

THE
ROCKHOUNDER

November 2008



PURPOSE: The purpose of the Gem, Lapidary, and Mineral Society of Montgomery County MD., Inc. is "To increase knowledge and popular interest in earth sciences, geology, mineralogy, paleontology, lapidary arts, and related subjects".

REGULAR MEETING: Meetings are held the 2nd Monday of the month from September to June. The Society will next meet on **Monday November 10th** in the dining room of the Rockville Senior Center, 1150 Carnation Drive, Rockville. The short business meeting will begin at 7:45 pm but the room is available to us at 7:30 pm so come early and see what you and others have on the Show Table and chat with old friends. The program will be by Nancy Kahn DeMulder, her subject: "What to do NEXT, making jewelry with your treasures!" The Silver Spring resident has been in the jewelry business for two dozen years and has taught jewelry arts for 18 years in the Montgomery County Adult Education program. Doing business as "ByJewelartist", she works with gold, silver, and various stones. Nancy has been a demonstrator at our annual show.

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS will meet November 17th at 7:30 pm at the home of David and Nancy Ballard. All Board members are expected to be there. Any member is welcome to attend but please let Nancy know if you plan to attend.



WELCOME!

NEW MEMBERS McDONALD, Melissa, 12208 Major Drive, Germantown MD 20876-4027, 301 515 0440, Melissa.mcdonald@verizon.net.

Alexander (4/94)
Gabiella (1/98)

ROSTER CHANGES

- IRBY, Bob & Norma, 301 540 5033
- LOUD, George, 4380 King Street, Apt. 903, Alexandria VA 22302-1544, gloud@baconthomas.com
- MCELRAVY, Audrey, ard_ri50@yahoo.com
- PARKER, Fred, 330 Whitfield Road, Catonsville MD 21228-1807, 240 446 2183
- WINFIELD, Robert, winfield100@yahoo.com

MEMBER SURVEY FORMS If you have not already submitted, please get your completed member survey form to President Mark Dahlman. Your input will let you have a say in club operation And help guide future activity of the Society.

What did the post card from the inebriated mineral collector say?
"Having a good time. Where am I?"

DEADLINE for the December 2008 Rockhounder: **Nov 24th**

IN THIS ISSUE

- Meeting Announcements, New Members, Roster Changes, Rockhounder Deadline, Member Survey Forms.....1
- President's Message.....2
- Reg. and Board Meeting Minutes..3
- Board Meeting Minutes, (Cont'd).4
- Birthdays, Birthstone, Safety, Dues Motion.....5
- Rock Hammers, Aurora News, AFMS Convention.....6
- Handheld Magnifiers, F'ld Trips..7
- Show Table, Door Prizes, HR 554.....8
- Shows and Events,9
- Web Sites, Cloth Needed..10
- History.....11

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE:

I'm pleased to announce that Pat Repik-Byrne and Jeff Cessna have agreed to fill important roles for the society. Pat didn't hesitate for a minute when asked to co-chair our 2009 show with Heather. Pat will have responsibility for coordinating the first floor activities. Jeff has agreed to stand for election as Secretary for 2009. It's wonderful to have so many members willing to apply their talents to help out our society.



Thanks to all of you who have given your comments and opinions on our recent questionnaire. Foremost, members say that they like the lectures, camaraderie, field trips, show table, our annual show, drawings at each meeting, and the vitality of the society. Members also really appreciate the *Rockhounder*, our nationally recognized publication (congratulations to Wendell!). On top of the list of things that members would change is to have more time - time for show and tell, mingling and getting to know each other in particular. Education is something members would like more of too - for adults and juniors. Subjects such as lapidary arts, mentoring during field trips, and "how to" sessions were suggested. Encouraging volunteers is a topic on members minds as well.

As with all of the comments, these suggestions for improvement have been submitted to the board for discussion and action in the coming months. All comments, except for offers to assist the society, were separated from members' names so that each idea could be considered on it's merits alone. Suggestions for the show included ideas for new demonstrations, set-up modifications, and new display cases. Our speakers received a lot of praise, and several new speakers were suggested. Many of you recalled favorite field trips, and had suggestions for repeat trips. Two-thirds of our respondents have visited the society website <www.glmsmc.com>, and several suggestions for the website such as encouraging visitors to come to our meetings were given.

