

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. 273

September, 2006

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Current Meeting

Saturday, September 16th
Chelmsford, MA library
Doors open at 9 am

Map and driving
directions are on page 6

Next Meeting

Saturday, October 21st
Chelmsford, MA library
Doors open at 9 am

Map and driving
directions are on page 6

For information regarding
MEETING CANCELLATION
due to inclement weather,
contact:

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From the editor

At the April meeting, I volunteered to replace Mike Swanson as Newsletter editor for 2006-2007. I will try to publish the traditional nine issues this year, and I will need everybody's help to fill them. I know that not anybody has time to write a 12 part monument like Bob Janules wonderful work on the Conway Granite, but there is space in the Newsletter for less colossal achievements. There are many mineral localities in New England that disappear without a trace. Construction sites, rehabilitated dumps are places where nobody will collect anymore; a short note in the Newsletter is a way to preserve their memory. You don't need anything fancy: a couple of sentences to describe the locality, a mineral list, and maybe a couple pictures, and you got an article for the Newsletter. For those of you who take pictures, why not sending me your best pictures, with a short caption describing them? I'm sure other MMNE members would love to see them. And as a mineral collector, I'm interested in what's happening at classic mineral localities. You found a mineral at Palermo that wasn't listed for this locality? Maybe other people are struggling with the same mineral in their unknowns, and would be happy to get the information... I do have a good scanner and a slide scanner, as well as various imaging and drawing softwares. I do have free access to many scientific publications. I will be happy to help you prepare articles for the newsletter. Just ask me!



Finally, I would like to thank Pamela and Gordon Jackson for hosting the summer meeting on July 15th. About 15 members of MMNE made the trip to Canterbury. The food was great, the company was wonderful and a good time was had by all.

MMNE summer meeting at Gordon and Pamela Jackson home.

Photo: Herb Fielding

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 and August. Sites rotate 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 \$10/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.

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2006 CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

September 2006

2 – Mont St-Hilaire fieldtrip (Labor Day week-end)

16 – MMNE meeting, Chelmsford, MA Public Library, 9am-3pm (Map and directions on page 6)

October 2006

7-8 – 43rd Annual Gem and Mineral Festival, Capital Mineral Club

Sunapee Ski Area, Rte 103, Newbury, NH. Sat. 9-6, Sun. 10-4.

contact Jonathon Herndon, P.O. Box 520, Ossipee NH 03814-0520

14-15 – 34th Annual Gem and Mineral Show and Sale sponsored by the Bristol Gem and Mineral Club

Beals Community Center, 240 Stafford Ave, Bristol, CT. Sat 10-5, Sun 10-4

Website: <http://bristolgem.org> – Email: Bristolgem@hotmail.com

21 – MMNE meeting, Chelmsford, MA Public Library, 9am-3pm (Map and directions on page 6)

November 2006

18 – MMNE meeting, Chelmsford, MA Public Library, 9am-3pm (Map and directions on page 6)

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In Memoriam:

Stephen Whitney Cares (1906-2006)



*Steve collecting at MSH on 14 September 1996
Photo: Willow Wigh*



*Steve Cares and Dana Jewell in July 1992
Photo: Bob & Anna Wilken*

Stephen W. CARES (or Steve as we all knew him) died May 25, 2006 at Emerson Hospital in Concord, Mass. He was a charter member of the Micromounters of New England in 1967⁽¹⁾, and a frequent contributor of giveaways and sales. In that year he married Janet Walkley (also charter member). Together they collected at many sites in New England, the Black Hills, and Mt St-Hilaire, where they discovered a new mineral, caresite⁽³⁾, named for them. They were inducted into the Micromounters Hall of Fame in 1999 at the annual meeting of the Baltimore Mineral Society. Janet is now living in a retirement home in Charlton, Mass. A collection of some 6000 micromounts⁽²⁾ was donated by the Cares to Harvard University as a reference collection.

by Janet Walkley Cares

⁽¹⁾MMNE was organized in 1966, but officially chartered in 1967.

⁽²⁾Micromounts themselves do not require a microscope, but are best observed under a binocular microscope.

⁽³⁾[from the editor] Caresite is a carbonate officially described by Chao & Gault in the Canadian Mineralogist (vol. 35 pp. 1541-1549) from material collected by Janet and Steve at MSH in 1989. The chemical formula is $\text{Fe}_4\text{Al}_2(\text{OH})_{12}\text{CO}_3 \cdot 3\text{H}_2\text{O}$, and it is isostructural with quintinite and charmarite. Janet and Steve are also co-finders of charmarite.

