

THE (SOMETIMES ON) FRIDAY SHEET FOR JANUARY 12, 2002 BY K. BRENT COOK

****Top Explorers for 2002: MNR, VIA, ARP, ALS, RNG****

Last year proved particularly rewarding for gold bugs with gold funds posting an 18% gain. The HUI Index (Gold Bug Index) did better, increasing from 41 to 65 while the CDNX-Mining index went from 5,000 to 8,000. Even yours truly recorded a 50% increase on the seven exploration stocks discussed a year ago (104% at their composite highs and -20% at the composite lows). [For the record, here are the seven: Harmony Gold, European Gold, Southwestern Resources, Anatolia Minerals, Virginia Gold, Rubicon Minerals, Francisco Gold, all of which still represent excellent value]. Even the laggards of the lot, Southwestern Resources and Virginia Gold offered a 60% and 30% increase respectively if you were quick.

Clearly, if a beach-bum geologist holed-up in Southern California can pull off a positive year, the junior resource market has bottomed and turned. You may recall right here that we called your attention to the bottom (3-3-01Sheet) and provided a most excellent visualization...

...Let's look at this year's top exploration companies.

Minotaur Resources (MNR.AU)...
Virginia Gold (VIA.T)...
Aurora Platinum (ARP.V)...
Altius Minerals Corporation (ALS.V)...
Rio Narcea Gold Mines (RNG.T)...

Altius Minerals' (ALS.V) expertise lies in generating high potential grassroots exploration projects and concepts in Newfoundland (11-02-01, 10-12-01, 9-15-00 Sheets). Their business plan is to minimize equity dilution and shareholder risk while maximizing shareholder exposure to a broad portfolio of exploration projects through joint ventures and strategic alliances with major mining companies. This business strategy has resulted in the evaluation of over 20 properties in four years and roughly C\$4 mil in partners expenditure against Altius's ~\$C1 mil accumulated deficit, or a 4:1 expenditure ratio. If G&A and other operating expenses are excluded, the ratio increases to 10:1. In short, shareholders get a lot of bang for the buck with four projects actively being explored by partners in 2002.

Altius carries a C\$12mil market cap with ~14 mil shares outstanding, ~ C\$1.4 mil (sufficient for 4 years at current burn rate).

At the Moosehead property, Aginco Eagle affiliate Sudbury Contact Mines (earning 60%) has discovered a number of epithermal, bonanza gold veins at shallow depths under a thin veneer of glacial outwash. Drill assays include 259g/t Au, 11g/t Au and 170g/t Au over 1 to 3m intervals. The mineralized veins intersected to date occur within narrow and discontinuous fractures with minor disseminated gold mineralization occurring into the hosting calcareous sandstone and shale. Given the high grades, shallow depths, evolving structural understanding and presence of massive auriferous boulders at surface, the possibility of discovering an economic gold deposit along this more than 2km belt seems high.

The recently acquired New Rambler property also offers the possibility of high-grade mineralization and a potentially economic deposit. Past production from the Ming Deposit amounted to 2.1mil tons grading 3.5% Cu, 1% Zn, 2.4g/t Au and 20g/t Ag from a moderately plunging VMS deposit. Mining stopped at the property boundary, which has since been consolidated into the New Rambler property package. Exploration work at the 1807' level along the old property boundary encountered a new VMS zone carrying 11.5% Cu over 8' as well as thin native gold in fractures along the un-mined contact. Additionally, a drill hole testing 1500' down plunge of the Ming workings intersected 2.89% Cu and 0.7g/t Au over 55' within a

131' interval assaying 2% Cu. These targets remain open and untested.

Other active projects include the 50km long Mustang trend where Barrick Gold has entered into a strategic exploration alliance with Altius exploring for "Carlin" style deposits; the Roberts Arm VMS project where Inmet will be drilling. The Billiton JV at the Pt. Leamington VMS target is under review and may not see work this year as a result of the BHP-Billiton merger.

Altius also has over a dozen 100%-owned exploration claims in the pipeline, the most significant being the Rocky Brook uranium-gold-silver prospect. Work to date on Rocky Brook has identified three main boulder zones carrying very high uranium, gold and silver up to 11% U3O8, 800 oz Ag, 0.5oz Au and anomalous Au, Zn, V, Mo, Co and Ni in a thrust sequence of pebble conglomerates, shale and sandstone.

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