

Mineralogical Society of the District of Columbia

MINERAL MINUTES



Vol. 69, No. 9

Mineral Minutes

November 2010

Club Meeting: Wednesday, November 3, 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: Minerals of the Thomas

Mountain, Juab County, Utah, presented by Pat Haynes. Pat is a well known field collector and mineral dealer who has spent many years exploring localities in the Four Corners Region and Nevada. He lived many years in Cortez, Colorado, Las Vegas, Nevada, and now Vienna, VA. This presentation will describe localities in the well known Thomas Mountains of Utah, home of Topaz Mountain - one of my most favorite collecting spots! But the Mountains are also home to several rare mineral localities, including new species, and Pat will be discussing some of these less well known collecting sites. Pat has had the new rare mineral species HAYNESITE, a hydrated basic uranium selenite (selenium, not Gypsum) named in his honor.

For "show-and-tell," bring any specimens you might have from Topaz Mountain and the Thomas Range to share with our members and guests. Tom Tucker

Place: The National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, 10th Street and Constitution Ave, 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 President Andy a call at (301) 270-6790 so he can make reservations if you wish to attend.

December Holiday Party

Don't forget - December's meeting will start an hour early, at 7 pm, so that we can enjoy our annual holiday dinner together. Your side dishes, desserts, and beverages will guarantee that we'll have a real feast, along with the brief business meeting to elect 2011 officers. Please e-mail Betty Thompson at bdthompson01@yahoo.com with what you plan to bring. Thanks!

2011 Dues will be Due Soon

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 Rieber because the list won't feel complete without your much appreciated presence on it. Bring your check and the enclosed form on page 7 (also online) to the November, December, or 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 the President **Andy Thompson**

A Smooth Transition Signals An Organization's Growth

November is the time of year when we ask MSDC members to think about who they want to serve as its club officers. And, of equal importance, members can ask themselves if there is something, however big or small, they can do to support MSDC. In other words, how can more members transition themselves into doing something to meet the club's needs.

I encourage all members to consider if they can see their way through to serving in one of the executive positions: President, V.P for Programs, or Secretary. The last job is one that Betty Thompson has been filling in recent years and she prefers to hand that job to someone else so she can devote more time to enhancing our web page. Secretarial duties have typically taken her about one hour a month to write up the monthly business minutes and a few more to describe the monthly program. The program write ups can be much shorter than the descriptions she has been providing. Most clubs provide only a short synopsis of the previous month's program and that's fine. Betty started doing longer program summaries because she found it a great way to improve her understanding of our fine programs. This Secretary position could even be shared among several members, if they so chose. So please consider it and if you are interested, contact Ed Fisher via e-mail at novaya2@cox.net.

And there are lots of other ways members can support our club. For example, we would like to reach out to local elementary or junior high school educators and supply them with a kit of low cost minerals and rock samples. Dave Nanney and Rick Reiber have an interest in this and perhaps you could support them.

Given that MSDC's strength has been our excellent monthly programs, why not invite more people to come and be exposed to these fine experiences. To help in this area let Ed know you are interested in helping with recruiting and marketing. The idea here is to share our wealth with others. If people see our programs as worthwhile, they will become members. But our focus, I believe, is to promote mineral and geological education as well as help collectors. If we do that, our membership will continue to grow, as we have been doing.

Also, everybody enjoys socializing after our meetings. And it helps if there are some drinks and snacks to serve as "background music." I would appreciate it if folks could step forward and say, yes, I'd be glad to bring 2 dozen cookies or a bottle of soda once a year. It reminds me of an experience I had shortly after Betty and I had married. We had what I considered a practical division of labor, with me working outside the home 9 to 5 and she finishing her undergrad course work as well as handling all other tasks such as cooking, laundry, etc. (Remember, those were the days when most clothes required ironing.) One day she asked me: "Sweetheart, do you like having ironed shirts?" Enthusiastically I said I did. She then asked: "Do you like it enough that you would be willing to iron them yourself?" Since then, I've done the ironing. So now I'm wondering if MSDC members like having snacks at our monthly meetings and if they like it enough to volunteer, perhaps in teams, to provide something once a year? If so,

please contact Betty or if you will be happy to coordinate this contribution.

