



December 2024

## A 'Seel'ed Deal By Eric Brosius



The November 16, 2024, meeting of the Leidy Microscopical Society was the first of four Saturday regular meetings for the winter season. The other three Saturday regular meetings will be on December 14, 2024, January 18, 2025, and February 15, 2025.



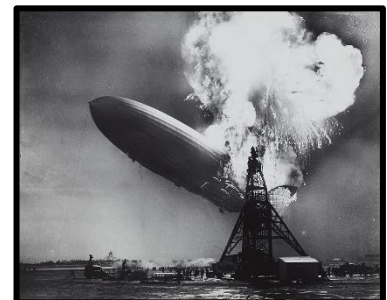
The meeting's subject of discussion and viewing of micromounts was Paul Seel micromounts. Members and guests were requested to bring their best Paul Seel micromounts from their collections. A bragging right claim would be given to the owner of the best overall Paul Seel mount viewed and voted on by the members present.

Paul Seel was born in 1904 in Silesia, Germany and passed away in 1982 at his home in Bala Cynwyd, Pennsylvania. Paul began his mineral collection as a boy searching for pretty pebbles in the gravel and sand in his hometown of Breslau, Germany. In 1925 he graduated from the University of Breslau with a degree in civil engineering. Paul specialized in engineering specifications, inspection and testing procedures for suburban transportation systems, Metroliners and jet turbine cars. In 1929 he took employment with the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, who positioned him in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1936. He was employed with that company until 1964.

Although Paul had no professional mineralogical education, until later on in his life, he was an avid and dedicated amateur mineral collector. His move to Philadelphia in 1936 greatly advanced his mineralogical expertise. He joined the Philadelphia Mineralogical Society where he met Bill Van Horn, an avid micromounter, along with Dr. Leon Clifford Wills, George Gilbert Rakestraw, George Washington Fiss, Frank James Keeley, Clarence Sweet Bement, William Walter Jefferis and others. At that time Philadelphia was known as the cradle of micromounting. In 1938 Paul acquired his first microscope which converted him to become a lifelong micromounter. Incidentally, his first micromount was made under the guidance of Bill Van Horn who destroyed it for not being good enough!

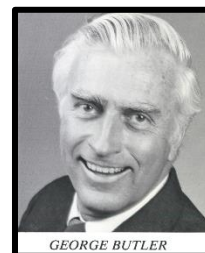
In 1950 Paul joined The Leidy Microscopical Society and would become their President in 1957 until 1963 and then again from 1979 to 1981. He was a member of The Wagner Free Institute of Science, The Philadelphia Mineralogical Society, The Eastern Federation of Mineralogical and Lapidary Societies, The American Federation of Mineralogical Societies, and The Mineralogical Society of America. He would serve as President and other positions in several of the listed organizations.

In 1936 Paul married his friend of 15 years Hildegard 'Hilde' Marie Adelheid Schumann, also a mineral collector. Their honeymoon was spent collecting specimens on Mount Vesuvius, Pozzuoli and other localities throughout Italy. Paul returned to Philadelphia without Hilde, who was to arrive later onboard the Hindenburg Airship at Lakehurst, New Jersey. As Paul waited for her arrival at the airfield, he witnessed the massive explosion of the



Airship on that horrible day. He left Lakehurst devastated, as Hilde's name was not among the survivors of the explosion. Fortunately, Hilde was not on that tragic flight, as the flight was overbooked, and she surprisingly showed up two weeks later.

Paul and Hilde traveled extensively collecting minerals. They visited each of the States in the United States and Canada along with 24 of the 29 states in Mexico. They traveled the world and obtained minerals wherever they went. Paul's collection would reach 17,000 specimens from 98 countries. There were 10,000 diamond specimens alone. His general collection of over 7,000 specimens was given to his friend George A. Butler, Mount Airy section of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. (George passed away on March 11, 2024. His collection has been put up for auction through Alderfer Auctions and bidding is currently ongoing.) The majority of Paul's prized micromount collection was donated to the Denver Museum of Nature and Science. In 1992 the mineral seelite ( $Mg(UO_2)(As^{3+}O_3)_{0.7}(AsO_4)_{0.3} \cdot 7H_2O$ ) a uranium mineral from the Talmessi mine, Iran and Rabejac in Herault, France was named in honor of Paul and Hilde Seel.



The viewing of Seel micromounts gave Dr. Robert Carlton bragging rights for the best specimen. The marcasite that won the title was acquired by Robert right before the start of the meeting when he had mentioned that he had no Seel micromounts in his collection. The generous John Ferrante had numerous mounts and told Robert to take one, anyone of his choice, it didn't matter. Without looking at the actual mount, that was in the old-style cardboard box, the Marcasite was selected, and the deal was 'Seel'ed. Robert would come away with a winner and bragging rights for the day.

In other Society business, the Election of Officers took place with the following elected for the next term:

President	Eric Brosius
Vice President	John Ferrante
Secretary	Karenne Snow
Treasurer	Don McAlarnen

Additionally, the 2025 Leidy Microscopical Society Annual Micromount Symposium flyer was finalized, along with the speakers. December's meeting will be our Annual Holiday Celebration, Ralph Thomas Silent Auction and mounts by Ralph Thomas. Members and guests are requested to donate items for the silent auction along with bringing Ralph Thomas micromounts from their collections for viewing. January's meeting will be Leonard Morgan micromounts. Member Dr.



Wayne Geller recently gave a talk to the Philadelphia Mineralogical Society on Samuel George Gordon, author of "The Mineralogy of Pennsylvania".

Finally, on November 15, 2024, Don McAlarnen, John Ferrante and Dr. Robert Carlton, along with several members of the Delaware County Institute of Science, viewed the Diatom Collection in the Herbarium of the

Academy of Natural Sciences under the guidance of Dr. Marina Potapova, Curator and Laura Aycock, Collections Manager.