

# The Red Ledge Mine!



## The Mineralogical Record

MAY-JUNE 2024 • VOLUME 55 • NUMBER 3 • \$30



# The Mineralogical Record

*The International Magazine for Mineral Collectors*

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The Red Ledge Mine!



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**COVER:** GOLD, 5.2 cm,  
from the Red Ledge mine,  
Nevada County, California.  
Barry Yampol (Mineral  
Trust) collection; Jeff Scovil  
photo.

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# Notes from the Editors

## American Mineral Heritage Award —Buzz Gray

The American Mineral Heritage Award, established by the Mineralogical Record in 2012, recognizes “field collecting achievements contributing to the heritage of North American mineral specimens.” Past winners, selected by a panel of judges, are as follows:

2012—Edward R. Swoboda  
2013—Wayne A. Thompson  
2014—Bryan K. Lees  
2015—William F. Larson  
2016—Terry Szenics  
2017—Stan Esbenschade  
2018—Rod Tyson  
2019—Graham Sutton  
2020—Mike New  
2021—Joe Dorris  
2022—Bob Jackson  
2023—Richard and Robert Hauck

The award committee is pleased to present the American Mineral Heritage Award for 2024 to long-time California field collector and faceter **Buzz Gray**.

Elvis Leroy “Buzz” Gray, was born in Santa Barbara, California, on October 24, 1933, the son of Amanda Dillon Gray and Elvis Herman “Sam” Gray, a purchasing agent for the Honolulu Oil Company (part of Standard Oil). He grew up in Taft, California, and began working in the oil fields where he first became interested in minerals. He served in the U.S. Air Force from 1953 to 1957, and during off hours collected agates along the Yellowstone River in Montana, then attended Taft College (1957–1958) and Fresno State College, earning his B.A. in Geology in 1960.



**Buzz Gray mining geodes in Montana  
(probably taken by Pete Knutsen), 1986.**

Following graduation he worked for Laval Underground Surveys in Fresno for the next ten years, photographing and repairing water wells in California’s Central Valley. During that time he also did some gold mining in the California Mother Lode Country with his partner, Bill Forrest. By 1967, he was selling specimens he’d dug to mineral dealers.

In 1970, Buzz relocated to Fallbrook, California, to work for Bill Larson’s Pala Properties International, and traveled extensively throughout the U.S. and Europe, representing Pala at many shows in the early 1970s (Federation Shows across the U.S., as well as local gem and mineral shows in the West). With others he also traveled



# The History of the Red Ledge Mine

*Washington District Nevada County, California*

**Wendell E. Wilson**

The Mineralogical Record  
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*The Red Ledge gold mine deposit, discovered in 1908, was once California's most famous and prolific locality for crystalline and leaf gold. It also yielded many tons of rich chromite ore during World War I, and is the type locality for redledgeite. Although mining there has been dormant in recent years, the deposit is not exhausted and could be reopened.*

## INTRODUCTION

Although the Red Ledge deposit was discovered rather late in the California Gold Rush period, it immediately became famous for the production of attractive crystal specimens, more so than any other mine in California up to that time. Collectors were eager for specimens, but jewelers absorbed a substantial percentage of the potential specimens found to make into brooches and stick pins as souvenirs of the Gold Rush. Leicht (1982) stated that the Red Ledge was "the most famous mine in California for crystallized gold" at that time. By 2008, however, he had revised that assessment in view of the huge number of fine gold crystal specimens that have since been produced by the Colorado Quartz mine, the Mockingbird mine and the Eagle's Nest mine.

Nevertheless, the Red Ledge mine is still a classic locality for California gold, and the comparatively rare specimens are highly sought after by collectors today. The good news is that the mine is far from exhausted, waiting only to be reopened once again when the stars align.

