



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

Last month I ran an editorial on Who Owns the Rocks and I asked for readers opinions. Please read the responses on page 7. I am still interested in responses, so write to me at kristinlolmaugh@gmail.com.

Don't forget, our Annual Show will be held March 15th & 16th at the Montgomery County Fairgrounds. Hope to see you there.

Kristin Lolmaugh, Editor

REGULAR MEETINGS

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

The presentation this month is "What's new in Smithsonian Gems and Minerals," by Dr. Jeffrey Edward Post, Curator of the U.S. National Gem and Mineral Collection. His areas of research interest include mineralogy, gemology, geochemistry, crystallography, and electron microscopy. He has published more than 75 scientific articles in these fields.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Meeting will be held **Monday, March 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 or phone 301-990-1370.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: HELLO FELLOW ROCKHOUNDERS

Well, we have three weeks until our big show weekend!!! To all of the volunteers that have already signed up to help out, I thank you in advance. Many hands make light work, so if you haven't signed up yet, there are places where we can use your help. Also, I know many of you are already in full swing in preparing your showcases for display and are finishing up last minute additions and changes. I believe we still have a few cases available, so if you are on the fence about displaying, it is time to jump off that fence! Our members' displays are incredible every year with the quality of minerals, diversity of topics, and creativity in laying out the case. Many are perennial displays that are enjoyed year after year, but everyone always loves seeing that new, first time ever shown, display. Is this yours???

We also need to have as many members as possible to lay out flyers, copy and put up posters, and spread the word in your local community about the show. If you need more flyers to distribute, just ask at the next meeting.

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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 April issue of *The Rockhounder* is March 25, 2014.

We fortunately have one more meeting just before the show for last minute promotion. The board has been working very hard to get the publicity out through various channels, but we need your help too for a strong turnout.

Finally, we are still looking for a replacement for our editor of *The Rockhounder*. We have plenty of help available to assist you and are willing to work with whatever computer program that you prefer to use for producing the publication. Kristin has been a wonderful editor and we are sorry that she is forced to leave the post, due to changes in her circumstances. This is one of the most important and integral jobs for the group, so please consider if this is where you can help the group the most. We have so many wonderful volunteers that contribute so much already, but now we need just one more.

Peace, Chris Luzier, President

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES: FEBRUARY 10, 2014

The February 10, 2014, meeting was called to order by President Chris Luzier at 7:47 pm, with approximately 55 people attending. It was M/S/P to approve the minutes of the January 13, 2014, regular meeting and the January 20, 2014, BOD meeting.

President: Chris Luzier mentioned a number of items: 1) we need a 2nd alternate Delegate for attendance at the EFMLS Meeting to be held on March 28th in Plymouth Meeting PA; 2) we need 2-3 volunteers to set up and run a GLMS demonstration table at the Rockville Science Day, April 6, 2014, Noon-5:00, at Montgomery College in Rockville ; 3) we need to replace Kristin Lolmaugh as the editor of the award-winning *Rockhounder* newsletter; 4) all interested members are asked to register as exhibitors/demonstrators at the March 15-16, 2014, Annual GLMS show using the forms available from Pat Repik-Byrne; 5) all GLMS members are asked to volunteer some of their weekend time to make the annual show a success (an assignment schedule was circulated for members to select and sign for the times and duties they chose to be responsible for); 6) cloth GLMS-MC patches are available at \$2 each; 7) the Rockhounder of the Year Award and congratulations go to Holly McNeil; and 8) members were informed that our June 2014 meeting would be a special auction with all members invited to submit items (split: 75% to Member: 25% to Club).

CLARIFICATION: For our Annual Gem and Mineral Show, the rule regarding children is children 11 and younger will be admitted for free.

Field Trips: Jonathan Harris announced the field trip planned for February 15, 2014, to the Northern VA Community College geology department for a demonstration of specimen thin sectioning and mineral identification by polarizing microscopy of the thin sections. All interested must sign up via the email message sent to all GLMSMC members.

Secretary: Dave Fryauff clarified that free admission for the Annual GLMSMC show on March 15-16, 2014, would be for all children 11 years old and younger.

