

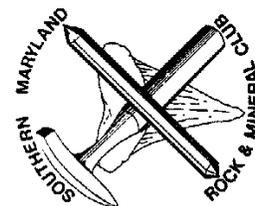
April 2008



SOUTHERN MARYLAND ROCK AND MINERAL CLUB



# Rock Talk



## Message from the President

We were able to meet in our own space this month, even though not all of the renovations were complete. One big surprise was the switching of the women's and men's restroom. Surprise!!! It was nice to be back home.

We had the Rock and Mineral show the last Saturday of March, and attendance seemed to be good as the weather cooperated with the show. Several comments about perhaps increasing the show to two days. Something we will need to discuss again, I think. I also want to take this time to give a big thank you to the staff and volunteers who helped us unload and load our many rocks. For me, it was a big help.

Thanks are also due to Sandy and Sam for the lovely refreshments and the program on flint knapping. Sam stated that the

two toned quartzite, beige and iron red were an indication that natives had heat treated the stone to improve its ability to be worked. I had always thought it was just due to a natural phenomenon and didn't bother to collect. Now I'll be keeping my eye out for that. Given my luck, though, I'll probably not see it again. I also had not realized that soapstone could be knapped or that these objects needed to be sharpened after use. The real shocker was that the average life expectancy was only 23. I had thought about 35. I am so thankful we live in this age and not back then.

A copy of the revised By-laws will be included in the Rock Talk. Please be ready to discuss these during the June meeting.

Mel and I will be at the William Holland School of

Lapidary Arts for 5 weeks starting the first week of May – teaching and taking classes. We will be sharing our experience during the program in June. While we are gone, Carole will conduct the May meeting. I am certain that she will do well, and I do appreciate her willingness to accept this responsibility. Thank you.

Diane continues to be ill and having major problems. Please keep her in your prayers. If you know of one of our members who is ill or if you are ill, please notify me or Carole. We need to support one another. I know I really appreciated your support during Mel's illness.

We will miss you, but will keep you in our thoughts during our absence. Lorna

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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.

# April's Birthstone: The Diamond

By Lorna Larson



The National Association of Jewelers adopted a birthstone list in August, 1912 that specified the diamond as the birthstone for April. According to Kunz who died in 1932, the diamond was not a part of any birthstone list prior to the last century (1800s). He did not think it even belonged in a birthstone list. Ancients did think it was an antidote for poison

and at the same time was considered a poison. Kunz did cite one example of death following the ingestion of diamond. A chicken being held by a noble man plucked a diamond from the man's jewelry and promptly swallowed it. The chicken quickly died as it had to be killed to retrieve the diamond.

Diamonds have been used as amulets at least for the past 2000 years, but the ability to cut it in the traditional brilliant did not occur until 1910. This was due in part to the difficulty of cutting it. It takes special equipment to do so. It is 140 times harder than sapphire; however, different crystal faces may have a different hardness, and it has perfect cleavage which means it can fall apart if struck on the plane and can also chip easily. These properties make it difficult to cut and set. Although it is impervious to most substances, it will burn if it becomes hot enough as it is pure, compressed carbon. Only about 20% of the production is jewelry grade, but the commercial diamonds are so important to industry that this forms a major economically indispensable item. About 80% of the trade is controlled by the Diamond Producers Association (I'm told that's DeBeers). And boy do they have a marketing program that has enabled them to maintain or increase prices even during an economic recession.

When DeBeers had too many small diamonds in their inventory, they promoted the anniversary ring which used up all those little diamonds. Don't hear a lot about it now. How about wearing a diamond as an engagement ring? Only within about the last 100 years or so since the technology has been available to cut them. Prior to that, various birthstones or stones with special meanings were used. What about the saying "A diamond is a girl's best

friend"? Well, diamonds are very common and easily obtained if you have the money. If you try to resell a diamond purchased retail, you will get 1/4 to 1/2 the original purchase price. There are many stones that are much more rare and valuable than a diamond. Although a diamond is the hardest mineral, corundum (sapphire & ruby) is stronger, less likely to chip or crack, and is sufficiently rare in a clear/silver color that it receives little promotion. It does not have the diamond sparkle, but it costs a whole lot less. Why not use this sapphire as an engagement ring and use the difference in price to help set up housekeeping?

Setting aside logical, rational thinking, there is just something emotionally satisfying in gazing at a diamond.

## SMRMC OFFICERS

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

# Minutes...

Sandy Lyon

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Guests that attended Steve McNight and Tom Francaville

Lorna announced that Diane Porter has been ill and in the hospital. A get well card from the club was mailed to her.

Speakers/Programs are needed for May and months in the summer and fall. Please contact Polly and volunteer!! Lorna mentioned that a good topic for a meeting would be safety when rock hunting.

