



Friends of Mineralogy, Colorado Chapter Newsletter – February/March, 2005

March Meeting – Thursday, March 10, 7:30 p.m.

(Board meeting 6:45-7:30)

Denver Museum of Nature and Science – V.I.P. Room. Enter through the single door Security/Staff entrance to the left of the main entrance. The V.I.P. room is to the left through the cafeteria area.

January program:

Beth Simmons

will speak on

Mining History of Idaho Springs and Clear Creek County

or

Howfarizitto to Jackson's Monument?

Beth will tell us of the history of Idaho Springs, its mining, milling, springs, scenery, and, of course, the true story of George Jackson and Joel Parker Whitney, heroes of Colorado. With the help of long-time Idaho Springs residents, Beth Simmons recently authored "A Quick History of Idaho Springs," published by Western Reflections Publishing in Montrose, Colorado. Personalized, signed copies will be available for \$10 after the meeting.

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FMCC dues for 2005 are \$13.00, which includes membership in national Friends of Mineralogy. Please send your dues payment to: FM-Colorado Chapter, P.O. Box 5276, Golden CO, 80401-5276.

FMCC 2005 Officers:

President, Pete Modreski, 303-202-4766

Vice-President, Jack Thompson, 719-636-2978

Treasurer, Jim Hurlbut, 303-757-0283

Secretary, Richard Parsons,

Directors: Bill Chirside (2005-06), 303-989-8748

Bruce Geller (2004-05), 303-237-2947

Paul Kendall (2005-06), 303-470-3261, and newsltr editor

2005 FMCC Auction

Our spring auction will be held on Sunday, May 15, from 1:00 to 3:00 pm at the Glendale Community Center. Please see the flier in this newsletter for details.

Gold Camp Road Project

This newsletter has previously written about the U. S. Forest Service project to rebuild the presently closed portion of the Gold Camp Road near Colorado Springs. Currently the USFS is waiting to receive comments from the public on their Draft Plan/Environmental Impact Statement. The final chosen plan will influence mineral collecting activities in that area. If you wish to make comments about their plan, you must send comments so that they will be received at the proper locations by **March 15, 2005**. For information about the plan, please log on to: www.fs.fed.us/r2/psicc/pp/ and click on "Gold Camp Road Issues." For sending your comments, go to the same website, or mail them to Gold Camp Road Project, c/o Greystone, 5231 S. Quebec St., Greenwood Village, CO 80111, or give them verbally to Frank M. Landis, District Recreation Staff, 719-477-4203.

Symposium: Agate and Other Cryptocrystalline Quartz

On Saturday and Sunday, September 10 and 11, 2005, there will be a symposium at the Green Center, Colorado School of Mines, sponsored by Friends of Mineralogy Colorado Chapter, the Colorado School of Mines Geology Museum, and the U. S. Geological Survey. The above theme will be in conjunction with the focus of the subsequent Denver Gem and Mineral Show, which is Quartz and Cryptocrystalline Quartz. The symposium will consist of lectures, discussion, and Q&A, and there will be a reception and tours of the CSM Geology Museum and a Saturday night banquet. On Monday and Tuesday, September 12 and 13, there will be field trips to Colorado mineral localities. Registration for the symposium will be \$40.

Anyone wanting more information can contact Pete Modreski at pmodreski@usgs.gov or Friends of Mineralogy, P.O. Box 5276, Golden, CO 80401-5276. Anyone willing to present a paper on cryptocrystalline quartz and related topics can contact Pete Modreski at the above email address or at 303-202-4766.

Colorado Springs Mineral Show And Symposium

The Colorado Springs Mineralogical Society will hold its annual show June 17 through 19, and with sponsorship by FMCC and RMFMS, it will hold a symposium this year on June 18 and 19 on Micro Mineralogy. Both of these will be at the Phil Long Exposition Center, 1515 Auto Mall Loop in Colorado Springs from 10 am to 5 pm each day. Planned speakers for the show are Michael Wise of the Smithsonian Institution, Barbara Muntyan, Jack Thompson, Jim Hurlbut, and Urban Turzi. Planned speakers on Saturday for the symposium are Paul Hlava, Ron Gibbs, Tom Tucker, Jack Thompson, Jim Hurlbut, and Tom Rosemeyer. Several of the above speakers are silver-tongued FMCC members. Admission to the show is \$5 per day, \$12 for all three days, and admission to the symposium is free with the three-day show ticket. Sunday at the symposium will be dedicated to trading and selling microminerals.

FMCC and the Denver Museum of Nature and Science

You may be aware that FMCC is an associate group member of the DMNS, and part of that relationship allows FMCC to hold our bimonthly meetings in the museum. FMCC members are encouraged to also become members of the DMNS.

