

# Mineralogical Society of the District of Columbia



## MINERAL MINUTES

Vol. 70, No. 6

*Mineral Minutes*

June 2011

### **Club Meeting:** Wednesday, June 1, 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:** – Program Announcement for June 1, 2011

**Speaker:** Dr. Rick Wunderman

**Theme:** “The Global Volcanism Program: Its Purpose, Operations and Impact”

Richard Wunderman is a volcanologist and museum specialist for the Smithsonian Institution National Museum of Natural History. He has worked in 10 countries as a volcanologist or geophysicist and visited sites in more than 40 countries. Dr. Wunderman has collaborated on peer-reviewed publications, for example, on the intermediate-sized collapse caldera Amatitlán in Guatemala, monitoring volcanic gases at Mount St. Helens, and aviation hazards caused by volcanic ash and ash plumes.

Rick has worked for many years with the Global Volcanism Program which, among other contributions, serves as a repository of information about volcanic activity across the world. He edits its Bulletin of the Global Volcanism Network and a member of the Academy of Geological and Mining Engineering and Sciences at Michigan Technological University, where he received his Ph.D.

**Place:** The National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, 10<sup>th</sup> 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. NOTE: MSDC members may park in the Natural History Museum parking lot (entrance on Constitution Avenue, NW) by giving your name to the guard. If you park on the street, THERE ARE 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. If you are planning on attending, please let Andy Thompson or Tom Tucker know so that reservations can be made.

## **PREZ SAYS – A WORD FROM OUR PRESIDENT**

**Tom Tucker, President**

### **Mineralogy books and "the Web"**

A couple of months ago I started with Part 1 of a list of recommended mineralogy books. Part 2 will come eventually, but a news story this week might make it moot. There was a report the other day that Amazon, had for the first time on a monthly basis, sold more digital "books" than real hard copy paper books that we are used to. The digital age is passing me by. Of course there will still be mineralogy "titles" to be read, they just will be in a digital format, for all of us to enjoy. Now in my mineralogy library I have at least one volume that is 174 years old and still just as readable, and useful, as it was the day it was printed. And in my "digital reading machine" I have numerous files that are less than 10 years old that are absolutely useless. New formats have come along that do not support the older files, leaving the old information in the dust.

As it relates to mineralogy books, this is perhaps not germane. I know of at least a couple of "antique" mineralogy volumes that have been digitized and are available on the Web. And I would suppose that as the digital age encompasses us, the powers that be will maintain some sort of digital compatibility so these volumes will still be available in ten or twenty years or more.

But I'm alarmed at the fragility of digital web sites. In the recent past at least two absolutely fabulous mineral-related web sites have ceased to exist. Where did all that information and knowledge go ? One day, it's with us - the next day, it's gone, perhaps for ever. What a shame. At least with a real book that may go out of print, there are still real copies that can be referred to in libraries, or purchased on the used book market. The information may never be "lost". It can be "scanned" and digitized, or photocopied, and be used forever. But a website, like a flickering candle flame, can be extinguished forever.

Now I'm sure some more astute "digital age" technician will point out that there are some resources out there in the digital world that are attempting to save forever these digital pages. But I'm not aware of any of them, or how they work. I think I heard a while back that Harvard had a function to "save" websites and the information they contained. I'm not familiar with the project or how it can be used.

The two websites which I have "lost" were Bocamina.com, and Strahlen.org. Bocamina was a Spanish mineral collectors magazine, and they sponsored a fabulous website with hundreds of excellent photographs of minerals, and also of mine sites - a novel, but related area of interest. When the journal ceased publishing a year or two ago, the website was also terminated.

Strahlen.org was a European mineral website including a forum and several sub-sets of information. The one I particularly enjoyed dealt with Binn, Switzerland and the diverse mineralogy of that region. There were hundreds of photographs, maps, locality descriptions, and the like, even to include a significant section dealing with hiking suggestions and the wildflowers of the Binn region. As I recall they noted 142 anatase localities in the Binn area. Now the website has ceased to exist, and all that valuable and interesting information is gone.