Treasurer: Holly McNeil reported an adjusted cash balance for the year end 2013 of \$24,700. This is net of the Lillian Turner funds earmarked for the youth program. Results for 2013 included show income of \$3,500, auction income of \$1,000 and membership dues of \$1,800. The year end cash balance was \$7,000 less than year end 2012, largely due to capital outlays for the Maryland mineral collection (\$1,600), new show cases (\$1,900), and a new trailer (\$2,800). (Note: all numbers have been rounded.) Financial activity in 2014 includes the receipt of dealer payments for the show, payment of some show expenses, and a \$2,000 donation to the Smithsonian.

EFML Liaison: Wendell Mohr informed members of upcoming events and activities that might be of interest to GLMS members.

Other Business

Andy Celmer: Thanked members for contribution of Maryland rocks and minerals for teaching to Korean students. He received a letter of thanks, written in Korean and asked if someone might be able to get a translation made.

Rodney Towers: Reported that he had represented GLMSMC as a volunteer instructor (Mineral properties of radio frequency and fluorescence) at an event in January 2014 held at the Maryland Nature Center, near Brookside Gardens in Kensington, MD.

David MacClean: Announced that the Micro-mineralogists of the National Capital Area (MNCA) will be hosting the Atlantic Micromount/Micro-mineralogy Conference on April 4-5, 2014, at the Springhill Suites Alexandria Marriott Hotel (registration is \$30). The AMC conference speaker will be Dr. Joe Marty, an avid collector and photographer who is credited with discovering many new mineral species in the southwestern US.

Presentation: An introduction to radiation and radioactive minerals was presented by GLMSMC/MS-NOVA/MNCA member Jim Kostka ("If it doesn't click, I don't collect it") whose profession is Radiation Safety Officer for a medical products company specializing in radio isotope preparations for use as imaging compounds for Positron Emission Tomography ("PET scans). Members were introduced to the two atomic particle sizes (alpha & beta), and gamma rays emitted as radiation and the properties-qualities of these emissions. The hottest uranium minerals occurring naturally are alpha emitters that present little danger unless they are ingested or their dust is breathed in. Many of these uranium minerals are coveted by collectors because they are very rare and often form interesting and beautifully colored crystals. The best/safe practice for collectors of such "hot" minerals is to minimize handling by keeping each specimen inside an enclosed plastic case, store these protected specimens in the least-frequented part of the house, and wash hands promptly with soap and water after handling any radioactive minerals to prevent internalizing the harmful dust.

Prizes: Joel Rosen announced that the Show Table winner of a cabinet size Barite specimen was Andy Celmer and the Door Prize winner of a polished piece of petrified wood was Gary Leaman.

Membership: There is a pending application for Priscilla Priteer and her mother, Priscilla Quackenbush, to become new GLMS members.

Adjournment: It was M/S/P to adjourn the meeting at 9:49 pm.



Photos by Wendell Mohr

Dave Fryauff, Secretary

BOARD MEETING MINUTES: FEBRUARY 17, 2014

The February 17, 2014, meeting was called to order by President, Chris Luzier at 7:34 pm. **Board members present:** Doug Baum, Andy Celmer, Kristin Lolmaugh (By conference call), Chris Luzier, Holly McNeil, Wendell Mohr, Andy Muir, Pat Repik-Byrne, Joel Rosen, and David Tiktinsky. **Board members absent:** David Fryauff and Rod Towers. **Non-board member present:** Conrad Smith.

Immediate Past President: Patricia Cronin has volunteered as delegate alternate for the EFMLS Convention. Await space confirmation for GLMSMC "MD Minerals" show case for convention show.

Treasurer Holly McNeil's passed out sheets with Year-to-Date information through January which continues to show cash balance declining. Donation for James Madison University not budgeted. Holly asked the Board to be cognizant of the budget when funding items. An auditor for the 2013 books has not yet been enlisted per Jonathan Harris. Annual Tax return has yet to be filed (The quarterly filing was waived since we have no paid employees.) Holly will contact the Senior

MEMBER UPDATE

Correction for Dan Bailey, cell phone: 301-5 14-7149, email suzydanb@comcast.net

Center for reservation for auction in April or May of non-member material. This is separate from regular June meeting auction of member's material. Holly purchased junior give-away specimens for the show. About 700 sewn bags for juniors are on hand, backup paper bags will be purchased. Call for another member to sew cloth bags for which we have plenty of material on hand. Applications for broader use of the Turner funds were discussed including digital projector, fluorescent light, and a teaching microscope for FRA, among other items.

