
What's New in the Mineral World?



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It is proving to be an early (warm) spring in Tucson, and soon the tourists will come from everywhere in search of Desert-in-Bloom displays which the mountains hereabouts will provide. Meanwhile, here's another online report to pass on news of certain mineral blooms that are currently popping up:

On The Web



Helvite with calcite, 12 cm, from the DongWuQi mine, Huanggangliang Mountains, Inner Mongolia, China. Chen Xiao Jun specimen and photo; now in Rob Lavinsky's collection of China minerals.

My custom has been to *end* these reports with mineral news from China, but let's begin the new season by *starting* with some this time. Mr. Chen Xiao Jun has a mineral shop in Shanghai, but you'll find him online under the banner of *China Ruff Collection* (www.chenxiaojun.com). Like many dealers these days—Chinese and Western alike—Mr. Chen has an impressive selection of specimens newly emerged from the iron mines of the Huanggangliang mountain range in Inner Mongolia. In several reports lately, printed and online, I've already said quite a lot about the mines of Huanggangliang and their tremendous potential for specimens—but let's briefly review. The best known of the region's mines is called the Huanggang, and from its extensive workings and from the surrounding skarns come superb specimens of arsenopyrite, hedenbergite, fluorite, calcite, datolite, apophyllite, beryl and several much rarer species. But in my opinion the Huanggangliang region's *most* impressive new things so far are **helvite** and **genthelvite**, in very sharp, lustrous, tetrahedral crystals to several centimeters on edge and in varying shades of brown; in some specimens there is an intimate relationship between helvite and genthelvite, such that serious analyses are required to distinguish their separate identities or domains. Of the various Huanggangliang specimens which Mr. Chen is now offering, the superstars are a few strikingly large ones which show helvite crystals with calcite. The picture, shown here, of a 12-cm specimen from DongWuQi, Huanggangliang Mountains, should convince you that helvite from Inner Mongolia is good enough at its best to compete with the smaller but more colorful and slightly translucent helvite crystals from Tongbei, Fujian Province (known for a few years now).



Cahnite crystals on borcarite, 2.5 cm, from the Huanggang mine, Huanggangliang Mountains, Inner Mongolia, China. *The Arkenstone* specimen; Joe Budd photo.

As I said, there are several very rare species also emerging now in remarkable specimens from Huanggangliang, and especially from the Huanggang mine—stay tuned for my report on the 2012 Tucson Show in the May-June 2012 issue. One such recent surprise is the Ca-Mg borate-carbonate called, aptly enough, **borcarite**, seen in a handful of pale green, thumbnail-size crystal clusters which Rob Lavinsky of *The Arkenstone* (www.irocks.com) brought to the 2011 Denver Show (see a photo of one of these on page

119 of the January-February 2012 issue). Rob still had a few borcarite thumbnails at Tucson in 2012, and in a January 6 posting on his website he offered something extra: about 25 specimens, thumbnail-size to 7.5 cm across, of borcarite crystal groups lightly sprinkled with colorless to gray-white microcrystals of the extremely rare Ca-B arsenate **cahnite**. Now, crystallized cahnite is one of the greatest desiderata which Franklin specialists seek in specimens from the old zinc mines of Franklin and Sterling Hill, New Jersey—indeed the species is not known in crystals as large as 1 cm from anywhere save on a precious few, very old Franklin pieces. But if *you* are a Franklin collector you should be aware that sharp cahnite crystals to 2 mm may be seen decorating newly recovered borcarite specimens from Huanggangliang. (Don't worry, the old Franklin crystals are still the biggest, but this primacy may face a challenge from China one of these days. Don't take it too hard.)



Fluorapophyllite, 5 cm, from Rahuri, Maharashtra, India. *John Betts Fine Minerals* specimen and photo.

In August 2001, a well was dug to supply water to the village of Momin Akhada, 5 kilometers west of the town of Rahuri, Maharashtra, India. At a depth of 55 feet the well excavation broke into a series of pockets in basalt which were lined with beautiful hemispherical aggregates of **fluorapophyllite** in a style that came to be known as “disco apophyllite,” since the hemispheres suggest those glittering mirrored balls which rotate above the dance floors in disco halls. The apophyllite crystals are squat tetragonal prisms of uniform length terminated by basal pinacoids, and for the most part they are colorless and transparent, but enough pale green zones are present within them to give the “disco balls” an attractive greenish cast. Fast-forward now to a March 6 update to the site of *John Betts Fine Minerals* (www.johnbetts-fineminerals.com), where some products of a new well-digging at Rahuri (called “Rahauri” on the site) are up for sale. Like the earlier

specimens, these are loose hemispheres of lustrous apophyllite crystals, but the new examples are not faintly green but faintly *pink*. Small sheaves of snow-white stilbite crystals play supporting roles in some of these very pretty specimens.

