

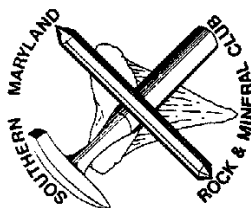
February 2010



SOUTHERN MARYLAND ROCK AND MINERAL CLUB



# RockTalk



## Message from the President

I hope everyone survived the recent snowstorms. Because of the weather, the rock club trip to the JMU geology department on Feb 6, 2010 was canceled. Unfortunately, I had already paid for hotel rooms in Harrisonburg and they were non-refundable. So Friday morning Sam and I made our way out to the Shenandoahs. The weather really didn't get bad until the afternoon, so we arrived without any problems. On the way in, we stopped at Massanutten and bought our snow tubing (snow sledding on giant inner tubes) tickets for later that night-at night it is colder and the slopes are usually faster.

We checked into the hotel and then drove over to the JMU geology department about 3:00 in the afternoon. The snow was falling pretty heavy by now, and the side roads were a mess. Everyone had gone home early, apparently, so we roamed the

halls and enjoyed the rock and mineral specimens on display. The mineral museum was closed. Off to dinner and then to buy food and supplies for the next few days. We left the hotel at 7:00pm and headed out to Massanutten, only getting stuck once.

From Wikipedia: The geology of the Massanutten Mountains is dominated by Silurian Massanutten Sandstone, a lateral equivalent of the Tuscarora Formation in the Appalachian Mountains to the west, overlying the Ordovician Martinsburg shale. Erosion of the Martinsburg shale in some areas of the mountain caused the sandstone to break and slide to form talus slopes. The Massanutten Sandstone is folded in a synclorium, and it outcrops at the ridge tops.

Enough of that, as we didn't see any of it anyway, because the entire mountain was covered with 6 or more feet of

snow! We got in a few runs on the inner tubes, but the snow was really slowing things down. The snow and ice soon stopped the conveyor belt lift, and we were given vouchers for another time. We plan on using them when this rock club trip is rescheduled. So back we went to the hotel, to ride out the snowstorm in the hot tub and swimming pool.

Speaking of field trips, I finally got around to taking a special field trip that Sam and I had discussed a few times before. Only an hour from my house, it did not require any special tools, although I did get a little dirty. However, within a short period of time I had collected 37 pounds of beautiful specimens! Mostly granite and marble, I expect these rocks will polish up fine. I will bring them to the next rock club meeting, and fill you in on all the details.

See you there.

### Inside this issue:

Message from the President	1
EFMLS News/ Upcoming Shows and Events	2
Minutes/Jan. Program Summary	3
Microlite	4-5
Recap 2009 Trips/Possible 2010 Trips	6-7
Meet the Member	8
Message from the Editor/Webmaster	9
Upcoming Program	10

### 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.

# EFMLS News

Submitted by Jessica Thomson



EFMLS 2010 Convention is March 5,6,7 in Stanton, Delaware. It is also Delaware Mineralogical Society's 47th Annual Gem, Mineral & Fossil Show. There are numerous convention activities to go along with the DE show. If you are interested in attending, go to the EFMLS website for more information.

April 23-29, 2010 is the Spring Session of Wildacres near Little Switzerland, NC. There are a variety of classes to take and fun to be had for all. There is a video program to see what Wildacres is all about at: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=kac0qhJG00M&feature=channel\\_page](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kac0qhJG00M&feature=channel_page)  
Or you can log onto the EFMLS website for more information.

AFMS Code of Ethics is included in the February EFMLS newsletter. Did you know there was a Code of Ethics? It is something all good rock-hounds should take a look at as these are good standards to follow. Check out the AFMS website for more information.

Log onto [www.amfed.org/efmls](http://www.amfed.org/efmls) for more information.

