

MICROMOUNTERS OF NEW ENGLAND NEWSLETTER

#211

December, 1998

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

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

News 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.

Upcoming Meetings

No meeting December, 1998.
January 9th, 1999, 9:00 AM –
Auburn, MA Public Library.

Next meeting

The next MMNE meeting will be held on Saturday, January 9th at the Auburn, MA Public Library. Doors open at 9 AM.

Specimen trade

Through the generous donations of MMNE members, a total of 90 micromounts will be sent to the Southern California Micro-Mineralogists for their annual symposium sales table. In return, the MMNE will receive an equivalent number of micros representing Western localities.

It was heartening to see the variety and quality of donated materials – gobbinsite, garronite, sabinaite, bastnasite, synchisite, elpidite and donnayite from Mont Ste-Hilaire; roscherite and eosphorite from West Baldwin, ME; jahnsite, strunzite, laucite, vivianite, fairfieldite, ludlamite and whitmoreite from the Palermo mine, N. Groton, NH; anatase from Nashua, NH; scorzalite and meta-autunite from the Charles Davis mine, N. Groton, NH; apophyllite, prehnite, and calcite from the OG quarry, Southbury, CT. We in the Northeast are fortunate to have access to such a wide variety of mineral occurrences!

A word of caution: one package of donated material I received rattled when handled. On opening, I found that about half the specimens had come loose from their mounts. When shipping micromounts, I find it a good idea to wad up some tissue paper or very thin plastic film and enclose a bit of it in each micro box. This will cushion the mount against the shocks of heavy handling during shipping. Also remember to pad the micro boxes tightly on all sides when packaging in a larger box. Before taping the box shut, give the package a couple of good shakes – it shouldn't make a sound. (*note – I remounted the loose mounts and repackaged the bunch...*)

Cubic Garnets revisited

In the last newsletter, I excerpted a number of articles by Jack Nelson (editor of *Mineral Mite*, newsletter of the Micromineralogists of the National Capital Area) and others, describing cubic garnets found in the heavy mineral concentrates of certain streams in Maryland, Virginia, and Idaho. As I send this newsletter to a number of other club editors, Jack thanked me for the mention of his finds and enclosed a few examples of the garnets. They are just as described – very tiny, pale pink rounded cubes with growth hillocks on the faces. Some show minor development of what appears to be the dodecahedral form (110). Now, how do I mount them?

Jack was kind enough to extend an offer to MMNE members: let him know you're interested and he will send you a couple of the garnets. Might I suggest sending him an example of something interesting from your area? I'm sure he would appreciate the return favor. His address is:

Jack Nelson
17300 Hughes Rd.
Poolesville, MD 20837-2037
Email: nelsonja@erols.com

From the editor

Well, it's the end of another collecting season. Time to mount and label those specimens, buy and read a good mineral book, plan next year's field trips, appreciate last year's finds. Best Wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Calendar of upcoming events

Jan. 9, Auburn, MA. MMNE regular monthly meeting. Auburn Public Library, Auburn, MA. Doors open at 9 AM. Snow date Jan. 16.

Feb. 6, Westford, MA. MMNE regular monthly meeting. Fletcher Library, Westford, MA. Doors open at 10 AM.

Feb. 27-28, Meriden, CT. Meriden Mineral Club "Rainbow of Minerals" Mineral-Fossil-Gem Show. Maloney High School, Gravel St. (exit 16 off I-91, west on Main St., 3rd right). Hours: 10-5. Info: (860) 267-4644.

March 6-7, New York City, NY. New York Mineralogical Club Gem & Mineral Show. Holiday Inn Manhattan, 440 West 57th St (between 9th & 10th Avenues). Hours: Sat 10-7, Sun 10-6. Info: (914) 739-1134.

March 13, Northboro, MA. MMNE regular monthly meeting. Northboro, MA Public Library. Doors open at 9:30 AM.

March 26-28, College Park, MD. 27th Atlantic Micromounters Conference. Hosted by the Micromounters of the National Capital Area. University of Maryland, College Park, MD. Info: Steve Weinberger PO Box 302, Glyndon, MD 21071-0302.