Also, please put on your calendar the date of December 1st for our annual holiday party. It is a fun event and we typically have outside guests including some Smithsonian Mineral Dept. folks and some of the speakers we have had in the past year. So we will have a pot-luck dinner in the Cathy Kerby room, starting about 7 p.m., an hour earlier than usual. Please make plans accordingly. Betty will coordinate the dinner, so please email her and tell her what you plan to bring (bdthompson01@yahoo.com). Our election of officers will take place before the dinner.

Thanks very much for the enthusiasm and generosity you have shown toward MSDC and our shared endeavors. We need your vision.

IN MEMORIAL – JACK CRANFORD

By Andy Thompson

One of our own members, Jack Cranford, has passed away. Jack had been active in MSDC and served in a number of positions. Jack's family saw it important enough that in the Washington Post obituary, see link below, it mentioned only two associations; he was a member of a Methodist Church in Springfield, VA and of the Mineralogical Society of DC.

When Betty and I first joined MSDC about a decade ago, Jack and Polly were transitioning out of the club. Each of them was previously married, and both couples were the best of friends. George (Ned) Blandford and Jack Cranford were best friends and were active MSDC members. Then Jack lost his wife and Polly lost Ned (heart attack). Jack and Polly, as survivors, married each other and Jack moved to Polly's house in Potomac. They did come to a few of our meetings and they were very pleasant people, very gracious and welcoming. But Jack was gradually succumbing to Alzheimer's disease and then, of course, rarely came to meetings.

I got a better sense of how important MSDC was to them when, about four years ago, they did come with Jack's daughter and grandson, Justin (interested in geology), to our December holiday party. But even then, Jack's health seemed a bit frail and his memory was slipping. But his earlier engagement with MSDC had been considerable and mineral collecting was a very important part of their lives. A few years ago, they held a big mineral sale at their Potomac home.

I have spoken with Polly on behalf of the club. Polly Cranford's address is: 1994 Milboro Drive, Rockville, MD

20854. The burial service will be on October 27th, first at Arlington National Cemetery and the memorial service will be at the St. John's United Methodist Church, 5312 Backlick Rd., Springfield, VA, at noon, with a reception to follow.

The *Washington Post* obituary can be found at:
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/10/06/AR2010100605412.html>

MSDC MEETING MINUTES – OCTOBER

By Andy Thompson, Secretary *Pro Tem*

Andy Thompson began the club's business meeting by recognizing and thanking the attending past presidents for their service, namely Cynthia Payne, Ed Fisher and Bruce Gaber. Bruce was also our speaker for the evening. Members welcomed Georgia Stromer who was an out-of-town guest and visiting with MSDC for the first time.

Andy asked for and received a motion to approve the minutes of the September meeting as they appeared in the October issue of Mineral Minutes. No corrections were offered and the motion was approved and seconded, with a unanimous vote in the affirmative.

MSDC Treasurer Rick Reiber gave a financial report and asked that all membership renewals be sent to the Mineralogical Society of DC, P.O. Box 9957, Alexandria, VA 22304. He noted the cost of membership is \$20 for one person and \$25 for a family. The check should be made out to MSDC. Alternatively, a check could be given to Rick at our November, December or January meeting. Memberships for 2010 expire at the end of December and so that is when renewal for 2011 should take place.

Vice President Tom Tucker then gave the Program Report indicating that our guest speaker for the November 3rd meeting will be Pat Haynes. He will speak on the minerals of the Thomas Mountain Range in Juab County, Utah. Tom invited MSDC members to bring their minerals from that site or adjoining sites such as from Topaz Mountain. Tom also asks that members help out by identifying future speakers and topics and by giving Tom any contact information available.

With regard to Old Business, Andy reported that several MSDC members could not attend this evening's club meeting because they had volunteered to become docents for the Mineral Hall and were receiving a training lecture on pegmatite's this very evening.

With regard to 'geology in the news,' members noted the recent 3.0 earthquake reported in southern Virginia. Also,

the Science and Engineering Festival will have over a hundred booths on the National Mall on 23 and 24 October. Our sister club, GLMSDC will be representing mineral clubs and Andy encouraged MSDC members to participate in the Festival and visit with its President Mike Colella and his colleagues.

