



# The Helena Mineral Society Newsletter



Gem, Mineral, and Geological Education and Experience

February 2009

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## From The Editor:

**Idocrase or Vesuvianite is a member of the Sorosilicate family of minerals. It's name is from the Greek, *eidos*, "form" and *krasis*, "mixture," because forms appeared to be those of several minerals to the namer of the species. Vesuvianite is from the locality of Vesuvius.**

**Crystals are tetragonal, uncommon. Many crystals are stubby prismatic of**

**square cross-section and box-like, also massive and common in cryptocrystalline aggregates.**

**Crystals are brittle, but cryptocrystalline aggregates are very tough. Fracture is conchoidal to uneven. Hardness is 6.5 and weight is 3.3 -3.6. It is translucent to transparent. Colors are usually dark brown-green. Other colors include yellow-green, yellow, brown, white and rarely blue.**

**Local collecting areas include Scratch Gravel Hills, found in the blue calcite; Crazy Sphinx Mine at the south end of Davis Gulch and at the Elkhorn Gold Fields at Elkhorn near Boulder, MT. To collect at Elkhorn, permission is required.**

**Some gem quality vesuvianite crystals can be found in the Scratch Gravel area, but most are quite small.**

**Helena Mineral Society  
Officers for 2007-2008**

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**Vice-president: Kathy Bruce**  
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On a sad note, Bill Luke passed away several weeks ago. I received an email from the Bozeman Club. I have not received any other details.

If you are interested in mineral swapping, trading, or sales, there is going to be a tentative date in May. Watch for more details in upcoming newsletters.

A Program Chairperson is still needed!  
Contact Andy.

The Club is still looking for a new larger meeting place. More details when they are available.

Phil Walsh will be the speaker at March's meeting.

Leland Stanford will have a puzzle in an upcoming newsletter. The first person to solve the puzzle will win a specimen of choice from Leland's excess.

If anyone has suggestions for field trips, contact Martin.

The 2013 show dates have been set; April 12- 13- 14, 2013.

The Club will have a wire wrapping demo at the show again this year. Volunteers are needed. Set your own time and demo. Contact Gary for details.

## -1 COLLECTORS PROFILE: Gary Parisi

In the last twelve years that Gary has been a member of the Helena Mineral Society he has been president, vice president, show chairman and newsletter editor. His devotion to all things mineral doesn't end there. Gary also does faceting, cabbing, wire wrapping, field collecting and even puts together special displays for the Helena Mineral Show. Gary became interested in minerals after an earth science class in 9th grade and has paid it forward by teaching classes on minerals to students at local schools, from elementary to the Vo-tech. When asked how he knows so much about minerals, Gary laughed and said he's taken Phil's class six or seven times! With all of this endless enthusiasm its no wonder that he has a spectacular personal mineral collection.

Although Gary and his rock hounding spouse Pamela have acquired a large selection of many different mineral species, the main focus of their current collection is fluorite. What struck me most about the beautiful, well lit display was the high quality and variety of the specimens. There was a spectacular zoned fluorite with dogtooth calcite from the Minerva mine in Southern Illinois, a beautiful association of fluorite with wolframite from the Ya Gan Xian mine, Hunan, China and a gorgeous specimen of sea green fluorite with grey bladed calcite from the Xianghuang mine, also in China. Other interesting specimens include a sharp color-change fluorite from the Rodgerly mine in England, a funky yellow botryoidal egg yoke shaped sample of fluorite on chalcedony from the Mahodi quarry in India and a purple Elmwood specimen which was one of the first fluorites that they collected. Gary and Pamela are always looking for unique and interesting specimens so be sure to corner them at the next meeting if you have information or samples to share.

One of the allures of this hobby is finding that special piece, whether it is discovered at a show, traded with friends, acquired on-line or collected in the field. Speaking of personally collected minerals, Gary has the most fantastic palm sized Japan law twinned quartz I've ever seen. The coolest thing is that it was collected from our very own Sally Ann claim! Also in his collection are some wonderful translucent red isometric grossular garnets from the Copper King/Queen mine just north of Three Forks, and a sharp blue euhedral spinel in matrix from the Crazy Sphinx just south of Helena. When asked about his favorite collecting locales, Gary touted the Helena area as one of the best and backed up that claim with several more beautiful specimens

In addition to being an avid mineral collector, Gary is also an experienced douser. One day while prospecting at Crystal Park he decided he would try dousing for amethyst. With brass rods in hand he conjured up images of euhedral purple amethyst, perhaps two inches long. Wandering over the digs his rods quivered and crossed at an area already dug to about 4 feet. He then asked if he had to dig one foot deeper? No. Two feet? The rods gave an affirmative vibration and Gary got to work with pick and shovel. Amazingly, at two feet he ran into a pocket of amethyst, one being a beautiful 2 inch long keeper! I want to get out in the field with this guy, and I want him to bring his dousing sticks!

The **Collectors Profile** column is aimed at sharing our members diverse interests in geology with the goal of improving communication and networking within our organization. If you would be willing to be interviewed for a future issue please contact me, Wiley, at [WileyHUDSON@gmail.com](mailto:WileyHUDSON@gmail.com).

### Two specimens for Gary and Pamela's collection



## Meetings

The Helena Mineral Society meets at the Mountain West Bank located on Montana Avenue between Aspen and Poplar. Meetings are the second Thursday of every month at 7:00 pm. There is no regular meeting for the month of December. See you there! Friends, guests, and new members are always welcome

To place a classified ad, please see me in person at one of our regular meetings or you may e-mail me (Gary) with your information at [gjparisi72@yahoo.com](mailto:gjparisi72@yahoo.com). Ad will run in the newsletter for that month only unless specifically requested to run longer.

### Pictures and Articles Needed:

If you have a picture that you want to share, please send it to me, along with a short description of the activity, where it took place, and when, and I'll put it in the newsletter. If you'd like to share your field trip adventures with those members who are unable to attend, please feel free to contribute to the newsletter. Just e-mail me your experiences, and I'll make sure they're entered. Remember, this is your newsletter, and your contributions make it better.

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