

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 meet on **Monday October 13th** 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 presented by Susan Staff on **WOOD OPAL - ROMANCING THE STONE**. Ms. Staff lived for four years in the opal camps at Virgin Valley, Nevada digging opal and rockhounding. Wood opal is found in only three places in the world. Ms Staff will present a brief chemistry of opal, a description of the geology of the area in which it is found and the conditions under which wood opal may have been formed. Her program will include a history of "the valley", photos and specimens, information about mines presently in operation, and other natural phenomenon that make Virgin Valley "a jewel of a place where the past hides, waiting for you to come and find it." She is a retired psychiatric nurse-therapist and author of novels: *Saconk, Rosewood, and Playa*.



THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS will meet October 20th 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.

DUES Our By-laws state "Any member in arrears as of Oct. 15th shall forfeit membership".

IF YOU HAVE NOT PAID DUES, THIS WILL BE THE LAST ROCKHOUNDER YOU WILL RECEIVE


A red star on the address label of mailed newsletters indicates non-payment (as of Oct. 1st). Notification will be made to those in arrears getting newsletters by E Mail only. If not already done, pay for your Single membership at \$15 per year, or Family membership (Up to 2 adults and children under 18 years of age) at \$20 per year at the October meeting or send to: Membership Chairperson Nancy Ballard, 16812 Baederwood Lane, Derwood MD 20855-2011, 301 926 7374. She will mail your membership card(s) back to you if you send her a self addressed stamped envelope otherwise you may pickup your card(s) at the next regular meeting. Club membership is a requirement for attending most Society field trips. We need you and want you back!

DEADLINE for the November 2008 Rockhounder: **Oct. 27th**

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SEPTEMBER VISITORS Wendy DeWolfe, Michael and Dolly Jewell, Chuck Spencer, Donna and Robert Thatcher. We hope you enjoyed the meeting and will join us again.

WELCOME



NEW MEMBERS

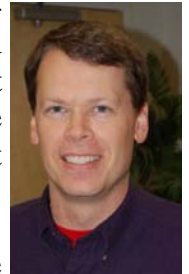
CHATFIELD, Jennifer, & WHALEN, Sandy, 13103 Superior Street, Rockville MD 20853-3338, 301 949 7683,

Jennifer: jchatfie@verizon.net, Sandy: cryswale@verizon.net

DAVIS, Lawrence, 3155 Keswick Road, Baltimore MD 21211-2737, 443 610 0211, glawrencedavis@comcast.net

MILLINGTON, Jason, 1401 Woodbridge Road, Catonsville MD 21228-1120, 410 747 6276, fasterjason@yahoo.com

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE: Anxious to get to the next meeting? Well, don't be too anxious. One of our members reports that Montgomery County's photo enforcement of the speed limit along Nelson Avenue was busy at work in time for our September meeting. It turns out that going 38 in a 25 zone (the speed limit along Nelson Ave is 25 mph) entitles you to a fine picture of your car, a close-up of your license plate, and the request to part with 40 of your best and brightest.



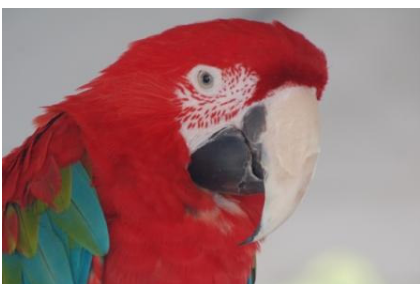
Speaking of money, I'd like to thank Andy Muir for stepping forward and agreeing to be a candidate for Society Treasurer. Don't hesitate to thank him next time you see him too. We couldn't operate without people like Andy - so how about you?

We're still in **need** of **someone** to join the board in 2009 as **Secretary**. Holly McNeil has not only done an excellent job as Secretary this year, but has also written an excellent description of the Secretary's duties. If you think you might be interested, there has never been a better time to join the board since Holly has offered to assist the next Secretary to get off to a good start as well! Please contact me, or any board member, if you think you might be interested in helping out our society, and would like to learn more about the position.

