

SHARON CISNEROS

AND THE MINERALOGICAL RESEARCH COMPANY

A Life in Minerals

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A glittering tunnel lined with brilliantly fluorescing scheelite had a powerful effect on a little girl. Since that day in 1948, Sharon Cisneros has spent her life collecting and dealing in minerals. She and her husband Gene founded their own mineral dealership in 1958 and have been at it for over 62 years, dealing in specimens, exploring for new occurrences, and even discovering one (and possibly two) new mineral species at their own claim.

INTRODUCTION

Surely everyone in the mineral world must be familiar with Sharon Cisneros and her husband Gene, proprietors of the Mineralogical Research Company dealership in San Jose, California and a long-time presence at major mineral shows throughout the West. Her charming and ever-friendly manner, her passion for minerals (especially rare species and thumbnails), and her interest in the history of collecting have won her friends throughout the hobby. She purchased ads in the *Mineralogical Record* beginning with its second issue in 1970 (the first issue had hardly any ads), and in magazines like *Gems & Minerals* and *Lapidary Journal* beginning in the late 1950s when she was still just a teenager. Now retired, she has been kind enough to supply some autobiographical notes that form the basis of this article.

EARLY LIFE

Sharon was born Sharon Lee Johns in San Jose, California, on May 29, 1941, the daughter of Beryl Dewolf [Brubaker] and Arthur Ardale Johns, a telephone lineman. Her first recollection of an interest in minerals came during one of her family's annual outings, best described as a "pack trip." Every summer from 1945 to 1955 or so they would drive up to the Sonora Pass area in the

Sierra Nevada Mountains of California. Her father would rent a mule and load it up with their gear, then they (Sharon and her mother, father and sister) would start off hiking up a trail, often not encountering another person for the entire two-week outing. They followed little-used trails into the wilderness area (elevation 7,000 to 10,000 feet), or no trails at all, with only an old USGS topographic map for reference as they explored the wilderness. Since that part of the Sierras borders on the upper boundary of Yosemite Park, fantastic scenery was all around, and there were plenty of fish in the lakes for food, as well as lots of interesting rocks under foot. Sharon's curiosity was piqued every time some different rock or mineral was encountered along the trail. Tiny quartz-crystal-filled geodes could be found in several places.

During one pack trip to the Snow Lake area around 1948, they came upon a group of miners driving an exploratory tunnel into the side of the hill to mine scheelite. The miners invited them into the tunnel and turned on their ultraviolet lamp to reveal a stunning sight: the inside of the tunnel lit up with thousands of little pinpoints of blue-white light piercing the dark like stars. That mind-blowing experience hooked her on minerals! Since her family had lots of fresh-caught rainbow trout, they traded the miners for many

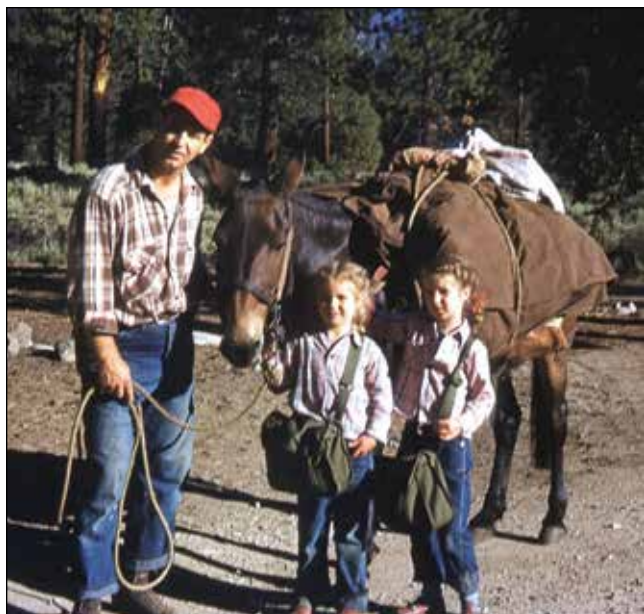
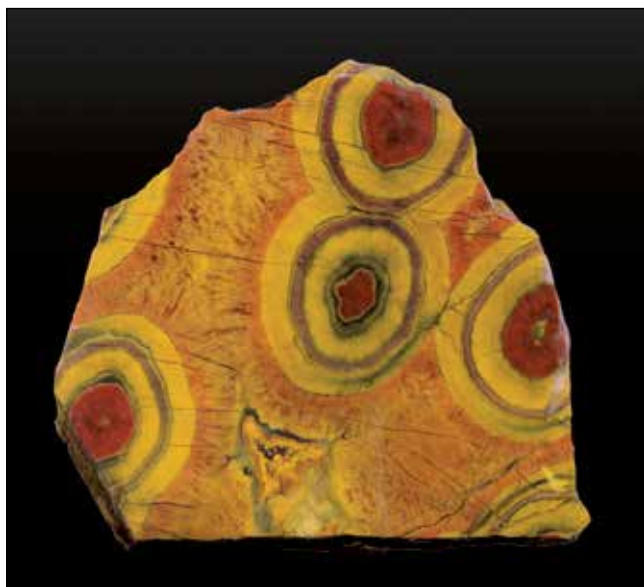


Figure 1. Sharon (right) with her sister and father on a family pack trip in the Sonora Pass area, California in 1948.

Figure 2. Gene and Sharon panning in Clear Creek, San Benito County, California (1957).



