



**REGULAR MEETING** The Gem, Lapidary, and Mineral Society of Montgomery County MD., Inc. will meet on Monday December 11th in the dining room of the Rockville Senior Center, 1150 Carnation Drive, Rockville. Meetings are held the 2nd Monday of the month from September to June. The short business meeting will begin at 7:45 pm but the room is available to us at 7:30 pm so come early and help us set up for the PARTY! **NO SHOW TABLE THIS MONTH.** There will be no speaker for this meeting because this will be the SWAP/SELL and social evening. You may bring hobby related items to swap or sell. Space is limited and we need some tables for refreshments, so bring no more than an amount that will fit on one table. It is possible that tables will have to be shared.



**REFRESHMENTS** This is the only meeting of the year when we have refreshments. PLEASE BRING COOKIES, CAKE, CRACKERS, or CANDY (Or VEGGIES for those who insist on healthy eating), to share. Goodies should be "Finger food". Napkins, cups, plates, punch, coffee, tea, and hot chocolate will be provided. Come and have a good time. As usual, visitors are welcome. Remember that WE MUST VACATE THE BUILDING by 10:00 pm and the tables and chairs must be cleaned and put back where we find them. If EVERYONE helps, it is not a big chore.

**THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS** Will NOT meet in December but will meet next on January 15th, 2007.

**ROSTER** Changes:

- IRBY, Bob & Norma, new E Mail (Overlooked since July!) irbyre@peoplepc.com
- KOBY, Ross (10/94), Delete junior member
- OLMSTEAD, Frederick, delete as member.
- TIHOMIROV, Cindy, delete as a member, Zinaida (Zina), Alexander (Sasha), Eugenia (Zhenya) delete junior members

**ROSTER UPDATE** An updated roster will be included with the January ROCKHOUNDER, If you do NOT want your name, address, phone number, or E Mail address listed, please let Wendell Mohr (301 926 7190) know by December 15th. If any data in your listing has changed, (Address, phone number, E Mail, children added or deleted) and you have not told Wendell about it, please do it NOW. If you know of any members who have not paid dues for this year but plan to do so, please tell him/her to do so NOW so that the roster can be complete. Thanks to Bob Irby who is quietly efficient in keeping up the roster for printing. It is for the convenience of members and will be mailed to members only. It is not to be used to solicit business.

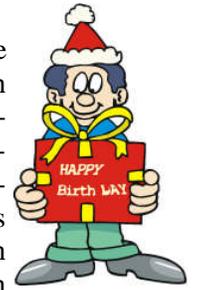


or note.

**SUNSHINE** George Reimherr had open heart surgery on Thursday November 9th. Our wishes are for a quick and complete recovery. His address is 7944 Jansen Drive Springfield VA 22152 if you care to send a card

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**HAPPY BIRTHDAY** Members with Birthdays in December: Bob Bratton, Mark Dahlman, Versie Durburow, Cheryl Hyland, Pat Jayne, Tyler Jones, Joshua King, Jeffrey Nagy, Helen Reimherr, Hugh Richards, Lois Ritchie, Bob Winfield, and Jennifer Wingard. Your birthstone is turquoise. The turquoise is ancient, but regularly finds itself back in fashion. In many cultures this gemstone has been esteemed as a holy stone, a bringer of good fortune or a talisman. In Egypt, grave furnishings with turquoise inlay were discovered dating from circa 3000 B.C. In ancient Persian, the stones were worn as protection against unnatural death. Changing color instilled fear of the approach of doom. It has been discovered that the turquoise certainly can change color, caused by the light, or by a chemical reaction brought about by cosmetics, dust, or the acidity of the skin.

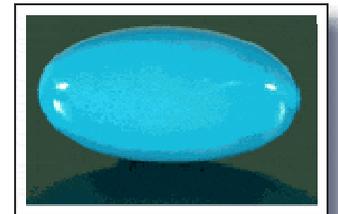


Turquoise affords protection and well being of the wearer. Persian scholar Al-Qazwini wrote: "The hand that wears a turquoise and seals with it will never see poverty." Turquoises were often worn on the turban, and often surrounded with pearls, in order to protect their wearer against the "evil eye". As talismans, they adorned daggers, sabers and the bridles of horses. At the time of the crusades turquoise came to Europe. Indeed it is from that period that the name "Turquoise" originates, meaning "Turkish".

