

# The Mineral Minutes

## “The History of Maryland Pegmatites”

by Dr. Cynthia Kearns

by Yury Kalish, MSDC Vice President

Our June presentation will be “The History of Maryland Pegmatites” by Dr. Cynthia Kearns. Dr. Kearns is the Instructor and Physical Geology Lab Coordinator at James Madison University. She enjoys presenting “real world” geology to students. Dr. Kearns tries to find the relationships between the earth systems and relate it to everyday life – not only how the earth impacts humans, but also how humans impact the earth. In geology, her interests are mineral chemistry topics and the stories they tell about geology. She has enjoyed studying everything from clay minerals in soils to metamorphic and igneous mineral environments.

Dr. Kearns’ presentation will discuss the research that has been done over the years going back into the 1800’s, the economic and mining history of Maryland pegmatites, and the geologic history of the region, which will include some of the original research she has done on the Henryton Pegmatite. Parts of the presentation are based on her doctoral dissertation entitled “The Mineralogy and Mineral Chemistry of the Henryton Pegmatite, Patapsco Valley State Park,” which she defended at George Mason University last year.

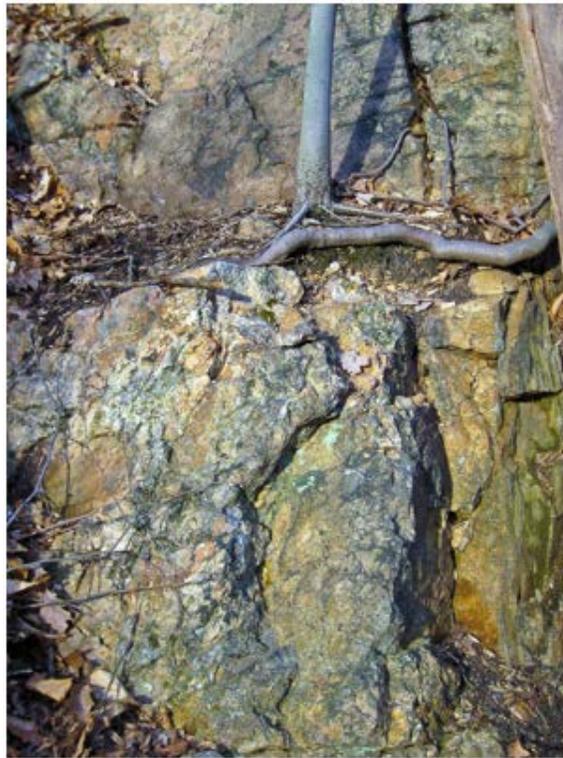


Image courtesy of Mineral Bliss

Please join us in taking Cynthia to dinner on June 5th at 6:00 pm at the Elephant and Castle at 1201 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW. If you cannot make it to dinner, please go directly to the lobby of the Natural History museum (Constitution Avenue entrance) at 7:30 pm. We will head upstairs to the Cathy Kerby Room at 7:45 pm for Cynthia’s presentation.

### Sharing Time

by Dave Hennessey, MSDC President

I look forward to seeing everyone on June 5th and hope everyone has a wonderful summer of collecting planned. Since our program this month focuses on Maryland pegmatites, why don’t we focus our sharing time on pegmatite minerals. Please bring along any pegmatite minerals (tourmaline, topaz, aquamarine, etc.), or any other minerals that excite you and that you think other members would enjoy seeing and hearing about.



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### Prez Says...

by Dave Hennessey  
MSDC President

For me, the best part of our hobby is collecting minerals in the field. There is nothing I would rather be doing than roaming around one of our local traprock quarries searching for vugs and crystal-lined fissures in the rock that was blasted in the latest quarry shot. I rarely miss a quarry trip in our area and really appreciate the cooperative spirit of our local clubs, which have

(cont. on p. 2)

## MSDC's May Business Meeting Report

by Andy Thompson, MSDC Secretary

President Dave Hennessey called the meeting to order, thanked the club's three past presidents who were in attendance, and welcomed guests Cheyan, Maxine, Tom and son Elijah. Their interests ranged from the general pursuit of collecting diverse rocks and minerals, to seeking volunteers and specimen donations for supporting the mineral collection of the University of Maryland and lastly to specializing in collecting fluorescent minerals.

