

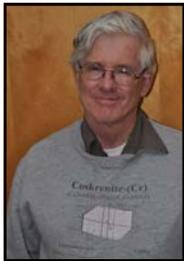
THE ROCKHOUNDER



OCTOBER 2011

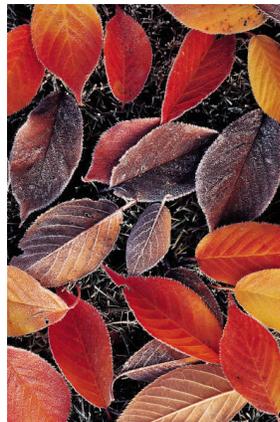
PURPOSE: The purpose of the Gem, Lapidary, and Mineral Society of Montgomery County MD., Inc. is "To increase knowledge and popular interest in earth sciences, geology, mineralogy, paleontology, lapidary arts, and related subjects".

REGULAR MEETING: Meetings are held the 2nd Monday of the month from September to June. The Society will meet on Monday October 12th in the dining room of the Rockville Senior Center, 1150 Carnation Drive, Rockville. The short business meeting will begin at 7:45 pm but the room is available to us at 7:30 pm so come early, chat with old friends, and see what is on the Show Table.



The program titled "**Pegmatites**" will be presented by **Dr. Dennis Coskren**. He is a mineralogist and geochemist, and graduate of MIT (BS) and the University of Kentucky (MS, PhD.) He has been interested in minerals since high school, when he did a science project in crystallography. He joined the Boston Mineral Club in 1958, and was introduced to the pegmatites of New England.

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS will meet Monday October 17th at 7:30 pm at the Home of Andy Muir. Board members are expected to be there. Any member is welcome to attend but please let Andy know if you plan to attend at <amuir21@comcast.net> or phone 301 990 1370.



BIG WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS:



SCHARFENBERG, Eric, 24036 Newbury Rd,
Gaithersburg MD 20882-4004, 240-751-2106,
e-mail escharfenberg@verizon.net

SCHOEN, Barbara, 16 Maxim Lane, Rockville MD
20852-1018, 301-762-5789,
e-mail barbaraschoen@msn.com

TREBOHANSINGH, Petra, 725 Wilson Ave,
Rockville MD 20850-2147, 240-425-2030,

e-mail petra2115@gmail.com

DEADLINE for Nov. 2011 Issue: October 31st

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DUES & DON'TS Final notice! There is a \$5.00 surcharge for renewals after the grace period which extends to November 1st. **2011 dues expired August 31, 2011.** Single membership is \$15 per year, Family membership (Which is defined as up to 2 adults and children under 18 years of age) is \$20 per year. We do not send out bills for dues bills. This is it!

If you have not already paid, send dues (check to GLMSMC) to Membership Chairman Doug Baum, 11205 Golden Meadow Court, Germantown MD 20876-1740. If you have questions contact Doug at dbaum@gazette.net or call 301 515 4641.

Doug will mail your membership card (s) back to you if you send him a self addressed stamped envelope, otherwise you may pickup your card(s) at the October regular meeting. If your phone number, address, E Mail address, or other vital information has changed since the January 2010 Roster or subsequent *Rockhounds* please let Doug know. If you are willing to receive the newsletter by e-mail only, so note when sending in your dues. **Don't neglect paying your dues on time.**

ERRATA In the "*Touching History*" article by Erich Grundel last month, under references it is <www.minrec.org> NOT <www.minrec.com>.

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

The objective of the Society is to EDUCATE. Some members have been active in this endeavor by responding to requests that we receive and are still active. Others have been unable to continue for various reasons.

We receive a number of inquiries as a result of people reading our web site. (Thanks Becky Dahman for keeping the site up to date.) Others are the result of word-of-mouth.

1. Speaking at Schools, Boy and Girl Scout groups, and other places. George Durland and Jonathan Harris have done this in the past.
2. Identifying inquirer's minerals, fossils, and gems.
3. Assisting people who request the sawing, capping, or faceting of stones. Elmer Lantz and Jeff Nagy have done this in the past.

The Board of Directors is looking to have a core group of people who are willing to assist with handling inquiries. If you are willing to help in any of these areas please let President Eric Kindahl know of your willingness. Jump into the pool!