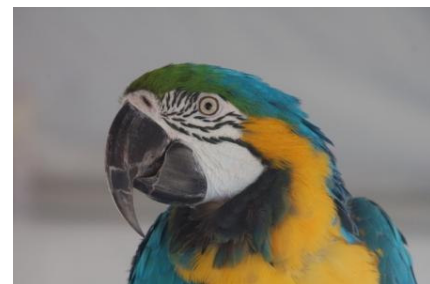
If you'd be interested in being our first official Historian, I'd like to talk with you as well. In September the board voted to support the appointment of our society's archivist. It's important that we keep certain society records and you can help out greatly by simply tending to these documents. We are also hoping that our Historian would be willing to put together the first society scrapbook pages that we can all enjoy for years to come.

Lastly, thank you to those of you who have returned your questionnaires already! If you haven't, please bring yours to the October meeting or send it to me at the address listed on the front. We're hoping everyone will give us their thoughts - we want to see yours too!

Thanks, Mark



Polly Want a Cracker?



REGULAR MEETING MINUTES: The September 8, 2008 meeting was called to order by President Mark Dahlman at 7:47 pm with approximately 59 people attending. Minutes of the June 9th, 2008 regular meeting were approved.

Board Vacancies: Mark announced the opening of the Treasurer and Secretary positions for next year and solicited volunteers. Please contact Mark or another board member if you wish to explore these opportunities to become more involved with the club.

Field Trip Chairman, Jonathan Harris, announced the upcoming field trips (details are included in the Field Trip section of the Rockhounder) and requested that those interested in the Rockville/Hunting Hill trips scheduled for September 21st and October 19th email him ahead of time so he has an accurate head count.

Jr. Advisor, Rod Towers, conducted the Junior door prize drawing and gave a brief summary of a radiation project he recently researched involving trap states.

Vice President, Elmer Lantz, introduced the speaker for the evening:



Walter A. Goetz, leading authority on gold mining in Maryland with a self proclaimed case of “Gold Fever” gave a very informative and interesting presentation on gold mining, past and present, in our area. He produced copies of maps, photos, and other documents as he explained the history of the local industry, discussed its economics, told many amusing anecdotes, and gave those of us with a prospecting urge some suggestions for finding gold practically in our own backyards. Walter educated us on the process and equipment used by the mines to extract gold and provided slides of some of his finds. Thank you Walter!



Other Business:

Mark announced an inter-club initiative, whereby mineral clubs around the country exchange samples specific to their respective regions. If anyone is interested in spearheading this effort for us, contact Mark.

During the meeting a sale was conducted of some equipment and specimens donated by Robert and Sara LaVilla, proceeds to benefit the club.

Lapidary Journals donated to the club from the Susanne Patch estate were made available for members to take.

Editor, Wendell Mohr, mentioned a request for a display/educational exhibit for the local Izaak Walton League event scheduled for September 27th. If any club member is able to assist, please contact Wendell.

He announced that, per Jennifer Wingard, the club would not be allotted “slots” at the Aurora, N.C. mine this fall due to limited availability. Don Turner suggested that any members still wishing to visit the mine should enroll in the Aurora Fossil museum’s “Friends” program which gives priority mine access. <<http://www.aurorafossilmuseum.com/>>

Wendell announced that the AFMS convention/show would be held Sep. 26th to 28th in Houston Texas and availability of raffle tickets. He identified other upcoming shows. (see show section of Rockhounder for details)

Auctions: 9/27 the Patuxent Lapidary Guild Benefit Auction will be held in Glen Burnie MD 4 to 7 pm.

9/28 A collection is for sale by auction by Heritage Auction Galleries, a brochure available for anyone interested. Web site: <<http://historical.ha.com/?ic=Tab-Home-041408>>

10/10 the Chesapeake Gem & Mineral Club will hold an auction at 7:30 pm at the Women’s Club of Catonsville.

Educational Opportunity: *Last chance for the year* -- Wendell announced the VA Mineral Miner workshop will be held in Manassas on September 18th for the final time this year. Cost is \$10.

Show Chairperson, Heather Felsen, announced that we are working on confirming the dates for the 2009 show.

Treasurer, Juan Proano, announced that the club remains solvent, he has been paying bills and membership dues received by Nancy Ballard, membership chair, will soon be deposited into our account.

Meeting Adjourned 9:55 pm.

Holly McNeil, Secretary

BOARD MEETING MINUTES: Board members present: Nancy Ballard, Mark Dahlman, George Durland, Heather Felsen, Jonathan Harris, Holly McNeil, Wendell Mohr, Juan Proaño, and Joel Rosen. Non-board members present: David Ballard and Andy Muir. President Mark Dahlman called the September 15 meeting to order at 7:30 pm.