In South, Central, and North America it held a very special position. The Aztecs in Mexico decorated their ceremonial masks with this stone, believed holy. The Indians of N. Amer., who still produce a good deal of traditional silver jewelry with turquoises today, believe that the sky-blue gemstone opens up a direct connection between the sky and the sea..

Turquoise is a copper aluminum phosphate with a hardness of 6. Colored in of hues from sky blue to gray-green, it is mostly found in places where there is a high concentration of copper in the soil. In the very best quality the color is paler, or bluish-green or greenish. The blue color is created by copper, the green by bivalent iron and a certain amount of chrome. Often, the material has veins or blotches running through it, which are brown, light gray or black depending on where it was found. These lively, more or less regular patterns are known as "turquoise matrix". Crystals are small, rarely recognized with the naked eye. As a rule, turquoise occurs as a filling in veins or crevices, or in the form of nuggets. The most well known deposits are in the USA, Mexico, Israel, Iran, Afghanistan and China. The most beautiful turquoises, in a splendid light blue, come from deposits in the north of Iran. Turquoise is rarely faceted. Usually, it is cut into cabochons or beads, or into some more imaginative shape.

Being relatively soft, turquoises are sensitive. The color may pale when the stone has been worn for a long time, and even high quality stones today are treated with wax and subsequently hardened. This treatment makes the sensitive gemstone more resistant. There are a large number of reasonably priced turquoises sealed with synthetic resin. They have a fresh color and good durability. Many of them are dipped in a coloring medium before being subjected to durability treatment, a process that must, according to the rules of the ICA, be revealed to the prospective purchaser. There is also such a thing as a "reconstructed turquoise", which is made from pulverized turquoise. Because of their sensitivity, turquoises are almost always subjected to treatment of one kind or another, though this may take any of a number of different forms. For this reason, turquoises which have a good natural color and are simply hardened with colorless wax or synthetic resin have a much higher value than stones whose color has been "improved". So it is more Advisable to purchase valuable turquoise jewelry at a jeweler.



The best quality turquoises are of a pure, radiant sky blue, a color which is highly esteemed with or without its fine, regular matrix. The more strongly the color tends toward green and the more blotchy and more irregular the matrix, the



lower the estimate of the stone's quality.

Turquoise should be protected from cosmetics, heat and bright light. It is not a gemstone to take with you when you go sunbathing. It is best to give it a cleaning from time to time with a soft cloth.

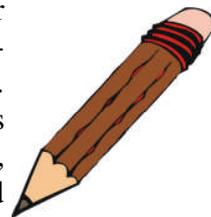
Anyone choosing a turquoise is sure to enjoy a piece of Heaven ... on Earth.

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**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES** November 13, 2006. The meeting was called to order at 7:55 pm by V.P. Rod Towers in the absence of Scott Braley. About 44 people were present. The minutes of the October Regular and Board meetings were unanimously approved. Wendell spoke for the Board which served as the nominating committee. The slate of folks willing to serve: Scott Braley for President, Harry Lupuloff for Vice President, Juan Proaño, Treasurer. The Secretary position is still vacant. Volunteers for that office were solicited with no takers. No other candidates being named, the slate was unanimously approved.



The speaker, Michael Colella, introduced by Rod Towers, spoke on "Sands of the World and their many uses". Michael is a member of the GLMSDC club and had a display of his varied collection in their annual show. He brought a small sample of around 30-40 vials of different color and texture sands from places around the world. Michael has been collecting rocks for a long time and started his sand collection about 4-5 years ago, and is a Psammophile, "A lover of sand". Sand comes in different grain size, composition, texture, shapes, and colors. It may be detrital lithogenic from rock fragments. It may be biogenic, consisting of shells or shell fragments. And it may be a chemical precipitate such as oolites and evaporates. Sand particles range in size from 1/16—2 mm and is larger than silt and smaller than gravel. It is transported by wind, water, and ice. By microscopic examination, it can be determined what transported the grains, how it weathered and what it is made of. He spoke of black lava sand, silica white sand, grainy sand, round sand. He brought a lot of interest to what many might have previously considered mundane. Mike answered questions about sand and also told of a toothless baleen whale fossil he found at Stratford Hall VA and its excavation. Editor's note: see <<http://www.sandcollectors.org/ISCSHomeIndexx.html>> for more information on the subject.

