



MICROMOUNTERS OF NEW ENGLAND

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

Summer 1995

Newsletter #184

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Dues are \$6.00/year and due on January 1st, payable to the treasurer.

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

Upcoming Meetings

July 15, 1995 John Reiner's Center Harbor, NH

August 19, 1995 Sunapee State Park, NH (Capitol Mineral Club)

The next regular meeting of the MMNE will be held in September at a time and place yet to be decided. There will be two informal meetings held during the summer. The first is on July 15 at the home of John Reiner in Center Harbor, New Hampshire. A map is on the back of this page. Bring your microscope, light, extension cord, table, chairs, and some food to share (pot luck). The second will be an informal session held during the Capitol Mineral Club show on August 19 at Sunapee State Park, Sunapee, NH. An area will be available for micromounters to set up scopes.

Welcome to the following new members:

Kerry Yellin
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Bob and Anna Wilken
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Thanks from the rest of us to the many members who contributed specimens, literature, and photographs to the sales and giveaway tables, as well as time towards the success of the May meeting, including Pat Barker, Gene Bearss, Inga Burggraf and Dana Jewell, Steve and Janet Cares, Marilyn Dodge, Bob Janules, Walter and Carolyn Lane, Edna Lerer, Fran and George Morrison, Margaret and John Stewart, Mike Swanson, Marcelle and Charlie Weber, and with apologies, anyone else we missed.

Since summer is the season for traveling to Mont Saint-Hilaire, I have enclosed an updated list of all the MSH species, compiled from the March/April 1995 issue of "Rocks and Minerals". The first trip to MSH was on Memorial Day weekend and was completed with mixed reviews. The weather was outstanding and the ravens entertaining, but the collecting was spotty, with some people leaving after just one day. Others reported good collecting, with a number of large miarolitic cavities found (one had several lustrous ilmenites each about 1/2 inch across) as well as some of the green/black hornfels containing bastnaesite, donnayite, gobbinsite, etc. reported in the Marcelle Weber's article in the March newsletter. The next trip is scheduled for July 1/2 (Saturday/Sunday). July 1 is Canada Day, so make your reservations early. Hope to see you there.

A couple of thoughts for future newsletters. We could run classified ads in this newsletter (for dues paying members only) for books, supplies, microscopes, etc. for sale or trade (but NOT for sale of specimen material). We could also indicate on the membership list (or a separate list) each member's special collecting interests, what particular specimen material they have for trade, whether they are interested in trading through the mail, and/or if they would be interested in having visiting micromounters or speakers stay at their homes (this list does get sent to multiple other clubs).

We need to get ZIP+4 from all members if possible. We can also list FAX numbers and e-mail addresses on the membership list if anyone is interested.

The East Coast Gem, Mineral, and Fossil Show is coming up August 11, 12, & 13 at the Eastern States Exposition, West Springfield, MA.

PUTNEY, VT ROADCUT (Rte 5)

Having been a member of the MMNE for just over a year now, I thought it was time to write a short article on one of my favorite collecting spots.

About 4 miles north of Putney, VT on Route 5 is found a rather extensive roadcut through phyllite, a rock very common to Vermont. The road here trends east-west. Folding on a large scale is evident; locally, the phyllite contains veins and masses of coarse white quartz. Garnet porphyroblasts occur in some of the phyllite "beds".

Of interest to the micromounter are the numerous fine (usually < 2-3 mm thick) mineralized fractures crosscutting the phyllite. The fractures appear to be of two types based on predominant mineralogy, although a continuum can be observed.

Quartz-bearing fractures are the first type to be considered. These contain abundant clear quartz crystals to several mm.; many are doubly terminated. Iron and manganese(?) oxides are locally abundant as fine films coating the quartz crystals. Rare pyrite crystals occur as modified cubes and pyritohedrons; many appear to at least partially altered to goethite or limonite. Other minerals include tiny clusters of lustrous, butterscotch-yellow, tetrahedral (?) plates on quartz. These are tentatively identified as brookite. A mass of rubble on the north side of Route 5, away from the town of Putney, contains quartz fractures carrying sparse electric blue and pale yellow anatase crystals. Rarely, fractures containing small quartz crystals may also contain white to clear, flattened diamond-shaped crystals. Most, if not all, appear to be twinned parallel to the flattened direction. These crystals may be prehnite.

The second type of fracture contains euhedral quartz with later coarsely crystalline calcite. Some of these fractures show very little quartz. Herein may be found water-clear harmotome crystals displaying the "star drill" twinning typical of this mineral; a pale violet-pink unknown occurring as equant crystals (orthorhombic?), some showing curved faces; and calcite crystal groups in the "nailshead" habit. Fractures with abundant uncrystallized calcite may also contain a second pink unknown. This mineral occurs in calcite fractures that have undergone some solution weathering, exposing the pink crystals. The crystals form attractive groupings of orthorhombic plates, some with (110) and (111) modifications. Cleavage parallel to the flattened direction is obvious. The luster is dull to vitreous. Attempts to etch these crystals from the enclosing calcite met with disappointment - warm vinegar dissolved the crystals more rapidly than it did the calcite!

A few extremely fine (< 1 mm) fractures contained calcite, sulfides, and quartz. On etching these specimens with vinegar a number of very tiny crystals were encountered. Some appear to be red-brown to deep red hexagonal pyramids - could this be wurtzite? Other crystals found are pyrite and possibly chalcopyrite.

I've also found filiform pyrite in the calcite-bearing fractures. The pyrite occurs as brass-yellow elongate grains with a square cross-section. Right-angle bends in the crystals are common; one specimen I have shows two such bends, forming a tiny rectangular frame standing above the calcite. Associated minerals include quartz, wurtzite (?), rare blood-red, equant rutile (?) crystals, and calcite.

COLLECTING

There is the amassing of a collection and studying which makes it fun. Then there are the oddities and unusual items that add zip to it. But even better are the friends along the way who will add a choice specimen or some knowledge or help. These are the only reasons to collect. A couple of years back I mislaid - "lost" - some of my choice items. I mourned the loss. But over a period of time, I thought just having them in my possession for a short time was really a privilege. It was all the pleasant memories that were most valuable. Never collect with the idea that some day some day your collection will be worth a fortune. If it happens, fine!. But enjoy the experience as you go along. Just recently I found those misfiled specimens.

Let's get down to some specifics. When I started micromounting I met Steve Cares and his wonderful give-aways. Then one day the Saco Valley Club was looking for ideas for the next meeting. "Tell me about this micromounting," I asked. So next meeting I saw some of the beauties and got some more samples, and I was hooked on micromounting. John Demars was especially helpful and gave me lots of identified specimens to start me off. Later on a field trip to St.-Hilaire, Janet Cares gave me one of the really great specimens - some fine aegerine needles with a cube perched mid way on one of them. Wow! The friendship and the specimen were well worth the trip.

When I moved south, I was the only active micromounted in the club. I lectured and provided specimens and even got a convert or two. But even better, Skip Merrill, formerly of the North Shore (MA) Club, presented me with 2 more outstanding specimens from his collection which he was winding down. One was a "trapiche" emerald, a six-rayed emerald cross with the spaces between the green arms filled with white beryl to make a six-sided beryl crystal. The other had come originally from Neal Yedlin. I'd heard Neal Yedlin lecture and admired his style and knowledge. One of his specimens was a slab of topaz with a circular inclusion of jahnsite, a truly unusual gift from Skip. I had seen pictures of these specimens but never expected to own one. The kindness and generosity of friends is the best part of collecting.

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