The Red Ledge property consists of the following claims: Red Ledge, Red Ledge Extension, El Capitan, Glacier Point, Brandy Flat, Ravine, Washington, Chief of the Hills, New Year (fraction)

and Triangle No. 1 and No. 2 (fractions). The total area of the property is 150 acres, covering a length along the lode of 1 mile. MacBoyle (1919) described the structure of the deposit as follows:

The foot-wall of the lode is serpentine and the hanging wall is Calaveras slate. Between lies an altered zone of ankerite and dolomitic material, traversed by numerous gold-bearing stringers and veinlets of quartz. The width of the lode is from 10 to 30 feet, and mariposite (chromium mica) accompanies the rich pockets. In the oxidized zone, the ankerite has been altered by weathering to an iron cap cut by quartz stringers carrying coarse leaves and plates of gold. Some beautiful specimens of leaf and crystalized gold have been taken from this mine. The general strike of the lode is N15°W and the dip from 70° to 80° E. The gold occurs in "bunches" and the so-called pay shoot is said to have been 70 feet in length.

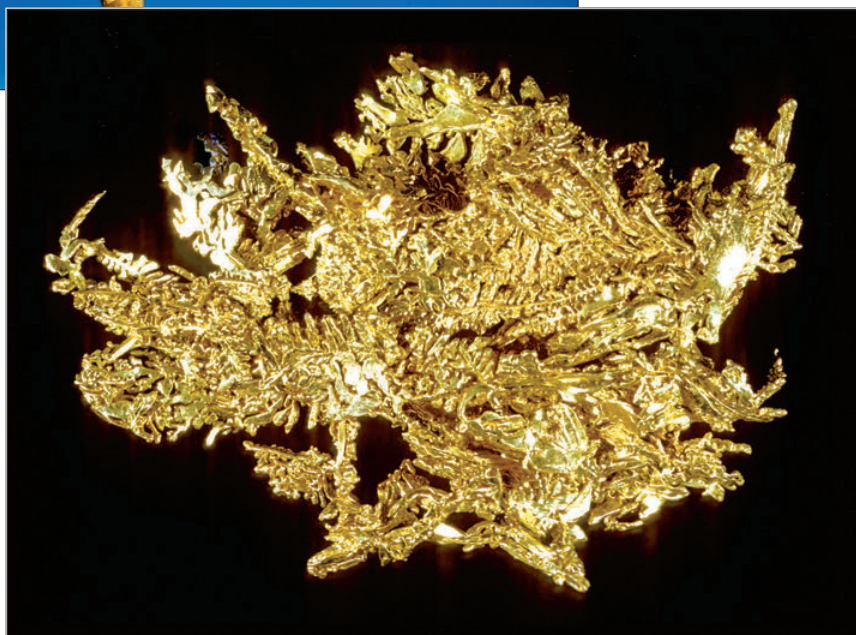
## LOCATION

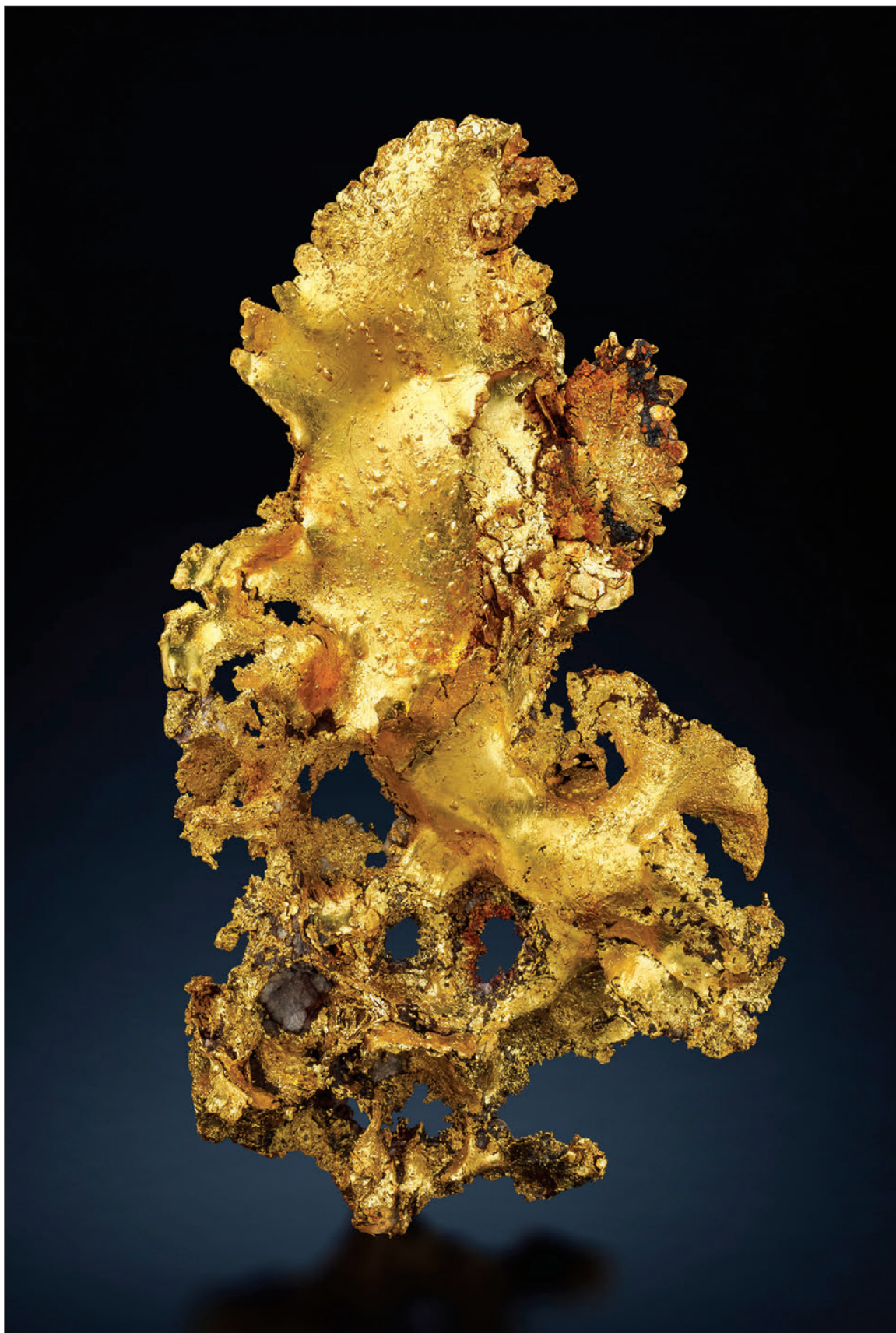
The patented Red Ledge mine is located just a couple of miles southwest of the small Gold Rush town of Washington, in the Washington Mining District, on the South Yuba River in Nevada



*Figure 19.*  
Leaf/crystal gold,  
6 cm, from the  
Red Ledge mine.  
Kyle Kevorkian  
collection, ex Jack  
Halpern collection;  
