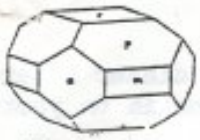
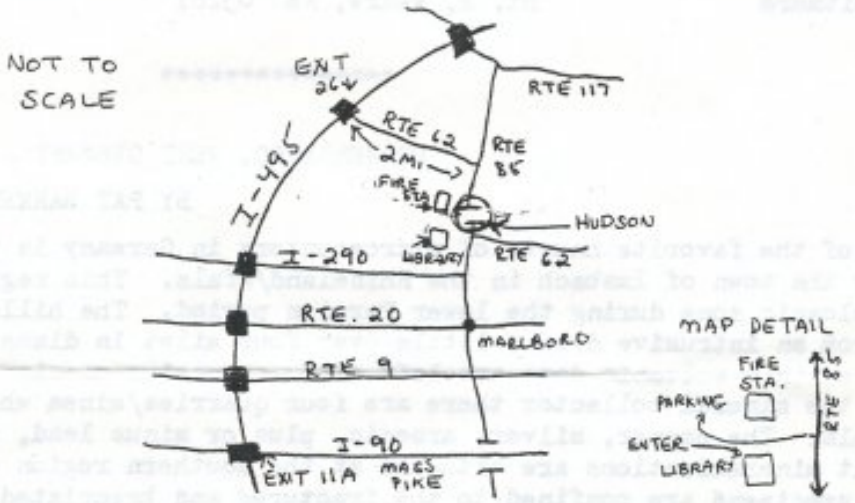


Topsham, Me.
Tapiolite

MICROMOUNTERS OF NEW ENGLAND

MARCH 30, 1984 NEWSLETTER #88

The next regular meeting of the Micromounters of New England will be held on Saturday, April 21, 1984, at the Hudson, Massachusetts Public Library. The library is located about two miles from either the end of I-290 (at Route 85) or exit 26 from I-495 (at Route 62). Enter parking space between the library and the fire station and look for the library parking on the right. The meeting room entrance is on the side of the library nearest the parking lot. (See map.)



Nominations for the officers for the MMNE took place in March. The slate is as follows: President--Pat Barker; Vice-President--Palmer Sevrens; Treasurer--Janet Cares; and Secretary--Ralph Carr, Jr.

Elections will take place at our April meeting. Officers will assume their elected positions at the conclusion of our May meeting.

The drawing for the five copies of the Mineralogical Record, which was to have taken place at our March meeting, was postponed until April as we did not wish to interrupt our members' discussions with the Pennsylvanian visitors. Anyone interested in participating can enter provided they meet the criterion as stated in last month's bulletin.

HELP OUT AT OUR NORTHEAST MEETING!

We still need help in various areas. Pat Barker needs some people to help with the micro mineral sales. She also needs more donations of mounted material (remember to price specimens). Norm Biggart needs people to help with security, and Palmer Sevrens could use some people to aid in registration and gate attendance. Frank Leighton could use help in the area of Luncheon preparation & clean-up. Anyone interested contact Norm Biggart. WE NEED YOUR HELP TO MAKE THIS MEETING A SUCCESS!

PRESIDENT

Norman Biggart
4 Baron Park Lane
Burlington, MA 01803

VICE PRESIDENT

Patricia Barker
19 Stocker Avenue
E. Lynn, MA 01904

SECRETARY

Ralph Carr, Jr.
25 Farnum Road
Warwick, RI 02888

TREASURER

Janet Cares
18 Singletary Lane
Sudbury, MA 01776

BULLETIN EDITOR

Shelley Nanes Monaghan
30 Eagle Avenue
Brockton, MA 02401

Dues are $3.50 per year and are due on January 1, payable to the treasurer.

Contributions of news items for the bulletin are welcome and should be sent to the Editor.

DINNER AFTER NORTHEAST MEETING

We are still interested in learning about who is interested in having dinner after our Northeast meeting. If you are interested, please write this information in on your meeting registration form or contact Norm Biggart.

ACTIONS TAKEN BY EXECUTIVE BOARD

The Executive Board voted last month to include Palmer Sevrens signature in the ability to write checks in the club's name. This is, of course, to facilitate arrangements for our Northeast Meeting. This action will remain in effect until the present term of office for our Executive Board expires in May.

