

Friends of Mineralogy

Colorado Chapter Newsletter

May, 1990

President: Dan Kile
Vice President: Pete Modreski
Treasurer: Jim Hurlbut
Secretary: Regina Modreski

Directors: Don Belsher
Ed Gray
Bill Smith

Notes From the President:

The audit of the past two years treasurer's records, by Don Belsher and Jim Hurlbut, has shown the bookkeeping to be in good order. Our past treasurer, Chauncey Walden, is to be commended for an excellent job!

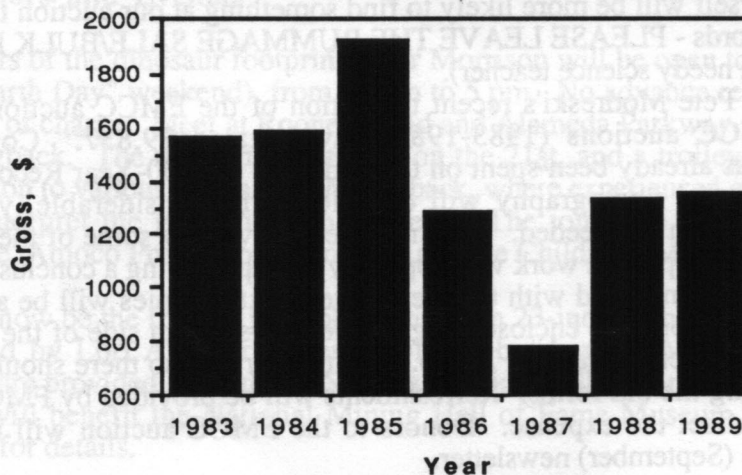
The annual member roster is included in this newsletter - courtesy of Jim Hurlbut, who did an excellent job of compiling the information from sporadic receipts of dues payments. There are about 80 members this year, which seems a bit down from years past ...

I want to particularly thank Vandall King for providing a camera-ready copy of his article on the proper disposal of a mineral collection for this newsletter. I think you will find it to be a valuable article that will hopefully stimulate consideration as to the disposition of important pieces that each of you may (knowingly or otherwise) own.

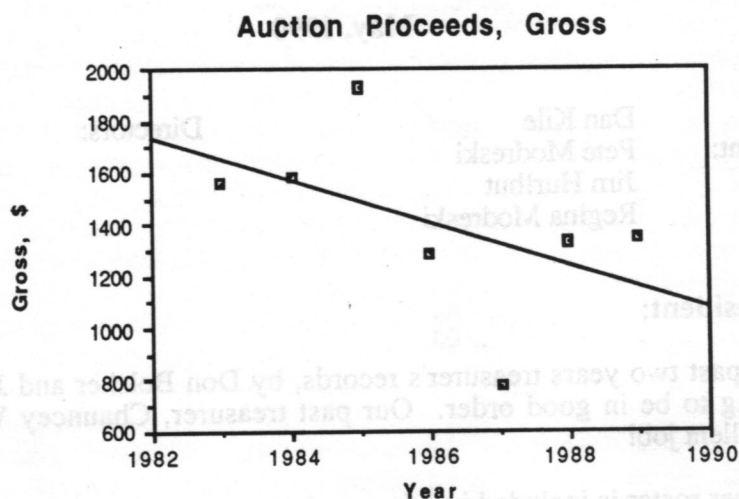
May Program:

As everyone (well, almost everyone) knows, May is the month that we have our annual fund-raising auction to benefit the various FMCC activities. The following sexy little graph shows our net proceeds for the past seven years:

Gross Auction Proceeds



This graph seems to show a more or less steady income, with perhaps a slight downward trend. Naturally, any idiot (like myself) can have a field day with a computer program like Cricket Graph, so just for the heck of it I decided to plot the above data in the following format, where the computer calculates a regression equation and gives a best-line fit for the data:



Obviously, a graph can be adjusted to make whatever point you want; the point, however, made more conspicuously by the above graph is that there is a perceptible decrease in overall income from the auction. It is not, in my opinion, attributable to the location, inasmuch as the facilities last year were very adequate. It may be, however, due to a decline in interest because of a dwindling quality of minerals, which is in turn attributable to a perception by FMCC members of a declining need for financial resources to support ongoing programs. Bear in mind that the continuing work on the update to the Minerals of Colorado is not the only project in need of funds; various symposia (of which there will undoubtedly be more) also require financing, not to mention the expenses of maintaining the chapter's daily (or bimonthly) activities, such as this overbearing newsletter. It is clear that, even though the overall financial account for FMCC has shown a more or less steady increase, we all need to recognize a need for a continuing commitment to maintain a high level of member interest and input.