Business Items: Wendell provided notes taken at the June 16th committee meeting held to discuss the need for a club historian. A motion was made to create the position of historian, the motion passed by majority vote. It was further moved that the historian be a position appointed by the president but not granted board member status, although the historian would be encouraged to attend all board meetings. The motion passed. Items deemed to belong in the custody of the historian are currently in the possession of Nancy Ballard. Nancy was asked if she was willing to assume the position of historian and continue to retain these items. She accepted and the board voted and passed her appointment.

Board members who have not already done so are urged to turn in their position descriptions.

Wendell attended the Montgomery County Fair and noted that some of the 4H members had exhibits involving minerals. Nancy will contact the 4H center and extend their members an invitation to our club meetings.

Publicity: Wendell mentioned that the International Gem & Jewelry show will be held at the Montgomery Fairgrounds November 7-9th. It is a commercial show. George will contact Danny Duke and request permission to supply flyers to publicize our show and, if permission is granted, will bring the flyers to this show.

Wendell responded to a postcard and our club will be listed in Rock & Gem magazine and on its web site.

Upcoming Speaker: On behalf of Elmer, Wendell reported on the upcoming speaker for October. Susan Staff will speak about Wood Opal from the Virgin Valley of Nevada.

Request for Service: Wendell mentioned he regularly receives requests from people for cabbing, slabbing, and faceting assistance. He will put a request in the *Rockhounder* soliciting club members to respond.

Regular Meeting Logistics: Mark will remind the Senior Center to arrange the chairs in the format used at the June meeting. Given the necessity to regularly abbreviate the show table presentations there was discussion relating to time management at our meetings; the board hopes suggestions will be forthcoming from club members on their surveys.

Donations: Holly will write a thank you letter to acknowledge a donation of magazines by Robert Patch. Wendell announced a donation of material and equipment by Gilbert Bowen. The Society will sell the lapidary equipment in a silent auction at a regular meeting to be announced in the *Rockhounder*. Robert & Sara LaVilla donated specimens and cabinets to the club, which sold for \$36 at the September meeting, and Juan has sent them a letter of acknowledgement. Susan Houser material donation: It was moved that we donate the remaining material to the Southern Maryland Rock & Mineral Club and the Patuxent Lapidary Guild for use in their workshops. The motion passed with one abstention.

Board Openings: The Board acts as the Nominating Committee. It was suggested that Andy Muir serve as Treasurer for the upcoming year. The board voted to recommend his nomination for the membership's consideration at the November election. Several names were suggested as possibilities for nomination for Secretary; Mark will contact those individuals to see if they would be willing to serve.

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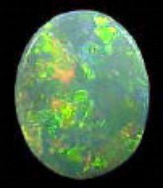


A reason to vote for McCain: He is a Palin-tologist!



OCTOBER MEMBER BIRTHDAYS: Kenneth Carter, Thomas Caton, Jonathan Ertman, Stephanie Hald, Charles M. P. Hyland, Charles J. Hyland, Sue Krug, John Kuehn, Aidan McElravy, Jim Michaelis, Leslie Porter, Louis Van Rafelghem, Therese Van Rafelghem, Annie Shaw, Scott Snyder.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY OCTOBER BABIES! **OCTOBER'S BIRTHSTONE, OPAL,** is



known as the “stone of happy dreams and changes”. It inspires creativity and imagination, and instills faithfulness and loyalty. It is said to strengthen the memory, alleviate fevers, stimulate the circulation and strengthen the eyesight.

The Romans believed opal was the symbol of hope and purity, calling it *cupid paederos* (child as beautiful as love), and kept the wearer safe from disease. Arabs believed that opals fell from heaven in flashes of lightning, and the ancient Greeks believed it had the power of giving foresight and the light of prophecy to their owners. Cleopatra is said to have worn an opal to attract the attention of Mark Antony. In the Middle Ages, young, fair-haired girls wore opals in their hair to protect its lovely blonde color and Medieval writers believed opal could render its wearer invisible when the need arose. The Aborigines of Australia have many myths and legends about opals, and believe they have spiritual value, representing something an ancestor left behind as a sign of his or her presence. Somewhat conversely, in the 19th century opal became known as a gem of ill omen and was connected with assorted misfortunes of European royalty; it had a reputation as a thief's stone, with the power to simultaneously strengthen one's eyesight and make the wearer invisible.