Jeff Scovil photo.

*Figure 20.* Crystalline  
gold, 5.9 cm, from  
the Red Ledge mine.  
The habit is unusual  
for the mine. Arthur  
Montgomery collection  
(1909–1999); Rock  
Currier photo. Current  
owner unknown.





**Figure 21.** Leaf gold (nicknamed “The Flame”), 21 cm, from the Red Ledge mine. Daniel Trinchillo (Fine Minerals International) specimen; James Elliott photo.



**Figure 36.** Heavy equipment being used to remove large quantities of rock to expose gold-bearing veins in the Red Ledge mine open pit. Terry Szenics photo, August 2009.

**Figure 37.** Trenton Davis (left), Barry Yampol (center) and Terry Szenics at the Red Ledge mine in August 2009.



down into the pit over a decade before to protect the exposed vein had to be removed, and consequently the dump had to be expanded to accommodate it all, eventually reaching the property line. Negotiations to purchase the adjacent property were not successful. Other tasks like widening the road and making safety improvements were accomplished—but all the machinery required overhauling after sitting idle for over a decade.

In the end, the state would not approve year-round operation,

which was the only way of justifying the tremendous costs of bringing everything up to code. Consequently, things were at a stand-still, and Bud and Tony both left the project. Undeterred, Barry made new plans to forge ahead, but he died in June 2023. The Red Ledge mine is still owned by his estate, and is currently standing idle, awaiting further developments.



