

MINUTES of the SOCIETY OF MINERAL MUSEUM PROFESSIONALS

February 9, 1996 at Tucson, Arizona

Minutes of the Board Meeting

Board members present: George Harlow, Carl Francis, Dave Thayer, Jeff Post, Tony Kampf, Joe Nagel, Jean DeMouthe, Jim Hurlbut

General members present: Dorothy Ettensohn, Joe Peters

Board members absent: Dmitri Belakovskii, Ferdinand Damaschun

The meeting was called to order at 8:14 am by George Harlow, president.

Dave Thayer, treasurer, issued the annual financial report. A discussion followed of lunch costs at the annual meeting, it was decided to forego lunch in the future. For this meeting, \$10 vouchers would be furnished to each member, for use in the Desert Museum restaurant. Thayer suggested that it was time for a general audit of the Society's books. The Board voted to authorize Thayer to arrange an audit, spending no more than \$250 to do so.

Thayer distributed a copy of the current Society bylaws.

George Harlow mentioned upcoming expenses: a social event at the upcoming MM3 conference in Budapest, the possible SMMP WWW site, and the possible SMMP table-top display for meetings. The Board authorized the expenditure of \$300 for an event in Budapest.

Jean DeMouthe reported on the status of the membership directory. It was suggested that fields for web site address and year dues paid be added to each entry.

Carl Francis reported on the nominees for the SMMP annual Board election. Harlow, DeMouthe, Lueth and Wilson agreed to stand for election. He suggested that the phrase "immediate past president" be used to describe the 10th Board position, rather than "last year's president". It was agreed that the vice President should issue a call for nominations from the membership prior to the February meeting, thus allowing members not planning to attend the Tucson meeting to have a voice in the election.

Joe Nagel offered to produce a revised version of the by-laws, with all changes voted on at this meeting.

The timing of the meeting was generally discussed, since some members objected to Friday morning.

Harlow discussed the problem of orphan collections and curators, and SMMP's potential role in providing support or assistance. He suggested the Society address a letter to the administration of the organization involved, expressing our concerns, questions and offering assistance. Issues such as collection availability and use, and abuse of the public trust were raised. The Univ. of British Columbia was used as an example.

Jeffrey Post suggested that all curators should document the uses of their collections. This would provide hard data to show the usefulness of collections in the event that were threatened with closing or disbursement.

Tony Kampf discussed the availability of collection data on the internet.

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 am.

Minutes of the General Business Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 9:50 am by George Harlow, President.

Harlow thanked Dave Thayer and the Desert Museum for hosting the meeting. This was followed by roll call, and the introduction of guests. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved unread.

Dave Thayer gave the treasurer's report, and called for payment of 1996 dues.

George Harlow discussed lunch expenses, and explained that in the future the Society would not subsidize the meal. He explained the system of \$10 vouchers to be used at this meeting.

John Rakovan, representing the Mineralogical Society of America, discussed their Arts Committee. The purpose of this group is outreach and the production of MSA products. They want to collaborate with SMMP in making a mineral calendar with an educational bent. The format would be a standard 2-page fold-down, with one large photos and several smaller pictures related to research in MSA. Each page would display specimens from different museums. Revenues would go to MSA. Rakovan said that MSA would do the leg-work and get the calendar made. Museums may be able to receive a certain number of calendars in return for allowing MSA to use their photographs. Rakovan's e-mail is: rakovan@ess.sunysb.edu

Joe Nagel suggested a project review; discussion with others who have done multi-institutional projects.

Andrew Sicree suggested the production of notecards or postcards. Carl Francis pointed out that it would be best if the calendar could be ready for release in time for the annual Geological Soc. of America meeting in November. Barbara Muntyan suggested that a 6-month advance release would probably be necessary (July for the following January). Thus, if we start production now, it would be for a 1998 calendar. Harlow said that with a new calendar each year, many museums would have an opportunity to participate. He also warned of potential problems that may arise with photograph licensing from some institutions.

Francis reported that there was nothing new on the Stolen Specimen Hotline.

Harlow is the representative to the MSA from SMMP. He asked for volunteers for a committee to look into collection concerns, including orphan collections. He reported that MSA is concerned regarding the status of mineralogy, and is establishing a web page from the head office, the focus and goals of which are under discussion.

Harlow reported that the table-top display, originally assigned to Susan Eriksson, has not been completed. Harlow described the success of the Denver SMMP symposium, and announced the one to be held on the upcoming Sunday. He said SMMP may want to do something similar at professional meetings.

The SMMP web page is still under consideration, but has been stalled because of Joe Nagel's job situation and lack of computer access. Harlow asked for a volunteer to serve as the "home" for the page (an

institution with a file server and a person to maintain it). Francis reported that the Peabody Museum at Yale has already put 30,000 records on the internet.

Ginny Mast is the new chair of the Education Committee. She will work on future public programs. It was suggested that we capture the information from these symposia and put it out on the net. Mast suggested the possibility of a poster or table-top session. Sicree suggested a traveling exhibit, which could be offered to shows for a fee.