Reflections on Summer Collecting at Charles Davis Mine

by Bob Wilken

Charles Davis Mine is a short jaunt north of its more famous neighbor, Palermo, in Groton, NH. According to Pegmatite Investigations 1942-45 New England by Eugene Cameron, mining started some time prior to 1920. Apparently, as with many of the pegmatite mines, work proceeded in fits and spurts spanning several decades. Just as Cameron was compiling his survey, a significant effort was being made with work beginning in December of 1943 continuing into July of 1944. It seems the winter season was no deterrent to work. I have no information that would indicate the final year of mining operations at Charles Davis.

Muscovite mica was the principal resource (and most likely the only one) mined at Charles Davis. The mining was all open pit with "waste rock.... removed by way of an aerial tramway." The mica often "contained numerous inclusions of magnetite (?) or pyrite (?) and small tourmaline crystals." But, because of these defects the mine could only produce small-sized sheet mica.

Most all of you who have collected microminerals, especially in NH, probably know this location well because of the occurrence of euhedral scorzalite crystals. Perhaps many of you collected here long before Anna and I had the opportunity. The scorzalite, originally reported as lazulite, may actually contain both end members even within a single crystal. The crystals range in color from an irresistible green to a deep royal blue. And, to make the site all the more interesting, brazilianite and goyazite are also reported to be present. Anyone perusing Philip Morrill's old New Hampshire collecting booklet or checking out the listing of mineral occurrences on Mindat must admit, it is a very alluring collecting site.

Charles Davis (for us) is only a twenty-five minute drive and, during a year of three dollar per gallon gasoline, it was an ideal time to explore it. Even better, the walk in is at best a five to ten minute walk over an old, obvious mine road. Throughout the month of August the only thing that made the walk longer was stopping along the way to snack on abundant blackberries.

The search for scorzalite (let alone the many other listed minerals) has been extremely difficult. Spots of blue occur readily throughout the pegmatite but, **microcrystals** are elusive. My wife, Anna, and I soon learned that most of the blue was deteriorated material. Childrenite occurs in vugs or voids in albite in relatively close proximity to deteriorated scorzalite. Frequently it fills out voids which when broken through appear as radial, bronzy and fan-like. Other times it appears as masses of extremely thin crystalline laminae; more often than not, heavily oxidized and also deteriorated. Rarely the masses are intact and fresh.

In spite of the difficulty and perhaps because of it, Anna and I have gone back to Charles Davis over and over often being "skunked" totally. But, how can this be? Many beautiful specimens were found no more than ten years or so ago...by some of YOU! Did you get it ALL? Well, you did a good job but, not quite. I have since found some modest specimens. Anna has yet to find her first. On the other hand, on two occasions Anna has found gorgeous, deep emerald green, chunky, cough drop-shaped crystals of torbernite that I have yet to find. In addition, we have found a total of less than five unaesthetic specimens of strunzite and a couple of specimens containing tiny paravauxite. No, no brazilianite or goyazite! But, lo and behold I have found one small specimen containing beraunite and rockbridgeite with paravauxite. And neither of these has been reported in any of the lists that I mentioned earlier. Anna discovered an old iron bolt. Jokingly I told her to check it for micros. She did! In a concave area of the bolt are sharp, grayish, platy hexagonal microcrystals! What are they?

Reflections on Summer Collecting at Charles Davis Mine (continued)

My experience at Charles Davis this summer causes me to question at least two things.

The first is the validity of mineral listings, especially on Mindat. There is no way to determine the history behind them let alone the source of the information. And indeed, they may be incorrect, incomplete, in question (souzalite?), or one-time finds. If I were to submit rockbridgeite and beraunite to the Mindat list my ego might soar. But, how realistic would it be for anyone else (or myself for that matter) to ever find it again?

The second issue that I question pertains to the wisdom of “where the good stuff occurs”.