# BARRY YAMPOL

(1937–2023)

## *The Pinnacle of Mineral Collecting*

Wendell E. Wilson  
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*Barry Yampol was perhaps the greatest American mineral collector of the last hundred years or more. He was a very private individual, only rarely exhibiting specimens at mineral shows (anonymously), almost never selling or trading specimens, and very rarely entertaining visitors at his home to see small parts of his collection. And yet his deep passion for minerals persisted for over 80 years, during which time he amassed one of the world's finest private collections.*

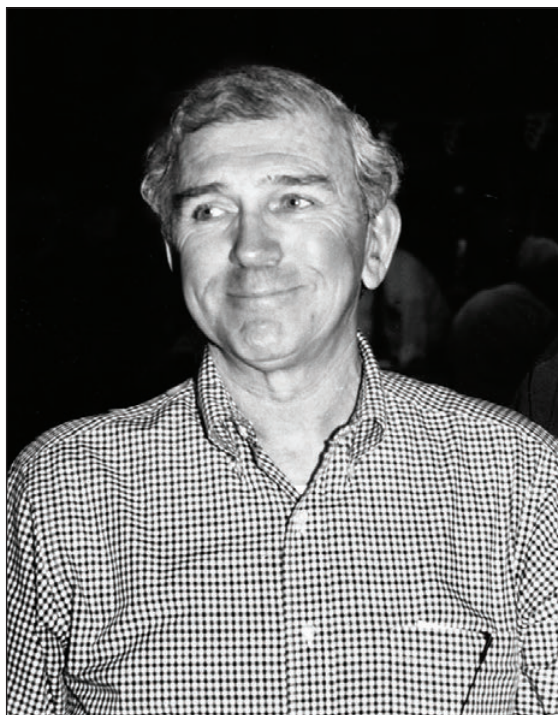
Barry Yampol was born in Brooklyn, New York, on November 20, 1937. His father, Paul Martin Yampol (1909–1968), a Jewish Ukrainian\* immigrant, worked in the Garment District as a maker and wholesaler of women's clothing for a company called Rio Frocks. He eventually became a co-owner of Camelon, and owner of Jane Junior, a New York dressmaking firm specializing in women's clothing and knit suits. Paul married Florence Ruth Green (1912–1995) in 1936, and they started a family which grew to consist of Barry, his brother Jay, and his sisters Gail and Jane.

As a young boy (4 or 5 years old), Barry's passion for minerals began with the discovery of some garnet crystals in his neighbor's stone wall. He found a way to chisel them out, and thus had his first self-collected specimens.

Barry grew up in Brooklyn and attended City College of New York, and later the University of Miami. In 1959, he married Joanne Maxine Nemeth (1937–2006), and together they had two sons, John and David. Like his father, Barry first worked in the

\* The crest shown at the top of the page is that of the old county and town of Yampol in western Ukraine.

**Figure 1. Barry Yampol at the 1998 Tucson Gem and Mineral Show. Kent England photo.**





**Figure 2.** Barry Yampol (Mineral Trust) case of specimens exhibited at the 2008 Tucson Gem and Mineral Show. Kent England photo.



**Figure 3.** Barry Yampol (Mineral Trust) case of amethyst specimens and faceted stones exhibited at the 2006 Tucson Gem and Mineral Show. Gene Meieran photo.

Garment Industry, ultimately as president of Strad Knits Inc. from 1959 to 1968, where he pioneered a number of innovative dress-making strategies that served a much larger potential market. In 1968 he became an entrepreneur in telecommunications, where he established quite an extensive record. According to his son David, "Without Barry's zeal in pursuing his business goals, it is likely that the ubiquitous wireless communication we enjoy today would have been delayed by as much as a generation."

It all started in 1968, when Barry founded Graphic Scanning Corporation, a telecommunications company, which soon took over virtually all of the business of handling the communications of Wall Street underwriters, who had previously been relying on Western Union telegrams. Along the way (1970–1982) he was

granted patents on a "digitally controlled telephone answering system." A successful legal battle with Western Union ended their monopoly on domestic telex and telegram traffic in 1979, opening up the field to Barry. He developed a sophisticated electronic mail service (called the Freedom Network), then created an improved system for electronically transferring funds, and later pioneered the development of mobile phone technology. The times were ideal for an aggressive entrepreneur; Graphic Scanning soon became the nation's largest pocket-pager company. One of Barry's best and oldest friends remarked: "Even in the first grade, Barry just thought differently than anyone, he saw things that nobody else saw." James Murray, author of *Wireless Nation; The Frenzied Launch of the Cellular Revolution in America*, described him as follows:



*Figure 6.* Gold, 3.4 cm, from the Mother Lode Country, Placer County, California. Barry Yampol (Mineral Trust) collection, ex David Wilber; Jeff Scovil photo.