Most people don't know that the Apache Indians were amateur mineralogists. One such Brave liked to keep beds in the teepees made out of locally collected stone. In one teepee, a squaw slept on a bed of Hypersthene. And in two other teepees, squaws slept on beds of Siderite. It happened that all 3 had papooses at about the same time, two had boys, and one had twin boys. This goes to prove the theorem.....The squaw of the Hypersthene is equal to the sons of the squaws of the other two Siderites! StateLine Gem and Mineral Society Rock Trails Feb 2010

A group had traveled to Europe on a really long distance field trip. Eleven pegmatite collectors were clinging precariously to a wildly swinging rope suspended from a crumbling outcropping on one of the tallest mountains in the Alps. Ten were from GLMSMC, one, the leader, was Michael Wise a well known pegmatite expert, of the National Museum of Natural History in DC. They had collected a lot of minerals and the rope was becoming overloaded. Rather than giving up some of the fine specimens they had collected, as a group they decided that one of the party had let go. If that didn't happen, the rope would break and everyone would perish. For an agonizing few moments no one volunteered. Finally a GLMSMC member gave a truly touching speech saying she would sacrifice herself to save the lives of the others. The other GLMSMC members all applauded.



REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

The September 12, 2010 meeting was called to order by President Eric Kindahl at 7:43 pm, with approximately 65 people attending.

FRA: Holly McNeil presented several badges and several Rockhound awards (see this newsletter.) President Eric Kindahl noted that these badges represent a lot of work by the recipients and a lot of encouragement by members and family. Holly thanked members for their generosity towards the program.

It was M/S/P to accept the membership of applicants Eric Sharfenberg, Barbara Schoen, and Petra Trebohansingh

Editor: Wendell Mohr discussed the contributions from the club to the Eastern Federation fund and American Federation Scholarship fund, noting our continuing recognition for a high level of contributions and explaining how the monies from the funds are used. He also described the nominating process, by the editor, for the awards. Unfortunately, the high quality of our newsletter itself can only be recognized by an award every three years. He announced, for the benefit of new members, that the field trip chair announces all field trips by email. He announced many upcoming shows and classes. Wendell asked if there was interest in a group order for Agate Calendars, he will coordinate.

Presentation: Vice president Owen Powers introduced our speaker for the month, Dr. Cara Santelli. Cara is a Research Geologist and Assistant Mineral Curator at the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History. She began her presentation discussing the unfortunate damage to some of the collection and displays at the museum, due to the recent earthquake in Mineral, VA. She then continued to her presentation of *Mineral-Making Microbes*. Cara discussed the many ways microbes can produce or affect minerals, passing around examples of banded iron formations, rock varnish, and manganese nodules. All the examples are considered to be formed by or from the influence of biological processes. She then went on to describe how biological mineral forming processes can be used to advantage in the treatment of acid mine drainage. Cara was generous enough to answer many varied questions from the audience. Thanks, Cara.



Photo by W. Mohr

Field Trips: Jonathan Harris announced many exciting, upcoming, field trips. He also asked that any members knowing of possible collecting sites contact him with that information.

Treasurer: Andy Muir announced that the club financial information for the previous year has been audited, with no findings. Suggestions were received for improving the bookkeeping procedures for clarity. The Society is in good shape financially.

Eric Kindahl announced that the board meeting had been moved to September 27th, same place.

Show: Mark Dahlman thanked Don Turner for his many years of service to the club, coordinating the activities in the shop area of the club show. He also thanked Elmer Lantz for assuming those duties for future shows. Mark mentioned that the showcases filled up early last year and the deadline will be early again next year. Start thinking about your cases now, so you don't miss your space.

Meeting adjourned at 9:57 pm. Jeff Cessna, Secretary.

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Board members present: Doug Baum, Mark Dahlman, Jonathan Harris, Wendell Mohr, Andy Muir, and Owen Powers. Immediate Past President Mark Dahlman called the September 27, 2011 meeting to order at 7:40 pm.

Board Membership for 2012: The process of nominating officers and board members for 2012 was discussed again. Mark Dahlman agreed to work with our Society president to identify candidates. A proposed slate will be presented in the November *Rockhounder* and voted on at the November Society meeting. In addition, Wendell Mohr stated that he will need to stop serving as editor of the *Rockhounder* as of Jan. 1, so a new editor will need to be identified by the board. It was M/S/P to authorize the purchase of Microsoft Publisher or equivalent software (about \$150), if needed by the new editor.

EFMLS Liaison and Guest Editor: Wendell encouraged board members to update their job descriptions and submit them to Mark. Wendell attended the EFMLS convention in Syracuse in August, and noted that the GLMSMC did not have nominations for key awards including Each One Teach One and Rockhound of the Year. The board discussed minerals and lapidary equipment that was donated to the Society by Virginia Vance and Gladys Fuller. An auction of these materials will be organized by the board, probably for a Saturday morning in November or early December.