Donald R. Belsher

Don Belsher of Eldorado Springs, CO. died from cancer on Nov. 31, 2004. He was 73. He was preceded in death in 2003 by his younger son, Daniel, owner of the Denver Box Company. Donald was an outdoor enthusiast, an outstanding field collector, and a good friend to many. He was also a part-time mineral dealer, selling many of his excess self-collected minerals at Denver's and Tucson's hotel shows.

Don was an engineering technician at the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) until he took early retirement. He then devoted himself to full-time field collecting and travel. At various times, he collected at all the major mineral localities in Colorado, especially in the Lake George, Crystal Park, and Devil's Head areas, as well as at Muddy Creek and Hartsel for barite, in Eagle Co. for yellow apatite, and at various locations around Colorado Springs. He also collected extensively at Washington Camp/Duquesne, at the Santo Nino mine, at Date Creek, at Stanley Butte, and in the Comobabi Mountains of Arizona. He also took collecting trips at Prince of Wales Island, Alaska, and in Mexico and Peru with members of his family.

Don was a founding member of the Colorado Chapter of Friends of Mineralogy. He regularly attended mineral symposiums and shows in Denver, Socorro, and Tucson. His collecting buddies in recent years include Frank Knous, Marj Riegel, Nick Golosow, and Barb Muntyan. They all have good memories of collecting times with Don, and will continue to remember him fondly.

-- from Barb Muntyan

Denver Gem and Mineral Show Mini Report January 2005

I know this is only January and the Denver Show is not until September, nine months away, but you all know how fast those nine months disappear and **WOW! the SHOW IS HERE!!** Ron Knoshaug, Club Liaison, is trying to prepare well in advance so club members will have the information they need when they need it. He is mailing the club packets to the clubs this month. The packets contain important forms and information for each club. The forms are the **Job Descriptions and Worker Sign Up Sheets**, the **Working Exhibits Space Request**, and the **Program Information Sheet**. These forms all have deadlines for being completed and returned to the responsible person on the Show Committee. Please be sure your club receives these forms from your Show Committee representative and **ACTS** on them. The Exhibit information and application forms are not complete at this time. However, as soon as they are, they will be forwarded to each club as well. Should your club have any questions about the forms, please be sure to contact Ron at 303-423-2923 or jrknoshaug@comcast.net.

The January Show Committee meeting was cancelled due to the bad weather. The next meeting is March 3rd at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science in Room 303 instead of the cafeteria. Anyone interested in the show is invited to attend. New members are always welcome and encouraged. Putting on the show is a big task.

Council President, Regina Aumente, is still waiting for 2005 updated information for each club. Please be sure your club provides her with 2005 officer and Trustee information. If your club needs another form, contact her at 303-978-9926 or raumente@aol.com. Respectfully submitted, Judy Knoshaug, Secretary

FM and the American Geological Institute

Several years ago FM became an official affiliated society of the AGI, a non-profit federation of 43 earth science societies. Publications from the AGI include the *Glossary of Geology* and the monthly magazine *Geotimes*. As an affiliate, FM members can order publications from them at a discount. Go to their website: www.agiweb.org for more information.

Disclosure of opal mine may trigger rush to Wyo.

By Katy Human
Denver Post Staff Writer

This article is reprinted from the March 1, 2005, Denver Post.

The discovery of a 34-pound opal in central Wyoming could trigger an old-fashioned mineral rush this week.

On Friday, the Wyoming State Geological Survey will publicly release the location of an enormous opal deposit found near Riverton in central Wyoming, probably one of the biggest opal formations in the country, said Dan Hausel, a state geologist.

The giant opal is a common type, not particularly valuable itself, experts said. But its discovery raises the possibility that the deposit hosts substantial amounts of fiery orange opal and the precious iridescent variety. Geologists already have seen traces of these more valuable types.

Gem mining is notoriously unpredictable: Valuable veins of precious opal may - or may not - twist unseen through the more common variety of opal found at the new site.

So it's possible no one will express much interest, Hausel said.

But the claimants may line up Friday, high-tailing it from the state geology office to the opal site, throwing down corner stakes and racing to file paperwork with Fremont County.

"The thing that amazes me is that people haven't already staked claims out there," Hausel said. "There's hundreds of thousands or millions of tons of opal in there - fire opal, traces of precious opal. ..."

Opal is thought to form over hundreds to millions of years, after water percolates through silica-rich rock, drawing out minerals. In certain circumstances, the minerals drop back out of the water, forming opal's watery mixture of silica dioxide streaked with minerals.

"Volcanic rocks, that's where the best opal comes from," said Jim Cappa, a geologist with the state of Colorado.

In Colorado, rockhounds have plucked fairly nice opal from Specimen Mountain in Larimer County and elsewhere, he said.

"It's widespread. But when you think of gem-quality opals, those come from Mexico and Australia," Cappa said.

