



The Mineralogical Society of the District of Columbia

The Mineral Minutes

The purpose of this Society is to promote interest in mineralogy, geology, and related earth sciences.

Vol. 74, No. 1

Founded 1942

January 2015

Meeting Dates, Time, and Location: The first Wednesday of each month. (No meeting in July and August.) 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. Street parking: **THERE ARE NOW PARKING FEES, PAYABLE AT THE KIOSKS, AND ENFORCEMENT EXTENDS UNTIL 10 PM.**

Pre-Meeting Dinner: Join us at 6:00 p.m. for dinner before the club meeting. Location: Elephant & Castle, 1201 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW. Please contact Dave Nanney, or Steve Johnson, StevikJ@gmail.com, to make a reservation if you wish to attend.

MSDC PRESENTATION - JANUARY 7, 2015



"Yellowstone - with rocks in mind" By Tom Tucker

I think the name "Yellowstone" brings to mind geysers, hot springs, and bears - and way too many tourists. Nearly three million visitors enter the Park each year, and the great majority visit during a relatively snow free 90 day Summer season. Besides the many animals, most folks are enjoying the numerous thermal features which have made

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the Park so well known. These are of course due to mother nature, and her geologic hand. I'll present a visual tour of many of the notable sights in the Park, always with the geologic background in mind. There are old rocks, roughly four billion years old, and brand new ones, less than 200,000 years of age, and all of them play a part in creating the present landscape.

I'll also present some of the numerous minerals that can be collected today - outside of The Park or course. Generally their occurrence is intimately related to the same processes that have occurred within the Park over the past four billion years. Oh, and we might see a bear or two also.

Tom Tucker

Tom is a native-born Washingtonian, reared in Arlington for the most part, and after spending 35 years in the West, he's returned to his Virginia roots. He has a degree in Chemistry, followed by graduate school in geology. He worked in petroleum exploration in West Texas, New Mexico, and most of the Rocky Mountain states - before the great discovery of oil in Bakken Shale. He worked for several years on a project to obtain the necessary permits for the largest underground coal mine in Montana. For 12 years he owned and operated, (read that - "cleaned floors and made beds") a log cabin motel facility just a mile outside of Yellowstone, on the most beautiful entrance road to the Park, the Beartooth Highway. He still has a small log cabin in the woods, full of rocks and books (and mice), just one mile from the Park. For several years he coordinated and taught grade school and Elderhostle tours of the Park and surrounding region.

THE PREZ SAYS...

Steve Johnson

Happy New Year! We look forward to an enjoyable and productive new year!



(Photo: S. Sims)

The new MSDC officers for the 2015 are:

President - Steve Johnson
Vice-president - Dave Nanney
Secretary - Andy Thompson
Treasurer - Rebecca Siegal
Directors - Dave Hennessy, John Weidner, Sheryl Sims
Editor (acting) - Susan Fisher

A special thank you to all who ran for an office and who brought food and items for the party. Without you, we could not have a successful and growing organization. See you at the January meeting.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!

Field trip to JMU, Dr. Lance Kearns, and the JMU Mineral Museum
Saturday, 14 February, 2015; 9:00 AM until....
- By Tom Tucker.

Dr. Lance Kearns, professor of Mineralogy at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia, has again invited our Clubs, Northern Virginia MC, Mineralogical Society of DC, and the Micromineralogists of NCA, to visit his laboratories, and Mineral Museum, on Saturday, 14 February, 2015. This continues a courtesy and tradition Lance began a couple of decades ago, when he invited the Micromineralogists to his labs, and it has now expanded to I think five weekends and seven or more Clubs from the region.

The finest mineral museum in Virginia has been assembled over the years by Lance and his many supporters. I'm guessing, a couple of thousand quality specimens are displayed in a series of about 15 standing wall cases and center islands, and a small alcove which provides a dark area for a spectacular fluorescent mineral exhibition. You will not find a finer mineral display in the region.

In the labs, Lance will be able to answer your mineralogical questions, and using various analytical techniques he has offered to attempt to identify any unknowns you bring along. Here's your chance to get that ugly black smudge from locality X identified, as best we can. If we have specimens too small for conventional analysis, after lunch we will probably go across campus, and work with the Scanning Electron Microscope and x-ray spectrometer. Bring your little unknowns and they may get identified. A rice-grain sized fragment will be sufficient for an x-ray diffraction analysis.

For lunch we will probably all go out to a local pizza establishment, and then visit the SEM facilities in the afternoon.