March 27-28, East Windsor, CT. Connecticut Valley Mineral Club 13th Annual Gem & Mineral Show. Best Western Colonial Inn. Hours: 10-5.

April, Rochester, NY. 26th Annual Rochester Mineralogical Symposium. Info: Dr. Helen Chamberlain, PO Box 85. Manlius, NY 13140.

April 17, Sudbury, MA. MMNE regular monthly meeting. Fairbanks Senior Center, Sudbury, MA. Doors open at 9 AM.

May 8-9, Topsfield, MA. North Shore Rock & Mineral Club Show. Topsfield Fairgrounds. Info (781) 592-4148.

Mineral Cleaning – an update

After reprinting an article on mineral cleaning by John Betts (New York Mineralogical Club) in the November MMNE newsletter, I received the following response by email:

Hi Mr. Swarts,

I am writing in order to update the John Betts article on cleaning with the Waller solution. As stated in both the article and also in Pearl's *How to Clean Minerals*, the material John Betts had a question about is sodium dithionite. This material also goes by the name sodium hydrosulfite. It can be purchased from many chemical supply houses but I don't think it is available much of anywhere else. Fisher Scientific carries it and so does J. T. Baker. Ordering can be done online in many cases and MSDS information is also available online. J. T. Baker's website is at www.jtbaker.com and Fisher Scientific also has a website but I couldn't get on it when I was looking for this information. You might note to your readers that it is a flammable solid and it may spontaneously combust on exposure to moisture and air. It is probably best to minimize rather than maximize the amount ordered.

The process works extremely well for many things, removing rust from carbonate minerals which would normally dissolve in acids, and for cleaning up oxidation on those hard-to-preserve pyrites and marcasites. I have seen specimens of both types cleaned with this process by Dr. Peter Leavens at the University of Delaware and results in some cases are astounding. As with everything, a test sample should be used to prevent the loss of a treasured specimen. Hope this helps your readers.

Regards,
Roland Bounds
Friends Of Mineralogy National Treasurer

November 14th, 1998 Micromounters of New England

The November 14th meeting was called to order by President, Jim Warner, at the Burlington, Massachusetts Library. The Secretary read the minutes that the Treasurer, Janet Cares, had taken in October at Vera and Forrest Fogg's home. They were approved as read. The Treasurer's Report recorded that we have \$4822.40 cash on hand. Treasurer Cares said that she would accept dues that day, because we don't have a meeting in December.

The members learned that Steve Cares had undergone a cataract operation that week, so he wasn't able to attend the meeting, but that he was recovering nicely. Janet said that she would like to find a coordinator who would help arrange the meeting places, dates, and speakers. She finds it quite a task to avoid other New England shows, field trips, and meeting dates. A list of speakers at our regular meetings will be printed in the bulletin when the dates and meeting places are arranged.

Janet reiterated that the 1999 May Meeting will be held on May 15th at the Royal Order of the Moose Hall near where routes 290 and 495 come together in Marlborough. The speaker will be Henry Barwood, a well-known speaker and contributor to mineral magazines. He had several talks that he could give and his subject (or subjects) will be announced later.

It was suggested that members could mail to editor, Hans Swarts, several micromount specimens for the swap with the California club. They need not be mounted in boxes, but should, at least, be mounted on cards. John Stewart said he would take the club material to Hans to his home in Vermont.

It was voted on and approved that, from now on, we shall have the business meeting one hour after the hall or meeting room is made available to us.

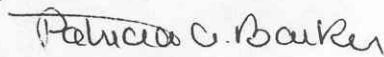
Because some of us (such as the Secretary) are getting hard of hearing, it was decided that it might be a good idea to get some sort of a speaker system. The President will research prices and models.

The January 9th meeting will be held at Auburn Public Library beginning at 9:00 a.m. The business meeting will be held, therefore, at 10:00 a.m.

We welcomed a new member, Josephine MacIndewar

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m. The speaker and member, Scott Whittemore, gave an excellent presentation on his photographic methods with handsome slides of New Hampshire minerals that he has collected.

Respectfully submitted,


Patricia Berry Barker