At 9:10 pm, Rod announced the silent auction of 14 lots of lapidary items donated by Jim Greenlees. After the break, Anita James announced a field trip to Pinesburg Quarry near Williamsport MD, Friday, Dec 1st at 8:15 am and a trip to the Rockville quarry, Sunday, Dec 3rd at 8:15 am (\$5.00 fee) Wendell announced that George Reimherr had quadruple bypass surgery on Nov. 9th and is recovering. The secretary will send a get well card from GLMSMC. Wendell announced coming shows, and information about a book for sale, The Beauty of Banded Agate, by Michael Carlson, and minerals for sale from Stuart's Minerals of Watertown NY. He reminded that preparations should start now for exhibiting at our Show, March 10 & 11, 2007. After Show table explanations and door prizes, the meeting was adjourned at 9:57pm. Bob Winfield, Secretary

### **NOVEMBER SHOW TABLE:**

\* = Self Collected or made

George Durland: Calcite and Willemite, Hydrozincite and Calcite, both from Sterling Hill Mine, Ogdensburg NJ, Clinohedrite and Willemite, Franklin NJ.

Gladys Fuller: Magnetic sand, Clinton County NY.

Chuck Hyland: Epidote\*, Unakite\*, outside Telluride CO.

Matt Hyland: Assorted Gold Ore\*, Pyrite\* etc, tailings up Mountain Mine, Telluride CO.

Sara Kaider: Dolomite/Quartz, Pinesburg Quarry near Williamsport MD.

Alexandra Kindahl: Collection of Amethyst, Dalmation Stone, Pyrite, Snowflake Obsidian, Amber, Calcite, Blue Lace Agate, Hieroglyphic Stone.

Eric Kindahl: Fluorite, IL, Ilymatogyra Arietina (Cretaceous Oyster) Austin TX (Collected by his wife Robin Wilson).

Sara LaVilla: Photographs at Morefield Mine, Amelia VA.

Chuck Mason: Chalcedony, Morocco.

Wendell Mohr: Holiday snowflake stamps.

Georgia Olmstead: Rock\*, Near original Bungee Bridge, South Island NZ, Fossils\*, U.S. Silica Quarry, Berkeley Springs WV.

Joel Rosen: Fluorite/Calcite, Pint's Quarry, Raymond IA, Barite in Geode, Hunter's Ridge, IN.

Nancy Shinowara: Pargasite, Pakistan.

Rod Towers: Microscope and specimens.





**NOVEMBER PRIZES:** The Junior Prize, a Fluorite, from the Sierra Grande Mine, Muzquiz, Coahilla, Mexico, was won by seemingly perpetual winner, Rory McElravy. The General Door Prize, a Vanadinite, from Mibladden, Morocco went to new member Andy Muir. Congrats! The Show Table Prize, a Brittle Star fossil from Solnhofen-Eichstatt-Kelheim District, Germany went to Nancy Shinowara. Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star!

**FIELD TRIPS** No field trips are scheduled at the present time. Sometimes we do not find out about field trips until after the newsletter has been sent. We try to send out information by e-mail, but not everyone has access to it. You are always welcome to call or e-mail the field trip chairman to inquire about field trips. Information: Field Trip Chair Anita James, Phone 301 652 5527, E Mail <johnjames04@comcast.net>.

**SNOW CONTINGENCY** Reminder: If schools in Montgomery County, MD are to be cancelled, or let out early, because of weather on the day of a scheduled Society meeting, we will have no meeting. Call the Society President or a Board Member (Numbers on the back of the ROCKHOUNDER) if in doubt. With the unusual weather patterns this year who knows what can happen!

**BOARD MEETING MINUTES** The November 20, 2006 meeting was called to order at 7:45 pm by Scott Braley, President. Board Members present: Nancy Ballard, Scott Braley, George Durland, Juan Proaño, Joel Rosen, and Rod Towers. Members present: Harry Lupuloff, Heather Felsen, Dave Ballard.



❖ Rod Towers has agreed to be Junior Advisor. Secretary position remains unfilled—volunteer needed.

❖ Juan reported that finances are in good order. One CD renewed at 5.93% interest (Formerly lower rate).

❖ Rod presented the program for the GLMSDC November meeting. Rod thought that, like them, we should pay our speakers \$50. After discussion about honorariums, reimbursement of expenses, take out to dinner, etc. Rod moved that we pay a guest speaker \$50 and take him/her out to dinner. George seconded the motion but the vote was tied at 3:3 and not passed. Scott then suggested we make an annual budget item of \$1,000 for the VP to spend on speakers at his discretion. A motion was made and seconded and passed unanimously. It was pointed out that some speakers will not or cannot accept an honorarium but might accept expense money. Rod requested checks for past speakers Mars and Colella, which were written by Juan. Harry asked for suggestions about types of programs club finds interesting. Many ideas were discussed. Rod brought all his program resources and material for Harry. Rod reported that our donated projection screen had been found at Senior Center. The January program not yet confirmed.