If you are unsure about wanting to attend, talk with other Club members who have been to the labs in previous years, and you will be convinced that this is something not to be missed. Lance will have an array of various mineral specimens that have been donated for this purpose, for sale at this gathering. They will be displayed on various counter tops, for your selection and appropriate donation. They will either be priced very reasonably, or will be there for you to make a significant contribution. These aren't "give aways" - they're here for you to acquire for a fair donation. Don't be CHEAP !! There will also be a large selection of pertinent geology and mineralogy books (priced at half or less of the cheapest you can find on The Web !) and there will be a large selection of micromounts for the Micromounters to peruse and select. There are plenty of available student microscopes in the lab for all of us to use - treat them as you would your own.

To reach the geology labs at JMU, it's about a two and a half hour drive from the Beltway. Take I-66 west 65 miles to the junction with I-81, and go left or south on I-81, toward Roanoke for about 55 miles. At exit 245, leave the interstate and go right on Port Republic Road. Go almost a mile, to High Street, and turn right. Go north on High Street about a half mile to Cantrell Avenue (now Martin Luther King Way), and turn left into the campus parking area, at Memorial Hall. Being Saturday, parking permits will not be required.

To find the geology department laboratories in Memorial Hall, just follow the signs. When you get to the right area, the laboratory we're in should be obvious.

We usually "pass hat" to make appropriate donations for the mineralogy department activities, and to reimburse Lance for his getting "breakfast" rolls for us, and coffee too.

In order for him to know how many collectors to expect, please email me, Tom Tucker, threedogtom@earthlink.net, (or call me at 540-280-7427) and let me know that you are coming. I'd like to get a head count to Lance by Thursday, February, the 12th.

I have had a "preview" of some of the new material that Lance will have for our selection. This year there will be a MULTITUDE of nice micromounts, from at least three donated collections. Be prepared to look at a lot of material if you'd like to acquire new specimens for your collection. Remember, please make a reasonable donation for the specimens you select - it all goes to support the Mineral Museum, and student activities, such as their field trips to Franklin, NJ and the Rochester Symposium. There are a slew of geology and mineralogy books - some great deals !! There will also be 30 or more flats of larger specimens, donated by a number of Museum supporters - most of whom you would know. If you have appropriate material, Lance is always looking for more donations of specimens for this activity. I'll see you all Saturday, February 14, at JMU !

REMINDER: Dues are due.

MSDC Meeting Minutes - December 3, 2014

The annual MSDC holiday party was held in the Cathy Kirby Room at the Smithsonian Natural History Museum on December 3, 2014. A number of members brought food for a dinner that was enjoyed by the entire group. A short business meeting was held and ballots were distributed for the 2015 MSDC officers. Nominating committee member Ed Fisher collected the ballots to count and report to President Steve Johnson after the meeting. Andy Thompson introduced Tim Rose who gave a short slide presentation on Kilauea volcano's lava flow that is threatening the town of Pahoa. Steve Johnson distributed stones engraved with the MSDC seal to those present.

HALIDES, FLUORITES, & HALITES



By Sheryl E. Sims

What group of minerals do we find that are composed of metals from the halogen group of elements?

Hint: They are a binary compound.

Another hint: The compound is made up of one part that is an element or radical and the other part is a halogen atom.¹

The answer is “Halides”.

Having good cleavage and low density, halides are soft and transparent. Making up the naturally occurring group of halides, as an example, are fluorites (CaF₂ - calcium fluoride). Fluorites can be found in an array of colors -- pink, purple, blue-green, yellow, red, etc. Their crystal formations are isometric and translucent, and they have a hardness of 4. Fluorites can be found all over -- the U.S., Europe, Canada, and Mexico. They are a favorite, among many collectors that I know, and they also fluoresce.

Halite, also known as rock salt, is also in this group. Sodium chloride (NaCl) has a hardness of 2.5 and is white. Halite possesses a waxy, dull luster and can be found in the US and Europe (Germany and France). Halite forms from the “evaporation of brine from the ocean or lakes.” Although typically, white, it can be found in purple, pink, blue, and yellow. Halides have cubic crystal structures and possess symmetry.

THERE'S A WAY & MEANS TO AN END

By Sheryl E. Sims

In the past several weeks, I've been asked to help the Eastern Federation of Mineralogical Societies (“EFMLS”) in two ways. When asked, I agreed to serve on the EFMLS Nominating Committee as well as the Ways and Means Committee. To be honest, I did have to think about it a bit. After some thought, however, I knew that it was the right thing to do, and I am happy to do my small part helping out for the greater good.

