

*The Mineralogical Society
of the
District of Columbia*



THE MINERAL MINUTES

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ATTENTION!!!!!!

There will be no MSDC meeting in December! Instead we will be sharing a holiday party with the Gem, Lapidary & Mineral Society of Montgomery County.

Monday, December 14 7:30-10:00pm

**Rockville, MD Senior Center Dining Room
1150 Carnation Drive, Rockville MD 20850**

**Exit 6A off of 270, to Nelson St, Left on Crocus, Left on Carnation;
Plenty of Free Parking**

'Pot Luck' finger food refreshments are served

Attendees are welcome to bring some specimens to sell

Remembrances of Andy Muir will be part of the event

Very Sad News
Cynthia Payne Has Passed

It is with deep sadness that we have learned of the death of one of our oldest members. Cynthia Payne left us on Sunday, November 15, 2015. She had been a member of MSDC almost since its beginnings in 1942. She has held many of the offices in the Society, including president, vice-president, treasurer, and secretary. She was also a founding member of the Micromineralogists of the National Capital Area, Inc. and a member of the Micromounters Hall of Fame. She has been very active in the American and Eastern Federations of Mineral Societies. Her enthusiasm, knowledge, friendship and guidance will be greatly missed. (A future edition of the *Mineral Minutes* will have a more complete tribute to Cynthia.)

Synopsis of the November 4, 2015 MSDC Business Meeting
- Andy Thompson, Secretary

President Steve Johnson welcomed the attendees and called the meeting to order. He noted that for the first time in ages, four MSDC past presidents were in attendance: Erich Grundel, Ed Fisher, Andy Thompson and Tom Tucker, Steve's immediate predecessor. Steve also welcomed first time visitors Shubha Sankaran and Tyler Tamasi and returning guest Brian Silver.

Old Business In the absence of any old business to deal with, attention turned to new issues.

New Business

By a voice vote, members voted unanimous acceptance of the Minutes of the October 7th Business Meeting as published in the November *Mineral Minutes*.

Discussion then moved to the upcoming **14 December holiday party** which will be held jointly with the GLMS Montgomery County club in order to honor the memory of Andy Muir who contributed so much to both clubs. Steve told the attending MSDC members the board agreed to participate in buying "Glow Rocks" shirts which honor Andy Muir and which shirts would have "Thanks Andy" on the front and on the back the logos of both clubs. The MC club is handling all the heavy lifting for that project as well as for the holiday party. Although MSDC members will be guests, all agreed it was appropriate for those attending MSDC members to bring "finger food" etc. to share as a lite dinner. The hosts have traditionally relied on the "luck" part of the "pot luck" dinner in that the attendees are not required to coordinate what type of food they bring. Reports are this approach has always worked out fine for having an appropriate spread of appetizers, main course, drinks and desserts.

The holiday party will be located at 1150 Carnation Drive, Rockville, MD 20850 which is just east of Route 270, off Gude Drive. The Center's phone # is 240-314-8800. Further specifics on the event will be forthcoming as they become available.

Speaking on behalf of the **Nominations Committee**, Steve announced the slate of candidates for the club's 2016 officers, which will be voted upon during the December business meeting on 14 December at the Rockville Senior Center: for President Dave Nanney; V.P. for Programs Dave Hennessey; Secretary Andy Thompson, Treasurer John Weidner. There were no other nominations offered by the evening's attendees.

Treasurer's report: Rebecca confirmed there were sufficient funds in the checking account to cover our upcoming expenses for club members' insurance (due in mid-November) and for the two grants which will be distributed in late December or early January. She further indicated she intends to provide the board with a list of the membership, including email addresses, and will facilitate the addition of new officers onto the check signing privileges.

Geology in the News Members noted the recent earth quakes around the world including a small quake in Virginia which was not felt by anyone attending the November meeting.

Motion to adjourn Having no further business to conduct, members motioned to adjourn the meeting and move on with the evening's program to be presented by Erich Grundel.