Those attending then approved the April Business Minutes report as published in the May Mineral Minutes. John's Treasurer's report indicated a decline in the number of members who have paid their 2019 dues. Unrelated to member's tardy payments of their annual dues, he shared that although the club's finances are solid, he projects that our current rate of annually giving donations to the Smithsonian and to a student will deplete club funds in a very few years.

No Old Business issues were raised or discussed. New Business included discussion of the annual Chesapeake Mineral Club's Show to be held this year on 11 May at the Ruhl Armory in Towson (<http://www.chesapeakegemandmineral.org/club-show.html>). Dave Hennessey also shared information about the June 1st field trip to Vulcan quarry sponsored by the Southern Maryland mineral club.

With regard to Geology in the News, MSDC members cited two spectacular events. The first was the large turnout for the Nanney recent open house and garden show. Of lesser note was the discovery of a large one-carat-plus diamond at Crater Park, AK and discovery of the Botswana Blue diamond. Dr. Jeffery Post noted that despite the latter's beauty and rarity, the Smithsonian Hope diamond had greater clarity.

Two brief but touching additions to the business meeting discussion items included Dan's story about the importance of adult collectors supporting the interest of young collectors. He recounted the story of when he was a youngster in 1992 when he wrote to Mr. John Watkins in Tennessee, who responded with an encouraging personal letter and included several mineral specimens. Dan has that letter and specimens to this day and shared how John's kindness made a significant difference in Dan's enthusiasm for collecting.

The second addition was Susan Fisher's humorous challenge to the May meetings' attendees to identify the one significant typo found in the May newsletter's "Fluoride" program synopsis. After jovial kidding but no reported typos, Susan then awarded the prize of a beautiful fluorite twin-crystal specimen to the writer of the mistitled synopsis. And, supportive of Dan's recommendation to encourage children's mineral interests, she generously gave another fluorite specimen to our enthusiastic and delighted young guest, Elijah.

Dave Hennessey then called for and received a motion to close the May business meeting, at which point he turned the meeting over to Yury to introduce the evening's presenter, Dr. Jeff Post.

## May 1st Program Presented by Dr. Jeffrey Post "What's new with the Smithsonian Gem and Mineral Collection?"

by Andy Thompson, MSDC Secretary

The Smithsonian Museum of Natural History has responsibility of caring for and growing the nation's world-renowned collection of gems and minerals. Dr. Jeff Post oversees and curates the thousands of unique specimens as well as directs the Department of Mineral Sciences. During his May 1st presentation to MSDC, he described an iconic scene which, he said, he frequently experiences at mineral shows throughout the country.

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lately been making their field trips available to our membership as well. On June 1st, four days before our meeting, I will be in the Vulcan Manassas quarry with at least four other MSDC members, participating in a field trip set up by the Southern Maryland club. I have been to this quarry probably 20 times over the years. I have been completely skunked on occasion, but other times I have found terrific prehnite, apophyllite, stilbite, stellerite, chabazite, calcite, pyrite, chalcopyrite, and magnetite. On the most recent trip, I added babingtonite to the list of species I have found at this quarry. I hope the June 1st trip yields more exciting finds.

In 2018, I pretty much guarantee no other MSDC members collected more from the local traprock quarries than me. Of course, I cheated. I had the rock delivered to my house. To solve a backyard drainage problem I had contractors come in and dig a channel that was then lined with 30 tons of rock from the Cedar Mountain Stone Quarry. Cedar Mountain is a traprock quarry in the lower portion of the Culpeper Basin, in Mitchells, Virginia. I collected there at various times years ago with my son and with George Loud. There is a typical traprock assemblage at Cedar Mountain that includes really superior pectolite and epidote specimens. You may recall that there is a very large "touch me" prehnite specimen (I think it is 78 lbs) at the JMU Mineral Museum. That prehnite comes from the Cedar Mountain Stone Quarry.