Other comments included those from members who wished they lived closer, while others hope for more silent auctions and rock swaps. Thanks to all of you who said you're willing to help out again at our Spring show and sale (sign-up sheets will be coming soon), and those of you offering to help with other specific activities. Volunteers are why this society works so well. Speaking of which, I'd like to thank Nancy, Heather, Becky, Joel, Jonathan, Rod, Wendell, and George for being willing to serve for another year as board members, and thanks to Elmer for being willing to stand for election as Vice President again for the coming year. It's great to serve with such an fine group of people. Hope to see you at the next meeting, Mark

ELECTION November each year marks the election of Society officers for the following year. Welcome to those willing to serve and stand for election:



Mark Dahlman	President, continuing for second term
Elmer Lantz	Vice President, continuing for second term
Andy Muir	Treasurer, new to office
Secretary	Jeff Cessna, new to office

Of course nominations will be open for anyone else who is willing to run. Fortunately we do not have the incessant campaigning and mud slinging as in the national elections. Rock throwing? -- Maybe!

NAME BADGES An option offered to new members as they join is to sign up for a name badge. Some folks are not really cognizant of that opportunity, which is strongly encouraged. So the Society is offering to make badges available now, not only for the newer members but also for long standing members who either never got a badge or whose badge was lost, strayed, or stolen. See Nancy Ballard, Membership Chairman, and buy yours at \$5.25 for each person. Badges help us to better get to better get to know one another at meetings and, as well, serve to identify Society members when volunteering a our annual show.



REGULAR MEETING MINUTES: The October 13, 2008 meeting was called to order by President Mark Dahlman at 7:45 pm with approximately 55 people attending. Minutes of the September 8, 2008 regular meeting were approved.

Mark announced that the club is still seeking to fill the positions of Secretary and Historian. Andy Muir has volunteered to be nominated for Treasurer. Officers for 2009 will be voted on by club members at the November meeting.

Mark read a letter from the AFMS to inform and acknowledge that our support of that organization's Endowment Fund helps fund beneficial programs including digitizing slide and video presentations.

Field Trip Chairman, Jonathan Harris, announced the upcoming field trips, including a newly added one for Saturday, October 18 to Hunting Hill quarry. He requested that those planning to participate inform him.

Treasurer, Juan Proano, announced that the club finances are in "good shape" with bills paid and dues coming in.

Show Chairperson, Heather Felsen, announced that the dealer contracts are being revised and she mentioned she is looking forward to many club members helping with the 2009 show.

Editor, Wendell Mohr, announced that he received notice of equipment for sale from a dealer if anyone is interested. Wendell also mentioned he has had no response from any club members able/willing to respond to slabbing or faceting requests the club occasionally receives. If anyone is able to do this, please contact Wendell so that the club is able to refer this useful service.

Vice President, Elmer Lantz, introduced the speaker for the evening: **Susan Staff**, a self-proclaimed "opal-holic." Reading passages from her diary in concert with a slide show, she "took us along" with her on an opal adventure in the Nevada desert. Susan shared numerous stories and adventures from her four years in the Virgin Valley, and showed us many examples of how her "digging in the dirt" eight hours a day paid off with beautiful specimens. We learned of the different types of opals that have been found, including the rare black opal, and some history of the region. Susan was kind enough to share her knowledge and gave useful suggestions for those of us who may find ourselves on an opal hunt one day. Thank you Susan!



Meeting Adjourned 9:59.59 pm! (we must vacate the building at 10:00 pm Ed.) Holly McNeil, Secretary



BOARD MEETING MINUTES Board members present: Nancy Ballard, Mark Dahlman, George Durland, Heather Felsen, Jonathan Harris, Elmer Lantz, Holly McNeil, Wendell Mohr, Juan Proano Joel Rosen. Non board members present: David Ballard and Andy Muir. President Mark Dahlman called the October 20, 2008 meeting to order at 7:37 pm.

The board voted to not have a December board meeting unless something urgent comes up.

Show Chairperson: Heather Felsen announced that Pat Repik-Byrne has agreed to be the "downstairs" chairperson for the show and handle all the exhibits, education and other components of that floor. Heather brought up some rule changes at the Montgomery County Fairgrounds that require our attention to ensure compliance.

Continued on page 4

BOARD MEETING MINUTES (Continued from page 3) Due to the fact that the complementary “back-up” tables have generally not been used in accordance with contract requirements, resulting in complaints from several dealers, it was moved and approved that said “back-up” tables be eliminated and all tables be billed. As an offset for what could be perceived as a reduction in value by some, the price on all tables will be lowered to \$100. Heather is finalizing revisions to the contracts and will mail them out to the dealers in early November. Heather mentioned that the club might have the opportunity to purchase Joe Murter’s Rock Shop exhibit for a permanent display. Joel will look into the possibility and report back.



