

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. 299

September, 2009

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Current Meeting

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2009
Trinity Lutheran Church
Chelmsford, MA
Doors open at 9 am

Next Meeting

Saturday, Oct 17, 2009
Trinity Lutheran Church
Chelmsford, MA

Map and driving
directions are on the last
page of this newsletter

For information regarding
MEETING CANCELLATION
due to inclement weather,

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Next Meeting: Saturday, September 19, 2009

Welcome back to another year of the Micromounters of New England! This newsletter kicks off the fall meeting to be held on September 19. It will be nice to see those familiar faces, most we haven't seen since the May symposium.

The **Boston Mineral Club** has scheduled a very exciting field trip to the **Palermo Mine** in North Groton, NH for the last weekend in September. This is the first club field trip in a couple of years. If you read the article here, you'll see why it's going to be an exciting trip! The BMC has graciously allowed us to join in on this fabulous bulldozer special in which some pretty old dumps will be turned over and hosed down for the first time in many, many years. There will also be a blast to further the excitement, quality and enjoyment of this trip. A hearty thank you to fellow MMNE members **Peter Cristofono** and **Nate Martin** who are also on the board of the BMC. I look forward to seeing many MMNE members at his great outing! This is the first Micromounters of New England field trip in quite a while. I hope that this is another sign that our club, while small, is still healthy, active and enthusiastic about collecting our own specimens.

Once again we have another superb article by Tom Mortimer in describing his trials in discovering Jarosite in New Hampshire. Tom has the best articles, and I am not saying that because he's the only contributor to the newsletter; I truly enjoy his adventurous spirit coupled with his knowledge and desire to document all of the minerals of New Hampshire.

The **American Federation of Mineral Societies** held their first ever mineral club website contest this year. The MMNE came in 6th place! Upon **Anna Wilken's** suggestion I submitted the our MMNE website for consideration. Apparently we won the EFMLS regional competition because the seven regions of the AFMS finalists were the regional winners. While my name is on the website and the certificate, it is very important for the entire club to bask in this glory because the website is merely a modern information delivery system; that information was created by all of the members of the club. No club means no articles and research which means no website. In these pages you will see a nice letter from Ms. **Phyllis George**, some selected web statistics and the final standings.

Elsewhere you will see an article taken from an online Maine newspaper detailing the end of an era with the closing of **Perham's Mineral Shop**. While we all regret to see a small business close, it's also a concern that the availability of those many mines around South Paris may soon be unavailable as well.

The **West Coast Mineral Show** in Springfield was held in August. It was a fabulous event! There were so many dealers and so many offerings. I controlled myself and mostly bought books, although I did buy a very nice non-micro plate of purple fluorite from the tri-state district. Note to self – it probably does have lots of micro fluorite, chalcopyrite and galena on it as well. Common species, yes, but I am a sucker for the simplicity and symmetry of cubic crystals.

A family trip to New York City was made with my wife and daughter to see Wicked this summer. During our free day we visited the **New York Museum of Natural History**. My daughter Rosemary was interested in Native American Indians, I was interested in the mineral collection. We both walked away very happy! While the Albany museum hosts a vast collection of state specimens, the NYC museum hosts the rest of the world. Most displays were grouped by similar chemistry or crystallography. There was a room full of rough gem material and finished jewelry displaying the results of fine workmanship revealing inner beauty of many minerals. If you are in town I would recommend a visit.

I have created an MMNE Facebook page to help bring our name to a larger audience. This page posts dates for events and other items I see fit to publish. If you are a member of Facebook, please consider joining this group. Your participation will broadcast the club to all of your other friends thus furthering our range and maybe our club membership.

See you all on September 19!

The **Newsletter** is the official publication of the Micromounters of New England (MMNE). The last by-laws revision was May 16, 2009. 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.

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Up and coming club mineral shows

September 19-20—New Milford, CT, The Danbury Mineralogical Society. Saturday September 12, 2009 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Sunday September 13, 2009 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. New Milford H.S. Cafeteria RTE.7,

September 19-20—Rhinebeck, NY. Mid-Hudson Valley Gem & Mineral Society. Show & Sale. Dutchess Cty. Fairgrounds. Info.—Carolyn Reynard, 845/471-1224, or www.geocities.com/nyrockhounds.