Unfortunately, the rock delivered to my home did not include any large prehnite specimens. It did however do the trick for solving my drainage problems.

(May 1st Program... cont.)

While searching for possible new acquisitions at the 2019 Tucson mineral show, one exhibit caught Jeff’s eye. It was a display of Montana sapphires arching over what was reported to be the largest gem-quality sapphire, 64.14 carats (cts), ever discovered in the state. Dubbed the “Ponderosa,” it had been unearthed a few months earlier at the Potentate Mining Rock Creek Mine. As often happens at public mineral shows, Jeff’s presence draws a crowd of collectors, on-lookers and occasionally curators of other museums. “Are you going to buy it?” they asked while Jeff examined the specimen and quietly negotiated on behalf of the Smithsonian. When Jeff finally answered “yes,” the crowd erupted with applause, expressing their shared pleasure that the rare sapphire would now become part of the nation’s collection.

*Ponderosa Sapphire: Before cleaning; post cleaning; rotated under U.V. light \**



That story captured important aspects of the message Jeff shared with MSDC attendees: new acquisitions require carefully considered discernment, thorough knowledge of what specimens the Smithsonian collection already has, which type minerals it needs, financial generosity enabling the purchases and citizens’ shared pride in the nation’s collective ownership. Underlying this acquisition process are the many trusting personal relationships which help make the Smithsonian’s collection the national treasure it is and makes its orderly curation possible.

\* All photos courtesy of Dr. Jeffrey Post.

Throughout the evening's entire presentation of more than 60 newly acquired minerals, Jeff showed photos and provided geological, historical and interpersonal background describing how the minerals have made their way into the national collection at 10<sup>th</sup> and Constitution Ave., NW, in Washington, DC.

The first photo Jeff showed was of a recently acquired rutile and hematite specimen from Bahia, Brazil. Jeff learned from a friend in the mineral industry about the mineral's availability, its unique geometric shape, large size (about one foot long) and fine crystal structures. A west-coast philanthropist had expressed her willingness to underwrite the purchase. When the seller assured safe delivery by hand-carrying it to the NMNH in Washington DC, the Smithsonian collection was enriched and the public will see it on display. As with the purchase of the Ponderosa sapphire, all the above-mentioned elements of trust and partnership contributed to the successful acquisition of this important specimen.

*Rutile and hematite, Bahia, India*



The second photo Jeff showed was a stunning faceted tugtupite (3.2 cts) from Greenland, named after its primary discovery site, Tugtup. Although there are tales that the native Inuit people have long celebrated this stone in their culture, geological collectors seem to have only “discovered” it in the 1950s and 1960s. Being one of the rarest known minerals, a [beryllium aluminium silicate](#), today it is found at only two other sites, Mont Saint Hilaire, Canada and the Kola Peninsula, Russia. One of the world's deepest red minerals, it is always intensely fluorescent. The color can vary but mainly is some variation between red and pink. It is the deep red gemmy appearance which is increasingly sought after by high-end collectors.

*Tugtupite, 3.2 carats, from Greenland*



It was only by the generous help of the Smithsonian Gift Collectors Group that Jeff could make the purchase. The less gemmy specimens are typically paler, often with a mix with white streaks, are much less expensive and used for low end jewelry. For contrast, Jeff also acquired for the collection a set of inexpensive whitish tugtupite cuff links.