MSDC Mineral Minutes of Nov 4, 2015 Board meeting

- By Andy Thompson

Attendees: All board members were in attendance: Johnson, Thompson, Nanney, Siegal, Hennessey, Weidner, Tucker and Fisher. Guests included Leslie Nanney, Betty Thompson and Ed Fisher.

1. Steve thanked all the board members for attending.
2. Minutes of the August 16th board meeting were approved without edits.
3. Discussion finalized the 2016 slate of candidates for officers for the coming year as follows: President Dave Nanney, V.P. for Programs Dave Hennessey, Secretary Andy Thompson, Treasurer John Weidner. To facilitate the transition, Rebecca pledged to provide a list of the MSDC members and arrange for getting the appropriate new officers onto the check signing privileges with the Burke and Herbert Bank in VA. There was also discussion of the issues of having a new MSDC club member be the DC resident as the club's contact with the DC government, and also having a new contact person between the club and the IRS.
4. For the fine editorship of 2015 *Mineral Minutes*, Steve thanked Susan for her excellent work. Steve and Rebecca then discussed various options for editorship arrangements for 2016. Given Rebecca has been so busy in recent months and has had computer glitches on top of that, discussion leaned toward asking Steve to take the lead in providing editorship. He said he was well trained for this post and would enjoy doing it consistently on a monthly basis.

5. For the 2016 Programs, Steve noted he would be willing to give a presentation on the geology of Franklin NJ (in contrast to the field collector's point of view). There was also some informal talk of John Weidner doing a presentation on the family of silicate minerals. Also raised was the possibility of having Ellen Stofan speak on the Pluto findings.
6. In response to Holly's and GLMSMC's generous offer for MSDC to participate in buying shirts in honor of Andy Muir, the board voted to ask that they use our logo alongside theirs. Board members agreed on a general sense of wanting fully to cooperate GLMSMC and join with them in honoring and celebrating at their holiday party the life and memory of Andy Muir.
7. Board members then discussed the state of the finances of the club and decided to increase the amount of the grant to the GWU student to \$1,000. At the same time, the board agreed to continue to give an annual donation of \$1,000 to the Smithsonian Mineral Department. Members also expressed a strong desire to have both recipients present, if at all possible, at the holiday party, to celebrate giving of the grants.
8. With no further business to conduct, members voted to adjourn the Board meeting.

Synopsis of November's Program: Erich Grundel "The Message is the Medium"

- By Andy Thompson

"What we saw tonight was the passion of a person who generously shared with us the fruit of his years of collecting," said one attendee. Here is how Erich characterized the motivation behind his decades of gathering post cards related to minerals, mining and miners. "I got to a point in my collecting of minerals that I wanted to go beyond simply collecting mineral specimens and wanted to expand to include the element of history." So after his earlier years of field collecting and trading minerals, he hit upon the idea of collecting easily stored and inexpensive post cards, mostly from the early 1900s.

He began his presentation by asking questions which concluded that everyone in the room had familiarity with sending or receiving post cards. By a "show and tell" method, Erich held up and walked his post cards around the room, relating the stories behind what was pictured or written on the cards. Each post card provided a glimpse into vast worlds, whether of diamonds, the celebrities who bought or wore them, the mines from which they came or the processes by which they went from raw stones to polished gems.

The diamonds pictured on Erich's cards included several from the Cullinan mine in Transvaal South Africa, namely the 530 carat Great Star of Africa and the 317 carat Lesser Star of Africa, both of which are now part of the British crown jewels. Post cards also illustrated the Taylor-Burton 69 carat diamond which came from the Premier Mine in South Africa, which gem was bought by Richard Burton and famously worn by Liz Taylor.

Each post card provided a glimpse into a piece of history such as a 1932 card which illustrated an abandoned South African mine whose gates were shuttered due to the depression. Throughout the presentation, Erich displayed approximately 20 sets of cards which in aggregate told mining-related stories from African gems to Alaskan gold, from the 1954 vintage Utah cards with attached bags of salt to the cards embedded with circles of copper mineral dust from the Utah Bingham Canyon mine.