Miscellaneous Business: It was brought up that many members are late in paying their dues, many beyond the membership forfeiture date of October 15th. Due to the follow up and additional maintenance needed to manage this, it was suggested a “re-instatement” fee of \$5 be assessed for those paying subsequent to October 15th. A motion will be made to the membership at the November meeting.

Mark will contact the senior center and remind them of our request for “stadium” seating at the meetings. Wendell acknowledged Nancy’s outreach to the 4H club.

Reminder If any board member has not submitted a job description to Mark, please do so as quickly as possible.

Wendell announced the by-law project is still pending.

Publicity: Wendell passed out flyers for our show to select dealers at the recent Howard County show. Flyers will be provided to all of the dealers we expect to participate in our show. George Durland has some advance publicity out for the show with more to come. Future publicity needs to be on the Society web site and web site reference given on next year’s publicity material.

Houser Material: The remaining material has been gifted to two of our “sister” clubs.

Upcoming Speakers: Elmer reported on the upcoming speakers and sought input on one additional possibility.

Treasurers Report: Juan Proano reported on the status of the finances and presented the adjusted 2008 budget and year-to-date P&L. Juan informed the board of the bank requirements to remove him and add the new treasurer as a check signer on the account. Juan mentioned the insurance will be paid soon. It was moved that the donation to the Smithsonian for 2009 be budgeted at \$2,200. The motion passed.

Property Manager: Joel Rosen requested funds for the purchase of specimens for door prizes at the regular meetings. It was so moved and granted for the amount of \$550.00.

Field trips: Jonathan updated the board on planned trips.



President: Mark announced that we have been unsuccessful thus far in finding a new secretary and asked for assistance and suggestions for possible candidates. He mentioned that there has been interest in the Historian position. Mark summarized the early results from the membership surveys. Results will be presented to the club and discussed at a future board meeting for any potential action items. Mark also announced that we should start research if we intend to move the 2010 or later show’s location.

Meeting adjourned at 9:43pm

Holly McNeil, Secretary

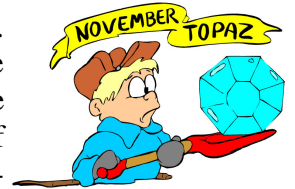


NOVEMBER MEMBER BIRTHDAYS: Patricia Cronin, David Dinsmore, Eric Durland, Chuck Mason, Audrey McElravy, Holly McNeil, Michelle Michaelis, Wendell Mohr, Laurence O'Callaghan, Joseph Powers, Dan Spielman, Erich Thompson, and Kathryn Wells.

NOVEMBER'S BIRTHSTONE TOPAZ

By Joy Bourne

The most prized color of topaz is called Imperial topaz, named in honor of the Russian Czars of the 1800s. The stone is a deep yellow/orange color with a rosy glow. Topaz can also be colorless, yellow, pink to red, and of course, the many popular blue tones. The impurity, chromium, is responsible for pink, red and orange topaz. While some blue topaz is found in nature, most of the material is produced by a combination of irradiation and heating treatment. Prized for several thousand years in antiquity, all yellow gems in antiquity were called topaz. Often confused with citrine quartz (yellow) and smoky quartz (brown), quartz and topaz are actually separate and unrelated mineral species.



Topaz has a distinctly different crystalline habit from that of quartz, as anyone who has ever collected at Topaz Mountain in the Thomas Range of Utah can tell or show you. There, the topaz has a beautiful "champagne" color, a lovely peach-yellow which fades to clear if the crystal is left exposed to the hot desert sun! More information about topaz plus a link to some really nice pictures can be found at:

<<http://beginnersguide.com/jewelry/topaz/>>. From Che Hanna R&M Club, Shin Skinner News, Nov. 2006

HOW SAFE ARE YOU?

By David Rich, Mid West Federation Safety/Field Trip Chair

There are plenty of safety devices in our world to-day. Some are relatively new and some have been around for a long time. Why? Because these devices are proven to work, and they keep you out of harm's way. My first safe practice, the one I harp on to the club, is *wearing safety glasses*. Some-thing as simple as shielding your eyes from flying foreign objects has a great payoff in the end. Perhaps those caught working without safety glasses should have to donate a dollar to the club coffee fund!



I really hate to admit it, but field collecting is coming to the end of the season in our region. This is a great time to shift our safety awareness to indoors. Take a good look at your work area, with an eye for safety (since you still have two good ones because you wear safety glasses). Look at your power sources. *Water + Electricity = Ground Fault!* Add-on Ground Fault Interrupters (GFI's) can be purchased at any good hardware store. These plug into your electrical sockets. You then plug your tool or grinder into the GFI. In case of a short circuit, the GFI cuts power *before you get electrocuted!*

Take a good look at your chemicals! Are they properly labeled? What shape are your containers in? Do not store any chemical in a recycled food container. *This is bad practice that should never get started!* Look for any flammable liquids and keep them away from all heat sources. If you're into lapidary work, don't forget to take a look at your grinding wheels. Order new wheels and equipment now. By the time they get here, winter will have arrived, and you can get started on new projects.

