

Mineralogical Society of the District of Columbia

MINERAL MINUTES



Vol. 70, No. 1

Mineral Minutes

January 2011

Club Meeting: Wednesday, January 5, 7:45 PM

The regular monthly meeting of the MSDC will take place as noted above. We meet at 7:45 PM in the lobby of the Smithsonian Natural History Museum.

Program and Speaker: Scott Southworth, from the USGS will be returning to present the program originally scheduled for last September: "Recent Advances in the Understanding of the Geologic Framework of the Piedmont Province, DC, VA and MD." This will be a very interesting program describing in some detail the geology of our "home" region, the Piedmont of Virginia, Maryland and DC. Those of us who were at the September meeting had a brief introduction to Scott's interesting presentation about our local geology. Don't miss this program!!! Remember, Wednesday, January 5, 7:45 PM at the usual meeting room at the Smithsonian. – Tom Tucker

Place: The National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, 10th Street NW and Constitution Avenue, Washington, D.C. We will gather at the Constitution Avenue entrance at 7:45 PM to meet our guard who will escort us to the Cathy Kirby Room. If you park on the street, **THERE ARE NOW PARKING FEES, PAYABLE AT THE KIOSKS, AND ENFORCEMENT UNTIL 10 PM.**

Dinner: Some of us will meet for dinner at the Pier 7 Restaurant at 6:00 PM before the club meeting. Give Andy Thompson a call at (301) 270-6790 so he can make reservations if you wish to attend.

2011 Dues are Due Now

Rick Reiber

This year we plan to produce a membership list in February, to be given to all paid members. We hope you'll remember to pay Rick Reiber because the list won't feel complete without your much appreciated presence on it. Bring your check and the enclosed form on page 6 (also online) to the January meeting, or mail it to Mineral Society of DC, PO Box 9957, Alexandria, VA 22304. For new members who join/joined in the last months of the year, membership extends through the following year with no additional dues.

The Prez Says – A Word from Our President

Tom Tucker

I want to thank everyone for their vote of confidence that we can lead MSDC for the coming year. We especially need to thank our outgoing officers for the commendable service they have provided the Club in recent years. Fortunately, we will still have Andy by my side when we need him, and I'm sure as program-person, he will continue our tradition of varied and significant programs. He has already been charging ahead arranging new programs for the coming year.

And we must thank Betty for her services as Secretary - I don't recall if she was elected, or "selected," but she's been doing a great job. And her reviews in the Minutes of our program each month has been a real service - both to those of us who

"were there," and perhaps more so, for those who couldn't make a particular meeting and program. Thank you, Betty.

Rick continues as our Treasurer - a task I consider perhaps most demanding of the various Club officers. Thank you, Rick, for keeping our books straight.

I especially want to note our upcoming program in January - Scott Southworth, of the USGS, returning to our midst to present his program on the geology of the Piedmont regions of Northern Virginia, and probably Maryland too. We got to meet Scott in September when his presentation was cut short by computer difficulties, but he did give us an impromptu geology lesson using Dave Nanney's Great Falls slides. This time we'll get the real thing, and I'm sure it will be a highlight of the year - not to be missed if you're curious about our regional geology. It's that geology that provides us the varied minerals we so love to collect. Bring your curious friends along. See you there, Tom

The Prez Says - A Word from Our Immediate Past President

Andy Thompson

What's 'New' About the NeoLithic?
And, What Will Be New For Me in 2011?

Mineral collectors and students of mineralogy are typically interested in a wide range of ideas and findings pertaining to rocks. With this in mind, here's a brief report of a new anthropological discovery concerning the Neolithic period when modern humans first began to find valuable uses for rocks, including as stone tools and for building houses.

Some have described that breakthrough as a revolution in human progress. The point of this article is to draw the reader's attention to connect your interest in rocks and minerals with a 'revolution' or a sense of creative breakthroughs.

The average person probably thinks of the Neolithic as a static period in human history. But for anthropologists the Neolithic is not "a specific chronological period, but rather a suite of behavioral and cultural characteristics, including the use of wild

and domestic crops and the use of domesticated animals."¹ They were tremendous breakthroughs.

