, Baffin Island, Canada! These included siegenite, chalcocopyrite, and covellite. All of these were from localities new to me.

Another young man was dashing to and fro taking pictures of the Micromount proceedings. For a few moments he stopped long enough to look at the micromount give-aways. Thinking he was a newspaper or magazine reporter, I figured his collecting time was limited, so I pointed out several interesting boxes. I noticed the new loupe he was using and asked if he knew where there was an equipment dealer at the Show. I told him I had lost my 51 year old Hastings Triplet on the dumps at Palermo Mine last summer. He replied that there had been an equipment dealer at one of the Satellite Shows, but that dealer had closed up his booth the day before. However, he told me that if I could wait till the Symposium was over, he would give me his loupe (!).

Startled, I made "paying for it" noises which he brushed aside, assuring me that it was a promotional item to introduce this Russian loupe. Needless to say, I didn't let him out of my sight. True to his word, he presented me with his loupe later in the afternoon. I asked him for his address so I could thank him and received his card: "Bob Keller, Webmaster of Bob's Rock Shop." Wow! The pictures he was taking were being displayed on The Show's web pages. I copied them off when I got home to NH.

At 1:00 p.m. the lecture series and slide programs began on the subject of Brazilian micro-minerals presented by geologists from the Hecla Mining Co. and Phelps Dodge Mining Co. A panel of micromounters, including our own John Ebner, gave a very popular program that prompted a lot of questions and comments from the audience. (John's subject was "Building Specialized Micromount Collections." Perhaps he would give this talk to the MMNE?)

The following day three of us MMNE members plus several North Shore Clubbers went on a field trip south of Tucson and visited several interesting mineral areas. It was great fun to be digging on February 12th! We found micro crystals of andradite, siderite, and calcite looking like grains of uncooked rice. Also an arborescent chlorite mineral, hematite roses, vanadinite, and wulfenite were some of the micro things we found. All together, most delightful micromounters' moments.

Pat Barker