His favorite cards, echoing his drive to unearth their historical provenance, were three from the late 1800s which depicted a mine scene from Australia (1899) and the South African cyanide Robinson Mine.

Erich said the funniest card in his collection depicts a “typical” mine for tourists located in Cowee Valley near Franklin in Western North Carolina, an area well touted for its sapphires and rubies. The advertising-oriented card shows a water sluice at the end of which stood a leggy young lady wearing high heels and promising enjoyment for the entire family.

V.P. David Nanney thanked Erich for sharing his treasure of post cards and historical insights which program was applauded by the assembled MSDC members and guests.



Two Geologic Encounters - John Weidner

Encounter 1:

The e-mails flew thick and fast at Northern Virginia Community College.

To Jim Buechler, our geology lab tech: “We have 40 sixth graders coming to see our campus. Can you entertain them for 20 minutes, as you did last year?”

Reply: "I'll be on a field trip with Prof Jaye. Maybe Callan Bentley can do it." (You know Shelley from the Corridor H trip. Callen spoke to us a couple of years ago, plus many of you have been on a trip or two with him.)

From Callan, "I don't come to school early enough on Fridays to do it."

Everyone knows our third professor, Ken Rasmussen, is a Tuesday–Thursday person, which means our professors and our staff can't do it. That leaves – well, maybe John can do it.

Yeah. I can entertain kids for 20 minutes, but I'd rather let the rocks do the talking. Robin Rohrback (she spoke to us last year) and I laid out five stations:

Station 1: Igneous, sedimentary, or metamorphic? Half a dozen rocks, including foliated gneiss, in case they think lineation means sedimentary.

Station 2: Test with acid and identify as limestone, marble, or neither. (Five rock samples) Everyone likes to put acid on rocks and look for the fizz.

Station 3: Identify the fossil. About a dozen fossils and a couple non-fossils spread out, including fossil ripple marks and dendritic manganese oxide. Each kid gets a sheet with a list of possible answers.

Station 4: Two samples of sand, one clean east coast quartz sand, the other California mixed-grain sand. Which has traveled further from the source? (Everyone likes to look thru a microscope.)

Station 5: Put in order of how far the clasts moved from their source: Four samples of conglomerate, ranging from well-rounded to angular, and a breccia.

When the kids came, we turned them loose. The room was a buzz of activity for the 20 minutes. Did they learn anything? I don't know. But no one was bored, including especially Robin and me, as we moved from one student to another answering questions – actually, mostly asking questions.

I think the kids left thinking our college is neat and geology is fun, which were our goals all along. Success!

Encounter 2:

"Hey Pops! I volunteered you to talk to Kyle's class about rocks." my son told me on the phone. Wait a minute. My grandson Kyle is four. His class is three-to-four year olds in a preschool in San Francisco. We fly in Wednesday night and I'm scheduled to talk to them on Thursday morning. What do you say to a four-year-old about rocks, and where am I even going to get rocks to show them.

"Don't you always carry rocks with you?" asks my son.

No. Don't be silly.

Well, all right, often. But usually when I'm coming home from a trip. Like the rest of you, it is a rare trip that I don't bring home a rock or two. (TSA check at the airport: take off my belt, shoes, and jacket; get out my laptop, by breathing machine, and my rocks.)

So I brought a rock or two with me, and my son had a couple in his garden that I had left on previous trips, and Susie & I picked up a couple pieces of sandstone in Utah, where we toured before going to San Francisco.

I was told to expect two groups of 10 each, one after the other. I got 30 kids sitting in a circle on the floor, looking at me, with the attention span of – well, of a four-year-old.

“What is a rock?” I ask them. We decide that a rock is hard.

Several of them volunteer that they have a rock collection. No need to worry about the next generation of geologists. They are on their way.

