



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.”

### FROM THE EDITOR: WHO OWNS THE ROCKS

I heard a comment the other day that started me thinking. Who owns the study of rocks? Our banner says that as a society, our purpose is the increase knowledge and popular interest in earth sciences, geology, mineralogy, paleontology, lapidary arts and related subjects. What are we allowed to include in the “related subjects?” If someone is a photographer with a passion for rocks, not just microscopic photography of crystals, but the huge beauty of mountains, do they belong? If someone is a cosmetologist and loves the way rocks can be used to enhance the beauty of the human body, do they belong? If a yogi has found that holding certain rocks increases the strength of their meditation, are they part of the related subjects? If a child looks at the sunlight streaming through a crystal and the rainbow transports her to a land of unicorns or him to far away planet, does their love of crystals entitle them to be included in our society? Do those who believe that rocks have the ability to increase our health and well-being deserve to be shunned and denied admission? I would love to hear your opinion on this matter. Please write to me at [kristinlolmaugh@gmail.com](mailto:kristinlolmaugh@gmail.com).

*Kristin Lolmaugh, Editor*

### REGULAR MEETINGS

Meetings are held the 2nd Monday of the month from September to June. The Society will meet on **Monday, February 10, 2014**, 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.

Our speaker this month is club member, Jeff Nagy. His presentation, entitled "Mining Montgomery," will whet all of our appetites for digging in our local area. Just the cure for 5 degree mornings and cabin fever! Jeff has been interested in geology and minerals since the age of 10 and is an avid field collector. His mineral knowledge is vast and he is always on the search locally for old mining areas lost to history.

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Meeting will be held **Monday, February 17, 2014**, 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](mailto:amuir21@comcast.net) or phone 301-990-1370.

IN THIS ISSUE	
President’s Message	2
Dinosaur Hall	2
Society Minutes	2
Board Minutes	3
Member Update	3
Rockhounder of the Year	4
Field Trips	5
Society Patches	5
Lure & Lore of Rocks	5
Mini-Miners	6
FRA	6
Thunder Eggs	6
Diamond Theme	7
New Officers	7
Websites of Interest	8
Safety Matters	8
Bench Tips	9
Upcoming Events	10
Rockville Science Day	11
Society Library	11

**REMINDER**  
If schools in Montgomery County, MD, are cancelled or let out early because of weather on the day of a scheduled Society meeting, the meeting will be cancelled. If in doubt, call the Society President or a Board Member (numbers on the back of *The Rockhounder*).

The deadline for the March issue of *The Rockhounder* is February 25, 2014.

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: HELLO FELLOW ROCKHOUNDERS**

Well a royal good time was had by all at our belatedly celebrated Christmas party. Many fine dishes and desserts were brought and feasted upon, along with many fine mineral specimens! Past President Andy B., and I were dressed in Renaissance regalia for the "changing of the guard." There was a "coronation" and it was all in good fun. Everyone then re-directed their attention to the mutton, roasts of wild boar, turkey legs and jousting!!! Thanks everyone for such great attendance and bringing many varieties of spectacular foods.

We have a lot of events coming in 2014, our 50th Anniversary year! The rapidly approaching show is going to have some remarkable displays, demonstrations, and dealers with plenty of new gem and mineral specimens to sink your teeth into! Dr. Jeffrey Post will be coming in the Spring to speak with us about this year's Tucson show and all of the Smithsonian's new acquisitions from the world's largest gem and mineral show! Just like last year, there will be many opportunities to find your own specimens with all of the upcoming field trips for the digging season. Many new quarries were open to our exploration last year and we had field trip after field trip. The Board is also working on another upcoming auction of specimens and lapidary equipment from three different sources. It is a good bit of work and logistics to get these planned so we'll keep you posted on the timing of the auction. These are always quite popular and it is a great way to find equipment, cutting material, and specimens for a good price. It is especially great if you are new to the hobby and are looking to get your feet wet in cutting, and not have to take out a second mortgage!