At the 2012 Tucson Show, Mike Keim of *Marin Minerals* (www.marinmineral.com) picked up some very good specimens of **titanite** from Mulla Ghor, Khyber Agency, Federally Administered Tribal Areas, Pakistan, and 19 of these specimens, from small miniature to small cabinet-size, may now be admired on his site. Most of the specimens are loose V-twins of titanite with very deep re-entrant grooves; they are lustrous and partially gemmy in varying hues of yellow, orange and brown, with occasional whispers of green. Many of the faces are a bit rough, and some edges are multiply notched, but these are nevertheless the best specimens of this material I've seen since at least 2008, when a German dealer brought in a few others, attributing them to "Mulaghany Baba" in the FATA. Clearly both specimen lots are from the same place, a very remote one, and from an occurrence probably of the Alpine-cleft type. In some of Mike's specimens the titanite crystals have black acicular crystals of ferro-actinolite attached or included.



Titanite, 4.6 cm, from Mulla Ghor, Khyber Agency, Federally Administered Tribal Areas, Pakistan. *Marin Minerals* specimen; Mike Keim photo.



Quartz, 2.1 cm, from Zhob, Baluchistan, Pakistan.
Mineral Movies specimen; Jeff Fast photo.

Jeff Fast of *Mineral Movies* (www.mineralmovies.com) has acquired a new batch of floaters **quartz** crystals from Zhob, Baluchistan, Pakistan. He remarks on the site that “the last time these were found was about 5 years ago,” but there was also a 1998-1999 find of clay-included “fenster” quartz crystals at Zhob (represented by specimens in the recently sold Herb Obodda collection of Pakistan and Afghanistan minerals). Jeff’s new, thumbnail-size quartz crystals are highly lustrous, transparent and colorless, and they might very well be “Herkimer diamonds” except that they are internally speckled with odd little shapes and colors: bloblike inclusions of yellow petroleum, black flecks of some other hydrocarbon material, and something dispersed and unknown which makes them fluoresce dark blue; many have movable enhydro bubbles besides.



Elbaite with albite, 6.5 cm, from Stak Nala, Skardu district, Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan. *Your Mineral Collection* specimen and photo.

A third Pakistani discovery begs notice here, as it did also at the 2012 Tucson Show, where a couple of dealers showed up with top-of-the-line specimens of **elbaite with albite** recovered in summer 2011 from two large pegmatite pockets at Stak Nala, Skardu district, Gilgit-Baltistan (Gilgit-Baltistan is the province formerly called “Northern Areas”). Elbaite from Stak Nala is distinctive enough that the occurrence has become quite well known in the West since the very first crystals came out in the early 1980s; systematic recovery efforts over the next 20 years produced thousands of specimens, but by the start of the new millennium, production had almost ceased. “Stak Nala” elbaite specimens typically show lustrous, lightly striated, stocky crystals, many of them doubly terminated, featuring complex color-zoning but mostly dark green, with bladed white albite crystals. In a March 10 update to the site of *Your Mineral Collection* (www.yourmineralcollection.com), many fine elbaite/albite specimens, to small-cabinet size, from the new strike are posted. They show dark green, short-prismatic crystals, some with pale green or colorless zones near the tips, to 3.5 cm long, with albite blades crowding and jumbling around them. It’s very good to see fresh material coming at last from this contemporary-classic occurrence—Pakistan’s best (or at least most prolific) for tourmaline.



Elbaite, center crystal 2.4 cm, from San Piero in Campo, Elba, Tuscany, Italy. *Demineralia* specimens and photo.

