

# Mineral of the Month Club Newsletter

April 2016



Happy Spring to everyone! We have a great line up in store for you this spring of new featured minerals and monthly offering minerals, all from the Tucson Gem & Mineral Show this year.

**Featured Mineral:** For April our featured Mineral of the Month is malachite from the Kolwezi district in the Katanga Copper Belt in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Congo Free State, Belgian Congo, and Zaire). There is a long and interesting history about this locality. The Katanga Copper Belt, a mineralized zone 160 miles long and 40 miles wide, is located in Katanga, the southernmost province of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. African tribesmen systematically mined these copper deposits as early as 300 A.D. European mineral exploration began in 1899 and, by 1916; a Belgian mining corporation had established two dozen mines and seven smelters, and employed thousands of Congolese workers to produce 22,000 metric tons of copper annually. The Democratic Republic of the Congo received its independence from Belgium in 1960, but subsequent decades of political turmoil delayed modern mine development in the Katanga Copper Belt.

A recent period of relative political stability, at least in Katanga Province, has since enabled international mining companies to develop large mines that have boosted annual copper production to nearly 900,000 metric tons. Katanga's huge reserves of copper ore will sustain mining far into the future. Katanga's copper ores are much richer than those of any other copper-mining district in the world. Our malachite specimens were obtained by Congolese collectors who sell to dealers from the United States and Europe.

*A reminder that each month the featured mineral is available to purchase in larger sizes and can be found in the "Featured Mineral Platinum Letter" which has photos, sizing and pricing information. The Featured Mineral Platinum Letter can be found in the monthly email that goes out to all members. If you do not have a computer we can mail it to you, just let Christine know.*

**Rock Hound Tidbits:** On pages 8-10 of this month's write-up is part 2 of *Mineral Form: Crystal habits and Aggregate Habits*. In our previous write-up (Barite, March 2016), our special section presented Part 1 of an explanation of mineral form and the six basic crystal systems. Part 2 explains the many habits of individual crystals and crystal aggregates. If you have questions about such terms as "botryoidal," "coxcomb," "drusy," "fibrous," and others as applied to mineral form, you will find the answers in this month's write-up.

**Behind the Scenes:** Club manager Christine and her assistant Lora have received the pallet-load of specimens that they acquired at the Tucson, Arizona, gem-and-mineral shows in late January and have now organized these specimens and planned the monthly specimen schedule for the remainder of the year.

**Memberships:** Welcome to Kai P. from Vermont. A warm thank you to all our other members who renewed for yet another year!

**Coming in May:** Our mineral of the Month for May will be the rare Tessin variety of quartz from the Pachapaqui mining district in Peru. Unlike most quartz crystals that have parallel prismatic faces and simple, line-type, transverse striations, Tessin quartz crystals taper from the base toward the termination and exhibit an unusual, mosaic-like striation pattern.

The featured minerals for the rest of the spring and the summer are sure to please. In June you will receive apatite-(CaF), or calcium fluorophosphate, from Mexico; in July we will feature the garnet-group mineral almandine in matrix from Brazil; and, in August, members will receive composite specimens of the tourmaline-group mineral schorl and the aquamarine variety of beryl.

With **Mother's Day** coming up in May, we are continuing our gift-membership program that enables Club members who purchase gift memberships for family or friends to receive an additional month free-of-charge on their own memberships.

**We Are Here For You:** We are here for you and all your collecting needs. If you have any questions please contact Christine or Lora at the office, by telephone at #1-800-941-5594 or via e-mail at [christine@celestialearthminerals.com](mailto:christine@celestialearthminerals.com) or [Lora@celestialearthminerals.com](mailto:Lora@celestialearthminerals.com).