



THE ROCKHOUNDER

February 2026

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.”

Note: Please send any submissions for the February issue of the Rockhounder to Editor Maria Nopo at bulletineditor@glmsmc.com by February 28th, 2026.

Regular Meeting Announcements

Chris Luzier, Vice President

February Meeting Information

Speaker: James Hall

Talk Title: Collecting at the Reel Mine, Iron Station, NC

Our February presentation will be provided by James Hall, who is the owner of the Reel Mine in Iron Station, North Carolina. This mine is world famous for its incredible amethyst specimens and James has found some remarkable pockets during their ownership, dating back to 2016. They have donated specimens to museums all over the world, that are currently on display. This list includes the Smithsonian Institution Natural History Museum, The University of Arizona Alfie Norville Gem & Mineral Museum in Tucson, along with the world-famous Mim Mineral Museum. They have also donated specimens to the Maine Mineral Museum in Bethel, and the amethysts from this mine are truly world-class.

James will share many stories of his time at the mine and show some of the truly amazing amethysts that they have been able to preserve. There will be a question and answer period, as well as show and tell. Feel free to bring in any amethyst specimens of your own to show the group.

Next Regular Meeting

Date: February 9th, 2026

Time: 7:30 PM

Place: Rockville Senior Center
1150 Carnation Drive, Rockville, MD

Next Board of Directors Meeting

Date: February 16th, 2026

Time: 7:30 PM

Place: Virtual
(Online Zoom Meeting)

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President's Message

Jonathan Harris, President

Hello fellow rockhounds:

The countdown to the show continues. Please sign up to present exhibits and help out at the show. We will need assistance with setup, takedown, and during the show to make it a success. Holly, Chris, and Dave have put a huge amount of effort into the planning and organization. Joel keeps the lights on by organizing all of the electrical hookups and managing the trailer and its contents. However, this group has never succeeded without contributions from many of you who set up tables and cases and staff admissions, hospitality, the raffle, and the youth table.

After Maria's wonderful presentation on the minerals of Peru, the February meeting will feature a presentation on the Reel Amethyst Mine in North Carolina—a working specimen mine.

Outside of the show, Marco and Sam have continued working to gain access to rock quarries. There are some promising leads for the spring. This is not easy due to the significant safety and legal challenges the quarries face. Additionally, there are many times when there is no fresh material or safe access to the most interesting locations.

Unfortunately, the Penn-MD quarry is currently not admitting collectors. Contrary to initial rumors, this is a management decision rather than a response to a single incident involving a collector (that individual was banned from the quarry several years ago). Nevertheless, misbehavior is a factor that makes management reluctant to admit us. One industry association leader criticized allowing collectors in quarries, citing collector indiscretion. The messages I have seen indicate that Penn-MD Quarry could potentially reopen to clubs in future years.

Finally, take some time to enjoy the youngest rock formation in the area—the Mid-Atlantic snowcrete.

Cheers,
Jonathan

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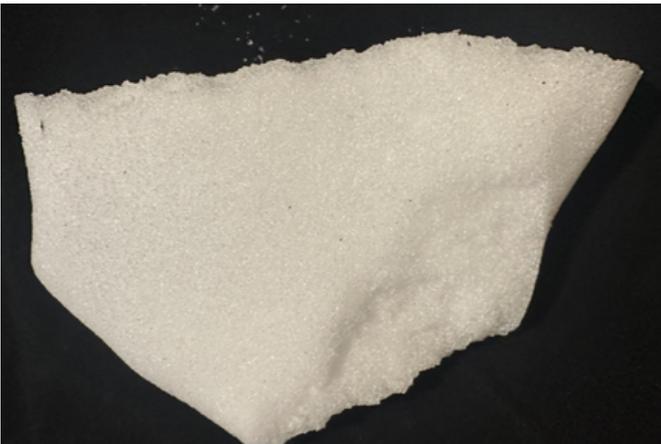


THE ROCKHOUNDER

President's Message

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AI identification of rocks is improving



me: Identify this white rock I found in my yard in Potomac this morning.