And why, you might ask, would an expanded use of stone have anything to do with crops and livestock? How are those categories of vegetable, animal and mineral inter-connected? Recall, of course, that the Neolithic was before the iron and bronze ages. So an answer, as you may have guessed, is that the growing of crops for cereals required sharp cutting tools for the harvest and grinding stones for processing the grains. Stone axes and adzes were needed for clearing brush and forest land for farming and then for working the wood, building corrals for domesticated animals and shaping stones for permanent housing and food storage. So the expanded use of stone was, so to speak, the necessary foundation for these new cultural developments.

Recent Findings

In the Fertile Crescent region of Mesopotamia, anthropologists traditionally considered the Neolithic period as having begun around 9,500 years B.C. But recent findings at Tell Qaramel in northern Syria, 25 kilometers north of Aleppo, place the beginning of the Neolithic culture back to around 10,700 BC.

Prof. Ryszard F. Mazurowski from the Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology at Warsaw University, has been directing the digs and he claims their discoveries of five large Neolithic stone towers, the earliest dating to the 11th millennium, make them the oldest buildings in the world and "one of the greatest discoveries in the Near-East region for 60 years, since the discovery of Jericho". Throughout the area, they also found numerous flint pieces for everyday domestic use.²

Stepping back from this exciting new discovery, there are at least two implications for members of mineral clubs, one general and one personal. The first is that the Neolithic period was one of considerable revolution. By using stone in new ways, as instruments for polished and sharp tools and for building structures, this breakthrough overturned the 'Paleolithic' period, the old stone age, when people were limited to using randomly found stone fragments. So what is here proposed is that we think of the term 'Neolithic' less as a chronological period

and more as a paradigm shift for humanity. It is a mindset which looks at stone and minerals in new and creative ways.

This, in turn, raises the question of whether mineral collectors and students of geology would want to consider incorporating this revolutionary spirit into their own approach to collecting and research. At a simple level, for example, when you look forward to 2011, is there anything 'new' you want to incorporate into your collection or geological studies (rare earth metals, copper ores)? Is there a first class physical or electronic site you want to explore, a geological puzzle you want to pursue? Is there a new way you might want to view your collection, not akin to nouns sitting in boxes, but somehow, as verbs, minerals in action, teaching others, trading with collectors overseas? Perhaps many MSDC members are already doing this and are ahead of the rest of us on the evolutionary curve. To the extent all of adopt this openness to the new approach to minerals, we can proudly claim to be Neolithic in our vision, in the best sense of this term.

So please bring your vision, whether Paleolithic or Neolithic to our January 5th meeting, when USGS geologist Scott Southworth will share his vision of the Piedmont, its origins and development.

References:

⁽¹⁾ cf. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neolithic>

⁽²⁾ If interested, visit http://www.eduskrypt.pl/yet_another_sensational_discovery_by_polish_archaeologists_in_syria-info-6775.html

MSDC Minutes, December 1, 2010 **Betty Thompson, Secretary**

President Andy Thompson welcomed everyone to the annual Holiday Dinner and meeting, particularly Dr. Richard Tollo, his wife Stephanie and son Spencer, and his student Laurie Ziminski, as well as other guests Alexi, Amber, and Pat. He thanked past president Cynthia Payne for her work. The November minutes were approved as published.

Vice President and program chair Tom Tucker has set up a fine start for 2011 programs, with Scott Southworth in January on the geology of the Piedmont Region, Steve Johnson in February on the minerals of Afghanistan, and last year's scholarship recipient, Allison Rubin, sometime in the spring, will give us a report on her research findings with Dr. Tollo at Mount Rogers in southwestern Virginia.

Elections affirmed the fine work of Nomination Committee chair Ed Fisher. The 2011 officers will be:

President – Tom Tucker

Vice President – Andy Thompson

Secretary – Denise Whitman

Treasurer – Rick Reiber

Director – Cynthia Payne

(Don Greaves and Dave Nanney will also continue as directors.)

A motion was approved to thank the outgoing President, Andy Thompson, for his excellent work during the years of his presidency.

Andy appreciated everyone's contributions to the party, including the feast of food. He thanked Patricia Rehill for a delightful guessing game that let us all get to know more about each other as well as Mary Bateman for Jeopardy-like fun with mineral information.