Safety is an ATTITUDE!. Get with it, or you *will* be injured! From MWF News October 2008

DUES MOTION A motion will be introduced at the November meeting proposing that a re-instatement fee of \$5.00 per household be imposed for people who have not renewed their membership on time but request renewal late. The purpose of this motion is to encourage people not to delay, which causes lots of administrative time and effort be spent. If passed the rule would become effective December 1, 2008, and November 1st in subsequent years. Prepare to come to the meeting, discuss the proposal, and vote.



Most quarries have a sump pond at the bottom. No black birds will be found drinking there, however.

Q. Where do you find black birds going for a drink? A. At crowbars.

Excerpted from Andrew Alden, About.com. Photos: Geology Guide

Geologists and rockhounds have several different rock hammers to choose from. One is usually enough for a day trip - the right one. Suitable hammers can be found in most large hardware stores, although they may not be labeled as rock hammers. For many users, these are all they need for a lifetime.

Hammers of higher quality and different designs are available from specialty manufacturers and dealers. Heavy users, people with unusual physiques, rockhounds who want a wide choice of options and someone looking for a special present should seek these out, but most people don't need a premium tool. The important thing is never to use a carpenter's hammer and avoid cheap, off-brand tools from discount stores. These can be made of soft or poorly tempered metal that may splinter or bend in heavy use, endangering the user and anyone standing nearby. And cheap materials in the handle may strain the arm and wrist, perform poorly when wet or turn crumbly after long sun exposure.

This is the most typical rock hammer, also called a rock pick or prospector's pick. The hammer head is used for breaking and trimming small rocks, and the pick end is for light prying and grubbing in loose or weathered rock. All rock hammers should be used wearing eye protection, because chips from rocks or from the hammer can fly in all directions. This hammer **must not** be treated as a chisel, being struck with another hammer, because the hardened steel head can send off chips. Chisels are made of a softer steel suitable for being hammered.



This is the hammer used to split and trim stratified rocks or dig into sediments. Its chisel end is handy for splitting shale layers in search of fossils. It's also well suited for carving clean exposures of sediment layers like varved clays or lake beds to prepare them for sampling or photography. This hammer **must not** be used as a chisel, that is, by hammering on the hammer's face, or it may chip. Proper chisels are made of softer metal. For paleontologists or workers in sedimentary rock country, this may be the only rock hammer needed.

This is a two-pound crack hammer; they also come in the three-pound size (or, presumably, 1 kilo and 1.5 kilos). It's suited for breaking outcrops and boulders of hard rock to collect large specimens, and also for driving a chisel or drill. If you do a lot of hammering rocks or work in metamorphic terrain, this can do things that the standard hammer can't. It weighs more than a standard rock hammer and is useless for prying or grubbing. All rock hammers should be used wearing eye protection, because chips from rocks or from the hammer can fly in all directions.



INTERESTING AURORA NC NEWS Lee Creek mine personnel and Curtis Ormand have jointly decided that in the interest of safety they will have to cancel the fall 2008 collecting season. The collecting season was cancelled due to rapidly approaching reclamation and the rising water that accompanies it.

Fossil Finder, American Fossil Federation November 2008.

AFMS CONVENTION The AFMS convention in TX was cancelled due to the hurricane which was so devastating to the Galveston/Houston area. It was a difficult but necessary decision to be made. The show itself was held anyway, local residents being less affected for lodging and transportation. Results of the various AFMS competitions have been published in the AFMS News, <<http://www.amfed.org/>>. Award trophies and certificates are being mailed. Arrangements were made for competitive judging and those awards were presented at the Saturday banquet. Elected AFMS officers and directors will vote on New Business from the meeting agenda by mail. The Houston Gem & Mineral Society was ready to put on the best darn AFMS/SCFMS show in Texas. The show went on as scheduled and we applauded them.



After you get a Rock Hammer, you'll need a magnifier. The big Sherlock Holmes type lens is a cliché; instead you want a lightweight, powerful magnifier (also called a loupe) that has impeccable optics and is easy to use. Get the best for demanding jobs like inspecting gems; in the field, for quick looks at minerals, buy magnifiers you can afford to lose.



