

THE ROCKHOUNDER



MAY
2012

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 May 14th** in the dining room of the Rockville Senior Center, 1150 Carnation Drive, Rockville. A short business meeting will begin at 7:45 pm but the room is available to us at 7:30 pm so come early and chat with old friends. The speaker will be long time member, Fred Parker. The topic will be "Franklin, New Jersey - It's More Than Just Fluorescent Minerals". It will cover some of the minerals, the history of the area and what Franklin was like collecting many years ago. It will be accompanied with a slide presentation as well.

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS will meet Monday, May 21, at the Home of Andy Muir. All Board members are expected to be there. Any member is welcome to attend but kindly let Andy know if you plan to attend at: <amuir21@comcast.net> or phone 301 990 1370.

NEW ROCKHOUNDS

ABERNATHY, Allison, 9306 Parkhill Terrace, Bethesda MD 20814-3963, 301 493 5590, abernathy.allison@gmail.com

GLENN, Daniel, 10703 Vista Linda Drive, Mitchellville MD 20721-4048, 301 385 9789, danielw5c@comcast.net

WALKER, Helen, 3909 Lawrence Avenue, Kensington MD 20895 20895-1536, 240 888 7888, helen_walker@comcast.net

Stephanie

WELCOME!



ROCK SWAP

--Cartoon by Betsy Oberheim, CPRMC



DEADLINE for Jun 2012 Rockhounder: May 27th.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Andy Celmer

"Gold is where you find it!" is true, but if you didn't have the skill and knowledge to recover it, you could be standing in a stream with gold nuggets and walk away empty handed.

Ray Stanford, per the Washington Post Magazine, 4/22/12, has the knowledge and the skill. He found dinosaur tracks in Maryland. Even though there weren't supposed to be dinosaur footprints here. Even though "the iron-rich geology wasn't right for it." Even though the experts disputed his findings. They don't dispute him now.

How many times have speakers like our own Jeff Nagy found minerals or fossils that weren't supposed to exist at that location?

We have the knowledge and the skills. Check out that road cut, construction site and stream bed. The next discovery is waiting for you!



Photo
W. Mohr

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**EDITOR**

Assemble input from the Program and Membership Chairs, President, Minutes from the Secretary, Field Trip Chair, FRA and Mini Miners leaders. Joel Rosen supplies door prize and show table information at the meeting. Area shows and other things like Safety articles come from EFMLS or AFMS Newsletters you will automatically receive.

The Board will supply you with Microsoft Publisher program or equivalent for your easy use. Lots of clip art and articles are available along with assistance. If are willing to take on the job, talk to Andy Celmer.

SHOW DEMONSTRATIONS CHAIR

The Society is seeking a new Demonstrations Chair to arrange/invite demonstrators for the 2013 show. Duties include cultivating relationships with potential demonstrators (such as sculptors, jewelers, faceters, etc.). The idea is to have a good representation of demonstrators relating to the earth sciences. Past year's invitations and sources would be turned over electronically as most invitations are recorded in Microsoft Word. Many invitations are mailed out over the Christmas holidays and in early January. Follow-up is often necessary later to confirm commitment and details etc. New contact sources need to be followed up and some cold calling and other club contact is required. Questions may be addressed to Bob Irby 301 540 5033 or <irbyre@verizon.net>. Thank you, Bob, for your many years of serving.

THE AFMS NEWSLETTER is available at <<http://www.amfed.org/>> for your interest. Shown in the May 2012 issue are more wonderful donations for the AFMS Endowment Fund drawing. The Earlier issues have earlier donations. The first four items are brand new lapidary equipment and you must designate if you want to be entered in those drawings, otherwise your entries go into the random drawing. Currently there are 38 items. Drawing will be at the AFMS Convention in Minnetonka MN at the end of July. You need not be present to win. Send your entries to Carolyn Weinberger, P. O. Box 302, Glyndon MD 21071-0302, with a check to "AFMS Endowment Fund" along with a stamped, self addressed envelope. Tickets are \$5.00 each or 5 for \$20.00. Carolyn may be reached at 410 833 7926 for questions.



The AFMS July convention information is at <<http://www.amfed.org/show2012.htm>>.

The April 9, 2012 meeting was called to order by President Andy Celmer at 7:47 pm, with approximately 69 people attending. It was M/S/P to approve the minutes of the March 12, 2012 regular meeting.

President: President Andy Celmer announced the rules for the sale of books donated by Keith Williams. The winners of the Lillian Turner award from the club show were recognized. There was a silent auction of a glass display case.

Treasurer: Andy Muir reported partial results from the club show. Attendance was down from 2011, but similar to 2010. The profit and loss statement will be ready for the Board of Directors meeting.