Speaking of **elbaite** tourmaline...you know of course that the type and namesake locality for this species is the Italian island of Elba, where pockets in pegmatite seams in the Monte Capanne granite have produced fine, gemmy, color-zoned crystals of elbaite for a couple of centuries now, although with greatly diminishing frequency during all of our lifetimes. The granite crops out all over the western half of the island, but most collecting has taken place on hillside exposures of pegmatite below villages such as San Piero in Campo: a magical name if we’ve looked at enough old labels. In a February update to the site of his *Demineralia* dealership (www.demineralia.com), Emanuele Marini offers pretty, gemmy, singly terminated, thumbnail-size elbaite crystals from San

Piero in Campo, all found between 1900 and 1910 and just recently released to the market. The crystals are zoned in dark green, pale green and pale pink, and a few have the black “Moor’s head” cap at the tip often seen in elbaite crystals from Elba; Emanuele is selling them mostly in sets of three, with prices *per set* between 150 and 200 Euros (\$210 to \$280). There are also two, slightly larger crystals being sold individually; a 4.7-cm matrix specimen with dark green elbaite crystals amidst fat quartz crystals; and a single specimen with a gemmy pale green/pale pink elbaite crystal 1.6 cm long attached to a small quartz crystal (95 Euros = about \$135). Although certainly not in a class with the fabulous 2.8-cm San Piero in Campo specimen, now in the Jim Bless collection, whose picture you can check out on page 233 of the March-April 2012 issue, the specimens on the *Demineralia* site are a few cuts above nearly all Elba elbaites seen for sale in recent decades, and they are good bargains—especially for *three* at a shot.

For one more Old Classics Experience, let’s look at a recent update on Ian Bruce’s *Crystal Classics* (www.crystalclassics.co.uk) website, showing some excellent, slightly offbeat, knowledge-challenging one-of-a-kind specimens which Ian acquired in late February and early March. The emphasis in this grouping is on classic English localities and on Tsumeb, but there are also some sophisticated items from Norway, Sweden and Greenland. I won’t bias your choice of favorites but will show here, simply, one fine small-cabinet-size barite from Cornwall (not Cumbria; *Cornwall*), and three smallish thumbnails, respectively from Kongsberg, Långban and Tsumeb, which stimulated quite well, thanks, my greed ganglia. And there are many more on the site these came from...



Barite, 6 cm, from the Ale and Cakes mine, Gwennap, Cornwall, England. *Crystal Classics* specimen and photo.



Silver, 1.8 cm, from Kongsberg, Buskerud, Norway. *Crystal Classics* specimen and photo.



Lead, 1.7 cm, from Långban, Värmland, Sweden. *Crystal Classics* specimen and photo.



Mimetite, 1.4 cm, from Tsumeb, Namibia. *Crystal Classics* specimen and photo.

At the 2012 Tucson Show, Ibrahim Jameel of *Khyber Minerals* (www.khyberminerals.com) picked up two nice lots of **amethyst** specimens—one new, one old—from places in the Far East that you probably wouldn't have guessed. The *new* specimens, i.e. from what was described to Ibrahim as a “new find,” hail from (hang on for this one) Namarisawa, Ashio-machi, Nikko City, Tochigi Prefecture, Kanto region, Honshu, Japan. They are groups, from 3.5 cm to almost 7 cm, of pale purple, lustrous, transparent, thin-prismatic crystals which taper gracefully towards their tips, i.e. they show the “Tessin” habit for quartz. Too pale-colored to be called spectacular, this anyway is a pleasant, “different” sort of amethyst—and from *Japan*.



Amethyst, 6.4 cm, from Namarisawa, Ashio-machi, Nikko City, Tochigi Prefecture, Kanto region, Honshu, Japan. *Khyber Minerals* specimen; Ibrahim Jameel photo.



Amethyst, 11.6 cm, from Eonyang, Kyeongsangnam-do, South Korea. *Khyber Minerals* specimen; Ibrahim Jameel photo.

The **amethyst** specimens in Ibrahim's other lot are a different matter entirely; for one thing, they are "old," having been found no later than the 1980s, when the last serious amethyst mining ceased (after more than a thousand years of intermittent activity) at Eonyang, Kyeongsangnam-do, South Korea. The crystals are fat and sceptered, with gemmy, dark purple heads on milky stems. Loose single crystals in Ibrahim's stash reach 11.4 cm long, and there are some clusters which reach about the same size. There is a general resemblance to the amethyst specimens—rarely seen now—which came in 1981-1982 from Ashaway Village, Hopkinton, Rhode Island, except that the Korean specimens rest, Chinese-style, on custom-carved wooden bases.



Hambergite, 2.3 cm, from the Tampo'ny Ilapa vein, Sahatany Valley, Antananarivo Province, Madagascar.

A couple of online reports ago I mentioned the world-class **hambergite** specimens which have been trickling out lately from a locality designated as the Tampo'ny Ilapa vein, Sahatany Valley, Antananarivo Province, Madagascar. Accordingly I recommend taking a look at several fine, thumbnail-size specimens of this material shown in a December update of the *Italian Minerals* site (www.italianminerals.com); you would be hard-pressed to find better hambergite from anywhere. The specimens are parallel and jackstraw clusters of prismatic, terminated, colorless and transparent hambergite crystals to 1.5 cm.