ADDITIONS TO OUR CLUB MEMBERSHIP LIST:

James Cahoon	24 Blackstone Street, Cambridge, MA 02139	(617) 876-3691
Donald & Jean McKenna	125 Poplar Drive, Cranston, RI 02920	(401) 944-9391
Dana McPhee	763 Summer Street, Lynn, MA 01905	
Earl & Marie Melendy	Museum Terrace, S. Londonderry, VT 05155	(802) 824-5272
Robert Whitmore	Rt. 2, Weare, NH 03281	(603) 529-2621

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DONNERSBERG, WEST GERMANY

BY PAT BARKER

One of the favorite haunts of micromounters in Germany is the Donnersberg rhyolite dome near the town of Imsbach in the Rhineland/Pfalz. This region was once a very active volcanic zone during the lower Permian period. The hills of the Donnersberg were formed from an intrusive dome a little over four miles in diameter. Only the lower portions of this volcanic dome are left after extensive erosian.

For the mineral collector there are four quarries/mines which have exotic assemblages of minerals. The copper, silver, arsenic, plus or minus lead, zinc, antimony, uranium and cobalt mineralizations are situated at the southern region of the rhyolite body. The choicest specimens are confined to the fractured and brecciated zones in the rhyolite.

This mining area is thought to have been worked for copper and silver as far back as 900 A.D., but most activity occurred in the period from the 1700s up to World War II. Even today, several mining companies periodically look the area over, but nothing seems to come of it.

When I visited this area in the mid-1970s it was quite deserted except for local rockhounds who combed and recombed the dumps. Then in 1979 the area was opened to the public as a fee collecting area.

These mines, quarries, and dumps areas are esthetically pleasing (of course, beauty is in the eye of the beholder). The first one that we visited, the Katherina I Mine, is set in rugged (for this region) terrain, where the steep, lichen-covered cliffs support hardy twisted pines. Even the mines and dumps are attractive. A sheer wall with mine entrances at various levels looks like ancient cliff dwellings or catacombs. The dumps are composed of rust-red to fawn colored rhyolite shot through with chrysocolla---a very vivid contrast, especially after a rainstorm.

Besides the chrysocolla, Katherina I Mine has malachite, azurite, and at the lower levels, chalcocite, chalcotrichite, and native copper. Other minerals there include linarite, wulfenite, jarosite, duftite, and brown pyromorphite, as well as smudges of galena. The young geology student who took us there was able to find micros of mimetite and duftite crystals on our first trip, and, on later visits, I found some for myself.

The Katherina II Mine, located higher, has a mineral suite that is much the same. Azurite crystals are much easier to spot here, and of special interest at Katherina II are very attractive specimens of malachite balls on rotten rhyolite. I had seen this material before I visited this area and was anxious to find some myself. It was not to

(Donnersberg, cont.)

be, however, for familiarity with a collecting area certainly helps a great deal! My student guide, however, eventually obtained one nice specimen from a seam that he knew contained the prizes. The malachite occurs embedded in a muddy red clay that must be washed away gently to reveal the green lustrous balls. Unfortunately and predictably they usually fall off in the cleaning, so matrix specimens are really choice. We had better luck collecting cerussite which is fairly easily obtained as long as the collector takes care splitting the friable material.

This mine is more extensive than Katherina I, and it is possible to get temporarily disoriented in the various quarry levels. One wide area of waste material between two steep rock ledges used to be underground workings, but an earthquake in 1938 collapsed the whole section. Other minerals found at Katherina II are chalcosite, jarosite, and linarite.

The final area we collected at during the several times we visited the locality, was the Weisse (or White) Mine. I recall this as being much smaller than the other two, but it was possible to go into a mine entrance a few steps and collect erythrite "flowers", pink felted rosettes on chrysocolla. Rarely, micro needle crystals of erythrite can be found; I was given the one I have. Other minerals to be found at the Weisse Mine include chalcocite, cuprite, and malachite, and native silver.

There is a fourth mine called the Grüner Löwe (Green Lion). I regret that I didn't visit this, but at the time it was the least accessible. Minerals from there include chalcocite, mimetite, olivenite, cuprite, and bayldonite.

Two other choice micro minerals found at these Donnersberg locations are tyrolite and agardite.

I remember collecting at these quarries with much pleasure, and I feel sad to think that it may have changed. I have written asking my German mineral collecting friends what it is like now the area is a tourist-y fee area, but none of them has ever gone back.

At the April meeting I'll have some Donnersberg specimens for Micromounters of New England members. -- P. B.