At Charles Davis the “good stuff” is reportedly on the dumps to the left and downhill of the quarry opening. It’s at the bottom of the dump. Well, we have dug bomb-crater-deep and made mini adits into the sides of the dump. I have come across masses of muscovite where workmen apparently were cobbing the material out of the rock. I have found scorzalite on top, scorzalite on the bottom and everywhere in between. There is no rhyme or reason to where it is which of course can be maddening. Just when you think you are going to hit the mother load, like the mirage on the road ahead of you, it disappears. The only conclusion is that it is where it is! In short we have moved mountains and been rewarded to a minor degree. And yet, how addictive is “the hunt”!

I invite you to write your experiences. Our new bulletin editor needs your contributions!

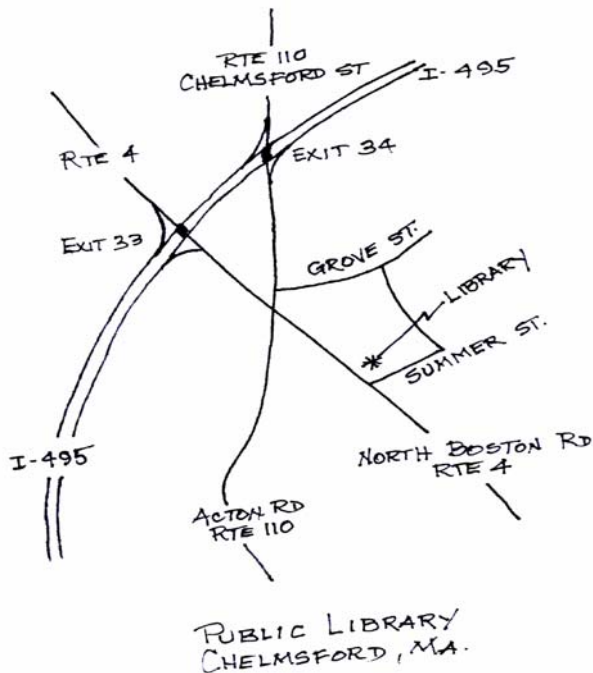
A note from your (new) president, Tom Mortimer

At the start of my term as your MMNE 2006-2007 president, I thought it would be appropriate to write a note of introduction and to express a few thoughts I have for our club in the coming year.

I have been a member of the New England micromounters for about a dozen years. Until recently, I have attended only two or three meetings a year, usually the winter month meetings. In good weather, my choice for time available to the hobby was always field collecting. I have now transitioned to a part time work week with my employer of the past 40 years, and so have agreed to take on the MMNE presidency this term.

My youth interest in minerals was rekindled in 1974 when I joined the Nashua Mineral Society. I have enjoyed a long and active association with that group. My interest in microminerals was spawned by Scott Whittemore and Bob Janules, who provided many excellent presentations to the Nashua club on their micro discoveries at Loudeville and North Sugarloaf Mtn.

On the topic of our monthly meetings, I would like to explore ways to view specimens of more members. My typical meeting experience is to share mount viewing with four to five other members, usually to get identification opinions. One option for more diversified member specimen viewing would be to have an area where members could put 4 to 10 mounted specimens in an individual box with their name on the set. These sets could be species, locality, or group related. With good participation, there might eight to a dozen of such specimen sets available at a meeting. Members could take these sets to their scopes for personal viewing. A sheet of paper in each box could be provided for member comments or suggestions on unknowns. With a moderate number of specimens circulating at a meeting, there is a risk of misplacing specimens. Members would have to be extra careful to keep the sets together. Perhaps some kind of color coding scheme could be used.



DIRECTIONS TO CHELMSFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY

From I-495 Northbound

Take Exit 33 and turn right (South) at bottom of ramp onto Rte 4. Follow Rte 4 approximately ½ mile through several sets of lights to traffic island in center of town.

*Continue on Rte 4 to the right at the island and proceed past the Mobil station on your left (Note that you are on a one way street). The library is on the same island as the Mobil station. Continue on Rte 4 staying to the left for several hundred yards. The back side of the library is to your left. Take Rte 4 North, a left hand turn, and the library is the first building on the left. Park in the lot and enter through the front doors. The meeting room is to the right, just inside the entrance.

From I-495 Southbound

Take exit 34 and turn right (South) at the bottom of the ramp onto Rte 110. Follow Rte 110 (Chelmsford Street) to junction of Rtes 110, 129, and 4. Go straight into Chelmsford Center, staying to the right of the Mobil station and follow directions from I-495 Northbound (*)

OR take Exit 33 and follow the directions from I-495 Northbound.

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