Guest Editor and EFMLS Liaison: Wendell Mohr reported a donation from Catherine Kieffer of Frederick of mineral specimens and fossils that will be used in the FRA program and one piece of jewelry that will be used for a door prize. The club extends Get Well wishes to Jack Busch. Jonathan Harris volunteered to tumble materials for a request received. Mark Dahlman and George Durland volunteered to represent the club at Rockville Science Day. Wendell discussed upcoming Gemology classes and Patuxent Lapidary Guild classes. The club continues to need a new newsletter editor.

Membership: It was M/S/P to approve membership for Allison Abernathy, Daniel Glenn, and Helen Walker, and daughter Stephanie Walker.

Field Trips: Jonathan Harris discussed upcoming field trips to Gettysburg Quarry, Penn-MD Materials Quarry, National Limestone Quarry, and Churchville Quarry.

Presentation: Vice president Chris Luzier introduced the speaker for the evening, **Jeff Nagy**. Jeff presented *The Ingalls Collection, The Maryland Mine, Montgomery County, Maryland 1867-1940*. Jeff discussed the history of gold in Maryland and, specifically, the history of the Maryland Mine. During the Civil War, in 1861, gold was discovered on the property of Dick Collins, Edgar Ingalls grandfather. This began the connection of Edgar Ingalls to the Maryland Mine. He began working there at age 14 and was the custodian of the gold specimens used to spark the interest of investors. Edgar played

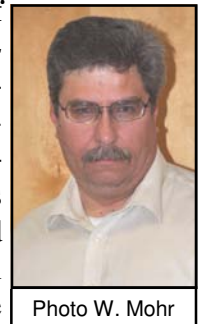
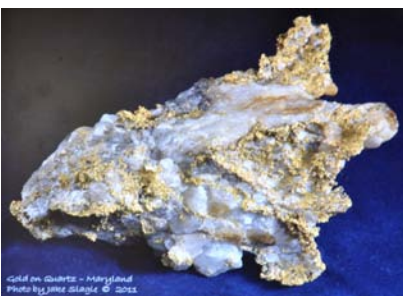


Photo W. Mohr



Gold on Quartz - Maryland
Photo by James D. Langley © 2008

several roles at the mine throughout his life and through the many owners of the mine. In the last years of the mine he was the last underground foreman. During his career he amassed a collection and eventually opened a gold mining museum in his Potomac home in 1960. In 1971 the collection was sold to the National Park Service. It was displayed until being packed up to avoid a flood. It was recently rediscovered and is now being properly stored. Several recent pictures of specimens were shown. Thanks Jeff.

Show: Mark Dahlman searched for the owner of a blue jacket from the show lost & found. Pat Repik-Byrne thanked the volunteers that made the show stress-free for her. Joel Rosen reported the trailer was stored and thanked the volunteers. George Durland mentioned the current president of the EFMLS, R. J. Harris, proclaimed the club had the “best fluorescent display he had ever seen.”

Door Prizes Rod Towers administered the junior’s door prize. Joel Rosen administered the show table and the drawings for the door and show table prizes (winning, again).

Meeting adjourned at 9:55PM.

Jeff Cessna, Secretary

BOARD MEETING MINUTES, April 16, 2012

Board Members present: Andy Celmer, Jeff Cessna, Jonathan Harris, Chris Luzier, Wendell Mohr, Andy Muir, Pat Repik-Byrne, and Joel Rosen. Non-Board members present: Mark Dahlman and Holly McNeil. Vice President Chris Luzier called the April 16, 2012 meeting to order at 7:39 pm. President Andy Celmer took over leadership a few minutes later upon his arrival.

Treasurer: The unneeded club copy of Publisher software was sold to the Maryland Geological Society. Andy Celmer mailed the software. Steve Turner donated an additional \$5000 for the Lillian Turner Award. There was discussion of expanding the award, Wendell Mohr will investigate. Andy Muir presented a treasurer's report. Mark Dahlman confirmed there were no charges against the show security deposit. The audit of club finances by Steve and Holly McNeil was clean, but pending some final documentation. The board agreed to purchase of a new stamp for checks.



Property: Mark Dahlman volunteered to assist Joel Rosen by handing out door prize tickets.