It is also important, in order to maintain a high interest level in the auction, that participants understand that the purpose of donations (whether they be at a 100% or 50% donation level) is not to get rid of the stuff that was cluttering up the garage; the intent is rather to bring minerals that you might otherwise want in your own collection - if participation from this standpoint becomes more prevalent, then you yourself will be more likely to find something at our auction that will fit into your cabinet. In other words - **PLEASE LEAVE THE RUMMAGE SALE/BULK ROCK IN THE GARDEN** (or give it to a needy science teacher).

A final note from Pete Modreski's recent tabulation of the FMCC auction records: the proceeds from all FMCC auctions (1983-1989) have totaled \$9,837. Considering that approximately \$6,386 has already been spent on the update to the 100-Year Record project, and that expenses for maps and photography will doubtlessly be considerable, your continued donations and/or participation are needed. With renewed activity by some of the authors of the update, this substantial and important work will hopefully be approaching a conclusion.

Auction bid forms are included with this newsletter - extra copies will be available at the auction for those unable to copy the enclosed page. The doors (north side of the Museum) will open at 6:30 p.m., and the auction starts at 7:30 p.m. in the Atrium, so there should be sufficient time to allow for preparing the bid forms. Refreshments will be provided by FMCC - donations will be appreciated to offset the expense. Donors to the FMCC auction will (gratefully) be acknowledged in a future (September) newsletter.



AUCTION INSTRUCTIONS



1. FMCC members may keep either 0% or 50% of the sale proceeds of donated items. Non-FM members are welcome to purchase and/or donate items for the auction, but may not receive proceeds from items donated.
2. Silent auction: indicate price bid with your initials on the bid form; minimum bid or bid increment is 25 cents.
3. Vocal auction: will occur at about midway through the silent auction and will last 1 to 1-1/2 hours.
4. End of silent auction: will be egregiously and abruptly announced, at which time please immediately cease bidding activities.
5. Bid forms: Seller should fill out completely; especially the minimum amount you will accept as a bid near the top of the form, and the amount you wish donated to FM (50% or 100%). If you want to receive the receipts by mail after the auction for your records of items sold, you MUST indicate so by checking the box at the bottom of the form. Be sure to fill out the item donated near the bottom part of the form: this is the only part that will be returned to you.
6. Payment by check will greatly expedite the processing of your purchases, as well as serve as a receipt of your expenditures.

Current Rumors and Events:

Field tours of the dinosaur footprints near Morrison will be open to the public on Saturday, April 21st ("Earth Day" weekend), from 10 am to 5 pm. No advance registration is needed, and the tour is free of charge. Meet at Rooney Road and Alameda Parkway, at the bottom of the east side of the hogback. The road will be closed on the 21st, and a trolley will periodically depart from this location to various sites along the hogback, where experienced guides will be available to explain and interpret the geological phenomena. The tours are sponsored by the Friends of Dinosaur Ridge, Amoco Production Company, and the Children's Museum of Denver.

You can now be the first on your block to own a 23-inch high bronze statue of a single-jack miner, sculpted by Lori Atz, for a mere \$2,100 - but hurry, only 35 of these are available. Actually, they are provided through the National Mining Hall of Fame, are quite nice, and \$700 of the proceeds will benefit the National Mining Hall of Fame Museum. Contact Carl Miller at 719-486-1229 for details.

The Shoshone Rock Club is sponsoring a Centennial year State Gem and Mineral Show in Powell, Wyoming (~75 miles east of Yellowstone National Park) on June 16 & 17, 1990. Contact Joyce Johnston, 475 North Bent, Powell, Wyoming - 82435, for more information. You heard it here first!

Update on Denver Council activities. Recent donations from Council funds (proceeds from the Denver Gem & Mineral Show), of which FMCC is a member organization, have been:

- \$5,000 for a Colorado School of Mines exhibit (Clear Creek Cave reconstruction)
- \$2,200 for a scholarship to a Colorado School of Mines student
- \$2,000 to the Denver Museum of Natural History for specimen acquisition
- \$1,500 to Rocks and Minerals magazine
- \$1,200 to Belmar Museum for a traveling exhibit

I am impressed not only with the projects that our Council has sponsored, but also with the progress of the School of Mines cave exhibit under the direction of Virginia Mast.