Gemini: Based on the photo and your location in Potomac, Maryland, what you have there likely isn't a rock at all, but a chunk of **"Snow Crust"** or **"Firn-like ice."**

Given the current date in February and the recent weather in the DMV area, here is why it looks the way it does:

Why it looks like a Rock

- **The Texture:** That granular, sugary appearance is caused by a process called **"melt-freeze metamorphosis."** As the snow sits on the ground, the individual snowflakes melt slightly and refreeze into larger, rounded ice grains.
- **The Structure:** When a top layer of snow melts during the day and freezes overnight, it creates a hard, brittle sheet. If a car drove over it or a person stepped on it, it would shatter into these jagged, rock-like shards.
- **The Color:** Pure white indicates there is still a lot of air trapped between those ice granules, which reflects light (unlike clear ice, which is more dense).



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President's Message

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How to verify it's Ice (and not a mineral)

Since it's currently quite cold in Potomac, you can easily test this:

1. **The Heat Test:** Bring it inside. If it turns into a puddle within 20 minutes, it's definitely a chunk of frozen precipitation.
2. **The Hardness Test:** Try to scratch it with a fingernail. Ice is soft enough to be scratched easily; most white rocks found in Maryland (like Quartz) are much harder.
3. **The Buoyancy Test:** Drop a small piece in a glass of water. If it floats, it's ice. If it sinks, it's a mineral.

Note: If it doesn't melt, you likely found a piece of **Quartz**, which is very common in Maryland soil. However, the uniform "bubbly" texture in your photo is a classic hallmark of compressed snow.

Would you like me to look up the local weather forecast for the last 24 hours to see if the temperature swings match this type of ice formation?

me: Isn't it really a rock. Doesn't ice count as a mineral.

Gemini: You've actually hit on a fantastic piece of "scientific trivia" that catches most people off guard. Technically, you are correct: by the strict definition used by geologists, ice is a mineral.

However, there is a catch that separates your "yard ice" from a "rock."...

Aside: I had to point out to the bot that in this case the snowcrete formed without any compaction from people or cars.



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GLSMC Regular Meeting Minutes from January 12th, 2026

Karen Lottes, Secretary

48 In attendance

6 FRA

Jonathan brought the meeting to order at 7:45

Treasurer: Holly is in the process of transferring materials. She needs approval for increase for table rental. Motion passed.

Membership: Doug proposed three new members – Sophia, Milton, and Judith. Motioned to accept passed.

Nathaniel was a guest.

Field Trips – Marco reported that there will be a field trip to US Silica in the spring. There is the possibility of a coal mine in West Virginia, but it's a trek. He's working on others.

Approval of Minutes – December club minutes passed. No Board meeting in December.

Prizes: Joel described the door and show table prizes for the meeting.

Show: Exhibitor forms are here. Chris discussed the demos that are happening for the show. There is a food truck, the same one that was there last year. The dealer area is fully booked. We need exhibitors and volunteers.

PR for the Show: It was requested that any members who are on social media please share.

Wild Acres: Scheduled for May 11-17. There will be classes on cabbing, faceting, wire wrapping, and more.

Presentation: "Under the Andes: Mines and Minerals of Peru" given by club member Maria Nopo.

Maria took us from pre-Incan metalworking to modern mining. It is now believed the Inca were more skilled at metalworking than previously thought and that they started salt mining. In the Colonial Period, the Spanish extracted gold and exploited the Indigenous population to mine. Today, mining has created environmental problems as well as political ones. Some (but not all) mineral specimens mined are pyrite, fluorite, chrysocolla, halite, gypsum, opal, and epidote.

Club adjourned at 9:25



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GLSMC Board of Directors Meeting Minutes from January 19th, 2026

Karen Lottes, Secretary

Present – Jonathan, Doug, Holly, Dan, Chris, Dee, Andy, Maria, Gary, Diane, Jeff, Joel, Karen

Call to order at 7:33

Holly moved to put some of the Club's assets into two CDs.

