

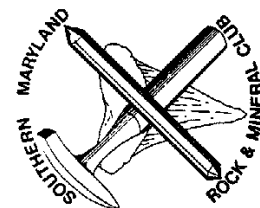
March 2010



SOUTHERN MARYLAND ROCK AND MINERAL CLUB



RockTalk



# Message from the President

Road trip! We are just back from the James Madison University (JMU) field trip that was rescheduled from last month. Check out a full report and photos elsewhere in this newsletter.

This is one of my favorite field trips for a variety of reasons. Our host, Dr. Lance Kearns, actually enjoys meeting with rockhounds, and sharing his laboratory. He can pretty much look at any rock and tell you not only what it is, but how it was formed and much more information.

I enjoy poking around the lab and seeing what is currently being taught to undergraduate students (in this case, lava flows and the resultant rocks).

In case you have a sample that cannot be easily identified by eye, Dr. Kearns fired up his x-ray diffraction spectrometer. I know that at least one of the club members (this was a multi-club field trip) had a small inclusion of rutile confirmed by this instrument. The Raman spectrometer was not running this year, but the stereomicroscopes were once again put to good use.

This year there was a wide assortment of high quality, reasonably priced specimens for sale. All proceeds go to support the JMU mineral museum. This is a fine museum, which had expanded since I last viewed it. Even though I am getting older and trying to downsize (also known as

"decollecting") I couldn't resist purchasing a few specimens. I will bring these to show off (and show you what you missed) at our next rock club meeting, Tuesday, March 23rd, 2010. This is our "beer flat social" meeting that was so successful last year. See you there.

PS-Sam and I did check out the snow tubing at Massanutten mountain. The track seemed reasonably fast, but it rained the entire weekend so we took a pass on tubing this time. Maybe Christmas?

## Inside this issue:

Message from the President	1
EFMLS News/ Upcoming Shows and Events	2
February Minutes	3
What's an Ultrasonic Dismembrator?	4-5
February Show Pictures	6
Message from the Editor/Webmaster	7
Upcoming Program	8

## 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



In the March edition, the nominating committee gave their report on officer nominations. Positions were voted on at the annual meeting at the beginning of the month. Our own Michael Patterson was nominated for Assistant Treasurer!

The safety chair, Jim Doran discussed the scheduling of trips while considering inclement weather during the winter months. It is always prudent to be safe with the various factors to consider when going on a trip and winter brings its own set of dangers. Remember to plan ahead and use common sense.

One article of interest is about the threat of excessive lead and cadmium levels in children's jewelry. Because this has become a more highly-publicized issue, it is something for members to take note of when making their own jewelry. Because children are more susceptible to serious health issues, it is important to be aware of the materials used to create pieces. There are different levels allowed for adults and for children. This is an issue that is worth the time to be aware of as well as spreading the message to others, especially those with children. The CPSC web-site at [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov) can give you more information.

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

## Upcoming Shows and Events

Submitted by Ralph Gamba

**March 20 – 21:** Gem-Mineral-Fossil Show. Montgomery County Fairgrounds, 16 Chestnut St., Gaithersburg, MD. Presented by the Gem, lapidary and Mineral Society of Montgomery County. Saturday 10 AM to 6 PM, Sunday 10 AM to 5 PM Admission \$6 Website [WWW.GLMSMC.COM](http://WWW.GLMSMC.COM)

**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:  
Alex Schuman

VICE PRESIDENT (membership):  
Tina League

VICE PRESIDENT (Programs):  
Larry O'Callaghan

VICE PRESIDENT (Field Trips):  
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\*\*\*If corrections or additions are needed, please contact Rocktalk Editor

# February 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; January minutes are approved

**Membership:** One guest tonight. Went to the show and decided to come check us out.

**Treasurer:** Same as December

**Programs:** Beer Flat Social next month-bring selections from your collections.

**Editor:** Same requests as normal.

**Webmaster:** Check out listing on the website of clubs across the country. Many hours were spent accumulating this list and is worth checking out!

**Old/New Business:** The saw is fixed! Mike fixed it and the larger saw is being worked on now.

Show Report: Many thanks to Harry for the venue! Members stated they had done well with more business than in previous years. Other vendors happy for the most part. Next year we need more signage and possibly increase the time and add another day. There also needs to be a single chairman and a committee for next year's show.