A continuation of the above note - don't forget the annual Denver Gem and Mineral Show at the Merchandise Mart, September 14-16, 1990. Not to mention the satellite shows that are also in the area as well. I accept donations from anyone with unspent \$\$ during this period of time

The following reprints of assorted old mineralogical publications are available from the Rochester Mineralogical Symposium:

A Catalogue of American Minerals, S. Robinson, 1825; \$28.00 softcover, \$40.00 hardcover, \$3.00 shipping - Special Publication No. 5.

The Chester Project, Volume I - *A Dictionary of the Names of Minerals*, A. Chester, 1896; (see No. 7 below for price) - Special Publication No. 6.

The Chester Project, Volume II, *A Catalogue of Minerals*, A. H. Chester, 1897 - Special Publication No. 7; Vol. I & II hardcover, \$50.00 + \$4.00 shipping.

Reprints of articles from various early magazines, 1853 - 1899, on mining, trips, mining regions, etc., from *Harpers*, *The Century*, *The Overland Monthly*, *Popular Science Magazine*, *Science Magazine*, and other magazines; each publication is ~ 130 pages, \$8.00 + \$2.00 shipping.

The above can be obtained from:

Rochester Mineralogical Symposium - Mr. Harry Simon
50 Long Acre Road
Rochester, New York 14621

News of Members:

We welcome the following new members:

Bryan Lees, a well-established local mineral dealer from Golden (the Collector's Edge);

Ed Allabough, a semi-retired mineral dealer from Kingman, Arizona (the cactus capitol of the world), with interests in micro- and thumbnail minerals and erstwhile Denver Show judge;

Keith Williams, another well-known purveyor of minerals and scientific instruments, from Idaho Springs;

Connie Clark, from Tucson, Arizona, with a wide-ranging interest in minerals.

Welcome to FMCC!!

Also congratulations to Bill Warren, who won one of the best of species (wulfenite) competitions at this past Tucson Gem and Mineral Show (I haven't actually figured out WHICH trophy he won - but he did win one).

What's New in Colorado Minerals:

There is evidently STILL not much new in Colorado minerals, since I have yet to receive any input from the members. *This space for rent ...*

FMCC Activities:

Copies of the FMCC Photography Symposium Proceedings are still available, through the Denver Museum of Natural History, for \$15.00 (a mere pittance). Don't come crying to me when this information-packed volume is out of print....

Interesting, Little-Known Publications of Interest to FMCC Members

Dan Kile

Information is the one thing that a conscientious collector, dedicated amateur, or professional, must have in order to increase one's overall knowledge in the field or even gain ideas as to new collecting localities. Without continued growth in knowledge by access to varied sources of information, one can become stagnant, having no new ideas or interests. Naturally, the preceding comments presume that one has the TIME to read all the stuff that is available. Of the almost overwhelming abundance of journals, newsletters, and other ilk that inundates a mailbox on any given day, the following sources of information have been culled by your erstwhile editor as being at least somewhat, if not very, worthwhile. They include various publications that may or may not be familiar to you, as well as noteworthy newsletters published by some diligent organizations.

1. Mineral News: P.O. Box 2043, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, 83814-1911. Contains current news and reports of contemporary activities regarding mineral or mining activities. \$14.00/year.
2. The Nevada Prospector: The Nevada Miner's and Prospector's Association, Box 283, Mina, Nevada, 89422. Quarterly, including opinionated editorials and some very good historical sketches of Nevada ghost towns and mining camps, as well as current news.
3. The Highgrade: National Mining Hall of Fame and Museum, P.O. Box 981, Leadville, Colorado, 80461. Newsletter containing current news items and information related to the National Mining Hall of Fame. Membership \$25.00 per year.
4. Matrix: Larry Conklin, ed., Room 1007, 2 West 46th St., New York, New York, 10036. An excellent newsletter, well-illustrated, containing articles of historic collectors and museums (i.e., Benjamin Silliman, Clarence Bement, early books, correspondence, mineral collections and specimens, etc.). Quarterly, \$10.00 per year.
5. Earth Sciences History: "HESS", c/o Kennard B. Bork, Department of Geology and Geography, Denison University, Granville, Ohio, 43023. \$20.00 per year; I don't subscribe to this, but a leaflet looked real interesting so I thought I'd pass it on.