Figure 3. Orbicular jasper, 7 cm, from Morgan Hill, Santa Clara County, California. Sharon Cisneros collection; Gene Cisneros photo.



specimens of crystallized andradite, epidote and massive scheelite in quartz—specimens they kept for many years thereafter.

When Sharon was 12, her family visited Yellowstone Park, checking out geologic sites during the entire two-week outing. Natural limestone caves, hot springs, volcanic craters and the Bonneville Salt Flats were all points of special interest on that trip, and made a big impression on her, forming the basis for a life-long interest in mineralogy and the earth sciences in general.

EARLY COLLECTING TRIPS

At 15 years of age, a life-changing event took place when Sharon met her future husband, 17-year-old Eugene Leon Cisneros. Gene had a very old car but no money to spare for activities like movies and dances. Since they shared a common interest in minerals and field collecting, the solution was obvious: they could go on field trips together for entertainment, exploring old mine sites like the New Almaden mine, the Guadalupe mine and many other abandoned pre-1900s mercury diggings in the Santa Clara Valley. Everything was wide open in those days—no gates, no locks and no forbidding “No Trespassing” signs. Having no cash, they had to look for specimens they could sell for gas money.

Their first commercial field-collecting success involved mining and marketing a lapidary material called orbicular jasper, also known as Morgan Hill poppy jasper. While Sharon was still in high school, she and Gene bought a second-hand 36-inch lapidary saw and made weekly, rigorous climbs up poison oak-covered Morgan Hill to collect the jasper. Then they backpacked it down the mountain, cut it into slabs and began advertising it for sale in *Gems & Minerals* and *Lapidary Journal* magazines. The jasper proved to be a highly desirable lapidary material not widely available from anyone else—thus they were in business together in 1958! Two years later they were married.

By 1959, Sharon and Gene had both graduated from high school. Gene was working in a pharmacy while going to junior college, and Sharon was working as a bookkeeper. They were able to take weekend trips farther away from San Jose by then, and found out about the serpentine dome collecting area in southern San Benito County, California. The area included well known sites like Clear Creek, the New Idria mine and the Benitoite Gem mine. The New Idria mine was still in operation at that time, so access to the tunnels was forbidden, but one could find specimens on the dumps.

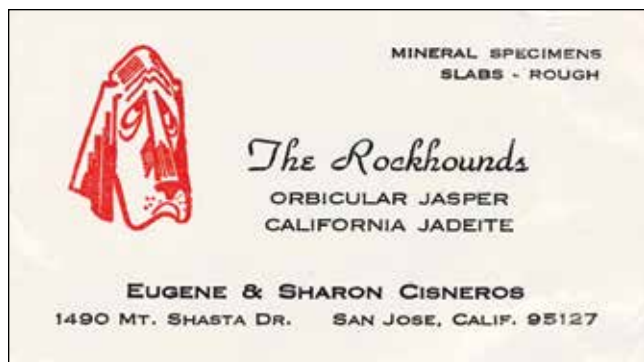


Figure 4. Gene and Sharon's first business card (1966).

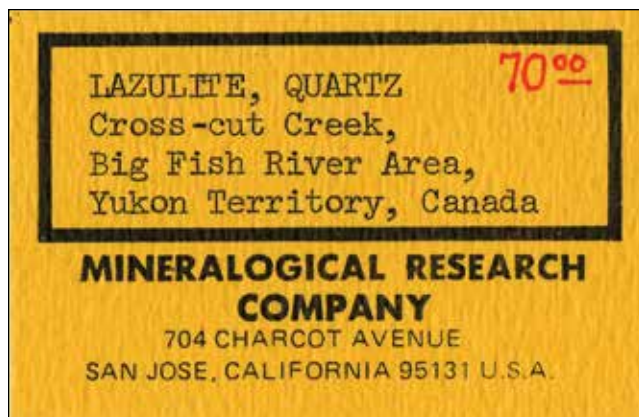


Figure 5. Label from the Shop address on Charcot Avenue (1978–1984).

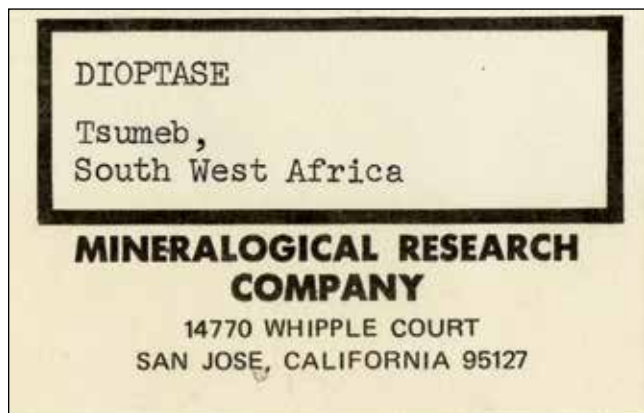


Figure 6. Label from the Whipple Court address (1970–1977).