FRA and Mini-Miners: Wendell stated that a Dr. Louis Hsu donated some books, equipment, minerals, and fossil specimens to the juniors of the Society. It was M/S/P to support the North Bethesda Middle School team competing in the Rocks and Minerals category of the Science Olympiad by purchasing one mineral identification kit. The board plans to add a line item to the Society budget to cover Mini-Miner supplies.

Field Trips: Jonathan discussed upcoming field trips, with two on Oct. 1 -- to the Ben Murphy Mica Mine and National Limestone Quarry. The board discussed several ideas for "indoor field trips" to museums or university geology departments this winter.

Vice President: Owen reported that the speaker from the Salt Institute had to cancel for the October meeting, as a business conflict came up. Dr. Dennis Coskren will fill in, with a presentation about pegmatites.

Show: Advertising flyers for our March 2012 show have not yet been printed, and therefore were not available for distribution at recent the Howard County Mineral Show. It is expected that the flyers will be printed and available for distribution starting at the Northern Virginia show. The board briefly discussed the January Society meeting, which is proposed to focus on "How YOU can volunteer at the Mineral Show and exhibiting tips." Wendell volunteered to contribute photos and other materials that would help Society members.

Treasurer: The board reviewed the Society by-laws and agreed to make some improvements to the financial reporting processes. Andy is working to re-organize some of the Society's accounting categories and a profit-and-loss statement for 2010 will be published next month.

The next meeting of the Board of Directors will be October 17, 2011 at Andy Muir's home.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 PM. Andy Muir, Secretary Pro-Tem.



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

Meeting Date: October 10, 2011 **Meeting time:** 7:45 - 9:00 pm

Meeting Location: Sunroom Cafeteria at the Rockville Senior Center

CONGRATULATIONS TO: Abbie Olshin and Elena Olshin who earned and were awarded the A.F.M.S. Future Rockhound program designation of “Rockhound.” A lot of hard work goes into earning these awards, and Abbie and Elena are commended for it.

KUDOS ALSO TO: Cassie DeSalvo who earned the Rock & Mineral and Collecting badges.



September 12th meeting program: Thank you to guest speaker Andy Muir (a/k/a “Ultraviolet Andy”) who shared his appreciation and knowledge of fluorescent minerals with us. Andy discussed the varying degrees of risks and appropriate precautions necessary to handle fluorescent lamps safely. He showed us different mineral specimens and how they reacted to different light wavelengths --



short, long and mid-wave. Andy explained how fluorescence occurs due to a reaction and release of light energy at the atomic level and he talked about the many forms of waves and light on the electromagnetic spectrum. We learned the difference between phosphorescence and fluorescence, and also discussed related phenomena such as chemical fluorescence and bioluminescence. We even learned how fluorescent light bulbs work! Each participant went home with three fluorescent mineral specimens to either start or add to their collections.

October 10th Meeting: Micromounting is a subspecialty in the world of rock collecting. Micromounters concentrate on beautiful mineral crystals that can only be fully appreciated through magnification -- they often boast that they are the only rock collectors who can carry an entire collection around in a briefcase! We are honored to have a few of our club’s micromount enthusiasts, including Patrick Haynes, Jim Koskta and Maureen Campeau (who is driving in from Ontario, Canada) join us. They will demonstrate the tools of their trade and teach us how to select and mount micro-minerals and to properly use microscopes. In short, to reinforce the saying that “good things come in small packages.”



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

TRAIN GOLD ROBBERY OF 1855

By Trevor A. Babb

Three safes containing gold bars were delivered to the London Bridge train station. Then they were transported to Folkstone, England. The safes were then shipped to Boulogne, France and weighed. It was discovered that one of the safes weighed 40 lbs. less than it should have. The other two weighed a bit more than they should have, yet they were still loaded onto a train and transported to Paris, France. The safes were weighed again, and they weighed the same as in Boulogne.

(Continued on Page 6)



TRAIN GOLD ROBBERY OF 1855 (Continued from Page 5)

The safes were opened and lead shot was discovered, not gold. Police forces from both France and Britain searched for the thief and arrested hundreds of suspects. They found nothing. Once they unofficially gave up, Britain said the robbery occurred in France, and France said the robbery took place in Britain. There was logic in France's accusation, since the weight had been the same in Boulogne and Paris.