We should also count ourselves very fortunate to have such a diverse and dynamic group of people in our club. There is a huge pool of knowledge with our members that have been in the hobby for decades. They have stories, seen trends, and have had opportunities to buy specimens that are long gone nowadays. These are the stalwarts of our mineral society and have passed down so much to the group. We are also very blessed to have a tremendous number of young people in our FRA and Mini Miner programs. The outreach of our group to youth is one of the main reasons I joined a few years back. As many of you know, that is not the trend that most mineral groups have now. We also have a nice influx of all ranges of ages in new members. We are not a static group at all, we are growing!!! Thanks so much for all you do!

*Chris Luzier, President*

## **SOCIETY MEETING MINUTES: JANUARY 13, 2014**

The January 13, 2014, meeting was called to order by outgoing President Andy Celmer at 7:45 pm, with approximately 64 people attending (49 adults, 11 youth, and 4 children). This meeting was our Society's annual holiday party with members contributing potluck foods and desserts. Great food! Delicious desserts! Outstanding fellowship! Thanks to everyone who contributed!

**President's business:** Brief attention was given to matters of business and reports from officers. Outgoing President Andy Celmer gave a warm welcome to new incoming President Chris Luzier and with additional thanks to all outgoing officers for their services. New and continuing officers were announced, recognized, and given an opportunity to speak. It was



## **SMITHSONIAN'S DINOSAUR HALL**

April 28, 2014, is a significant date for dinosaur lovers. That is the day that the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History Dinosaur/Fossil Hall will be closing for a five-year, \$48 million makeover. When it reopens in 2019, the 31,000-square-foot hall will have a new centerpiece: the Wankel T. rex, one of the most complete Tyrannosaurus rex skeletons ever unearthed. Not all of the dinosaurs will be gone: the museum recently installed a cast of the Wankel T. rex skull in its Constitution Avenue lobby. Next year, it will add a temporary exhibit featuring fossils from the last days of the American dinosaurs. The museum is also planning a series of paleontology programs and events.

M/S/P to approve both the regular and Board minutes for November 2013 and the minutes for the Board meeting for December 16, 2013. (The December 2013 regular meeting/holiday party was cancelled due to snow.) Pres. Chris Luzier announced that one of our Show dealers (Carved Opal and Obsidian) Pamela Castle, is looking for a society member to assist her at our March 15-16 show.



**Memberships:** It was M/S/P to accept new member Daniel Bailey

**EFML Liaison:** Wendell Mohr mentioned several upcoming events and activities: 1) January 16<sup>th</sup> Smithsonian NMNH special webcast on "Unearthing Fossil Whales;" 2) One of our ex-Society members in Seattle is in the process of publishing a children's book on minerals and is looking for someone to allow her grandson in Virginia to take pictures of their minerals; and 3) upcoming shows.

**Presentation:** No presentation was scheduled; the time was given over to enjoying the potluck foods and to a number of tables set up for the trading and selling of jewelry-gem-fossil-rock-mineral specimens.

**Give-aways:** Society members brought numerous mineral and fossil specimens to give away.

**Donations:** Society member Dave Fryauff donated a brightly fluorescent cabinet-sized specimen of norbergite/graphite/calcite to the Society for the 2014 annual auction. He collected this specimen in November 2013 from the Rhein Property, Amity, Orange County, NY.

**Door Prizes:** Joel Rosen handed out tickets for an attractive door prize (green stone pendant in gold mount) and Linda Smith drew the lucky number.

**Adjournment:** The business meeting adjourned at approximately 8:15 PM with the remaining time given over to the enjoyment of potluck foods, deserts, and drinks contributed by members. Thanks to all members for their contributions!



Photos by Dave Fryauff

*Dave Fryauff, Secretary*

## BOARD MEETING MINUTES: JANUARY 20, 2014

**Board Members Present:** Andy Celmer, Chris Luzier, Wendell Mohr, Dave Tiktinsky, Andy Muir, Doug Baum, Joel Rosen, Dave Fryauff, Jonathan Harris, Pat Repik-Byrne, and Kristin Lolmaugh;  
**Non-Board Member Present:** Conrad Smith. President Chris Luzier called the January 20, 2014, Board of Director's meeting to order at 7:31 pm.