Show: Andy Muir discussed the show budget. Expenses were similar to 2011. Receipts were down from 2011, due to lower attendance. Attendance was similar to 2010. Joel Rosen discussed sand collection in trailer; Holly McNeil will look into using it for FRA. Pat Repik-Byrne reported the show went well. The January club program helped members understand volunteer opportunities. All time periods for the shop volunteers were covered. Mark Dahlman credits Andy Celmer for increasing volunteer numbers. Clean up was effortless thanks to Andy Celmer's marshaling of troops. A majority of dealers supported the increase in security. It was decided to roll over security deposit to next year. Several dealers reported their best show ever. Allocation of exhibit cases was discussed. Exhibitors are requested to clean all mounting materials from cases. Andy Muir will update raffle slip and provide for next year. Optimization of shop attendee sign up was discussed. Purchase of a new dop pot was authorized for the shop. Joel Rosen will update large fence sign with new hours; if possible add "jewelry." Joel Rosen reported unloading and loading trailer went well, the latter with the assistance of Jonathan Harris. The problem of cases shifting was solved. Joel Rosen will provide a diagram for loading trailer. No electrical issues were reported. Joel inventoried exhibit case fronts. Chris Luzier will look into scratch filler for case fronts. Andy Muir recognized Diane Lehman for her contributions at the admissions table. Publicity was discussed, including use of the internet and possible updates to the flyer. Holly McNeil requested that the exhibit judges provide feedback for the juniors.

Membership: Doug Baum, unable to attend, emailed the membership numbers read at meeting.

Guest Editor and EFMLS Liaison: Wendell Mohr reported Jonathan Baum posted a nice meeting announcement on Facebook. Mark Dahlman will submit a summary of Rockville Science Day for the newsletter.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:01 PM.

Jeff Cessna, Secretary

EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH

Jeff Nagy not only made his presentation to our Society on April 9th but also spoke on the same subject April 19th at the Sandy Spring Museum. Quoting Cathy A. Case, Interim Executive Director, "Your knowledge of Montgomery County and its rich mining history was an educational treat for all the attendees. I am sure the question period could have gone on for much longer. Thank you for your time and for sharing your passion for Maryland mining history."

Thanks, Jeff.

FIELD TRIPS

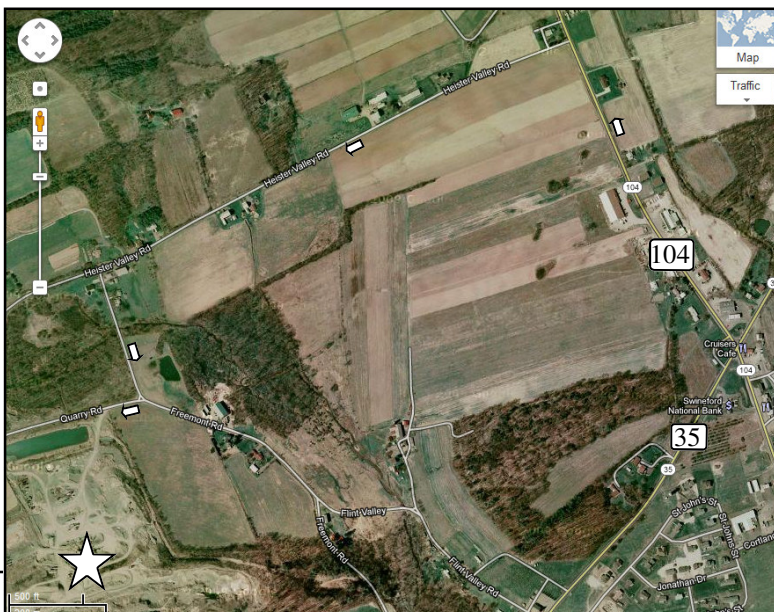
Saturday, May 12, National Limestone Quarry at Mt. Pleasant Mills PA. Meet at 9 am at the quarry office. If there is sufficient interest, then it is likely we can all go to the nearby Middleburg Quarry. This is a great site for wavellite, strontianite, fluorite (purple masses) and more recently variscite and turquoise. Collectors should bring a specimen from some other location for Eric Stahl, the manager of National Limestone Quarry.

Mt. Pleasant Mills is about 3+ hours away, but it is worth it! Children are permitted 10 and older, but a parent must stay near and supervise their children and leave the quarry with them if they get too restless to be safe.

Please RSVP to Jonathan Harris by May 9 at jgharris7@gmail.com with "National Limestone" in the subject line or phone 301 545 0808. Quarries are now often requesting that we have a minimum number of people so that their employees' time will be used effectively. Thus it is important that people who sign up on these and other trips attend.

Directions: Summary: About 150 miles, 3 hours, drive time. Take I-270 to Frederick, then US 15 North. Stay on US 15 after Camp Hill PA past Liverpool PA. Turn left onto PA-104 North. Cross PA 35 and go north on Route 104 about one-third of a mile and make the first left turn (Heister Valley Rd). Proceed a little ways to the first left turn on this road (sorry, didn't get the name) and your are at the Quarry entrance on the right.

