



MICROMOUNTERS OF NEW ENGLAND NEWSLETTER

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

No. 289

May, 2008

OFFICERS 2007-2008

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Next Meeting:

Saturday, May 17, 2008, Annual MMNE mini-symposium, Elks Lodge at 91 Park Street, Hudson, MA, doors open at 8 am for member set up. The meeting program will be as follows:

- 9:00 Registration & Informal Session
- 11:00 Speaker Presentation by Bill Henderson
Microminerals of the Palabora Mine, South Africa
- 12:00 Lunch
- 1:00 Speaker Presentation by Bill Henderson
Microminerals of Italy
- 2:30 Informal Session – continued
- 3:00 Door Prize Drawings, Raffle, & completion of Silent Auction
- 4:00 Departure

Newsletter Editor

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Current Meeting

Saturday, May 17th
(Annual Symposium)
Elks Lodge
91 Park Street,
Hudson, MA
Doors open at 8 am

Map and driving
directions are on page 7

Next Meeting

For information regarding
MEETING CANCELLATION
due to inclement weather,
Joseph Mulvey
(603) 880-4018
bassmeister_2000@yahoo.com

In Memorium, Merrie Porro forwarded from our president, Joe Mulvey

With heavy heart I forward on to you the information regarding this weeks' sudden passing of Merrie Porro. Merrie's active involvement in the Micromounters since I've been a member was almost that of den mother. She loved minerals, knew so much about micromounting, she never failed to cook up some very tasty cake for the meeting even though, invariably, she was at the North Shore meeting the night before. I know I speak for all our members when I say we will miss her very much. The below is edited from the Funeral Home website.

Meredith "Merrie" (Wiggin) Porro, age 64, of Lynn, died suddenly on Wednesday, May 7, 2008, at Newton Wellesley Hospital.

A resident of Lynn for the majority of her life, she was the daughter of the late Russell and Alice (Wood) Wiggin. She was a graduate of Saugus High School and of the Malden Business School.

"Merrie" was very involved with the North Shore, Lynn, and Boston Rock and Mineral Clubs. She enjoyed attending and contributing to the various shows, educational events and had her own extensive collection of rocks and minerals. She enjoyed traveling around the New England area in pursuit of her mineralogical passion. She will be fondly remembered by her many friends for her trusty companions; her cooler, camera and sledge hammer.

Merrie was a proud Scot's woman who enjoyed attending the Highland games with her family. Among her varied interests she was a Cub Scout Den mother, avid reader, amateur photographer, prolific gardener, had diverse pets and her very own wild life sanctuary. Merrie will be remembered for her generosity and the relief she provided to so many people.

Her Funeral will be held on Wednesday at 11 am in the Solimine Landergan and Richardson Funeral Home 426 Broadway (RTE129) Lynn. Burial will be in Pine Grove Cemetery. Relatives and friends are respectfully invited. Visiting hour's Tuesday 4-8pm.

In lieu of flowers the family requests that donations be made to the National Wildlife Foundation or North East Animal Shelter in memory of Merrie.

The **Newsletter** is the official publication of the Micromounters of New England (MMNE). The last by-laws revision was April 19, 2003. The MMNE is a member of the Eastern Federation of Mineralogical and Lapidary Societies (EFMLS) (<http://www.amfed.org/efmls>) and the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies (AFMS) (<http://www.amfed.org>). Material from the *Newsletter* may be copied in other rock and mineral publications if credit is given to the author and the *Newsletter* and permission has been obtained from the author. If there are questions regarding copying contact the editor. The club address is c/o the Secretary. Meetings are held monthly, September through May, except for December, and usually on an informal basis in July. Meeting sites may change and will be posted in the *Newsletter* as far in advance as possible. Visitors are welcome to attend all meetings. Bring a microscope and light source if you have one.

DUES are \$12/year for a single person and \$15/year for a family membership, levied on a calendar basis. The family membership includes two adults and all children under 18 living at the same address. One copy of the *Newsletter* will be sent on a family membership.