Edward Agar was arrested for passing a false check even though he was set up. Hard to believe, since he was a professional criminal. In prison, he wrote to Fanny Kay, the mother of his illegitimate child, telling her that a certain William Pierce should have paid her. Pierce gave her no money, so Kay visited the governor of Newgate Prison. The governor contacted the investigator for the railway company. The investigator went to the prison where Agar was being held. When Agar heard what happened, he told the investigator about the robbery.

Agar had met Pierce years before the robbery. They talked about snatching some of the gold that was frequently shipped on the railway. Before they could get the keys to the safes and rob them, the safe locks were changed. When they came back, the locks had two keyholes, not one. Pierce recruited a guard named James Burgees and a clerk named William Tester. Since Tester was a clerk, he got the keys for the first locks for a short time and made wax impressions of them. Agar had a box of gold sent on the train to Folkstone, where he could get it under a false name. Agar watched the clerk open the safe with the key for the second lock and put it in a cupboard. Later, when the clerks were gone, Pierce got the key out of the cupboard, made a wax impression, and put it back. Once they had the two keys, they waited until there was a lot of gold to steal. Dressed as gentlemen, Agar and Pierce boarded the train and removed the gold from one of the safes. They did this three times, because there were three safes, before they got off the train. They split the gold and then melted it and sold some of it.

Burgees and Pierce were arrested soon afterwards. Tester was arrested when he came to visit relatives in England.

*Note from Holly McNeil: Trevor wrote this article about a historical event that involved Gold to satisfy the final requirement needed for him to earn the FRA Gold Panning & Prospecting badge.
Trevor is 11 years old.*

Trevor Babb
Photo by W. Mohr



MARYLAND'S STATE FOSSIL

On October 1st 1994, the official state fossil became an extinct snail also known as a gastropod. Actually it was our state fossil in 1984 but there was a name change. It was originally called *ecphora quadricostata*. Now it is called *ecphora gardnerae gardnerae* Wilson. This fossil was one of the first fossils from the new world to be illustrated in a scientific work in Europe. It first showed up in William Huddesford's copy of the third edition of Martin Lister "Historae Conchyliorum" also known as the history of conches. It was printed in 1770 in England. It was labeled (the drawing not the book) "a marilanda" or from Maryland.

(Continued on Page 7)

MARYLAND'S STATE FOSSIL

(Continued from Page 6)

The shells of different types are very unusual. Here is how you tell this one apart from others. It has: a russet color different from the white color of other mollusks, four ribs which have a "T" shape at the cross section and a wide umbilicus, and it is a hollow cone shape along the axis of coiling. Actually there is a difference between the Ecphora quadricostata in St. Mary's County and the one in lower parts of Maryland. This fossil had first been assigned to Virginia. The name had to be changed. Druid Wilson, who worked for the Smithsonian Institution, in 1987, came up with the name Ecphora Gardnerae . After that in 1988 Ward and Gilinski added to the name to make it Ecphora Garnerae Garnerae Wilson. The word quadricostata is the Latin form of "four ribs." The new name is in honor of Julia Gardner. The subspecies is a repeat of the species name and the part "Wilson" is in honor of the man who made up part of the name. Ecphora went into the waters in an early stage of the Continental Shelf. Maryland's Miocene forms from oldest to youngest are: the Calvert, the Choptank, and the St. Mary's formation. Ecphora Gardnerae Gardnerae Wilson is in the St. Mary's Formation.



Jennifer Weiss
Photo by W. Mohr

Note from Holly McNeil: Jennifer Weiss is 10 years old and wrote this to complete the final requirement she needed to earn the FRA fossil badge.

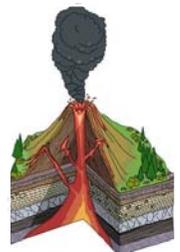


Photo from Wikipedia added by editor

FUTURE ROCKHOUNDS OF AMERICA (MINI MINERS) Ages 6-9

Meeting Date: October 10 , 2011 **Meeting time:** 7:00 - 8:00 pm

Our 1st meeting for 2011/12 was held on September 12 where we discussed the Rock Cycle and Igneous Rock Formations. The kids examined different igneous rocks, examined a cross section of the earth, learned about volcanoes and made their own mini volcano.



During the October 10th meeting we will continue discussing the Rock Cycle and examine Sedimentary rock formations. Parents are welcome to participate.

Meeting Location: The Card room at the Rockville Senior Center

For more information contact: Linda Smith, Home Phone: 301-530-5007, <Tunacat107@aol.com>.



You Might Be a Rockhound If ...