Courtesy Google Maps



THE 23rd ANNUAL ROCKVILLE SCIENCE DAY by Mark Dahlman & George Durland
Held on April 15th, George Durland, Mark Dahlman and Rod Towers represented our club by enlightening crowds of visitors in the dark. Ours was one of about 60 science exhibits (from astronomy to zoology) displayed Sunday afternoon at Montgomery College in Rockville. George and Mark presented a demonstration of fluorescence, phosphorescence and tenebrescence with George's extensive fluorescent mineral collection. Rod showed the crowds the electroluminescent properties of noble gases in a very colorful and dynamic display. Hundreds of curious people ventured into the dark room provided to the GLMSMC and were amazed by glowing minerals and the fascinating electroluminescent properties of a plasma ball, light bulbs, and other equipment which responded to high frequency electricity. George and Mark heard plenty of astounded "wows" and "oohs" from children and adults when they saw the brilliance of the minerals under UV, and the odd property of tenebrescence in George's "magic rock." Rod not only demonstrated many electroluminescent effects but also encouraged the crowd to try it for themselves using the light bulbs and plasma ball he brought. The kids especially liked the plasma ball. Only one bulb was dropped in the course of the afternoon. George, Mark and Rod provided a lively day of demonstrations for young and old alike. (Ed.: Thanks to the three willing members for volunteering for this educational event.)



FUTURE ROCKHOUNDS OF AMERICA (The MOCKS) Ages 10-15.

Meeting Date: May 14, 2012. **Meeting time:** 7:45 - 9:00pm.

Meeting Location: Sunroom Cafeteria at the Rockville Senior Center

April 9, 2012 Meeting Recap

The evening started in the main meeting room where the MOCKS were recognized for their enthusiastic volunteer work and outstanding exhibits at our club’s annual show. Upon “retiring” to the sunroom, we learned about the formation and classes of metamorphic rocks -- the final group in our three-part series. We learned to differentiate foliated and non-foliated rocks, the various grades of metamorphic rocks and did a couple of identification exercises. A brief review of the three rock groups completed the evening.

May 14th 2012 Special effects are not just seen at the movies....we are going to learn about the special effects produced by minerals. What causes cat’s eyes and stars? Why do some minerals change colors? We’ll learn about double refraction and phantoms, adularscent, play-of-color and more. “Special Effects” is one of the 5 new FRA badge programs developed by the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies (AFMS).

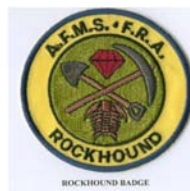
Overview of other new badges just released by the AFMS

Fluorescent Minerals – learning why minerals fluoresce, safety, and building a collection

The World in Miniature – collecting, preparing and storing miniatures, micros, and thumbnails

Maps – learning about different types of maps, and how to make and read maps

Reaching Across Generations – spending time learning from a senior club member



For more information on the Future Rockhounds of America program, please contact Holly McNeil at <fra_advisor@glmsmc.com> or 301-605-7179.



President Andy Celmer calls for a recognition for FRA Members present at the April meeting and who worked at the Show

Photos by W. Mohr



From the Conglomerate:

Do 8 year old sisters on bikes perform cyclic twinning?

If you use a ladder-vein to climb out of a glory-hole, will you fall on your tuff?

Isn't a normal fault a contradiction in terms?

Do geologists take Alkali seltzer for acid-rock stomach from eating pudding stone?

MINI MINERS Ages 6-9

Meeting Date: May 14th 2012 **Meeting time:** 7:00 - 8:00 pm

Meeting Location: The Card Room at the Rockville Senior Center

April 09th Last month the Mini Miners finished learning how to identify rocks and minerals. We examined and performed streak tests, cleavage and luster.

May 14th We will either be talking about minerals in our everyday lives or Fossils, the topics for our last two meetings. One of our Mini Miners attended the Big Dig at the Sterling Hill Mine as well as one of the teachers, Conrad Smith. He got some great specimens which he will bring for show and tell. If you have any new additions to your collection, please bring them into show and tell. Hope to see you there.



Photos by W. Mohr unless otherwise noted



CONRAD SMITH AWARD WINNER Conrad competed in The Maryland Science Olympiad which this year centered on Bottle Rockets, Aquifers, and **Rocks and Minerals**. He received 1st place in all of his events at the State Competition, however his team came in second and did not win the State Championship this year to advance to the National Competition. Both Walter Johnson High School and N. Bethesda Middle School thank the Society for the generous support of the team through the purchase of a sample set. Approximately 8 students from both schools have been using the set to study. It will continue to be a valuable resource for both schools and possibly also for the feeder Elementary schools.



Photo from by Linda Smith

The Maryland Science Olympiad is a "hands-on" K-12 science program including rigorous academic interscholastic tournaments. Scientists and engineers from Maryland corporations, organizations, and universities oversee the events. Tournament events are balanced between biology, earth science, chemistry, physics, and technology. The Maryland Science Olympiad is affiliated with the National Science Olympiad organization. Congratulations Conrad for your remarkable accomplishments.