## Upcoming Shows and Events

Submitted by Ralph Gamba

**February 20 2010:** Mineral, Jewelry and Fossil Show. Southern Maryland Rock and Mineral Club. Equestrian Center, 14900 Pennsylvania Avenue (Route 4) Upper Marlboro, MD. 10 AM to 4 PM. Admission \$3.00

**March 6-7 2010:** Delaware Mineralogical Society. Delaware Technical & Community College, Churchmans Road (Rt. 58), Newark (Stanton) DE @ I-95 exit 4B. Saturday 10-6, Sunday 11-5. Admission adults \$6.00, Seniors \$5.00, 12-16 - \$4.00

**March 12 2010:** rock and mineral auction Chesapeake Gem and Mineral Society, Women's Club of Catonsville, St. Timothy's Lane & Frederick Rd in Catonsville, MD 7:30 PM

**March 20-21:** 46th Annual Gem-Mineral-Fossil Show sponsored by the Gem, Lapidary & Mineral Society of Montgomery Co. MD; Montgomery County Fairgrounds, Gaithersburg, MD. Sat: 10-6, Sun: 10-5 Adult Admission \$6.00

**June 11 2010:** rock and mineral auction Chesapeake Gem and Mineral Society, Women's Club of Catonsville, St. Timothy's Lane & Frederick Rd in Catonsville, MD 7:30 PM

**October 8 2010 :** rock and mineral auction Chesapeake Gem and Mineral Society, Women's Club of Catonsville, St. Timothy's Lane & Frederick Rd in Catonsville, MD 7:30 PM

**August 14-15:** Native American, Fossils, Rocks, Gems and Minerals Themed flea market Shupp's Grove, Adamstown, PA [www.shuppsgrove.com](http://www.shuppsgrove.com) 607 Willow St. Reinholds, PA

If anyone has information on any other local shows or rock events, contact Ralph Gamba at [rgamba@verizon.net](mailto:rgamba@verizon.net), so they can be included in this list.

## SMRMC OFFICERS

**PRESIDENT:**  
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Larry O'Callaghan

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

# January Minutes

By Jessica Thomson

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## **Business Meeting**

Meeting called to order at 7:15 PM

**Secretary:** Polly is on a trip, Jessica taking notes; "minutes" approved

**Membership:** No New Members; pay dues if you haven't already; if you were at the holiday party, sign the sign-in for December

**Treasurer:** Same as December

**Programs:** Larry passed around sign up sheet for 2010 refreshments and programs, sign up! Field Trip Report: JMU Feb 6, Dave gave information; passed out possible trip list for 2010; Trip out west (led by League's) sign up by March 1 if interested.

**Editor:** Presented Bob with award from bulletin contest; discussed new features; Wildacres information; gave a plug for articles.

**Webmaster:** new site due to space on server SMRMC.org; any suggestions, send to Bob; talked about checking out local rock club sites if you are traveling, contact them and they can get you on the right track

**Old/New Business:** Rock Show-Harry read notes from Michael, things are good to go-if you need information, contact Michael at Nature Center; banners are being made; Dave set up display at La Plata Library; Paul and Linda set up display at Surrats Library

Meeting Adjourned at 8:10 PM

## **Program of the Evening**

January's program was by Dave Lines. He quickly talked about his trip to Gem-O-Rama in California, showed some of the pieces he found, and then showed a DVD that walked us through the excitement of the trip.

Gem-O-Rama is a rock and mineral show held the second weekend of October in Trona, CA and it includes three field trips to the nearby Searles Dry Lake. The first field trip is called the Mud Piles field trip. On that field trip, participants feel through piles of salty, sticky black mud to find the crystals that grow inside. Most of these are [Hanksite](#) crystals, a relatively rare mineral that is primarily only found at Searles Lake. It is also possible to find masses of small, needle-like crystals, called Trona.

Later that afternoon is the second field trip called the Blow Hole field trip and entails sorting through various crystals and fragments that the mineral company gets out of the ground. To get the crystals up to collect, the mineral company first drills holes to where the crystals are growing. They then set off explosives inside the holes, to blast loose the various minerals that are inside. Technicians feed pipes down the holes to blow air in, which pushes the saltwater or brine and the crystals, up to the surface where they are sprayed all over for collecting.

On the second day is the third and final field trip. This field trip is out to a wetter part of Searles Dry Lake called Brine Pools. In the salty, red-tinted water, collectors find pretty, pink Halite crystals. Collecting these crystals entails wading through pools, feeling under the water for shelves with crystals growing on them, using a breaker bar to break off the areas with the crystals growing on them and pulling out sections of Halite shelf.