❖ Contact needs to be made with Jeffrey Post. We want to choose specimens as our donation to the Smithsonian Institution, NMNH. Juan requested donation before year end to offset the income from sales of various collections this year. George suggested we tell Jeff we have \$3,000 to donate and that a committee visit to choose specimens.

❖ Heather asked about procedure for sending out invitations to show exhibitors. Nancy has "Request to Exhibit" form updated by George. She will get copies to Heather at December meeting. Nancy also suggested Heather contact Fran Gallegos for prior practices.

❖ Miscellaneous: Joel had the specimens he had bought for \$800 at the NOVA show for door prizes. He needs three more and has about \$200 left to use if needed. Scott will contact Jonathan Harris about status of the website and the Library. Juan wants help in composing letter to Fairgrounds Board. George is interested in helping to judge at Science Fair.

❖ Wendell, in abstentia, suggested we make our usual annual donations to: AFMS Endowment Fund, \$300, AFMS Scholarship Fund, \$400, Eastern Federation Fund, \$300, American Lands Access Association, \$100. It was moved, seconded and unanimously passed that we do so.

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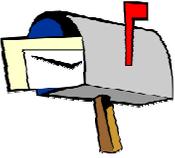


**BOARD MEETING MINUTES** (Continued from page 4)

❖ Scott said he had sent out contracts to dealers for our Show last week. Two checks have been received already. He read new paragraph in cover letter telling dealers they must not move tables after we set up and must not exceed power limits. Scott wants to have alternate dealers in case some cannot come. Nancy said she had sent door prize tickets to Charlie Zellers for him to make labels for postcards. There was some discussion about having addresses and return address printed directly on the cards, Scott will contact Charlie. We have to get cards out promptly to alert people about change of dates.

Meeting adjourned about 10 p.m.

Nancy Ballard, Secretary pro tem



**NEW SOCIETY MAILING ADDRESS:** Reminder: GLMSMC, P. O. Box 444, Gaithersburg MD 20884-0444. This is where all mail to the Society is received with the exception of material for the Editor.

**SILENT AUCTION AND SALE PROCEEDS** Juan Proaño reports that, in November, the silent auction of donations by Jim Greenlees yielded \$191 and the sale of Paul and Jennie Smith specimens \$86 to the benefit of the Society treasury. For Fiscal Year 2006 we have realized \$1744 from sales.

**HELP STILL WANTED:** The success of your Club depends on everyone carrying a fair share of functions to be done. The following are needed:

1. Secretary. Take minutes at regular and board meetings. Step up, it's easy!
2. 2007 Gem-Mineral-Fossil Show Chairman. Duties include overall Show management, arrange table and chair rental, guard service, dealer contracts, and venue rental. Or how about taking just a part of the job duties? You pick what part you will do.
3. Historian, a new position to keep historical records and photographs.
4. Science Fair Committee chairman. Functions one week after our show, March 17, 2007.

Contact President, Scott Braley, for more information and to volunteer.



**YOU  
CAN  
DO IT!**

**EFMLS CONVENTION AND SHOW** The 57<sup>th</sup> Annual Board of Directors' Meeting was held November 17<sup>th</sup> in West Palm Beach FL. Along with it was the 40<sup>th</sup> Annual show of the host society, the Gem and Mineral Society of the Palm Beaches. Wendell Mohr attended as our group's delegate. Other of our Society's members in attendance were Matt Charsky, Georgia Olmstead, (Both representing multiple area clubs) and Jo Ann Mohr. The Society did a wonderful job of coordinating events.