With regard to New Business, Andy asked that any members who had recommendations for the Nominations Committee (Ed Fisher), should give those recommendations to Ed so he can propose a slate of officers for the election which will take place at the club's holiday party in December. For one, MSDC needs a new Secretary (to write the monthly meeting's minutes and to give a short summary of the program). We also need members' help in the area of membership recruitment and outreach to support local educators.

With no further business to conduct, Andy asked for and received a motion to close the meeting and, with unanimous positive vote, closed the session.

The door prize tickets were then drawn from the proverbial hat, and, as traditional, the first prize was won by Mark Dahlman who chose a meteorite oxide and the second prize was won by our visiting guest Georgia Stromer who selected the beautiful hexagonal ruby crystal.

Andy then thanked Betty Thompson and Susan Fisher who provided the refreshments for the evening. He also noted that after the presentation by Bruce, there would be a birthday celebration in honor of one of MSDC's most honored members, Cynthia Payne.

He then turned the meeting over to V.P. for Programs, Tom Tucker, who introduced Dr. Bruce Gaber and his topic of Photographing Minerals: What You Need to Know.

SUMMARY OF THE MSDC OCTOBER PROGRAM

"Mineral Photography" Presented by Dr. Bruce Gaber

Reported by Andy Thompson

Bruce replaced his chemist's hat for his photographer's chapeau and treated club members to everything they needed to know about the whys and hows of mineral photography. Here are a few snapshots from his presentation as viewed through the lens of a non-photographer:

- Many mineral collectors who are serious about their inventory not only number and fully identify each specimen in their collection, but photograph them as an integral part of that process. This gives them many advantages such as when visiting a mineral show or shopping on the web, of having ready access to their current holdings via their hand-held PDA. As a result, they can intelligently fill in missing minerals, upgrade to a more attractive example and avoid purchasing unnecessary duplicates.
- Photographers absolutely need to RDM, that is, Read the Darn Manual, so they know their camera's capabilities backward and forward. This means learning about F stops, aperture settings and automatic timing mechanisms. Results are enhanced by acquiring additional photo taking equipment, using supplies for artistic backdrops, studying the effects of various types of lighting and employing tools for making your camera free of any vibration when shaping photos.
- At the very least, when holding your camera while photographing samples, be sure to brace your camera against your body so there is absolutely no movement when snapping the shot.
- Respect the reality of your mineral sample by sleeping with it before photographing it. Bruce said he found it very helpful to occasionally place a mineral item on his bed stand and view it from multiple angles, contemplating it, becoming intimately aware of its features, looking for its more interesting aspects, all of which help tell others the story of what the collector sees in the mineral and how he or she relates to it.
- For serious photographers, once the photo has been taken, that is the beginning, not the end of the process. For most collectors, the world of film is dead and digital cameras now reign supreme. By connecting the camera to a computer, this opens a new world of possible software assisted portraits, all based on enhancing the original photo. The availability of programs akin to Photo Shop or more professional versions will expand what the mineral collector can do to illustrate the mineral's better features. Bruce presented examples of the fruit of his own work in what appeared to be videos of a few of his minerals, seemingly rotating them 360 degrees accompanied by background music. But the stunning reality was they were not videos at all,

but rather a series of still photos which gave the appearance of being a video.

- The above snapshots are but a sampling of the insights and technical skills Bruce shared with his appreciative audience. Perhaps more importantly, he said that when a collector takes the long view of life, there comes a time when the older collector will pass his or her holdings on to family, friends or to otherwise dispose of the collection via means such as an estate sale. With this long view in mind, Bruce said he looks at his own activity as simply leasing the minerals, not owning them in perpetuity. At this later time in the collector's life cycle, the photographic record will make it infinitely easier for whoever is in charge, to knowledgeably dispose of the specimens and confidently share the wealth with the next generation of collectors.

MINERAL MINUTES

By Mary Bateman, Editor

If you signed up for the electronic version of Mineral Minutes, you should have already received your copy of the *Mineral Minutes*. If you haven't signed up for the electronic copy and wish to do so, please e-mail me at mbateman1@verizon.net, along with your e-mail address, name and telephone number. If you have already signed up, you need do nothing. Again, if you do not want the electronic copy, you also need to do nothing. You will automatically receive the *Mineral Minutes* in the mail.