With much pleasure, Andy announced that Cynthia Payne is MSDC's Rockhound of the Year. The citation (see page four) honors not only her 51 years of contributions to the club but also her personal characteristics that offer an inspiring model of how to pursue our mineralogical interests with both permanent curiosity and ever increasing knowledge and skill.

Andy presented the 2010 Foshag-Hronik scholarship of \$750 to Laurie Ziminski, with all good wishes for the success of her research of the rocks of the Blue Ridge Parkway with Dr. Tollo. And he presented to our sponsor, Tim Rose, a gift of \$500 to the Mineral Sciences Department, with much gratitude for the support of the Smithsonian and for his own constant behind-the-scenes skillful support.

Cynthia Payne: MSDC Rockhound Award For 2010

Betty Thompson

In recognition of her more than 51 years as an active and valued member of the Mineralogical Society of the District of Columbia, Cynthia Payne is our Rockhound of the Year 2010. Through the years, Cynthia has served in the offices of president and vice president, providing able leadership and creative programs for club members. She developed her expertise in mineralogy and crystallography through initiative and energy that serve as a model for all mineral enthusiasts. Among other activities, she served as a long-time volunteer and docent at the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History, our club "home," taking full advantage of the related training offered by the Mineral Sciences Department; she collected all over the world; she enjoyed and encouraged others to take advantage of both the Rochester Symposium and the Tucson Show each year; she assembled an extensive collection; she studied on her own; she has served the micromounting community for decades and is a member of the Micromounters Hall of Fame. As a result, Cynthia is a very interesting person, a knowledgeable resource for all club members, and a friend to all. Her quick intelligence and reliable stamina belie the 90 years of age that she claimed to reach this past September. She has been, is, and will be a great asset to our club, and we are delighted to name her Rockhound of the Year for 2010.

Wildacres Workshops for 2011

From e-mail from Carolyn Weinberger, Editor EFMLS Newsletter

EFMLS Wildacres Workshops for 2011 are in the current (January) EFMLS Newsletter and on the EFMLS website www.amfed.org/efmls/wildacres.htm.

Information about the classes being offered each session, dates, speakers etc. is all there. You can also download an application form that you can print off for your club members or fill in directly on your computer before you print the form out for yourself. Registration for both sessions begins on January 1. If

you've never been to an EFMLS Wildacres Workshop, you're missing a treat and we encourage you to come.

Note from Editor:

If you have not yet been to Wildacres, or it has been awhile, check out the EFMLS Wildacres Website referred to by Carolyn and sign up for the April session. You will be glad you did. If you don't have a computer, let me know and I'll get the info to you.

SAMS Convention in 1958

Cynthia Payne

Early in 1958 Lydia suggested that we go to the Eastern Federation Convention in Asheville, NC for our vacation. We had both become interested in the lapidary and mineral hobby Lydia in the Canal Zone, where she was learning to facet, preform agate and tumble it. The Canal Zone has an endless supply of agate, jasper and bloodstone. All one has to do is pick it up on the beach where the Culibre Cut dredge dumps it. But that's about it for minerals. Lydia did find a few small quartz crystals once. She also went gold panning in Panama a few times but without much luck. A couple of years before that I had started taking lapidary lessons and learned about the Gem & Lapidary Soc of DC.

A couple weeks before the show the man who was supposed to take the Lap Club exhibit was sent on a trip for the outfit he worked for. I had told the club I was going to the show so I was asked to take the exhibit. I had joined the club only a few months before and didn't know much of anything about the materials or exhibiting but was assured that everything was labeled and there was a diagram of how they were to be arranged in the case. We got to the show and opened the boxes. And there were all these cabs, each in a little bag--and not one of them labeled. We opened the diagram, it was a huge piece of kraft paper with ovals, circles and squares in diagonal from the center out to the edges; a note that the club had two cases available and there were more cabs if we wanted to use that second case... Also some very wrinkled fabric was included. We tried for about 10 minutes to make sense of the diagram and then scrapped it, and arranged the cabs as we liked paying some attention to color and shape.