President Luzier reports that Rod Towers and Karen Lottes have volunteered to represent our Society at the Rockville Science Day April 6th.

Show Updates

Conrad Smith received approval for the Cub Scout presentations at the Show for his Eagle Scout project. Plans call for five stations on various topics with special emphasis on Sunday. Volunteers, including scouts, are needed. Final assignment of space will be determined by Pat Repik-Byrne. It was M/S/P to cover Show scout program expenses of \$590.00 from the Turner fund.

Show Chair Pat Repik-Byrne reported 44 exhibitors (Including 6 juniors) and 15 demonstrations are signed up as of this date. We can accommodate more regular exhibits. She had to turn down one request for exhibit space due to over capacity for fluorescent cases. Micromounters have confirmed their demonstration. The Robert Clemenzi group is only able to demonstrate one day. Flint knappers demonstration is not yet committed, have an alternate possible. Show posters are yet to be finalized.

"Upstairs" Show Chairman Andy Muir reports all dealers except two have made final payment for space. Chris Luzier will put out signs for show on Saturday morning, Andy Muir will do the same for Sunday morning. Joel Rosen will have four more new signs made.

Wendell Mohr passed out free entry tickets for the show for strategic use.

Vice President David Tiktinsky shared information about how the NOVA club ran their meeting auction. Replacement for *The Rockhounder* editor sorely needed. Perhaps the spouse of an active member could take on the responsibility. Wendell Mohr will take pictures when Kristin Lolmaugh is unable to attend.

Membership Chair Doug Baum will complete and send out the 2014 Roster about March 1st.

Adjournment: Meeting Adjourned 9:35 pm.

Wendell Mohr, Secretary Pro-tem

THE LURE AND LORE OF ROCKS: LEPIDOLITE

BY KRISTIN LOLMAUGH

Lepidolite is not technically a gemstone, but a very beautiful purplish type of mica. Lepidolite was discovered in the eighteenth century and in 1792 Martin Klaproth named it from the Greek words Lepidos for "scale" and Lithos for "stone."



Photo from
<http://www.mineralminers.com>

It is referred to by healers as the Peace Stone. Known as a stone of transition, some believe that Lepidolite helps one get through transitions with trust that everything will ultimately turn out for the best. It helps to shift and restructure old energy patterns, bringing light and hope to a situation and use it to reduce stress associated with change. It brings balance and inner peace, helping one to see reasons behind any negative experiences, so they can improve on them. It is said to encourage independence for setting and attaining goals inconspicuously and provide protection from outside influences.



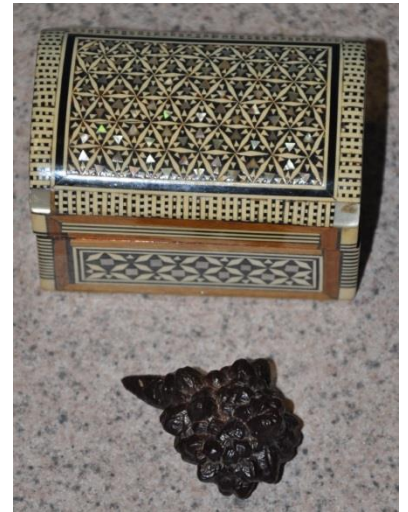
Photo by Kristin Lolmaugh

SHOW TABLE: February 2014

Thanks to those who bring items for sharing at the meetings.

Exhibitor	Specimen (s)*	Locality
Jeff Cessna	Calcite, Willemite, Sphalerite, "LW Barite"	Odgensburg, NJ
Andy Muir	Elbaite & Aquamarine	Minas Gerais, Brazil
Frances Becker	Prehnite	Bonnie Lake Area, AK
Gary Leaman	Calcite ball	Poona, India
Diane Leaman	Hornblende in calcite	Ontario, Canada
Andy Celmer	Conglomerate*	Elkins, WV
Gerald Elgert	Crinoid Stem & hold fast*	Richmond, IN
Wendell Mohr	Scutelosaurus CA Coin	Canada Mint
Rodney Towers	Bismuth	Germany
Dave Fryauff	Turquoise	Lynch Station VA (JMU)
Joel Rosen	Barite	Stoneham, Weld Co., CO
Priscilla Quackenbush	Unknown	Unknown
Chuck Mason	Montana Agate Cabs*	Montana
Jim Kosta	Hornblende	Canada

* indicates self-collected or self-made



Photos by Wendell Mohr

MINI MINERS

Next Meeting Date: March 10, 2014

Location: Card Room, Rockville Senior Center

Ages 6-9

Time: 7:00 - 8:00 pm

The Society teaches many interactive geology and mineral topics each month with hands on learning, geared towards children ages six to nine.