6. Mining Artifact Collector (aka MAC Newsletter): Ted Bobrink, 12851 Kendall Way, Redlands, California, 92372. An excellent and relatively new newsletter containing detailed articles in all facets of mining memorabilia, including oil wick lamps, candlestick holders, powder thawers, fuse crimpers, carbide lamps, mining candles, etc. Quarterly, \$12.00.

7. Underground Lamp Post: Henry Pohs, 4537 Quitman St., Denver, Colorado, 80212. Quarterly newsletter similar to above, but restricted to mine lighting artifacts; nominally no charge, but donations gratefully accepted.

8. Geoliterary Society Bulletin: Clifford Krueger, 625 Market St., Suite 802, San Francisco, California 94105. A substantial quarterly with detailed articles pertaining to out-of-print literature of historic importance, as well as treatises on early collecting activities and collectors (i.e., Mount Apatite, Maine, G.F. Kunz's bibliography, etc.); also items of interest such as bookplates, old mineral labels, etc. \$10.00 per year.

9. Gems and Gemology: Gemological Institute of America, 1660 Stewart St., Santa Monica, California, 90404. Quarterly, \$40.00/year. A "glossy" publication that is not widely known among mineral collectors, but which often contains mineral-related articles. All pictures (including maps and diagrams) are in color (thus explaining the relatively high cost of a subscription)! Contains articles on gemstones, gemstone inclusions, current gemstone information, and localities and mining activities. Recent (within the past number of years) articles included Brazilian pegmatites, Pakistan pegmatite deposits, Brazilian emerald, amethyst, chrysoberyl, and beryl deposits, etc.

Undoubtedly there are some interesting or informative newsletters or other publications I missed or overlooked - additional information is always welcome for a future newsletter.



In addition to the above sources of contemporary information, those incorrigible souls who dabble in the REALLY old stuff can find sources (besides the local library, who won't let you check out an old book) of out-of-print literature from the following who are more or less serious book dealers, and/or who send out more or less regular book lists:

1. Jack Garvin's Book Shop: Jack Garvin, 321 No. Golden Mall, Burbank, California, 91502; (818) 848-2132.

2. Geoscience Books and Prints: Russ Filer, 134057 California St., Yucaipa, California, 92399; (714) 797-1650.

3. Peri Lithon Books: John and Marjorie Sinkankas, P.O. Box 9996, 5372 Van Nuys Ct., San Diego, California, 92109; (619) 488-6904.

4. Francis Paul Geoscience Literature: Frank Chambers, 50 Church Street, Hoosick Falls, New York, 12090-1601, (518) 686-7986. (Note - Frank has recently published a new book titled "Hayden and His Men", which is a pictorial essay of the famous Hayden Survey of the 1870's).

5. Art Source International: Paul Mahoney, 1237 Pearl St., Boulder, Colorado, 80302; 444-4080.

- 6. The Book Lode: Sylvia Pettem, 3060 15th St., Boulder, Colorado, 80304; 443-0714.
- 7. Culpin's Book Shop: Culpin's Antiquarian Book Shop, Alan Culpin, 3827 West 32nd Ave., Denver, Colorado; 433-5550.
- 8. The Gemmary: R.C. Blankenhorn, P.O. Box 816, Redondo Beach, California, 90227; (213)-372-6149 (eves). {Rick also periodically sends out a catalog of nifty scientific instruments}
- 9. Sam Weller: 254 So. Main, Salt Lake City, Utah. 84101; 1-800-333-7269

Other dealers who may have out-of-print literature, but who do not send lists, are:

Keith Williams, P.O. Box 1599, Idaho Springs, Colorado; 1-567-4647; and
 Mark and Jeanette Rogers, P.O. Box 1098, Yucaipa, California, 92399; 714-797-8034.

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|-------|--------------|-------|---|---------|-----------------|---|------------------------------|
| Item: | Minimum Bid: | Name: | at the Auction | Seller: | Winning Bid: \$ | Donation (mark one) | Please Return Receipt to Me: |
| | | | Denver Museum of Natural History, City Park | | | <input type="checkbox"/> 100% <input type="checkbox"/> 50% | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | | | books or other related items | | | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|-------|--------------|-------|----------------|---------|-----------------|---|------------------------------|
| Item: | Minimum Bid: | Name: | at the Auction | Seller: | Winning Bid: \$ | Donation (mark one) | Please Return Receipt to Me: |
| | | | at the Auction | | | <input type="checkbox"/> 100% <input type="checkbox"/> 50% | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | | | at the Auction | | | | |



AUCTION

The Colorado Chapter of the Friends of Mineralogy Presents . .



