
Bay Area Mineralogists

December 2015

Meeting: December 9, 2015; 7:00 pm
USGS, 345 Middlefield Road, Menlo Park
Building 3, 2nd Floor, Auditorium

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About Us:

The Bay Area Mineralogists meet monthly during the school year, on the 2nd Wednesday. We meet at the U.S. Geological Survey in Menlo Park, on the second floor of Building 3, where the campus map (<http://online.wr.usgs.gov/calendar/map.html>) says "Rambo Auditorium." The front doors will be locked so you'll have to come up the stairs on the Middlefield Road side of the building. Parking is free.

December Program: Trona Field Trips

As reported in the November newsletter, a group of BAM members attended the Trona Gem-O-Rama in October. Barb Matz will provide a detailed look at the weekend, complete with a DVD produced by Searles Lake Gem & Mineral Society that describes the field trips. Here's your chance to see what it's like without getting muddy, salty, or overheated!

Welcome New Members!

Welcome to new member Tish Hunter, of Tucson AZ. We hope to see you on field trips next year!

Welcome also to Mark Bissell, father of Peter who joined BAM last month.

"Occasional Stories from the Desert" OR
"What the heck has Ted been up to?" by
Ted Hadley [photos by Ted unless otherwise noted]

October 6-8: Well, I moved down south for another winter. My first trip was with Stan to the northern Argus Mountains. We visited the Minietta Mine (4 tunnels underground) and the Modoc Mine (one huge underground operation).



Two portals of the Minietta Mine system, Argus Range CA



Looking downstope in one of the Minietta mines.



Stan removing mimetite with wulfenite in one of the Minietta mines

At the Minietta, we found phoenicochroite, wulfenite, cerussite, possible stolzite, and lots of common minerals, all as small miniature and micro samples. From our vantage point on the hillside, we could see the ruins of the Chinese miner camps in the valley floor. Neat.

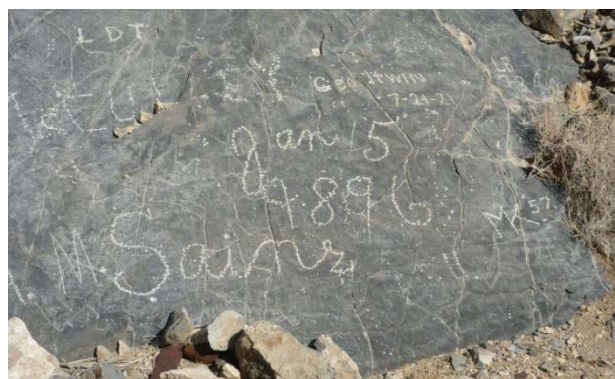


View of the valley floor below the Minetta Mine. Numerous rock walls still stand from the homes occupied by Chinese miners working at the Modoc Mine.

The Modoc mine was large but uninteresting mineralogically. Massive galena was rare. We did not climb down into the stopes and lower levels.



Stan trying his hardest to find something in the Modoc Mine.



Graffiti rock near portal of the Modoc Mine, Argus Range. Note the 1896 date. This mine was owned by George Hearst, patriarch of the Hearst dynasty in San Francisco

We drove about halfway to the mountaintop ghost town of Lookout City, but HUGE rocks in the riverbed turned the route into a technical 4x4 drive, so we turned back.

Oct 9: Stan and I with Gary Parsons visited the Ophir Mine in the Slate Crossing Range near Trona.



Looking down into one of the many openings of the Ophir Mine.



Gary Parsons showing his better side on a very hot day collecting at the Ophir Mine near Trona, CA.

Gary and I lost interest early on, but Stan's tenacity paid off when he started finding mimetite, vanadinite, and other interesting minerals, all as micros in very hard rock. The day was so hot (over 100F) that Gary laid under Stan's truck to escape the sun. Gary and I called it a day and returned to camp while Stan continued hammering on rocks. As always, Stan's hard work paid off.

Oct 10: Trona dig on Searles Lake. I saw many friends from the Bay Area, So. Cal, even Barstow, and met a bunch of new people. Fun was had by all and everyone found nice material.



Ted at Trona with Mesa Community College students (they asked about his bumper sticker...)