**Field Trips:** 1. Feb 27th University of Richmond trip cancelled

2. JMU in Harrisonburg, March 13th: great museum as well as selections for sale

3. March 27th: Chestnut Ridge-led by Dave

4. March 27th: Vulcan Manassas Quarry-led by Bob

Meeting Adjourned at 8:00 PM

## **Program of the Evening**

Larry O'Callaghan brought in an informative DVD on the geological history of Oklahoma. The video discussed how old the area is as well as how it formed. The video moved through the periods of geologic history, discussing the types of rocks that can be found and their locations in the state. It also discussed fossils and natural resources from Oklahoma.

The DVD was lengthy and due to the lateness of the evening, we had to cut it short. It may be something we'll have to finish in the future.



# What's an Ultrasonic Dimembrator?

By Dave Lines; Pictures by Dave Lines and Alex Schuman



Those of us (\*) who attended the recent club field trip to James Madison University (JMU) were treated like royalty. As soon as we arrived at the Geology Lab, Dr. Lance Kearns (\*\*) personally greeted each of us with fresh pastries, coffee and a big smile! He immediately pointed out the counter space in the back of the lab which was covered with flats of beautiful mineral specimens, all of which were in excess (for JMU). And the prices were outrageously *CHEAP*. At least 10 flats had no prices --- any donation amount was acceptable. As the various attendees from the two clubs (Southern Maryland and Shenandoah Valley) arrived, the activity

around the specimen flats grew to a feeding frenzy! It was GREAT!! Everyone found something they were pleased with and the donations were for the benefit of the Mineral Museum.

At about 9 a.m., Dr. Kearns invited us to go see the Mineral Museum. It is spectacular. It is small --- only about 600 square feet according to the brochure --- but the specimens have been carefully selected and are top quality. Systematically arranged in beautiful, state of the art cabinetry around the perimeter of the room, each cabinet represents a class of minerals, such as carbonates, sulfates, sulfides, et cetera. Additionally, there are cabinets occupying the center of the room which are devoted to Virginia. There are also cabinets for small specimens and many spheres from Virginia material. There is also a room entirely for an ultraviolet display from Franklin and Sterling Hill, New Jersey. Everything is very nice. Lot of glittery, sparkling, colorful eye candy.

I asked Dr. Kearns what his favorite specimen is. Without hesitation, he replied "The turquoise crystal specimen from Lynch Station, Virginia. Not because it is the most valuable (the large crystal gold has that honor), but because it is irreplaceable." Indeed, crystals of turquoise are found only in one place in the world --- Virginia --- and it is a closed and mined out location. This specimen is not only large --- it is one of a kind and is truly impossible to replace. That is the quality of this museum.

After 30 minutes or so viewing the museum, we returned to the Geology Lab where Dr. Kearns spent much of the rest of the morning to identifying our "unknown" specimens. What a treat! Of course, he was able to identify most of the specimens just by looking at them. But to confirm his identifications, he readily resorted to standard simple, but tried-and-true techniques such as a streak plate. His depth of knowledge of the physical properties of minerals --- such malleability --- was often the deciding factor. When he was unsure, he brought out the big gun --- x-ray diffraction analysis. To use it, he scraped off a tiny amount of the specimen under a microscope and placed a portion in the machine. About 20 minutes later, it produced a unique signature readout on screen of the sample and precisely matched it to the correct signature on file in the computer. Very nice. On a personal note, the x-ray diffraction analysis was the best part of the entire field

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# What's an Ultrasonic Dimembrator?

CONTINUED

trip because it *firmly identified* my specimen --- sillimanite from the Champion Sparkplug Mine in the White Mountains of California. Perhaps fellow club member, Mike Bolster, best expressed the successful x-ray diffraction analysis of Mike's massive rutile from the U.S. Silica mine near Montpelier, Virginia --- Mike said it was "deeply satisfying".

Oh --- the ultrasonic thing? Well, after Dr. Kearns visually identified a mineral that I collected in 1999 in Silverton, Colorado as "huebnerite" --- a tungsten ore --- I asked him how to best clean it. Dr. Kearns' answer --- the ultrasonic dismembrator. I am not kidding. Not only that, Dr. Kearns offered to clean my specimen for me. Ten minutes in the machine and my huebnerite looked great.

If you missed this trip, you missed a little bit of *ROCKHOUND HEAVEN*. Better sign up next year.



## Notes:

(\*) Southern Maryland Rock and Mineral Club attendees included Alex and Sam Schuman, Mike Bolster and Dave Lines.

(\*\*) Dr. Kearns is a "Rock Star" (pun intended) in our hobby. He has published numerous papers and articles about minerals over a long and distinguished career. Not only is he highly respected professionally as a University educator specializing in Virginia minerals, he is a very genuine and likeable person.