**Annual Show:** Andy Celmer discussed height requirements as the only barrier for FRA members to participate in cabling but hazard and liability should be considered. Wendell Mohr questioned whether USGS could be invited as a demonstrator. Free entry was discussed for all children younger than 11 years old and scouts. A handful of passes are available for a few nonmembers (i.e., Mary Bernardo) who provide special assistance and services to GLMSMC. Table arrangements for Scouts (Girl, Boy, Cubs, etc.) were discussed with suggestions made to locate Scout tables toward the rear of the first floor. Special cloth shopping bags to commemorate our 50<sup>th</sup> show anniversary this March was discussed; however, vendor's price and quantity requirements discouraged this idea. Petra is in charge of publicity for the show and Andy Celmer will contact her with 8.5" x 11" fliers for posting in grocery stores, etc. Joel requested help from one or more other board members in driving around the fairgrounds property to determine where the new directional signs should be placed. There was consensus that we have enough outdoor signage for the show. Additional funding for the back

### MEMBER UPDATE

Welcome to new member Daniel Bailey, 4129 Baker Valley Road, Frederick, MD, 21704-7646, 301-695-8915, cell: 301-314-7149. [suzvdanb@comcast.net](mailto:suzvdanb@comcast.net).

room at the fairground building was considered, but deemed too expensive. Raffle tickets: 700 are sufficient. Voucher Certificates for Exhibitors and Demonstrators will be prepared by Pat Repik-Byrne.

**Treasurer's Report:** Holly was not present but there was discussion of the Turner endowment and Andy Muir encouraged members to consider ways in which those funds can be used with the focus on younger, student members of GLMSMC. We need ideally a GLMS member to serve as auditor for review and approval of the GLMSMC book keeping records for 2013. Jonathan Harris volunteered to contact member Tom Parnell (retired banker) in Virginia Beach as a possible candidate and without conflict of interest issues.

**2014 Auction:** Andy Celmer reported four separate donations of lapidary equipment to the Society and suggested that better prices might be obtained by selling these items at auction rather than on E-Bay. Springtime/May date for auction discussed with exact date to be determined. Dave Tiktinsky advised that Member/Society split for items sold at the upcoming May-June GLMSMC auction should be 75%/25%. It was M/S/P.

**Membership:** The Board discussed the possible broadening of membership and Annual Show attendance if the Society recognized New Age healing and mystical properties of minerals and crystals. This was a somewhat contentious issue with primary interest and recognition of the science of mineralogy and geology that we embrace. However, in the spirit of open inquiry and tolerance to other views, Board members were agreeable in principle, as long as appropriate disclaimers attended any presentations.

**Boy Scout Eagle Project:** Conrad Smith presented his plan for an Eagle project based on outreach education and introduction of earth science for primary, middle, and high school age children/youths. The lasting, tangible aspects of this project would be the teaching aids and collections he would make and administer interactively at the show. \$165 for rock & mineral specimens to make 'scout started kits' was M/S/P.

**President's Items:** We need a Society member to replace Kristin as the editor of *The Rockhoulder*. Please submit photos from the Holiday party to Kristin. GLMSMC volunteers are needed for the April 6th Rockville Science Day.

**EFML Liaison:** Wendell Mohr requested a Society member to serve as an Alternate for EFML meeting attendance. GLMSMC subsidizes the Director (Luzier) and Delegate (Mohr) who attend the EFMLS Annual Meeting. Andy Celmer will be Director's alternate. Delegate alternate needed. The alternate will receive the funding if the primary person is unable to attend.

**Marketing:** There was discussion of the current GLMS-MC brochure and it was M/S/P to eliminate wording about voting/approval of new members and to state that: "All are welcome."

**Adjournment:** M/S/P to close adjourn BOD meeting at 9:33 pm.

## ROCKHOUNDER OF THE YEAR

BY A. CELMER

The Gem, Lapidary and Mineral Society of Montgomery County's 2013 Rockhound of the Year is Holly McNeil. Holly created our Future Rockhounds of America (FRA) program out of whole cloth. She developed activities and lessons for each of the topics that the FRA group studied. She brought in distinguished speakers to enlighten the group as well. Holly solicited minerals from members so that each class-attending child received a mineral for their collection. In many cases, the minerals were relevant to the subject of the month. Throughout her five year stewardship, she built the FRA program to include more than 40 students. During our annual show, Holly, her students, and their parents staffed the positions at the Mini Mine, Give Away, Touch Table and Knowledge Hunt. They explained properties of minerals, identified rocks and gave away specimens. Holly was responsible for encouraging a record 11 youths to enter a showcase in our annual show last March. Congratulations, Holly, for a great job, well done.