Photo by Wendell Mohr

FUTURE ROCKHOUNDS OF AMERICA (THE MOCKS)

Next Meeting Date: March 10, 2014

Location: Sunroom Cafeteria, Rockville Senior Center

Ages 10-15

Time: 7:45 - 9:00 pm

The MOCKS enjoyed a presentation on fluorescent minerals by Jonathan Harris. Mr. Harris' presentation included fluorescence, phosphorescence, tenebrescence, and even a little triboluminescence. He discussed important safety rules when using UV lights, as well as famous locations for fluorescent mineral collectors. The MOCKS each added to their fluorescent mineral collections with generous donations of minerals from Mr. Harris, Mr. Muir, and other benefactors of our FRA program. As a result of Mr. Harris' presentation, all eight of the MOCKS in attendance earned their Fluorescent Minerals badge. Thanks, Mr. Harris!

Jonathan Baum was one of the MOCKS to earn his Fluorescent Minerals badge. This badge is his sixth FRA badge, which means he has earned the AFMS Rockhound award! Congratulations Jonathan!

March 10th Meeting:

We will start our March meeting with presentation of Fluorescent Mineral badges, followed by the presentation of the Rockhound award to Jonathan Baum. We will be studying Stone Age Tools and Art at our March meeting. Come and be part of fun as we start on this badge. For more information on the Future Rockhounds of America program, please contact Mark Dahlman at fra_advisor@glmsmc.com or 301-428-0455.

BENCH TIPS:

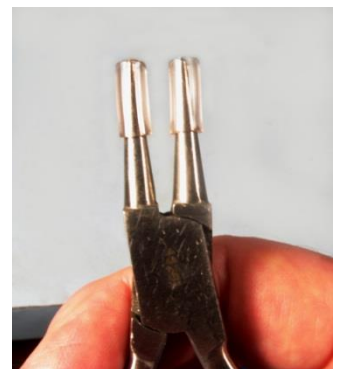
BY BRAD SMITH

No-Mar Pliers

Pliers can often leave nicks and scratches on your work. If this is giving you a problem, first take a close look at the plier jaws. New tools can be a little rough. I typically relieve any sharp edges, sand away any tool marks and give working areas a quick polish.

If that doesn't solve the problem, you probably need to cover the jaws. Plastic electrical tape provides a quick fix but can leave messy adhesive on the jaws. Dips don't seem to last very long.

A quick and easy way I've found is to slip a length of 1/8 dia vinyl tubing over each jaw. It's quick and leaves no sticky residue. The only problem is that it increases the size of the plier jaws a bit. The tubing can be found in a store that sells aquarium supplies.



Patina Recipes

In a recent class we did a little work with patinas. I came across a couple websites for those of you who'd like to explore this area, especially for copper and bronze.

The first is The Science Company at <http://www.sciencecompany.com/Do-It-Yourself-Patina-Formulas-W12C672.aspx> with plenty of formulas for a variety of colors. And there are more formulas at Tim McCreight's Brynmorgen Press website at <http://www.brynmorgen.com/resources.html>.

Small quantities of chemicals for making your own patinas are available from The Science Company at <http://www.sciencecompany.com/Patina-Chemicals-C672.aspx>.

If you prefer to buy the patinas ready for use, one of the best sources I've come across is Sculpt Nouveau at <http://www.sculptnouveau.com/> Don't miss all the instructional pdf's on the site and be sure to take a look at the videos showing how to use their products at <http://www.youtube.com/sculptnouveau>

More Bench Tips by Brad Smith are at facebook.com/BenchTips/ or see the book Bench Tips for Jewelry Making on Amazon

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Kristin,

I agree whole heartedly that our club should be open to all. However, I would never accept "new age healing and the mystical properties of minerals and crystals" as being something the club should promote or encourage. This is a club based on a love of the earth sciences – with science being a pretty important part. Our members do a great job of educating not only children but adults in everything from fossils, minerals, lapidary arts, geology, etc... Why would we want to go away from this?