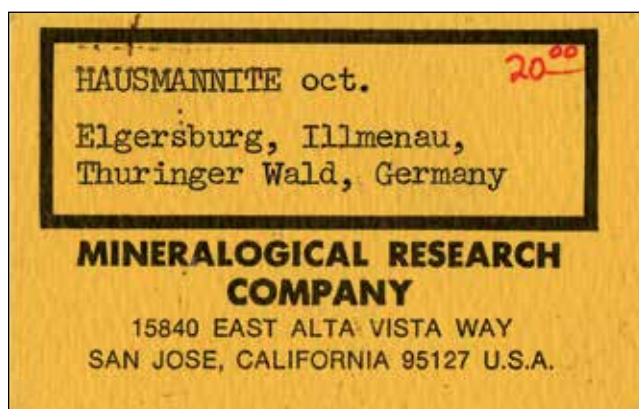


Figure 7. Label from the Alta Vista Way address (1977–2020).

Still looking for ways to supplement their income and build their fledgling mineral collection, they collected the topazolite and melanite varieties of andradite as well as artinite, mercury-bearing minerals, chromite and many others. They brought enough Clear Creek jadeite home to build a very large retaining wall in the backyard of their new home. The jadeite had originally been ordered by a big commercial firm, but the order was canceled once the company discovered that jadeite boulders are so tough they will jam a commercial rock crushing machine.

Two daughters arrived within less than a year of each other, so the field trips had to be put on hold for a while, but eventually they began selling minerals and lapidary materials again, and by 1964 they were attending some of the local shows as dealers. In the meantime, Gene was still working and going to school. By the time their daughters were old enough to climb a hill, they were back to doing field trips in San Benito County.

MINERAL BUSINESS

In 1966, mentored by their friend, the well-known Oregon mineral dealer Walt Lidstrom (1920–1976), Sharon and Gene officially founded their mineral dealership, eventually calling it the Mineralogical Research Company. Considering their interest in rare species and field exploration work, it was a well-chosen name.

Encouraged by Walt, they embarked upon a 7,000-mile trip to Mexico to buy minerals. At that time, only a few mineral dealers were going there to buy specimens. For the trip they had two large signs mounted on the side windows of their International Scout, saying “*Compro de Minerales y Cristales*” (“I Buy Minerals and Crystals”). They visited several well-known localities in Chihuahua and Durango, bringing back more than 100 flats of high-quality,

in-demand specimens of wulfenite, mimetite, hemimorphite, yellow fluorapatite crystals (from Cerro de Mercado) and much more. By the time the second issue of the *Mineralogical Record* was published in 1970 they were advertising their business, “Mineralogical Research Company,” located at 1490 Mt. Shasta Drive in San Jose. Later that same year they moved into a home at 14770 Whipple Court, eventually adding on a spacious two-story mineral show room.

They then began to buy mineral collections to supplement their show stock. They expanded their local show circuit to include annual sales at the Mineralogical Society of Southern California show in Pasadena and began to attend the Tucson Gem and Mineral Show as mineral dealers in 1975, continuing there every year until 2003 (28 years!) when they retired from the show to devote more time to their very active internet business.

To supplement their show sales, they enlarged their mineral business by advertising in the popular gem and mineral magazines. The Mineralogical Research Company mail order business took off like a shot, and over a 50-year period evolved into a highly successful portion of their business. Mineral books, back issues of the *Mineralogical Record*, and meteorites were added to their list of specialties, then specimen boxes, stereographic microscopes, ultraviolet lamps, Geiger counters, and eventually digital microscopes and microscope eyepiece cameras.

In 1977, they moved to 15840 East Alta Vista Way in San Jose, and have remained there ever since. During their early years, Sharon and Gene both maintained full-time jobs while also attending shows, running their mail order business, and raising a family. Minerals had already grown into the equivalent of a full-time operation



Figure 8. Gene and Sharon in their booth at the Tucson Show, 1984.

by 1971, and in 1974 they formally decided that Sharon should quit her full-time job as an executive secretary with a national marketing company and devote all of her energies to running their mineral business. This proved to be an excellent decision. While still attending to their California and Tucson show commitments, Sharon decided to travel to several shows on the East Coast to make personal contact with many of the mail order customers they had befriended over the years. She shipped their mineral show inventory to the Detroit, Rochester and Franklin shows and traveled by air to run the show booths while Gene stayed in California to continue working and attending his university classes. Sharon was the first woman speaker at the annual Rochester Academy of Sciences mineralogical symposium, presenting a one-hour illustrated lecture on historical Gold mining in California.

In 1976 they opened a walk-in store in San Jose at 704 Charcot Avenue, specializing in minerals, meteorites and astronomical equipment. In 1981 they also made arrangements for a mineral dealer friend of theirs in Germany to sell minerals for them at the Munich show. The store in San Jose was open seven days a week, with six employees, leaving little time for field trips. Ultimately Gene's graduate studies, running their mail order business, raising a family, and doing shows all took their toll on the busy couple; they reluctantly closed the store in 1984, after eight years, because it was just too much work! Sharon continued to work at the business full time, while Gene was employed by the Stanford Linear Accelerator Center National Laboratory in Menlo Park, California, designing nuclear instrumentation.