The word “opal” comes from the Sanskrit *upala* for “valuable stone”, the Greek *opallios* for “color change”, and the Latin *opalus* or “precious stone”. “Opal” is also the Indian word for “stone”. Opal is one of the most popular gemstones. There are two distinct types of opal, common and precious. The way the silica particles form determines its type. In precious opal, silica particles are packed in regular rows and layers. A special characteristic of opals is their opalescence, a multicolor iridescence that changes with the angle of observation. These iridescent flashes of green, blue, aqua and sometimes yellow or red colors are referred to as “fire”. The sparks of color are caused by tiny spheres of the mineral cristobalite layered in siliceous jelly.

Most opal is 50-65 million years old, dating back to the Cretaceous period when dinosaurs roamed the earth. Opal formed as silica from decomposing rocks mixed with ground water which formed a gel that collected and hardened in underground cavities and fissures. Opal's chemical formula is $\text{SiO}_2 \cdot n\text{H}_2\text{O}$. The stones have a high water content – as much as 30% – thus requiring care when working with them as a heat can evaporate the water. The stone is sensitive to pressure and knocks, and is relatively soft, a 5.5-6.5 on the *Mohs Scale*.

Quality Opals are found in Czechoslovakia, Brazil, Guatemala, Honduras, Japan, and in the U.S. (Nevada), but most of the world's jewelry opals come from the Australian Outback.

From The Matrix, 10/06. Via the RockCollector Rochester Lapidary Society Oct 2006

HAND TOOL SAFETY - PLIERS & FILES by Bill Klose, AFMS Safety Chair September 2005

Slip joint pliers, which include the well known water pump pliers, have serrated jaws with a rod-gripping section and are used to hold objects. The slip joint accommodates objects of different sizes. These pliers may also have a cutting edge for soft wire and nails, however cutting large or hard items will spring the jaws. Arc joint pliers are similar, but may have straight or curved jaws and will accommodate a variety of object sizes. The tightening of bolts or nuts with slip joint or arc joint pliers is not recommended and will usually result in damage to the nut or bolt and may lead to knuckle injuries if the pliers slip. Use wrenches for tightening nuts and bolts.

Vice grip pliers are designed to provide a tighter grip, but are still not to be used to tighten nuts and bolts.

Parallel jaw pliers are designed to hold flat surfaced items, such as sheets of metal.

Flat nosed and round nosed pliers have a fixed pivot jaw and curved handles which may or may not be equipped with insulated grips. The flat nosed pliers may have smooth or serrated jaws and are designed to bend light sheet metal or wire. Round nose pliers are used to make loops in soft wire.



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WILD ACRES WORKSHOP SCHOLARSHIP

By Gerald Elgert

To the membership: I want to thank all of you for sponsoring me to the Wild Acres Workshop this past spring. Although working many years as a medical photographer, I learned a lot about the new field of digital photography from a master of the craft, Bruce Gaber. While the techniques haven't changed all that much, the technology has and Bruce just has that special gift of integrating both into his teaching. Maybe the best part of the week was in the general fellowship, of making and renewing of friendships and with the entertainment provided by the various skits performed by the participants. I know that there was a great deal of learning and sharing on both sides of the lens during that wonderful week. Thanks again!



**Barry Remer & Gerald Elgert With
Ellery Borow, EFMLS President**



**Bruce Gaber, instructor
for Digital Photography**

HAND TOOL SAFETY - PLIERS & FILES (Continued from Page 5)

Diagonal cutting pliers have a fixed pivot and curved handles that are offset 15 degrees so as to provide the operator enough knuckle clearance while making flush cuts in soft metal. These pliers are designed for cutting small, light pieces of wire, cotter keys, solder, etc., and should not be used to hold or grip items. When cutting, restrain the piece that is to be cut off so that it will not become a missile hazard. End cutting pliers, or nippers, are used to cut off wire flush to the working surface, thus keeping fingers away from the wire ends. Hand shears are made with straight or curved cutting blades and are used for cutting sheet metal. Shears are made for right-handed operators so that the cutting line is always in full view for accuracy. Straight blade shears are used for cutting straight lines and curves, while curved bladed shears are used for cutting short straight lines and curves and small intricate designs.