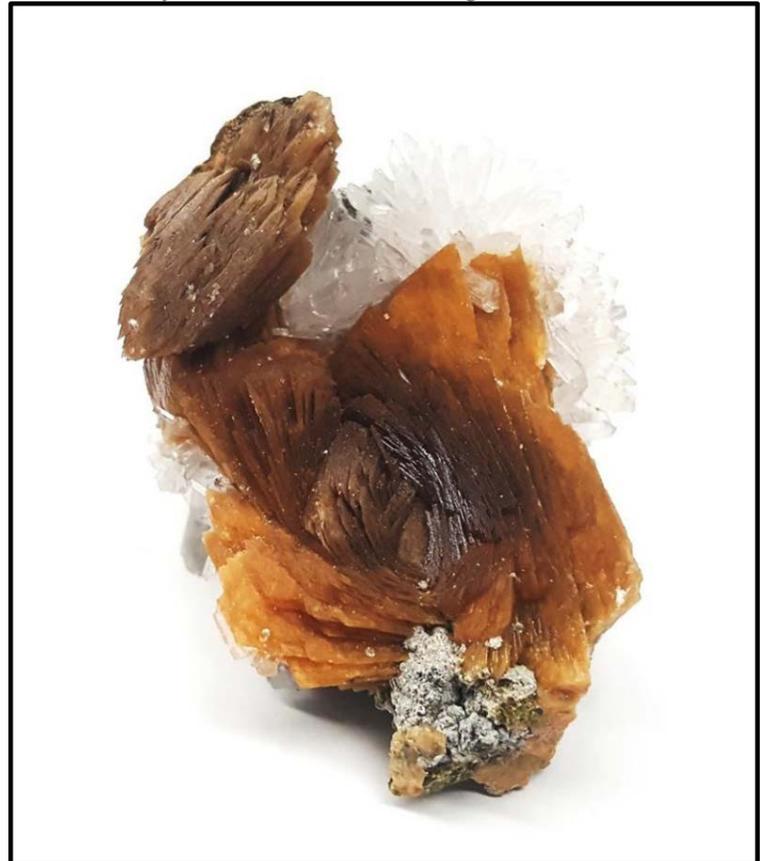
*Scolecite-on-stilbite, Maharashtra, India*



Another extraordinary acquisition was a two-foot-wide scolecite-on-stilbite specimen which came with an interesting origins story. It was found by well-diggers searching for water in Rankhanb Village, in the state of Maharashtra, India. While digging with picks and shovels, they found small samples close to the surface. Accordingly, they proceeded with caution as they carefully dug down twenty feet to where they found this unusually large, white and spikey specimen. The rarity is not only the size and fine condition of the sample, but also that they caught the entire dig and discovery on video.

Jeff then showed photos of more than sixty acquired minerals which included some obtained at the Denver and Tucson shows. They included a 6-inch wide roweite from the Shijanshan mine in Inner Mongolia, a pyrite cube in an 11-inch specimen mined in Navajun, Spain, and an opalized “thunder egg” from Ethiopia. The black, brown, and white calcite from Palmorejo Mine in Chihuahua, Mexico was of special interest to Jeff because the site included specimens of manganese oxide, which happens to be his favorite mineral to research.

*Roweite, Shijanshan Mine, Inner Mongolia*



*Calcite, Palmorejo Mine, Chihuahua, Mexico*



Jeff also obtained samples of galena and brachiopods from the Elano mine in the Platteville, Wisconsin area where he did some of his graduate geology studies. He also brought back foot-long quartz specimen with needle-like spikes from the Muzo region of Columbia and calcite from the Linwood mine near Buffalo, Iowa and a huge foot-long barite crystal.

*Quartz, Muzo Region, Columbia*



After showing us a picture of a white albite from Bulgaria, a 7-inch wide marcasite from Morocco and a fist-size wulfenite from the Congo, Jeff showed us another stunning acquisition – the now famous, deep red 48.86 carat topaz, already on display, the Whitney Flame donated by Coralyn Wright Whitney. Although many MSDC members knew of that acquisition and its spectacular display in the NMNH mineral gallery, what we all learned was that the donor also made it possible for the position of curator of the National Gem and Mineral Collection to now be independently funded. As a result, that important work of curation will no longer be vulnerable to government shut-downs. The importance of that gift was very much applauded by the MSDC attendees.

Several of the recently acquired mineral specimens came with their own interesting histories. A beautiful aquamarine-colored beryl, for example, had, since 1920, been faceted and then kept in a Swiss bank vault. After nearly a century with no activity in the bank account, it was identified as “inactive” and by Swiss law its assets had to be disposed of. The unclaimed beryl was acquired by a mineral dealer from India who subsequently kindly donated it to the Smithsonian.

