

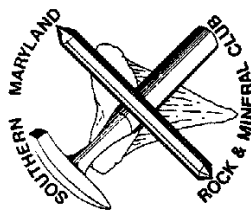
March 2012



SOUTHERN MARYLAND ROCK AND MINERAL CLUB



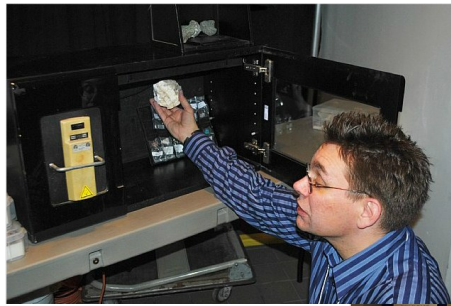
RockTalk



# Message from the President

Our 22nd Annual Mineral, Jewelry & Fossil at Show Place Arena on February 18th was a great success! The exceptionally mild winter weather brought people out in droves. The show rooms were crowded with customers from start to finish. It was a long, hard, and fun day. We couldn't have pulled off such a successful event without the help of our wonderful volunteers for the day: Michael and his staff, Harry, Polly, Jim, Linda, Dave, Lorna, Gary and George did a fantastic job- THANK YOU, THANK YOU!!!!

Thank you to all of the vendors and demonstrators that participated in our annual event- without you we wouldn't have a show. There was a wide variety of items for sale and the customers seemed to enjoy it all. Now that everyone's had a few days to rest, it's time to start planning for next years show....Enjoy the pictures. (Courtesy of Sheryl Sims)



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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.**

# EFMLS/AFMS News

Submitted by Jessica Dixon



Interested in finding new information or sources? Check out the article in this month's EFMLS newsletter about internet resources.

Also included is information about WildAcres, including schedules and application forms. This is a great way to learn new things!

For more information on any of these articles, visit [www.amfed.org/efmls](http://www.amfed.org/efmls)



This month's AFMS newsletter includes information about A Celebration of Agates at this year's convention this July in Minnesota. If you are a fan, check out the schedule of events and consider attending!

Also included is a piece about trip safety concerning mosquitoes and West Nile Virus. We all remember

For more information, visit [www.amfed.org](http://www.amfed.org)

## Upcoming Shows and Events

Submitted by Ralph Gamba

April 28. - Miller's Fossils Presents A One-Day Fossil Extravaganza Courtyard Marriott, west side of Rt, 202; 320 Rocky Run Parkway, Wilmington, Delaware; 10am—6pm; Fossils, Fossil Replicas of all kinds and Sizes, Affordable Meteorites, Books, CDs, Posters, and other educational materials; Free Admission, Free Parking, Restaurants Nearby; For more information contact: [info@millersfossils.com](mailto:info@millersfossils.com)

Now through April 29. – Dinosaur display, featuring Astrodon johnstoni, Maryland's state dinosaur. 11Am to 4 PM daily. Montpelier Mansion 9650 Muirkirk Road, Laurel 20708. \$3/adult; \$2/seniors ages 60 & up; \$1/child.

June 8. Auction. Chesapeake Gem and Mineral Society. Women's Club of Catonsville, St. Timothy's Lane & Frederick Rd in Catonsville, MD. 7:30 P.M.

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

## SMRMC OFFICERS

**PRESIDENT:**  
Tina League

**VICE PRESIDENT (membership):**  
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**VICE PRESIDENT (Programs):**  
Lorna Larson  
Jim White

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

\*\*\*Cover Photo Courtesy of  
Microsoft Office\*\*\*

# Minutes

By Christine Proctor

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**DATE:** February 28, 2012

Meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm

Guests were welcomed and introduced: We had two new guests, Joyce Richardson and Suzie Wickham.

**TREASURER:** Same

**MEMBERSHIP:** Make sure you pay your dues, we are waiting a little longer to allow for people to pay then a new roster will be made.

Motion to send out reminder letters for renewals. Motioned carried.

**PROGRAMS:** Please help to recreate the list for programs and refreshments as it was misplaced.

**FIELD TRIPS:** Rich S. gave a trip report on Vesuvius VA. Dean from the Shenandoah club was the tour guide, they found rockbridgeite, manganese nodules, and quartzite, and had great weather. He also reported on a successful trip to Morefield Mine.

