Directives—Connecting through the Significance of Minerals

By Barbra Barrett, MMGM Director

Early in 2016, with great excitement we announced our mission statement, the very bedrock principle governing what we do and why we do it. To communicate the significance of minerals in our lives, our planet and beyond.

Now we’re putting it into action. Quintessential to all notable institutions is getting connected. In 2016 we plan to be guests and hosts of and for esteemed colleagues, to participate in far-reaching shows, to write and present authoritative pieces, to provide educational programming and to be a resource for our community. In short, to receive inspiration and to be inspirational.

With this in mind, we headed to Tucson for the “largest, oldest and most prestigious gem and mineral show in the world.” The Tucson Gem and Mineral Show® (created by the Tucson Gem and Mineral Society which was established in 1946) has enjoyed international stature since the 1970s and was the first gem and mineral show to bring the hobby enthusiast, the (continued page 2)
We arrived in Tucson on February 4 and joined up with MMGM Trustee, Don Dallaire, to prowl the satellite shows. We didn’t expect to see many Maine specimens except for those in John and Debbie Whitney’s room. John and Debbie, dealers from Chester, Maine, are great friends of MMGM. We check in with them early and often!

At the Westward Look Show—where many of the dealers with premier specimens set up—we acquired an excellent fluorapatite from the Harvard quarry in Greenwood to be added to our “Maine Minerals: A to Z” exhibit. Procurement is an essential part of the “show” experience.

On February 10, we—Barbra, Carl, Diane, Don and Myles—were all at the convention center to set up the MMGM display. There is great pre-show comradery and exchange between exhibitors, professionals and dealers with discussion of valuable information and even the occasional deal. It’s during these impromptu meetings and a lot of specimen-ogling that it becomes important to rely on experience in authenticating the gems from the chaff. Occasionally in the passion of the moment, less than the highest quality artifacts are presented. If at first a specimen seems too good to be true, it often is. As a curator, I find prudence to be the best discipline.

Mislabeled specimens are a challenge we occasionally encounter. To insure the credibility of the MMGM collection, trusting one’s experience and intuition is critical.

In April, we’re headed to the Rochester Mineralogical Symposium; in May to the Cincinnati Mineral Society’s 51st Annual Gem, Mineral, Fossil and Jewelry Show and we’ll be home at Sunday River for the New England Mineral Conference. We have many other dates in 2016 also planned.

We participate in these treasured opportunities to learn, to connect, to showcase and to preview what’s in the works and to come at MMGM.
Amethyst is the traditional birthstone for February. We delightfully display specimens, jewelry, and loose stones in the MMGM Museum Store.

The purple variety of quartz—amethyst—has been mined in the Stow area since the late 1800s. Miners and field collectors have found thousands of pounds of crystals from these three locations: Deer Hill, the Intergalactic Pit and the Eastman Quarry.

Colors of specimens and gemstones from these locations range from lavender to rich purple. The Deer Hill amethyst in the Museum Store was mined from 1967-1971 and the stones from the Intergalactic Pit were mined from 1992-2000.

To search beyond the walls of the MMGM Museum Store, you need some key information. The Deer Hill locality is within the borders of the White Mountain National Forest with field collecting permitted. However, there are limits to collecting. We highly recommend checking with the Forest Service before you go collecting.

The Intergalactic Pit and Eastman Quarry are not open to the public.
The MP2 Research group submitted the following manuscripts to the Canadian Mineralogist for the pegmatite volume stemming from the Peg2015 meeting in Poland...

Bulk Composition of Mount Mica Pegmatite, Maine, USA
William Simmons, Alexander Falster, Karen Webber, Andrew P. Boudreaux and Leah Rae Grassi

Pseudobrookite from the Nine Mile Pluton, Marathon County, Wisconsin: An Occurrence from a Plutonic Environment
Thomas W. Buchholz, Alexander U. Falster, Wm. B. Simmons

An Investigation of Erongo Granite Tourmaline, Namibia
Andrew P. Boudreaux, William B. Simmons, Alexander U. Falster, & Karen L. Webber

Iron-bearing Pollucite and Tourmaline Replacement in the Garnet Line in the Mt. Mica and Havey Pegmatites, Western Maine
Myles Felch, Alexander U. Falster, William B. Simmons

On the Crystal-Chemistry of Bjarebyite, (Ba,Sr) (Mn2+,Fe2+,Mg)2Al2(PO4)3(OH)3, from the Palermo #1 Pegmatite, Grafton County, New Hampshire
Nicola Rotiroti, Pietro Vignola, Danilo Bersani, William B. Simmons, Alexander U. Falster, James W. Nizamoff, Robert W. Whitmore, Paolo Lotti, and Alessandro Pavese

And these abstracts were submitted to the Rochester Academy of Sciences Mineralogical Symposium...

Interaction of Basaltic Lava with Gem Tourmaline Miarolitic Cavities in the Havey Pegmatite, Poland, Androscoggin County, Maine
Falster, Alexander, U., and Wm. B. Simmons

A New Spodumene-Bearing Pegmatite Occurrence in Appleton, Knox County, Maine
Myles M. Felch, D. P. West, and A. U. Falster

Work in the lab and for future manuscripts continues

Myles has been using the imaging capabilities of the scanning electron microscope to check for zoning in columbite from a spodumene-bearing pegmatite near Appleton, Maine.

Al is currently guest editor of six manuscripts for the pegmatite thematic issue of the Canadian Mineralogist.
Community service and service to science…

Emily Hanscom, from Telstar High School in Bethel, getting some hands-on time on the scanning electron microscope after being a ‘shadow’ in our lab. This is a project freshmen are encouraged to do; they spend one day as a job shadow for a career they may be interested in pursuing.

Support—Please Suggest People Who Will “Dig It” with Us

By William F. Stockwell, Fundraising Consultant

You—our readers and members—are the best source of new friends for MMGM.

Please help us spread the word to people you know will be interested, and hopefully become a member to join us in supporting this great mission. In this early stage of our growth, friend-raising is our most important task.

As these wonderful images of antiquity portray (1977-1980), I spent many years bringing summer camp children, family, friends, and students from the schools I worked at to the mines of Oxford County and Perham’s Maine Mineral Store. Surprisingly, several have learned of my continued interest through social media and at least six have become members.

You can do the same to attract more friends. Just let them know how excited you are as the Museum gets closer to opening. Sharing your passion for Maine minerals and gems as well as mining and collecting here is the most important thing you can do to help us grow into a successful museum.

Please ask them to join, forward this newsletter, like us on social media, send us their names and contact information, or even better, bring them here to see what is happening.

Thank you for all you do to support the amazing dream that is fast becoming reality.

Contact us for a membership form or join online at www.mainemineralmuseum.org.
For sponsorship and funding opportunities, call us, 207.824.3036.