MY FAVORITE THINGS — OLD MINERALS

By Susan Fisher

I have heard it said many times that Americans are fascinated with old things because as a country, we are so young. That may be true, but it does not lessen the fascination. In my case, this interest extends to minerals mined or collected a number of years ago when the science of mineralogy was young. As I type this, I am also looking at a small miniature specimen of botryoidal barite on galena with quartz crystals (Figure 1). The piece is from Stribro (Mies), Western Bohemia, in what is now the Czech Republic. The piece is accompanied by a handwritten label from the University of Prague indicating that it was collected in 1862.

That's right, 1862, one hundred forty-eight years ago. In that year Abraham Lincoln was President and the United States was going through one of its most trying periods. Think of how much this little mineral specimen has survived in those years. There have been two world wars, numerous local conflicts, fires, floods, thefts, financial upheavals, and the general ravages of time, but it has endured. The last political and economic upheaval, the breakup of the Soviet Union and the resulting financial crisis in its member states, caused a number of Central European museums to sell some of the accumulated pieces to raise funds to remain viable. I think this little specimen was part of that movement. After its sale from the university museum, it passed through the hands of at least one dealer and was eventually offered to me.

It has been a long path from that mine in western Bohemia to Virginia, but I hope the piece has been appreciated along the way. It is a piece worth the time to study. What can it tell us about the geology of the mine? Why did the barite form a crust of little spheres instead of the usual discrete crystals? The galena is a bit darker than is usual. Does that indicate some silver or other metal mixed into its structure? Why was this piece selected from the tons of ore to be set aside for study? Did it leave the mine secreted in a miner's lunch pail or was it collected by a geologist visiting the mine? There are more questions than I have answers, but the search is fascinating. In purchasing this little piece, I have taken on the responsibility of preserving it for the next generation of mineral enthusiasts. After all these years, it is still fulfilling its purpose. It is still inspiring even the poorest of students of minerals, me, to ask the questions. I certainly won't get many of the answers, but if I perform my stewardship well, the next inquiring student who looks at the piece may. Just like this small bit of barite on galena, there are many pieces in our collections with stories to tell. They are more than just pretty rocks or interesting chemical compounds. They are bits of the history of the earth. Listen closely and be enthralled.



Figure 1. Barite with quartz on galena.
Photo by Susan Fisher

DIAMONDIFEROUSLY SPEAKING

By Sheryl E. Sims

Dresden Diamond of deepest green;
Reigning true its color supreme.
41-carats to count and to adore;
It's from India, but we know little more.

1930 found **Hope** sparkling bright;
A cursed beauty with radiant light;
It was named for its owner, it's true;
In the Smithsonian, it's lovely and blue.

Cullinan was once Africa's own true star;
It has lured royals from both near and far.
Once cut free from the largest of stones;
Now, finds the Tower of London its home.

So, **Sancy** was worn by Charles The Bold;
Yet, in 1570, he did lose his envious hold.
Bought by one named Seigneiur de Sancy;
Now in Louvre, Sancy meets everyone's fancy.

Tiffany was found in a Kimberley mine;
Its weight of 287-carats was quite a find.
To Tiffany jewelers' delight it was cut;
At 90-facets it shows most diamonds up.

Koh-I-Noor is yet another to be long adored;
A round stone of 186-carats miners explored.
It belonged to the Raj, the Shah, and you'll find;
The Mt. of Light cut and in Queen Elizabeth's line.

Nassak used to be 90-plus carats and more;
From the Indian Temple of Shiva, to be sure.
It was later looted by the conquering English;
And, on to a Saudi King once it was relinquished.
Shah is more than a title, it's quite a nice gem;
With 3 inscriptions, you will no doubt find them.
When losing jewels Monarchs names are often key;
The Shah is now in Moscow's Kremlin, remarkably.

Florentine's history is one steeped with great legend;
A treasure of the Medici's, was this mineral of heaven.
Once used as a brooch and in the Habsburg crown;
After war, the Florentine was sadly, never again found.