When using diagonal pliers, end cutting pliers, or shears, keep fingers away from the jaws and cutting edges and always wear eye protection. Do not attempt to cut material that is heavier than the tool is designed for. Do not use pliers or shears as hammers or pry bars. Keep shears sharp with an oil stone or file. Grinding is not recommended and shortens shear life. Keep pliers and shears clean and lubricate the pivot point with a light oil. Store in a dry location on hooks or a shelf, protecting the cutting surfaces from contact with other tools. A thin coat of oil can be applied to protect from rust. Do not remove insulation from handles or oil insulated handles. Replace pliers or shears that have broken handles, cutting edges, or jaws.

Straight lip jaw thongs have a fixed pivot point, two straight jaws and long handles and are used for placing hot items into and picking them out of pickling solution. These thongs should be made of materials that will not react with the solution and discolor the metals being handled.

Files come in many types and sizes and are used in metal smithing and soap stone carving. Some general safety precautions for using files are:

1. Never use a file without a securely attached file handle (unless it is a swiss pattern type).
2. Do not oil files which will cause the file to slide across the work, preventing fast cutting.
3. Do not use files for anything but filing.
4. Clean files often, as clogged files will scratch the work. Always use a file scorer and file cleaning brush to clean a file. Do not strike against another tool or object to remove filings.
5. Store files in a file rack or box so that the file faces or edges do not touch each other or other tools. Do not store files with lubricants on them. Wrap each file with a water-proofed barrier wrapping paper.



Proper use of hand tools will provide the operator with long tool life, injury free.

FIELD TRIPS: Jonathan Harris will email announcements of additional trips scheduled after press time. Get on his list if you are not already included and are interested. Or phone 301 545 0808. Children with full safety equipment (same as for adults) and accompanied and supervised by a parent are permitted for these two trips.



Collecting minerals recently at
Manassas Quarry
Photo by Georgia Olmstead



October 19, Sunday, Hunting Hill (Rockville Crushed Stone) Quarry. Those attending **MUST** be at the quarry by 8:30 am for briefing, and trip is 9-3. Find your best way to the intersection of Shady Grove Road with Darnestown Road. (From I-270 you may take I-370 west to Great Seneca Highway, where you turn left, to Darnestown Road, where you turn right) Go North (West at this point) on Darnestown Road. Turn Left at the stop light at Travilah Road. Go 0.9 miles and turn left on Piney Meetinghouse Road. Go 0.1 miles to the quarry entrance on the right. Enter the property and stay right and meet at the office building.

You may only go to this site with an organized Club trip. It has been customary to pay \$5.00 each for the person opening the quarry for us. Safety Requirements: STEEL-TOED BOOTS, HARD HATS, SAFETY GLASSES/GOGGLES, SIGNED RELEASE FORM.

Ref.: Parker, Fred J. "The Minerals of the Hunting Hill Quarry, Rockville , MD ". Mineralogical Record. Sep/Oct 2005. <http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3672/is_200509/ai_n15638363>.

We have heard from our coordinator for Aurora NC trips: I am sorry to report we were not able to get any slots for Aurora this fall. They had twice as many requests for slots as there were slots available and since our club went in the spring they allocated the slots elsewhere. Here's to spring! Jennifer Wingard.

BOARD MEETING MINUTES:

Continued from Page 4

Juan requested board authorization to pay the annual EFMLS dues (includes AFMS dues) and donations to the AFMS Scholarship program, AFMS Endowment fund, American Lands Access Association, and Eastern Foundation Fund. The motion was made and passed. Juan announced that the Senior Center has been paid through February 2009.

Finances: Juan provided a status of the financials and submitted a two-part budget (show and general operations) for review. The budget was approved subject to a few modifications recommended by the board members. Juan announced that a supplemental schedule "A" has been completed and submitted to the IRS per their request. There was discussion on a donation to the Smithsonian for 2009, tabled until the next board meeting.

2009 Show: Heather Felsen announced that the show dates of March 21st and 22nd have been confirmed with the Montgomery County Fairgrounds. Due to the enormity of the show chairman's duties, she recommended dividing the responsibilities for the dealer floor and the education floor between two co-chairs. The issue was not resolved, and further discussions are anticipated.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:50 pm.

Holly McNeil, Secretary



LAPIDARY HELP NEEDED

Increased non-member inquiries are being made to the Society requesting:

1. Faceting rough to be cut/polished.
2. Rough to be diamond saw cut or slabbed.
3. Stones to be finished into cabochons.