As far as I know there is no "library" where one can go and refer to all that information, which, had it been in a book, would forever be available. So, enjoy your wanderings around the world of "the Web". Just be aware, unlike a book, tomorrow it might not be there at all.

## **MSDC MINUTES, May 4, 2011**

**Denise Whitman, Secretary**

President Tom Tucker called the meeting to order at 7:55 pm in the Cathy Kirby Room at the National Museum of Natural History. Past presidents Ed Fisher and Andy Thompson were present and were thanked for their service. Sheryl Sims and her daughter, Amber, each brought a friend to the meeting: Cliff Kellogg and Baray Ayuvi, respectively. Including the guests and the speaker, 21 people were present.

The March and April minutes were approved. Treasurer Rick Reiber is working on the accounting software program. There was no old business.

New business included keeping in touch with old friends: Jack Busch reported that Georgia Olmstead is in Colorado and doing well. And Susan Fisher gave us an update on Cynthia Payne: she is in an assisted-living facility and undergoing rehabilitation after her fall- she is recovering well and we hope to see her soon!

For "Geology in the News," several people commented on the earthquake-tsunami in Japan and that this seismic event was recorded in a well in the United States. And the meteorite that fell in a dental office in Virginia several years ago has been purchased by the Smithsonian.

At 8:05 pm, the business portion of the meeting was concluded.

Andy Thompson introduced our speaker for the evening, Dr. Richard Walker of the Isotope Geochemistry Laboratory in the Department of Geology at the University of Maryland at College Park. His PowerPoint presentation was entitled "New Insights to Late Stages of Planetary Accretion for Earth, Moon and Mars."

The initial question that he wanted to answer was "why is there so much gold in the silicate-rich upper mantle portion of the Earth?" Gold, and the other highly siderophile ("iron-loving") elements (the others are Re, Os, Ir, Ru, Pt, Rh, and Pd), or "HSE," are concentrated in the iron-rich core of the Earth and tend to be segregated from the silicate-rich mantle due to differences in chemistry, but there is an unexpected abundance of HSE in the upper mantle portion. He proposed the "late accretion model" as a solution: HSE-bearing chondritic meteorites accreted to the Earth after the core and mantle had effectively become separated in the Earth's interior, allowing the primitive upper mantle to become enriched in these elements. He suggested that the same situation would hold true for Mars, as it was formed at about the same time as the Earth and was also subjected to meteorite impact, but that the Moon would not have been enriched with HSE because it was formed later and is much smaller, reducing the chance of meteorite bombardment.

After responding to several questions, Dr. Walker ended his presentation with a "trailer" on his field investigations of the zoned pegmatites of Tin Mountain in the Black Hills of South Dakota.

Thanks, Dr. Walker, for taking our understanding of the Earth beyond its outer limits!

Our winners of the mineral raffle table were Baray Ayuvi and Betty Thompson.

And another round of applause for all the folks who brought refreshments!

## **My Favorite Things - A Visit to a Fine Mineral Collection**

**Susan Fisher - Temporary Editor**

Of all the things I can do on a weekend afternoon, a visit to a fine mineral collection is among my favorites. It is just not the pleasure of viewing outstanding minerals, but it is an opportunity to expand my intellectual store of standards for what my collection should strive to be. I will never be able to spend thousands of dollars on the perfect museum mineral piece, but I can look for the piece in my price range that most closely meets the standards set by those who are coinsurers of truly fine minerals. Most of the time, pictures are the only way to view the "perfect" piece, but to be able to stand in front of the case containing a mineral specimen that is recognized as a very fine example is a truly pleasurable experience.