Have you ever seen or aspired to see a “sphere of Heřmanov,” or, more informally put, a “Heřmanov ball?” The former is the term used by Bernard and Hyršl in their book *Minerals and Their Localities* (2004); the latter is the term you'll find on the website of *Pauli Minerals* (www.mineralspauli.com), where a few funny-looking but interesting specimens of **anthophyllite enclosing phlogopite** from Heřmanov, near Křižanov, Moravia, Czech Republic, are offered. These miniature to small cabinet-size specimens show lustrous, reddish brown spheres of phlogopite which have been exposed by partially peeling back their enclosing jackets of pale brown crystalline anthophyllite—the latter a rather rare amphibole typically found as reaction rims at contacts between ultrabasic and more felsic rocks. Put a Heřmanov ball on your shelf and no doubt you'll immediately feel more learned in igneous petrology, and have something weirdly attractive to look at besides.



Anthophyllite enclosing phlogopite, 6.3 cm, from Heřmanov, Moravia, Czech Republic. *Pauli Minerals* specimen and photo.

Kleinite, a mercury mineral with the strange formula $[\text{Hg}_2\text{N}]_2(\text{Cl}_2, \text{SO}_4) \cdot \text{H}_2\text{O}$, reaches its best crystal development worldwide at the McDermitt mine, Opalite district, Humboldt County, Nevada. The yellow (and photosensitive) kleinite crystals are all well under 1 cm individually but in some specimens the microcrystals form solid coatings on matrix. A few such examples, collected in the 1980s, are now for sale in a March 7 update (“Gallery 14”) on the site of *Wright’s Rock Shop* (www.wrightsrockshop.com). Unfortunately the website places the McDermitt mine in California, not Nevada, but these, anyway, are impressive specimens of a very rare mineral, with bright yellow crystals as sprinklings and thin encrustations on white opalite breccia matrix.



Kleinite, 5.6 cm, from the McDermitt mine, Opalite district, Humboldt County, Nevada. *Wright’s Rock Shop* specimen and photo.

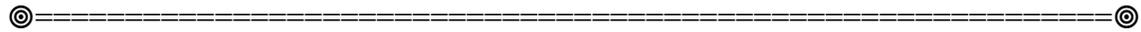
Also in Nevada, there is a new find of pretty **calcite/quartz** specimens from near an extinct hot spring in the Virginia Range of mountains near Reno: Jack Crowley posted the specimens on his *Crystal Mine* site (www.crystal-mine.com) on February 26, announcing proudly that “no one else has these.” The specimens are miniature to cabinet-size groups of opaque pinkish calcite scalenohedrons with dull to satiny luster, with quartz occurring as brilliant “starbursts” of colorless, transparent prisms scattered at large all over surfaces of the calcite. Some of the quartz crystals are stubby, some are elongated, quite a few are sceptered, and all of the little starbursts have the effect of lending glitter and glam to the rather pedestrian calcite crystals below and around them.



Quartz on calcite, 8 cm, from the Virginia Range mountains near Reno, Nevada. *The Crystal Mine* specimen; Jack Crowley photo.



Phosphophyllite twin on matrix, 5.7 cm, from the Unificada mine, Cerro Rico de Potosí, Potosí, Bolivia. Stuart Wilensky specimen and photo.



Stuart Wilensky (www.WilenskyMinerals.com) specializes in elite-level specimens of the kind that appeal to all of us but are acquirable by only a select few. His website typically offers specimens we might already be familiar with, having seen them on the covers of magazines and the pages of coffee-table books. Currently, for example, he has posted the incredible morganite on matrix that appeared on the cover of the November-December 2005 issue of the *Mineralogical Record*. One surprise is a miniature-size (5.7 cm; 2.25 inches wide) **phosphophyllite** from the Unificada mine, Cerro Rico de Potosí, Bolivia; big twinned crystals on matrix like this particular one (which I've never seen before) are classics of the highest sort and almost *never* come on the market.

