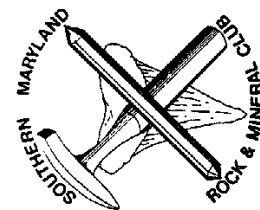




# RockTalk



# Message from the President

A hearty thank you for those of you who have stepped up to the plate to volunteer as our leaders for the coming year. We look forward to exciting times this coming year.

Sometimes I think that we could be doing so much more, and then my sisters who are in Oklahoma and Michigan will make a comment on how active our Club is. When you listen to the reports on some of the extensive trips as well as day trips various members take, I realize we are very active. Unfortunately, we just do not have time to do everything we wish to do. So a big thank you to Dave and Bob for planning these wonderful trips. Dave also keeps the money for our memorial fund.

Another thank you

goes to Polly for coordinating our various programs. These have been varied and informative. Even though some programs may not meet our specific interests, they do keep us abreast of the wide field, and I am finding that we are going through a period where there is a lot of cross over from one area of the field to another. Another thank you for coordinating our refreshments at the meetings. Sometimes it is difficult to get people back to their tasks as they enjoy the fellowship with each other so much during that time.

Ralph has been kept busy updating our membership as we continue to bring in new people to the Club and changing emails. Accurate membership mailing

and phone information is critical if we are to keep in touch with each other. He also initiated a log of shows and activities which Club members might be interested that is included in the Rock Talk. So thank you and keep up the good work.

Personally, I think one of the most difficult tasks in a Club is that of Secretary. Sandy has done a marvelous job of keeping our minutes accurately. She has also helped to keep me on track as I find I am in that position of sometimes forgetting things. This position does not garner a lot of recognition for the importance it actually holds. So I think we owe Sandy a big THANK YOU. We are certainly going to miss you when you move to Virginia.

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### Meetings

...are held the 4th Tuesday of each month at 7:00pm.

Clearwater Nature Center 11000 Thrift Road  
Clinton, MD.

For more information, call Michael at (301) 297-4575.

# November's Birthstone: The Topaz

By Lorna Larson



As a younger person, I can remember hearing jewelers talk about hard and soft topaz and smoky topaz. We now know that soft topaz and smoky topaz are citrine and smoky quartz respectively. Citrine is still considered an alternate birth stone for November. In ancient

times, brown and yellow as well as some green stones were called topaz. The literature suggests that this may be from the name of an island in the Red Sea which used to be called Topazas Kunz identifies topaz as the birth stone for November in several different traditions going back for multiple centuries. It is associated with several religious traditions including Aaron's Breastplate in the Judaic tradition and the foundation stones of the New Jerusalem for Christianity. It has also been used as a symbol for St. Matthew.

This stone does not have a lot of ancient lore attributed to it. It's main claim to fame lies in its huge crystal size. Some crystals may reach hundreds of pounds which have resulted in some very large cut stones. Arem reported that these cut stones could reach up to 20,000 carats and that museums loved to obtain them for their displays.

Topaz is an aluminum silicate -  $Al_2SiO_4(F,OH)$ . It forms orthorhombic crystals in a number of colors: colorless, white, gray, pale to medium blue, greenish, yellow, yellow-brown, orange, pale pink, deep pink, tan, beige and red. At one time, the colorless was not cut commercially. Then, someone determined that irradiation would turn this stones into medium and dark blue stones which became very popular as a readily available blue stone. Unless the provenance can be verified, assume that a blue topaz has been irradiated as I am not aware of any test that can determine if the stone has or has not been irradiated. The pink and red topaz are the rarest. Although the topaz has a hardness around 8 on Mohs Scale, it does have one drawback. It has a single plane perfect cleavage. If the stone is knocked at the right angle, it will break into two pieces. This tendency calls for extra care in cutting and setting as well as in wearing the stone.

Currently, various surface treatments are enjoying a great deal of popularity as the stones are very flashy and eye catching. One of these is called the mystic topaz. I have personally seen a ring stone that had worn through the coating. There was no way to polish or cut the stone to return it to its former glory. So a note of caution, if you have one of these stones, do not place it in a position where it will be rubbed as the treatment changes just the surface and not the

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## SMRMC OFFICERS

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### VICE PRESIDENT (Programs):

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### Co-VICE PRESIDENTS

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Bob Davidson

### EFMLS Representative

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\*\*\*If corrections or additions are needed, please contact Rocktalk Editor

# Minutes...

Sandy Lyon

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September minutes were approved.

