

Colorado School of Mines (CSM) Geology Museum Musings

My eighth year directing the Museum has seen a record number of volunteers, and donation box proceeds. Unfortunately, our attendance data from 2015 has not yet been compiled.

I'm proud to announce that as of this writing, we are ranked by Tripadvisor.com as the #7 tourist attraction in Golden, in terms of visitor satisfaction, out of 49 Golden attractions, and were again awarded their Certificate of Excellence. This year our display at the Denver Mineral Show received the Chirnside Award for the best museum display (of 24 museum entries, including the Smithsonian), and the Friends of Mineralogy Award for the best educational display by an institution. These resulted from the help of our Collections Managers and donors. Others who also contributed this year were our Advisory Council, Student Aides, Friends of the CSM Geology Museum (FCSMGM), volunteers, specimen loaners, CSM faculty, and administrators.

The Advisory Council has met monthly and oversaw the completion of the LED conversion over our conserved Hoffman mining murals last April. They began a policy of charging a nominal amount for guided tours in March, which has worked out well by compensating our Student Aides for their time leading those tours. They also agreed to loan our Apollo 17 moon rock to the National Mining Hall of Fame in Leadville for three months last summer.

I held weekly meetings with our Collections Managers and volunteers. One of our Collections Managers, Ed Raines, created a great educational display using our Museum specimens for the Colorado Capitol last spring. It was taken down in November, but should hopefully reappear spring of 2016. Our volunteers have been busy keeping our Gift Shop well stocked. Our 2015 Gift Shop sales were down 14%, but our donations box contributions increased 72%. Our volunteer ranks have now risen to roughly 80. Our facebook fans are up 34% over 2014.

Our Student Aides have led a vast majority of our tours again, rented our teaching and fossil kits, helped with our Book/Mineral (Garage) Sales, and rung up all of our Gift Shop sales. 40% of our Student Aides graduated in May, so we hired new ones. Currently eight Aides are women (nearly twice the female demographic on campus!) and two are graduate students.

One change to our Gift Shop was the installation and programming of a digital cash register to help track purchases and inventorying. Our ten page chapter in the Mineralogical Record's "Mineral Collections in Colorado" supplement (distributed internationally and on sale in our Gift Shop) was well received. At this point nearly all of our exterior windows have had UV filtering mylar professionally applied to them and we hope to have this project completed when nicer weather returns.

Mandi Reinshagen Hutchinson (former Museum employee and current CSM masters student) spent a great deal of time creating new displays on our lower floor for the Critical Materials Institute (CMI). Most of these feature rare earth minerals, but there are also tellurides and Li minerals (Figure 1). This was funded by the CMI and involves many departments on Campus. We will officially dedicate these exhibits on February 3, 2016.

Our Friends of the CSM Geology Museum (FCSMGM) now has over 215 paid memberships. The Friends ran a one day work shop in Berthoud Hall on the causation of color in minerals, featuring George Rossman from Cal. Tech. There were roughly 60 registrants. The Friends prepared and conducted our two successful Garage Sales in April and November (Figure 2). The Friends were co-sponsors of the Gunnison Mineral Symposium which ran for three days



Figure 1. Mandi Reinshagen Hutchinson explaining the Critical Materials Institute display in our Museum, December, 2015.



Figure 2. Two happy customers at our spring Garage Sale April, 2015.

in July with about 60 participants. They also conducted field trips to Pala and Carlsbad, CA, Cherokee Ranch, CO, and Nacimiento, NM, and bestowed several fine specimens to our collections. Our new board was recently elected and took office January 1, 2016. As always, FCSMGM members receive 20% discounts in our Gift Shop. Application forms can be found at: http://issuu.com/csmgeologymuseum/docs/friends_app.

You may have heard about some major vandalism in the GRL (General Research Laboratory) building, which we share, on July 4th. We are extremely fortunate that none of our collections or displays were soiled in any way, even though we were forced to close for about four days. The vandals were caught and we breathed a sigh of relief.

In September, High Noon Productions came to Campus to shoot an episode of “Prospectors” (which aired on The Weather Channel in January, 2016). Our Annual Open House

in September was attended by roughly 300, where they saw eleven new exhibits and three updated exhibits.

Some of the donations to our Museum this year were truly stupendous, for which we are grateful. We gladly accept geological book, map, and specimen donations throughout the year.

In 2015 we displayed our specimens at mineral shows in Tucson, Fort Collins, Colorado Springs, Denver, and Socorro. We are currently preparing an exhibit for the Tucson Gem and Mineral Show this February.

As for upcoming events, we will tentatively hold another famous (infamous?) combined Book/Mineral (Garage) Sale on 4/30 + 5/1/2016 from 9-4 P.M. in the Conference Room across the hall from our Museum entrance. Prices will drop frequently throughout the event on most items. The Friends of the CSM Geology Museum and the Museum are two of four sponsors of the Second Eugene E. Foord Pegmatite Symposium, which will be held on 7/15-19/2016 on Campus. There will be two days of lectures and two days of field trips. Anyone interested in planning this symposium is invited to contact me. Our Annual Open House is scheduled for September 14, 2016 from 6 to 9 P.M.

In conclusion, please visit our Museum. Our address is 1310 Maple Street. We are open Monday – Saturday 9 A.M. to 4 P.M., Sundays 1 P.M. – 4 P.M., except for certain legal and school holidays. Notice that nearly all our display lighting is LEDs! I'm willing to lead a free guided tour of our Museum to your club. Simply phone me three choices of dates and times (yes, evenings and weekends are acceptable) and I'll pick one that works best for me.

Admission to our Museum is free, but parking fees are required in our lots and on campus streets Mondays through Fridays before 5 P.M. Further information is available on our website (http://www.mines.edu/Geology_Museum), Facebook page (<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Colorado-School-of-Mines-Geology-Museum/168875179736>).

Cordially,
Bruce Geller, Museum Director
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