I am 50 now but I started in the club when I was 10. (I grew up in Silver Spring but moved to Harford County many years ago.) I can still remember collecting fossils in Gore, West Virginia, calcite & pyrite in Blue Ball, Pennsylvania, and amazonite & moonstone in Amelia Virginia. I learned a lot about geology, mineralogy, and even a little gemology. I learned to appreciate the aesthetics of minerals and how to put in a display. (I won best in show when I was 14.) This club was and always has been about educating its members.

I don't mean to offend you if you do believe in new age thinking but my personal opinion is that it is nonsense. I worked for an importer of minerals from Brazil while in college and met many "healy feelies." They were very nice people but they were crazy. One guy showed me the wound on his arm that he had healed with an amethyst wand (there was no wound). Another sat down on the floor of the warehouse and went into a trance for 40 minutes with a 20 pound topaz crystal between her legs.

These people need a club like ours to educate them about real science – not the other way around.

Sincerely,
David Dinsmore

Kristin,

Very insightful article you placed on the front page! It does make you wonder, doesn't it?

I am not a rockhound per se, but my hubby enjoys the hobby. I was recruited as the editor of a local club when they were desperate and asked their newest member (hubby) to help out. When he came home and announced that he was the editor, I almost fainted! I edited a monthly newsletter for an OSU Extension Office in a small county in Oklahoma and knew the trials and tribulations. So, I joined the club to keep hubby from making a huge mistake. That was ten years ago and three editorships later. Now, I am the editor for the Rocky Mountain Federation.

If we allow only folks who are included in the hobby's definitions, I would be one of the forbidden! I also have a sun allergy and cannot go on field trips, except museums; and then only if I can sit down every half hour or so (scoliosis).

Thanks,
Betty Cain

Kristin,

I find your articles "The Lure and Lore of Rocks" to be interesting, well written, and well-illustrated. I hope that you will continue them. Several other

newsletters are lifting your articles for publication. That should make you feel good.

I personally feel strongly that claims about minerals and crystals effecting a reduction or cure of diseases and conditions does not fly. If there was scientific proof of such claims, OK, but where is that proof? What does the Food and Drug Administration say about such claims?

I have no reason to say we should turn away from membership anyone who holds those beliefs. "Everyone is welcome."

I do not object to someone, including you, writing about such matters. But I feel, as I have said several times in proofing *The Rockhounder*, that the statement "Some people believe that....." needs to be included.

Wendell Mohr

WEBSITES OF INTEREST

BY WENDELL C. MOHR

Amazing Geologist, <https://www.facebook.com/AmazingGeologist>, is like an old *LIFE* magazine. Here is a gathering of wonderful pictures about minerals, fossils, gems, geology, etc., with somewhat sketchy information on the content. Opened in 2012, collectors worldwide contribute by their postings. If you enjoy geology voyeurism, here it is!

Photo by Wendell Mohr



Gemstone Guru, gemstone.guru.com/, is an insider's guide to gemstones and jewelry by a group of about a half dozen gem enthusiasts. Topics include Gemstone Basics, How to buy Gems, Compare Prices in Jewelry, and Ask the Experts. Don't miss "Popular Articles" at the right of the main page with many links. There are some videos. See "Archives" at the bottom of page 1 for an index of articles. Thanks to Natalie Darling, Lynchburg, VA, *Gem and Mineral Journal* February 2014 for the lead on this site.

Photo by Photo by R. Weller/Cochise College

Snowflake Photos, <http://www.today.com/slideshow/today/photographer-captures-snowflakes-in-stunning-detail-53758764>, if you got too much snow in February or think of it as only a bother to be tolerated you might better look at the micro form as snowflakes here. A Today Show feature is a slide show blog by Russian Alexey Kljatov showing a dozen outstanding images with brief descriptions. H₂O, Ice or snow, qualifies as an abundant mineral because of its properties.



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>.



PRIZE WINNERS!

Show Table:

Barite, Force Crag Mine, Keswick, Cumbria, England – Andy Celmer

General:

Agatized Petrified Wood, Madagascar – Gary Leaman

CONGRATULATIONS!