The 1990 Auction



Featuring

Minerals

Books

or other related items

at the Atrium

Denver Museum of Natural History, City Park

Thursday, May 10, 1990



Refreshments and Other Accompaniments Available



50% (for FM members) or 100% donations

Starts at 7:30 p.m.

(doors open at 6:30)

Proceeds go toward FM Symposiums, the Minerals of Colorado Update, and other FMCC - sponsored activities

➔ Silent and Vocal Auction ←

EVERYONE WELCOME

The Proper Disposal of a Collection

by Vandall T. King, P.O. Box 90888, Rochester, New York 14609

Collections are intimate possessions. We hold onto them dearly, yet we seldom provide for their continuity. Families who inherit collections seldom know what to do with a collection after the primary collector is no longer around. A plan or will would seem to be an easy set of directions to provide, but a careful look at experience from the last several years alone, should caution us, if not shock us. A few collectors "tidy up" their holdings by having a sale to reduce the magnitude of the collection's volume. A sale also maximizes the cash return on a collection.

Though these discussions are specifically directed toward specimen collectors, but you can insert books, coins, stamps, etc. in place of minerals, fossils, or lapidary objects and get the same message.

Some Horror Stories

probably obsolete

An internationally known author and mineral collector in South Dakota died with a will directing the disposition of his mineral collection. His historically important correspondence was thrown into the trash and his books were given to a local charitable recycling store where they were sold for 25 cents each. A world renowned diamond expert from Pennsylvania gave his extensive micromount collection to a museum. Similarly his correspondence and books were essentially thrown away. Dumpsters were used to discard the personal affects in the house. A box with a pound of diamond crystals, all tiny micromount-sized was found in the dumpster, but the finder, who turned the diamonds over to the executor, was not allowed to see what might have been also thrown out just below the surface of the pile. A regionally known scientist / collector, not far away, left an enormous collection of minerals, most of which were unlabeled. A separate box contained the labels! A regionally known professor in Maine had his large, regionally significant, micromount collection sold by an antique dealer. His correspondence and books were discarded. In California, a species collection of international significance was also sold by an antique dealer, at first at a local flea market and later to a collector who appreciated its significance. The species collector had told the family how much his collection was worth, yet it was being offered at the flea market for 1 dollar per specimen - your pick!

A nationally known collection in Massachusetts is, now, displayed in glass cases without labels or cataloging as the labeling destroys the beauty of the exhibit. A now almost forgotten, but world-class Pennsylvania collection was similarly unlabeled in glass display cases.

Why do incidents like this happen? This is only a selection of incidents of the most recent vintage. These tragedies are happening now! One reason is secrecy. When the author was a mineral dealer and still, now, when in the presence of current dealers, comments such as these were and are frequently heard, "I'll buy this, but don't tell my spouse."; "Let me give you two checks so I can hide the purchase from the account."; "Give me some time on this, so my spouse won't find out."; etc. One story is told of a forgetful New York City collector. His wife allowed him a large closet to keep and store his collection. In order to preserve family harmony, the collector would always admit that he paid 1/10th what he actually had. Friends would frequently come over for "mineral night". The collectors would view specimens kept in the closet, while the non-collectors would enjoy refreshments in the kitchen. The forgetful collector had no catalog and he was frequently rummaging through the shelves to find a particular item. Years later, it was revealed from the kitchen conversation, via a spouse, and finally back to the collector that the wife saw how much he enjoyed collecting and had always regretted that their city apartment was too small to have the collection occupy more room, so the wife would go into the closet regularly and throw away a few specimens so that there would be more room for collecting to continue - after all, minerals were so cheap!