Ralph Gamba reported on a visit to Ft. Payne Alabama to see marine fossils and thin walled geodes, Wetumpka Alabama to visit an impact crater, and Kentucky where they saw coal mining artifacts as well as shale samples.

Ralph has compiled a list of field trip sites that we have visited in the past and asked that we check off places we would be interested in going to again. Blank lines were provided for suggestions to be written in.

April 28, 2012- Sterling Hill Super Dig 9:00am-11:00pm in Franklin, NJ.

Gary will be the trip leader. We can go as a club or join their club in order to go as an individual. Cost is \$20.00 per person, \$1.50 per pound taken out, bring your own light. There will be a mine tour, there is a new tunnel open, a fluorescence wall, and a two day mineral sale. Approx. 4 1/2 hours from Annapolis area.

October 11-13 2012- Mt. Ida Georgia. Register by August 31, 2012 and pay \$75.00, after that date pay \$100.00.

**EDITOR:** Newsletter will be out next month.

**WEBMASTER:** Two trip reports were added and we are in a website contest.

# Road Trip

By Ralph Gamba and Mary Cramer

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When planning our annual trip to Florida, we try to get in some rock collecting along with sight-seeing. So when we decided to return from Florida via Alabama, we found some collecting spots in Fort Payne, Alabama. We also came across two other areas of interest.

## The Big Impression

When traveling, we like to pick up the tourist information brochures. In Alabama, we picked up a paper called “The Historical News”. The back of the newspaper had an article about the Wetumpka Impact Crater. Another brochure listed a lecture from an Auburn University geologist on Thursday, February 2, School Tours on February 3 and general public tours on Saturday, February 4. Our schedule allowed us to take the Saturday tour.

The hills east of downtown Wetumpka Alabama are part of the eroded remains of a five mile meteor crater. The impact occurred about 83 million years ago. In the circular pattern that makes up the rim of the crater, the hard rocks of the Piedmont are bent sharply upward and point toward the center of the impact. Figure 1 shows a portion of the rim where the underlying schist exposed. The normally horizontal layers of more recent surface rocks are mixed in and around the crater. Normally the sedimentary rocks of the Coastal Plain overlap the older and harder metamorphic rocks of the Piedmont. But at Wetumpka, rocks of more than two hundred million years different of age are intermixed. Below the surface, concentric rings of fractures and zones of shattered rock encircle the area.



Figure 1. Exposed schist at Wetumpka

In 1891, State Geologist Eugene Allen Smith noted the unusual nature of the Wetumpka area and marked the area on geological maps as “structurally disturbed”.

In 1972, Geological Survey of Alabama Geologist Tony Neathery headed a team making detailed map of the county. When they approached Wetumpka, they found layers bent a different angles and directions than other rocks in the area.

In 1976, they published their findings, calling the feature an Astrobleme or “star wound”. The conclusion was greeted with skepticism. In 1998, two cores revealed shocked quartz, which could only be formed by an enormous explosion such as a meteor impact. Another piece of evidence was that the level of the element iridium was 20 times the normal level<sup>1</sup>. Iridium is rare on earth, but much more common in meteorites. Another piece of evidence indicating an impact crater was the difference in gravitational pull in the area because of the faults and fractures in the underlying rocks. More studies confirmed the results and in 2002, scientists established the site as an internationally recognized impact crater. At the time of impact, the area was covered by a shallow sea of up to 100 feet in depth. The resultant tidal wave washed away the southern portion of the crater and any remaining meteor material. Based on scientific calculations, the meteor was estimated to be 1000 feet in diameter. The energy released from the impact is estimated to be 1,500 megatons, or the equiva-

# Road Trip

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lent of 1,500,000,000 tons of TNT<sup>2</sup>. This was 15% of the explosive power of the Cold War's nuclear Arsenal.

Our tour consisted of a half-hour lecture on the history and geology of the area. We were then driven by vans around the rim of the crater. We did make one stop to make a short hike for a better view of the center of the crater, Figure 2.



Figure 2. View showing center of Wetumpka crater.

During the stop, we collected small pieces of quartz and schist. Note that only microscopic examination would determine if the quartz was shocked.

The city of Wetumpka hosts tours once a year, usually in winter when the leaves were off the trees for a better view. We were fortunate to have traveled in the area when they hosted the 2012 tour. For information about the tour, contact the City of Wetumpka, P. O. Box 1180, Wetumpka, AL 36092, telephone 334-567-1313. The web site is [cityofwetumpka.com](http://cityofwetumpka.com).