THE ORIGIN OF BIRTHSTONES

BY JAMES C. CAGLE, CALGARY LAPIDARY JOURNAL, SEP 2013

Birthstone tradition may be traced back as far as the Bible story of Aaron, the High Priest of the Israelites and brother of Moses. Twelve stones were set in a jeweled breastplate about nine inches square. The Bible says, in Exodus, Chapter 28, Verse 21, "and the stones shall be the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names, like the engravings of a signet, everyone with his name shall they be according to their tribe."

The first row of stones on the breastplate contained a sardius (apparently the modern carnelian), a topaz, and a carbuncle. The second row consisted of an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond; the third, a figure an agate, and an amethyst. The last row contained a beryl, an onyx, and jasper. It was from this breastplate, worn by the Hebraic High Priest Aaron that the custom of wearing birthstones evolved. Leaders of each of the tribes of Israel wore the stones that had been assigned to the tribe by Aaron. The stones were later associated with the signs of the zodiac and eventually, with the 12 months of the year.



Originally, it was considered good fortune to wear the proper stone for each month, but by the eighteenth century, the custom of wearing the stone of one's birth month was already becoming popular. Many ancient myths and superstitions have accumulated around these stones.

Amethyst, for instance, the February stone of purple or wine-like colour, was associated in pagan myth with the god Bacchus, and the belief prevailed that it protected one against many of medicinal value, especially as antidotes against poison. Peridot and diamond are said to protect one against forces of evil. The warm red glow of the ruby gave rise to the belief that it contained an internal fire, which could be neither quenched nor concealed. Even today, birthstones are often thought to possess occult powers and confer favorable influences upon the wearer.

The following is a list of birthstones and their symbolic meanings as established by the National Association of Jewelers in 1912, and approved by the Jewelry Industry Council in 1950.

- January – Garnet (constancy) Picture-grossularite form Garnet
- February – Amethyst (sincerity)
- March – Bloodstone & Aquamarine (courage)
- April – Diamond (innocence)
- May – Emerald (success in love)
- June – Pearl, Moonstone & Alexandrite (health, longevity)
- July – Ruby (contentment)
- August – Sardonyx & Peridot (married happiness)
- September – Sapphire (clear thinking)
- October – Opal & Tourmaline (hope)
- November – Topaz (fidelity)
- December – Turquoise, Zircon & Lapis lazuli (prosperity)

*Excerpts from the article by James Cagle
Information compiled from the Holy Bible,
Encyclopedia Britannica, Groliers Encyclopedia, et al.*

FORENSIC MINERALOGY

BY: DR. VIVIEN GORNITZ

The popularity of TV shows like CSI has spurred a growing interest in forensic science. Soil and mineral particles found at crime scenes can offer vital clues and, therefore, mineralogical analysis has become an important component of criminal investigation.

On a rainy fall day in 2002, two men sitting in an old black pickup truck were shot; one killed, the other badly wounded. The survivor pointed the police to a known drug dealer who lived in Alexandria, Virginia, 75 miles east of the crime scene. The cops kept an eye on the suspect, and when he was seen about to wash his Jeep of mud and dirt, they arrested the man and seized his vehicle for tell-tale evidence. A preliminary examination of mud on the Jeep suggested that it had been near water. Microscopic observations further revealed signs of cross-bedding, well-rounded sorted grains (indications of water-deposited sediments), and more importantly, the same set of minerals, including azurite and malachite, found at the murder site. It turns out the murder occurred only a half mile from a rock quarry where copper, granite, limestone, and other rocks and minerals were mined. Traces of azurite and malachite were also present in mud samples from the crime scene. The shooter is now in prison; the surviving victim was blinded in one eye.

In another murder case, bentonite, a type of clay mineral, provided the crucial clue that helped solve the crime. A man was shot three times while hunting with his wife in the mountains of Colorado in 1995. His wife's ex-husband had also been camped in the general area at the time, and therefore became a prime suspect. However, he claimed that he was out hunting with his boss far from his campsite, and furthermore he insisted his .308 rifle with cartridges had been stolen. A bullet and shell case of that caliber had been found near the body, but searches for the murder weapon had turned up nothing. The investigation continued over several summers. In a conversation during the extended search, one of the investigators happened to mention to his fellow searchers that a cattle pond near the ex-husband's camp was lined with bentonite in order to prevent seepage of water from the bottom. Another investigator later remembered seeing dried mud on the wife's clothing and her remark

that she stepped into a bog near camp. Mud samples were collected from the cattle pond, another nearby pond, the bog "near the camp," and mud scraped off the wife's hunting overalls, which she had worn that day. Only the mud containing bentonite from the cattle pond matched that found on the wife's clothing. She had apparently been to the ex-husband's camp, stolen the rifle, and then killed her husband. The woman is now serving a life's sentence without parole.