We are very lucky in the Washington area to have one of the finest museum collections of minerals in the world right at our doorstep in the Smithsonian's Museum of Natural History. That part of the Smithsonian's collection that is on public display is beautifully arranged, nicely lighted and well (and accurately!) labeled. A trip through that display hall with the conscious purpose of observing the characteristics of a few individual minerals can be mind expanding experience. (Be careful not to go into "mineral overload!" by trying to take all the details in all the minerals displayed. Study a few minerals on each trip and enjoy the rest. )

I recently had the pleasure of again touring the mineral museum at the Colorado School of Mines in Golden, Colorado. It has a fantastic collection of fine mineral specimens from classic mining sites in Colorado and a very nice selection of worldwide minerals. I was particularly taken by a large covellite from the Summit District in Rio Grande County, Colorado and a wonderful spinel-twined copper from the Ray mine, Pinal County, Arizona. I was also very encouraged to see several groups of second and third grade children touring the museum under the patient guidance of museum personnel.

If you plan to travel this summer, there are many museums with fine collections across the world. As you plan your trip, consider a visit to a mineral museum. No matter where you travel, there is the potential to view something new and exciting. The International Mineralogical Association lists a number of well known mineral museums' web sites at [www.smmp.net/IMA-CM/museums.htm](http://www.smmp.net/IMA-CM/museums.htm). The American Federation of Mineralogical Societies site ([www.amfed.org](http://www.amfed.org)) lists clubs and shows across the country and can provide valuable information in planning your trip. My advice is to plan, look, learn, and enjoy! Have a great summer and come back and share your finds with us.

## **MINERAL MINUTES MAY DEADLINE**

**Mary Bateman, Editor**

The **deadline for the September issue of the *Mineral Minutes*** will be **August 15**. If you have an article or pictures that you wish to share, please e-mail them to Mary Bateman at [mbateman1@verizon.net](mailto:mbateman1@verizon.net) or

mail them to 52 Harrison Street, Morristown, NJ 07960. Don't forget one-paragraph items for the new "Over the Tea Cup" section that is devoted to news of our members, their families and friends of MSDC.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

The following are upcoming events/shows within easy commute of the Washington area plus other events of interest:

**Spring Mineralfest** (June 4) sponsored by the Pennsylvania Earth Science Association. Macungie Memorial Park, Macungie, PA.

**EFMS/AFMS Convention** in conjunction with the Gem and Mineral Society of Syracuse, NY, show (July 6-10) Syracuse, NY. Details on the EFMLS website at [www.amfed.org/efmls](http://www.amfed.org/efmls).

**Wildacres** (September 5-11). Details on the EFMLS website. Speaker in Residence will be Dr. Steve Chamberlain

**47<sup>th</sup> Annual Atlantic Coast Gem, Mineral & Jewelry Show** (September 24-25) hosted by the Gem Cutters Guild of Baltimore, Howard County Fairgrounds, I-70 at MD Rt. 32, West Friendship, MD

**Desaultels Micromount Symposium** (September 30-October 2) hosted by the Baltimore Mineral Society, MHA Conference Center, Elkridge, MD

## OVER THE TEACUP

Cynthia Payne continues on her course of recovery at Aspenwood. She expects to be home when she is able to drive.

**NOTE:** If you have some news that you would like to share "Over the Teacup," please let the editor know. Items of interest should be no more than a paragraph long and might consist of an ill member, an award you or a fellow club member or family member might have received, a graduation or birth in your immediate family, news of a former member, a special anniversary or birthday of yourself or a member, etc. Pictures will be welcome to go along with your note. Please identify the photo as to photographer, date (if known), and name(s) of person(s) (from left to right by row) appearing the the picture.

## Reminder

MSDC will not be meeting during July and August, but we will see you again on September 7. Bring your summer finds and stories. Vice-president Andy Thomson is lining up some wonderful programs that you will not want to miss. Come to the June meeting and then have a great summer.

## 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  
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Web page: **[www.mineralsocietyofDC.org](http://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.

## *MINERAL MINUTES*

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

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FIRST CLASS

## **Time Sensitive Dated Material**

**VISITORS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME AT OUR MONTHLY MEETINGS!**