The 2+ hours **Business Meeting** was non-controversial, with reports made in written form or in person by the various officers and committee leaders. The efforts of the EFMLS in most all activities continue strong. I would note, however, that 3 regions of 8 had little representation. Also that there was NO All-American Award applicant club in EFMLS. EFMLS Membership continues flat with one club dropped and two added. One By-Law change was proposed, changing written notification to the Secretary of the director and delegates and/ or alternates expected to attend the annual meeting from 30 to 15 days prior to the convening date. It passed in a 28 to 13 vote. Next year's budget was discussed, minor alterations made, and passed unanimously. New officers were proposed by the nominating committee and the election of the slate was unanimous: President: Frances Sick, Che-Hanna R&M Club (PA); 1<sup>st</sup> VP: Ellery Borow, Water Oak G&M Soc. (ME); 2<sup>nd</sup> VP: Mary Bateman, GLMSDC (DC); Secretary: Cathy Patterson, G&M Soc. of Syracuse (NY); Asst. Treasurer LaReene Heath, GLMSDC (DC); Nominating Committee members K. C. Foster, Miami M&L Guild (FL) and Sue MacInnes, PA Earth Sc. Assn. (PA). The terms for Treasurer Lou Buddell and Editor, Carolyn Weinberger continue into 2007.



AFMS President, Robert Carlson, was in attendance for all convention and show events. (Continued on Page 6)

**EFMLS CONVENTION AND SHOW** (Continued from Page 5)

The Wayne County G&M Club will host the convention and show in Newark NY October 5-7, 2007 and the 2008 event will be in Jackson MS.

The “**Cracker Barrel**” session, which tends to be one of the most constructive discussions about EFMLS and club activities, was held in the evening after the business meeting. There was much discussion about starting and maintaining club workshops. A large part of the dialog was concerning working with youth. I believe it was the most valuable topic, and the best in years. (I will share helpful information with Rod Towers, our new Junior Advisor.) I suggested that the All-American Award program be dropped and a program to recognize youth programs by clubs be initiated in its place. I also suggested that EFMLS Supplies, if applicable, such as articles, papers, booklets, guidelines etc. be put on the EFMLS web site in pdf form. Other subjects included museum mineral collection de-accession to collectors or dealers not the trash, communicating EFMLS information to clubs (Use regional VP's), an EFMLS internet blog, enhancing regional support by making coverage not so geographically diverse by either more regions or sub VP's, and issues with the lame duck U. S. congress and bills supported or opposed by the American Lands Access Assn. The adverse fossil bills could expand to minerals.

The **Show** was held at a very spacious building at the South Florida Fairgrounds Expo Ctr., accommodating space for over 60 retail and 3 wholesale dealers, 22 exhibits (Of which only one was competitive), meeting rooms for speakers and EFMLS auction, and demonstrations. A majority of dealers were selling gems, jewelry, and beads. The meetings had informative speakers including Eddie Rucks, owner of Rucks' Pit, an active quarry where fossil clams are found with calcite crystal inclusions and to which a convention arranged field trip was held on Sunday. Their demonstrations were wide ranging including geode sawing and even junior members doing glass bead forming.

Saturday evening the **Banquet** was held where EFMLS awards were presented. The EFMLS selection for the AFMS Scholarship in our region was to Dr. Richard Yuretich who selects two scholarship recipients. Nancy Price, one of the winners accepted for him and gave a brief history of her work. The other winner is Sarah Schillawski. Both are at University of Massachusetts. AFMS scholarship donor clubs were recognized. One competitive exhibit award, an Each One Teach One award, the “M” awards for club membership growth, and the EFMLS Citation Award to Husband and wife Cathy and Bruce Gaber, were given.

Officers were installed and the key note speaker, Christian (Chris) Koch, Director of Education at the South Florida Science Museum gave a great, not too long, speech on “Hunting for Fossil Shark's teeth in Florida”.

Sunday morning the **Bulletin Editor's Breakfast** was held where awards were given for 113 entries in 12 categories. 12 trophies and 3 special awards were made. Many of our members were represented: Georgia Olmstead received a 1<sup>st</sup> Place Award for Small Bulletins, “The Mineral Mite” of the Micromineralogists of the NCA, and a 4<sup>th</sup> Place for “Mineral Minutes” of the Min. Soc. of DC. Erich Grundel won a trophy for his article “Rare Gem Unearthed in the Nation's Capital” (Thru Min. Soc. of DC), For Original Non-Educational Articles. Rob Robinson received a 4<sup>th</sup> Place award for “Early Mining Provided Clues About the Origin of the Earth” (Thru NOVA Club), George Loud got a 9<sup>th</sup> Place award for “Charles McPherson” (Thru NOVA Club), Erich Grundel got an Honorable Mention for “New Museum, New Mineral Exhibit?” (Thru NOVA Club), and Inga Wells an Honorable Mention for “All that for a Dollar a Day” (Thru Che-Hanna R&M Club). For Written Features, George Loud received a 3<sup>rd</sup> Place award for “Remembering Norm” (Thru the NOVA Club), Erich Grundel a 4<sup>th</sup> Place for “Copper Floats” (Thru NOVA Club), Barry Remer got a 6<sup>th</sup> Place for “NVMC Picnic” (Thru NOVA Club), and Inga Wells an 8<sup>th</sup> Place for “An Open Letter from Inga” (Thru the Che-Hanna R&M Club).