*Figure 7.* Gold, 6.5 cm, from Floresta, Mato Grosso, Brazil. Barry Yampol (Mineral Trust) collection; Jeff Scovil photo.



*Figure 8.* Gold (nicknamed “The Eagle”), 5 cm, mined in the 1850s in the Mother Lode Country, Placer County, California. Barry Yampol (Mineral Trust) collection; Jeff Scovil photo.

*Figure 9.* Gold, 3.2 cm (69 grams), from the Colorado Quartz mine, Mariposa County, California. Mined By John Emmett. Barry Yampol (Mineral Trust) collection, ex Gene Meieran, ex Wayne Thompson; Stuart Wilensky photo.





*Figure 18.* Mimetite crystal group, 7.7 cm, from the famous “Gem Pocket” of 1971 at the Tsumeb mine, Oshikoto Region, Namibia. Barry Yampol (Mineral Trust) collection; Jeff Scovil photo.

*Figure 19.* Azurite crystal group, 14.6 cm, from the Tsumeb mine, Oshikoto Region, Namibia. Barry Yampol (Mineral Trust) collection; Jeff Scovil photo.





*Figure 24.*  
Cerussite, 24.4 cm,  
from the Tsumeb  
mine, Oshikoto  
Region, Namibia.  
Barry Yampol  
(Mineral Trust)  
collection; Jeff  
Scovil photo.



*Figure 25.*  
Cerussite, 7 cm,  
from the Tsumeb  
mine, Oshikoto  
Region, Namibia.  
Barry Yampol  
(Mineral Trust)  
collection; Jeff  
Scovil photo.



*Figure 26. Elbaite with quartz and cleavelandite (nicknamed “Joninha”), 110 cm, from the Jonas mine near Itatiaia, Minas Gerais, Brazil (1978). Barry Yampol (Mineral Trust) collection; Keith Proctor photo.*



*Figure 27. Spinel-law fluorite twin, 10 cm, from Chumar Bakhoor, Hunza Valley, Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan. Barry Yampol (Mineral Trust) collection; James Elliott (Fine Minerals International) photo.*



## Tucson Show 2024

by Thomas P. Moore

[January 26–February 11]

“Fear no more the heat o’ the sun  
Nor the furious winter’s rages . . .”

Those lines of a song from Shakespeare’s *Cymbeline* may be heard to evoke the main reason why the “Tucson Gem, Mineral and Fossil Showcase,” as it is now called, has grown into such a behemoth of an event since it began with just a few dozen dealers in a small elementary school building in 1955. Tucson’s “heat o’ the sun” can indeed be ferocious, but that ferocity doesn’t kick in until late May. In late January through mid-February, countless people escape the “winter’s rages” of almost everywhere else in the Northern Hemisphere to visit Tucson and enjoy this desert’s soft, silky wintertime air, with daytime temperatures between the mid-60s and low 80s, the gentlest sort of sunshine, and, as a bonus, flamboyant serandite-colored sunsets. In the earliest days of the

2024 show the weather grew strangely perverse, delivering rain, wind, and daytime highs in the 40s; however, normality quickly returned, and showgoers all over town seemed comfortable in light sweaters and jackets (although you could always spot native Tucsonans going around in tee-shirts and *shorts*).

In numerous earlier Tucson reports I have mentioned the physical sprawl and thematic diversity of the “Showcase” generally, but in that citywide roil of Earth Science-centered capitalism only a few show venues which focus mainly or wholly on *minerals* beg attention here. The center of gravity for the mineral-minded continues to be the Mineral City complex (see later), but just across Oracle Road from that conglomeration on Lester Street, Isaias Casanova’s “Just Minerals Show” holds forth in an old Elks Club building, and that event, with its dozen or so strictly-minerals dealers, opens for business during a single long weekend and remains very popular: Isaias says that most of its dealers did unusually well in 2024.