Officers for 2007-2008

Acting President: Joseph Mulvey 24 Skyline Drive Nashua, NH 03062-3516

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Below: Photos from the April MMNE meeting courtesy of Merrie Porro



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MMNE SECRETARIAL REPORT
APRIL 19, 2008 MEETING

The following minutes are condensed and transcribed from the MP3 recording on the “Members” page at www.micromountersofnewengland.org

The business meeting came to order with Acting President Joe Mulvey presiding. The most immediate issue at hand pertained to the nomination of officers for the 2008- 2009 calendar year. Joe Mulvey volunteered to accept the full-time role of President for the upcoming year. Gordon Jackson said he would be willing to serve as Vice President. Merrie Porro accepted the position of Treasurer hence replacing the retiring Anna Wilken. Anna took some time to explain the major duties and procedures that Merrie would confront. Bob Wilken will continue in the role of Secretary. Anna Wilken said she would serve as a Director along with Gene Bearss. Tom Mortimer will continue as Bulletin Editor.

A motion was made to accept the above slate of officers by voice vote. It was passed unanimously.

Mike Swanson suggested that the club by-laws are in need of study and possible revision. It was determined that it had not been done since 2003.

Joe Mulvey commented that he would attempt to get more member participation for the writing of newsletter articles in order to take the burden off the Editor. He said that he would personally approach and encourage members individually during the upcoming year. He stated that field trip reports to collecting localities or articles that highlight a member's technical expertise would be excellent candidates for the newsletter.

Members briefly discussed whether or not to make a motion to approve the disbursement of funds for an eyepiece camera that can be adapted to a microscope and connected to a digital projector. Joe Mulvey stated that the Kennebec, Maine club had made the purchase and that it was very pleased with the system. Joe said he would gladly purchase the item as long as he would be promptly reimbursed. The motion, however, was never actually made.

Gordon Jackson said that he was in charge of the May meeting's silent auction. He expressed a hope that more members would volunteer items. He said he hoped for at least twenty items donated by as many people. He noted that last year only three people donated a total of nineteen items.

Respectfully submitted,
Bob Wilken, Secretary

Symposium Silent Auction Preview

Through the efforts of Joe Mulvey, donations for the Symposium silent auction have been solicited from several mineral dealers. Below are the dealers, a brief intro and a description of their donations, which have been added to the silent raffle.

Sauktown Sales



Visit Jim Daly's website <http://www.sauktown.com/> to find a wide selection of micros, both mounted and unmounted. He also has thumbnail specimens from the Fred Dryer collection for sale. Jim's trip reports around his home state of Michigan and to the great southwest are wonderful, too.

Jim donated a suite of 29 Michigan micros temporarily mounted in clear plastic micro boxes with very nice labels. There were about 12 different minerals and a fair amount of the same mineral from different localities. These 29 mounts were separated into three lots of 10, 10 and 9 to enable three people to win the raffle and enjoy a very nice suite.

Symposium Silent Auction Preview -- continued from page 3**ConnRox Minerals**

ConnRox Minerals is devoted to supplying the mineral community with quality specimens at reasonable prices. They deal primarily in crystal specimens, loose or in matrix. <http://www.connroxminerals.com/> Visit Connecticut geologist Larry Rush online, schedule an appointment, or see him at the Gilsum Rock Swap every summer. Larry is a retired geologist who is well respected for his fine worldwide selection of minerals, stories, jokes, books and swap lists.

Larry Rush sent me a huge package of specimens, all wrapped in paper and labeled very well. I was very surprised at the quantity and quality of the specimens. While some may not be considered micro per se, all the specimens have a reason for interest. I broke down his package into six cigar boxes each with about a dozen specimens. Among the noteworthy, many zeolites from the northwest, a beautiful titanite or two, some vuggy libethenite from Portugal, and many nice specimens from North Carolina. That's all I can remember right now – I was tired by the time I was done!

Dan & Diana Weinrich

Dealers in Fine Mineral Specimens - Since 1989

Dan Weinrich may be one of the early pioneers of internet based mineral sales. His website is vast with selections ranging from his home in the St Louis, with great specimens from the Viburnum Trend out to all the current international areas such as China, Pakistan, Namibia and Brazil.