# Microlite-Big Things Come in Small Packages

By Ralph Gamba

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When you think of the Morefield Mine in Amelia County, Virginia, you think of amazonite. But Morefield has over 60 different recognized minerals. This is the story of one of those other minerals.

When my friend Mary asked me what I wanted to do for my birthday, the answer was easy. I want to go to Morefield. So early morning on November 3, 2007, Mary met me at my home and off to Morefield we went.

It was not too crowded that day, so on the last dump of the day I was able to grab a large rock. It had nice piece of amazonite on one end but also some of the lesser known minerals. At worst, it would make a nice garden rock. The rock weighed 38 pounds.

The rock sat around before I gave it a close examination. As the May 31 2008 trip to Morefield neared, I gave the rock a close examination, thinking there might be something I can't identify but Sam Dunaway, the mine owner, could.

At the very tip of the rock I saw an octahedral crystal. It was small, about 1/8 inch wide. I carefully extracted the crystal and surrounding matrix from the host rock and using dental tools, removed a small portion of the matrix, making the crystal visible.

My first thought that the crystal was zircon, another mineral found at Morefield. I carefully wrapped the specimen and took it to Morefield.

Late in the afternoon, I showed it to Sam. He identified the mineral as microlite.



Microlite, Collected November 3 2007.

This story of microlite does not end there. While collecting at Morefield, I tend to gather a number of samples to examine at the sluice or when I get home. Most of these end up in the "leaverite" pile at the sluice, but a few make it home. The ones that make it home get stored for later examination. When time allows, I'll examine the rocks, breaking them apart carefully with small chisels and dental picks to see if any interesting minerals lurk within. When I find something, place it aside for Sam to identify.

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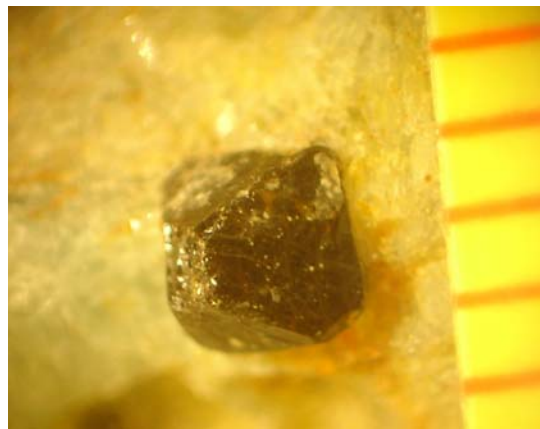
# Microlite

CONTINUED

While preparing for our November 21, 2009 trip to Morefield, I looked over a number of specimens, collected in 2008, which needed identifying. Sam identified one of them as microlite. On the same specimen Sam noticed an area that looked like phenakite ( $\text{Be}_2\text{SiO}_4$ ). Sam took a photograph of the microlite. Upon arriving home, I placed the microlite phenakite specimen in a box, made a label and added it to my collection. Below are two photographs of the microlite, with the second one photographed through the lens of a stereomicroscope.



Microlite (2008).



Microlite (2008) close-up.  
Ruler tic marks are 1 mm.

Microlite is named from Greek, *mikros* for "small" and *lithos* for "stone", alluding to the small size. It is a pale-yellow, reddish-brown, or black isometric mineral composed of sodium calcium tantalum oxide with a small amount of fluorine ( $(\text{Na,Ca})_2\text{Ta}_2\text{O}_6(\text{O,OH,F})$ ). Rare earth elements may also occur in Microlite, often making it slightly radioactive. Microlite was first described in 1835 for an occurrence on the Island of Uto, State of Stockholm, Sweden. The type locality is the Clark Ledges pegmatite, Chesterfield, Hampshire County, Massachusetts.

So when you are collecting at Morefield, and any other locality for that matter, keep a lookout for the more unusual minerals. An interesting mineral may even come in a small package.