*Dave Fryauff, Secretary*

## FIELD TRIPS

**SATURDAY February 1, 2014** – James Madison University Department of Geology and Environmental Science and Mineral Museum, hosted by Professor Lance Kearns; 9:00 am. For those who like machines more than experts, Professor Kearns has indicated that the x-ray diffraction machine and Ramen Spectrometer will be available. There is some chance that the LEEDS/SEM lab (Low energy electron diffraction and Scanning Electron Microscope) will be open – and, of course, the JMU mineral museum. Please sign up by contacting [Jonathan Harris, jgharris7@gmail.com](mailto:jgharris7@gmail.com).

**SATURDAY February 15, 2014** – Thin Section Field Trip to Northern Virginia Community College, 1:00 pm, Meet in the Geology Lab, CS Building, Room 217, Annandale Campus of Northern Virginia Community College. Please sign up by contacting [Jonathan Harris, jgharris7@gmail.com](mailto:jgharris7@gmail.com). by February 5<sup>th</sup>, by 5:00 pm.

## THE LURE AND LORE OF ROCKS: COPPER

BY KRISTIN LOLMAUGH

Copper comes from the Latin word cuprum, meaning “from the island of Cyprus.” Copper is man’s oldest metal, dating back more than 10,000 years. There are reports of copper beads dating back to 9000 BC found in Iraq and a copper pendant discovered in what is now northern Iraq has been dated to about 8,700 BC. Methods for refining copper from its ores were discovered around 5000 BC and a 1000 or so years later it was being used in pottery in North Africa. Copper and bronze artifacts were found in the ancient cities of Sumer dating back to 3000 BC. Egyptian findings made of copper and copper alloys containing tin are known from approximately the same period. Copper pipelines of a water supply system dating back to 5000 years ago were found in one of the Egyptian Pyramids. The use of copper in ancient China dates back to about 2000 BC. There are ancient copper mines preserved in the mountain of Ural where ore used to be mined 3500 - 5000 ago. The glaciers of the Austrian-Italian Alps have preserved a skeleton of a man who lived in about 3200 BC. A copper axe made of 99.7% pure metal was found close to him. The finding was called Ötzi the Iceman and scientists assume that he was an ancient miner who used to mine and smelt copper.



*Photo by Kristin Lolmaugh*

In ancient mythology and alchemy this metal was associated with the protection of the goddesses Aphrodite and Venus due to the radiant beauty of copper articles and its relation with the island of Cyprus which was considered sacred.

Copper has been used to promote health in various ways since ancient times. The ancient Egyptians used it to purify water for drinking, and cultures around the world used it as a form of medicine for such afflictions as sore throat, eye infections, and skin conditions. It was also applied to wounds to prevent infection. In more recent modern times, copper has been found to have anti-microbial properties which explain in part why it was well suited for its ancient applications. To prevent the spread of bacteria, copper has even been woven into fabrics or used on various surfaces.

## EMBROIDERED SOCIETY PATCHES

Many members have shown an interest in a Society patch, if they exist. They do! They can be sewn to a jacket or other piece of clothing. Our Treasurer, Doug Baum, has the patches as illustrated here. They are about 3” in diameter and are available for \$2.00. See Doug if you want to purchase one or more and he can fulfill your wish!



Copper is known as a good conductor of energy, as well as a balancing metal that works with the flow of projective and receptive energies. Copper is known to shamans and healers to be a metal that balances the body's polarities, thereby removing blockages which are responsible for illness or imbalance. Some believe copper provides a harmonic connection between the physical and astral bodies and also can align the subtle bodies. It has been used to amplify and transmit thought and healing energy. Copper has been used with stones and crystals – it helps to align the stone's individual energy field. It can assist in combating fatigue and lethargy, restlessness and non-acceptance of oneself.