- You can pronounce the word "molybdenite" correctly on the first try.
- You think the primary function of road cuts is tourist attractions.
- You can point out where Tsumeb is on a world globe.
- You own more pieces of quartz than underwear.
- than of your family.....

Your photos include people only for scale and you have more pictures of your rock hammer and lens cap

From Facets, Flatiron Mineral Club Jun/July 2002

AURORA NC The official word is that there will be no Fall collecting season at the PCS mine in Aurora. "Due to safety concerns related to heavy equipment in the mine area as a result of us receiving our mine continuation permit, we have suspended fossil collecting. As we approach the Spring 2012 season, we will re-evaluate."



October 29 Lafarge Quarry, Churchville MD, Saturday, 8:45 am - 1 pm. Meet at the office building. Park in the gravel parking lot, 1219 Calvary Road, Churchville MD. We must be out of the quarry by 1 pm (subject to change by quarry management if the people on site have to leave earlier.) Restrictions and age limit: Attendees must be adults (18 and over) and be current members of GLSMC or a mineral club invited by the GLSMC. Total number of attendees is limited to 12 by request of the quarry.

Special rules: The quarry has requested that we wear fluorescent vests (typically available at home center stores), that members with any certification for mine safety bring their cards (certification not required), and that no food wrappers or other trash be left behind.

Mineral types to be found: Zeolites (Stilbite, Heulandite, Laumontite), Pyrite, Quartz, and Epidote.

Because this is a space limited trip, Please reply to Jonathan Harris <jgharris7@gmail.com> by E-mail (preferred) including "Churchville" in the subject line, or phone 301-545-0808 by October 22nd, at 5 pm with your name and the names of others going with you. You will need to agree to the rules and waiver which you can obtain from Jonathan. Please note any special issues that may affect your plans on attending (e.g. potential to be called away for business trip, desire to avoid rain, etc.) Jonathan will let people know within a couple of days after the 22nd if they can attend; previous experience suggests it is unlikely we will be oversubscribed. People who request to attend after October 22 will be accommodated on a first-come-first-served basis.

Directions: Take I-270 to beltway I-495, to I-95 (Baltimore/NY.) Keep right onto I-895 (Harbor Tunnel Throughway.) After the tunnel, merge right onto I-95. At Exit 80 turn right onto ramp for MD543 (Riverside/Churchville.) Turn left on MD543 (Cresswell Road.) Bear right onto MD 136 (Calvary Road) to 1219 Calvary Road, Churchville MD. About 75 miles from Rockville, 1 hour and 15 minutes.

SHOWS AND EVENTS

SOUTH PENN ROCK SWAP
27th Annual
Saturday, October 29, 2011
8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

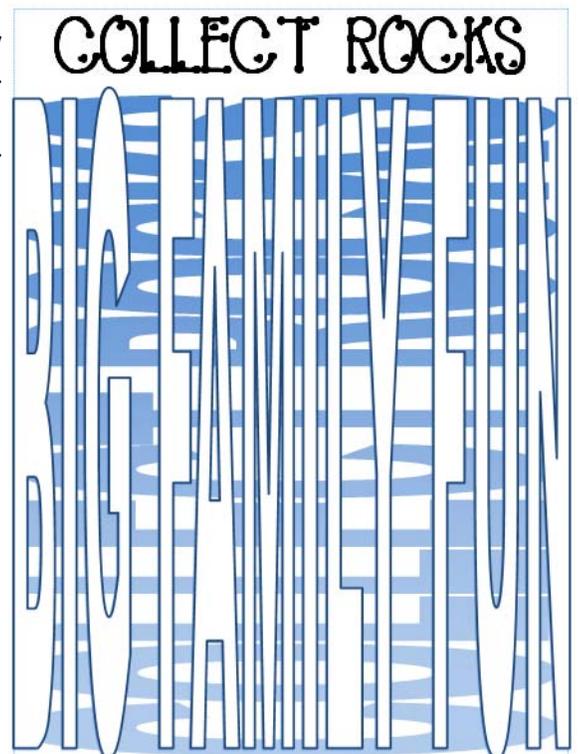
South Mountain Fairgrounds
(1.5 miles West of Arendtsville, PA on route 234)

General Admission: \$1.00
Tables for swappers: \$10.00

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

visit <www.rockandmineral.org>

View from low angle then Turn
sideways and view from low angle



By Wendell Mohr

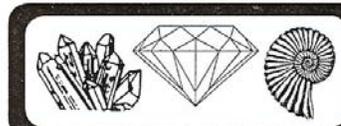
**CHESAPEAKE GEM &
MINERAL SOCIETY
AUCTION**

Date : Friday, October 14, 2011
Time : 7:30 (viewing 7:00 pm)
Place: Woman's Club of
Catonsville

**Offering Gemstones, cutting
rough, jewelry, minerals, fos-
sils, books, magazines, and
lapidary equipment.**

Refreshments are available.