# Recap of 2009 Official SMRMC Field Trips

Submitted by Dave Lines

As of 1-26-10

<u>Trip #</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Where</u>	<u>What we looked for</u>
1.	2/24/09	Ches Bay (West. Shores Estates)	fossils
2.	4/26/09	Rockville Quarry, MD	grossular garnet + various
3.	5/11-15/09	Herkimer, NY	Herkimer diamonds (quartz)
4.	5/23/09	Morefield Mine, Amelia, VA	amazonite/pegmatite mineral
5.	6/20/09	Lake Anna State Park, VA followed by Contrary Creek (Mineral, VA)	Region IV Picnic/swap/ garnet & magnetite xls
6.	7/18/09	Jones Creek, Amelia Co., VA	complex mica & quartz xls
7.	8/15/09	Big Hill, Cornwall, PA	garnets, magnetite
8.	8/29/09	U.S. Silica, Montpelier, VA	silver flash moonstone plus
9.	9/1-9/09	Utah	topaz, geodes, trilobites, jasper, opal
10.	9/19/09	Willis Mtn, Dillwyn, VA	kyanite, rutile, pyrite, iridescent hematite
11.	10/8-10/09	Mt. Ida, Ark	quartz crystal world championship dig
12.	10/10/09	St. Clair, PA	fossil ferns
13.	10/17/09	Vulcan Manassas Quarry, VA	prehnite, zeolites
14.	11/21/09	Morefield Mine, Amelia, VA	amazonite, pegmatite mins.

# Possible Field trips for 2010

Submitted by Dave Lines

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## **Feb**

As of 2-08-10

\*Feb 27: **FIRM**: Lora Robins Gallery at U. of Richmond (1 to 4 p.m.); plus(8-12) Ligon Mine, Amelia, VA (fee)

## **March**

\*5-7: **FIRM** (*on your own*) EFMLS Convention in Newark, DE at Del. Show

\*Maybe TBD: Dobbins Prospect, Amelia, VA- beryl xls

\*Maybe TBD: Dixie Iron Mine, Vesuvius, VA- rockbridgeite micros (Lead by Tom Tucker)

\*27 maybe: Chestnut Ridge- quartz xls; Bath Co., VA

\*26-28: **FIRM** (*on own*) Reel Amethyst Mine, Lincolnton, GA *with MAGMA* (combine w/Graves Mtn opt)

## **April**

\*10: Maybe - unakite, Robinson River, VA

\*17: **FIRM** (*on your own*) Ben Clements Museum public dig, Marion, KY. (opt. private digs; 10 person min)

\*18-24: **FIRM** trip to New Mexico (Tina and Harry League will lead)

\*23-25: **FIRM** (*on your own*) Graves Mtn, GA, Annual Rock Swap and Dig

## **May**

\*1-2: **FIRM** (*on your own*) Primitive Technology Weekend, Oregon Ridge Nature Center, Cockeysville; call 410-887-1815

\*TBD:1-14 (??) Herkimer NY trip (Bob Davidson to lead), Herkimer diamonds

\*TBD: maybe Morefield mine

\*15: **FIRM** (*on your own*) Ben Clements Museum fluorite public dig, Marion, KY

\*TBD: maybe Rockville Quarry, Rockville, MD garnets, calcite, many minerals

## **June**

\*5-6: **FIRM** (*on your own*) Ben Clements Museum Rock Show fluorite public dig, Marion, KY

\*12: **FIRM** Lake Anna Region IV Picnic and Rock Swap; poss. Contrary Creek after

## **July**

\*26 -31: **FIRM** (*on your own*) **MAGMA Roundup in Western NC**

## **Aug**

\*TBD: maybe National Limestone Quarry, PA; calcite, wavelite, fossils

## **Sep**

\*TBD: Rockville Quarry, MD

## **Oct**

\*7-9: **FIRM** World Championship Quartz Crystal Dig, Mt. Ida, Ark.