Another, more recently mined locality producing specimens with a very high “Wow!” factor is the Pederneira mine in Minas Gerais, Brazil -- co-owned by Daniel Trinchillo (Fine Minerals International). A particularly incredible Pederneira tourmaline is pictured here, from a pocket mined in the last year called the “Cranberry Pocket.” It was a relatively small pocket that yielded a dozen or so specimens, most of which are still in preparation. And seemingly running parallel with the Pederneira mine these days is the Afghan locality of Paprok, which has been in bonanza mode for at least a couple of years with regard to fabulous elbaite specimens. They seem to come in all colors, from purple to blue, green, red, yellow-green and even orange. A fascinating 10-cm example currently appears on Rob Lavinsky's website (in “The Vault” section where he keeps his elite-level specimens): a fat blue-green/purple **elbaite** crystal sits on a big smoky quartz crystal with white cleavelandite. Most interesting is the broad termination covered by trigonal growth hillocks.



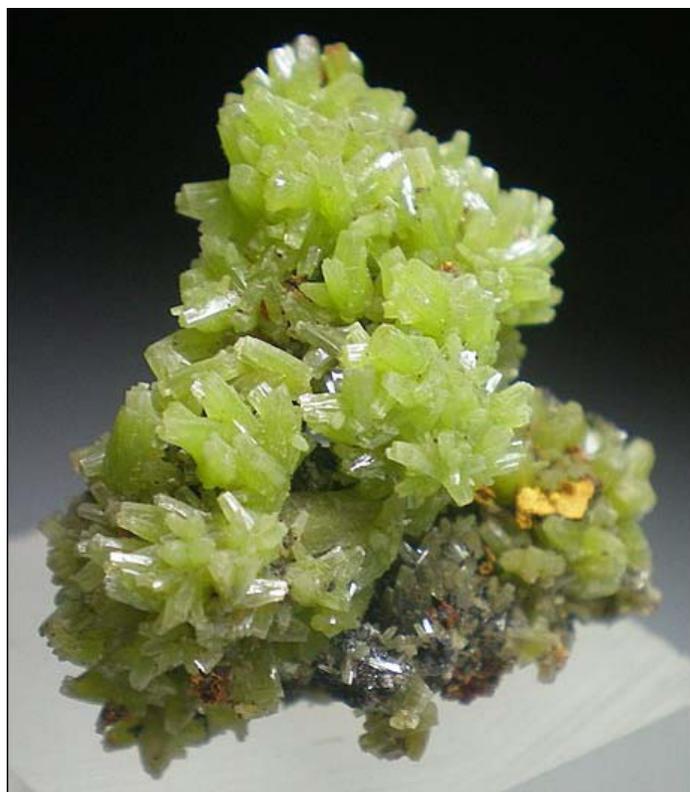
Elbaite on matrix, about 30 cm, from the recently opened “Cranberry Pocket,” Pederneira mine, São José da Safira, Doce valley, Minas Gerais, Brazil. Daniel Trinchillo (Fine Minerals International) specimen, now in the Mark Pospisil collection; James Elliott photo.





Elbaite crystal with cleavelandite on smoky quartz, 10 cm, from Paprok, Nuristan Province, Afghanistan. Rob Lavinsky (The Arkenstone) specimen; Joe Budd photo.

Finally, permit me another riff on **pyromorphite** from odd places. I know that I've already done one such riff in an earlier online report, but hey, pyromorphite is one of my *very favorite* species, not least because there are so many old, little-known localities where it appears in a plethora of forms, colors, and associations. John Veevaert knows all of these things about pyromorphite, too, and that's why, in early January, he flew to North Carolina to visit Dr. Mark Feinglos, and ended up buying a 76-piece pyromorphite collection of which some remainders are now posted on his site (www.trinityminerals.com). The scholarly Dr. Feinglos had managed to verify, somehow, every provenance for his pyromorphites, and these include occurrences in Missouri, Japan, Romania and other peculiar places; there are also extremely old specimens (all with labels) from European and U.S. localities, some of which you have heard of and others you may not have. John's site offers pages called North American Pyromorphite – British – French – German – Other European – Australian – Miscellaneous. Only a small handful of pieces is left on each page, and some of the specimens are just large matrix plates with very small green, brown or yellow pepperings on them, but on the other hand there are some killers which pop up by surprise. Pictured here are two fine ex-Feinglos pyromorphites from two little-known U.S. places: the Hardshell mine, Arizona (whose best specimens came out in the late 1970s) and the Brookdale mine, Pennsylvania (which, like its famous near-neighbor the Wheatley mine, peaked in the mid-19th century).



Pyromorphite, 3 cm, from the Hardshell mine, Patagonia, Santa Cruz County, Arizona. *Trinity Minerals* specimen; John Veevaert photo.