The cavalcade of photos of numerous, less storied but beautiful newly acquired minerals continued with a 2-inch wide green and white wavelite specimen having a botryoidal shape. It was followed by a rather expensive but generously donated “Windex blue” 5-inch high elbaite from the Rio Grande do Norte region in Brazil, given by a woman who received it as a gift for her 60<sup>th</sup> birthday and who then donated it for her 70<sup>th</sup>. Also added to the collection was a 4-inch cobalite from the Congo; from Kenya came a ruby which fluoresces red, along with a diaspore from Turkey, and a 16-inch specimen with an afghanite crystal from Afghanistan.

*Whitney Flame Topaz*



Jeff also shared stories of many persons who for years have been friends of the Smithsonian’s Department of Mineral Sciences. A case in point was evident in a photograph taken at the 2018 Tucson mineral show. One police officer, for the past 15 years, has provided protection of the Smithsonian’s displayed minerals. His familiarity with the staff and displays made him a valuable asset, including when he held in his hands and showed visitors an eye-catching 19,000-carat smoky citrine specimen. Again, that underscored Jeff’s theme that mineral collection and curation rests on the bedrock of trust and personal relationships.

By the time Jeff showed his MSDC audience the 60<sup>th</sup> photo, showing an expensive and gorgeous 40.25 carat spinel from the world’s oldest spinel mine, he concluded it was time to close the presentation and respond to a final round of questions from his enthusiastic listeners.

MSDC President Dave Hennessey thanked Jeff for the extraordinary presentation and for making the extra effort to extract himself from a Denver snowstorm that morning, just in time for his evening's Washington presentation. Club members and guests expressed their gratitude with sincere applause for Jeff's presentation.

*Spinel, 40.25 carats, Tajikistan*



## MSDC Club Information

Meetings are the First Wednesday of the Month (Jan-Jun and Sep-Dec). We meet in the Constitution Avenue lobby of the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History at 7:30 pm.

Website <http://mineralogicalsocietyofdc.org/>

Facebook [www.facebook.com/Mineralogical-SocietyOfTheDistrictOfColumbia](http://www.facebook.com/Mineralogical-SocietyOfTheDistrictOfColumbia)

## 2019 Officers and Directors

**President** - Dave Hennessey | davidhennessey@comcast.net

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**Secretary** - Andy Thompson | thompson01@starpower.net

**Treasurer** - John Weidner

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### Webmasters

Betty Thompson | bdthompson01@yahoo.com

Casper Voogt | casper.voogt@gmail.com



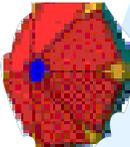
### THE MINERAL MINUTES

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NEWSLETTER OF THE MINERALOGICAL SOCIETY OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Mineralogical Society of DC  
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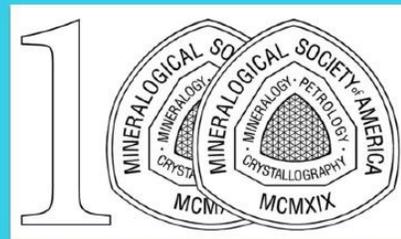
## Useful Mineral Links:

	American Federation of Mineralogical Societies (AFMS)	<a href="http://www.amfed.org">www.amfed.org</a>
	Eastern Federation of Mineralogical and Lapidary Societies (EFMLS)	<a href="http://www.amfed.org/efmls">www.amfed.org/efmls</a>
	MINDAT	<a href="http://www.mindat.org">www.mindat.org</a>
	Mineralogical Society of America (MSA)	<a href="http://www.minoscam.org">www.minoscam.org</a>
	Friends of Mineralogy	<a href="http://www.friendsofmineralogy.org/">www.friendsofmineralogy.org/</a>
	WebMineral	<a href="http://webmineral.com">webmineral.com</a>
	The Geological Society of America (GSA)	<a href="http://www.geosociety.org/">www.geosociety.org/</a>
	Jeff Scovil Mineral Photography (not advertising - just great photos)	<a href="http://scovilphotography.com/">scovilphotography.com/</a>
	United States Geological Survey (USGS)	<a href="http://www.usgs.gov">www.usgs.gov</a>
	The Geological Society of Washington (GSW)	<a href="http://www.gswweb.org/">http://www.gswweb.org/</a>