MORE FIELD COLLECTING

After closing their store, field collecting trips became more common again and, in total, they made nearly 200 weekend field trips to sites in San Benito County. Between 1980 and 1992 they collected some exceptional artinite, andradite (large black melanite crystals and yellow topazolite), large natrolite crystals and many other minerals. With diligent prospecting and determination, they successfully rediscovered the second reported occurrence of benitoite in San Benito County—the fabled occurrence of “pink

Figure 9. Sharon with Geiger counter, prospecting for radioactive minerals (2003).



benitoite.” They filed a mining claim on the occurrence, calling it Mina Numero Uno. One of the species found at the site was a yellow mineral usually occurring in doubly terminated crystals, similar to (but not the same as) joaquinite-(Ce). William Wise at the University of California Santa Barbara performed the necessary descriptive research and named the new mineral species *strontiojoaquinite* in 1982—Mina Numero Uno being the type locality, and Sharon and Gene credited as the discoverers. Explorations of the site also yielded blue, white and peach-colored benitoite, but no true pink benitoite was ever found. Mina Numero Uno also produced microcrystals of neptunite, albite and joaquinite-(Ce).

Sharon and Gene made several spectacular discoveries of artinite at an occurrence near the headwaters of Clear Creek, recovering

Figure 10. Sharon at the Blue Bell mine in San Bernardino County, California (2011).



Figure 11. Office of Mineralogical Research Company, San Jose, California (2020).



personally collected: artinite, andradite, epidote and other classics available at that time from U.S., Mexican and European localities. But after a few years she began to realize that she needed to specialize in some specific areas rather than taking the “shotgun” approach of trying to collect everything in the world. This led to emphases on (1) minerals from Mexico, (2) classic European localities (especially in Germany and the United Kingdom), (3) African localities (including a sub-collection devoted to minerals from Tsumeb), and localities in (4) Australia, (5) Japan, (6) Russia,

many hundreds of fine specimens, some of them world-class for the species. The find also gave Sharon an opportunity to write an article for the *Mineralogical Record* describing the minerals they found (Cisneros, 1977) (see also Pemberton’s *Minerals of California*, 1983). The site has also yielded excellent hydromagnesite and desautelsite specimens. Another major find they made was a deposit of melanite garnets, with crystals reaching an inch in size. Many specimens were recovered, the largest of which is now in the collection of the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History.

Explorations at the Clear Creek claim, an abandoned mercury mine in the Clear Creek area, yielded specimens of cinnabar, native mercury and many others including a yellow unknown mercury-bearing mineral. When it was first discovered (circa 1970), specimens were sent to the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, and the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C. for identification. The technology for characterizing minerals today is more advanced than it was back then, but even though over 50 years have passed since its discovery, the yellow unknown has never been formally described, and is still referred to only as CCUK-8 (Dunning *et al.*, 2005); the structure is still unresolved, and the mineral remains unnamed.

SHARON’S COLLECTION

During the early 1960s, Sharon began to collect minerals, specializing in thumbnail-size specimens. Her first acquisitions were



Figure 12. Benitoite crystal, 2.0-mm view, personally collected at Mina Numero Uno, San Benito County, California. Sharon Cisneros collection; Gene Cisneros photo.



Figure 13. Benitoite crystal, 8.0-mm view, personally collected at the Mina Numero Uno, San Benito County, California. Gene Cisneros photo.

Figure 14. Strontiojoaquinite crystals, 1.0-mm view, personally collected at Mina Numero Uno, San Benito County, California. Sharon Cisneros collection; Gene Cisneros photo.



Figure 15. Neptunite crystals to 1.0-mm view, personally collected at Mina Numero Uno, San Benito County, California. Sharon Cisneros collection; Gene Cisneros photo.



Figure 16. Epidote (twinned) crystals to 1.0 cm, personally collected at the Garnet Hill, Calaveras County, California. Sharon Cisneros collection; Gene Cisneros photo.

Figure 18. Artinite, 5.5 cm, personally collected at the Artinite pit, Clear Creek Area, San Benito County, California. Sharon Cisneros collection; Gene Cisneros photo.



Figure 17. Andradite (variety melanite) crystals on matrix, 11.0 cm, personally collected south of the Dallas Gem mine, San Benito County, California. Sharon Cisneros collection; Gene Cisneros photo.



Figure 19. Diamond crystals: (left) 1.4 cm, from the Premier mine, Cullinan, Pretoria, Gauteng Province, South Africa. (center) 1.6 cm, from the Sakha Republic (Yakutia), Russia. (right) 1.3 cm, from the Kimberley mine, Northern Cape Province, South Africa. Sharon Cisneros collection; Gene Cisneros photo.