Similar secrecy involves a New England collector and his pal. The two collectors met while the twentieth century was young and they were inseparable. They went to every mineral event conceivable! They collected on almost every available week-end and frequently took extended collecting vacations. They went to mineral shows back when shows were one company, frequently one-man, events in hotel rooms. The two collectors knew they were each building significant collections. They saw the results of each other's labors in the field, they saw each other's purchases, trades, etc. The one difference was that Mr. X's collection was displayed in his home for all to see. Mr. Y never showed his collection to anyone once it went into his home. This

association continued for between half and three-quarters of the twentieth century. Mr. X wanted to move back to the "old country" and approached Mr. Y. He reminded Mr. Y of their lifelong friendship and experiences together. He asked, "I will, in all likelihood never see you again, I have never been allowed to see your collection, may I please see your collection before I leave?" Mr. Y replied, "No." Mr. X and Mr. Y are no longer with us. Mr. X sold his collection before going back to his homeland. Mr. Y's collection was supposed to have been donated to a local college. The local college has no record of its acquisition. A rumor suggests that the family found it easier to throw the collection away, than go through the bother of transferring it to the college.

The build-up of these explanations touches on several points. Labeling is the foremost concern. Knowledgeable heirs is another. A plan or will is a third. A judicious sale might be a solution.

Labeling

Many mineral specimens are so distinctive that they can be labeled from across a dimly-lit room. In contrast, no Pennsylvania collector can identify specific localities for all of the wonderful amethysts and almandines which are found in their domain if they are presented unlabeled for their inspection. How many of us even know the names of the quarries, much less the towns which produced the fabulous quartz crystals western North Carolina has been famous for, for nearly a hundred years. Who can tell where San Diego county, California tourmalines are from? There are a few systematic galena collectors: can even they know where all of the unlabeled galena specimens came from? What calcite specialist even knows about the fabulous calcite crystals from Shelburne, Massachusetts? How much native copper is labeled *Keweenaw Peninsula*. An unlabeled collection loses much of its value. Numerous Quebec and Ontario, Canada diopside localities exist. A label would make the difference for them. Most countries have problem species and localities.

There is at least one mineral dealer who ruined his reputation by falsifying labels by putting deliberate incorrect information on a label to enhance a specimen's value. As the collector world is so small, deliberate falsification will surely ruin anyone's reputation. However, the accidental or ignorant labeling of specimens has its pitfalls. Who hasn't seen a label indicating an Ogdensburg specimen, but which was labeled: Franklin, New Jersey, a wulfenite labeled from Mapimi, Chihuahua, Mexico, or almost a hundred unlikely Minas Gerais, Brasil or Bancroft, Ontario specimens? It has frequently been suggested that attribution labels, as relabeled information is called, should be indicated by (), [], { }, etc. When confidence is high, the spirit is usually too weak to admit the uncertainty the notation implies.

As a rule of thumb, a single unlabeled specimen is worth about 25% or less of its normal retail value. An unlabeled collection is probably worth 5-10% or less of its retail value. Gem, lapidary, and other objects which are sold primarily for their decorator value are usually not so drastically under-valued. The exception comes from rare pieces prized for their locality interest.

Cataloging is definitely out of fashion and it shouldn't be. While a major Los Angeles and a major New Jersey collection come to mind as excellent examples of well-labeled, well-cataloged collections, few others are in even the distant background. One of the best practices involves putting locality information directly on an important specimen. Catalogs do get lost. What major museum doesn't lack at least one catalog of a collection it is housing? Labels with catalog numbers corresponding to a number on a specimen usually save the day. (Note: it is not usually necessary to label the species on a specimen as that can always be determined. Old varietal names can not be resurrected, however.)

Secrecy

The problem of secrecy is well known. Several collectors have been forced to liquidate their collections once the spouse found out that the collection was worth more than the house they were living in. Collectors are unhappy if they don't acquire. A tightened budget would lower acquisition. The alternative is to hide the expenditures. One parent was known to have asked his son if he had any specimens worth more than 50 cents, despite his display-quality azurites, beryls, tourmalines, etc.. Living at home allows working children the opportunity to have a relatively large disposable income. Parents don't like to see income disposed of. Secrecy results.

Budgets don't seem to work either. The best specimens, books, etc. always become available when the budget is already stretched beyond allowable limits. [One benevolent father allowed his college student son \$10,000 per year *allowance* for minerals, but would come forward to make important purchases when a new find's cost would crimp acquisition style for the year. Now

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graduated, this third generation collector is continuing to build one of the world's great private collections.]

There is no hope that secrecy will diminish in collecting. A potential solution might be to alert key family members that the early "bargains" are now getting to be valuable and that the collection is now more than just fun.