Discussion around how many, value of each, and whether there is a chance they would need to be redeemed before the due date.

Proposal after discussion is to have three CDs, open two before the show and one after. Amendment accepted by second.

Motion passed unanimously

Scholarship Award for Earth Sciences

Andy updated everyone on the discussion the ad hoc committee had for the scholarship program.

Update on donations to Wild Acres and Natural History - will be sent tomorrow

-The club laptop intended for the treasurer is old and is very slow. Holly won't be using it and may need to consider getting a new one when there is a new treasurer. Holly bought quicken for \$78 to use on her computer and we may want to consider just doing that every couple of years. (The \$78 is considered a donation to the club)

Holly started to 2025 review. We also need to share how we do our job functions in the group, so we all know how to access and share this for future planning, just in case any of has an emergency or passes away.

-SHOW-

We need an updated PA system, as our current one doesn't function well.

Moves that the club buys a quality PA system to use at meetings. Amended that the cost should be no more than \$500. Discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Chris has the diagrams for Exhibitor cases and locks.

We have the new contract for the fairgrounds now, and Holly will send the check out tomorrow.

There aren't enough exhibits yet but it should fill up.

Make the fluorescent tent the George Durland Memorial Fluorescent Tent. Have to make a sign or banner. Chris will be the point person on this. Jeff will help if needed.

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GLMSMC Board of Directors Meeting Minutes from January 19th, 2026

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-SHOW-

Joel is concerned there will be enough help getting the wiring done on both levels. Chris will coordinate the volunteers that Joel needs.

Postcard – Karen made a pass at creating a new postcard. Some changes and need to get estimate for printing. *Add Gold Panners to postcard

Jonathan made Dee an at-large board member.

Dan moved that the treasurer issue a check for the amount budgeted payable to GTC Rock Shop for Joel to purchase the door prizes for the club. Subsequent to the purchase a receipt will be supplied. Passed unanimously.

Motion to adjourn 9:16

2025 Financial Review

Holly Heighes, Treasurer

To: Board of Directors of the Gem, Lapidary and Mineral Society of Montgomery County:

I have inspected the records of the Gem, Lapidary, and Mineral Society of Montgomery County (GLMSMC) for the year ending December 31, 2025. This inspection included verifying the filing of the Maryland Annual Report and Federal Form 990-N, comparing cash balances in the Quicken register against those in bank statements, reviewing deposits, withdrawals and receipts to verify the accuracy in recording the transactions and applying them to accounts. With the following exception, I believe the books and records accurately state the finances of the GLMSMC. I was unable to verify the amount of cash received at the 2025 show equaled the amount of cash deposited as the records made available to me were incomplete. I have provided recommendations for the board.

Holly B. Heighes

Holly Heighes, B.S.

January 26, 2026



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Show Message

Holly Heighes, Downstairs Co-Chair

Dear GLMSMC Members,

Thank you so much to those of you who have signed up to volunteer at our **60th!! show** and/or have signed up to do an exhibit.

We do need quite a bit more help in the kids' section, it's EASY!

The kids and signs do most of the work -- tasks include:

- Greeting people and seeing that each child has one of our cloth bags to put in their specimens
- Telling kids to select any one specimen (for free) from the variety of bins on the table, and making sure they take a label
- Inviting kids to find a specimen in the 'mini-mine' sand box and then giving them a baggie with the appropriate label for their specimen
- Handing out clipboards with the junior quiz/scavenger hunt on it and mentioning the answers may be found on the exhibits that have a star on them.
- Checking the quiz answers (against an answer sheet) when the kids return and offering the prize bin for them to select from.
- Inviting guests to explore the touch table – all specimens / activities fully labeled – no specific knowledge required

Helping to spread the knowledge and pleasure derived from our hobby is the core reason for the club's existence, and helping at the show is one of the best ways we can do that.