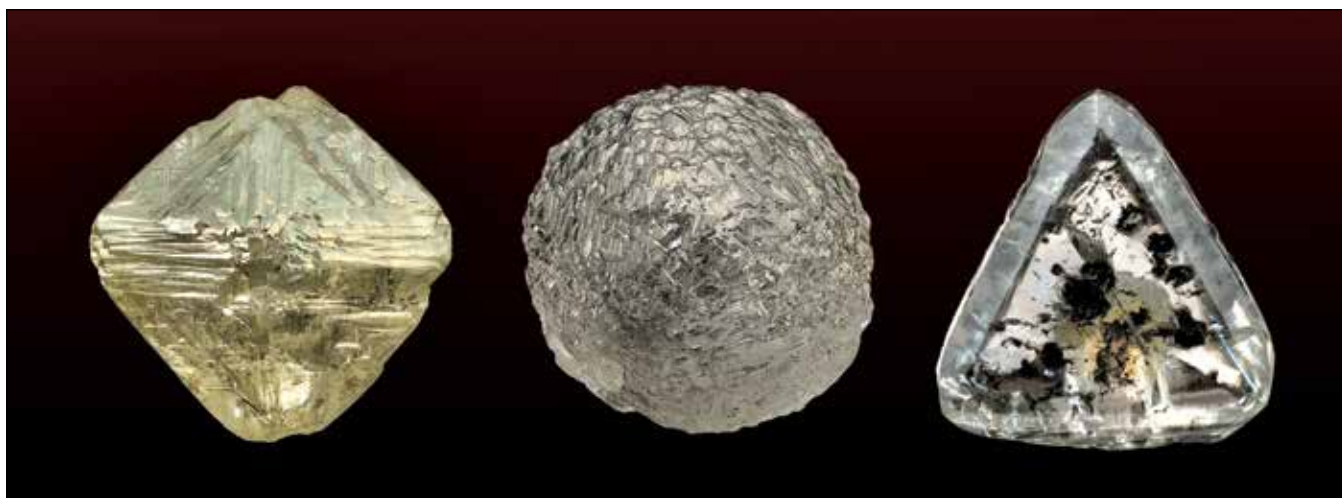




Figure 20. Neptunite crystals to 2.0-mm view, personally collected at Mina Numero Uno, San Benito County, California. Sharon Cisneros collection; Gene Cisneros photo.

Figure 21. Scheelite crystal, 3.0 cm, from the Baia Sprie mine (Felsöbánya mine), Baia Sprie, Maramureş, Romania. Sharon Cisneros collection; Gene Cisneros photo.

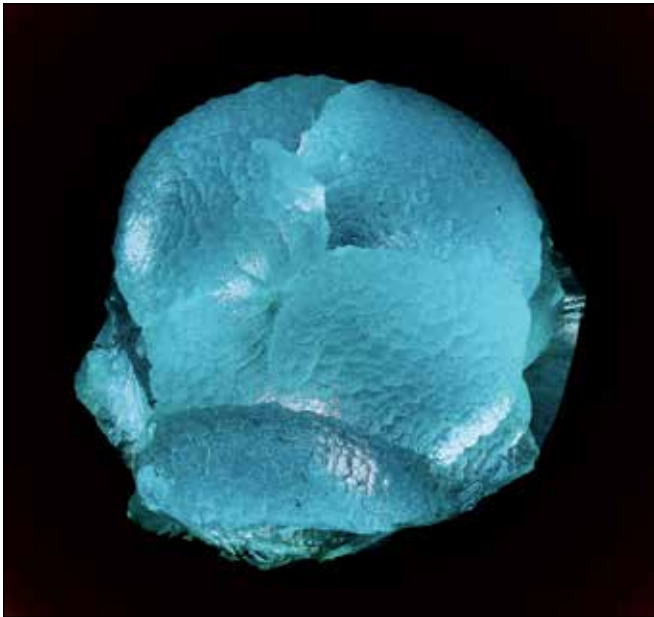


Figure 22. Smithsonite, 2.6 cm, from the Kelly mine, Magdalena, Magdalena District, Socorro County, New Mexico. Sharon Cisneros collection; Gene Cisneros photo.

Figure 23. Aquamarine crystal group, 2.5 cm, from Dache, Rakaposhi-Haramosh Mountains, Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan. Sharon Cisneros collection; Gene Cisneros photo.



Figure 24. Arsentsumebite after mimetite, 2.6 cm, from the Tsumeb mine, Tsumeb, Oshikoto region (Otjikoto region), Namibia. Sharon Cisneros collection; Gene Cisneros photo.



Figure 25. Mimetite, 2.5 cm, from the 1972 “gem pocket” at the Tsumeb mine, Tsumeb, Oshikoto region (Otjikoto region), Namibia. Sharon Cisneros collection; Gene Cisneros photo.

Figure 26. Diopside crystals on matrix, 4.0 cm, from the Tsumeb mine, Tsumeb, Oshikoto region (Otjikoto region), Namibia. Sharon Cisneros collection; Gene Cisneros photo.





Figure 27. Rhodochrosite crystal group, 3.0 cm, from the N'Chwaning II mine, near Kuruman, Northern Cape Province, South Africa. Sharon Cisneros collection; Gene Cisneros photo.

Figure 28. Phosphophyllite twin, 2.4 cm, from the Unificada mine, Cerro Rico de Potosí, Potosí City, Potosí Department, Bolivia. Sharon Cisneros collection; Gene Cisneros photo.

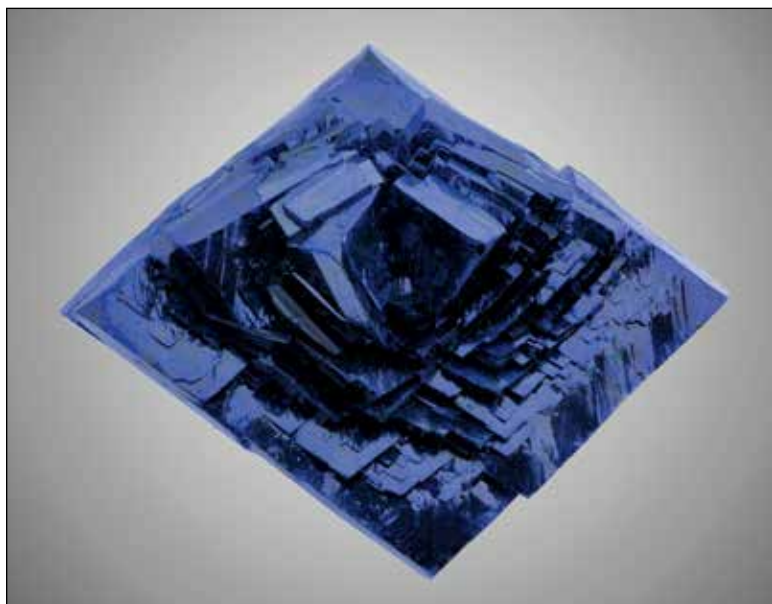


Figure 29. Azurite "rose," 3.2 cm, from the Cole shaft, Bisbee, Warren District, Cochise County, Arizona. Sharon Cisneros collection; Gene Cisneros photo.