And it turns out the preschool has a dish with rocks in it. I add them to the samples I will show, and in fact, after my ‘lecture’, I leave a couple of mine to add to their collection. I’m not going to bring that Utah sandstone (calcite-cemented sandstone of the Entrada Formation) back with me.

“This is hard. Is it a rock?” I ask, holding up a wooden block.

“No.” they chorus.

“That’s right. A rock can’t be wood.” “Is this a rock?”

“No, that’s a hammer.” they chorus.

“That’s right. Rocks aren’t metal.” “Is this a rock?”

“No, that’s a brick.” They know a brick when they see one.

“That’s right. Rocks are natural. People made the brick.”

So I hand a couple rocks around:

A piece of an amethyst geode (actually cut to be a bookend) – explaining that rocks can be pointed.

A smoothed oval piece of granite – explaining rocks can have all their points wore off if they tumble down a mountain in a stream.

A piece of sandstone – explaining that sand can get pressed together so hard that it turns into rock.

I wanted to take them outside and have them take turns hitting the sandstone with a hammer and seeing that they can break it back into pieces of sand, but going outside with a preschool class

involves everyone changing from their slippers to their shoes, then going potty, then washing their hands. Try that with 30 kids. It's not just a casual 'Let's go outside for a minute.'

I told them rocks can melt. "It has to get very hot to melt rocks. Your stove gets hot. Do we ever touch a hot stove?"

"No, we don't." (Throw in a stove safety lesson there.)

"It has to get much hotter than a stove to melt rock, but when we melt rock, do you know what we have? We have a volcano!"

So we all imitate a volcano. We hold out our hands at floor level and shake them making a rumbling sound. Then we throw our hands in the air and go 'Whoosh'.

Hey! Don't get technical on me. They're four years old. When you melt a rock you have a volcano. The difference between lava and magma, and discussion of magma cooling underground can wait until they're 5.

I show a big piece of shale with lots of shells in it, and call them fossils.

We look at the rocks with magnifying glasses – everyone likes to look thru a magnifying glass.

And we are done.

A few of the kids came with me to their science corner and looked at more of the rocks with magnifying glasses, but most of them went back to playing with cars and fighting over blocks. They seemed interested, which was my third goal; and I had fun, which was my second; and I got to play with my grandson, which was my first.

Did they learn anything? I don't know. But on Sunday, at a birthday party my granddaughter was invited to, the mother of one of the kids in the class thanked me for telling the kids about rocks. I hope that's because her son told her about it.

And I had a good time, which was my goal all along. Success Number 2!

My New Favorite Mineral

- John Weidner

Moolooite! How can you not love a mineral named moolooite!

According to Wikipedia:

Moolooite is a rare blue-green mineral with the formula $\text{Cu}^{++}(\text{C}_2\text{O}_4) \cdot n(\text{H}_2\text{O})$ ($n < 1$) (making it a hydrated copper oxalate). It was discovered by Richard M Clarke and Ian R Williams in Bunbury Well, Mooloo Downs station, Murchison, Western Australia in 1986.[1] It has an orthorhombic crystalline structure, and is formed by the interaction of bird guano with weathering copper sulfides.

A second occurrence is reported from the Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines silver mining district of Vosges Mountains, France.

According to Dana classification, it is an organic mineral. According to my physical geology class, minerals can't be organic.

Moolooite. Moooooo-loooooo-ite. Moooooo! Moooooo! An organic mineral, which means it's not organic. Ya gotta love it!

Elections are coming up in December at the Holiday Party. If you are interested in participating in the leadership of MSDC, please contact Steve Johnson or Andy Thompson. Also a editor is needed for the *Mineral Minutes*.

Check out www.amfed.org/EFMLS for show dates and news from the American Federation and the Eastern Federation of Mineralogical and Lapidary Societies

Dues are due!

**Please use the attached form to renew your membership
and**

Be sure to update your information.



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

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Directors: Dave Hennessey, John Weidner

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

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

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 UNTIL 10 PM.**



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