

# MICROMOUNTERS OF NEW ENGLAND NEWSLETTER

March, 2001

no. 229

*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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## **Next Meeting**

April 21<sup>st</sup>, Sudbury, MA  
Public Library

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.

## **Next meeting**

The next meeting of the MMNE will be held on March 17<sup>th</sup> at the Auburn, MA Public Library, from 9:00 AM on. A slide projector has been reserved for anyone wishing to present a program with visual aids.

## **Future meetings**

April 21<sup>st</sup> - Sudbury, MA Public Library  
May 20<sup>th</sup> - Moose Lodge, Marlborough, MA

## **Club notes**

Remember, the annual May meeting is not that far off. As the sales and giveaway tables are always very popular at this event, the club is actively seeking sales or free material in the form of specimens, books, magazines, reprints, etc. If anyone has minerals to donate for the sales table in May, please contact Hal Herard at (508) 755-5947. Giveaways are to be given to Gene Bearss or Bob Janules.

Dues are still due at \$7 per member. Dues should be mailed to the new membership chairman, Brian Porter:

Brian Porter  
355 Walsh Ave.  
Newington, CT 06111

Membership will be dropped if dues are not paid by March 31, 2001

## **It's Winter...**

Like many of you, I'm eagerly looking forward to the end of snow (and mud) season so I can get out and start collecting again. In the meantime, I've been doing a job many of us probably dread - trimming, cleaning, mounting and labeling specimens. Over the past few years, I've built up a backlog of several hundred trimmed specimens, each rolling around loose in a box. Additional, somewhat trimmed, material fills another 30 flats or so. Let's not even mention the 50 flats in basement, 40 or 50 5-gallon buckets in the barn...

Each little chunk gets a view under the 'scope and an initial decision as to whether it's a 'keeper'. One wonders why some of the stuff was kept in the first place, or there's the realization that a 'better one' has come along in the meantime. Others are of sufficient quality, but will most likely end up in the trading stockpile. Sometimes a little trim is necessary, either for sizing or to remove uninteresting material.

Then it's off to the cleaners! Dirty pieces get a soaking in water with a couple of drops of dish soap. If I get caught up in other things around the house, the pieces may soak for a week. Fe oxide coatings may call for an oxalic acid bath, but care must be taken that the cleaning chemical does not affect the mineral of interest. I've found out the hard way that Mont St-Hilaire gaidonnayite doesn't do well in an ammonia bath, for instance.

## Calendar of upcoming events

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**March 17, 2001, Auburn, MA.** Monthly MMNE meeting. Auburn Public Library.

**March 25-25, 2001, East Windsor, CT.** 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Gem & Mineral Show, sponsored by the Connecticut Valley Mineral Club. Best Western Colonial Inn, East Windsor, CT; Exit 45 off I-91.

**March 30-April 1, 2001, College Park, MD.** 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Micromounters Conference, sponsored by Micromounters of the National Capital Area. University of Maryland, College Park, MD.  
Info: Steve Weinberger, PO Box 302, Glyndon, MD 21071-0302 <cwenber@bcpl.net>

**April 19-22, 2001, Rochester, NY.** 28<sup>th</sup> Rochester Mineralogical Symposium. Radisson Inn, 175 Jefferson Rd., Rochester, NY. Info: PO Box 85, Manlius, NY 13104-0085.

**April 21, 2001, Sudbury, MA.** Monthly MMNE meeting. Sudbury Public Library.

**May 20 (Sunday), 2001, Marlboro, MA.** MMNE Northeast Meeting. Moose Lodge, Marlboro, MA.

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Each piece then gets a brief dip in the ultrasonic cleaner, a rinse in clean water and is then set out to dry. In the meantime, I may have prepped a hundred or so various-sized plastic boxes with cork pedestals glued in, finished off with a coat of modeler's flat black paint. I use a variety of cork sizes, balsa sticks, toothpicks, etc. Prepping the micro boxes is good mindless sitting-in-front-of-the-TV work.

Now we come to the part I find kind of challenging. The trimmed and cleaned specimen needs to be presented in a small box with a cover, mounted such that little, if any, of the pedestal (and surrounding box) shows on viewing. Obviously, glue shows NEVER show. All of these requirements can be met for any specimen by selecting the right prepped micro box. Pedestals can be simply cut to length or shaped to fit irregular specimens. A dollop of Duco Cement and I'm done! Well, almost. Sometimes, the lid won't close over the specimen, or it slides off the pedestal, or the angle is wrong, or a blob of glue makes an unfortunate appearance, or a large specimen may need to be propped up with additional corks... Aesthetics come into play, as well as manual dexterity and lots of patience.

After mounting, the micromount boxes are given color dot labels representing localities – yellow = MSH; orange = Palermo mine; green w/black center = Gold Hill, UT, for instance. I like to collect and examine suites from a single locality, so the dots give me quick visual access in my collection to the relevant specimens. This type of labeling is reserved for places represented by tens or hundreds of specimens.