Figure 30. Rhodochrosite crystal group, 3.0 cm, from Butte, Silver Bow County, Montana. Sharon Cisneros collection; Gene Cisneros photo.



Figure 31. Acanthite crystal group, 4.0 cm, from the San Juan de Rayas mine, Guanajuato Municipality, Guanajuato, Mexico. Sharon Cisneros collection; Gene Cisneros photo.



Figure 32. Cumengite on boleite, 1.6 cm, from the Amelia mine, Santa Rosalía, Boleo District, Baja California Sur, Mexico. Sharon Cisneros collection; Gene Cisneros photo.

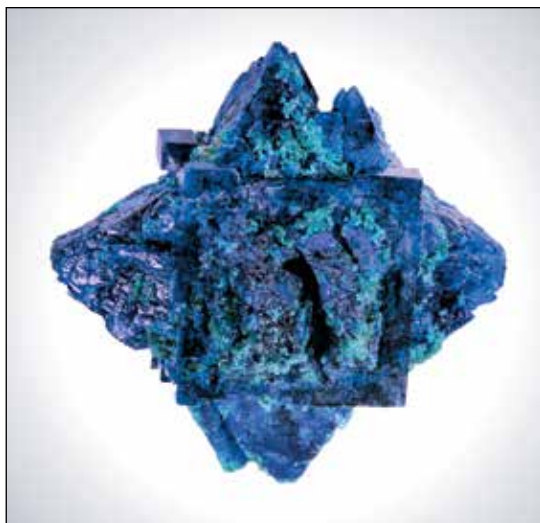


Figure 33. Adamite, 3.2 cm, from the Ojuela mine, Mapimí, Durango, Mexico. Sharon Cisneros collection; Gene Cisneros photo.



Figure 34. Uraninite crystals on matrix, 3.4 cm, from the Shinkolobwe mine, Kambove District, Haut-Katanga, Democratic Republic of Congo. Sharon Cisneros collection; Gene Cisneros photo.



Figure 35. Proustite crystal group, 2.8 cm, from Příbram, Bohemia, Czech Republic. Sharon Cisneros collection; Gene Cisneros photo.

Figure 36. Proustite crystal, 4.0 cm, from Schneeberg, Erzgebirgskreis, Saxony, Germany. Sharon Cisneros collection; Gene Cisneros photo.



Figure 37. Stephanite on pyrargyrite, 3.5 cm, from the Freiberg Mining District, Mittelsachsen, Saxony, Germany. Sharon Cisneros collection; Gene Cisneros photo.



Figure 38. Proustite cluster, 5.0 cm, from the Freiberg District, Erzgebirge, Saxony, Germany. Sharon Cisneros collection; Gene Cisneros photo.

Figure 39. Wire silver, 2.9 cm, from the Dzhezkazgan mining district, Karaganda region, Kazakhstan. Sharon Cisneros collection; Gene Cisneros photo.



Figure 40. Proustite crystal group, 2.5 cm, from the Chañarcillo mine, Sierra Gorda, Antofagasta Province, Antofagasta, Chile. Sharon Cisneros collection; Gene Cisneros photo.



Figure 41. Gold, 2.0 cm, from the Colorado Quartz mine, Mariposa County, California. Sharon Cisneros collection; Gene Cisneros photo.

Figure 42. Pyrargyrite crystal group, 2.3 cm, from Taxco de Alarcón, Guerrero, Mexico. Sharon Cisneros collection; Gene Cisneros photo.



Figure 43 (left). Silver crystal group, 5.8 cm, from Aspen, Aspen Mining District, Pitkin County, Colorado. Sharon Cisneros collection; Gene Cisneros photo.

Figure 44 (below left). Silver crystals, 2.9 cm, from the Kongsberg District, Kongsberg, Buskerud, Norway. Sharon Cisneros collection; Gene Cisneros photo.

Figure 45 (below). Silver crystal group, 10.5 cm, from Aspen, Aspen Mining District, Pitkin County, Colorado. Sharon Cisneros collection; Gene Cisneros photo.





Figure 46. Gold, 2.5 cm, from the Berezovsk District, Beryozovsky, Sverdlovsk Oblast, Russia. Sharon Cisneros collection; Gene Cisneros photo.



Figure 47. Gold, 2.3 cm, from the Zapata mine, Santa Elena de Uairen, Bolívar, Venezuela. Sharon Cisneros collection; Gene Cisneros photo.