Mast reported on the upcoming symposium, scheduled for Sunday afternoon. The lecturers are basically the same as those who presented in Denver, and she asked for participants from the general membership to come and serve as resources for the general public.

Harlow discussed the upcoming MM3 meeting in June, 1996, in Budapest. He reported on the social event hosted by SMMP at the International Mineralogical Association meeting in Pisa, Italy last year, and reported that we will host a similar event in Budapest. He asked for any Society members planning to attend the MM3 meeting to let the Board know.

Harlow introduced the subject of orphan collections and curators. He suggested that SMMP contact institutions involved through an SMMP committee, which could interview the people involved, send a query letter. Nagel reported on this termination from Univ. of British Columbia and the status of the collection. No plans have been made for the use or disposition of that collection at this time. DeMouthe suggested that the SMMP letter should include the offer of assistance. Harlow pointed out that each institution is different, with different responsibilities to the public and/or government agencies. Our concern is that they deal with collections ethically and within the goals of their institutions. Lueth suggested we compose a general letter to the mineralogy community at large. Mary Johnson suggested a letter to government agencies, with offers of help and collection ethics and practical matters.

Sicree brought up the question of meeting schedules. He asked that the SMMP meeting moved so as not to conflict with the Friends of Mineralogy Board meeting, which also occurs on Friday morning every year. He moved that the SMMP meet with FM officers to arrive at a compromise in the future. The motion passed, and will be an action for the new board.

DeMouthe reported on the status of the membership directory. Another call for corrections and dues will go out in March, followed by the re-issue of the directory.

Harlow announced the Susan Eriksson is writing an article for Rocks & Minerals on museums and computers, and asked if members wanted their e-mail addresses included in it. Nothing was resolved, and people were encouraged to contact Susan directly.

Carl Francis conducted the election for Board members. He announced the predetermined slate: George Harlow, Virgil Lueth, Marc Wilson and Jean DeMouthe. A call for nominations from the floor produced only one volunteer, Andrew Sicree. Francis discussed the responsibilities of Board members and officers. The election was held by written ballot. Results of the election: Harlow, Wilson & DeMouthe. New officers: president, DeMouthe; vice-president, Post; secretary, Harlow; treasurer, Thayer; editor, Hurlbut; board members at large, Kampf, Belakovskii, Wilson and Damaschun.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- The American Museum's mineral hall is currently closed for recarpeting and painting.

- The Cleveland Museum of Nat. History is installing a hall on Earth & Planetary exploration, and is adding 1,800 sq. feet for gems. Openings scheduled for 3/97 and 12/97 respectively.
- The New Mexico mineralogical symposium is scheduled for Nov 9, 10, 1996 in Socorro.
- The Colorado School of Mines has acquired the Fred Ransome economic mineral collection from Cal. Tech.
- The Gemological Inst. of America is moving to Carlsbad, California. The move begins in July, and the new building will be finished in November. A large gem display area is planned.
- The Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum has a spring exhibit at the Arizona Historical Society in Tucson.
- The Penn. State Univ. mineral gallery will be renovated this spring. A display of mineral-related art is planned for Sept. at the Penn State art museum. They are running a symposium on carbonates.
- The Minerals of Colorado is in review, and has been submitted to the Denver Nat. History Museum of publication. Denver has acquired a Sweet Home Mine wall section, which will be installed in the mineral hall entry by June 1997.
- The U.S. Nat'l Museum mineral hall closed in Jan. 1995. The reopening, originally scheduled for 12/96, has been pushed back to mid-1997 due to government budget problems and delays. The Smithsonian's 150th anniversary celebration includes a traveling exhibit, which will be on the road for 2 years.
- The Fersman Mineralogical Museum in Moscow would welcome visits by SMMP members (but at this time there is no running water in the building).

Meeting adjourned at 11:39 am. Thirty-four members present.

SYMPOSIUM: What we collect and why: a panel discussion from 11:50 to 12:45, February 9, 1996

Participants:

- Carl Francis, Harvard University
- Stan Dyl, Michigan Tech.
- Terry Huizing, Cincinnati Museum of Natural History

Following the symposium, lunch was available at the adjacent restaurant.

WORKSHOP: Care for Collections at Home: 1 3 pm, Sunday, February 11, 1996

This workshop was open to the public attending the Tucson mineral show, and was held in one of the large meeting rooms on the upper level of the Convention Center. Five members of the SMMP were

designated speakers, and other members participated in the general discussion. Each presenter spoke for 15 or 20 minutes, some using slides and examples of specimens and materials. The program consisted of the following speakers:

- Susan Eriksson - introduction & the importance of collection data
- Ginny Mast - storage and handling of specimens
- Dorothy Ettensohn - labeling and conservation materials
- Virgil Lueth - cataloguing
- Jean DeMouthe - toxic & radioactive minerals

The workshop was moderately attended, although the sound system made it difficult to hear from any but the front-row seats.