SHOWS AND EVENTS

Saturday May 12, Rock Swap by the Central Penn Rock Club & Franklin County Rock Club. South Mountain Fairgrounds, 615 Narrows Rd., Biglerville PA, outdoor pavilion. 8-3, Adults \$1, children free. Contact Tom Smith, 717 552 6554 or e-mail <tsmith1012@comcast.net>.

Saturday May 19, 23rd Annual Chesapeake Gem and Mineral Show, 10-4, Ruhl Armory, Towson MD. Free admission. Directions: take I-695 (Baltimore Beltway) to exit 26 - York Road South. The armory is on the east side of York Rd. (across from a car dealer and funeral home) just inside I-695.

July 26 - 29, "A Celebration of Agates." AFMS Convention and Show and seminars. Lindbergh Center at Hopkins High School, 2400 Lindbergh Drive, Minnetonka MN. For information see <<http://minnesotamineralclub.org/2012show.htm>>.

September 15 - 16 47th Annual Show by the Central Pennsylvania Rock & Mineral Club, Zembo Shrine, 2801 N. 3rd St., Harrisburg PA 17110. **EFMLS** Meeting Friday September 14th. For information see <<http://www.rockandmineral.org/>>.

THE EFMLS NEWSLETTER is available at <<http://www.amfed.org/efmls/>>. In the May issue, EFMLS President R. J. Harris who was able to attend our show wrote "A special shout out to the GLMSMC. I have never been to a show that had the breath of hobby-related demonstrations that they had. Cabbing, faceting, tumbling, mineral identification, jewelry making, scouting activities, and more all in one show! Their attendees see all aspects of the hobby before they see a single vendor. Bravo!" Thanks for the compliment, R. J.



Congratulations to Steve and Carolyn Weinberger who have been selected as the honorees for EFMLS for the AFMS Scholarship. They are more than deserving, having served in important leadership roles in the AFMS, EFMLS, and three or so Baltimore area clubs plus the MMNCA. They have the pleasure of selecting two graduate students who will receive the actual monetary scholarship a \$4,000 educational grant.

POSTITE New Mineral Discovered by Joe Marty, Salt Lake City, UT. Named in honor of Dr. Jeffrey E. Post (b. 1954), National Museum of Natural History (Smithsonian Institution). Dr. Post has had a long and distinguished career in mineralogy, crystallography and geochemistry, and has specially contributed to the scientific understanding of manganese oxide minerals. Postite was approved by the Commission on New Minerals, Nomenclature and Classification of the International Mineralogical Association (IMA 2011-060). The mineral species is from the Vanadium Queen mine, La Sal Creek Canyon, and the Blue Cap mine, Lyon Canyon Creek, San Juan County, Utah, U.S.A. Chemically $Mg(H_2O)_6Al_2(OH)_2(H_2O)_8(V_{10}O_{28}) \cdot 13H_2O$, Postite is Orthorhombic. Abstracted from the April 2012 Mineral Mite.



Some say I am like a poet. Poet's eyes, Poet's ears, Poet's feet. Longfellows aren't they? Looks to me like we have Rhymin' Rockhounds right here in our Society. Ever notice? Members Remer, Reimherr, and Rimar. Ed.



WEB SITES

**CHOICE
PICKS**

By Wendell Mohr



Photograph By
James DiLoreto,
Smithsonian Institution

Titanoboa Monster Snake Fossil is a Smithsonian Channel feature about a 65 million year old snake fossil at <<http://www.smithsonianchannel.com/site/sn/show.do?show=140671#video>>. Found at the Cerrejón coal mine in La Guajira in Columbia, it describes the world's largest fossil snake found to date, estimated at 48 ft. long, 2500 pounds. Click on "Video" for the full 52:59 program. The item reviews the discovery, science, and comparisons with present day snakes. A full scale model was constructed by Kevin Hockley of Maynooth Ontario, Canada and is on tour, including to the National Museum of Natural History until January 6, 2013 on the Second Floor.

See <<http://newsdesk.si.edu/releases/titanoboa-monster-snake-premieres-national-museum-natural-history-march-28>>. Go see it! • If this fossil were alive which hand would you use to pick up the dangerous snake? Someone else's! What do you get if you cross a snake and a Lego set? A boa constructor! •



With permission of The
Tuscarora Lapidary Society

American Masters of Stone at <<http://www.americanmastersofstone.com/index.htm>> was created by Conrad K. Grundke and assisted by Dennis Paul Batt, now deceased. The fine site features a database on Lapidary as a Fine Art emphasizing "Compresso" or "Intarsia." Over 300 artists are represented with over 2000 images and others are being added to the catalogue. There are "How To" articles among other topics to explore. Click "News" and scroll to "Lost Art" for a 16:59 presentation. Thanks to the San Diego G&M Society April 2012 Pegmatite Bulletin for their lead to this site. • My uncle is a magician. He walked down the street and turned into a bar. It was the Rocky bar and he got stoned •