September 26-27—Franklin, NJ. Franklin Mineral Museum. 53rd Annual Franklin–Sterling Hill Mineral, Gem & Jewelry Show. Franklin School, Washington Ave. Info.—Lee Lowell, 973/827-6671

October 2-4—Baltimore, MD, Baltimore Mineral Society – Paul Desautels Memorial Micromount Symposium of the Baltimore Mineral Society (BMS), on October 2–4, 2009

October 17-18 -- Bristol, CT, Bristol Gem and Mineral Club 37th Annual Gem & Mineral Show is scheduled for the weekend of October 17 and 18, 2009. The show will be held at the Beals Community Center at 240 Stafford Ave., Bristol, CT. The hours are 9:30am to 5:00pm Saturday, and 10:00am to 4:00pm on Sunday.

November 3-4 – Stamford, CT Stamford Rock and Mineral Society Annual Show - 20th Annual Show will be held at the Eastern Greenwich Civic Center, 90 Harding Rd. Greenwich, CT

November 14 – Ontario, CA, CMMA Fall Mini-Conference The Burlington Arts & Cultural Centre, 1333 Lakeshore Road, Burlington, ON Contact: Bill Lechner at 416-438-8908 or bill.lechner@rogers.com

November 21-22-- Worcester, MA Worcester Mineral Club. Saturday and Sunday 10am to 5pm at National Guard Armory, 701 Lincoln Street, Worcester, MA Take I-290, exit 22, Main Street Shrewsbury towards Worcester, through light, up hill, armory and parking lot on left. Contact: WMC, P.O. Box 2278, Worcester, MA 01613 413-477-0107

PERHAM'S OF WEST PARIS HAS CLOSED FOR GOOD

WEST PARIS — Following a seasonal shutdown, the owner of Perham's has made the difficult decision to close the business for good.

The store, which sold minerals and gems as well as books and equipment for prospecting, was opened in 1919 by Stanley Perham. In December, Stanley's daughter and current owner Jane Perham said she would close the store until June 1, but the business did not reopen.

Perham will hold a closing sale from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. July 3 through 5.

It's a big change in my world, and not one I wanted," she said. "This has not been an easy decision, and it's not been a decision that's easily reached."

Perham said the store has always been a family business. Her brother has worked in mining materials in area quarries. In another mineralogy venture, her grandfather started a feldspar mine after accidentally discovering a rich deposit on his property.

Perham herself has been a full-time employee since 1964 and worked part time prior to that. She earned a graduate gemologist title from the Gemological Institute of America in 1972, and turned down an offer to teach at the institute in favor of returning to the store.

She said she had considered closing the store for the past three years. Her decision was influenced by the recent downturn in the economy and difficulties in the gem market. She said there has been a decline in tourism to inland Maine. "The tourism isn't here anymore," Perham said. "There used to be a continuous flow of tourists from June to October."

The store sold local gems and minerals and pieces from around the world. Perham said the area is rich in pegmatite, a rock composed of quartz, feldspar, and mica. The slow cooling of such materials allows crystals to grow. Green tourmaline mined on Mt. Mica was the store's specialty when it was founded.

The store was featured in Reader's Digest in 1957; Perham said recent visitors still arrived with copies of the issue. Yankee Magazine also cited Perham's as "The Best Place to Rock" in Maine in their May-June issue.

In addition to the store, the business includes a museum display of gems and minerals unearthed at local quarries. Perham and her father have sent samples to the American Museum of Natural History and the Smithsonian Institution.

The pieces in the museum display will be given to a private party who will keep them in Maine. Perham said her brother was hoping to keep the quarries he owns open for public access as long as they are covered by liability insurance.

Perham said interaction with visitors has been the best part of her job, including children who have come into the store curious about a mineral they've found.

