

The Mineral Minutes

Zoom Meetings Continue

Please connect to our January program at our usual time and date: **Wednesday, January 6, 2021 at 7:30 pm Eastern Time.** You should receive a link in an email from the MSDC Treasurer, John Weidner. If you do not, please email John (jfweidner42@gmail.com) and he will forward the link to you.



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Prez Says...

by Dave Hennessey, MSDC President



It's Christmas Day and I'm looking out the window right now and seeing little mineral crystals floating about. Good old snow is a mineral. I sometimes forget that. It's not my favorite mineral, especially when I have to get out the shovel to clear the driveway, but it is beautiful to watch right now as its falling.

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January 6, 2021 Program: “Collecting at the Red Cloud Mines of Lincoln County, New Mexico” by Dr. Scott Braley

Our presenter in January will be Dr. Scott Braley. Scott has been collecting minerals since childhood, with a focus on microminerals and photography for the last 15 years. Until a few years ago, he lived in the DC area and was active in several local mineralogical clubs. Scott was a member of the NVMC and the MNCA, and is a past president of the GLMSMC. After retiring from the Air Force, he completed a Ph.D. and is now a professor at the Northern New Mexico College. With the recent limitations on travel, he spent much of the summer of 2020 investigating some less well-known mineralogical localities in his area of New Mexico.

Scott will be discussing the Red Cloud mines of Lincoln County, New Mexico – two small, distinct mines a few hundred feet apart in the Gallinas Mountains, within the Cibola National Forest. The Red Cloud Fluorite mine presents interesting micro fluorites and some rare earth minerals, while the Red Cloud Copper mine yields beautiful specimens of vanadinite, wulfenite, mimetite, cerussite, and more. Both have been only sparsely written about in the mineralogical literature, so are only lightly visited.

Please connect to our January program at our usual time and date shown above.

Sharing Time

by Dave Hennessey, MSDC President

For January, why don't we give the nod to our favorite minerals. What mineral specimen in your collection gives you the most pleasure? If you had to rush out of your burning house and could rescue only one mineral specimen (presuming the family and pets already are safe) what would it be? Is it special because of its beauty? Because of

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(Sharing Time, continued from p. 1)

where it came from? Because it was a gift? We look forward to hearing about your favorite and why it has that status.

December 2020 Business Meeting

by Andy Thompson, MSDC Secretary

Summary: President Dave Hennessey welcomed everyone and thanked them for coming to the December 2nd MSDC meeting. He thanked the past MSDC presidents who were in attendance and called for acceptance of the November business meeting's minutes as published in the December newsletter. Their acceptance was motioned, seconded, and unanimously approved without discussion.

Treasurer's Report: John Weidner provided a comprehensive overview of the club's finances and noted that the Board of Directors will soon be deciding on the disposition of MSDC's annual financial gift to the Smithsonian and to an undergraduate geology student. John said now was the time of year for everyone to send in their annual membership dues (\$20 for individuals and \$25 for family). He emphasized that, important as the dues are, if members are not in a position to pay, they should still feel free to come and participate in our meetings. All are warmly welcome. John also explained that several recently donated collections of minerals will be shared with youth, once face-to-face meetings and mineral shows resume. MSDC welcomes all such mineral donations, including specimens intended to be given for free to children, as well as those that may be sold for the benefit of the club.

Old Business: No issues were outstanding.

New Business: Yury Kalish, editor of "Mineral Minutes," announced that Ken Rock had generously volunteered to follow in Yury's able footsteps and would take over the important job of creating the club's monthly newsletter. Members applauded and thanked Ken for stepping into this position which allows Yury to concentrate on his responsibilities as Vice President for Programs.