“LOOKIN’ FER” A HERKIMER!

By Sheryl E. Sims

At some point, 2011 will find me, not just looking for, but mining for, Herkimer diamonds. I’ve seen very small crystals before, but when rock hound friends of mine, Harry and Tina League (from that *other* mineral club), showed me their finds during a visit one day, I was left wanting larger crystals. Being a relatively new rock hound, I knew little about Herkimer diamonds. Once I caught a glance of the rainbow of colors that could be seen when holding a Herkimer diamond to the light, I knew that learning more about Herkimer diamonds would be a bright spot in my future. Here’s what I learned:

- “Herkimer diamond” is the generic name for this type of quartz. They may also be referred to as “Middleville diamonds” and “Little Falls diamonds.”¹ Incredibly, these double-terminated quartz crystals can often be found clear and faceted. Other crystals may be cloudy, contain inclusions, or even be smoky.
- Herkimer diamonds were discovered in Herkimer County, New York and the Mohawk River Valley, around the late 18th century, by workmen cutting into dolostone. Now, these quartz crystals can also be found in such places as Afghanistan and Tibet² They can also be found in Norway, Arizona, and in the Ukraine.
- According to the theories of geologists, the crystals are thought to form extremely slowly. Herkimer diamond crystals have little or no contact with the host rock.³
- Herkimer diamonds can be found in large cavities called pockets. These often measure several feet in diameter. They can also be found in small vugs (cavities) and the inclusions can contain water or oil. (Fluid inclusions are called “enhydro”). There are phantom crystals (contains an image of itself); skeletal crystals (contains multiple crystal edge outlines in the crystal); and hopper crystals (the face of the crystal has been replaced by what is called a “step” pattern).⁴
- Good sources for mining are the Herkimer Mine in New York, and Ace of Diamonds Mine, in Middleville, New York.

What’s fascinating to me is the contrast of the surrounding rough, gray, dolomite with that of the shiny, faceted,

crystals. There is such a play of the ordinary against the natural beauty of the quartz crystals. I’ve been warned by more than a few people that mining for these crystals takes great effort and power equipment is generally not permitted. One has to be prepared to spend the day literally hammering away in order to reap the benefits. Lastly, remember to think “safety” or your gain may involve pain!

Sources:

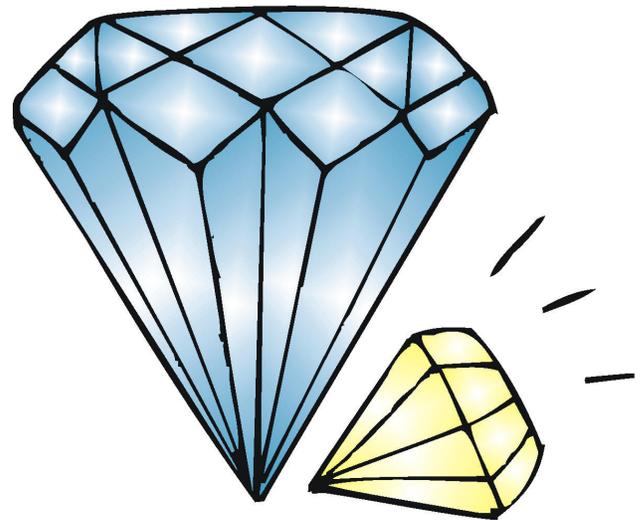
¹http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herkimer_diamond
²*Ibid.*

³<http://geology.com/articles/herkimer-diamonds.shtml>

⁴http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herkimer_diamond

Mineral Minutes: Call for Articles and Pictures -- Next Deadline

The deadline for the December issue of the *Mineral Minutes* will be **November 10**. 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. Articles can be included in the body of your e-mail or attached as a Word document or .pdf document. Pictures can be included in the body of your article.



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 December or 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: Andy Thompson thompson01@starpower.net Director: Dave Nanney
 Vice President: Tom Tucker threedogtom@earthlink.net Director: Cynthia Payne
 Secretary: Betty Thompson (301) 270-6790 Director: Don Greaves
 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!

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

Mary Bateman, Editor
 2700 Ninth Street South, #203
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