Labeling has always been a task I especially dreaded – all that tiny lettering on a small bit of paper! Combining an ineligible scrawl with a shaky hand and a tendency to make spelling mistakes makes for lousy-looking labels. Playing around with Microsoft Publisher led me to think I might be able to print my labels by computer. An ACCESS database and front-end built by a co-worker (payment in beer) allows me to quickly enter mineral names and localities by typing the first few letters of each, the rest filled in by the program. Although Microsoft Publisher is designed for creating address labels like the one on this newsletter, a few tweaks allow me to use the mineral/locality ACCESS database like an address database. I print labels on standard adhesive-backed Avery label stock, available at any office supply store. By rotating the label sheet after printing once, I can print two mineral labels on a single Avery label. The result: 60 nicely lettered labels per sheet. They only need to be cut a bit and then stuck onto the micro box.

Although all of the above sounds like a lot of work, I find that breaking the process into steps eases the load. I might spend a day cleaning and trimming, another day mounting, labeling the next. The results are certainly worthwhile and quite satisfying. This winter alone, I've mounted probably 500 or 600 specimens, and labeled 300. The remainder should be labeled in the next month or so. Next winter, I think I might build a computer-based cataloging system. Hmmm, so I'll start with a modified Dana system, cross-referenced by locality, but I'll want also access by crystal system...

### **Goldschmidt online**

Poking around on the Internet leads me to some, ahem, interesting sites. I don't even remember how I found this one. A German-language site, it appears to present the owners' interest in mineral collecting. What I found intriguing was that someone had apparently scanned all/most? of Victor Goldschmidt's *Atlas der Krystallformen*, published over an eleven year period from 1913 to 1923. In its entirety, this work presents over 23,000 crystal drawings representing nearly 700 mineral species.

Pages of drawings are presented as .gif files, somewhat grainy in appearance, but very enlightening to 'leaf' through. To see this collection of drawings, go to

<http://www.meinmineraliensammlung.de/Lexicon/lexicon.html>

You'll see displayed a page, in German, with the hotlink 'Atlas der Krystallformen von Victor Goldschmidt' embedded in the text. Clicking on this will take you to another page with tiny underlined hotlinks at the bottom – 'Band1', 'Band2', etc. Clicking on one of these hotlinks takes you to yet another page arrayed in table format:

Tafel001 - <mineral names>

Tafel002 - <mineral names>

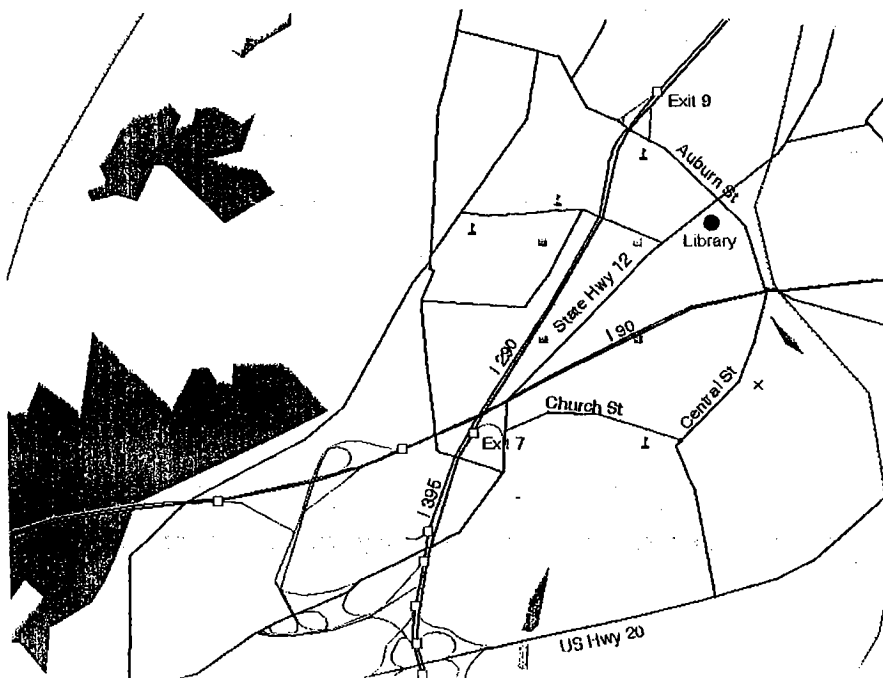
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Each takes you to a page of crystal drawings. Mineral names are in German, but most make sense to the mineral collector – 'anatas' for anatase, 'baryte' for barite, etc. Pages are also downloadable as .gif files.

### **Mont Saint-Hilaire dates, 2001**

The following dates have been announced by the Montreal Mineral Club for access to Mont Saint-Hilaire

May, 26, 27.....	Saturday, Sunday
June 30.....	Saturday
July 28.....	Saturday
Sept. 8.....	Saturday
Oct. 20.....	Saturday



Map to  
Auburn, MA  
Public Library  
- March meeting -