## **Membership**

Ralph passed out an updated Membership Roster and emailed one later also.

Dues are now due for 2009. All members will be CNC Associates: Prince George's & Montg. Co. Residents : \$16 and Non-residents: \$17. Family membership requires 3 or more people. Visitors: Maria and Loc Tran

## **Programs**

November meeting will has a program on the Mt Ida, Arkansas trip for Quartz crystals.

December meeting will be on December 16<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm. There will be a gift exchange game (approx. \$ 10.00) marked male or female if needed. The editor will send out a special notice with the directions to the Christmas party.

## **Field Trips**

### Herkimer NY

Tom reported that the weather on the trip was great, they all worked hard and found lots of "diamonds".

Next year in the spring they will be opening another mine which should have easier digging. A trip in the spring may be planned. Bob found about 100 crystals and 30 pieces in matrix. Tom, Bob, Carole, Al, Richard, Nan, Cobb and Al attended from our club.

### Mt. Ida, Arkansas

3 members of our club, Dave, Polly and Sandy attended the 25 Annual World Championship Quartz Crystal Dig in Arkansas. Dave reported that the mine they went to in previous years was not too productive but Arrowhead Mine, where this years group went was very productive. He brought in a sample of Blue Phantom Quartz that was very dark and had a second crystal growing inside of each crystal. This trip will be discussed in detail at the November meeting,

### Gold Panning

Ralph, Carole, Al, Nan and Richard found some small flakes of gold on an unofficial field trip.

### Vulcan Quarry, VA

This Saturday Dave passed out a sign up sheet for a trip to Vulcan Quarry in Manassas, VA meeting there at 7:30 am.

### Fossil Trip

December 13 there will be a fossil trip because of the low tide – location to be announced. The Crocodile jaw that Dave found was mostly washed away when the museum folks returned to see it. Indian artifacts were found in the area.

### Open House

Saturday, November 1<sup>st</sup> will be an Open House to allow instruction to members and non-members to introduce them to the club and the art of jewelry making.

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# Crabtree Emerald Mine

Trip Report by Ralph Gamba

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Visiting relatives or friends in other states often gives a collector to collect in different areas. It is especially nice when the ones you are visiting also want to collect. Such was the case when Mary Cramer and Ralph Gamba visited Mary's son, Eric, daughter-in-law, Pam, and daughter-in-law's son, Delaney, in North Carolina in early September. Eric had heard about the emeralds in North Carolina and wanted to find one. We talked about going to Hiddenite, but after realizing that the mine was salted with Brazilian emeralds, we chose the Crabtree Emerald Mine.

So on Sunday, after church, we started out on our adventure. We left the outskirts of Winston-Salem and headed West on Interstate 40. Mary contacted one of the mine owners and he told her to go to Emerald Village, near Spruce Pine to sign the release forms and pay the \$20 per person fee. If you sign up in advance over the internet, the fee is \$15 per person. At Emerald Village, we could see examples of what we could find at the mine. Shorl (black tourmaline) was plentiful, beryl and garnets available and if one was lucky, one could find some small emeralds.

After paying the fee and signing the release forms, we headed to the mine. We turned onto Emerald Mine Road, which quickly became a dirt road and then a stone-covered road. There was a small circle where we could pull off the road and park. We gathered our tools and started collecting. The wncrocks website has the history and a brief geology write-up of the mine.



Crabtree Emerald  
Mine main shaft

It was a short walk from the parking area to the mine. The above picture is the main shaft of the Crabtree Mine, which is now filled with water. Eric and Mary took chairs and we started hammering. Small shorl crystals were everywhere and small, broken garnets (spessartine) were imbedded in the pegmatite host rock. Ralph found the first beryl crystal and showed it to Mary and Eric. Mary gathered a number of shorl specimens in matrix along with the garnet.

## Crabtree Emerald Mine...continued

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Ralph then found a specimen with beryl and aquamarine, a blue-green colored beryl. He also found an intact garnet crystal. Ralph split open a rock and found more beryl, which he gave to Eric. Meanwhile, Eric started hammering on a large rock. He “had a feeling” that there was something worthwhile in the rock. Soon his persistence paid off when he found about a dozen beryl crystals. Eric also found a couple of rocks that appeared to have tiny emeralds. Ralph found more small yellow beryl. After about four hours of collecting, we gathered our supplies and samples and headed back to the car. We were all tired but pleased.

Eric's persistence  
pays off.



On our next visit, Eric wants to visit the Ray Mine. It looks like we have another rock collector in the making.