"I've learned so much from my visitors," Perham said. "It just has been so meaningful to be an important part of our visitors' lives."

Dennis Creaser, co-owner of Creaser Jewelers in Paris and a former bench jeweler and designer for Perham's, was saddened to hear of the store's imminent closing.

"We feel that the area is going to be missing something," he said. "Perham's has been a huge part of what makes the Oxford Hills special for almost 100 years."

Creaser said more action must be taken to promote tourism in the area and businesses in the state. He recalled how the showroom at Perham's was packed with visitors from Independence Day to Labor Day when he worked there.

"I think tourism is going to hurt," he said. "It's just one less thing that makes us someplace that you'd want to go visit."

Betty Jones, president of the West Paris Historical Society, said Perham's had helped put the town on the map. "We hate to be losing the last of the landmarks," Jones said. "I just never thought of it closing, I guess. It's been here for so long."

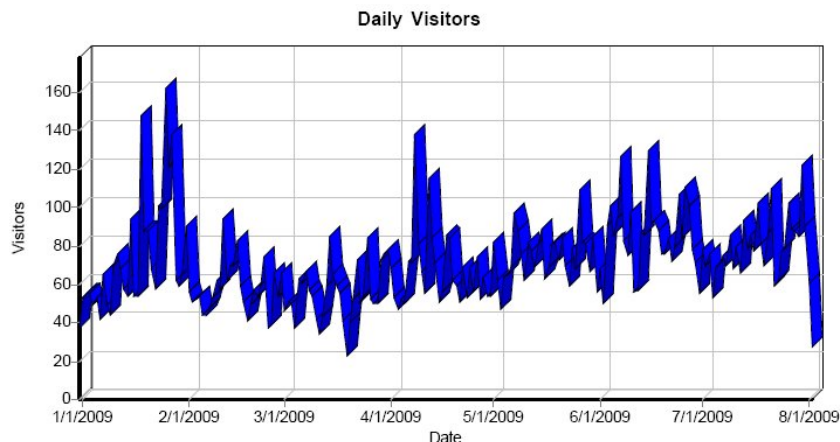
mlangeveld@sunjournal.com

MMNE WEBSITE RECOGNIZED FOR SUPERB CONTENT AND ORGANIZATION

It is my great pleasure to inform you that you are among the seven finalists for the AFMS 2009 Webmaster Contest. Your Web sites have been judged by both Bob Keller and Wes Lingerfelt, and the results will be announced August 2 at the 8:00 a.m. Breakfast with the Editors and Webmasters in Billings, MT during the AFMS/NFMS show. You each will receive a certificate commemorating your achievement, and first place will also receive a trophy.

I certainly hope that you will be present to receive your award in person, but if you cannot be there, please let me know the address where I should mail it.

Thank you,
Phyllis George
AFMS Webmaster Contest Chair



Based upon our MMNE web logs, the majority of us still use Windows XP and Internet Explorer version 7, but Windows Vista and the newest version of Explorer are definitely gaining a larger user base. Nothing on the MMNE website at this time precludes the use of older operating systems and/or web browsers. The site tries to offer all files to people with limited bandwidth yet still remain current with large sized audio files and scanned books in the member area.

AFMS 2009 Webmaster Contest - Rankings of Contest Finalists

Rank	Region	Webmaster	Club Name	Club Location	Web Site
1	California	Terry Yoschak	Roseville Rock Rollers Gem & Mineral Society	Roseville, CA	www.rockrollers.com
2	Southeast	Mike Baldwin	Memphis Archaeological and Geological Society	Collierville, TN	www.memphisgeology.org
3	Northwest	Susan Appleby	Willamette Agate & Mineral Society, Inc.	Salem, OR	www.wamsi.org
3	South Central	Phyllis George	Houston Gem & Mineral Society	Houston, TX	www.hgms.org
5	Rocky Mountain	Bob Loeffler	North Jeffco Gem & Mineral Club	Arvada, CO	www.peaktopeak.com/njeffco/
6	Eastern	Joe Mulvey	Micromounters of New England	Nashua, NH	www.micromountersofnewengland.org
7	Midwest	Milton Michael Bamfield	Parma Lapidary Club	Cleveland, OH	www.parmalapidary.com