Directions: Go West on
Fredrick Rd. from I-695 ap-
prox. 3 blocks to St. Timothy's
Lane. Turn right & go 1 block
to the
Woman's Club; located
behind St. Timothy's Church.



**20th Annual
GEM, MINERAL
AND FOSSIL SHOW**

Presented by the Northern Virginia Mineral Club, Inc. www.novamineralclub.org
Sponsored by the Dept. of Atmospheric, Oceanic and Earth Sciences at GMU

Date: November 12 & 13, 2011

Place: Student Union II Building
George Mason University Campus
Braddock Rd. & Route 123, Fairfax, VA

\$1 OFF
1 Adult Admission
with this card.

Hours: Saturday 10-6, Sunday 10-4

Admission: Adults: \$5, Seniors & Teens (13-17): \$3.
Children 12 & under, Scouts in uniform,
and GMU Students w/ valid ID are FREE.

Demonstrations, Exhibits, and Door Prizes. Mini-mines for children to dig in and get free fossils & minerals. Over 20 dealers with Fossils, Minerals, Crystals, and Gems for sale.

*Use Parking Lot A, enter Lot A from Nottaway River Lane.
Look for our Courtesy Shuttle to Mineral Show*

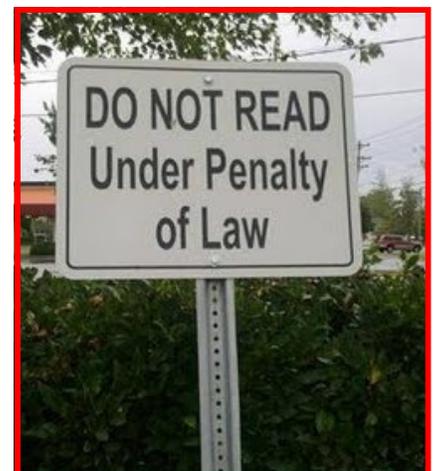
October 29: Annual "ULTRAVIOLATION" Fluorescent Mineral Show sponsored by the Rock & Mineral Club of Lower Bucks County. First United Methodist Church, 840 Trenton Rd., Fairless Hills, PA. 9am to 5pm. \$2 donation, children age 12 and younger free. Information: contact Chuck O'Loughlin, 130 Maple Terrace, Merchantville, NJ 08109, Phone: 856-663-1383, Email: <ultraviolation@yahoo.com>.

NATIONAL FOSSIL DAY EVENT

Join paleontologists and park rangers for the second annual National Fossil Day in Washington, D.C. The National Park Service and Smithsonian's Museum of Natural History are collaborating to host the National Fossil Day Celebration on the National Mall from 10 am to 2 pm on Wednesday, October 12, 2011.

The event will feature presentations and activities for all ages, including Jim Henson's Dinosaur Train, digging for fossils, and activities exploring prehistoric life. Museum staff will oversee a fossil prep lab and displays dedicated to fossils of the area. On hand will be paleontologists and geologists from the National Park Service, American Geological Institute, the Bureau of Land Management, the National Science Foundation, Maryland Dinosaur Park, and NOAA.

The event is free and open to the public. For more information, please see <<http://nature.nps.gov/geology/nationalfossilday/>>





OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS:

Ken Carter, Thomas Caton, Cassie DeSalvo, Jonathan Ertman, Stephanie Hald, Patrick Haynes, Matthew Hennessey, Charles M. P. Hyland, Sue Krug, John Kuehn, Rod Lee, Stephanie Luzier, Louis Van Rafelghem, Therese Van Rafelghem, David Tiktinsky, Li-Ching Wang, Dee Weiss.