We are requesting members who willing to be put on a list as a reference to respond to the requests. You may select one or more of the categories. You are free to negotiate arrangements; for a price for materials and time, free, or other, such as half of rough for cutting. Let your editor know if you are willing to participate.

SHOW TABLE: September 8, 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>
Jeff Cessna	Calcite	Canada
	Fossils*	Brownie's Beach MD
	Margarosanite	Langban, Sweden
Wendy DeWolfe	Various Minerals*	
George Durland	Calcite (Fl.)	Challenge Cave, Nuevo Leon, Mexico
Jonathan Harris	Kyanite	Willis Mountain VA
Anita James	Gypsum	Australia
Pat Jayne	Azurite	Mejran, Morocco
Phil Krug	Gems and Minerals Magazine April 1968	Roy Rogers feature
Sue Krug	Garnet	Locality not given
Wendell Mohr	20 Rand bill featuring Diamond	South Africa
Andy Muir	Sericite? on Quartz*	Hunting Hill Quarry, Rockville MD
	Calcite? (Fl.)*	Manassas VA
	Humite etc. (Fl.)*	Long Lake Zinc Mine, Parham, Ontario
Owen Powers	Possible Chesapeake Bay Bolide remnants	Locality not given
Joel Rosen	Amethyst	Nyiri, Hungary
Conrad Smith	Ulexite, Pyrite	Locality not given
Earl Smith	Pectin Fossil Scallop	Calvert Cliffs MD
Linda Smith	Rhodochrosite cabochon	Colorado
Robert Thatcher	Calcite pseudo after Glauberite	AZ
	Muscovite	Taos Co. NM
	Amethyst	Locality not given
	Selenite Gypsum	Locality not given
Rod Towers	Tetrahedrite	Pachapaqui Mime. Peru
	Microscope and Specimens	
Barbara Wells	Float Copper	Phoenix Mine, Keweenaw MI
Kathryn Wells	Datolite	Mesnard Mine, Upper Peninsula MI



SEPTEMBER DOOR PRIZES Winner of the junior prize was a visitor, Robert Thatcher, and was a Lortone hand capping system called a "Stroker." Conrad Smith took home the show table prize which was a specimen of float copper from glacial drift, Houghton Co. MI. The general door prize, a chalcopyrite on dolomite from Reynolds Co. MO, was won by Anita James.

NEW RECORD ANCIENT CRUST: 4.28 Ga (Giga Annum Ed.)

Canada has always had a reputation for ancient rocks, but the September 26 *Science* puts a new jewel in Canada's crown in a paper reporting a bedrock outcrop that dates back to approximately 4.28 billion years, well into the Hadean eon (or, for purists, the Eoarchean Era.) The previous oldest known rock, from about 4.03 Ga, was the Acasta gneiss, also Canadian.

The locality is in the Nuvvuagittuq greenstone belt by Porpoise Cove, way up by the north tip of Labrador on Hudson Bay. This photo, by coauthor Don Francis of McGill University, shows the look of the country side there, scraped clean and flat by generations of glaciers. It's a geologist's dreamland. The Saskatoon StarPhoenix reports that the local Inuit tribe that oversees the site is pondering its potential for tourism. I know I'd go see it.



Shake sits in the Nuvvuagittuq
Courtesy Don Francis

From Andrew Alden, Sep 29, 2008 <About.com> fair use.

October 10, Chesapeake Gem & Mineral Society Auction. Friday only, viewing 7:00 pm, Auction 7:30 pm. Woman’s Club of Catonsville. Gemstones, cutting rough, jewelry, minerals, fossils, books, magazines, and lapidary equipment. Refreshments are available. Directions: Go West on Frederick Road from I-695 (Baltimore beltway), approximately 3 blocks to St. Timothy’s Lane. Turn right and go one block to the Woman’s Club located behind St. Timothy’s Church.

October 10 - 12: 52nd Annual Desautels Micromount Symposium hosted by the Baltimore Mineral Society MHA Pierson Conference Center, 6820 Deerpath Road, Elkridge, MD. Special Events: Hall of Fame Induction, Giveaway Table, Auctions, Dealers, Talks and Slide Shows About Minerals, & Swapping. Information and registration materials: <editor@amfed.org> or call 410 833 7926.

October 18 & 19, 34th Annual Gem & Mineral Show, sponsored by the Kanawa Rock & Gem Club. South Charleston Community Center, South Charleston WV.