Oct 13: Met some friends at McDermitt, NV, and collected mercury minerals for the week. This trip will become the subject of a talk on its own. We found lots of interesting material.



Retorts at an unnamed mercury prospect near the Cordero and McDermitt mines, NV.



Mike Cox and Delillah Sabba making gravel from big rocks in the open pit of the McDermitt Mine, McDermitt, NV.



Headframe and calcines of the Nevada Quicksilver Mine.

Oct 19: While looking at MinDat.org photos of the uncommon mineral bayldonite, I decided to go looking for some. I knew two of the localities well, and since they were only a couple of minutes from Barstow, I decided to spend an hour hammering on rocks...

Well, I didn't make it that far. Only a quarter mile off the pavement, I found a dead human body. Well, it IS Barstow, so I knew it would only be a matter of time. I called 911, and the police, sheriff, fire, paramedics, and ambulance all came. After an hour or so, they released me and I returned to my Barstow home. The news reports are online at DesertDispatch.com. It was a kidnapping-for-ransom-turned-murder body dump of a 53 year old male, reported missing a week before my discovery. The 6 perpetrators have been captured (all Barstow residents 25 years old and under) and are in jail awaiting trial. Each is held on \$1.4mil bail.

Oct 22: Went looking for bayldonite again. I found something, but I'm not sure if that is it.

Oct 23: Visited the Blue Bell Mine, Adit D, area again. Nothing new or exciting to report, but it was a fun outing.

Oct 26: Visited the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County as an invited guest. This is THE museum to see in California. Probably their worst exhibit is the [mineral room](#) and even still, it is spectacular. I also visited Tony Kampf, their mineralogist, and got a tour of his mineral ID and analysis lab. Really cool!



Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County

Oct 28: Home to the Bay Area. Returned to Barstow mid-November (before the BAM meeting).

[Ed. Note: Ted, We're looking forward to Occasional Stories from the Desert, Part 2!]

Second Largest Diamond Found in Botswana

(Nov 19) The biggest diamond found in more than a century, and the largest ever found in Botswana, has been discovered at the Karowe mine operated by [Lucara Diamond](#), a Canadian mining company.



This new 1,111-carat gemstone is second in size only to the Cullinan diamond, which was

unearthed in South Africa in 1905. The 3,106-carat Cullinan, found near Pretoria, was cut to form the Great Star of Africa and the Lesser Star of Africa, both of which are set in the British crown jewels.

Lucara has reported finding two other significant diamonds – 813 carats and 374 carats – at the same mine during the same week.

Sources: BBC, UK Guardian, Lucara Diamond

Large Pink Diamond Found

(Nov 27) Petra Diamonds has recovered an extremely rare, high quality, 23.16 carat pink diamond from its Williamson mine in Tanzania. The rough stone will be sold at auction in Antwerp in December.

Another Large Pink Diamond Found

(Nov 24) A rare 25-carat, barrel-shaped pink diamond has been found, not at a mine but in the jewelry collection of former Philippine first lady Imelda Marcos. The collection was seized by the Philippine government when the Marcoses hastily fled the country in 1986. The collection, which includes Burmese rubies, Indian and South African diamonds, and Colombian emeralds, is currently being appraised, and the pink diamond could be valued at \$5 million. However, Imelda Marcos, who is back in the Philippines and an elected member of Congress, has vowed to recover her family's seized assets...

Upcoming Shows, Symposia, & Events

Dec 5 – Emeryville CA

Annual Mini Mineral Show

Hyatt House, 5800 Shellmound Ave, Emeryville
Sat. 12 noon to 5 pm

Dec 5 – Albany CA

Crystal Gazers Holiday Party – BAM invited!

RSVP: Steve Smith ssmith.contractor@tsocorp.com
Sat. 5 to 10 pm

Featuring: fabulous pot luck and silent auction

Dec 4-6 – Barstow CA

High Desert Gem & Mineral Society;

Cora Harper Fitness Center, 841 Barstow Rd;
Sat. 10 am-5 pm, Sun. 10 am-5 pm

That's all – no club or commercial shows in the Bay Area until 2016, so you can save your \$\$\$ for Tucson instead!