Using a Magnifier Hold the lens up next to your eye, then bring your specimen close to it, only a few centimeters from your face. The point is to focus your attention through the lens, the same way you look through eyeglasses. If you normally wear glasses, keep them on. A magnifier won't correct for astigmatism.

How Many X? The X factor of a magnifier refers to how much it magnifies. Sherlock's magnifying glass makes things look 2 or 3 times bigger; that is, it's 2x or 3x. Geologists like to have 5x to 10x, but more than that is hard to use in the field because the lenses are very small. 5x or 7x lenses offer a wider field of vision, while 10x gives you the closest look at tiny crystals, trace minerals, grain surfaces, and microfossils.

Flaws to Watch For Check the lens for scratches. Set the magnifier on a piece of white paper and see if the lens adds color of its own. Now pick it up and examine several objects, including one with a fine pattern like a halftone picture. The view through the lens should be clear as air with no internal reflections. Highlights should be crisp and brilliant, with no colored fringes (that is, the lens should be achromatic). A flat object should not look warped or buckled—move it to and fro to be sure. A magnifier should not be loosely put together.

Bonuses Given the same X factor, a larger lens is better. A ring or loop to attach a lanyard is a good thing; so is a leather or plastic case. A lens held with a removable retaining ring can be taken out for cleaning. And a brand name on the magnifier, while not always a guarantee of quality, means you can contact the manufacturer.

Doublet, Triplet, Coddington Good lens makers combine two or three pieces of glass to correct for chromatic aberration—that's what gives an image blurred, colored fringes. Doublets can be quite satisfactory, but the triplet is the gold standard. Coddington lenses employ a deep cut inside the solid glass, using an air gap to create the same effect as a triplet.

FIELD TRIPS: Jonathan Harris will email announcements of any additional trips scheduled after press time. Get on his list if you are not already included and are interested. No E Mail? Call Jonathan at 301-545-0808. Children with full safety equipment (same as for adults) and accompanied and supervised by a parent are permitted as noted.



Saturday November 8, Stafford Quarry (Vulcan Materials), 8 am to Noon. Meet at the office at 7:45 am so we can have the safety briefing and paperwork signing by 8 am.

It has been years since I have been on a field trip to Stafford. In the past we have found nice orange zeolite crystals (mostly stilbite) in the amphibolite rock. Age limit is 10 and up (with parent supervision!!!) Please let me know of your plans by November 1st so I have a head count. Email is preferred, <jgharris7@comcast.net>. My phone is 301-545-0808.

Directions from Rockville MD: Take I-270 towards Washington. Keep RIGHT onto I-270 Spur South towards Northern Virginia. Merge onto I-495 Outer loop. At exit 57A, take Ramp (RIGHT) onto I-95 towards Richmond.

At exit 143B, take Ramp (RIGHT) onto SR-610 [Garrisonville Road] towards Garrisonville.

Turn LEFT (South) onto Furnace Road and go 0.3 mile.

Turn LEFT (South) onto Choptank Road and go 0.3 mile.

Turn LEFT (North-East) onto High Street and go 0.3 mile.

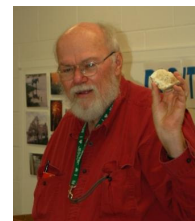
Turn RIGHT (East) onto Patton Drive then immediately turn RIGHT (South) onto SR-610 [Garrisonville Rd] and go 0.4 mile to quarry 1012 Garrisonville Rd, Stafford, VA 22556.

SUMMARY: Driving distance: about 55 miles. Trip duration: about an hour.



SHOW TABLE: **October 13, 2008** Thanks to those who bring items for sharing at the meetings