The Uses of Talc at <<http://geology.com/minerals/talc.shtml>> 615,000 metric tons of the softest mineral (Mohs = 1) was produced in the U. S. last year. The site gives information on this industrially important stone. What is Talc?, Where is Talc Produced?, How Does Talc Form?, and Talc Mining and Processing are topics covered. • Talc has the ability to absorb moisture, absorb odor, adhere to the skin, serve as a lubricant and produce an astringent effect in contact with human skin and provide *relief* from itchiness. New definition *Relief \ree-leaf\ : What trees do in the spring •



Photo R.Weller Cochise College

APRIL 9th PRIZES

Junior Door Prize: A Specimen of Garnets with Brown Vesuvianite from Lake Jaco, Chihuahua, Mexico was won by Jennifer Weiss.

General Door Prize: A Calcite from the Barrett Shaft, Mahoning Mine, Hardin County, IL was claimed by Joel Rosen. Fair and Square?

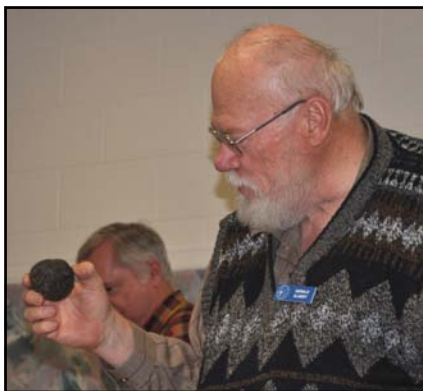
Show Table Prize: Andy Celmer took home a Schorl Tourmaline specimen from Howard County MD. Fair and Square!



SHOW TABLE: April 9th, 2012. Thanks to those who bring items for sharing at the meetings.

<u>Exhibitor</u>	<u>Specimen (s)</u>	<u>Locality</u>
Andy Celmer	Crazy Lace Agate*	Desert of CA
Jeff Cessna	Willemite, Sphalerite, & Malachite	Andover Iron Mine, NJ
George Durland	Agrellite & Vlasovite	Quebec, Canada
	Fluorite & Calcite	Geronimo Mine, La Paz AZ
Gerald Elgert	Tar Ball*	Spiro OK
Don Greaves	Pietersite	Namibia
Ryan Gunnison	Variety of Fossils	From March Show
Jim Kostka	Quartz	Brazil
	Serpentine*	Germantown MD
Wendell Mohr	Axinite	Gilgut, Pakistan
	Shorl	Karibib, Namiba
Andy Muir	Fossils*	Near Dayton OH
	Fluorite with Quartz coating	Rogerley Mine, Weardale, England
Jeff Nagy	Granite (Cleopatra's Backscratcher)	Cairo, Egypt
Pat Repik-Byrne	Calcite	Holbrook Mine, Bisbee AZ
	Wavellite	Saline County AR
Joel Rosen	Willemite and Franklinite	Franklin NJ
Conrad Smith	Scalenohedral Calcite	Manassas VA
Earl Smith	Franklinite etc.	Franklin NJ
Linda Smith	Garnet, Quartz, Muscovite	Kensington/Wheaton MD
Rod Towers	Snakeskin Agate	OR
	Scutes	FL

* = Self-collected or self made



Photographs by W. Mohr



Participate at the Show Table to increase your chances of winning a prize!



Back in November 2011 I started entertaining thoughts of driving to Tucson. Then I started having "second" thoughts. I figured I was off my "rocker". It is a long way between Brighton Ontario and Tucson AZ. Finally, I said to myself: "What the heck! You only live once, so go for it."

My soon to be 15 year old car, had its pre-travel check-up and new winter tires were installed. My mechanic said: "She is good to go!" Long distance driving is better for a car than doing short little trips around the area.

Tues. January 24 had almost dawned (6:30 am) when I departed asking myself: "Are you crazy." "Not at all!" I crossed into the United States at 8:15 am. The custom's agent asked if I was alone. "Yes!" "Have a safe trip!" I was now in the United States, the excitement was really beginning. The I-81 stretched ahead of me for many hundreds of miles. It was a good day to be on the road, the miles passed quickly and comfortably. I called Andy Dietz to see if he and Donna would have room for a traveler. Three and half hours later I turned into their drive. The light was on in my room. What a wonderful feeling after twelve hours and 698 miles later. I was rather tired the next day, so I remained at Chez Dietz the next day. I had consulted my road maps and figured I could still make Albuquerque NM by Saturday early afternoon.