October 19 to January 4, 2009 Bedazzled, 5,000 years of Jewelry. The Walters Art Museum in Baltimore hosts one of the world’s best collections of jewelry from ancient times through the Renaissance to early 20th century works by designers such as Rene Lalique and pieces from Tiffany and Company.

October 25 Ultraviolation 2008 Fluorescent Mineral Show sponsored by the Rock & Mineral Club of Lower Bucks County First United Methodist Church, Fairless Hills PA

October 25 Audubon Naturalist Society program. “Georgetown Geology Loop.” 1-5pm, 5 mile hike. Info. 301 652 9188. Registration form <http://www.audubonnaturalist.org/Images2catalog_of_programs.pdf>. Members \$22, Nonmembers \$30.50

October 30 Thursday Mornings at the Smithsonian. 10:30 am. Nat’l Museum of Natural History, Baird Auditorium. “Treasures from the Deep”, a lecture by Dr. Jeffrey Post about pearls and a part of a series relative to the new Sant Ocean Hall at the museum which opened September 27th. For resident associates, tickets required, visit <residentassociates.org>.

November 8, Richmond G&M Society Fall Rock Swap, 9-3. Indoors at Ridge Baptist Church Mtg. 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

24th Annual
SOUTH PENN ROCK SWAP
Saturday, **October 25, 2008**
8 a.m. to 3 p.m.
South Mountain Fairgrounds
(1.5 miles West of Arundtsville, PA on route 234)

General Admission: \$1.00
Tables for swappers: \$10.00
(Multiple tables allowed for the \$10.00 fee)

Sponsored by: The Central Pennsylvania and Franklin County Rock and Mineral Clubs

Not a rockhound but a rockcat?

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, rockcllctr@aol.com

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.

Law of the Lapidary Workshop: Any tool, when dropped, will roll to the least accessible corner.

WEB SITES

Spy on These

By Wendell Mohr

Geology of National Parks by the USGS is quite different. At <http://3dparks.wr.usgs.gov/> you will find photographic tours of over 60 National Parks and Monuments and other park related resources. You will need to obtain red and cyan 3-D viewing glasses to get the stereo effect. Featured are both standard and 3D photographs along with written information describing what you are visualizing. Perhaps you have some cardboard glasses left over from a 3D movie you have seen. Plastic framed glasses may be purchased but are not any better for viewing. There are instructions for making your own. Making and viewing Anaglyphic (3D) photographs is explained. The tours describe park geology and natural history. Lots of fun here. ●Bed time for Geologists: Lava bed, Selenite sheets. Pillow lava– no pillow fights please●



Free Gemology Course by Barbara Smigel, PhD, GG, who is a professor emeritus at the College of Southern Nevada, has a site at <http://www.bwsmigel.info/>. In my estimation this is one of the most attractive sites I have come across with much depth and well illustrated. There are 10 lessons, 10 essays, audio pronunciation guide, and a 5.66 MB pdf pictorial survey, among other attributes. Thanks for the lead from the March 2008 newsletter, Rochester Lapidary Society. ●Did you hear about the woman who named her three daughters Pearl, Sapphire, and Onyx? The first had skin as smooth and white as a pearl. The second had eyes that shone like two blue sapphires. The third was onyx-pected.●



Mammoth Site of Hot Springs SD, <http://www.mammothsite.org/>, is the world's largest mammoth research facility south of the Black Hills where you can tour an active paleontological dig site and view Ice Age fossils exhibited as they are found. There is a 60 ft. deep Karst sinkhole where they invite you to drop in sometime! The operation is run by a non-profit group. Discovered in 1974, you may pay an actual visit there (download a brochure) or take a virtual tour, learning about the paleontology and geology. ●Isn't extinct life an oxymoron?● ●The Russians found a mammoth body frozen solid in Siberian ice. It was a great story for TV—Cold Case●

VARISCITE, OLDER THAN I THOUGHT

By Dr. Timothy Baker

Many of you will have worked with this beautiful green phosphate gemstone, sometimes known as green turquoise. It has a long and interesting history. There were articles in the magazine *Rocks and Minerals* in the 1950's about the gun battles fought over the Variscite nodule mines near Fairfield, Utah. (Skiers take note, Fairfield is south of the famous Alta Gold mines now converted to a ski resort).