(7) Brazil, (8) China, and several others. Additional specialties include (9) single crystals, (10) fluorite from worldwide localities, (11) topaz, (12) quartz, (13) tourmaline group minerals and several others—perhaps not a shotgun approach, but most of the arsenal appears to be in there! She has enjoyed sharing her collections with the public via numerous special guest exhibits of thumbnail specimens at the Tucson Gem and Mineral Show; at the Flandrau Planetarium’s year-long exhibit of minerals from Chinese localities in 2013; and in the 2013 “Crystal Gazers” supplement to the November–December issue of the *Mineralogical Record*. After collecting thumbnail specimens for more than 60 years, she remains very active, always looking for the chance to augment and improve the collection, now numbering over 3,000 specimens. Though thumbnail specimens remain her preferred size, Sharon never overlooks an opportunity to add to her smaller miniature collection.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

It is important in life to not be entirely focused on a single activity to the exclusion of all else. Sharon’s first choice for a change of pace was the martial arts. For many years she regularly practiced the Hawaiian Kempo style of karate, competing in tournaments as time allowed, advancing through several belt ranks, instructing students and occasionally breaking a brick for demonstrations. When that became too physically taxing she shifted to her second choice for a fun physical activity: weight lifting! One would have thought that lifting all those heavy flats of minerals was quite sufficient, thank you, but Sharon is an interesting personality with her share of surprises.

WINNING A TOUGH BATTLE

If you have read her story this far, you know that Sharon Cisneros is an energetic, tough, intelligent and determined woman. But she has had to face some critical physical challenges, not the least of which was a late onset case of rotational scoliosis in the lower

to middle spinal column and the deterioration of some vertebrae. Surgery became necessary in 2000, to straighten out her back, fuse seven discs and install titanium rods. It wound up being four surgeries and a bacterial infection to overcome, but after two years of antibiotics and physical therapy she was back to doing shows again—a terrible ordeal and a remarkable triumph in the end.

RETIREMENT AT LAST

Until very recently, Sharon and Gene had still been actively running Mineralogical Research Company as an online business, still selling minerals, mineral books, magazines, meteorites, optical microscopes, digital microscopes, microscope eyepiece cameras, and ultraviolet lamps. But in 2020 they at last decided to retire from the business and take more time for themselves. They’ll be working on their bucket lists, going on field collecting trips to explore new localities and, hopefully, to make more new and interesting mineralogical finds!

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Ruby Silver!

PYRRARGYRITE, 6.9 CM, FRESNILLO, ZACATECAS, MEXICO



JEFF SCOVIL PHOTO



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Contact the Advertising Manager at tpmoore1@cox.net

THE MUSEUM DIRECTORY

Montana Tech Mineral Museum

Curator: Dr. John J. Metesh
Tel: (406) 496-4159
E-mail: JMetesh@mttech.edu
Assistant Curator: John Foley
Tel: (406) 496-4414
E-mail: jfoley@mttech.edu
Website: <http://www.mbm.mtech.edu/museum/museum.asp>
Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology
Montana Tech of U. of Montana
1300 W. Park St.
Butte, MT 59701
Hours: June 15 to September 15:
9–5 daily
Rest of year: 9–4 M–F
Specialties: Butte and Montana minerals,
worldwide classics

Tellus Science Museum

Website: www.tellusmuseum.org
Executive Director: Jose Santamaria
Tel: (770) 606-5700 Ext. 401
E-mail: joses@tellusmuseum.org
Director of Curatorial Services:
Amy Gramsey
Tel: (770) 606-5700 Ext. 405
100 Tellus Drive
Cartersville, GA 30120
Hours: open 7 days a week, 10 AM–
5 PM, except major holidays
Specialties: Georgia and international
minerals and gems, mining and geology,
dinosaurs, transportation, and hands-on
science.

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to the editor. There is a modest
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The Gillespie Museum of Minerals, Stetson University

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Tel: (386) 822-7331
E-mail: bbradford@stetson.edu
Director: Dr. Karen Cole
Tel: (386) 822-7330
E-mail: kcole@stetson.edu
234 East Michigan Avenue
DeLand, FL 32723
[mailing: 421 N. Woodland Blvd.,
Unit 8401]
Website: www.stetson.edu/gillespie/
Hours: 10–4 Tues.–Fri.
(closed during university holidays)
Specialties: Worldwide, comprehensive mineral
collection; Florida minerals, rocks and fossils;
historic fluorescent collection.

Fallbrook Gem & Mineral Society Museum

Tel: (760) 728-1130
E-mail: fgms@sbcglobal.net
Curator: Michael Evans
E-mail: benitoitebandit@gmail.com
Assistant Curator: Gina Palculich
E-mail: theyellowhouseca@yahoo.com
123 W. Alvarado St. Ste. B
Fallbrook, CA 92028
Hours: 11 AM–3 PM Thurs., Fri., Sat.
or by special appointment
Specialties: San Diego County, California
& Worldwide Minerals

Mines Museum of Earth Science

Executive Director: Renata Lafler
Tel: (303) 273-3823
E-mail: rlafler@mines.edu
Operations Director: Daniel Schlegel, Jr.
Tel: (303) 283-2071
E-mail: dschlegel@mines.edu
Curator: Ed Raines
Tel: (303) 384-2041
E-mail: eraines@mines.edu
Website: www.mines.edu/academic/geology/museum.com
Tel: (303) 273-3815
Golden, Colorado 80401
Hours: 9–4 Mon.–Sat., 1–4 Sun
(closed on school holidays)
Specialties: Colorado minerals, worldwide
classics, mining artifacts, meteorites, fossils,
gemstones, ultraviolet minerals, Apollo 17
moon rock, video on local geology, outdoor
geologic trail
Support organization: Friends of the Mines
Museum of Earth Science
Accessible to persons with disabilities