Disposing of a Collection - The Will

A will is a legal document which can alert the family to the significance of possessions and can serve to distribute these possessions without loss. As it is an admission of our mortality, few people have wills to guide their estates. A hundred years ago, wills were very common. The state is now left to decide our wishes and invariably ignores what our wishes probably really were. As far as a collection goes, the disposition of the collection can be made to benefit particular people or institutions. An important collection can be given to a competent, appropriate institution or friend or relative. A collection can be sold to benefit the general estate or specific heirs. The most important information is telling the executor of the estate, who usually knows nothing about special collections, *how* to follow your wishes. It is never sufficient to say, "I bequeath my collection of rubber bands and paper clips to Outervania University." Recently, a major mineral collection was almost refused by a major university as the executor called the university switchboard and the call was referred to the engineering department. The department said that they had no interest, but the caller might try the geology department, but doubted that they would feel any different. The collection is now safe there, no thanks to any directions from the will.

It has to be remembered that no matter how simple or logical a step appears to you, it will almost never be thought of by a non-specialist. One alternative is to have a sub-executor for the purposes of disposing of the collection **and its related materials** in addition to an overall executor. Someone, in life, other than your executor should know of your intentions. If you plan to have your collection go to a *curated* museum, tell the curator of your intention and give him notice in writing to whom he is to write offering help should an untimely end come.

Wills can be made by lawyers or by competent individuals. Printed forms for wills can be purchased from stationary-stores. The legal status of your will is best decided by a lawyer, however. A legally-binding will needs careful wording and professional help is necessary. A casual will which has instructions might be allowable in your state or perhaps not. Many books are available to help decide if a lawyer is necessary. Don't let the word, lawyer, prevent you from writing down your thoughts and directions. A non-registered will is better than none. Directions available for an executor are better than leaving a disposition **completely** to chance.

The executor of a will is usually paid for his services and the fee is usually based on a percentage value of the estate. For this reason, you will probably want to keep the money in the family by having a trusted relative be executor.

If you name a destination for your collection, you should give the names, addresses, phone numbers, etc. of contact people as well as their titles. Different sub-specialties of a collection might have different destinations, etc. An out-of-date will could be hazardous. If you want the collection sold, you could ask a few of your dealer friends if they would sell your collection for you on commission and you could indicate a list of dealer choices, in order of preference, for your executor to contact.

Disposing of a Collection - A Sale

A collection does not have to be sold all at once or even immediately after the demise of its owner, unless there is an unusual financial need. However, some schedule will allow your heirs to enjoy the investment in money a collection represents. How many old collections have we known of which lie dormant in a spouses custody? One New Jersey collector's spouse was a concern to her children and grandchildren. Mom, or grandma, lived alone in her cluttered old house along with a "clutter of the old man's collection", poor girl! The children took their mother shopping one day while the remaining children and grandchildren emptied out the "undesirable" contents of the house into a dumpster. When the lady returned, to a thoroughly cleaned house, it is not recorded how grateful she must have felt. (Some heirs dispose of collections simply because they hate the collection and the irritation and friction it may have created in a family.)

Time and perspective are valuable to consider. The shorter the time available, the smaller the monetary return likely will be. Of course, if the collector can control the sale, his financial state will

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be better off.

The mineral section of the Rochester Academy of Sciences in 1986 had two collectors who wanted to sell their life-long mineral, fossil, and book collections in order to help their retirement years. Arrangements were made to have a mineral show which featured only the two collections. The club got a percentage commission and the collectors got a high percentage of the retail value. In 1989, two more collectors in that club found the idea attractive and another successful show was held. A similar event could be held for collectors who do not belong to a club. Both collectors kept a few specimens which had special meaning for themselves and sold the rest.

Plan of a Sale

Any sale needs enough publicity so that people can and will plan to attend the event. Most customers will come from within 250 km/150 miles radius, advertising is needed for this area. Club bulletins, Geoliterary and otherwise, announcing the event are effective. (A list of club bulletin editors can be had through the various federations of mineral clubs and is usually held by a particular club's bulletin editor.) A garage-sale type ad in the local newspaper a week before will also help. The familiar neighborhood signs to bring impulse buyers into a show all help. In general, it is wise to plan a one-day event. In order to attract the most attendees, additional events can be scheduled to provide enough interest for long distance travelers to come so that even if they don't intend to buy many things, the day will be full. If the club can have a member give a talk about minerals, mining, gems, etc. the event can be a crowd attractor. The Rochester group also scheduled a pot luck dinner to end the day.