### **MINI MINERS**

**Next Meeting Date:** February 10, 2014

**Location:** Card Room, Rockville Senior Center

**Ages 6-9**

**Time:** 7:00 - 8:00 pm

### **FUTURE ROCKHOUNDS OF AMERICA (THE MOCKS)**

**Next Meeting Date:** February 10, 2014

**Location:** Sunroom Cafeteria, Rockville Senior Center

**Ages 10-15**

**Time:** 7:45 - 9:00 pm

**January 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting:** The MOCKS enjoyed a couple of rounds of a Yankee Mineral Swap at our holiday party. Everyone went home with a specimen or two that had been donated to the FRA by our generous benefactors.

**February 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting:** Our February meeting will be all about fluorescent minerals. Jonathan Harris will be our guest speaker. It sounds like there will be hands-on exploration, as well as fluorescent specimens for the MOCKS to add to their collections. Come and enjoy the glow!

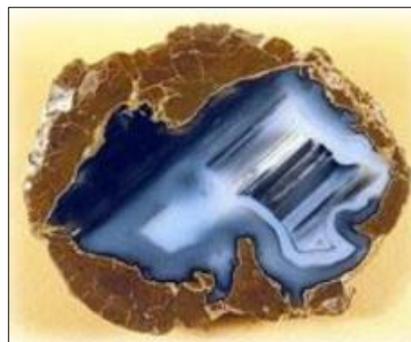
As a reminder, if you'd like enter an exhibit in our March show, please fill out an exhibit form and submit it to Pat Repik-Byrne as soon as possible since exhibit spaces are limited. Don't forget that junior exhibits are eligible for the Lillian Turner awards given at the show. Details of the Lillian Turner competition will be available again at our February meeting.

For more information on the Future Rockhounds of America program, please contact Mark Dahlman at [fra\\_advisor@glmsmc.com](mailto:fra_advisor@glmsmc.com) or 301-428-0455.

### **THUNDER EGGS**

Thunder eggs do not thunder and neither will they hatch. They are not even eggs! They are called thunder eggs because they were once thought to be petrified eggs of the terrible dinosaur called the Thunder Lizard or Tyrannosaurus Rex.

They are curious baseball-shaped concretions dug from the soil of old volcanic ash beds of Idaho and Oregon. These concretions were once hollow lava pockets that have since been filled with chalcedony, agate and opal. When cut in half and polished, they reveal patterns of Thunder Eggs are sometimes confused with geodes. The thunder eggs are solid; a geode is a similar shaped hollow globular body varying from two inches to a foot or more in size and is characteristic of certain limestone beds. They have hollow interior linings of inward projecting crystals and sometimes this lining is drusy quartz. They have a clay film between the outer geode



*From Pickin's & Diggin's 12/1991 Jean Wallace, Editor, via Rockhound Gazette, January 2013, via The Rock Collector, Rochester Lapidary Society, January 2014*

## DIAMOND THEME

BY WENDELL C. MOHR

The latest *Rock & Mineral Magazine* has the theme of Diamonds, tying in with the fact that the 2014 Tucson Gem & Mineral Show, February 13 - 16, has "60 years of Diamonds (and Gems, Silver, and Gold)" as their theme. This is their 60th Show or Diamond Anniversary. Great if you can escape the bitter cold here and head to the Southwest. If you are interested, see [www.tgms.org](http://www.tgms.org).

The *Rock & Mineral Magazine* issue includes three articles by our local Smithsonian NMNH staff:

1. "The Hope Diamond" by Jeffrey Post.
2. "Beyond Hope, Other Notable Diamonds at the Smithsonian" by Russ Feather. Other articles to come in later issues.
3. "Diamonds from Dutoitspan Mine, Kimberley, Northern Cape Province, South Africa" by Paul Powhat. A mine in a kimberlite pipe, owned by the De Beers and closed in 2005. The deepest mining level was 870 meters below surface. In 1974, a miner at Dutoitspan picked up an octahedral diamond of 616 ct. This crystal is the largest diamond ever found in all of the Kimberley mines, and also the largest ever octahedral diamond that has been recovered per Mindat. You might be interested in obtaining a copy of this issue.

## NEW OFFICERS

Please allow me to introduce our two new officers and members of the Board of Directors.