<u>Exhibitor</u>	<u>Specimen (s) * = Self-collected or self made</u>	<u>Locality</u>
Lisa Carp	Angelite	Peru
	Shattuckite	AZ
Lawrence Davis	Petrified Wood	Arbutus MD
George Durland	Chalcedony Geode	Near Dugway UT
	Willemite needles on ore	Franklin NJ
Gerald Elgert	Petrified Wood	College Park, PG Co. MD
Chuck Hyland	Assorted minerals and rocks in frame	Assorted localities
Alexandra Kindahl	Howlite, dyed Howlite, Turquoise	Various
Eric Kindahl	River Agates*	Los Osos Camp Grd., Santa Inez N.F. CA
Bob Irby	Mexican Fire Opal	Mexico
David MacLean	Various Sedimentary minerals	Near Thermopolis WY
Aiden McElravy	Grey rock	Locality not given
Rory McElravy	Fossil Ammonite	Locality unknown
Wendell Mohr	Garnet*	Cornwall PA
	Amethyst	Xichang China
Andy Muir	Coral (Fl.)	Locality unknown
	Calcite (Fl.)	Mexico
Jeff Nagy	Specimens	Mexico
Owen Powers	“Sponge” rock*	Washington DC
	Fossils	Calvert Cliffs MD
Keith Regatts	Hyalite Opal (Fl.)	Chalk Mtn., Spruce Pine NC
	Calcites with Diopside and Prehnite*	Hunting Hill quarry, Rockville MD
	Clinozosite*	Hunting Hill quarry, Rockville MD
George Reimherr	Willemite, Calcite	Buckwheat dump, Franklin NJ
Pat Repik-Byrne	Tugtupite (Fl.)	Kvanefjeld, Greenland
	Geode (Fl.)	Unknown locality
	Opals in matrix	Brazil
Joel Rosen	Two Willemites	Franklin Mine, Franklin NJ
Alf Shupe	Garnet, Tourmaline in Mica, Apatite, Sugillite*	ME
Conrad Smith	Quartz*	Berkeley Springs WV
Earl Smith	Quartz	Berkeley Springs WV
Eric Smith	Azurite	Ural mountains Russia
Linda Smith	Amethyst Geode	Harpers Ferry WV
Harold Williams	Opalized Wood	NV/AZ
	Purple Opal (“Tiffany stone”)	UT
	Petrified Wood	St. Johns AZ



OCTOBER DOOR PRIZES Winner of the junior prize was Matthew Hyland who received a colorful specimen of Rockville Quarry rodingite. The show table prize was claimed by George Reimherr who took home a showy specimen of Calcite from Mexico. Claiming the general door prize, a beautiful carnelian from Chandler Mountain OR, was Steve McNeil.

HR 554 The U.S. Senate’s massive omnibus bill now contains the language of H.R. 554, the Paleontological Resources Preservation Act. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid is talking about calling the Senate back to the nation’s capital after the election to seek passage of his Omnibus Land Management Act of 2008. Enactment of this 1,000+ page monstrosity of a bill will be disastrous for several reasons. You are urged to contact your two state senators to ask them to oppose the legislation because it contains so many negative effects on fossil collecting on public lands in the United States.

UPCOMING SHOWS AND EVENTS

November 4, Tuesday. (Very controversial subject and claims! - Ed.) "The Origin of Maryland Gemstones", 8:45 am Coffee and Bagels, 9:00 am presentation by Courtland Lee at the Maryland Science Center in Baltimore. Maryland has an official state gemstone. In May 2004 Governor Robert Ehrlich signed a law making the Patuxent River stone the official Maryland gemstone. Patuxent River stone is a unique variety of agate found only in Maryland. Mr. Lee posits that the Patuxent River agate is actually fossilized dinosaur bone invaded by agate. It is found in the Arundel Formation, which outcrops in the central part of the state. It has an intense red to yellow color when polished. "Tuesday Talks" are free to anyone with advance registration. Thanks to Chuck Spencer for this information.

November 8, Saturday, Richmond Gem & Mineral Society Fall Rock Swap, 9 am to 3 pm. Indoors at Ridge Baptist Church Meeting Hall, 1515 E. Ridge Rd., Richmond VA. Free admission. Parking in front of Hall. Swappers please label your specimens. Information contact: Murray Rosenberg, Swap Chairman 804 740 0019, <murrayrosenberg@cavtel.net>. Use I-95 to Exit 79, to I-64 West. At Exit 181A go South on Parham Rd. 1.5 miles and turn left on East Ridge Rd. Church and Meeting Hall are about 400 ft. on right, across from Kroger's Market. Hall is at rear of parking lot on W. side of Church. To defray costs swappers are asked to donate specimen(s) for raffle and auction.

November 15, 16 M.A.G.M.A. = The Mid-Atlantic Gem & Mineral Association, Gem Miner's Holiday, New Show at Lebanon PA, Saturday 10 am to 5 pm, Sunday 11 am to 4 pm. \$5 admission, children under 12 free. \$1.00 discount admission coupon on web site. Take the Pennsylvania Turnpike to exit 266 (Lebanon/Lancaster - old exit 20). Exit on to Rt. 72 North. Follow signs north ~5 miles to Rocherty Road. Turn right on to Rocherty Road. Proceed to next traffic light. Go through the light, the Exposition Center, fairgrounds is found on the right. Information: <<http://www.gem-show.com/>>, Phone 717 838 8870 or 301 565 0487.