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1. King, David T., Jr. and Petruny, "Lucille W. Neathery, Thornton L. Drilling Into Wetumpka Impact Crater, Alabama" Geology office, Auburn University, Auburn, AL, Astra-Terra Research, Auburn, AL, Neathery and Associates, Tuscaloosa, AL

2. Ibid.

## Gain in Payne without Pain

While preparing for our trip, we researched potential collecting areas in the regions where we would travel. We came across an article on the Internet by Ray Hill describing collecting fossils, limestone, slate, agate, chert and drusy quartz in Fort Payne, Alabama.

When we arrived, we stopped at the DeKalb County Tourist Association. We loaded up with brochures of local attractions and chatted with Ms. Avice Pearson. She didn't know anything of any of the rock collecting areas. Then we showed her the Ray Hill article, which had cited her as being helpful. To say the least, she was thrilled to see her name in the article and made a copy of the article.

Our first stop was in the back of an old strip mall, near the Alfa Insurance and Sears building. The temperature was in the low 60s, making a great day for collecting. In the back was a 15 foot bank which contained limestone, chert, druzy quartz and geodes. Collecting was easy except for extracting the geodes from the chert. The geodes were thin walled so we could only obtain pieces of the geodes. Figure 3 shows a typical geode in the chert.



Figure 3. Geode in Chert

# Road Trip

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Our next stop was on Route 11, just past mile marker 231. On the right was a gravel driveway. We drove up the driveway (avoiding the ruts) and parked. The collecting area was on the flat section at the base of the banks, Figure 4. We collected a few plates of marine fossils. The fossils were plentiful, Figure 5. We obtained a couple samples and moved on.

We checked out the chert quarries cited in the article, but decided that we had enough chert, so we didn't collect. One quarry looked like it was still active.



Figure 4. Fort Payne  
Fossil Area



Figure 5. Fossils in Fort Payne

## The Coal Miner's Daughter's Brother

Our journey took us to the hills of eastern Kentucky. This area is famous for two things – coal and country music. And often the music is about coal mining.

This led us to the town of Van Lear. It seemed like most of the road names in the town had the word “hollow” in it – Akers Hollow Road, Storehouse Hollow Road, Possum Hollow Road. On the far side of town, there is Butcher Hollow Road.

Van Lear was a coal town. The Consolidated Coal Company operated mines in the area from 1910 to 1946. One of the workers was a Mr. Melvin (Ted) Webb, who worked in the No. 5 mine, Figure 6, off of Butcher Hollow Road. Mr. Webb had eight children. The second of his children, Loretta Lynn Webb, sang about the coal mining - Loretta Lynn, the Coal Miner's Daughter. She now lives in Nashville, TN, but the Webb homestead, Figure 7, still stands as a monument to the coal mining days. Also still standing is the No. 5 Store, Figure 8, the company store. It is now owned and operated by Herman Webb and his wife. Herman is Loretta's brother.

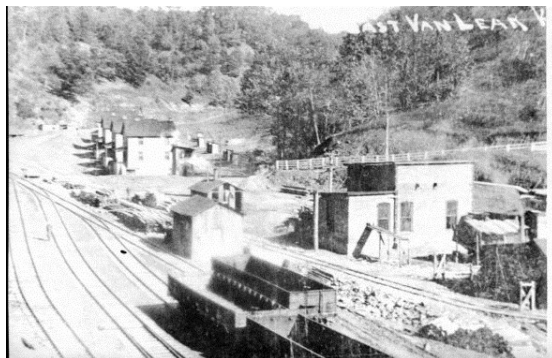


Figure 6 Van Lear # 5 Mine, in 1930

# Road Trip

CONTINUED

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Figure 7. The Webb Homestead in Van Lear



Figure 8. Webb Grocery Store

We drove by the homestead on Butcher Hollow Road. The road barely had room for one car, although it was paved. On the way, we passed homes that had collapsed and many homes in need of upkeep. It is a poor community.

After driving by the Webb homestead, we stopped at the store. Herman was there and asked us where we were from. He talked about the coal mining days and his store had items such as carbide lamps, pictures of the old mines and devices to detect if there was gas in the mine. He also had memorabilia from Loretta Lynn, Crystal Gayle (Loretta's sister). Two other siblings, Peggy Sue and Jay Lee also were professional musicians. Herman said that Jay Lee was really talented. Herman also offers tours of the home.