**DAVE TIKTINSKY, VICE PRESIDENT:** I have been a mineral collector since I was about 13. I grew up in New Jersey and collected in various localities including Franklin, NJ. My interests in collecting led me to major in Mining Engineering at the University of Arizona. After graduation I went to work at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission on high level radioactive waste disposal. Although my interest in mineral collecting was always there, my activities related to this hobby had been dormant for a number of years. However, about seven years ago my interest in minerals was re-kindled. I have traveled to Maine for collecting and attended the Pegmatite workshop a couple of years ago. In order to combine my interests in minerals and traveling to more exotic locations, my family and I went to Namibia on a "mineral safari."



**DAVE FRYAUFF, SECRETARY:** My dad was a mining engineer involved in management of 3M quarries and crushing operations in Wausau, Wisconsin, Little Rock, Arkansas, & Belle Meade, NJ. He introduced me to interesting rocks and minerals from his geologist friends at work and at a young age I became a collector of virtually everything – rocks, fossils, butterflies, bugs, reptiles, amphibians. As a kid I had a pretty good collection of minerals that were given to my dad or that we had found together. Prehnite and zeolites were some of the showiest specimens and continue to be my favorites. After graduating from American University I joined the Peace Corps and did a two year tour in the Tonga Islands working on a project to treat and control the parasitic disease. After receiving my PhD from Johns Hopkins, my wife and I traveled extensively – to Liberia, West Africa, Cairo, Egypt, the Sinai desert, Jakarta, Indonesia, and finally back to Maryland. In 2011 we attended the annual rock, gem, and mineral show at the Gaithersburg fairgrounds and suddenly I felt that unusual fascination with "well-arranged molecules" and I was back again, passionately collecting minerals, trying to understand them and trying hard to make up for all that lost time.

## WEBSITES OF INTEREST

BY WENDELL C. MOHR



Photos Credit Larry Benson

**Lake Winnemucca Petroglyphs**, located about 35 miles (56 kilometers) northeast of Reno are possibly 14,800 years old. Petroglyphs (also called rock engravings) are images created by removing part of a rock surface by incising, picking, carving, and abrading. The Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe owns the land on which these are found. The dating method is unusual since the stone writings were submerged, so the exposed carbonate deposition could be dated. See

<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2013/08/130815-lake-winnemucca-petroglyphs-ancient-rock-art-nevada/>.



NMNH Website, Credit: Jorge Velez-Juarbe

**Unearthing Fossil Whales** by Dr. Nick Pyenson of the Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of Natural History is a video webcast presentation approximately 30 minutes long. I had mentioned this at the January meeting. Now this interview is available at <https://qrius.si.edu/paleobiology-unearting-fossil-whales-featuring-nick-pyenson> and includes Panama, Canada, and Chile finds. Click on "[11am EST Fossil Whales Webcast featuring Dr. Nick Pyenson, Archive.](#)" Discovery, recovery, and preparation are discussed as well as the use of 3-D, <http://3d.si.edu/browser>.

**International Gem Society**, [www.gemsociety.com](http://www.gemsociety.com), is a very comprehensive "A+" collection of information about gems. Explore "Reference Library" for more topics than I have room to mention here. All are interesting and educational.



Logo from Website

## SAFETY MATTERS: WEAR THE MASK FOR THE TASK

BY ELLERY BOROW, AFMS SAFETY CHAIR FROM AFMS NEWSLETTER

Perhaps you have heard the expression "Wear the right mask for the task at hand." Then again perhaps you may not have heard of it seeing's how I just made it up. Because it rhymes, it may be more memorable as a safety message. Catch phrases are handy for making a safety guideline a rememberable guideline. What the expression "wear the right mask for the task" is meant to convey is the message that for many rockhounds, silver and goldsmiths, lapidary tasks and so on, wearing a specific for the task mask may be advisable.

Rockhound tasks often involve being in an area of dry, wind-blown dust. For such situations a simple, properly fitted, dust mask would be suitable for protecting the lungs from air-born dust.

Silver and gold smithing operations may also involve dry dust such as when using rouge or polishing powder to finish a piece of work. Smithing tasks may also involve fumes from soldering and pickling operations. A dry dust type of mask would not offer suitable protection to the lungs from the detrimental effect of soldering fumes. Masks providing protection from harmful fumes would be a more appropriate choice. Even under the best of circumstances where a suitable ventilation system is being used during soldering operations, wearing a mask for protection from vapors may be advisable.