# February Show Pictures

Submitted by Jessica Thomson and Larry O'Callaghan

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Show Banner outside of Showplace Arena



Harry and Tina enjoying the show from their table



Ralph and Mary at their table



Bob and Tom interacting with some customers



Demonstrations by members and exhibitions from the Nature Center were included also



# Message from the Editor

By Jessica Thomson

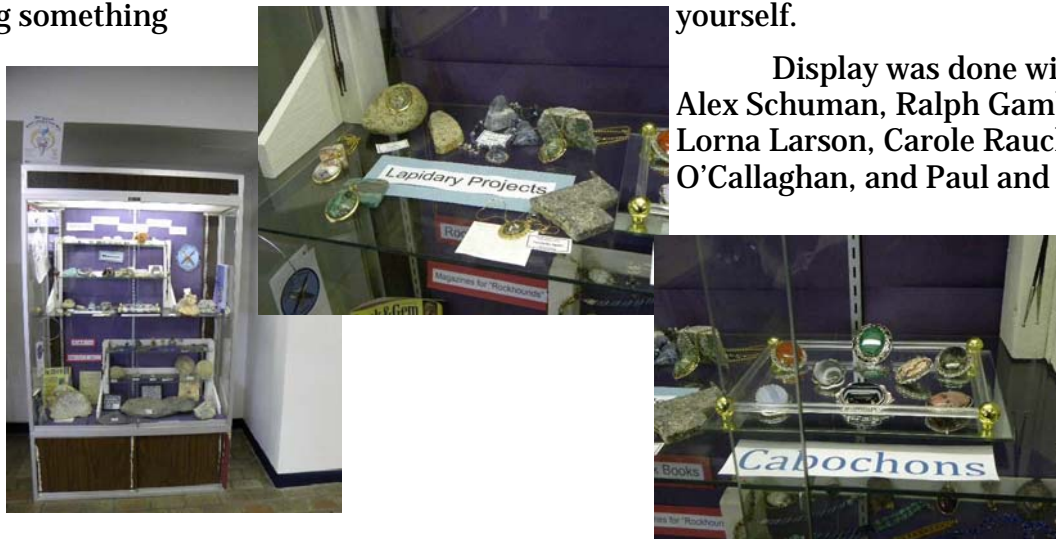
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Spring is here!!! (Well it will be by the time we have our meeting!) Field trips will be becoming more frequent as will, I hope, the reports from those trips! Remember to be officially sanctioned and covered by insurance, there must be some kind of report in the newsletter.

I'm looking forward to discovering the results of last year's bulletin contest. EFMLS had their convention at the beginning of the month and this is one editor patiently waiting to find out what happened. There are a couple of articles from last year that turned out really well and I'd like for them to do well in the contest. That being said, I'm still looking for some great articles for this year. Everyone has some idea that they can develop. Remember if you need help getting started or finishing, that's what I am here for!

Make sure you are at this month's meeting! The Beer Flat Social is great fun and you don't want to miss it! I know there are quite a few members that collected some amazing pieces during the last year and I'm looking forward to seeing what they've got and drooling with envy! If you have something you'd like to share from the last year, or even years before that, bring it to the meeting! Even if you don't have anything this year (like me) come and check out what is out there. It's just as fun to see what everyone else has!

Check out the pictures below. Paul and Linda Holden put together a display at the Sur-ratts library and they did a wonderful job. I just had to find room to share with everyone. These types of displays are a wonderful way to advertise our club and show. Consider looking into doing something yourself.



Display was done with the help of Alex Schuman, Ralph Gamba, Mel and Lorna Larson, Carole Raucheisen, Larry O'Callaghan, and Paul and Linda Holden.

Nice job everyone! The display looked great!

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# Message from the Webmaster

By Bob Davidson

Once again, check out the updated website. There are great new features.

Check out the new database of clubs nationwide! If you are going on a trip and would like to check out a club in the area, they can probably get you some information on great places to check out.

This is a great resource and is more accurate than other databases you'll find.



# ROCKTALK

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

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

We're on the web:

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

March's  
Refreshments/  
Programs

**Refreshments:**

Tom and Cobb Allison

**Program:**

**Beer Flat Social!!!!**

Remember the days of "Show-and-Tell" when you were in school? Well, those days are here again for a night. Bring in your favorite finds from the past years to share with everyone. Everyone will get their moment in the spotlight to share the story of the find and why it's a favorite.

This program was done last year with great success and everyone is looking forward to seeing the amazing things found by all. Come and share or come and enjoy.

Fun to be had by all!!!