Pyromorphite, 4 cm, from the Brookdale mine, Chester County, Pennsylvania. *Trinity Minerals* specimen; John Veevaert photo.



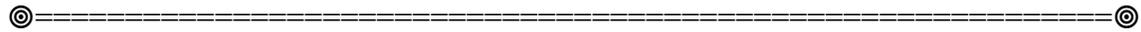
Cool Mineral Shows for Hot Times

In general, spring and summer are slow times on the mineral-show circuit, although Marty Zinn does help us to get through the lull with his spring Denver show (April 20-22 this year), his West Coast show in Santa Ana, California (May 11-13), and of course his big East Coast show in Springfield, Massachusetts (August 10-12).

For many years now, the very important show which completely takes over the ex-mining town of Ste.-Marie-aux-Mines, Alsace, France, has been a big draw for mineral people who travel to (or are already in) Europe in late June/early July. My own experience has shown that hot new mineral finds, especially from Africa, often debut at this show, such that specimens may be picked up in Ste.-Marie months before the same materials surface, generally at higher prices, in Munich, Denver or Tucson. This year, of course, the show will go on again, although it will no longer be run by Michel Schwab, its longtime organizer and promoter. M. Schwab decided to move his show to nearby Colmar (itself a lovely old town, with winemaking, not mining history, central to its personality), but the mayor of Ste.-Marie, Claude Abel, not wanting to lose the yearly event, organized a new show in the hallowed old place. And so for a while it looked as if there would be *two* shows running simultaneously within an hour's drive of each other—and that, politics quite aside, would have made for much fun for visitors. But Schwab's show at Colmar failed to attract enough dealers, and has now been cancelled, leaving only the "new" show at Ste.-Marie. Now the logistics are simplified: a visitor need only drive his (indispensable) rental car from, say, Strasbourg or Frankfurt to Ste.-Marie, there to battle for parking spots (it's a tradition) along the narrow, hilly, beautiful old streets therein. But the parking hassle is trivial: for its incomparable setting, not to mention its potential for offering specimen coups, Ste.-Marie-aux-Mines remains one of the foremost must-visit places—if not this year, then next, or *some* year—if you are a serious mineral collector. The 2012 show will run from June 21 to June 24; the address of its website is www.sainte-marie-mineral.com.

In the last couple of issues of the *Mineralogical Record* you may have noticed the ads for The First Annual New York City Metro Show, to be held at the Meadowlands Expo Center in Secaucus, New Jersey (4 miles from midtown Manhattan via the Lincoln Tunnel) on May 10-13, 2012. This enterprise by Lowell Carhart's *Eons Expo* is a serious attempt to set up—at last—a major mineral show in the New York City area, and surely it warrants a visit by anyone finding him/herself in that area in mid-May. Among the nearly 100 dealers on hand will be several high-enders in a plush area (with wine bar and police guard) called the "Fine Mineral & Gem Gallery"; Thursday May 10 is reserved for wholesale buyers; the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum and the University of Arizona Mineral Museum will exhibit some of their finest specimens apropos the show theme of Mexican minerals; and three speakers (I am one of them) will hold forth on Mexican-minerals topics. It's worth supporting, however we can, this effort to set up an annual show in an area where, as Lowell's ad says, "15 million people live within an hour" of the site. The Springfield, Massachusetts show in August is a fine thing, but, to its east, the





megalopolis stretching from D.C. to Philadelphia (where American mineralogy began) to New York to Boston *deserves* a big show of its own. For information call 516-818-1228, or visit www.NYC-MetroShow.com.

The First Annual
New York City
Metro Show

featuring **THE MINERALS & GEMS OF MEXICO**

May 10-13, 2012

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| <p>Fine Minerals, Rare Fossils, Meteorites, Gems & Jewelry Scheduled speakers: Tom Moore Bob Jones Dr. Debra Colodner Mark Candee Museum Collections: Arizona-Sonora Desert University of Arizona</p> <hr/> <p>www.NYC-MetroShow.com</p> |  | <p>Meadowlands Expo Center just 4 miles from Manhattan in convenient Secaucus, NJ. Featuring our high-end <i>Fine Mineral & Gem Gallery</i>. 15 million affluent people live within one hour of the show. Advertising support includes front-page color ads in the <i>Wall Street Journal & NY Times</i></p> <hr/> <p>For info call: (516) 818-1228</p> |
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Wendell Wilson Photo

May your spring be as full of the sap of life as a newly bloomed daffodil. I would think up a similar greeting to cover your summer, but I live in Tucson and just can't do it.