Thur. January 26, I departed Ashland, VA for points south and then west. Donna, her sister-in-law and I shared the road as far as Knoxville TN. They headed south on I-75, I stayed west on I-40 with a daunting 1100 + miles to Albuquerque ahead of me. Then the rains came. As is customary for me, I had looked at the radar before leaving Ashland and knew I would be in for a challenge. Tennessee is one long state with Nashville about half way across. I pushed on through the driving rain and fog. Warning signals suggested a radio station should be tuned to for an emergency broadcast. The State police were reporting heavy fog with very low visibility for 20+ miles. I had just entered the warning area. I knew if I stopped short of Nashville I would be putting Albuquerque on Saturday in jeopardy. I pushed on and stopped on the east side of Nashville. I had done 650 miles and was more than ready to stop. If you have never driven across the bridge over the mighty Mississippi River in Memphis TN, you really should to do it. You cross into AR in the middle of bridge. Another state bites the dust. I had crossed through 6 states- NY, PA, MD WV, VA and TN. At this point I was really getting impressed with myself. I had my sights set on getting to the other side of Oklahoma City before I stop for the night. As darkness approached I was beginning to realize that it would be hard. I pushed on. I stopped in El Reno, OK about 35 miles W. of Oklahoma City. I pulled into a Days Inn, asked the receptionist if there was a room available and handed all my information to her. I had some dinner, opened my laptop and let everyone know that I had traveled 721 miles in one day! I was now in Central Time Zone. I got an extra hour of driving in that day without even thinking about it.

I received a text message from my friend saying that he was thinking of going to East Grants Ridge (NM) on Saturday but would wait until Sunday if I wanted to go with him. "Sure, why not, please don't ask me to drive though." Needless to say, when I finally crawled into bed Friday night I was not sure what the difference was between the foot and the head of the bed. I fell asleep pretty darn fast. Saturday morning arrived very early. My destination was only a state and a half away. Yes, I am really getting impressed with myself now!

At 5:30 am and I was back on I-40. The road sign showed that Amarillo was well within reach in the next three hours. I have entered the next time zone - Mountain Time. Good, I gained another hour of driving time. As you enter NM you pass under a beautiful arch that reads: "New Mexico, Land of Enchantment". They got that right. I honk the horn, raise my right hand and let out a nice loud yahooooo. I am on schedule to arrive in Albuquerque very close to 1:00 pm. Call me excited! It had been a hard push from Ashland VA. At precisely 1:00 pm Jan. 28th I took the exit off I-40. I could see the Motel. I sent a text to Patrick Haynes and said: "I am here". I had been on the road for a scant 8½ hours that day. The sky was blue, the sun was shining and the temperature was very pleasant and I had just finished Part 2 of my trip to Tucson. (Continued next Page)

Now the fun begins. I was in the beautiful SW US! I planned to be in Tucson on Thur. Feb. 2. I could stay put for a couple of days. Patrick and I had lunch, and then off to start buying minerals, after all that was the reason for the trip. Patrick decided I deserved to be taken out for dinner. No complaints from me. My only concern was whether or not I would be awake to enjoy a fine meal and good conversation. A hot shower and a change of clothes, I could handle anything. We visited "Old Town" in Albuquerque where we also had dinner. Lovely, but something was going wrong. My mouth was starting to hurt. The nasty tooth that should have had root canal was starting to hurt. Thank goodness for the foresight to bring antibiotics with me. I should be fine in a couple of days.

Sun. morning Patrick picked me up and we started the hour and half drive to Grants NM. What beautiful country! The Town of Grants is quite small, the mountains don't really seem that high but my, oh my, it is just so beautiful (and warm). We arrive at East Grants Ridge and I saw boulders all over the place. Patrick said the Spessartine and Topaz were in the Rhyolite boulders. He takes off his glasses and starts looking, "Here are some Spessartine."



"Where?" "Well, look." On came my glasses and I pulled my loupe out of my pocket. Oh my goodness, there were some tiny red golf ball shaped Spessartine. You have to watch out for the cholla cactus. They have nasty spikes that can easily get right into whatever part of you that might come in contact with the. It is interesting to watch Patrick in the field. He walks around looking, getting a feel for what might be hidden inside a boulder, he stops swings the 12 pound sledge hammer, checks what broke off and either hits again or moves on. Meanwhile, I am sitting on a rock looking out at Mount Taylor (covered in snow). I was just looking around, finding it hard to believe that I was actually at the Spessartine location in NM. If this is a dream – do not wake me up.



Several hours and many flats later we started back to Albuquerque. I was tired but it is a good tired. Patrick gave me a running commentary on the history and geology of the area. He is in his element and had a captive audience. So much information came from him. I will forget it all but the scenery will stay with me. Beautiful.

Monday saw me back to buying minerals with my "guru". We visited Petroglyph National Monument in Albuquerque after lunch. The volcanic mesa had many interesting drawings on the black rocks. I had planned to head to Socorro that day but it was late afternoon before I returned to the motel so I stayed another night in Albuquerque. Good thing I did, Tues. I woke to a broken water pump, it had to be replaced. That done, I headed to Socorro where I spent Tues. night with dear friends. Wed. I stopped at the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge to do some serious birdwatching.



