

SMP NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 1999

Editor: [Mark Mauthner](#)

TUCSON MEETING

The Society of Mineral Museum Professionals will meet on Friday, 12 February, in a room on the upper level of the Convention Center in Tucson, Arizona. The board meeting is scheduled for noon (12:00 to 1:00). The general annual meeting will begin at 1:00, and will be followed by a symposium on meteorites and meteorite collections. The meetings will all be over and done with by 3:00 at the latest.

Look for flyers at the show announcing the exact location.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Finally! A newsletter! As president, I offer the membership my apologies for the lack of communication within SMMP during the last year. No excuses....all my fault.

Our new newsletter editor, Mark Mauthner, has decided on a new look for the letter, and plans to put in more feature articles and other things. Please read through and let Mark know how you like it. I am sure he would welcome feedback from the members. You can drop him a note or send him an e-mail. As with all members who have e-mail, Mark can be reached via a link directly from the SMMP web page.

As the SMMP has evolved over the years, I think it has become apparent that our greatest potential is in the field of education. Not only can we communicate and help each other to learn more about mineralogy and our profession, but we can interact with the public in a variety of ways. As a group, we have an incredible amount of knowledge and experience to share.

A few years ago, SMMP began hosting a workshop for the general public on Sunday afternoons at the Tucson and Denver meetings. These sessions were devoted to specific topics related to mineral collections and collecting. As time went on, it became increasingly apparent that we were not reaching very many people. Only one workshop, on treated and repaired specimens, was well attended. This lack of

attendance was probably due to a combination of factors. At Tucson, the area allocated to us by the show committee was incredibly noisy and full of distractions. Advertising was inconsistent, and often the loud-speaker announcements made during the show were incoherent or confusing. Whatever the reason, the public's lack of interest has prompted us to re-think our educational efforts. The workshops were a great idea, and we gave it our best effort. But we are now seeking other methods of communication. I would like to thank all of the SMMP members who gave up their Sunday afternoons to help out with these symposia.

Thanks to the efforts of Education Committee chair Ginny Mast, the Society has had interesting and educational cases both Denver and Tucson for several years. These topical exhibits contain specimens solicited from SMMP members and are designed to convey information to the public that is not normally part of traditional mineral show exhibits. We have had excellent response to these cases from the public, show committees, and our own members. I think this is a wonderful venue for our educational efforts, and would like to encourage more SMMP members to participate.

We will also continue to hold educational symposia immediately following the general annual meeting. This year's topic is meteorites, and the session is being organized by our vice-president Jeff Post. Meteorites will also be the topic of our educational case in the show itself. The Tucson show committee has agreed once again to let us use one of the big meeting rooms upstairs at the Convention Center for our Friday meetings. Hopefully, this will be our permanent home at the Tucson show.

Having been president of SMMP for three years, I feel that it is time for me to step down. I will continue to work on various SMMP projects, and plan to be active on several committees. I would like to thank all the members who have helped and supported me in this role.

Jean F. DeMouthe
President

FROM THE EDITOR

Your editor has been up to his oaksters in stuff related to getting a nice shiny new mineral museum up and running. No kidding folks, since Denver, our intrepid scribbler has taken only a solitary weekend off (4:00 am Sat to 12:00 am Sun) to go collecting (see photo, which is only to demonstrate that we can do this for the newsletter now!). Did not find much, but stuffing one's body into a small hole that somewhere down in a bigger hole does a lot for one's sanity.

Submissions and ideas appropriate for this newsletter, and of course, constructive criticisms are all welcomed.

MEETING MINUTES

TUCSON 1998

Friday 13th of February 1998

Directors' Meeting

Present: Jean DeMouthe, Pres., Jeffrey Post, VP, George Harlow, Sec., Anna Domitrovic, Treas., Dmitriy Belakovskiy, James Hurlbut, Anthony Kampf, Virgil Lueth, Mark Wilson,

Pres. DeMouthe called the meeting to order at 12:05 PM. She thanked Anna Domitrovic for her efforts to make the Society legal with its present name. A short period of adulation followed.