November 22, 23 17th Annual Gem, Mineral, and Fossil Show sponsored by the Northern VA Mineral Club. George Mason University, Student Union Building II, VA Route 123 & Braddock Road, Fairfax VA. Sat. 10 am to 6pm, Sun. 10am to 4pm. Admission: Adults \$4, Seniors and teens ages 13 to 17 \$3, 12 and under free. Information contact: Tom Taaffe, rockcellctr@aol.com

Ongoing You will find the newly opened Sant Ocean Hall at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History of interest. It includes fossils of ocean life including the Basilosaurus, a 55 foot long ancient whale found in Alabama in 1894-6. See <http://ocean.si.edu/ocean_hall/> for more information.



◀ **Breaking News!** What do all these people have in common? As you can tell from their smiling faces, they've all been to an EFMLS **Wildacres Workshop!** Next year, one of these people could be you.

Get out your 2009 calendar and reserve the week of Friday, April 17 to Thursday, April 23 for the first of our two EFMLS Wildacres Workshops! Bruce Gaber, our speaker coordinator, says that the speaker in residence for the session will be Dr. Michael Wise, a research mineralogist/ curator with the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, where he has worked since 1988. He is one of the world's leading authorities on the mineralogy of pegmatites. He is a Consulting Editor for Rocks & Minerals Magazine and an Adjunct Professor at the University of New Orleans. Mike is an engaging speaker and will regale us with tales of adventures from mountains in Southern California to the back roads of Madagascar.

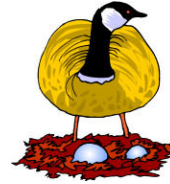
We'll have a list of classes to be offered, hopefully information about our fall session (if we receive our dates for that session from the Wildacres Foundation in time) and an application form in the December issue of EFMLS News. We can tell you however, that we will be offering some new and different classes....so reserve that week on your schedule so you can join us at Wildacres. (If you've been before, you know how wonderful an experience it is....and if you've never been, come and find out for yourself.)

From Steve Weinberger and Fran Sick



WEB SITES

Take a Gander at These



By Wendell Mohr

RECOVERY OF HISTORIC 478 CARAT WHITE DIAMOND.

Gem Diamonds in partnership with the Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho, is delighted to announce the recovery on Monday 8 September of a historic diamond from the Mine in Lesotho. Subsequent to its recovery, the diamond was transferred to Antwerp where it underwent acidisation and provisional analysis. Weighing 478 carats, it was determined to be a type II D colour diamond, the highest colour grading available for a white diamond. Furthermore the diamond is of outstanding clarity with no inclusions visible in its rough form. It has the potential to yield one of the largest flawless D colour round polished diamonds in history.

The diamond, which is yet to be named, ranks as the 20th largest rough diamond ever to be recovered. It is the third significant recovery from the Letšeng Mine in as many years, following the 603 carat Lesotho Promise and the 493 carat Letšeng Legacy recovered in 2006 and 2007 respectively. Including the 601 carat Lesotho Brown, recovered in 1960, the Letšeng Mine has now produced four of the world's 20 largest rough diamonds and the three largest diamonds recovered this century.



**Diamondback
Rattler**

Commenting on the recovery, Minister Monyane Moleleki, the Minister of Natural Resources for Lesotho said: "Once again Letšeng has proved its ability to produce extraordinary diamonds and continues to place Lesotho at the forefront of diamond producing countries. We will continue to proudly develop this asset and the rare diamonds that it produces to their maximum value for the benefit of the people of Lesotho." Clifford Elphick, Chief Executive Officer of Gem Diamonds, added: "Preliminary examination of this remarkable diamond indicates that it will yield a record breaking polished stone of the very best colour and clarity. Letšeng continues to reward its shareholders with the production of these significant diamonds and to confirm its position as one of the great mines in the diamond industry. With a further 45 years of life remaining, we expect Letšeng to make history for many years to come." Excerpted from Joint News Release, 22 September 2008

The Letšeng Mine is in the Mokhotlong District of eastern Lesotho. See "Big diamond find" <<http://www.reuters.com/news/video?videoId=91037&newsChannel=scienceNews>> and Letšeng Mining <http://www.miningreview.com/archive/mra_1_2005/24_1.php>

GEOLOGY.COM, <<http://geology.com/>>, by Hobart King is a compendium of earth science news, maps, dictionary, articles and jobs. Despite quite a few advertisements, its wide-ranging topics will keep you out of mischief for these longer nights. I wont enumerate the many topics covered but think that you will find it intriguing. You can even sign up for daily E Mail messages about earth science news.