Dave then called on MSDC's head of the Nominations Committee, Andy Thompson, to announce the slate of people running for the club's four executive positions and one Director's position for 2021. He asked if there were any last-minute nominations. With none being offered, he identified the candidates for the President, VP, Treasurer and Secretary. All were already serving in those positions: Dave Hennessey, Yury Kalish, John Weidner, and Andy Thompson. All had offered to step down and allow other club members to step up. But in the absence of any new volunteers, Andy called for a vote on the previously published slate which met with unanimous acceptance. For

(continued on p. 3)

(Prez Says, continued from p. 1)

So, what is my favorite mineral? Do I have a favorite? So many to choose from. Calcite with its innumerable crystal forms and worldwide distribution is a common favorite for many (we miss you, Cynthia). Anatase is a favorite for several of us (Tom Tucker, Alex Venzke) and fluorite with so many color and crystal forms is much loved by many (Susan Fisher, your fluorites are amazing). But for me there are two favorites: prehnite and apophyllite. I love these minerals because, as a long-time resident of Northern Virginia, these are the premier minerals that we find in our local quarries.

Over the years (but sadly not lately) I collected in the traprock quarries of Northern Virginia many times. I have amazing apophyllite on prehnite specimens from the various Luck Quarries in Virginia – Bull Run, Centreville, Leesburg, Goose Creek and Bealeton. It is one of the truly unfortunate realities of our litigious society that the Luck organization feels it can no longer allow collector visits because of the possibility of lawsuits should a collector injure themselves on their property.

It is heartbreaking to think of the beautiful specimens that are no doubt still showing up in the shots at the quarries, going up the conveyor belt and into the crusher. I am glad I rescued what I did over the years. Large apophyllite rosettes on prehnite from Centreville and plates of apple green prehnite with tabular apophyllites from Bealeton. These are my favorites because they are not only beautiful but because I collected them myself.

My collection includes apophyllite on prehnite from the Vulcan Materials Quarry in Manassas, as well. Not as spectacular as those I found at the Luck Quarries, but bless Vulcan for still allowing club collecting visits.

I hope some time in 2021 to get back into their Manassas quarry and find a top shelf apophyllite on prehnite from this locality to add to my favorites.

So, what is your favorite mineral?

(Dec 2020 Business Meeting, continued from p. 2)

the one open Director's position, Alex Venzke accepted the nomination and was elected to serve for the coming three-year term from 2021-2023. Dan Teich will continue to serve his term, 2019-2021, and Ken Reynolds will continue to serve his term, 2020-2022. Dave thanked Leslie for her service in the position of outgoing MSDC director.

Geology in the News: Dave then asked if anyone had any interesting geological news to report. Members called attention to China's having recently landed on the Moon, the first such landing since the Apollo landing by the U.S. Also noted was the Indonesian volcanic activity of Mount Merapi, on the island of Java, characterized as smoke but no lava flow. That prompted evacuations and authorities warned that it could erupt at any time.

Of great interest to the club members was that its most recently elected Director, Alex Venzke, has joined The Arkenstone ([The History of The Arkenstone and www.iRocks.com](http://www.iRocks.com)), a widely known and well-respected international mineral dealer located in Dallas. Although Alex will be relocating to Texas in early 2021, through Zoom, he will be able to serve on the MSDC board, attend our monthly club meetings, and provide advice through our after-hours board meetings. Members congratulated Alex and expressed delight in his career advancement.

With no further Geology in the News needing discussion, Dave asked for a motion to close the meeting. With one being offered, Ed seconded the motion and Dave closed the business meeting and turned the event over to Yury to introduce the evening's presenter, Dr. Jeff Post.

December 2020 Program Synopsis:
“NMNH’s Recent Mineralogical Acquisitions”
Presented by Dr. Jeffery Post, Curator-in-Charge
MSDC’s December 2nd 2020 Monthly Program
 by Andy Thompson, MSDC Secretary