Treas. Domitrovic distributed copies of the notice published in three consecutive times in the Tucson newspaper and suggested getting a post box in Tucson to make maintaining our incorporation in Arizona easy in the future, regardless of the officers location. A motion was made to authorize getting a post box and carried unanimously. She discussed our current finances (see report) and suggested placing some of our funds in an interest bearing account. Sec. Harlow moved that the treasurer be given authority to split our funds between an interest bearing account and a checking account in whatever manner best balances income and expenses. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously. Communication among the directors and board via email was discussed, and a motion was made and unanimously approved for Treas. Domitrovic to acquire access to an online service until her institution (Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum) gains access to email for its employees.

Pres. DeMouthe raised the subject of the forthcoming IMA meeting in Toronto—Aug. 9-14—and SMMP's sponsoring refreshments and a get-together during a poster session, as it did in Pisa in 1994. A motion was made and approved for the president to investigate and arrange such an event. Next, the annual GSA/MSA meeting—Oct. 26-29—also to be held in Toronto, was discussed. It was generally agreed that hosting some type of gathering, perhaps in coordination with the ROM at the museum, would be a good idea and should be explored.

Pres. DeMouthe inquired of George Harlow, MSA liaison, of any outstanding activities or initiatives. He reminded the directors of the idea to have the MSA adopt a policy of deposition of minerals (and other materials) described in articles in the American Mineralogist at a recognized collection/museum where they will be available for science. He said he had been advised to approach the editors but acknowledged he dropped the ball. He will revive the inquiry with the editors and then the Council of MSA and push the same agenda with CAM and NSF.

Pres. DeMouthe asked Virgil Lueth about the status of orphan collections (and curators). He reported that the future of the Ouray (CO) County Museum was in doubt with the departure of Barbara Muntyan, the director and one-person band. Jeff Post raised the question of the Cranbrook Institute upon the death of director Dan Appleman. The Board agreed to raise the issue at the general meeting before deciding upon a plan of action.

Lost/Stolen Specimens: A report is to be delivered at the general meeting.

New newsletter editor: It was agreed that upon the completion of the effort of Jim Hurlbut, editor for many years, that we seek to involve another member with the task. President DeMouthe reported that Mark Mauthner at the Pacific Mineral Museum Society (ex-UBC) had shown interest in the job.

Sunday Workshop demonstration: President DeMouthe reported that the workshop for Sunday was AOK according to organizer Ginny Mast.

Retiring members were polled about their willingness to continue on the board. The three, Dmitriy Belakovskiy, Jim Hurlbut, and Tony Kampf agreed to continue if nominated.

The Meeting was adjourned as the press of members appeared for the General Meeting at 2:00 PM.

General Meeting - 2:00 PM

President DeMouthe called the meeting to order at a few minutes passed 2:00 PM.

Members responded to the Roll Call with personal self-introductions; Joe Peters (AMNH) introduced his wife, Nancy.

Minutes of Denver meeting on 9/14/97. A motion was made, seconded, and unanimously adopted to dispense with a reading of the minutes.

President DeMouthe's report: Jean discussed her plan to continue the sponsoring of a exhibition by SMMP to present topics that present the theme of a workshop or other society public project, as with the case of fakes and treated specimens at this Tucson Show.

Treasurer's Report: Anna Domitrovic announced that we were now legal with our name change and set up with a working account. She discussed the details of her report to the Board (above). On the topic of accounts, it was agreed that she would investigate various liquid asset accounts to maximize the return on the society's funds. A general round of applause was offered by the members to Anna's stalwart efforts.

MSA Calendar: John Rakovan of the Mineralogical Society of America informed the society of MSA's plans to produce another calendar and his desires to work again with SMMP members to obtain images of specimens for this endeavor. He said he would be in contact with us in the future (I have a note about Charles Weiss but am not sure what it is about?)