- If geology produces quick sand, does it also make slow sand? ●



BENITOITE, <<http://www.benitoite.com/benitoite/index.shtml>>, by John Veevaert, is actually a subset of the Trinity Mineral Company, Weaverville CA. As customary, this is not an endorsement of the dealer. In the site he shows his personal collection, which is not for sale. Additionally there are excellent articles about benitoite and neptunite from the world wide famous San Benito Co., CA locality, how to clean the specimens, and past mining news. The mine is being operated commercially for specimens. Sale specimens are also shown.

- I asked "How much is that benitoite with neptunite specimen?" They said "\$2000."
"\$2000! That's exorbitant." "That's only the down payment." they said ●

CLOTH NEEDED Jo Ann Mohr, the bag lady, needs material for making the bags for kids specimens for the show. If you have some excess cloth material you never used please donate it for the cause. She will also accept old shirts etc. which could yield usable scrap material. Help the little ol' bag lady!



Recent news headline: Miners Refuse To Work After Death.



More of '93 - But before we go further into that year, I want to correct a couple of "oopses" that appeared last month. First, the article's headline should have read 1993 not 1983. (Bifocals can do odd things.) And in the item about the Swedish mine, lest anyone thought that the mine had been stolen, it was not a copped mine but rather a copper mine. (The latter was the editor's fault-Ed.) These errors were pointed out to me at the last meeting so it's nice to know someone's reading these scribblings.

I left off last month with 1993's show. Things were a bit quiet after all that excitement. A planned gold panning trip in early April had to be canceled because the creek did rise too high to permit such activity. We did have some doings with aurum later in the month as the speaker at April's meeting was Walter Goetz. (Yep, the same fellow who spoke to us in September this year.) His talk primarily was about the gold mines in Maryland and Virginia. Also, at April's meeting as a guest, was Lisa Carp who promptly proceeded to win the evening's door prize. (Is that what prompted you to join, Lisa?) One of the sights on the show table that night were four thumbnails Dave Ballard had acquired at the year's Rochester Symposium. (No, silly, they are mineral specimens, not the tips of hitchhiker's digits.

One of the other field trips scheduled for April was more successful. Though the day was cold and windy five hearty souls went to The Willows, south of Chesapeake Beach, to search the sand for fossils. And fossils did they find! Shark's teeth (one a 2.5 inch mako), porpoise teeth, ray plates, and whale bones, one of the latter 5 inches long and 3 inches wide. A week later another group went to Medford Quarry where the temperature reached 70⁰ F. Georgia Olmstead found a nice galena specimen, and others "rounds and pyramids" of dogtooth calcite. Terry Cirrincione located a vug containing todorokite crystals, a rare manganese mineral the Smithsonian currently was studying.

April's EFMLS Digest gave details about the coming Wildacres event. Among the lecturers was member Ginger Posthumus who would give a course on Gold Wire Jewelry. Another publication, the Washington Post, announced that anyone, age 10 or older, could volunteer to work for a couple of weeks during the summer "Digging Dinosaurs" in Montana. The Museum of the Rockies in Bozeman was seeking helpers to assist in collecting fossils for three research programs. No, it wasn't free; \$875 for two weeks for Museum members (you had to join, \$30 more). This included accommodations either in rustic cabins or in campgrounds, and three meals a day. Wonder if they had any takers.

At May's meeting, Wendell Mohr introduced two of the year's Montgomery Area Science Fair winners, Mike Bader and Adrienne Johnson. Mike, a student at Redland Middle School, spoke briefly about his project, "Do Volcanoes Affect Weather?", and Adrienne, a Damascus High School student, told about her project, "Fault Formation." Both students brought their projects with them to show to the audience.

Fred Schaefermeyer spoke about the agreement between the EFMLS and the Southeast Federation and what would occur when the agreement is ratified at the next EFMLS convention. (Concern: overlapping territories.)

The evening's speaker was Ms. Ginger Morgret who had received her GIA Certificate in 1982. Her topic was "Gems and their Identification." She explained various methods of identifying real gems through observation and use of instruments. Re the latter, she uses a Chelsea Filter, Dichroscope, and a Loupe. She then gave a slide presentation depicting inclusions in gemstones. Her presentation was informative and thoroughly enjoyed.



Another attempt at gold panning was made in May, this one proved to be more successful with one exception. One lady stepped into a hole with water up to her waist. This prompts a suggestion for future panners, bring a change of clothes with, and a towel of course. On the bright side, trip leader, Jack Nelson, reported every one had found gold, with one lucky person finding a 0.5 inch flat square flake, the second largest Jack had ever seen.

More next month. Happy Thanksgiving and be sure it's turkey you're eating, not the golden goose.