In terms of the nominating committee, you probably won't hear from me for quite a while. Kathleen Collins, the committee chair informed me that our real work won't begin until later in the year. Then, it will be necessary for me to approach you and others throughout the federation in an attempt to find replacements for our outgoing federation officers. Do you like minerals? Do you like people? Do you like being a part of a mineral club and society? Are you itching to feel needed? Then, I'm sure that we can help each other!

As I've mentioned before, each club belongs to a federation. We are, of course, a part of the Eastern Federation. Each region/federation of the U.S. makes up the American Federation. It takes help from our individual clubs to keep the federation strong. Therefore, we shouldn't think of our club as an entity unto itself. As club members, it's the responsibility of all of us! Volunteering scares a lot of us off; but don't be scared. Just picture yourself under the umbrella of the federation. The money raised helps to fund our conventions, pay for insurance, scholarships, awards, and more. What could be easier than making a few donations? In terms of the Ways and Means Committee, I will assist Gerry Cox in finding ways to raise money for the Eastern Federation. Here's how *you* can help! You may make a donation in any amount, write Ways & Means on the memo-line, either mail it to EFMLS office or give it to me and I'll forward it for you. Or, perhaps you have something that you can donate -- a nice mineral, a microscope that you are no longer using, or perhaps some lapidary tools or jewelry that you've made. These items can be used for raffles, which will hopefully, raise much-needed money for the causes of EFMLS.

Please support me in supporting EFMLS. Thank you! You'll be hearing from me!

¹ www.wikipeida.org.halides. A pocket guide to Rocket & Minerals, by James Lagomargina.

Editor's "Two Cents" - Susan Fisher

Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. said: "A mind that is stretched by a new experience can never go back to its old dimensions." In this new year, I am challenging all of us to stretch our minds and share our passion for the earth sciences. By doing so, we can get a new perspective on our avocation and a new appreciation of the life-time enjoyment to be gained by the study of the earth around us.

In mid-December, I had a great experience that was new to me. I was asked present a "guest lecture" to a class of second graders. My niece's daughter is a member of that class and the teacher wanted someone to talk for about an hour on rocks, minerals, fossils, and "space rocks." This opportunity had come about because my great-niece had taken portions of her small mineral collection to school as part of a "show and tell" exercise and I was named as the contributor.

After I glibly accepted the challenge to talk to the second grade class, I panicked. I have briefed government and military executives, taught at a junior college, and delivered presentations to adult groups, but how does one explain ordered atomic arrays and chemical formulas to second graders? I don't have children and have very limited recent experience dealing with anyone under the age of twenty. My rescue came in the form of a childhood memory. When I was in grade school, my class took a field trip to a nearby town to view a mineral collection. The owner of a tire store devoted the space above his business to cases of rocks and minerals. I walked into that space and I was hooked for life. All I needed to do was convey that same excitement and wonder to the class, but how?

All of us learn better when we can interact on an individual level with the subject matter. Pictures help and actual examples are even better. As an old "power point warrior," pictures in a slide presentation were no problem. With the help of some friends, a little raiding of my "give-away" mineral stash, and a bit of purchasing, I was able to put together a small collection for each class member and a larger collection for the teacher. Those collections contained samples of common rocks, non-harmful minerals, fossils, and "space rocks." The pieces in the teacher's collection, along with other examples, were pictured on the slides and the teacher has a copy of the somewhat wordy slides so she can do this again.

On the day of the presentation, we had a great time. Students helped to hand out the take-home samples; we played "pretend" to explain to a space alien from a totally soft world about our rocks; we looked at examples; we lined up on squares in the carpet to illustrate ordered arrays; we did an experiment with calcite and double refraction; and we talked about how rocks and minerals are used in our daily lives. The kids asked good questions and told about their experiences. We did go a little over our allotted hour but the teacher was happy to continue the session. The highlight of the talk seemed to come when we passed around a small, but very plainly evident as to its source, sample of coprolite. I'm sure that there was some interesting dinner table discussions that evening over that bit of fossilized "dinosaur poop!"

While I think I have made my only appearance with this talk, I'm sure I gained more than did any of the students. The youngsters' enthusiasm and wonder has re-energized me to look more deeply into my collection and has given me new perspectives on the rich joys to be had in my favorite field of study. If you have a chance to teach someone, don't be afraid. Go ahead and stretch your mind. To quote that famous old antacid commercial, "Try it. You'll like it."