2009-2010 Micromounters of New England Meeting Agenda

Saturday, September 19, 2009.....Competition: Minerals containing a rare earth element
 Saturday October 17, 2009.....Competition: cubic crystal structure, any locality, any species
 Saturday, November 21, 2009.....Micro swap – everyone swaps a specimen at the “special swap” table
 Saturday, January 16, 2010.....Competition: Most specimens on one piece, size less than 2cm³
 Saturday, February 20, 2010.....To be determined at fall 2009 meetings
 Saturday, March 20, 2010..... To be determined at fall 2009 meetings
 Saturday, April 17, 2010..... To be determined at fall 2009 meetings
 Saturday, May 15, 2010..... The 2010 Micromounters of New England Annual Symposium

BULLDOZER SPECIAL
PALERMO #1 & #2 MINES, NORTH GROTON, NH
Sat., 9/26, 2009 & Possibly Extending thru Sun, 9/27

We are very pleased to announce that a bulldozer special field trip to the **Palermo #1 Mine in Groton, NH** has been scheduled for **Saturday, Sept. 26th Starting at 9:00 AM**. This trip features the following collecting opportunities:

- A unique opportunity to collect in a freshly excavated & washed down section of the lower dumps of the Palermo #1 mine. We have scheduled an excavator for four hours shortly before the trip to dig out a section of the lower dump that to our knowledge has never been dug. Once we get into the good stuff we will spread it out over a sizeable area so that many people will have an equal opportunity to dig through it. Bob Whitmore will also set up a pump for us and your trip leader will personally see that the fresh material is thoroughly washed down the day before the trip.
- A second unique opportunity to collect at the nearby Palermo #2 mine. Bob and his crew have done a lot of mining there over the past few years but until now very few people have had the opportunity to collect there. We will have access to the dumps of the Palermo #2 mine during this trip. Micromounters will be especially interested in this opportunity.
- Bob Whitmore and crew are also preparing to do some blasting this Fall in the pegmatite zone up behind the mine. While we will obviously not get first crack at the freshly blasted material we will be permitted to collect in this area as well.
- If there is enough interest we can most likely extend the trip to a second day. Sunday, 27 September will also serve as our "rain date" if we have sufficiently severe weather to cancel the trip on the 26th.

The Palermo #1 mine is a world-famous pegmatite locality with a very large number of mineral species. Mindat lists 151 valid mineral species as occurring at this locality. Many of these species are phosphate minerals, most of which are associated with the secondary alteration of large triphylite crystals that have formed in the core-margin zone of the pegmatite. Several type specimens have been described from Palermo, including those of the namesake species of palermoite and whitmorite. For a somewhat complete list of specimens found at Palermo #1 go to: www.mindat.org/loc-3942.html

The Palermo #2 mine is rapidly developing its own reputation as a premier locality for secondary phosphate minerals. It has been studied extensively by researchers from the University of New Orleans. See <http://www.pegmatology.com/jnizamoffdoc1.htm> and <http://www.mindat.org/loc-8928.html>.

Who should go: This field trip is suitable for a wide range of collectors from beginner to the most experienced. Although the dumps where most will chose to collect are very "child-friendly," parental supervision at all times is essential, as there are some deep open pits back in the mine area which are hazardous.

Tools: The tools required are standard dump-digging tools: hoes, shovels, pry bars, crack hammers, chisels, etc. **Safety equipment, including a hard hat, safety goggles, and sturdy boots are required for this trip.** Other important accessory items include food, water, sunscreen, bug spray and specimen wrapping material.

Registration: This is a joint field trip with the Boston Mineral Club. Nate Martin has taken care of all of the arrangements. Only club members may attend this trip and you must register for this trip with Joe Mulvey. If possible, please register by sending an email to bassmeister_2000@yahoo.com. If you don't have Internet access you can also register by calling 603-880-4018. Further details re check in, start and stop times, and directions to the mine will be sent to those who register.