Lapidary tasks, on the other hand, usually involve the need for lung protection from the presence of wet dust. Wet dust requires a different type of mask – one that catches the dust but does

not block the flow of air to the lungs. A standard dry dust mask would rapidly clog and be rendered useless when used in a wet dust environment. Another common material used in lapidary tasks is the mixing and application of epoxy resins. Epoxies, as I'm sure you have noted from reading the safety labels, emit volatiles that are harmful if inhaled.

Labels on epoxies usually stress using the product in a well-ventilated area. If the usage is in an area not all that well ventilated, a mask suitable for epoxy vapors may be used.

Were one to look in any reasonably complete safety equipment catalog, one would find a bewildering array of safety masks made by numerous vendors and suitable for every imaginable task. No brief safety article can mention all the various products available for rockhound, smithing

and lapidary tasks but catalog sales representatives could easily offer mask guidance for your particular needs. Even in modestly equipped hardware and building supply stores one may be able to find masks suitable to the task at hand.

The takeaway message in all this discussion is that your lungs are important and need to be protected. There are numerous safety masks which can offer that protection. The trick is to choose the mask which fits the task. Actually, a similar statement may be made for many rockhound tasks - use the right hammer and chisel, select the right safety goggles, wear the right footwear, choose the right gloves, and so on.

Being safe involves making good choices. Please be informed, please be safe.

## **BENCH TIPS:**

BY BRAD SMITH

### **Modifying Pliers**

Sometimes a few changes to your tools can significantly improve productivity and quality at the same time. Stock tools can be customized and improved using standard jewelry skills. Here's an example:

Making jump rings and weaving them into chainmaile designs involves a lot of opening and closing of the rings. I typically use two square jaw pliers to do this, one for each hand. But sometimes the rings would slip out of the pliers, getting scratched, and requiring extra cleanup time.

I solved the problem by forming a groove at the end of the jaw that would grasp the ring gently without scratching it. Use a triangular file or cutoff disk to cut the grooves about 1.5 mm back from the tip. Then to make the grooves round so they grasp the wire without distorting it, close the jaws and run a drill through the opening formed by the two rough



grooves. Start with a small drill and follow up with a drill just slightly smaller than the wire size you want to grip. In my case that was 14 gauge wire, so I chose a #53 drill. Finally, polish the grooves with a rubberized disk.



## Managing Production

Many readers of these Bench Tips sell their jewelry at shows, in galleries or online. They are sole proprietors and constantly under pressure to design new pieces and make enough product to keep up with demand. So their options are few when a large order comes in. They can burn the midnight oil themselves, or they can be smart and get some temporary help. But you need good help, and you often need it fast.

Jewelry assemblers are skilled, trustworthy and reliable craftsmen who make it their business to help others handle overloads and meet deadlines. Flexible arrangements are possible, working by the job, by the hour or by the piece. Each has a different mix of skills, from fabrication to enameling, casting, stonsetting, lapidary and others.

Assemblers are known to the trade, so you may have to ask around to find some references. But some assemblers advertise on the Net. For instance, a good friend of mine, Janice Metz, [JenFT4@aol.com](mailto:JenFT4@aol.com), has been working with designers and fabricators in the West Los Angeles area since 1997. She specializes in silversmithing, wire-wrapping, beading and stringing.