Special thanks to the Gem and Mineral Society of the Palm Beaches. Inc. and the Show co-Chairs, Carl Bengtson and Barbara Ringhiser for a great event. See < <http://www.amfed.org/efmls/newsletters.htm>>, the EFMLS Newsletter, for further details.

Contributed by Wendell C. Mohr

A club member was infatuated with another member of the opposite sex, but was so timid he never had the courage to speak to her. In fact, he even told his therapist that every time he got near her he felt like he was unimportant. He said that he felt as insignificant as a tiny pebble. "Well," his therapist responded, "If you want to get the girl you'll just have to be a little boulder!"



**WILDACRES** With Winter Upon Us...Let's Think Spring. I know I'm pushing the calendar a bit. Winter doesn't begin until December 21, but in much of the country the chill of winter has set in. Summer gardens have been put to rest, leaves have fallen, and in some places, a blanket of snow has fallen.



The 2007 calendars are available in the stores and if you're like me, you've already penciled in many significant dates. I hope you've considered adding a week at one (or both) of our EFMLS Wildacres Workshops to your schedule. This coming year promises to be exciting.

Our spring session will be April 20-26, a bit earlier than in the past, but we understand that it's really wonderful at Wildacres in April. Speaker Coordinator Cathy Gaber has confirmed that our guest speaker will be none other than Bob Jones, Sr., Editor of Rock & Gem Magazine. Bob and his wife Carol just returned from a trip to China, so we're sure to hear at least a little bit about their latest adventures in this mineral and gem rich part of the world. Bob has traveled widely, written extensively, and is an excellent photographer and speaker. In fall, September 10-16, we'll welcome back Dr. Steve Chamberlain, renowned mineral collector and author. Steve is also an excellent speaker and photographer and has a wealth of knowledge to share. He's currently Director of the Rochester Mineralogical Symposium, has amassed a very large New York State mineral collection, and loves to go out and field collect.

Tuition for 2007 at EFMLS Wildacres will be \$330 per person. This includes lodging in very comfortable private rooms, all meals and gratuity for the permanent Wildacres facility staff. Registration for both sessions will begin on January 1. A registration form will be in the January EFMLS Newsletter along with a list of classes that will be offered.

If you've never been to Wildacres, we think you're missing a wonderful week of fun, learning and sharing. If you'd like a sneak peak at what the workshop is all about, we'd be delighted to send you a CD entitled "It's Wildacres...It's Wonderful and It's Yours" produced by Bruce and Cathy Gaber. Just write or send an E-mail to me (P. O. Box 302, Glyndon MD 21071-0302, <cscrystals2@verizon.net> ) and we'll send you a copy at **no charge**. So mark your 2007 calendar, get a group of friends from your club together, and plan on attending an EFMLS Wildacres Workshop. If you've never been, you're missing a wonderful opportunity.

Modified slightly from communication by Steve Weinberger, Wildacres Functioning Committee Chair

**SMASHING DISCOVERY** Another Pallasite, not the biggest meteorite ever found, but excitement can't be reigned in over latest find. Kiowa County - At 154 pounds, it wasn't the biggest meteorite ever found, not by



a long shot. But that didn't dim the celebration Monday for the contingent of archeologists and others on hand from the Houston Museum of Natural Science to dislodge the space rock from its Kiowa County resting spot for the last millennium or so. "These guys are all giddy about it," said Steve Arnold, the meteorite hunter who helped locate the stony-iron specimen. Indeed, the scientists treated the rock with the care due a baby as they painstakingly unearthed it, placing the dirt that had enveloped the object into plastic bags for closer inspection later. And when the time finally came Monday afternoon to extricate the 12 X 16 X 13-inch chunk from its roost about four feet under the ground, the cameras clicked, someone applauded and the smiles widened. "Oh, it's about to go on a trip again," said Carolyn Sumners, senior director of astronomy at the Houston museum.