Dan has committed to donating to the symposium but being at the Dallas show at the time of this writing we have not yet seen his gift to the club. <http://www.danweinrich.com/>

If you are looking for a mineral specimen, I strongly encourage you to drop a line to one of our thoughtful sponsors! I have dealt with them personally for my collection and have always been extremely satisfied. Now, knowing their generosity towards our club I can only recommend that much more.

Club Donations

Donations to the 2008 Symposium have been positive.

Among club members, **Merrie Porro** has generously donated her entire collection of mineral magazines (about 150 lbs!) dating back to the mid-70's. Obviously, she started collecting as a child. We have separated the magazines into bundles by year and will try to sell them at a fair price in these small lots. Magazines include Rocks & Minerals, Mineralogical Record, Rock & Gem, some Natural History and some Earth. There is also a good bundle of fossil related magazines.

Thank you, Merrie for your kindness!

Member **Ron LePage** has also donated a suite of specimens. Being quite a distance from our regular meeting spaces doesn't deter Ron from participating in the club. His shared insight into our search for a quality microscope camera has put us on the right path, and now his donation of specimens from the White Mountain region has earned our respect and appreciation again.

A NOTE FROM OUR NEW PRESIDENT, JOE MULVEY

Our Annual Micromounters of New England mini-symposium is nearly here!

Location: Elks Lodge, 91 Park Street, Hudson, MA. Map available on the MMNE website.

Handicapped accessibility is very good with no stairs or physical barriers.

Our speaker is our own **William Henderson**, who will present talks about the Microminerals of Italy and Minerals of the Palabora Mine in South Africa.

As always, we need donations for the symposium from all members as our stocks of both sales and give-away material are running quite low. Please bring your donations to the early if they need color coding. If each MMNE member would consider donating ten to fifteen specimens for the sales table and a couple of flats or egg cartons of material for giveaways, there would be plenty for everyone. **Please remember: Your registration fee covers only part of our operating expenses – your donations cover the rest.**

We also need items for the silent auction and door prizes which could include hardware, books, posters, other printed material, and mounting supplies (or anything else a micromounter might be interested in).

If you are bringing mounted material for sale, please color code them with price stickers (dots) as follows:

\$1.00 yellow,

\$2.00 red,

\$3.00 green,

\$4.00 silver,

\$5.00 gold.

Anything above \$5.00 needs to have an actual price tag.

If you do not have the colored stickers, group them by price category, and we will try to mark them at the symposium.

The symposium officially convenes at 9:00AM, but anyone who can come in at 8:00AM to help set up the various venues (sales, silent auction, etc.) will be appreciated.

Please sign up promptly for the meeting so that we can get an accurate count for the caterer. Bring a friend or two if you can. There is plenty of space.

All reservations which include lunch must be in the treasurer's hands before May 12th. Walk-ins can pay at the door, but extra meals may not be available.

Please fill out and send in the **Registration Form** on newsletter last page or download from the Micromounter's website as soon as possible.

2008 Symposium Presentations by Bill Henderson**Microminerals of the Palabora Mine, South Africa**

The Palabora Mine, located near the town of Phalaborwa (yes, the spellings are correct) is working in a carbonatite rock. Carbonatites are extremely rare, igneous rocks composed mostly of calcite. Several elements found only in trace amounts in granites, etc., are concentrated in carbonatites, and these crystallize to form rare minerals. In most cases, such minerals are massive or, more properly, anhedral. Only rarely are the minerals at Palabora or elsewhere found in open cavities where they form nice specimens. Examples of such, obtained by exchange with the mine superintendent no less, are shown in this talk.

Microminerals of Italy

Italy has experienced an extremely varied geological history, resulting in a great number of rock types and parageneses. These in turn have led to an amazing number of mineral species. In fact, it would be hard to find any country of a similar size with so many. Further, a substantial fraction of these species occur in truly beautiful micro crystals. This talk will show these species arranged by their chemistry and paragenesis.

April Meeting Minutes notes from Joe Mulvey

Bob Wilkens was unable to attend the April meeting. Hopefully, he'll be able to make the May symposium, otherwise we will need a picture of him to remember what he looks like. In the absence of our esteemed club secretary, I will supply some first hand notes as they come to me.