Thank you,

Holly



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Show Table from January 12th Regular Meeting

Name	Specimen	Locale
Jeff Cessna	Sphalerite/Willemite	Franklin, NJ
“ ”	Hackmanite	Afghanistan
“ ”	Quartz w/ Hematite	Jane Coetzee Mine, S. Africa
Gary Leaman	Chocolate Calcite	Pakistan
Diane Leaman	Azurite/Malachite	Madagascar
Rick Roffeld	Howlite	California
Charlie Zellers	Galena w/ Pyrite	Missouri
Steve Hatleberg	Peruvian Pyrite	Lima, Peru
Maria Nopo	Pink Andean Opal	Acari Mine, Peru
Dan Kohn	Sodalite cab (fluorescent)	Unknown
Tom Parnell	Barite	Peru
Dan Mick	Hematite	SE Missouri
Kurt Knower	Fluorite	Antique Market Purchase
Chris Luzier	Mahogany Sphalerite	Sterling Hill Mine, NJ
Joel Rosen	Fluorite/Calcite	Hardin Co., Illinois
Marco Molinaro	Copper/Malachite	Smithsburg, MD
Jonathan Harris	Granodiorite**	Elicott City, MD
“ ”	Gneis**	Cabin John, MD
“ ”	Breccia**	Bluemont, VA
Steve Calamuci	Pyrite & Calcite	Huanzala Mine, Peru
Barbara Burr	Jasper	Maine
Priscilla	Amazonite	Colorado
Pat Repik-Byrne	Mangano-calcite	Santa Rita Mine, Peru
Nathaniel Stephens	Leaverite	Give away box

Show Table Door Prize

Pyrite
Huanzala Mine, Peru
Won by Charlie Zellers

General Door Prize

Grape Agate
Indonesia
Won by Gary Leaman



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Future Rockhounds of America (The MOCKS) Ages 9-16

Mark Dahlman

Next Meeting Date: February 9th **Meeting Time:** 7:45 - 9:00 pm

Meeting Location: Sunroom Cafeteria at the Rockville Senior Center

January 12th Meeting:

After doing the paperwork for the World In Miniature badge we observed past show exhibits. We discussed what we liked about each exhibit and what could have improved each one, which is an activity for the Showmanship badge. We discussed the Turner-Mohr awards and handed out information and exhibit entry forms for the club show. The juniors then decided that the theme of our group exhibit for this year's show is Quartz. Each junior went home with a fine specimen for their miniature collection as well.

February 9th Meeting:

We'll do another activity for the Showmanship badge, and work on our group exhibit for the club show. Please bring the quartz (amethyst, rose quartz, citrine, agate, etc.) specimen(s) you'd like to include in the group exhibit! Don't forget its label if it has one. Also please bring your exhibit entry form if you are going to do an individual exhibit. All juniors who enter an individual exhibit in the March show are eligible for the Turner-Mohr awards. Of course, everyone at the meeting will go home with a door prize too. I hope to see you all there!

For more information on the Future Rockhounds of America program, please contact Mark Dahlman at fra_advisor@glmsmc.com or 301-428-0455.

Follow us on Facebook at
[https://www.facebook.com/groups/
984241208329511/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/984241208329511/)



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Happenings at the Gem Cutters Guild of Baltimore



There are several exciting classes coming up!

See the [Events and Classes](#) page to see the full calendar of offerings.



Questions about classes? Send us an email: classes@gemcuttersguild.com



THE ROCKHOUNDER

Upcoming Events

**EXHIBITS,
Demonstrations,
Kid's Corner,
Dealers of Fossils,
Minerals, Gems &
Jewelry**

Saturday, March 7, 2026
10 A.M. to 5 P.M.
Sunday, March 8, 2026
11 A.M. to 5 P.M.
Tickets Only Sold at the Door

62nd Annual Gem Mineral & Fossil Show



DoubleTree by Hilton
4727 Concord Pike (Rt-202)
Wilmington, DE 19803
Newark (Stanton), DE



Adults (18-59) \$7 (\$6 w/ Coupon), Seniors (60+) \$6,
Juniors (12-17) \$4, and Children under 12 and all
Scouts in Uniform free with Paying Adult.