The Texas contingent started trickling in last week, drawn by the abundance of meteorites in Kiowa County, site of the famous Brenham meteorite that fell 2,000 years ago, give or take a decade or two. But this wasn't any ordinary search for space rocks. First, Arnold scouted for possible meteor sites using his oversized metal detector, which has helped him locate a 1,430 pounder and numerous other specimens here. Then last Friday, a planetary scientist from the NASA-funded Lunar Planetary Institute passed a more finely tuned device over the spots Arnold picked, something called a ground-penetrating radar, to see which ones held most promise. Finally, the archeologists, paleontologists, geologists and other assembled experts zeroed in on the rural site where the 154 pounder was found, five miles west of Greensburg. They dug a trench around the meteorite, taking note of the varied characteristics of the sediment at the location, finally wrapping the rock in foil for the trip to Houston, where it will face further scrutiny.

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**SMASHING DISCOVERY** (Continued from Page 7)

If it might seem like a lot of fuss, there's a good reason. Meteorite hunters typically dig at will to extricate space rocks, paying little to no heed to the dirt they scoop to get at the bounty. However, Barbara Wilson, another member of the Houston Museum of Natural Science contingent, said the point of the careful digging this go around was to see what clues the soil might yield about the rock. As far as she knows, such care, documented by a cameraman on hand for the occasion, has never been taken when retrieving a meteorite.

"They want to get as much science out of it as they can and look for whatever the soil and rock might reveal," she said.



Photo by Travis Morisse

The rock will be put on display at the Houston Museum as part of a planned exhibit next year on comets, meteors and meteorites. The search to locate the rock, meanwhile, will be part of an exhibit at the museum's planetarium that will document the science and technology necessary to explore the hidden nooks and crannies of the universe. As for scientific insights, David Temple, a paleontologist at the Houston museum, said it's too early to tell with any certainty. However, the layering of soil indicates the meteorite is no more than 10,000 years old, he said, though dirt samples

will be examined for anything organic for possible use in pinning a more precise age on the rock. Other soil attributes might help in determining the speed of the rock when it fell and its trajectory.

Twelve other Kiowa County sites also scoured for meteorites, including one that had some dreaming of a humongous 10 X 15 foot specimen, yielded nothing. The site of what the scientists thought may have been the giant actually yielded a long, metal cable apparently used for a long-gone oil rig.

By Tim Vandenack  
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**SAFETY FIRST - HOLIDAY TREE SAFETY** (Slightly Modified) by Bill Klose, EFMLS Safety Chair

The tree is a tradition and centerpiece in many homes during the holiday season. When properly selected and trimmed the traditional tree is a thing of beauty and pride, but if not, has lead to over 400 fires and 40 deaths a year in the United States. To avoid tree fires, consider an artificial tree that is fire resistant and if lighted, UL approved, or a live tree that can be planted outside after the holidays.

If you decide on a live tree, pick one that is fresh and not dried out. Check the tree for insects and dead loose needles and shake or blow them out before bringing the tree indoors. Tree Farms now color the trees prior to shipping, so check the tree for dried out spots, needles falling off, or dry branches that snap when bent. Pick a tree that is too tall for the room, leaving space for ornaments and that will be well clear of walking areas and heat sources. Cut off the trunk about 1 to 2 inches from the base of the tree at an angle and place in a sturdy, water holding tree stand. Keep the stand continuously filled with water containing a mixture of two cups of Karo syrup, two pinches of Epsom salt, one teaspoon of Boraxo, two ounces of liquid chlorine bleach, and one teaspoon of chelated iron for each two gallons of hot water to ensure the tree stays waterlogged and fireproof. Tie the tree in place to the wall or ceiling to prevent it from falling over. After the holidays, do not burn the tree in a fireplace. Discard as appropriate for your area. An option: Remove the branches and use in the garden over the mulch for protection of the plants from the cold.



Check the tree lights for broken sockets and frayed wires and replace if required or if over 5 years old. Do not use outdoor lights on indoor trees. Use UL or CSA approved extension cords and tree lights and do not exceed the Wattage ratings of the lowest rated string or extension cord when connecting together, usually no more than three. Turn off, or better yet unplug light strings when going out or retiring for the night. Do not use lighted candles on trees. Do not use light strings on artificial trees, instead light with spot lights that are placed at a suitable distance from the tree to avoid the lamps heat.