OPAL, BIRTHSTONE FOR OCTOBER “HOT FLASHES”

Author unknown

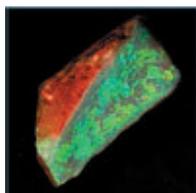
from *The Matrix*, October 2006 via *Gem Cutter’s News* October 2007

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

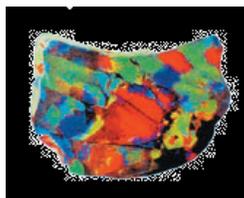
The Romans believed opal was the symbol of hope and purity, calling it cupid paederos (child as beautiful as love), and kept the wearer safe from disease. Arabs believed that opals fell from heaven in flashes of lightening, and the ancient Greeks believed it had the power of giving foresight and the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

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

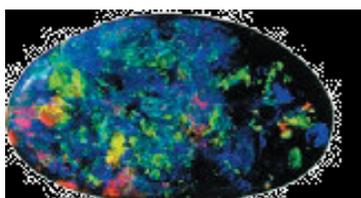
Most opal is 50-65 million years old, dating back to the Cretaceous period when dinosaurs roamed the earth. Opal formed as silica from decomposing rocks mixed with ground water which formed a gel that collected and hardened in underground cavities and fissures. Opal’s chemical formula is SiO₂. nH₂O. The stones have a high water content – as much as 30% – thus requiring care when working with them as a heat can evaporate the water. The stone is sensitive to pressure and knocks, and is relatively soft, a 5.5-6.5 on the Mohs Scale. Quality Opals are found in Czechoslovakia, Brazil, Guatemala, Honduras, Japan, and in the U.S. (Nevada), but most of the world’s jewelry opals come from the Australian Outback.



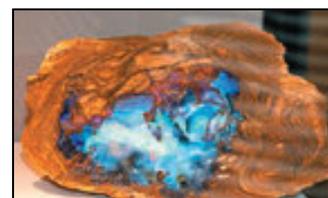
Black Opal Lightning Ridge NSW Australia



The Pride of Australia Coober Pedy, S. Australia, Australia found in 1915 - 225 cts.



Aurora Australis Most Valuable Black Opal, Lightning Ridge, NSW, Australia found in 1938 - 180 cts.



Boulder Opal Queensland, Australia

Photo R.Weller
Cochise College



A Beryl of Fun

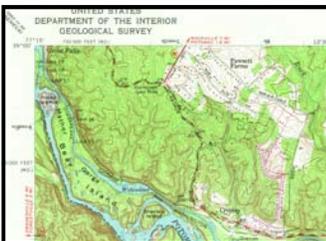


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WEB SITES

By Wendell C. Mohr

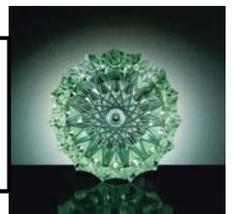
The Explorer's Guide to Impact Craters <<http://www.psi.edu/explorecraters/>> is by the Planetary Science Institute in Tucson AZ. If your time is limited I suggest that you first explore Barringer Crater. Otherwise you can peruse the Introduction, two other terrestrial Virtual Tours and one on Mars, Simulations, and Impact Rocks. Links are found at Resources. I believe that you will find the Barringer (the premiere US crater, in AZ) tour intriguing. An estimated 40 meter wide nickel iron meteorite struck with a purported velocity of 14-20 km/sec. This web site is very educational. ● New book just out: *Crater Lip* by Eileen Dover and Phil Down ●



Historic Topographic Maps - Preserving History is a USGS site at <<http://store.usgu.gov>>. I found the site difficult to navigate, but once learned, a useful reference. Currently there are 90,000 of the holdings of 200,000 maps available as pdf documents. Begin by going to "Map Locator and Downloader." In Search box, enter town & state you want then click "Go." There will be a map appear with a marked location logo. Click on it to get list of maps available. You select the map you want, the date published, and the scale i.e. 7.5 minutes. Select "Download" and you will get the pdf Zipped file. The files are ZIP condensed so you need to have a program such as WinZIP. I had downloaded the free jZIP program, which you may do by a Google search of jZIP. Be prepared for long downloads of very large files. Open the file with Adobe Reader. Of course you may also purchase hard copies if you wish. ● The collector followed the topo map to the deepest part of Death Valley CA to do some prospecting. What do you call that? Keeping a low profile. ●

Concave Faceting Synopsis at <<http://www.ultratec-facet.com/pdfs/Hargrave-concavesynopsis.pdf>> by Dalan Hargrave presents a three page condensation from his book, *Concave Facet*, Published in 2010. A brief history and technical tips are posted. Cutting specifications are given for both a standard and concave round brilliant 12 mm stone accompanied with comparative pictures of the results. As usual, no endorsement is give for either the equipment used or the book. ● You know you have done too much faceting when you stick your dopstick in your coffee cupor when you look up from your lap and the sun is coming up.....or when you have ground off your fingerprints. ●

Photo
from
Web
Site



SHOW TABLE: Sept. 12th, 2011. Thanks to those who bring items for sharing at the meetings.