\*9-10: **FIRM** (*on your own*) Searles Lake, California (hanksite, pink halite)

\*TBD: Morefield mine, Amelia, VA, amazonite, beryl, topaz, rare earth minerals

## **Nov**

\*13: **FIRM** Richmond Rock Swap (9-3), free tables, great swapping/buying

## **Dec**

\*TBD --- fossil trip ( new moon = 5<sup>th</sup> / full moon = 21<sup>st</sup>)

***Interested in any trips? Contact Dave Lines  
at (301) 934-9396 or at the meetings***

# Meet the Member

Submitted by Carole Raucheisen

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**Name:** Jennifer Knies

**Area live in:** Marbury

**Place of birth:** Fort Morgan, Colorado

**Occupation:** Bingo caller

**Marital status/spouse's name:** David

**Number and ages of children:** Michael 22, Samantha 14

**How became interested in rocks/minerals/fossils:** grew up in the Rockies, so has always been interested in rocks and minerals; joined club about 2 years ago after hearing about it from Cobb at bingo

**How long a collector:** for years

**What you like to collect:** gems

**Favorite find and how found:** David found her a huge garnet in North Carolina

**Funniest Rock Club experience:** fighting over items at auctions

**Most memorable field trip:** really enjoyed watching the kids at Moorefield Mine, particularly their experience going down into the mine

**What you have gained from the Rock Club:** wonderful friends and memories

**What you would still like to find/collect:** Herkimer Diamonds, and would like to learn to make jewelry

**Other interests:**

Arts and crafts; in the past, taught arts and crafts at 4-H events;  
is now setting up an art studio to do more Karaoke



## Message from the Editor

By Jessica Thomson

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I hope this finds everyone staying safe and warm through all the crazy weather! I know I am ready for Spring.

Coming up soon is the SMRMC Rock Show at the Showplace Arena. As a club member, you should have received an email from Bob with a coupon. If you didn't, please contact him. We're hoping for a good turnout at the new location this year, so hopefully you are spreading the word as much as possible. I am putting a flier in the teacher's lounge this week, so hopefully I can generate some interest. You can check out the website for detailed information as well as directions. Everyone is excited and ready to go and it will be a great chance to get out for a while if you were stranded at home for over a week like I was!

You'll notice the newsletter was a bit longer this month. I am trying to get everything in and there was some good information to send out for February. Check out the possible field trips for this year. There is more information to be had through Dave, so contact him if you're interested in any of the trips.

Also, I am searching for a little help. If anyone is interested in doing a little something for the newsletter each month, I have a couple of possible assignments. Keep in mind these would be commitments to the newsletter, not just one-time pieces.

1. EFMLS Report. Anyone can access the EFMLS newsletter online at [www.amfed.org/efmls](http://www.amfed.org/efmls) If you would like to check out the monthly newsletter and write up a report like the one you see this month, please let me know.

2. ProgramSummary Reports. Everyone has a time when they can't make it to the monthly meetings. It is nice to know what you missed. For last month, I wrote up a summary of Dave's presentation for the newsletter so that those who missed the program could at least read a little something about it. It's only a 1/2 page piece, just quickly summarizing what was presented. If you would be interested in writing this part, let me know.

Again, it is nice to hear the perspectives of a variety of people. Writing an article or doing a program is a great way to learn about something yourself. We all lead busy lives, but it is so satisfying to pause for a while and take the time to learn something new. So ask yourself what you want to know, then go out and find the answers. We would all love to hear what you learned.

See you the 20th at the show and then the 23rd at the meeting!

## Message from the Webmaster

By Bob Davidson

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In the past 30 days our website has had over 400 hits with 90 alone on Valentines Day. I think the increase in traffic may have been generated by the Rock & Gem ad for the show which included our website address.

I hope you received the \$1.00 off coupon. I sent it to all the club members and to 76 other people who provided their email address at last years show. Perhaps next year we can put the coupon on the website for everyone to use.



# ROCKTALK

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

**Next Meeting**  
**February 23, 2010**  
**7:00 PM**

We're on the web:

[SMRMC.org](http://SMRMC.org)

February's  
Refreshments/  
Programs

**Refreshments:** Nan Stout

**Program:** "Looking for an armchair field trip, or an introduction in advance of an OK expedition? Take a road trip across Oklahoma, visiting State Parks, Museums, tourist attractions, and natural areas to learn about the state's rich, interesting geology and natural history by looking at sands, stone and soils and more."

This month's program will be a DVD on "Oklahoma Rocks". This 58 min. DVD was awarded the "Excellence in Education Award" in the 2009 AFMS Program Competition. It was the subject of an article in the Dec.2008 issue of Rock & Gem magazine.