



# Société Française de Minéralogie et de Cristallographie

[www.sfmc-fr.org](http://www.sfmc-fr.org)

## SFMC AND GFA AT THE XIV INTERNATIONAL CLAY CONFERENCE

Many members of the SFMC and the Groupe Français des Argiles (GFA) attended the 14<sup>th</sup> AIPEA meeting, the largest ever held, in Castellaneta Marina (Italy), in a beautiful and peaceful Aleppo pinewood and close to Unesco world heritage sites. In this exquisite sunny environment, delegates had the opportunity over a full week (14–20 June) to participate in exciting scientific exchanges (1028 contributions from 50 countries) and to experience the wines, cooking, villages, dances and tarantellas typical of the region. For the success of the conference highlighting the vitality of the clay community, Professor Saverio Fiore (CNR, Tito Scalo) and his efficient and welcoming team are warmly thanked. For more meeting information and photographic reports, visit [www.14icc.org/index.html](http://www.14icc.org/index.html) and see meeting report on next page.



SFMC and GFA participants at the XIV International Clay Conference  
PHOTO CREDIT J. BRENDÉ

## MEETINGS ANNOUNCEMENTS

### LE VERRE, les enjeux de la recherche



The “Days of the Glass Science and Technologies Union” event will be held at the Polytech’Orléans, at the University of Orléans (France), on 5–6 November 2009. The event is jointly organized by René Vacher (LCVN, Montpellier), Pernelle Barlier (Corning, Avon), Daniel R. Neuville (IPG, Paris), Patrick Echegut (CEMHTI, Orléans) and Dominique

Massiot (CEMHTI, Orléans), and will be held under the auspices of the CNRS and of several glass industry companies.

Three posters sessions and ten keynote lectures will cover a wide range of topics, including Silicate melts simulation (W. Kob, LCVN, Montpellier); Exotic glasses (J. Lucas, Rennes); Glasses for fibers and amplifiers (E. Burov, Draka); Vitroceramics (M. Comte, Corning); Physics of glasses and liquids (P. Richet, IPG Paris); SiO<sub>2</sub> and B<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>: Peculiar glasses (A. Takada, Asahi Glass Company); Technologies and inventions (H. Arribart, Saint-Gobain); Nuclear wastes, success and challenges (A. Ledieu, CEA); Heavy metals and release in glass containers: A statistical survey 1974–2008 (N. Favaro, Stazione Sperimentale del Vetro); and Sub-nanometric scale of glass structure: Topologic or chemical disorder (D. Massiot, Orléans).

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## ASBESTOS SANS MINERALOGY? A VIEW FROM A DIFFERENT HILLTOP – Mickey Gunter’s response

narrow the definition of asbestiform when the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) did not regulate cleavage fragments. From my point of view, the “door was closed” on using a broader definition. Even though I am very aware the term “elongated mineral particle” is not the new definition for asbestos, it is my opinion that we are headed in that direction. Greg also commented on the use, during the Libby trial, of methods other than aspect ratio to determine if a particle really is a fiber and not an elongated crystal fragment. Strohmeier et al. (2007) discussed established criteria for distinguishing a fiber from a fragment of amphibole, and one criterion to indicate the particle is a single crystal fragment is stepped sides. So, in the end, we always seem to fall back on aspect ratio to distinguish fibers from fragments of amphiboles.

One of our most important concerns should be with human exposure to potentially harmful materials. The refereed literature indicates exposure to non-asbestiform amphiboles is less harmful than to asbestiform amphiboles. In fact, this is why OSHA regulates only asbestiform amphiboles. Gunter et al. (2007) reviewed the literature in this field, and interested readers should refer to three recent articles published by other authors in the *Journal of Regulatory Toxicology and Pharmacology* (2008, volume 52, pp S154-S186, S187-S199, S200-S203), which come to similar conclusions.

Greg and I disagree on many things—from the recent legal definition of asbestos to the amount of “tolerance” we should have for the misuse of mineralogical nomenclature. I remain steadfast in not accepting the phrase “naturally occurring asbestos,” which appears to be derived from the popular media. Regardless, I hope Greg and others interested in these issues will attend and contribute to our upcoming symposium “Asbestos Issues: Past, Present, and Future” at the combined Northeast/Southeast sectional GSA meeting in Baltimore (March, 2010). I, for one, would like to get off the “hilltop” and enjoy a more harmonious life down in the valley.

Gunter ME, Sanchez MS (2009) Amphibole forensics: Using the composition of amphiboles to determine their source, the Libby, Montana example. *American Mineralogist* 94: 837-840

Gunter ME, Belluso E, Mottana A (2007) Amphiboles: Environmental and health concerns. In: Hawthorne FC, Oberti R, Della Ventura G, Mottana A (eds) *Amphiboles: Crystal Chemistry, Occurrences, and Health Concerns*. *Reviews in Mineralogy & Geochemistry* 67, Mineralogical Society of America, Chantilly, VA, pp 453-516

Meeker GP, Bern AM, Brownfield IK, Lowers HA, Sutley SJ, Hoefen TM, Vance JS (2003) The composition and morphology of amphibole from the Rainy Creek Complex, near Libby, Montana. *American Mineralogist* 88: 1955-1969

Strohmeier BR, Bunker KL, Harris KE, Hoch R, Lee RJ (2007) Complementary TEM and FESEM characterization of amphibole particles in mixed mineral dust from Libby, Montana, U.S.A. *The Microscope* 55: 173-188