The Youth Program will begin in April. Michael will have a flier available on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup>.

Dave reported on Field Trips:

3 people went to Graves Mountain, Georgia for 4 days and they found iridescent hemitite and rutile crystals. It was so successful that they want to return next year. There is also a site for amethyst in the same county.

On March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 27 people from 5 different clubs ranging from age 11 to 70 + climbed the mountain at Chestnut Ridge in VA to collect quartz crystals. All seemed to have a great time.

On April 26<sup>th</sup> the club has scheduled a trip to Vulcan Manassas Quarry 8am to 12 N in VA to find prehnite and other minerals. Steel toed shoes, safety glasses and hard hats are required. Dave will email those who signed up the details.

The tentative trip to N.C. in May has been canceled.

Morefield Mine in Amelia, VA will be open from April 12 to approx. May 31. Then the owners plan to close it and sell it. Check [www.toteshows.com](http://www.toteshows.com) for more info.

Lorna discussed a bill that the House is considering that could limit rock hounding and that you may need to be able to prove where you obtained your fossils. Gary said the the EFMLS is tracking this.

The committee has been working on the By-laws and a copy will be available for members to review and comment.

Michael reported that the Jewelry, Mineral and Fossil Show is Saturday March 29<sup>th</sup> from 10 to 4. Anyone interested in doing a demonstration needs to talk to him. All vendors and the public will be using the road on the right of the building for Show access. 2 vans will be transporting people up to the building from the parking lot. Vendors may set up from 12 N to 7pm on Friday (this is preferable) and Saturday starting at 7am. Dave Lines provided an interesting Rock and Mineral display at the La Plata library to help advertise the show.

Because the computers were down, dues may be paid at the show or in April. Micheal said that calling the center and giving them a credit card number over the phone is the easiest way to pay your dues. Those who have not paid will no longer receive the newsletter.

Sam Lyon did a demonstration of how to flintknapp. Obsidian, rhyolite, quartz, quartzite and flint are the stones that are commonly used for making atlatl points and arrowheads. Sam explained that rocks that are heated are easier to work and the native Piscataway Indians did just that also. Tools used to break the rocks were antlers, bone and other larger stones. Obsidian flakes are so sharp they can be used in surgery and are even sharper than a surgeon's steel blade. 24 people attended and seemed to really enjoy the program.

# “No Pain — No Gain”

A Trip Report By Dave Lines



“What is it that entices otherwise normal people to hike for two hours up the side of a steep mountain?” The answer in this case is ... quartz crystals ... lots of them!!!

Although everyone had been “warned” well ahead of time that it was going to be a very strenuous trip, 27 rockhounds from five different clubs (\*) showed up ready and raring to go. (\*Lynchburg, Southern Maryland, Richmond, Roanoke and Tidewater) Since this was twice as many as I had ever taken previously, I was a bit apprehensive. So at the beginning of the Safety Brief, I asked “How

*many of you have ever been up Chestnut Ridge?”* Only one person held up his hand. Oh, my goodness.

Looking over the eager faces of the crowd ranging in age from 11 to over 70, I knew right then that they could do it. I explained that I would mark a trail (pretty much straight up) with surveyor’s tape so that everyone could climb the mountain at their own pace without fear of getting lost. We quickly reviewed the list: --- wear sturdy, ankle supporting footwear; take food and water; recommended tools and clothing; don’t roll rocks; pick up all trash and bring it back; let me know when you leave; and take it slowly.

So off we started up the mountain --- quickly at the beginning, but slowing to a crawl at the first steep spot. I began tying bright red-orange tape on small trees about 10 yards apart. People strung out as the slower ones fell back. Then the “Pain” part started. Quietly, some climbers shed their coats. Others left their heavy clothing by the trail to pick up on their return. And the questions came. “How much further?” (We are about half way there.) “Will the trail get easier?” (No, it is steeper in several places.) “Can we find crystals down here?” (Yes, but the best ones are near the top.) I was not worried because, during the climb, nearly everyone questions the sanity of this trip.

The weather was turning out to be ideal. Fears of predicted rain soon subsided. And 40 to 50 degrees was cool enough to hike comfortably, yet warm enough to enjoy the experience. The scenery was leafless trees (mostly oak), rocks, old logs and fallen brown leaves. Chestnut Ridge is part of the George Washington National Forest and people have been finding quartz crystals there for centuries. Even though the site has been reported in the literature several times in the last 50 years, beautiful clear quartz crystals --- mostly small in singles as well as on large plates --- are still plentiful. The reason they are found here in such quantity? ... the mountain ... it is so rugged and steep that it keeps people away. Also, private property surrounds the mountain and permission must be obtained to park on and cross this privately owned land.