I stopped in Lordsburg, NM that night. I arrived in Tucson Thur. Call me incredibly amazed with myself by now. I left Brighton Ontario Jan. 24th and it was Feb. 2. Not to waste any time I jumped right into the mineral buying. My first stop was the Quality Inn on East Benson Hwy. That was the location for most of the Asian dealers. Several hours and hundreds of dollars later it was time to call it a day. Friday was spent getting right into the thick of things. Buy, buy, buy, was the name of the game. Last year, purchasing micro material was far easier. There seemed to be far less micro material available this year. Also, I had help of my geologist friend, Mr. Haynes, who would not arrive until Saturday. What the heck, if I can sell them, I should be able to buy them.



There were all kinds of replica dinosaurs around the Hotel Tucson. Sat. Patrick arrived and we started checking out the dealers at the Hotel Tucson. Once again, it was quickly becoming clear that micro material was going to be hard to find. My dear friend Stephanie arrived Sat. evening and joined Patrick and I for dinner. Sun. dawned and it was to be a day to hunt minerals with Patrick and Stephanie. I got to ride in the "beast". Patrick's 30-year-old Toyota Landcruiser. I was told it was an honour to ride in the "Beast". Okay!

(Continued next Page)



Sun. evening I met Stephanie, at a resort, in the Oro Valley where we were stationed for the next week. What a lovely 40 minutes drive north of Tucson. We were close enough to the action but far enough away to have total peace and quiet. Mon. I was off again mineral hunting with Patrick who knew where to go. Tue., the "three amigos" headed out together. Wed. was supposed to be "a day off". Stephanie had received several emails from her husband with places for us to try to find. We found this quaint little place on South Kinney Road. It was full of dust and dirt. The owner took us into the "back room", cleared (not cleaned) a place for us at a desk and told us to go crazy. Three and half hours later we had only looked through 41 (8½ x 11") flats. Simkev's motto is "pulchritudo in parvitas" "beauty in smallness" and that is exactly what I was finding. There is something more awesome than crystals that are truly micro.

For the next four days "The Main Event" would be taking place at the Tucson Convention Centre. If you want to see beautiful things (rocks, jewelry, fossils) that cost a lot of money, that is the place to be. Stephanie and I visited the main event for two days. You just cannot see everything in one day. You can walk and shop 'til you drop.

Sun. Stephanie had to return to Maryland. We had such a good time together and agreed we would do it again. Mon. morning was spent packing material to be sent to Virginia. That afternoon Patrick and I went looking for Cerro de la Concordia Amethyst. It would be hard to find Amethyst more beautiful than those from the Veracruz area of Mexico. Tue. was indeed a day of rest. It was snowing in the Oro Valley and temperature was not making any effort to rise. I decided to see if I could find more Veracruz Amethyst and just take a leisurely drive around Tucson.



Wed. – a new adventure dawned. I was only 4 and bit hours away from the Grand Canyon. Should I, shouldn't I, so I made a reservation in Williams Arizona and off I went. Tucson is around an elevation of about 2000', Williams is 6000'. The traffic and flatness of Tucson soon changed as I headed north. At 6000', I was wondering where the mountains had gone. The road passed through forests of Ponderosa Pine trees with huge amounts of snow on the ground. I had not lost the mountains, I was in them, and it was cold! My poor little 15-year-old car (almost) made some groaning sounds as we continued to climb. In some places I was in third gear due to the grade.

The Grand Canyon is just too amazing. If you have never been there, put it on your "to-do-list".

Amazing! Of course I was wondering where exactly the Grand View Mine was located from where I was. I also saw two California Condors, as they glided several feet below where I was standing.

I was as far west in the US as I ever thought I would get. Do I start east or go farther? I received an email from friends asking me to call them. I called. Their daughter was in the hospital and they wanted to know if I could stop in Dayton TN on my way back to Virginia. Four days later, I arrived in Dayton and met their daughter and four-day-old granddaughter Madeline - "pulchritudo in parvitas". Tues., Feb. 21st Andy Dietz and I headed to Ashland, VA. It is rather scary, when the dashboard lights start flashing like it is Christmas. I would need a new alternator in Buchanan VA. Not to be out done by my car, I had a tooth extracted in Richmond VA.

Now that I was back in Ashland, home was only a scant 12 hours away. I would be weather watching for the next couple of weeks. I finally crossed into Canada Wed., Mar. 14th with a warm greeting from the Canadian Customs Agent. What an exciting time! 11,216 kilometers (6729 miles) after leaving Brighton on a solo trip, I was home. Would I do it again? Darn straight, why not? Would I make the effort, again, to ask anyone to go with me? No. It sure will be easier the second time round, after all it would not be the daunting "first-time".

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