The April meeting convened with the first order of business being an election to determine the club officers to take the reins at the end of the symposium for the next year. After a brief and lively discussion, the slate was hammered out and voted in. The 2008 – 2009 Officers will be:

President: Joe Mulvey

Vice President: Gordon Jackson

Secretary: Bob Wilken

Treasurer: Merrie Porro

Newsletter: Tom Mortimer

Director: Gene Bearss

Director: Anna Wilken

The Treasurer seat was the most highly contested seat. Nobody seems to want it. It is my opinion that the Treasurer has been slowly given more and more responsibility over the years and that needs to change. While our club is successful, it is unfair for the most of the burden to be placed on one person. With Merrie assuming the Treasurer position let's all think twice before deciding some dirty job needs to be done by the Treasurer because "that's the way it has always been done".

Anna Wilken has been Treasurer since 2004 and is retiring from the position after four years of reliable, detailed, thoughtful and diligent service. She said that the club bank account is currently at \$6600.

Anna proposed, and I know Mike Swanson requested it as well, that the Bylaws be reviewed by a committee to ensure we are meeting our own laws and to see if anything needs to be updated.

Joe Mulvey has volunteered to create a word document of the bylaws at his earliest convenience.

Discussion shifted to the microscope camera topic. It was decided that Joe Mulvey will purchase, through ebay, a five megapixel camera (based on Ron LePages observations at another club's meeting) and be reimbursed once the product is received. Joe will email the final total to the club officers prior to the purchase.

The following is an article that I think was published in the old Rocks & Minerals in the early 1950's. At one time, it was available on the internet through a Maine Collector's site (Flagman) but it has been unavailable for quite a while.

Standpipe Hill, Topsham, Maine

By LEO NEAL YELDIN

Topsham Maine is a locality noted for the quantity and variety of its pegmatite minerals. Strictly speaking, however, it is not a single locality. It can be described more accurately as a mineral region, for hundreds of pits, test holes, and worked ledges can be found, extending over an area of some 16 square miles. Topsham itself is a small village located on the north side of the Androscoggin River (across from Brunswick) in Sagadahoc County. The mineral workings extend in a north south direction, east of highway 201, from Bowdoinham, thru Cathance (where the famous Fisher Quarry is located), through Mt Ararat to Topsham. A number of quarries were worked immediately west of the town, in the vicinity of the larger water tower, and these became known as the Standpipe Hill localities, one of which is herein discussed.

Geology - The rocks of the region are quartz mica schist, intruded by pegmatites, and on occasion by granites. These run in a northerly – southerly direction, and at the Standpipe Hill locality there are test pits extending some 300 yards from the main workings which evidence this direction distribution. The pegmatite is coarse grained with large sheaves of biotite as the predominant mica.

Mineralogy - On a visit to one of the quarries on April 19th 1942 in the company of Andrew Snyder of Randolph, Maine, the following minerals were observed.

ALBITE - Pearly white masses abound with occasional crystalized clevelandite

AUTUNITE - Platty yellow crsytalline flakes on surfaces and in the seams in the feldspar.

BERYL - Rather rare. A single rough crystal, of honey color was observed.

Larger masses of this material would cut beautiful golden gems (the area also has a lot of deep blue beryl scattered through out the pits - ED)

BIOTITE - The prevailing mica is biotite. Masses and crystal sections up to a foot long are common. Splitting the books sometimes discloses flattened garnets, rather opaque, between the sheaves of the mica. The biotite may coat all the surfaces of a wedge shaped piece of feldspar, and it is here that samarskite and monazite are usually found.

GARNET - Flattened crystals of almandite as note above. Many small lustrous crystals, trapezohedrons are scattered throughout the rock. One notable find was a bright red compound crystal 4 inches in diameter, embedded in microcline.

HEMATITE - Small vugs in the feldspar contain brilliant black crystals of specular hematite. Occasionally a fresh surface of feldspar will be coated with glittering black scales of this iron oxide. Red brown stains on old exposed cleavages evidence a once considerable quantity of this mineral.

HYALITE - The exposed surface of 1 large mass of quartz at one of the test pits was covered with a white blebbly skin of this material. It was not fluorescent.