Jarosite, A New Species for NH by Tom Mortimer

While examining New Hampshire mineral specimens in the Harvard basement collection during the spring of 2008, I came across two pyrite specimens from “Moss Brook”, Easton, NH. These specimens contained well-formed, brassy, pyrite cubes, to three-quarter inch, in a coarse chlorite schist. I had not read of this locality in any previous literature.

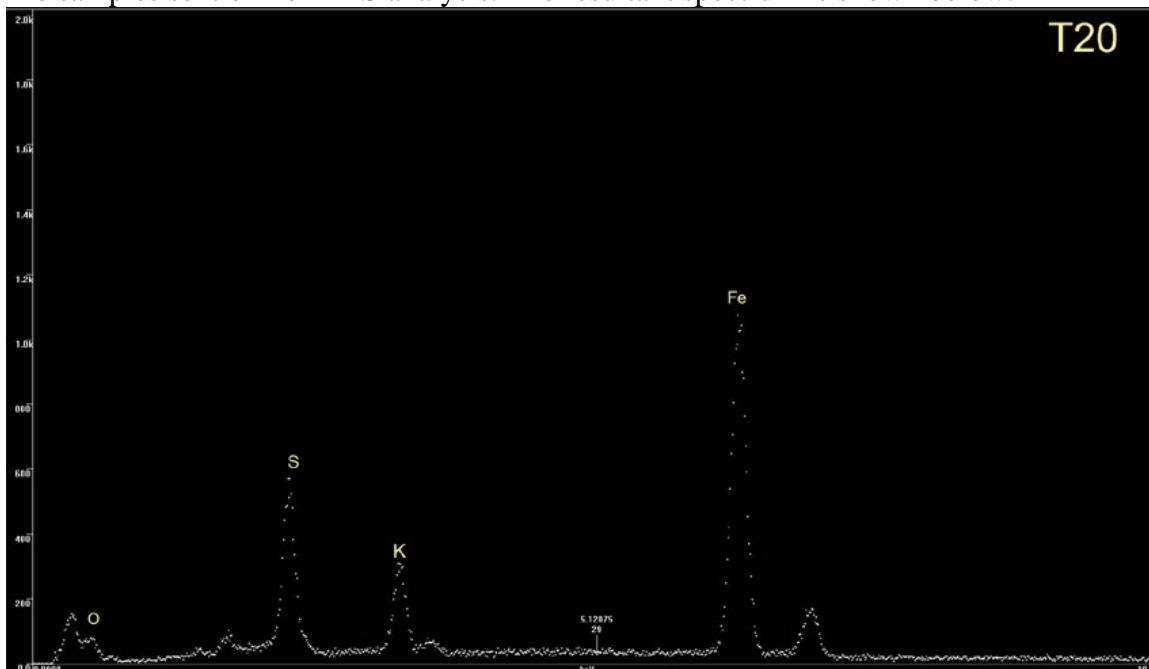
My friend Curt LaPlante, who shares my curiosity for “lost” collecting locales, (and a willingness for long hikes with no guarantees), agreed to research this occurrence with me. We could not find a “Moss Brook” in Easton, NH, but we did identify a “Morse Brook.” We concluded that this was the most likely match.

A visit to the area of Morse Brook in the spring of 2008 led to the discovery (or more accurately re-discovery) of pyrite cubes in chlorite schist. Extracting well exposed cubes on the schist matrix proved to be moderately difficult. The schist is quite permeable to water and most crystals contained micro fractures due to weathering, (even though their luster remained brassy). The majority of the crystals fell apart on attempts to reduce specimens to a manageable size. Fortunately the pyrite was moderately abundant so a number of fair specimens were collected. The pyrite crystals were found in float boulders and exposed ledges. One large boulder was found that contained external (and internal after breaking apart) surfaces covered with a fine yellow powder. My first thought was that this powder was native sulfur which being released from the decomposing pyrite. The powder appeared identical to the “Flower of Sulfur” that I purchased as a kid from my local drug store.... to make my own gunpowder (as a typical young lad, I loved things that went “bang”).