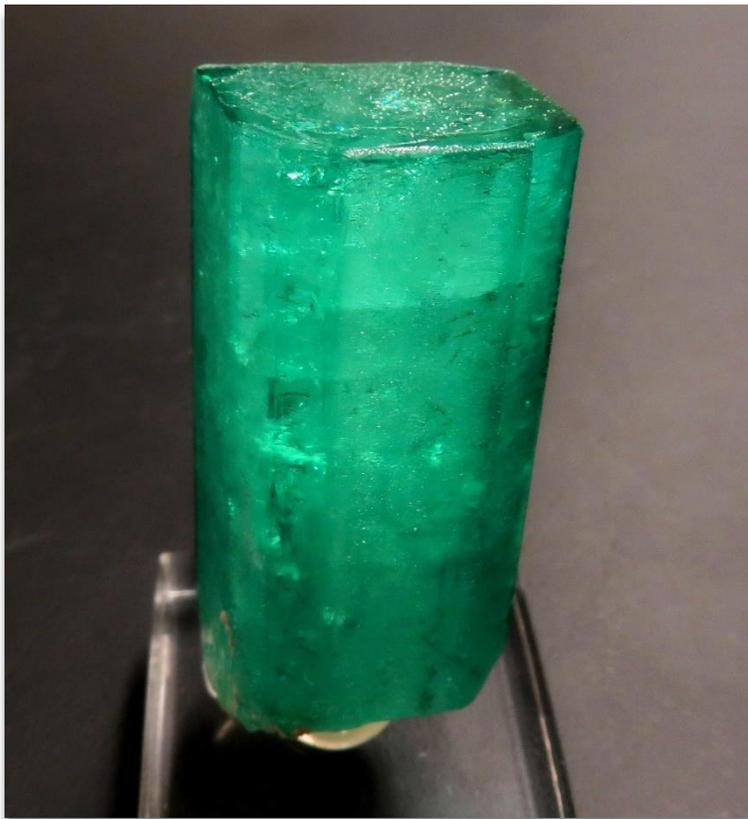
On December 2, MSDC was honored to have Dr. Jeffery Post, curator of the National Gem and Mineral Collection of the Smithsonian Institution, make a presentation discussing some of the most interesting minerals and gemstones acquired this year for the Smithsonian collection.

The Department of Mineral Sciences within the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History takes responsibility for systematizing, maintaining, displaying, researching and expanding the nation's mineral and gem collection. The Department's geologists serve as the collective intelligence and memory for the collection's inventory of minerals and what additional specimens are needed to make it more comprehensive.

Each year, the Department's staff shares with the public news of its research and acquisitions through scholarly publications, provides displays at national and international mineral shows, and gives presentations to mineral clubs. Their search for new acquisitions is guided by the goals of developing a more complete collection, obtaining specimens representative of specific geological locations, and making minerals available for research purposes.

Below are a few of the more than 70 images from Dr. Post's interesting and enjoyable December virtual presentation to the MSDC club. Many specimens were acquired at the February 2020 Tucson Gem & Mineral Show, with others acquired at the Denver Gem & Mineral Show.

During this time of Covid-19 and beginning in March, the Smithsonian museums necessarily were closed to the public. As a result, most of the staff had to telework and initially could come into the offices and labs only every two or three weeks to maintain the mineral collection and continue the research. More recently, each department has been allowed to have only one person at a time working on-site. Despite these restrictions, the work of the Mineral Sciences Department has continued. The photos that follow represent highlights of the wonderful images and comments that Dr. Post shared with MSDC members and guests.



◀ **Emerald, Hiddenite, NC**

Three inches high, this extraordinary domestic emerald was discovered in 2004, held for a few years in a private collection, and judged “best” in its class for its beautiful color. Jeff noted that its top, flat surface shows variations in color zones that reflect slight differences in mineral composition.

▼ **Fluorite balls, Deccan Plateau, Pune, India**

This 3-inch diameter circle of fluorite raises the perplexing and unresolved question: How did this specimen’s shape come about?



▼ **Chalcopyrite “blueberries,” Hubei Province, China**

Again, this specimen is unusual in its shape and provides hints that some of the spheres may be hollow.



▲ **Yogo Blue Sapphires Brooch, Montana**

If ever there was a show-stopper, this 50-carat brooch of Yogo sapphires is a fine example. Found in the Yogo Gulch area of central Montana, the tiny cornflower-blue, clear, corundum stones have been embedded in the design of a five-petaled Wild Rose flower. Jeff noted their deep blue color and tiny size make Yogo specimens unique among the world’s sapphires. Under long-wave U.V. light, many of them fluoresce red due to the presence of trace amounts of chromium.