<u>Exhibitor</u>	<u>Specimen (s)</u>	<u>Locality</u>	Photos by W. Mohr
Frances Becker	Epidote	Green Monster Mine AK	
Boe Brosius	Fluorite (2)	TX and Locality Unknown	
Barbara Burr	Serpentine and Rubellite	Locality Unknown	
Jeff Cessna	Petoskey Stone	MI	
Gerald Elgert	Sugilite, Baratovite, Aegerine	Ehime Prefecture, Japan	
Ryan Gunnison	Datolite, Axinite	Nyvojia Shizuoka Japan	
Jonathan Harris	Tourmaline*	Kensington Mica Mine, MD	
Patrick Haynes	Handmade Crystal*		
Eric Kindahl	Stilbite*	Manassas Quarry, VA	
Jim Kostka	Fluorite*	Ponderosa NM	
	Meteorite - Allende CV3	Pueblito de Allende, Chihuahua, Mexico	
	Meteor-wrong - Mystery Material	Mendota, LaSalle Co., IL	
	UV Response Agate	Locality Unknown	
	Wire Wrapped Quartz and Moss Agate		
Diane Leaman	Mozarkite	Ozark Mtns., MO	
Gary Leaman	Strawberry Quartz	Austria	
Wendell Mohr	Garnet	India	
Tim Morgan	Apophyllite	Nasik, India	
	Tourmaline in Mica	Huney Mine, ME	
Andy Muir	Scheelite in Quartz	China	
Pat Repik-Byrne	Green & Pink Tourmaline	ME	
Rod Towers	Green Apophyllite on Stilbite	Jalagon, India	
	Tourmaline	Brookside Gardens, Montgomery Co., MD	

* = Self-collected or self made



Why does mineral water that has Trickled through mountains for centuries have a "use by" date?

SEPTEMBER 12th PRIZES

The General Prize, a Marcasite from Starkville MS, was claimed by Jeff Cessna.

Junior member Ryan Gunnison took home the Show Table prize, a blue Barite from Stoneham CO. He also won the first of two Junior Prizes comprising of a *Rocks and Minerals Magazine*, the book: *Colorful Mineral Identifier*, a "Let's Explore Dinosaurs Fun Kit", and a coral rock called "Lizard Rock" from Tampa Bay FL.

The other Junior prize, also a multiple treasure consisting of a *Rock and Gem Magazine*, a book: *How to Know Minerals and Rocks*, and a coral rock called "Lizard Rock" from Tampa Bay FL.

SAFETY EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS



Basis: Montgomery Co. Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security. In our local area we have experienced earthquakes, tornados, hurricanes, and floods. What's next? Whether it's a natural hazard like a severe thunderstorm or a technological hazard like a water main break, disasters can occur at any time. The more you know about how hazards may affect your family and your community, the better you can prepare.

Following are natural and technological hazards that may occur:

Natural hazards: severe storms, hurricanes, winter storms, tornados, earthquakes, floods, heat or cold. Technological hazards: chemical spill, terrorism, fire, radiological hazards, and utility disruption.

Emergencies can take many forms and occur with or without warning. By taking a few simple steps now, you can ensure your family and community are better prepared to handle emergencies.

See important details and links available at:

<<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/oemtmpl.asp?url=/content/homelandsecurity/index.asp>>

Create emergency preparedness plans for your family, children, and pets. Be aware of existing various community preparedness plans. Know what to expect in a shelter.

Advance notice of an emergency, even just a few minutes, can make a big difference in your safety. Systems like "Alert Montgomery" can send notification to your mobile phone or e-mail as well as to TV and Radio, reverse 911, and the Montgomery County homepage. So you receive emergency alerts whether you are at home, at work, or even running errands. Often an emergency occurs without warning. Following an emergency, government officials will provide vital information about response efforts and ways to keep your family safe. Keeping open lines of communication will ensure that you know what is expected. Having access to a variety of communication devices can ensure you always get the latest information.



Make a kit. One of the most critical steps you can take to sustain yourself and your family during a disaster is to create an emergency kit before the disaster strikes. An emergency kit contains items you might need including food, water, medications, a flashlight, a radio, and batteries. These items will help you if you are asked to stay home for as many as three days. However, a kit may also be useful in case you have to evacuate your home. If the items you need are in your emergency kit, you will not have to scramble at the last minute to gather important items.

You have seen the news reports of the results of the recent events and know how severe they can be. As the Boy Scouts of America have stressed for years -- Be Prepared! By Wendell Mohr



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Rockhounder and its editor. Such items are to be sent to the editor's home address.



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