It wasn't until I was visiting my daughter in Catalonia, Spain however, that I found out how old Variscite mining really was. In the development of a suburb 10 miles south of Barcelona the excavators discovered a series of tunnels. These tunnels dated back to the Neolithic period and are the oldest gallery mines discovered in Europe up to this time. It has been established that the mines were worked for variscite for several centuries. The mines were 6,000 years old (a thousand years before the pyramids). There are many openings. Some of the tunnels were 100 feet in length. There is evidence that the Variscite was traded throughout Spain.



Gem quality variscite, Nevada. Ring mounted cab from the McGuinness Mine, Austin; Loose cabochons showing spiderweb, Damali Mine
Wikipedia

The next time you cut a specimen of Variscite, realize that you are following an ancient tradition.
Gem Cutters News 9/08



ONWARD WITH 1983 - March 6 saw another Ident-i-day at the Nature Center of the Smithsonian's Museum of Natural History, this one pertaining to fossils. The museum specialists had volunteered to help identify specimens and to tell something about them. The "Day" then was still being held at 10th and Constitution NW DC, making it easy to get to by public transportation. It now is difficult to get to their Reston VA location by that method.



MINING OUR HISTORY

Speaking of the Smithsonian, in March Gladys Fuller passed along information that in October 1994 the Hall of Minerals would be shut down to be renovated with the completion date estimated to be July 4, 1996. Cost of the project also estimated was \$12,000,000, of which half was to be provided by donations. The Society's Board voted to donate 10% of the proceeds of the upcoming show as part of the hoped for \$6,000,000. Gladys also said that Mrs. Edward G. Hooker had made a "very generous gift" which permitted the Institution to begin the planning. To thank Mrs. Hooker, the new hall would be named for her.

February's speaker Fred Ward returned to display a carving of an owl done in China from nephrite shipped there from British Columbia. Fred said tons of that form of jade was being shipped from B.C. to China to be formed by young carvers who used electric drills and other tools resulting in poor work.

In March's *Rockhoulder*, Field Trip Chair Terry Cirrincione presented an itinerary of 11 field trips she'd scheduled for April, May, and June, including fossil collecting, gold panning, and mineral collecting.

Member Gordon Austin was the speaker at March's meeting. He presented a program on diamond mining around the world with emphasis on the Soviet Union. At that time the diamond market was in a deep depression but it was beginning to rebound. (Let's hope our present-day markets can do the same.

As had occurred in previous years our March show was pronounced to have been a success. Although she didn't print any attendance figures *Rockhoulder* Editor Nancy Ballard stated that, based on the number and sizes of packages in the hands of departing visitors, those who came were a buying crowd. To quote Boris Karloff "Good-y, Good-y." Winners among those who had put in competitive exhibits: David Dinsmore (Minerals, also designated "Best in Show"), Paul Vance (Lapidary), Gordon and Cheryl Austin (Fossils), and Julia Hamasian (Educational).

The "You Can't Win Them All" Department: March's *EFMLS Digest* reported a proposed joint Geology Trip by the Central Canadian Federation of Mineralogical Societies and the Eastern Federation had to be cancelled because the sites to be visited were afraid they could not cope with the large number of participants. On the other hand (this time quoting Tevye, in *Fiddler on the Roof*), EFMLS was invited by the Midwest Federation to join them in a Field Trip Competition at Michigan Technical University in Houghton on the UP. (Dumb me, I thought those initials stood for Union Pacific and I wondered who would go on a field trip on a freight train. My Michigan relatives promptly told me they meant Upper Peninsula)

Juan Proaño reported that the world's oldest copped mine had shut down. Stora Kopparberg of Sweden was closing its Falun Mine after 1000 years of operation because the supply of ore (no, not the currency, that requires an umlaut) had been exhausted. Toward the end the mine mostly yielded zinc, lead, and pyrite, though there were small amounts of silver and gold.

Have a Happy Halloween! I still think October's gemstone should be cat's eye.

By Jack Busch

USED LAPIDARY EQUIPMENT SALE The Prospector's Shop, one of our show dealers, has come into possession of a number of lapidary items which they are offering for sale. Contact <wcannon@westol.com> or call 724 593 2510 for information. There are 47 lots which include one Raytech UV light and one kiln. No endorsement is given. Wendell Mohr will have a listing at the October meeting.

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1st Place, New Editor, 2007
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