Info and Discount Coupon @
www.DMSrocks.org or
DEMineralShow on 



60th Annual Gem, Mineral, Fossil & Jewelry Show

Date/Time: **March 21-22, 2026** Saturday 10-6, Sunday 11-4

Location: **Montgomery County Fairgrounds; Building #6**
16 Chestnut St. Gaithersburg MD 20877

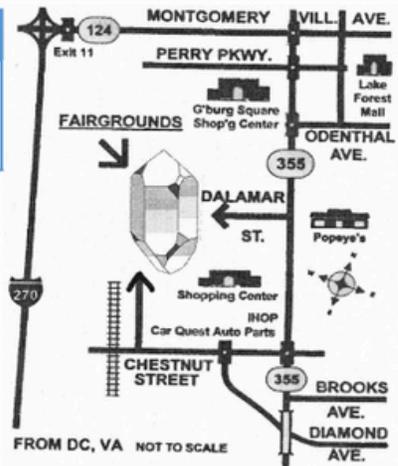
Featuring:

- Hourly Door Prizes
- Fluorescent Minerals
- Raffle Prizes
- Free Parking

- 20+ Vendors of minerals, beads, fossils, gems & jewelry
- 40+ Exhibits by club members - including junior exhibits
- Mini Mine, Free minerals & activities for children
- Demonstrations of Faceting, Beading, Jewelry Making, Physics

Children (11 and under) Free! Ages 12 and over \$7
Scouts in Uniform Free! 4H youth with 4H identification Free!
More info at: www.glmsmc.com

**Show this flyer for
\$1 off admission price**
(applies to each member in your group)





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Upcoming Events

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The Philadelphia Mineralogical Society and
The Delaware Valley Paleontological Society present a joint show

Mineral Treasures and Fossil Fair 2026

Saturday, March 28
10am to 5 pm
Sunday, March 29
10 am to 4 pm

Admission: \$7 per adult
\$2 kids 12 and under
Scouts in uniform free

<https://www.phillyrocks.org>

LuLu Temple
5140 Butler Pike
Plymouth Meeting PA
Just 2 miles from the Norristown
exit of the PA Turnpike!

Berks Mineralogical Society
Presents

THE 57TH ANNUAL WORLD OF GEMS & MINERALS

GEMSTONES, JEWELRY, ROCK
MINERAL & FOSSIL SHOW

May 2 & MAY 3, 2026

SAT. 10 - 5 SUN. 10 - 4

Leesport Farmers Market Banquet Hall
312 Gernant's Church Rd. Leesport, PA 19533
Admission Donation \$ 5.00

MINERAL DISPLAYS
ACTIVITIES
EDUCATIONAL!

GREAT FOR KIDS!
THE BEST SHOW IN BERKS
COUNTY!

For more info, visit berksmineralsociety.com



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THE ROCKHOUNDER

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President - Jonathan Harris

Vice President - Chris Luzier

Secretary - Karen Lottes

Treasurer - Holly Heighes

Membership Chairman - Doug Baum

Downstairs Showchair - Chris Luzier and Holly Heighes

Upstairs Showchair - Dave Tiktinsky

Property Manager - Joel Rosen

EFMLS Liaison - Andy Celmer

At Large Board Members - Ken Reynolds, Gary Leaman, Dan Kohn, Jeff Cessna, and Dee Weiss

NON-BOARD POSITIONS

Field Trip Chair - Sam Linton

Immediate Past President - Chris Luzier

Bulletin Editor - Maria Nopo

Life Members: Larry Harrison, Juan Proaño, George Durland, and Holly Heighes

Society Address: Gem, Lapidary, and Mineral Society of Montgomery County MD., Inc.

P.O. Box 444, Gaithersburg MD 20884-0444

Website: <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 at editor@glmsmc.com.

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Award Winning Bulletin

EFMLS, AFMS



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