*More Bench Tips by Brad Smith are at [facebook.com/BenchTips/](https://www.facebook.com/BenchTips/)  
or see the book *Bench Tips for Jewelry Making* on Amazon*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- **MARCH 1-2, 2014** – Delaware Gem-Mineral-Fossil Show; visit <http://www.delminsociety.net/marchshow.htm> for complete information
- **MARCH 8, 2014** – Southern MD Show Saturday only March 8th, for more info, visit <http://www.smrnc.org/2014-rock-show.html>
- **MARCH 14, 2014** - Auction from the estate of the late Dale Fisher. Preview at 7:00 pm – Auction begins at 7:30 pm sponsored by the Chesapeake Gem & Mineral Society, Westchester Community Center 2414 Westchester Ave; Oella, MD, [chesapeakegemandmineral.org](http://www.chesapeakegemandmineral.org)
- **MARCH 15 - 15, 2014** – Annual Gem, Mineral & Fossil Show sponsored by the Gem, Lapidary & Mineral Society of Montgomery Co., MD. Montgomery Co. Fairgrounds, 16 Chestnut St; Gaithersburg, MD. Admission: \$6 ages 12 and older (children 11 and under, and scouts in uniform get in for free), World-wide treasures from more than 20 dealers, More than 40 exhibits, Door prizes, Demonstrations, Free workshop, Free specimens for the kids, Free kids' Mini Mine, Food for sale, Fluorescent minerals, Raffle, Information Center, Plenty of free parking, See <http://www.glmcmc.com/show.shtml> for directions, coupon, and more information
- **MARCH 22-23, 2014** – 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Gem, Mineral & Jewelry Show, Franklin County Rock & Mineral Club, Hamilton Heights Elementary School, Chambersburg, PA
- **MARCH 22-23, 2014** – 45<sup>th</sup> Annual Rock & Mineral Show, Che-Hanna Rock and Mineral Club, Athens Township Volunteer Fire Hall, 211 Herrick Avenue, Sayre PA
- **MARCH 28, 2014** – Eastern Federation Meeting in Plymouth Meeting, PA
- **MARCH 29 – 30, 2014** – EFMLS Convention and show at Plymouth Meeting House PA a suburb of Philadelphia (EFMLS Meeting on Friday the 28th)
- **APRIL 4-5, 2014**: 2014 Atlantic Micromounters' Conference, the Springhill Suites by Marriott, Alexandria, 6065 Richmond Hwy, Alexandria, VA 22303 Phone (571) 481-4441, 6:00 – 9:00 pm Friday and 8:00 am – 9:00 pm Saturday; Speaker Joe Marty, Salt Lake City
- **APRIL 11-13, 2014** - NY/NJ Gem-Mineral-Fossil Show in Edison, NJ

## ROCKVILLE SCIENCE DAY

The Rockville Consortium for Science is inviting us to bring an exhibit to the 25th Anniversary Rockville Science Day at Montgomery College's Rockville Campus. There is no cost to exhibit, but selling is not permitted. Last year there were over 70 exhibits and over 3000 visitors. This year's event will be on Sunday April 6<sup>th</sup> from noon to 5:00 pm. (Set Saturday 4 – 6pm or Sunday 10 – noon.) This activity offers an opportunity for us to educate young folks about our Society's interests. We are grateful for a few members who have represented us in former years. Are YOU willing to commit an afternoon to this project by demonstrating some aspect of what excites you? Please respond to President Chris Luzier who can coordinate our reply. He can fill out the needed reservation forms for exhibit space. In the past some members have paired up for a presentation.



## SOCIETY LIBRARY

A nice resource for you is our library. "Where is it?" you ask. Simply go to the Society web site at [www.glmsmc.com/library.shtml](http://www.glmsmc.com/library.shtml). There you will see a complete listing of materials available for lending to all members, juniors included (with parents responsible). Nearly everything in earth science is covered. You will find books, pamphlets, leaflets, and even videos on fossils, minerals, gems, geology and more. To utilize the library materials get in touch with librarian Jonathan Harris at [301 545 0808](tel:3015450808) or [jgharris7@gmail.com](mailto:jgharris7@gmail.com). He has the materials squirreled away. If you contact him before a meeting he can arrange to bring the requested material to the meeting and you may keep it out until the next meeting, when it must be returned. This is a great resource and most items are not available in the County Public Library system. And thanks to Jonathan for serving as the obscure and largely unheralded librarian.

If you are planning a trip and want to know what clubs you might be able to visit, it would be worthwhile to visit the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies website. Check out their newsletter archives at <http://www.amfed.org/news/default.htm>.



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 All Society correspondence is to be sent to this address except that which is intended for the *Rockhounder* and its editor. Such items are to be sent to the editor’s email address – [kristinlolmaugh@gmail.com](mailto:kristinlolmaugh@gmail.com)

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Award Winning Bulletin  
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