Use flame resistant ornaments on the trees. Place glass ornaments or those with small parts out of reach of small children and pets. Do not use popcorn chains or candy on trees when small children are present to avoid their climbing into the tree for them. Use approved step stools or ladders to reach high places when trimming the tree. Do not use cellophane, as it can not be made flameproof. Use an approved flame retardant on cotton batting, and paper decorations. Have a great holiday season and New Year.



WEB SITES

Bringing new sites to light

By Wendell C. Mohr

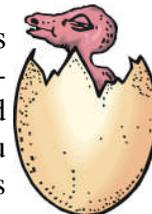


**All Things Ancient in Arizona**, at <http://www.t-rat.com/>, the personal web site of Ron Ratkevich, concerns itself with fossils and archeology in Arizona. See information on various species, geologic eras in AZ, topographic maps, geologic time, fossil preparation, where to find them, dinosaurs of AZ, collecting tools, and Fossil identification and a host of other topics. The Petrified Forest and the Grand Canyon National Parks get a play and, as others, are well illustrated. Check out all the other links. All those fossils are nearly as old as the cast of "60 Minutes". Ever notice how most turtle fossils are found upside down? Even then, they were saying "Help, I've fallen and can't get up."

**Trinity Mineral Company**, <http://www.trinityminerals.com/index.htm> by John Veevaert is a commercial site which, as usual, we do not endorse, but bring to you as a top notch web site to visit. The main web site is an umbrella for other websites: Mineral Auctions, Tsumeb, Benitoite, Rare Minerals, Mineral Books, Mineral Shows, Mineral Museums, UV Rocks, and Links. Here is a way to spend a long cold winter night, seeing mouth watering material. A "Cross index" allows a peak at Africa, Asia, North and South America, Europe, Australia, and Russia information. There are articles and exceptional specimens, including gold. The dealer had a bunch of water soluble minerals like halite, sylvite, chalcantite. High humidity in his shop forced him to hold a liquidation sale. Another dealer in fluorescent minerals held a day-night sale.

**San Diego Natural History Museum**, presents a double-header **FOR KIDS**, the first is "Mineral Matters" at <http://www.sdnhm.org/kids/minerals/index.html> where you will find How to identify minerals, Build a collection, Mineral FAQs, Grow your own crystals, and Mine Games. There are True-False and 10 question quizzes, and a word search. Every beginner starts out knowing Quartz and Calcite. They are about as common as the "You Know" of our sports figures.

The other is "Dinosaur Dig" at <http://www.sdnhm.org/kids/dinosaur/index.html> which has Name that reptile, Finding Fossils, Dinosaur bytes, The mystery of the Ankylosaur, Jurassic Jumbler and Explore fossil mysteries. Educational as well, it has games, a slide show, and word search. Layers of rocks containing fossil remains are called beds. What should you do if you find a T. Rex sleeping in your bed? Sleep somewhere else! Some California regional minerals and fossils are featured. Have fun juniors (And seniors too).

UPCOMING SHOWS:

**December 9, 2006** Sat. 10 am - 4:30 pm. Fall Festival of Fine Minerals, Fossils, & Jewelry. Days Hotel, 9615 Deerco Road, Timonium MD, just north of Towson/Baltimore I83, Exit 17, Padonia Road. Commercial show by five local dealers, admission free.

**March 3-4, 2007** 44th Annual Earth Science G&M Show, by the Delaware Mineralogical Society, Delaware Technical & Community College, I-95 at Exit 4B, Churchmans Road (Route 58), Newark DE.

**March 10-11, 2007, OUR SHOW.** Three months and counting for planning for your exhibit in the show and what volunteer jobs you will help to fill.

**NEWSLETTER MODE** We are now sending the Rockhounder by E Mail to all having the capability to receive it that way. It gives the chance to receive it, in color, at the earliest possible time. If you do not require a hard copy, it will save the Society the printing and mailing costs. If you want to receive the E Mail copy only, please contact the Editor at [wmohr@erols.com](mailto:wmohr@erols.com). Of course you may want both an E Mail and a hard copy and we will comply with that request.



There was a certain rockhound who liked rocks but didn't have time to work on them, so he stored them in the attic. His wife said one day, "What good are those rocks doing up on the attic?" He replied, "When I leave this earth and go to heaven, on the way up I'm going to take them with me."

One day he died. When things settled down, his wife went up to the attic to see. The rocks were all there. She said, "That's what I thought, He must have gone the other way!" Pegmatite, San Diego M&G Society March 2000

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