Luckily there were no labeling requirements for lapidary. We found some opals in the second box. The cases were flat 3' x 4', tent style which meant they were viewed from both sides and were painted white. And most of the fabric in the box was white and some odd colors except for one piece of green, all very wrinkled. We begged some thumb tacks from someone, stretched that green across from corner to corner and we had something to put the opals on. We took some of the more attractive cabs from the first case and the whole thing looked fairly good. The cases were judged the next day and we had a First and Best in Lapidary on one case and a Second on the other. My first lesson in the value of showmanship

Once we decided to scrap the club plan, it was kind of fun. The worst thing about the whole deal was that right on the other side of the aisle was the Singing Rocks, thin strips of some rock hanging from cords and someone playing them like bells. Long before we had the cases done I was wishing for ear plugs.

This was the first of many conventions and shows we would attend. And as North Carolina is mineral country it was a great one. The Southern Appalachian Mineral Club had some very enthusiastic people and they and the city of Asheville made everyone feel welcome. The swap area was on the plush rug in the lobby of the George Vanderbilt Hotel, and the club people were there to make sure visitors left with North Carolina minerals. I had taken a large specimen from Franklin, NJ and swapped it with Bob Williams, the show chairman, for 8 or 10 specimens from all over western NC. He wanted the Franklin piece for the new museum on the Blue Ridge Parkway.

To be sure we were welcomed to North Carolina they even included in our show packet a ticket for the Mountain Folk Festival, which is always held "Long about sundown the first weekend in August" That was a lot of fun, real country music, clog dancing, and dulcimer playing.. If you have seen *Riverdance* and think it's loud, imagine twenty dancers in clogs on a raised wood floor.

A special feature at the show was an exhibit of tektites. The show wanted publicity and the Asheville paper was looking for something unusual to write about so we were interviewed with me wearing a

tektite necklace. The caption on the photo read something like "two sister mineral collectors, one wearing jewels from outer space and one from miles away, out of the country". The interview on an inside page for the most part was what we had told the reporter with just a little embroidery on his part.

With so many available collecting sites, SAMS scheduled a full week of field trips. They held a Field Trip Cabaret the last night of the show and unfortunately invited everyone at the show to come on the trips. They had prepared a Field Trip Guide, a page for each day with directions to get to the site, a map and a list of the minerals found there. So the first day we had over 200 "collectors" There were women in sandals, and most of these people had no equipment at all or any idea what they were doing. The second day we were down to about half that number., but still a lot who didn't know what they were doing. By midweek we were down to mineral collectors.

There were a group of us camping, including the field trip chairman, Craig Ballinger, who was there working on the Blue Ridge Parkway, Craig had the biggest black light I have ever seen with a huge back pack battery. The evening we went to a mine in Spruce Pine for Hyalite Opal, we campers got there before the others, and were on the dump when they arrived. This was a locality where you drove right up to the dump. Lots of noise as the others arrived and scrambled up the dump. I didn't pay much attention until someone grabbed my ankle and said "Get off my rock." I'm afraid I was not very polite when I said "Let go of my ankle, that is my white sock you have, don't you have any idea what you are looking for? "

The day I remember most was the day at the Little Pine Garnet Mine, Madison Co. It was early in the week so we had a lot of cars, parked all along all along the roads anywhere near.. I needed some cash, the treasurer was at work but his wife said she would take me there. My car was parked way up the road, so the son of the show chairman said I could borrow his which was fine, for a while. He was 6' plus and I was 5'3". We got my money and started back when a sudden thunderstorm hit. I got the top up and tried to close the windows but they hardly budged. I stopped and rolled the seat back some and got the window closed a little but as soon as I moved the seat forward

to where I could safely reach the pedals the windows went down again. Apparently there was one hydraulic system for the top, the seat and window functions. The rain was coming in all directions so we got drenched. Our situation was mild to what we found when we got back to Little Pine. The stream we had crossed on stepping stones to get to the mine was now a raging torrent between knee and hip high on the men. They were linking hands and carrying women and children across. After a while the rain stopped and the local people said the water would go down soon, so 10 of us stayed and went back in to get some garnets. It was a joint effort, prying garnets out of the wall and putting them in rock sacks. When we felt we had enough, we went out, dumped them on the road and divided them up, each person taking one in turn.