This yellow powder was a substance that only a species collector would stick in their backpack. I happily selected several chunks and carefully wrapped the pieces in paper towels to preserve as much of the powder as possible.

Native sulfur is very rare in New Hampshire. It is only confirmed from the Parker Mtn. Mine in Center Strafford, NH. In this occurrence the sulfur forms sub-millimeter, resinous, spheres (http://mindatnh.org/sulfur_sheet.html)

With the prospect of a *macro-scopic* NH occurrence of native sulfur, I set out to do some tests. My first test result was encouraging: the yellow powder did not dissolve in water, consistent with sulfur and eliminating melanterite and other water soluble, sulfur containing, species. Next I heated a sample in a small test tube, expecting the formation of a gooey resinous mass and a distinctive sulfur odor. I got neither. My powder turned a dark reddish-brown, with water condensing in the cooler, open end of the tube. No sulfur smell was detected. At this point I posted a request for “Identity Help” on the mindat message board. Several helpful suggestions were proffered. Among these, Jarosite, $\text{KFe}^{3+}_3[(\text{OH})_3\text{SO}_4]_2$, seemed likely the best fit. A confirmation of the presence of potassium (K) in my unknown was essential. A sample of this Morse Brook yellow powder was included in my next batch of New Hampshire samples sent off for EDS analysis. The resultant spectrum is shown below.



The EDS analyst confirmed that the spectrum clearly indicated jarosite.



Jarosite, 3 cm specimen. Yellow powder on coarse chlorite schist. Morse Brook, Easton, NH.

Although jarosite is not a rare species, I believe this is the first confirmed occurrence of jarosite in New Hampshire. Given jarosite's association with weathering pyrite, it is possible that jarosite may have been observed by previous NH collectors, but that its unattractive appearance has kept it from their sample bags and backpacks.

Jarosite

A secondary mineral found in the oxidized zones of sulfide deposits, forming by the reaction of dilute sulfuric acid in ground water, derived from the oxidation of pyrite, with gangue minerals and wall rock in the deposits. Usually found as amber-yellow to brown crusts or coatings of minute crystals, larger crystals rather rare.

Alunite Group, Jarosite Subgroup

Formula: $\text{KFe}^{3+}_3[(\text{OH})_3(\text{SO}_4)_2]$

System: Trigonal

Colour: Amber-yellow

Luster: Sub-Adamantine, Vitreous, Resinous

Hardness: $2\frac{1}{2}$ - $3\frac{1}{2}$

Name: Named in 1852 after the type locality, Barranco Jaroso in southern Spain.

Type Locality: Jaroso Ravine, Sierra Almagrera, Cuevas de Almanzora, Almería, Andalusia, Spain

Minerals on display at the American Museum of Natural History



Figure 1 Apatite



Figure 2 Pyromorphite



Figure 3 Beryl



Figure 4 Gypsum



Figure 5 Feldspar



Figure 6 Smithsonite



Stibnite Credit: D. Finnin, AMNH

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY UNVEILS SPECTACULAR NEW MINERAL SPECIMEN GLITTERING, HALF-TON STIBNITE SAVED FROM DESTRUCTION BY CHINESE MINERS

The Museum's stibnite specimen is the largest on public display in the world. It was likely formed some 130 million years ago when water heated by volcanic activity dissolved antimony and sulfur from surrounding rocks and flowed between layers of limestone, leaving a dense band of stibnite and occasional pockets containing long, elegant crystals. Complete stibnite crystals as long as the ones this specimen exhibits are rare—they are typically found broken because of their extreme fragility and the industrial nature of modern antimony mining.

The stibnite was donated by Marc Weill, founder and CEO of City Light Capital and world-renowned mineral collector. It will be on display in the Museum's newly renovated 77th Street Grand Gallery.

DISPOSITION OF YOUR COLLECTION

This topic is always relevant, since the list roster changes. In the museum field since 1985, it is a favorite subject.