Laboratory analyses are also indispensable in solving many mining scams. Typically, a gullible investor will be told of "secret processes" that can detect gold, silver, platinum, and other precious metals that otherwise would not be detected by fire assay, the standard analytical method of assaying ores. The "inventor" is usually very tight-lipped about details of his process, "fearing that rival companies or competitors will steal his trade secrets." Often such scams are backed up by shady assayers who find much larger quantities of precious metals in the ores than those found by reputable labs, and who furthermore claim that they are "correcting" analytical errors made by other instruments.

One investigation showed that if iron were not removed from the sample prior to analysis, the analytical instrument would give an erroneous reading for the platinum group metals. As an example, a US nickel was analyzed without taking the proper precautions. Had it been a "sample," it would have been reported by the shady assayer "to contain 11.5 troy oz. of platinum, 5.63 troy oz. of palladium, and 5.314 troy oz. of iridium per ton." Needless to say, a US nickel is actually composed of copper with some nickel.

Minerals may also figure in poisoning cases. For example, a small child in the state of Washington became seriously ill from arsenic poisoning. Forensic examination of the child's home turned up a number of mineral specimens, apparently left in the house and yard by a former occupant who was a mineral collector. Among the specimens were arsenopyrite and iron arsenic sulfide. Foul play was ruled out. The child had evidently been chewing and swallowing this mineral. Case closed!

Abbot, D. M., Jr., 2005, Investigating Mining Frauds., *Geotimes*, Jan. 2005, p30-32

Murray, R. C., 2005, Collecting Crime Evidence from Earth, *Geotimes*, Jan. 2005, p18-22

Sever, M., 2005, Murder & Mud in the Shenandoah., *Geotimes*, Jan. 2005, p24-29

From: NY Mineralogical Club, March 2005;

Via: Strata Gem, September 2010; Minnesota Mineral Club Rock Rustler's News, February 2014

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
- **MARCH 15 - 16, 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.gmsmc.com/show.shtml> for directions, coupon, and more information
- **MARCH 22-23, 2014** – 36th Annual Gem, Mineral & Jewelry Show, Franklin County Rock & Mineral Club, Hamilton Heights Elementary School, Chambersburg, PA
- **MARCH 22-23, 2014** – 45th 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
- **APRIL 26, 2014** – Superdigg, the registration fee is \$21, <http://SterlingHillSuperDig.org>
- **MAY 24, 2014** – 25th Annual Chesapeake Gem & Mineral Show, Ruhl Armory, Towson, MD, 10:00 am – 4:00 pm; for more information, visit chesapeakegemandmineral.org.

PUBLIC LANDS

BY JOHN MARTIN, CONSERVATION & LEGISLATION CHAIR VIA GEM CUTTERS NEWS

Have you ever picked up a rock
Cut it open and revealed the beauty
Fashioned it into a beautiful piece of jewelry?
Have you ever found a mineral specimen
Examined the structure and marveled at the color
Observed the entire specimen as a wonder of nature?
Have you ever found a fossil
Looked at the pattern left long ago
Wondered about life before us?
Have you ever taken these rocks
These minerals, these fossils to the children at the schools?
Shared with them the beauty and wonder
Showed them a record of the history of life?
Don't make them simply look at pictures in a book.
Don't tell me I'm using up your resources
Destroying something that should be preserved
I am preserving the most precious resource
Let the children touch and see
The wonders of my hobby
Pass on the natural curiosity and zest for life I harbor.

*From the Monrovia
MOROKS Newsletter, January 2014*

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Society Address: Gem, Lapidary, and Mineral Society of Montgomery County MD., Inc.
 P. O. Box 444, Gaithersburg MD 20884-0444; Web Site: <http://www.glmsmc.com/>
 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

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Award Winning Bulletin
EFMLS, AFMS



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THE ROCKHOUNDER
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 of Montgomery County, MD, Inc.
 Kristin Lolmaugh
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 Arnold, MD 21012