Upon arrival at Pam and Eric's home, Pam had a meal fit for a king, if not miners. After eating our fill, we did what miners in the past did – we played poker. At the poker table, Mary was the big winner, but we were all big winners that day.



Mary and Ralph at the entrance to  
the Crabtree Emerald Mine.

# Minutes...continued

From page 3

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## Richmond Swap

November 8<sup>th</sup> is the swap from 9-3 at the Ridge Baptist Church on East Ridge Rd in Richmond, VA. Free tables are available if you come early, like 7:30 am.

## **Old Business**

Junior Members who want to take the junior's classes, do not need to be rock club members but do need to have Smartlink membership. Lorna will proceed with offering this program for home school students.

## **New Business**

Gary Lohman, past president, presented the American Federation Mineralogical Societies Certificate for the 2008 Rock Hound of the Year Award to Bob Davidson. Congratulations!!

Bob will take care of listing our club in the Rock and Gem Magazine list of Rock and Mineral Clubs.

## EFMLS Bulletin Contest

Jessica will be submitting several articles for the Bulletin Contest so please submit any additional articles that you would like considered. There are several categories, for example: Educational, Humorous Art, Junior Articles, Drawing/Sketches, etc.

## Next Years Slate of Officers

Bob announced the follow slate for 2009

President - Alex                                      Programs - Larry

Membership - Ralph                                      Secretary - Polly

Field Trips & Treasurer - Dave      Editor - Jessica

Webmaster – Bob

Other nominations, with the candidates permission, are welcome.

The vote will take place next month.

## **Refreshments**

Thanks to Polly and Jessica for refreshments tonight.

November's refreshments will be by the Holden's.

## **October Program**

Lorna and Mel presented the crafts that they learned in the Holland School this year.

Faceting, Bead Crocheting, Metal Art, and Etching were discussed. Lorna did several nice demonstrations to explain these crafts. One created earrings of pounded and annealed copper with wire and beads. The use of Renaissance Wax over this firm iron wire keeps it from rusting.

# CONGRATULATIONS BOB!!!

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Bob Davidson was awarded the AFMS Rockhound of the Year, 2008!

*Congratulations!!!*

## President's Message...continued

From page 1

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Along with the Secretary's position is that of Editor of our Rock Talk. I think that Jessica is really to be commended in getting it published. It has an easy to read format and also keeps us informed of what we need to be doing. If it were not for her, you would not be receiving your message because she sends me reminders so I don't forget. Time just gets away from me, and there is her email saying this message is due. I'm thinking, "It can't be that time again!!!!!" As I tend to go from day to day, that reminder has been a life saver. So thank you Jessica.

Bob has also been great as our Web Master. He has developed and kept current our website which has attracted several new members. As computers and I have something of a love/hate relationship (I can never get it to do what I want) I can not begin to understand how he does it. I can appreciate that it is there. He also won the AFMS Rockhound of the Year award.

Last, but not least, I need to thank Carol for stepping in to lead the meetings and take care of things while I've been absent. Thank you. We will be traveling to Massachusetts to visit our son and his family for Thanksgiving to will not be there for the November meeting.

Although these have been the organizers/leaders for the past year, their activities would be for naught if the members had not followed through with their assignments. To those of you who volunteered to do the various activities, I thank you. Without your involvement, we would not be a club. I wish each and every one of you a wonderful Thanksgiving. We will miss you but this is one holiday for family. Enjoy yours as we will ours.

## November's Birthstone...continued

From page 2

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whole stone. On a similar but different note, the Madeira topaz is actually a treated citrine or amethyst. Where other months have frequently had a number of different stones attributed to them, if your birthday is in November and you choose to wear some sort of a yellowish topaz, you will share a heritage that has attributed this stone to November throughout the ages in an unbroken statement.

### References

Arem, Joel E. Color Encyclopedia of gemstones. VanNostrand Reinhold Co., New York, NY, 1972.

# Thar's Gold in Them Thar Hills

Trip Report by Ralph Gamba

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Gold. The word connotes riches. Former Kingston Trio member, John Stewart, sang about "Turning music into gold." The Gatlin Brothers lamented "All the gold in California is in a bank in the middle of Beverly Hills, in somebody else's name." With the high price of gold, people are again staking claims to find gold. On television, one can hear advertising to send in your old or broken gold jewelry for cash.