The key factor in disposition is the quality of the specimens and labels / data. If the specimens are low quality and/or have no data, there will likely be little market value. Such collections are best given to schools (K-16) where specimens can be used and abused in the name of scientific investigation.

If there is scientific information (locality for minerals, locality and formation for fossils), they can be sold to a dealer (many ads say, "We buy collections.") or another collector. Another option is an auction.

For the average collector, specimens are bought at retail value and sold back at wholesale value. For self-collected specimens, it can be a little dicier determining the value because one doesn't have prices attached to labels or jotted in record entry data. If the collection contains a quantity high value, museum-quality minerals or fossils, a licensed appraiser can be brought in (at some expense) to set the wholesale / retail value. For the most part appraisal is more important for insurance or tax purposes than for resale. It is also safe to say that a geological collection is never worth (\$) what the collector thinks it is worth.

To sell or donate a collection is a personal decision. If the collection is large, then the disposition should be mentioned in your will. Many people (like your friend) want to liquidate it as they age for many reasons, commonly moving to a smaller place or deterioration of health. If you want your collection to remain intact in perpetuity - good luck! The only way that will happen is if you provide a sizeable endowment to maintain the collection in storage. To expect your collection to be displayed is unrealistic. Maybe a hand full on permanent exhibit (=10 to 15 years) and others for temporary exhibits (up for a few months).

One hundred years after you are gone, does it REALLY matter if your collection is still intact? Will your great, great, great grandchildren care? Probably not. Very few collections by the earliest collectors - scientific pioneers - are still in one piece. And chances are, their collection is more important than yours or mine and will remain so hundred years from now. How many people have their grandparents collection of family photographs? Those are more treasured than grandpa or grandma's "rock collection!"

Target the collection - or parts of it - to the appropriate repository. Specimens from a certain location within a state may be beneficial to a state museum. As Earl Verbeek said, minerals may benefit a mineral museum. Let them decide whether specimen A goes to the collection storage, specimen B goes to the museum educator and specimen C goes to the gift shop to help pay bills. Sell the collection if it will benefit your family. Donate the collection if your family doesn't need the money.

Fossils are only permanent in a museum when the data is very good. The only significant fossils are type specimens! Ultimately those should end up in a museum where they can be available for study by paleontologists of the future. Many field collectors end up with rare, new or unusual fossils and don't even know it. Unfortunately most fossil collections are never shown to the scientists. I had a collection of several dozen conularids - some self collected others obtained in trade. Who would have thought a paleontologist at a small college an hour away was one of about a half-dozen researchers on them. That's a half-dozen on the entire planet! When he saw what I had he wanted to "borrow" about two-thirds of them. Hmmm... Keep them in a beer flat in the garage or let an expert use them for study. Hard decision - NOT! I'll get more conularids. I've still got a couple of decades of collecting left in me and if I don't, well those fossils found a home.

Well this rambled on a lot longer than I had planned. I hope it gets you thinking about your own collection!

Alan Goldstein, Louisville, KY / Rockhounds list group August 2009

MEMBERSHIP FORM, NEW AND RENEWAL

Membership in the MMNE runs from January 1st to December 31st. Dues are payable on or before January 1st for the upcoming year. Failure to renew on time will result in cancellation of membership including the subscription to the Newsletter. Please fill out this form and return it with your payment.

Name: _____

Street/PO Box Address: _____

City/State/Zip : _____

Telephone: _____

E-mail address: _____

☐ **Hard copy via USPS** **or** ☐ **via email to above address**

Membership type: Individual \$ 12.00 Family \$ 16.00

Family membership includes two adults residing at the same address and all children at that address under the age of 18. Only one copy of the Newsletter per family membership.

Newsletter: The Newsletter is available as hard copy sent through the mail, or via email, which may have color photographs included. Please indicate choice of format. The Newsletter is published in January, February, March, April, May, Summer Issue (June), September, October and November (no December issue), and is sent out approximately two weeks prior to the next scheduled meeting.

Please remit payment to Treasurer Tom Mortimer, 3 Roberts Rd., Amherst, NH 03031

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