We then headed into Spruce Pine to Bakers Motel. Someone in our group had a room and we rented another. The women used one and the men the other and we all took showers. We used lots of water and figured the mud would wash down and not clog the drains. We brushed as much mud off our clothes as we could and headed down to the restaurant. They had closed when we got there, the waitresses were gone but the cook was still there. This being Spruce Pine he understood why we were late. We told him we would eat anything. So we set the table, made the coffee, went to the kitchen when he said the food was ready and cleared the table after we were done. I don't remember what we ate but it was delicious.

Collecting in the park is not permitted and parking on the Blue Ridge Parkway is strictly forbidden, but somehow Craig got permission for us to collect Kyanite at Balsom, Gap, Buncombe Co. under very strict restrictive conditions. We were to pull off the road as far as possible, we had 15 minutes, and had to be back in our cars. We parked our cars, made a mad dash down the hill and did some fast digging. Luckily it was fairly easy to collect, but we couldn't get much in the time before we had to be we had to be back up that hill, and 15 minutes goes awfully fast. I didn't get much, but at least I did get a few pieces. The Kyanite is a pretty blue.

As I said we were camping, it was August, and my clothes were showing it. One morning on our way to the locality as we were going through a town I

noticed a big sign in a store window - "Sale blouses 2 for \$5." I bought 2 blouses, changed in the store and when I got to the site, everyone in our group wanted to know how I managed to have something clean.

The rest of the week was not as exciting or memorable. We went to Jones & Truman Zinc Mine in Henderson Co. Lots of Zircons, they were opaque yellow and all falling apart from radioactivity One day to McKinney Mine for Mica, and Olivine in Jackson Co. and Indian Paint Pots, really Hematite Geodes in Bessemer City. In my catalog of specimens collected that week I list Olivine from Jackson Co., and Siderite from Davidson Co. but I don't really remember those two localities. They must not have been very interesting localities, but then it was 52 years ago

That week of camping is responsible for my getting involved in the Eastern Federation. One family was Roy Clark and his two sons, one named Chip. Who is now the photographer at the Smithsonian, who takes those wonderful mineral and gem pictures. The next year when Roy Clark was elected President he asked me to chair the Education & Program Aids Committee. During several phone calls he convinced me it didn't matter that I didn't know much, he would help. That job led to many others and was responsible for many years of a lot of fun, meeting interesting people and making friends all over the country.

A Bit of MSDC History

Submitted by Cynthia Payne

The following first appeared in the August 1969 *Mineral Minutes*:

Minutes, July 23, 1969

The meeting of July 23, 1969 convened at the home of Warring and Cynthia Barnes...a warm muggy evening and a spacious, air-cooled room with plenty of room for the evening's activities.

We greeted our speaker of the evening, Dick Busch, a recent graduate of the University of Arizona, who is returning there to continue work toward his advanced degrees; who, by the way, led his father into the mineralogical hobby, and not the other way around, as we stated in a previous issue. With Dick was

“proud papa” Jack Busch and the Mrs. Jack Bush to-be, Mrs. Jean Reynolds, who received the best wishes of the group.

Members present: Warring and Cynthia Barnes, John Griesbach, Harry Dickens, Frank Berek, Dr. Arthur Roe, Herb and Geneva Corbett, Ruth and Vernon Wertz, Tom Cooney, Bob, Bonnie and Danielle Dunning.

Ruth Wertz called the meeting to order. The Club case at the Federation Show at Rochester was discussed. A more than general up-grading of specimens was suggested. John Griesbach brought out the idea that we would do well to change several of the specimens each time the case was shown. Frank Berek and Harry Dickens without arm twisting volunteered to take the case to the Chesapeake Club Show.

Field trip is Saturday, July 26th, at Teeter Quarry at (near) Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Bring all the usual equipment and wear your safety hats! The quarry is a working quarry so we must follow the ground rules of the owners....for our safety and theirs! The other excursion is cancelled due to an accident to a mineral hunter in that quarry recently.

John Griesbach is host to the next meeting.

Vernon Wertz reported on the exchange of minerals with the group at the Royal Ontario Museum. Vacations have interfered with communications.

Frank Berek proposed the name of Ben Chromy as an Honorary Member. Ruth Wertz offered the name of Isabelle Mattison for regular membership, Ben Chromy is Past president of the Eastern Federation, the Mineralogical Society of the District of Columbia, a leader in micromounting on the west coast, the author of a micromount column, photographer extraordinary of micro minerals, the dispenser of color photos of micro minerals at Christmas time and a good citizen.