One Wyoming rockhound was skeptical that the new area - about 14 square miles of sagebrush scrub hills - will turn into a productive one for opal miners.

There are three grades of opal, said Melvin Gustin, who lives outside of Riverton and runs a small rock shop and jewelry business with his wife.

Common opal is a fairly unimpressive milky-white rock, he said; fire opal glows orange or red; and precious opal, the most valuable, glimmers with iridescence.

"I've never seen any fire opal here," Gustin said. "Now, that's what the world's seeking. I don't think it's worth claiming myself."

But Hausel has found the fiery variety, and he e-mailed a reporter images of rock with tantalizing streaks of iridescence.

"Well, I won't pooh-pooh this," Gustin said.

In the gem and mineral game, he said, there are always optimists willing to spend the few hundred dollars it takes to survey and stake a claim.

Because the deposit is mostly on federal land, owned by the Bureau of Land Management and the National Forest Service, successful applicants will essentially lease the right to mine, said Pam Stiles, a BLM land-law examiner in Cheyenne.

The laws regarding claim staking have changed little since 1872, she said.

"It's first come, first served," she said. "If people think it's something major, they'll be out there knocking each other over."

It has been decades since such a scramble for mining claims happened in Colorado - in the 1950s, it was for uranium, Cappa said. In Wyoming, Stiles recalled a bentonite rush in the early 1990s, when miners stood at the edge of the site with picks and shovels, waiting for the opening.

The possibility of a rush motivated Hausel to make the opal-location announcement at a scheduled time, to put everyone on the same playing field, he said.

For more information, call the Wyoming State Geological Survey at 307-766-2286.

Staff writer Katy Human can be reached at 303-820-1910 or khuman@denverpost.com.

North Jeffco Gem & Mineral Club Silent Auction

Friday, April 8th, 2005

North Jeffco Senior Center, 6842 Wadsworth Blvd.

Setup at 6:00 PM, Auction Begins 7:00 PM



- ◆ jewelry ◆ gems ◆ minerals ◆ bake sale ◆
- ◆ crafts ◆ free refreshments ◆
- ◆ public invited ◆



Sellers & Buyers Welcome
Call Ron Knoshaug 303-423-2923

COLORADO MINERAL & FOSSIL SHOW - Spring

APRIL 22 - 23 - 24, 2005

Fri. & Sat. 10 - 6 • Sun. 10 - 5

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(Retail & Wholesale)

and across the street . . .

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FMCC March meeting is Thursday, March 10, 2005, 7:30 pm, Denver Museum of Nature & Science. **Beth Simmons** will present "Mining History of Idaho Springs and Clear Creek County."

Coming Events 2005:

- Mar 10 Friends of Mineralogy meeting, DMNS
- Apr 1-3 Ft. Collins Rockhounds Show, Lincoln Center, Ft. Collins, CO, 907-493-6168
- Apr 8 North Jeffco Gem & Mineral Club Auction, N. Jeffco Senior Center, 6842 Wadsworth Blvd.
- Apr 22-24 Colorado Mineral and Fossil Show - Spring, Holiday Inn, Best Western, I-70 and I-25, Denver
- May 7 Colorado Mineral Society Auction, Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church, 920 Kipling, Lakewood
- May 7-8 Grand Junction Gem and Mineral Show, Two Rivers Convention Center, Grand Junction, CO
- May 12 Friends of Mineralogy meeting, DMNS
- May 15 FMCC Silent Auction, Glendale Community Center. See inside this newsletter for details.
- Jun 17-19 Colorado Springs Mineralogical Society/RMFMS Show, Phil Long Exposition Center, Colo Spgs
- Jun 18-19 Micro Mineralogy Symposium in conjunction with the above Colo Springs Min. Society Show
- Jul 3 Colorado State Mining Competition, Creede, Colorado, 719-658-2370
- Jul 4 Days of '92 Mining Competition, Creede, Colorado, 719-658-2370
- Aug 5-7 Rock and Mineral Show, Underground Museum, Creede, CO, 719-658-2376
- Aug 11-14 Contin-tail Mineral Show, Rodeo Grounds, Buena Vista, CO
- Sep 8 Friends of Mineralogy meeting, DMNS
- Sep 10-11 Mineral Symposium: "Agate and Other Cryptocrystalline Quartz," Green Center, Colorado School of Mines, Golden, CO; evening banquet Sep 10, field trips Sep 12-13
- Sep 14 Open House, Geology Museum, Colorado School of Mines, Golden, CO
- Sep 14-18 Colorado Mineral and Fossil Show, Holiday Inn Denver Central, I-70 and I-25
- Sep 16-18 Denver Gem and Mineral Show, Denver Merchandise Mart
- Nov 3 Friends of Mineralogy meeting, DMNS. The date is now confirmed.

Friends of Mineralogy—Colorado Chapter
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