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# Bay Area Mineralogists

## November 2007

Next meeting: Nov. 14, 2007  
Foothill College

<http://www.baymin.org>



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### **BAM November Program: “When Flame Lights Illuminated Our Underground World”**

Brian Thurston has endeavored to arrange a solid program for the November meeting: David Des Marais will give a talk on the evolution of technologies which provided miners with light underground. David's talk gives the audience an appreciation of mine hazards like methane gas and how the challenge of providing flame light in a potentially explosive atmosphere was eventually overcome. David brings mining history alive with anecdotes about past mining practices and the challenges they faced. David will also be displaying a portion of his extensive collection of historic mine lamps and other gear – word from Brian is that the selection and temporal variety is pretty stunning, providing a glimpse into an aspect of mineral acquisition most of us never think about.

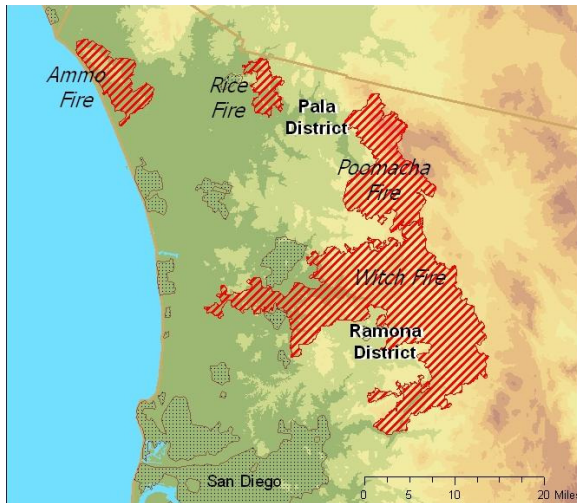
David Des Marais received a Ph.D. in Geochemistry from Indiana University in 1974. His long-term research interests have been the biogeochemical carbon cycle and the early evolution of Earth and its biosphere. His areas of

specialization have included the stable isotope geochemistry of carbon in lunar samples, meteorites and oceanic basalts, the biogeochemistry of microbial communities in hypersaline environments, and the biogeochemistry of ancient (Precambrian) carbonates and organic matter. He serves on the editorial boards of the two journals *Astrobiology* and *Geobiology*. He is the principal investigator of the Ames Research Center team of the NASA Astrobiology Institute. Des Marais is an interdisciplinary scientist for astrobiology on both the Mars Exploration Rover 2003 science operations working group and the Mars 2005 CRISM infrared spectrometer..

Brian's been cross-advertising this among several different clubs, so expect this meeting to be well-attended and have some new faces. As always, start time is in the vicinity of 7:45pm. We meet in the Geology Lab at Foothill College. See <http://www.baymin.org/Meet/FoothillMap.gif> for a campus map. Bring \$2 for parking.

### **A Cautionary Note: Fires in the Southland**

Once in a rare while, my professional and personal lives overlap in unexpected ways. While evaluating the impacts of last month's wildfires in Southern California, I saw a few place names on maps that would be familiar to collectors everywhere. With the largest fires occurring in San Diego County, localities like Pala and Ramona were not far from the edges of the conflagration. Based on the perimeter information available, three localities in the



Ramona district (ABC Mine, Hercules Mine, and the Sunrise Claim) fell within the burn zone of the Witch fire, the largest and most destructive of the fires in the outbreak. The Little Three locality is to the west of the fire extent.

This is not to mourn for the potential loss of a few tourmalines to an unwanted heat treatment, but rather a reminder that we as mineral collectors may place ourselves out in areas at risk of fires. A few common-sense tips for not starting the next big fire, taken from smokeybear.com:

- If smoking, safe practice requires a 3' clearing around the smoker
- Don't park your vehicle on dry grass
- If off-road vehicles are allowed, internal combustion equipment requires a spark arrester
- Inspect your site on leaving
- Never take burning sticks out of a fire
- At the first sign of a wildfire, leave area immediately by established trails or roads. Contact a Ranger as soon as possible. If escape route is blocked, go to the nearest lake or stream.

Each fire record from the CDF includes a field for "cause" – I've yet to see any listed as mineral collectors and hope to keep it that way!

## Ed Oyler "Memorial" Sale

Those on the BAM e-mail list received a last-minute notice from Sharon Cisneros this week about an impromptu sale at the San Martin home of Ed and Elaine Oyler. Ed Oyler was a

well-known collector and devotee of the mercury minerals of California for whom the species edoylerite ( $\text{Hg}_3^{2+} [\text{S}_2] \text{CrO}_4$ ) is named; he passed away in 2004. (See the short but sweet obit by Richard Erd in the Sept 2004 issue of MinRec.)

The sale was of Ed's mineralogical effects and was held last Saturday morning to benefit his wife Elaine, who is in poor health and moving to smaller housing. It was well attended n BAM members; among others, during my visit there, Bill Spence, Dan Evanich, John Magnasco, Gary Moss, Steve Smith and Lee McIlvaine all were present and rummaging through the vast assortment of minerals, books, and other goodies present. John Magnasco found a letter from Paul DeSautels to Ed, discussing an analysis of yet another obscure mineral.

The materials in Ed's collection were generally not high-end display samples, as his passion was collecting. There was an amazing range of California minerals, some common, some rare, some unobtainable today. I found myself with an assortment of samples from California and elsewhere; perhaps my favorite was a small miniature with sprays of bluish glaucophane on a matrix of crystallized (!) tan jadeite from Valley Ford, Sonoma County.

Given his connection to BAM and the historical value of the specimens, perhaps the December meeting would be a good occasion for those who attended to bring in their newly-acquired samples from the Oyler collection (or other pieces connected with Ed) to share?

## Deposits Magazine

This item in through the BAM website and was passed along by Charles Nelson...

"During the last 2 years we have been producing the *Deposits Magazine*. We are based in the UK, but the magazine is already being sent to Australia, New Zealand, Netherlands, Belgium, and Spain.

"This is mainly a Rock & Fossil publication, and we would now like to ask if you or any of your members would be kind enough to donate an article for the magazine. We would love you to do this and believe this would be most beneficial.

"You may view the overview of this magazine at [www.depositmag.com](http://www.depositmag.com)

"Kindest regards,  
Roy Bullard, editor"

## **Coming Soon...**

Yours truly notes that BAM would similarly welcome articles and content for future issues of the BAM Newsletter.

Coming next month: a report on the Munich Show from BAM ex-pat Claus Hedegaard!

## **Upcoming Shows**

November 17-18

Livermore Lithorama  
Livermore Valley Lithophiles  
3131 Pacific Ave, Livermore  
17<sup>th</sup>, 10am-5pm; 18<sup>th</sup>, 10am-4pm

November 17-18

"Beauty of Amethyst"  
Oxnard Gem & Mineral Society  
Oxnard Performing Arts Center  
800 Hobson Way, Oxnard  
17<sup>th</sup>, 9am-6pm; 18<sup>th</sup>, 10am-4pm

November 17-18

32nd annual show  
Victor Valley Gem & Mineral Club  
San Bernardino County Fair Grounds  
14800 7th St.  
9am-5pm daily

December 8-9

Arcata "Northwest Crystal Ball"  
North Crystal Co-op & Mineral Club  
1185 11<sup>th</sup> St, Arcata  
10am-6pm daily

## **Letters to the BAM Editor**

Please send your comments, content, compliments, and/or complaints to Don Windeler, [don.windeler@rms.com](mailto:don.windeler@rms.com), 650-591-1644.