Unfortunately, we did not have time to visit the coal mining museum or explore for any coal samples, although we obtained pieces of shale from a local road cut. On the first weekend in August, Van Lear hosts a celebration of their coal mining past. The visit made us appreciate the hardships that the coal miners endured. Note – camera problems prevented us from having pictures of Van Lear. Pictures of the store and Webb homestead are from the Internet.

# Rock Tumbling Contest

Submitted By Dave Lines

## Announcement – Please Post

Feather River Lapidary and Mineral Society, Oroville, CA is pleased to announce the

## **Fourth Annual World Rock Tumbling Championship**



2011 Winning stones

### CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2011 WINNERS!

**First Place \$250 -Susan Oglebay of Ephrata, WA**  
**2nd place \$100 – Ed Obermeyer, Oregon Coast Agate Club**  
**3rd Place \$50 - Tom Kuzia, Beacon Falls CT**

### **Here's how to participate in the contest...**

- Send in a completed application (below) with a \$40.00 entry fee postmarked no later than May 7, 2012.
- The material for the 2012 contest is Petrified Wood from Arizona. Contestants receive over 3 pounds of raw material.
- Contestants will have over three months to tumble the rock in a rotary or vibratory tumbler and mail a half-pound (1/2 lb) of the best pieces for judging. The entries must be received no later than September 23, 2012.
- A committee of judges from FRLMS will evaluate each entry on the basis of smoothness, shape, shine and overall appeal. They will select the top five winning entries to be displayed at the club's October Rock and Gem Show in Oroville, California. The top three winners will be determined by popular vote at the Rock and Gem Show

1<sup>st</sup> Place: \$250.00  
2<sup>nd</sup> Place: \$100  
3<sup>rd</sup> Place: \$50

[www.oroillerocks.com](http://www.oroillerocks.com)

**Note to Rock and Gem clubs:** Consider sponsoring a contestant from your club. It could be a junior member you want to encourage or a more experienced member who has enjoyed rock tumbling for many years. We will include the club affiliation when announcing the name of the winners! Also, this is a wonderful opportunity for your junior members to learn more about tumbling and competition.

**Here is a sample of the rough that contestants will receive for the 2012 contest....  
*Beautiful Arizona petrified wood***



### **2012 Application Rock Tumbling Championship Form**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

USPS Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Country, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Club (if any): \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail applications with a check or money order by May 7<sup>th</sup> to:

**FRLMS Contest Headquarters, PO Box 2645, Oroville, CA 95965**



# Club Display in February

Submitted by Paul Holden

Thanks to:

Paul & Linda Holden, Lorna Larson, and  
Ralph Gamba

For the display at the Surratts Library in PG  
County during the month of February!



## 2012 Rock Show Attendance

By Bob Davidson

This is the fourth year I have been collecting names and addresses of people who attend our rock show. The mailing list has grown to 927 with 610 email addresses and 317 for regular mailing.

Here are the numbers for this year:

502 = Number of Door Prize slips and Discount Coupons.

285 = Provided and Email Address (with or without a Street Address)

101 = Provided a Street Address Only

116 = Were illegible or duplicate

126 = Number of people who have attended at least one of our past three shows.

260 = Number of people attending our show for the first time.



## ROCKTALK

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

**Next Meeting**  
**March 27, 2012**  
**7:00 PM**

We're on the web:

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

## March's Program

Thanks to Gary L. for the interesting program on the Petrified Forrest as sharing information such as this encourages members to visit are as they might not consider. Also thanks to Mike B. for his presentation on gemstones and some of the marketing ploys that are questionable. And thanks to Carole and Al for the refreshments.

NOTE: JIM W. IS PRESENTING A PROGRAM ON CRACKING GEODES THIS MONTH AND IS REQUESTING THAT MEMBERS BRING GEODES THEY WOULD LIKE TO SEE CRACKED. THE NUMBER TO BE CRACKED WILL DEPEND UPON THE NUMBER THAT CAN BE DONE WITHIN THE TIMEFRAME.

Just think, we will be the first to see what is inside a given geode and that is an honor that many people never experience. Each will be unique in its own way.

We still need a program for November 13 , and someone to provide refreshments for April, June, October, and November. Please see me at the meeting to sign up. Thanks. Lorna L.