Mrs. Mattison, a learner in the micro field, has held about all of the offices in the Northwest Federation, and the club of which she is a member in the Pasco-Richland-Kennewick, Washington area, as well as being the second member on the present AFMS Rules Committee.

Both names were voted on and both persons elected to membership.

Ruth introduced Dick Busch, who proceeded to give an interesting and informative talk on the reasons for, methods and results obtained in the use of X-ray diffraction in the identification of minerals. He stressed that it is one of many tools used in the identification of minerals, not the only tool. He also brought out the time required to make such identification, which prompted John to call attention to the fact that requesting friends to make such an identification is an imposition unless that friend, himself, has a personal interest in the identification. Dick also answered a number of questions.

We then adjourned to the scopes, small discussion groups, and the ice-cream and cold drinks furnished by Ruth.

Adjourned slightly after 11:00 p.m.

Vernon Wertz, Secretary

***Mineral Minutes* Deadline** **Mary Bateman, Editor**

The **deadline for the February issue of the *Mineral Minutes*** will be **January 15**. If you have an article or pictures that you wish to share, please e-mail them to Mary Bateman at mbateman1@verizon.net or mail them to 2700 9th Street South, #203, Arlington, VA 22204-2328

Pictures

Editor

Thanks go to Cynthia Payne for the pictures on pages 7-8 from the November meeting and to all the pictures she has contributed during 2010..

If you took pictures at the December Holiday Party, won't you share them with your fellow members. Just send me a copy of the photo via mail (see "Deadline" article above for submitting instructions) and I'll do the rest.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR RENEWAL
THE MINERALOGICAL SOCIETY OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA (MSDC)

Family ~ \$25.00 per year. One address.

Individual ~ \$20.00 per year.

New * Renewal Dues are for Year _____ *

For new members who join in the last months of the year, membership will extend through the following year with no additional dues.

Please make check payable to MSDC.

ANNUAL DUES – PLEASE PAY BY JANUARY 10.

Pay at the January meeting or mail to: Mineralogical Society of DC
P.O. Box 9957
Alexandria, VA 22304

Name(s) (First and Last)

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone(s) – Home/Work/Mobile

Email(s)

OK TO INCLUDE YOU ON CLUB MEMBERSHIP LIST? Distributed to Club members only.

Yes – Include name, address, phone, email.

If you want any information omitted from the membership list, please note:

Omit my: Email Home phone Work phone Mobile phone Address
 Name

SPECIAL CLUB-RELATED INTERESTS?





MINERALOGICAL SOCIETY OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

| | | |
|--|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| President: Tom Tucker | threedogtom@earthlink.net | Director: Cynthia Payne |
| Vice President: Andy Thompson | thompson01@starpower.net | Director: Dave Nanney |
| Program Chair: Andy Thompson | thompson01@starpower.net | Director: Don Greaves |
| Secretary: Denise Whitman | | |
| Treasurer: Rick Reiber, c/o DC P.O. Box 9957, Alexandria, VA 22304 | rickhike14@yahoo.com | |
| Web page: www.mineralsocietyofDC.org | | |

Meetings are held the first Wednesday of each month at 7:45 p.m., in the Kirby room, the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC. (No meetings are held during July and August.)

The purpose of this Society is to promote interest in mineralogy, geology, and related earth sciences and to encourage mineral collecting. An annual scholarship is awarded to a deserving student in the related field.

Dues – **Due by 10 January.** \$20 for a single membership, \$25 for families.

The *Mineral Minutes* is the bulletin of The Mineralogical Society of the District of Columbia, Inc.

The Mineralogical Society of the District of Columbia is one of the founding Societies of the Eastern Federation of Mineralogical and Lapidary Societies.

VISITORS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME AT OUR MONTHLY MEETINGS!

MINERAL MINUTES

**Newsletter of the Mineralogical
Society of the District of Columbia**

Mary Bateman, Editor
2700 Ninth Street South, #203
Arlington, Virginia 22204-2328

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Time Sensitive Dated Material

First Class Mail