## Mineralogical Society of America Centennial (1919-2019) Symposium

Mineralogical Society of America

1919 - Centennial - 2019

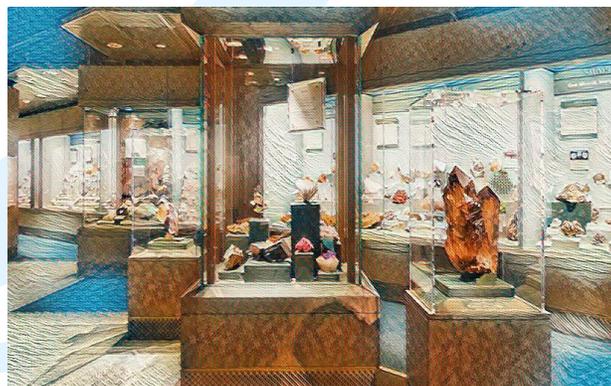


### The Next 100 Years of Mineral Sciences June 20-21, 2019

**M**SA will hold a celebratory Centennial Symposium on June 20-21, 2019 at the Carnegie Institution for Science Building, located at 1530 P St NW, Washington, DC 20005. Fourteen theme colloquia will offer a vision for exciting new directions in mineralogy, geochemistry, and petrology as MSA begins its second century. Each theme colloquium will include two 20-minute presentations by invited speakers followed by five minutes of moderated audience discussion.

Lunches will be included with your registration fee, and attendees are invited for a private evening reception in the Janet Annenberg Hooker Hall of Geology, Gems, and Minerals in the US National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution. We thank the Gemological Institute of America for sponsoring this evening reception. Please join us for this once-in-a-century event!

[http://www.minsocam.org/MSA/Centennial/MSA\\_Centennial\\_index.html](http://www.minsocam.org/MSA/Centennial/MSA_Centennial_index.html) Submitted to Micromineralogists of the National Capitol Area, Inc. Newsletter by Herwig Pelckmans





# AFMS Code of Ethics



- I will respect both private and public property and will do no collecting on privately owned land without the owner's permission.
- I will keep informed on all laws, regulations of rules governing collecting on public lands and will observe them.
- I will to the best of my ability, ascertain the boundary lines of property on which I plan to collect.
- I will use no firearms or blasting material in collecting areas.
- I will cause no willful damage to property of any kind - fences, signs, and buildings.
- I will leave all gates as found.
- I will build fires in designated or safe places only and will be certain they are completely extinguished before leaving the area.
- I will discard no burning material - matches, cigarettes, etc.
- I will fill all excavation holes which may be dangerous to livestock. [Editor's Note/Observation: I would also include wildlife as well as livestock.]
- I will not contaminate wells, creeks or other water supply.
- I will cause no willful damage to collecting material and will take home only what I can reasonably use.
- I will practice conservation and undertake to utilize fully and well the materials I have collected and will recycle my surplus for the pleasure and benefit of others.
- I will support the rockhound project H.E.L.P. (Help Eliminate Litter Please) and will leave all collecting areas devoid of litter, regardless of how found.
- I will cooperate with field trip leaders and the se in designated authority in all collecting areas.
- I will report to my club or Federation officers, Bureau of Land management or other authorities, any deposit of petrified wood or other materials on public lands which should be protected for the enjoyment of future generations for public educational and scientific purposes.
- I will appreciate and protect our heritage of natural resources.
- I will observe the "Golden Rule", will use "Good Outdoor Manners" and will at all times conduct myself in a manner which will add to the stature and Public "image" of rockhounds everywhere.

**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  
c/o John Weidner  
7099 Game Lord Drive  
Springfield, VA 22153-1312

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?** \_\_\_\_\_

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 7:30 PM to meet our guard who will escort us to the Cathy Kirby Room.