The first step is to organize the specimens to sell. A show label can be generated which identifies the material and which has the price. One way to have a club sale is to designate a small committee to meet on a weekly basis to gather, label, and price the material for sale. Processed specimens can be put into flats to go to the sale. Low value specimens can be put into attractively priced lots. (The goal is to preferentially sell the low priced material as it represents the greatest challenge to sell.) Any collection will have material which is not suited to sell and those items can be considered as they are examined: either discarded or given away. A code, usually the owner's initial would serve to designate each of the sellers interested. In such a club sale, an entire collection, a single flat, or even a single specimen might come from a particular collector. The code will signify how a single check might be divided rather than having a check-out line for each collector's material.

A meeting hall, barn, lawn, etc. will be required to sell the material. A weatherproof area is preferred. A season which allows the weather to co-operate and does not conflict with regional shows is important. A club sale right after a commercial show will attract budget-depleted customers. All of the material has to be visible at a glance as hidden material never sells. Unpriced specimens have to be avoided as customers interested in the specimens are notorious for not asking what the price is and they walk away from the specimens instead of buying them. (Show-style lights are not necessary, but anyone in the club who has some might loan them to the sale.)

A set-up crew is essential. Watchers are necessary to monitor and prevent damage or shrinkage. Tables require set-up and take-down, etc. As most clubs have mineral shows, an experienced crew is usually to be found.

An efficient cash-out and accounting procedure is essential. Rochester's procedure proved quite popular. All of the customers who came to the sale registered to receive a number as at an auction and a numbered envelope to put tabs into. (The registration list could be used to recruit new club members as well as provide informational control on what happened to the merchandise, mis-payments, etc.) Each label had three tab segments attached to the label proper. The tabs had a number which identified the specimen on an inventory sheet. If there was more than one collector, colored labels or letter-prefixed numbers could designate whose specimens were sold. There was a line for the price and there was a line for the customer number.

When each specimen was selected by a customer, it was given to a watcher behind of a table who recorded the customer's number on each of the label tabs and one of the tabs was given back to the customer as a receipt. When "enough" specimens were selected by the various customers, runners would pick up the specimens from the various tables or areas, etc. to be put into individually registered flats in a secure area so that no one could shop from a selected flat of specimens. When a particular customer was through shopping, he could bring his stubs to the secure area where his lots would be gathered and checked against what the customer thought he

bought. Any missing specimens could be picked up by the runners if they had not yet come to the secure area. The customer would bring the flat(s) to a check out station where his bill would be totaled and paid. The three tabs are necessary. The customer has one of the tabs to be sure his bill is correct. The club would have a set of tabs to know that total income represented total purchases. A third set of tabs would go to the various collectors whose specimens were being sold.

The schedule of events shouldn't overlap. A lecture or demonstration should be offered after the sale. Usually three hours is adequate to allot for a sale. In the case of some items, a discount period might be offered where certain items you want to sell can be promoted. The discount period might be long or short, 20-50% off, etc. Generally the highest quality items sell first while the lower quality items wait around to be sold. Customers were not allowed to carry their own selections around as a standard security measure.)

Collectors who want to sell all of their collections to just **one** customer will lose the most money. Most collectors have not thought of the possibility of becoming a short-term dealer or let their clubs be a dealer for them. If the top half of a collection sells at 80% of retail, this is more money than the 33% or lower he will be offered as a wholesale price. The experience can be fun and at the end, more money can be had. There are many regional sales that can be attended and for the price of a table rental, additional specimens can be sold. Some collectors who have borrowed display cases, lights, etc. have gotten space at commercial mineral shows to sell part or all of their their collections.

Auction sales are a reasonable way to sell minerals, books, etc. Auctions and consignments work only for higher quality items, however. While book auctions are common, there is only one regular commercial mineral auction company currently in the US.

Summary

The disposal of any collection is difficult for an owner. The most important consideration is the emotional attachment. A family or a collector might be unwilling to part with a collection. One solution is selecting certain items to be retained while selling the bulk of the collection.

An estate collection need guidelines: written and specific. Heirs will not usually think of the proper steps. Horror stories should motivate all collectors toward preventing them from happening.