A History of the 1967 Show Favors

- Cynthia Payne

(Editor's note: This is an article written several years ago by Cynthia Payne on the history and preparation of the favors given out to at the 1967 Eastern Federation And American Federation Convention and Show hosted by MSDC and the Gem and Lapidary Society of DC . When Cynthia was clearing her home a few months ago in preparation to move, she found several of these favors. Ed Fisher asked permission to give the some of the found favors to the MSDC officers, sponsors and past speakers. These were given at the annual December holiday party.)

Several months ago Bob Dunning, gave the Mineralogical Society .some club materials he had. Among those things were some that puzzled the members who received them. By chance I heard about them and it had been commented that they looked like banquet favors, which, of course, was exactly what they were. MSDC used to enter at least one case in competition or display in the Eastern Federation and American Federation Shows. Some members would also enter their own individual cases. There would be a banquet at these Federation shows and there were always favors given to the banquet attendees.

The 1967 Show favors were a little different. In the early 1960's, my sister Lydia and I timed our vacation trip so we could attend the American Federation Show in Oklahoma City. It was a great show. There were club members on the floor all the time, but they told me they were a very small club. It was just that they were determined to put on a good show so they all turned out every day.

That fall MSDC received a request to host the Eastern Federation and American Federation of Mineral Societies Convention and Show in 1967. The initial reaction was we couldn't do it. We didn't have enough members. I said if a much smaller club like that in Oklahoma City could, we could also. Ruth Wertz added that the Silver Spring Camera Club was small too and they had just sponsored a successful national show. As we were both very active exhibitors, and with a few more active members agreeing with us, the club decided to sponsor the 1967 National Show.

At that time, about half the members of MSDC and The Gem and Lapidary Society of DC (including me) belonged to both clubs so the next month I proposed that we invite them to join us as sponsors. They agreed to do so.

On the drive to Wildacres that summer Ruth, Lydia and I started tossing around ideas for the banquet favors. In the course of discussions we wondered why should people who only sat down to a meal have favors when all the people who really contributed to the success of the show didn't. We started thinking of appropriate things for each job. After much discussion, we made a stack of stone books for the judges, a lectern for the speakers, a showcase for mineral and jewelry exhibitors, a tumbler for lapidary exhibitors, and a wrapped-wire editor and desk for editors who entered in the bulletin competition, as well as small Washington Monument replicas for the banquet attendees.

I cannot remember how many of each favor we made, except for the monuments - over 200. The material all came from collecting sites we went to regularly : Goose Creek Quarry and Virginia Stone in Loudoun Co ,Virginia; Rose River, Virginia; Amelia, Virginia; Texas Quarry north Of Baltimore; Marriotsville; Calvert Cliffs; Fort Washington, Maryland; Pennsylvania Sand Glass

Company Quarry in West Virginia; and Cedar Hill, Pennsylvania. I had two slabbing saws going for over a year, and sometimes we had four people around my flat lap.

Will Halliday and I made the small wooden showcases. He had a woodworking shop in his downstairs. My husband Warring Barnes had previously had a machine shop and had been making prototypes for inventors, so it was no problem for him to make a jig for me to cut the angles for the Washington Monuments.

After months of work and contributions by numerous members, the favors were completed in time for the show and were enthusiastically received.

(A word about Bob Dunning. He was very active in both MSDC and the Micromineralogists of the National Capital Area until he deserted us for Maine and then Florida. He was MSDC Secretary and Master of Ceremonies for our Silver Jubilee Banquet in 1967, MSDC President in 1969, and first president on the Micromineralogists in 1967 and 1968.)



1967 Show Favors



Members at Holiday Party

Visitors are always welcome at our monthly meetings and dinners!

**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.

ANNUAL DUES – PLEASE PAY YOUR DUES PROMPTLY.

Pay at next 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?

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

(2015 Officers & Board Members)

President: Steve Johnson, stevikj@gmail.com

Vice President & Program Chair: Dave Nanney, dnanney@cox.net

Secretary: Andy Thompson, thompson01@starpower.net

Treasurer: Rebecca Siegal, dmineralclub@gmail.com, (mail: c/o MSDC, P.O. Box 9957, Alexandria, VA 22304)

Directors: Dave Hennessey, John Weidner, and Sheryl Sims

Editor (Acting): Susan Fisher, novaya2@cox.net

Co-Web Masters: Betty Thompson & Casper Voogt, <http://mineralogicalsocietyofdc.org/>

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