Orphan Collections: Virgil discussed the problem with the loss of a director for the Ouray (Colorado) County Museum. A discussion followed on the problem of how the Society could best influence the Boards or administrations of such museums. Jeff Post extended the subject to the Cranbrook Institute and mention was made of the Field Museum. Jeff said he would be involved with discussions with Cranbrook, and there was a general agreement for a need for a plan from the officers or board (Wasn't that the gist of our non-action?)

Stolen Specimens: In addition to the theft of specimens from the personal collection of Wayne and Donna Leicht, mention was made of the theft of specimens of the Smithsonian and Gene Meieran from the special exhibition case at the Tucson exhibition last year.

SMMP Directory: Jean DeMouthe announced that new directories of the membership would be in the mail for all PAID-UP members. Hint, hint.

Sunday Workshop Demonstration: As reported in the January Newsletter, Ginny Mast has organized a program entitled "Imitation, treated, and repaired specimens" to be held at the Convention Center from 2:00 to 4:00 PM on Sunday. In addition a case with examples from several member's institution's collections was presented in a 4-foot exhibition case. President DeMouthe led the members in hearty thanks to Ginny for another Workshop well organized and certainly destined to be a success.

Gem Artists of North America Exhibition: (I only vaguely remember that Suzanne Cowan spoke about a traveling exhibition of gem carvers' materials. Anyone got more beef?)

Collection Standards Document: Jean DeMouthe discussed the need for our discipline to establish a document of standards for information on and conservation of mineral specimens, such as has been developed by the Society of Vertebrate Paleontologists. She emphasized the demands required by AAM and funding sources, as well as potential funding by the National Science Foundation in the U.S. She said she would work with volunteer members to start organizing the process.

New Business: Jean DeMouthe announced the change in the editorship of the Society's Newsletter from Jim Hurlbut to Mark Mauthner at the Pacific Mineral Museum Society. The president and members extended their thanks to Jim Hurlbut for his years of dedication to the newsletter.

Election of new Board Members: Nominations for the Board included Dmitriy Belakovskiy, Jim Hurlbut, Tony Kampf, Mark Mauthner, and Ginny Mast. Secret ballot by the members present elected Tony Kampf, Mark Mauthner, and Ginny Mast.

Election of Officers: The board members went off into a huddle and returned with the news that the officers would continue in their present positions.

Announcements: The annual La Rancherita Flan fest for that evening was announced.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 PM

DENVER: September 18, 1998

Pres. DeMouthe called the meeting to order at 1:58 pm, and reported on the IMA meeting and related SMMP reception. Minutes were taken by DeMouthe, in the absence of secretary George Harlow.

Carl Francis, president of the IMA Museums Committee, spoke about the type specimen catalog currently being put together. Tony Kampf, US representative on that committee, encouraged members to send lists of their types.

Following the introduction of members and guests, treasurer Anna Domitrovic presented a half-year report on SMMP finances.

Ginny Mast, chair of the Education Committee, reported that since the Sunday afternoon programs have not been well-attended, SMMP will abandon them, at least for awhile, and seek other venues for educational activities. The SMMP exhibit cases have been very well-received and we will continue them at both Tucson and Denver.

Jeffrey Post, V.P. and program chair, suggested that meteorites might be a good topic for the Tucson program. Joe Peters suggested traveling exhibits as a topic, and the subject of donations and appraisals was also raised. An informal vote was taken and the meteorites topic was chosen.

DeMouthe read and distributed a letter written to SMMP by John Sinkankas (reproduced in this newsletter). A lively discussion followed on the subjects of donations, tax laws, and the ethics of acquisition. Many members participated with opinions and reports of problems and possible solutions. Andrew Sicree suggested that SMMP ask an attorney to draw up a one-page summary of relevant IRS tax laws. This was discussed and a motion was made to this effect by A.S. and seconded by Bill Cook. A vote was taken and the motion was defeated. Jeff Post offered to ask the USNM legal council about this subject. Other members also offered to discuss this with their institution's lawyers upon returning home.

Andrew Sicree described an episode of specimen theft in which the items were returned, but that they had been damaged by the police during handling. He encouraged people who have things stolen to warn the agencies involved about how fragile minerals are.