▲ Wild Rose Flower and Yogo Brooch

One of the attendees of Jeff's Zoom presentation asked about the striking similarity between the five-petal format of the brooch and the flower known as the Wild Rose. Jeff confirmed that the questioner was correct, noting that the flower was, indeed, the inspiration for the design of the brooch. After the meeting, Jeff provided these side-by-side images, leaving no doubt about the designer's intention.



▲ Diaspore, Mugla Province, Turkey (two images of the same specimen) ▲

This large "fish-tail" twin crystal of diaspore was found in the southwestern region of Turkey. It is an aluminum oxide hydroxide mineral and shows an unusual alexandrite-like color change that appears greenish when illuminated by sunlight (above left) and takes a more reddish hue when illuminated by artificial light (above right).

Rutile, Tormiq Valley, Pakistan ►

This 4-inch wide specimen from the Haramosh Mountains is an excellent example of mineral twinning, the symmetrical intergrowth of two or more crystals of the same mineral.



▼ Iridescent Goethite, Durango, Mexico

This iron oxide hydroxide surface displays not only gorgeous iridescent rainbow colors but also interesting layers across its base.



Spinel, Burma (Myanmar) ▼

Spectacular octahedral spinel crystal on white marble from Mogok, Burma.



▼ Rough Diamonds, Zimbabwe

Occasionally the U.S. Customs Department intercepts and confiscates gems being smuggled into the country. During this past year, officers discovered a number of small, rough diamonds (160 carats) from Zimbabwe and delivered them to the Smithsonian's NMNH Department of Mineral Sciences. Jeff indicated that these minerals likely will be used for research purposes.



Additionally, and of notable interest, Jeff showed images of several gemstone acquisitions, including:

- a large green-blue beryl gem (196 carat aquamarine) from Sri Lanka
- a sun-light colored calcite gem (897 carats) from Pune, India
- the Poloma Picasso necklace of kunzite and pearls, a gift from Tiffany
- a morganite beryl gem (1,377 carats) from Minas Gerais, Brazil

Jeff provided a delightful commentary for many of these specimens, often describing who found, faceted, sold, donated, or even hand-carried delicate minerals to the NMNH. Several of his stories described the network of private collectors and dealers who attend national mineral shows and who watch for the arrival of Jeff and other Smithsonian staff members, including Paul Pohwat, Dr. Mike Wise, and the newest team member, Dr. Gabriela Farfan. Our Smithsonian Mineral Sciences staff are well known to many attendees and tend to draw a crowd as they look for minerals worthy of incorporating into the national collection. Jeff reported how one of the dealers at a national show invited Jeff to accompany him quietly to the parking lot, away from the crowds, to examine minerals he had set aside for possible accession into the NMNH collection.

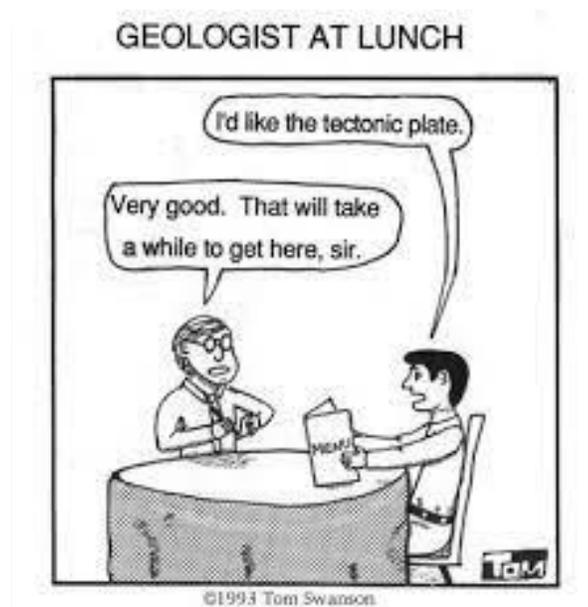
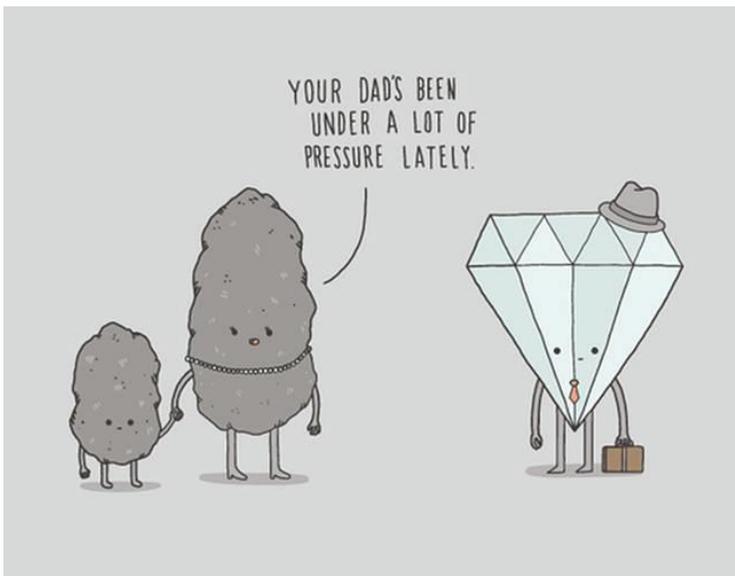
Jeff also noted that some dealers and donors are proud to make a connection with the Smithsonian's gem and mineral collection. In some cases, dealers may donate or sell exceptional pieces at a reasonable price to facilitate the museum's acquisition of a special piece of jewelry or mineral. In 2019, such was the case with gifts of the 57-carat Kimberley Diamond (pictured at right) and the Uncle Sam Diamond from Arkansas.