In Maryland, there is gold in them there streams: In this case, Rock Run in Montgomery County. On October 20, Carole Raucheisen, Al Raucheisen, Nan Stout, Richard Fiordaliso and Ralph Gamba gathered their shovels, screens, and pans and headed to Rock Run. Carole, Al and Ralph had panned for gold previously, but this was Nan and Richard's first time. We arrived at the spot around noontime. The group was hungry so we ate our lunches before we started our panning. Ralph was the first one in the stream. He placed his screen upon his pan and shoveled gravel from the river bed. After rinsing and discarding the rocks on the screen, He started to wash and swirl the contents of the pan so any gold would sink to the bottom. With more washing and swirling, the mixture was reduced to "black sand", black, heavy particles. If there was any gold, it would be mixed in with the black sand. With more, careful swirling, the black sand would be washed away separating the heavier gold from the rest of the particles. A small flake of gold appeared. Ralph showed Nan and Richard. Nan was surprised how small the flake was. Ralph explained that the chance of finding a nugget of gold was remote, but one will find small flakes of gold called flour gold – because the flakes are the size of wheat flour.

Soon Carole, Al, Nan and Richard joined in the panning. Nan was not having very much success, so Ralph shoveled dirt from his spot for Nan. Nan found two small flakes from those pans. Carole and Al found a few small flakes while Richard and Nan tried their luck in another spot. By three o'clock, the sun was at a low angle making identification of the gold in the pan harder, we packed up and headed home to beat the rush hour traffic. We all enjoyed the cool, fall weather, the beginning of the changing of the color of the leaves and the friendship.



# Upcoming Shows and Events

By Ralph Gamba

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## **November 8, 2008:**

Richmond Swap Meet, 9-3. Free tables to participants on a first come basis. Be there extra early (Between 7 and 8) for a table. Ridge Baptist Church Hall - 1515 East Ridge Road - Richmond, Virginia

## **November 14-16:**

Charlottesville, VA Fall Charlottesville Gem, Mineral and Jewelry Show. 1640 Avon St. Extended Fri. and Sat. 10-6, Sun. 11-5 Web sidt [www.toteshows.com](http://www.toteshows.com)

## **November 15-16:**

Lebanon, PA. Gem Miners Holiday Festival. Lebanon Expo Center, Rte 72 and Rocherty St. Sat 10-5, Sun 11-4.

## **November 22-23**

FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA: 17th annual show; Northern Virginia Mineral Club; George Mason University, Student Union Bldg. II, Rte. 123 and Braddock Rd.; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-4; adults \$4, seniors (65+) and students (13-17) \$3, children (12 and under) and Scouts in uniform free; Web site: [www.mineralclub.org](http://www.mineralclub.org)

## **December 13, 10-4:30:**

Fall Festival of Fine Minerals, Fossils and Jewelry. Days Hotel, 9615 Deereco Rd., Timonium, MD. I-83, Exit 17, right on Padonia Rd. to Deereco.

# HOLIDAY PARTY!!!!

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Date: December 16, 2008

Time: 6:00 pm

Location: David Knies' Home in Marbury, MD

Address and Directions to Follow

What to Bring: Dish to Pass

Gift for Chinese Auction



# ROCKTALK

Clearwater Nature Center  
Maryland-National Capital Park &  
Planning Commission  
11000 Thrift Road

**Next Meeting  
November 25,  
2008**

We're on the web:

[www.freewebs.com/smrmc/](http://www.freewebs.com/smrmc/)

## Message from the Editor

I can't believe how the time does fly. It is almost the holiday season once again! I know I'm almost ready to start playing Christmas music!

I also can't believe that I've been your editor for about a year now. I've been very lucky and am excited about what next year may bring.

I have truly enjoyed reading the articles and reports that have come my way for publishing. I love Dave's insights on trips and Lorna's monthly birthstone articles have been really interesting. Thank you Ralph for starting the shows and events piece each month. It's nice to have someone keep us informed of those things.

I again want to send out my plea for your ideas. I will also try, as the new year approaches, to give some tips on

types of pieces that we'd like to see in the RockTalk. We have people with so many talents and I think it would be wonderful to see those talents displayed each month for the rest of the club to enjoy. If you can draw, we can scan in your drawing. If you are a poet, create some "rocking" poetry. If you learn something new, not only put it in the newsletter, but share it in a program at a meeting.

Our club is growing and with new faces come new ideas. We'd all love to hear them!

### PROGRAMS/REFRESHMENTS

November	Program: Mt. Ida 08 Trip Presentation Refreshments: The Holdens
December	Holiday Party
January	