Mark Mauthner, new SMMP editor, reported on the status of the newsletter.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:12 pm.

COMMITTEES

There are three standing committees within SMMP. These are active groups, headed by one or two members having a strong interest in these areas, and a willingness to spend time on projects during the long period between Tucson and Denver (and Tucson).

The basic role of each committee is described here, and the chairman's name and address are given. If you are interested in serving with any of these groups, please contact the chairman directly.

Education Committee:

Prepares educational materials and organizes symposia, lectures and demonstrations for other professional groups and for the public.

chair: Ginny Mast
Colorado School of Mines
Golden, Colorado 80401
e-mail: vamast@mines.colorado.edu
phone: 303-273-3823

Computer Committee:

Works toward establishing a SMMP home page on the World WideWeb; acts as a focus and resource group for SMMP members wanting to work with collections on the Internet

chair: Tony Kampf
Los Angeles Co. Mus. Nat. History
900 Exposition Blvd
Los Angeles, California 90007
213-744-3328
email: akampf@bcf.usc.edu

Collection Committee:

Keeps track of orphan collections and curators; prepares correspondence on behalf of SMMP to institutions having orphaned collections or other collection-related problems

chair: Virgil Lueth
New Mexico Bureau of Mines
801 Leroy Place
Socorro, New Mexico 87801
phone: 505-835-5140
e-mail: vwlueth@nmt.edu

Stolen Specimens Sub-committee:

Keeps track of stolen specimens or collections.

Bill Metropolis
Harvard Mineralogical Museum
phone: 617-495-4758
24 Oxford Street
Cambridge, MA 02138

If you have any thoughts on other committees or projects that may be useful to the Society, please contact me or any other member of the Board. A list of current Board members, with addresses, is included in this newsletter.

THINGS NEWSY AND/OR RELEVANT

TUCSON SHOWCASE

The Society of Mineral Museum Professionals will have an educational exhibit in the main show. This year's topic is "Meteorites and Meteor-wrongs". Education Committee chair Ginny Mast is in charge of putting this display together.

Anyone wishing to help out by lending specimens or their expertise to this effort should contact Ginny as soon as possible.

SMMP EVENT AT IMA

In August, the International Mineralogical Association met in Toronto. The highlight of this meeting was, of course, the reception sponsored by SMMP. The lure of intelligent conversation, the meeting's poster session, and cheap beer were too much for the registrants to resist. The event was very well-attended, and SMMP members who were there were able to tell lots of people about our organization. Handouts were provided giving our web page address and basic information about the Society.

TYPE SPECIMENS

The International Mineralogical Association Museums Committee, which is chaired by SMMP member Carl Francis, is assembling a world-wide list of type specimens. Anyone having type specimens in their collection is encouraged to send a list to Carl or to Tony Kampf, the U.S. representative on this international committee. Questions regarding this project should also be directed to one of these two people.

SINKANKAS LETTER

Dr. John Sinkankas has written a letter to SMMP regarding donation of cash and specimens to museums, and some of the problems he has encountered. This letter was distributed at the Denver meeting, and sparked a lively discussion. This is obviously a topic of interest to our membership. The letter is being reproduced here in this hopes that it will prompt all SMMP members to think about this important subject.

Anyone wishing to open a discussion on the subjects raised in this letter, or any related topics, are welcome to contact any member of the SMMP Board. You may also write to Dr. Sinkankas.

This is an active issue for SMMP and we will be working toward getting members more and better information in the months to come.

KEEPING TRACK OF YOUR DUES

The mailing label on this newsletter tells you the year for which your dues have been paid. If the number is 98, then you are paid up through the annual meeting, February 1999.

The Society's dues for 1999 is \$10.00 U.S., payable to Anna Domitrovic, treasurer, Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, 2021 N. Kinney Road, Tucson, AZ 85743.

NEW DIRECTORY

The new membership directory is in the mail right now. Membership information is also available on the SMMP web page.

Please send any directory changes or additions to treasurer Anna Domitrovic, who will, from now on, be maintaining the membership database.