As the presentation came to a close, Jeff fielded questions from about a dozen of the more than 60 attendees. They ranged from enquiries about specific specimens, the history of certain mining sites, and why the famous Australian Rio Tinto diamond mine closed this year (water problems and finances). Importantly, other members of the Mineral Sciences Department were in attendance and contributed their insights, including the widely shared desire to get the Yogo Sapphire brooch included in the NMNH's gem and mineral display.

MSDC's President, Dave Hennessey, thanked Jeff for his marvelous presentation. The attendees seemed particularly appreciative not only of the content of the talk but also of the way Jeff respectfully fielded each person's questions. People signaled their appreciation by applause. Some MSDC members said their expectations for the traditional December holiday club party were more than exceeded by the evening's gathering.

Humor Section (contributions are invited)



MSDC Club Information

Due to COVID-19, our meetings will be virtual over Zoom. No in-person meetings are planned until further notice. In non-COVID times, 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

2021 Officers and Directors

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Treasurer - John Weidner

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THE MINERAL MINUTES

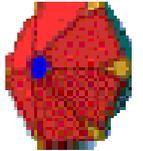


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NEWSLETTER OF THE MINERALOGICAL SOCIETY OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Mineralogical Society of DC
Time Sensitive Dated Material

Useful Mineral Links

	<p>American Federation of Mineralogical Societies (AFMS)</p>	<p>www.amfed.org</p>
	<p>Eastern Federation of Mineralogical and Lapidary Societies (EFMLS)</p>	<p>www.efmls.org</p>
 <p>mindat.org</p>	<p>MINDAT</p>	<p>www.mindat.org</p>
	<p>Micromineralogists of the National Capital Area</p>	<p>http://www.dcmicrominerals.org</p>
	<p>Mineralogical Society of America (MSA)</p>	<p>www.minoscam.org</p>
	<p>Friends of Mineralogy</p>	<p>www.friendsofmineralogy.org</p>
	<p>WebMineral</p>	<p>webmineral.com</p>
 <p>THE GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA</p>	<p>The Geological Society of America (GSA)</p>	<p>www.geosociety.org</p>
	<p>Jeff Scovil Mineral Photography (not advertising - just great photos)</p>	<p>scovilphotography.com</p>
	<p>United States Geological Survey (USGS)</p>	<p>www.usgs.gov</p>
	<p>The Geological Society of Washington (GSW)</p>	<p>www.gswweb.org</p>



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 or August.

(Due to COVID-19, our meetings will be virtual over Zoom. No in-person meetings are planned until further notice. Normally, the MSDC meetings take place at the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, 10th Street and Constitution Ave, Washington DC. We usually gather at the Constitution Avenue entrance at 7:30 pm to meet our guard who escorts us to the Cathy Kerby Room.)