Very near the Just Minerals Show, the big white tent housing the Rocky Mountain Gem & Mineral Show was bustling as usual in 2024. Gem, lapidary and mid-range-mineral concerns are prevalent there, but the show did provide a couple of interesting “what’s new” items for this report, as did the Pueblo Show at the Ramada Inn (despite its strong emphasis on gem and lapidary wares). Meanwhile, in the huge 22nd Street lot that adjoins the access road to highway I-10, the 22nd Street Mineral, Fossil, Gem & Jewelry Show offered free admission (although with a \$10 parking fee). This perennially popular show had expanded from previous years, with a new “north tent” at one end which, with the jewelry-intensive “Showcase” tent at the south end, bookended the great white quarter-mile-long tent in between. All manner of lapidary, fossil, New Age and mineral merchandise drew in the crowds, and although this show is usually low in significant mineral finds—there have been years in which I have skipped it entirely—this year’s 22nd Street Show turned out to include a couple of mineral dealerships with first-rate “what’s-new” materials.

In the scenic Westward Look resort hotel on the northern edge of the city, the Westward Look Fine

Mineral Show has hosted a small group of high-end dealerships ever since Dave Waisman created this “elite” venue in 2002. Just eight dealers set up at Westward Look in that first year, but by 2022 the show had grown to host about 20 dealers and had added “special features” as well (see earlier reports in this magazine). In 2022, Dave called it quits as the show’s manager, but a small alliance of high-end dealers including Bill Larson, Wayne Thompson and Christophe Gobin stepped in, resolving to keep it going (albeit without associated lectures and exhibits). Thus in 2024, the Westward Look Show was still drawing plenty of shoppers and gawkers, but only eight dealers had set up there, as in the beginning. These dealers still offered many ultrafine specimens, though, and the general hope is that “Westward Look” will persist, and perhaps even grow anew, in the years to come.

Near the center of town, the Granada Gallery and Granada Mineral Showcase on Granada Avenue were full of fine specimens



**Figure 3.** A case of specimens from the Strzegom granite quarries, Lower Silesia, Poland, in the room of *Spirifer Minerals* at Mineral City. Tom Moore photo.

**Figure 4.** Purple cuboctahedral fluorite, about 12.5 cm, from Borów (found ca. 2005), Strzegom, Lower Silesia, Poland. Szczawno-Zdrój Mineral Museum (Poland). *Spirifer Minerals* exhibit at Mineral City; Chris Stefano photo.



**Figure 5.** Fluorite crystal, 20 cm, from Strzegom, Lower Silesia, Poland, in the *Spirifer Minerals* room at Mineral City, with a faceted gem of pink fluorite cut from a pink zone in the same crystal. Tom Moore photo.

**Figure 6.** Blue cuboctahedral fluorite, about 12.5 cm, from the Blaue Druse Pocket (found in 2004), Grabina I quarry, Strzegom, Lower Silesia, Poland. Szczawno-Zdrój Mineral Museum (Poland). *Spirifer Minerals* exhibit at Mineral City; Chris Stefano photo.



**Figure 7.** Pink, octahedral fluorite with smoky quartz on feldspar, about 8.5 cm, from the Five Man Pocket (found in 2012), Andrzej III quarry, Strzegom, Lower Silesia, Poland. Szczawno-Zdrój Mineral Museum (Poland). *Spirifer Minerals* exhibit at Mineral City; Chris Stefano photo.





*Figure 8. Microcline, 20 cm, from the Pinaleno Mountains, Graham County, Arizona (held by Evan Jones). Unique Minerals specimen; Tom Moore photo.*

*Figure 9. "Onegite" (goethite and smoky quartz), 18 cm, from near Lake George, Colorado. Blue Owl Minerals specimen; Christi Cramer photo.*



*Note to readers with a digital subscription: The following showcase photos are shown in higher resolution in the digital edition of this issue and may be enlarged substantially on screen in order to read labels and study individual specimens.*



**Figure 53.** Mineralogical Association of Dallas (MAD) showcase. Christi Cramer photo.



**Figure 54.** Conan Barker and Bruce Carter's exhibit. Christi Cramer photo.



**Figure 55.** Amazonite and smoky quartz specimens from the Icon Pocket, Smoky Hawk claim near Florissant, Teller County, Colorado, mined in 2012 by the Dorris family. Christi Cramer photo.

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