Rice Northwest Museum of Rocks and Minerals

Executive Director: Aurore Giguet
Tel: (503) 647-2418
E-mail: info@ricenorthwestmuseum.org
Curator: Angela Piller
Tel: (503) 647-2418
E-mail: curator@ricenorthwestmuseum.org
Website: www.ricenorthwestmuseum.org
26385 NW Groveland Dr.
Hillsboro, OR 97124
Hours: 1–5 Wed.–Fri., 10–5 Sat.–Sun.
Specialties: Finest rock/mineral museum
in the Pacific Northwest. Gold, fossils,
dinosaur eggs, 'Alma Rose' rhodochrosite,
reference materials for study and research.

A.E. Seaman Mineral Museum

Website: www.museum.mtu.edu
Executive Director and Interim Curator:
Dr. Theodore J. Bornhorst
E-mail: tjb@mtu.edu
Tel: (906) 487-2572
Michigan Technological University
1404 E. Sharon Ave.
Summer–Fall hours: 9–5 Mon.–Sat.
(May through October)
Winter–Spring hours: 9–4:30 Tues.–Sat.
(November through April)
See website for holidays and latest info
Houghton, MI 49931
Specialties: Minerals of the Great Lakes
region, worldwide minerals, Michigan
native copper

Houston Museum of Natural Science

Curator (mineralogy): Joel Bartsch
Tel: (713) 639-4673
Fax: (713) 523-4125
1 Herman Circle Drive
Houston, Texas 77030
Hours: 9–6 Mon.–Sat., 12–6 Sun.
Specialty: Finest or near-finest
known specimens

THE MUSEUM DIRECTORY

Richard L. Sutton, Jr. Geosciences Museum

Curators: James B. Murowchick, Professor
Tel: 816-235-2979
E-mail: murowchickj@umkc.edu
Richard J. Gentile, Professor Emeritus
E-mail: gentiler@umkc.edu
Website: <https://cas.umkc.edu/geosciences/opportunities/geosciences-museum/>
Department of Geosciences
University of Missouri-Kansas City
5110 Rockhill Road
Kansas City, MO 64110
816 235-1334 geosciences@umkc.edu
Sutton Geosciences Museum (new location)
Miller Nichols Library, 3rd Floor
800 East 51st Street
Kansas City, MO 64110
Hours: 9-5 weekdays when classes are in session
By appointment-- call 816 235-1334
Specialties: Missouri minerals, cephalopods, petrified wood, worldwide minerals

California State Mining and Mineral Museum

Curator: Darci Moore
Tel. (209) 742-7625
Fax: (209) 966-3597
Website: www.parks.ca.gov
Mailing: P.O. Box 1192
Mariposa, CA 95338
Hours: May 1-Sept. 30, open daily 10-6
Oct. 1-April 30, open 10-4, closed Tuesdays
Closed Christmas and Thanksgiving
Specialties: California & worldwide minerals, gold, gems, and mining

Permian Basin Petroleum Museum

Executive Director: Kathy Shannon
Tel: (432) 683-4403
E-mail: kshannon@petroleummuseum.org
Website: www.petroleummuseum.org
1500 Interstate 20 West
Midland, Texas 79701
Hours: 10-5 Mon.-Sat.
2-5 Sunday
Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas,
Christmas Eve and New Year's Day
Wheelchair accessible
Specialties: Worldwide minerals, petroleum exhibits, Chaparral racecars, Tom Lovell paintings

Carnegie Museum of Natural History

Collection Manager, Section of Minerals,
Debra L. Wilson
Tel: (412) 622-3391
4400 Forbes Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15213
Hours: 10-5 Mon., Wed., Fri. Sat.,
10-8 Thurs., 12-5 Sun.,
closed Tues. & holidays
Specialty: Worldwide minerals & gems

New Mexico Bureau of Geology & Mineral Resources Mineral Museum

Website: <http://geoinfo.nmt.edu/museum/home.html>
Director and Sr. Mineralogist:
Dr. Virgil W. Lueth
Tel: (575) 835-5140
E-mail: Virgil.Lueth@nmt.edu
Curator: Kelsey McNamara
Tel: (575) 835-5418
E-mail: Kelsey.McNamara@nmt.edu
New Mexico Tech
801 Leroy Place
Socorro, NM 87801
Hours: 9-5 M-F, 10-3 Sat., Sun.
Closed: most University holidays
Specialties: New Mexico and world-wide minerals, lapidary, meteorites, gemstones, research specimens, mining artifacts, geological information.

U.S. National Museum of Natural History (Smithsonian Institution)

Curator: Dr. Jeffrey E. Post
E-mail: minerals@nmnh.si.edu
Collection Managers: Paul Pohwat
and Russell Feather
(Dept. of Mineral Sciences)
Washington, DC 20560-0119
Hours: 10-5:30 daily
Specialties: Worldwide minerals, gems,
research specimens

Collection des Minéraux Sorbonne Université

Director: Dr. Jean-Claude Boulliard
Tel: +33 144 275 288
E-mail: jean-claude.boulliard@sorbonne-universite.fr
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D-59 MIDC, Malegaon,
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Specialty: Minerals of India

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