MAGNETITE - Irregular octahedrons up to 1 inch in size are common in the granite. These react strongly to the magnet, but do not exhibit the properties of lodestone. (Many well formed magnetites with mica scattered over faces are found today)

MICROCLINE - The prevailing Feldspar. White, gray to pink. No crystals were found. It is in this material, in wedge shaped masses, coated with biotite, that samarskite and monazite occur.

Continued on next page

Standpipe Hill, Topsham, Maine -- continued from previous page

MONAZITE - Small, sharp, twinned crystals, dark brown and lustrous are comparatively abundant. they usually occur in microcline, just at the contact between the biotite and feldspar, sometimes extending into the mica. The feldspar in the vicinity of the monazite and samarskite loses its vitreous luster and becomes a bit chalk like, dropping about 1 degree in hardness. Several unusual specimens were found, one $1/2? \times 5/8?$ astride a crystal of garnet and a notable twin $1 \frac{3}{8}? \times 1?$. This crystal was embedded in rock, part in quartz, part in feldspar and part in biotite, an unusual occurrence here.

MUSCOVITE - Comparatively rare Muscovite is more apt to be found in vugs in the feldspar, in minute crystals, than as a normal constituent of the pegmatite.

QUARTZ - Everywhere abundant in pure grey and white masses. Tiny drusy crystals line surfaces of seams and vugs in the rock.

SAMARSKITE - Small crystals are common. These, like the monazite, are found in triangular shaped masses of feldspar. None was found in quartz. The crystals run to an inch in length, are terminated, have a dull altered exteriors and are brilliant black on fresh surfaces.

SERICITE - Some altered mica, appearing as greenish yellow scales on microcline, was noted.

The rare earth minerals occur in a zone of feldspar on the west wall of the quarry about 8 feet below the surface. The pit is now (Russell Brothers Mine?) full of water , but the surface of the dump is covered with biotite coated microcline, indicative of monazite and samarskite.

The locality merits further study. Perhaps other interesting material will come to light. It is not known when it will be worked again but the waste piles contain quite sufficient material for investigation.

1. Notable is the absence of tourmaline black or colored. In a region of pegmatite so abounding in this mineral, it's lack is outstanding.
2. Some years ago, Mr. J C Boyle of New York, who had returned from a trip throughout Europe, described the occurrence of some of the rare earth minerals of Sweden or Norway. He presented the writer with a specimen of fergusonite from Evje, Norway. It is remarkable how alike the occurrence of this specimen is with that of the rare earth material found at Standpipe Hill. The wedge shaped feldspar, biotite mica, deadening of the feldspar's luster in the vicinity of the fergusonite all attest to a more than casual similarity.

Micromounters of New England
Annual Reunion Meeting
May 17, 2008
The Elks Lodge
91 Park Street, Hudson, MA

Schedule:	9.00 AM – 12 Noon	Registration, informal session Speaker, silent auction, sales table.
	12 Noon – 1.00 PM	Lunch (catered)
	2.00 PM – 3.00 PM	Speaker
	3.00 PM – 4.00 PM	Informal session

PROGRAM

Bill Henderson, Jr. is giving the following talks:

- 1) Microminerals of Italy
- 2) Minerals of the Palabora Mine in South Africa

Registration Form

Registration Fee: Members \$ 20.00 Non-members \$ 25.00

Please make checks payable to: Micromounters of New England (MMNE)
c/o Anna Wilken, 79 Meadow Lane, Campton NH 03223

Name(s) _____ @ \$ 20.00 each

_____ @ \$ 25.00 each

Address _____

Please return this form by Saturday May 10.2008. This is the closing date for ordering a meal.

48 hour notice is required for cancellation with refund.

Direction to Elk's club, Hudson MA

MMNE Mini-Symposium
Saturday, May 19, 2008

Take Rte 85 (Hudson Street) east from the I-290/I-495 interchange to Washington Street. Take a left on Washington Street and then look for Rutland Street on the left, maybe $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ mile down Washington Street. Go to the end of Rutland Street and turn left on Park Street. The Elk's Club will then be immediately on your right on Park Street.