As we neared the top, only a few folks were ahead of me --- notably Hugh and Elaine Scruggs of the Roanoke Club and Sherry (or was it Sue?) Gaeta of the Lynchburg Club. It was about 10:30 a.m. when I tied on the final trail marker. I quickly found some plates of crystals to pile up under it --- the sight of a pile of shiny crystals after the long climb gives people a boost of adrenaline. The area looked as though it had not been visited by anyone since my previous visit two years ago. I saw plenty of crystals which I began pointing out to folks as they arrived.



Within an hour, everyone had completed the hike and was finding crystals. Big smiles all around. I showed the kids an area above the rock ledge where crystals were laying eve-

...CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

# Meet the Member

Submitted by Carole Raucheisen

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**Name:** Alex Schuman

**Area live in:** La Plata, Md.

**Place of birth:** Connecticut

**Occupation:** Safety, NSWC, Indian Head

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

**Number and ages of children:** Sam, age 10

**How became interested in rocks/minerals/fossils:** Through Sam

**How long a collector:** 1 year

**What you like to collect:** Anything, in small amounts

**Favorite find and how found:** Kingsley North - Bob Davidson

**Favorite Rock Club experience:** James Madison University field trip, and also at the hotel: pool, hot tub, tubing, etc.

**Funniest Rock Club experience:** Showing up at Clearwater Nature Center for meeting when it was closed for renovation.

**Most memorable field trip:** Meckley Quarry, which was also his first

**What you have gained from the Rock Club:** Cabochon skills

**What you would still like to find/collect:** Slabs/cabs for Bola ties

# “No Pain—- No Gain”

CONTINUED

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rywhere and gave them the first opportunity to pick up the abundant crystals there. The kids were really happy --- maybe we made a few more lifelong rockhounds. The folks below the big ledge were pounding on rocks with vigor. Lots of digging. Lots of happy people.

We continued all afternoon --- stopping occasionally to eat a snack or grab a sip of water. Gradually, we began to wrap our finds with old newspaper and start the descent. By 4 p.m., only five of us were left. Soon, we all started back down the trail with full buckets and backpacks. We removed the tape markers as we went downhill and about 45 minutes later, we reached the bottom --- tired, but satisfied. At the cars, we changed clothes, made ready for the drives back to our homes and let the neighbor know that we were leaving. On this day before Easter 2008, the good Lord had blessed us with good weather, plentiful finds and a safe trip.



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## General Mineral Miner Certification

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May 13, 2008

In Manassas, VA

Some locations may begin requiring this certification to attend their site for a field trip. If you haven't taken this course, it is a good idea to sign up for so you don't miss out on some great sites!

The training lasts about seven hours and certification will give us access to more quarries and mines in Virginia. For more information and to sign up, call the office of Jeffrey Stewart, Virginia Division of Mineral Mining at [\(434\) 951-6315](tel:4349516315).

# SMRMC Gem, Mineral, and Fossil Show

Pictures by Dave Lines

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At Clearwater Nature Center  
Clinton, MD

March 29, 2008  
10am to 4pm

Everyone had a great time!  
See you next year!!!



# Constitution and By-Laws

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A couple of months ago, the President of the Club, Lorna Larson, established a committee to review the Constitution and By-Laws of the Club and make recommendations for any changes needed to bring it up to date. The committee consisting of Polly Zimmerman, Carole Rauchiesen, and Bob Davidson made recommendations that were used to draft a new version of the Constitution. It is included in this months Rock Talk for all members to review prior to the vote for approval

## CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS OF THE SOUTHERN MARYLAND ROCK AND MINERAL CLUB

### Article 1. Name and Affiliation

#### Section 1. Name

The Name of this organization is The Southern Maryland Rock And Mineral Club, hereinafter referred to as the Club.

#### Section 2. Affiliation

This Club is affiliated with the Clearwater Nature Center, an entity of the Louise F. Cosca Regional Park of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, hereinafter referred to as the Center, and with the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies, Inc., through the Eastern Federation of Mineralogical and Lapidary Societies, Inc., hereinafter referred to as the Eastern Federation.

### Article 2. Purpose

The purpose of the Club is:

1. To stimulate interest in the earth sciences and hobbies associated with rocks and minerals, fossils and lapidary arts.
  2. To encourage and work for improvement in the art of gem cutting and making jewelry.
  3. To provide members with opportunities to collect and identify rocks, minerals, and fossils.
- To provide opportunities for fellowship among members and with other clubs and societies having similar aims and interests.

### Article 3. Membership

#### Section 1. Eligibility

Membership in the Club is open to anyone interested in one or more of the purposes listed under Article 2.

#### Section 2. Classes of Membership

A. **INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP** is available to one person. If two people in a family join the Club, they must join as Individual Members.

B. **FAMILY MEMBERSHIP** is available to three or more people in a family.

C. **CLEARWATER NATURE CENTER ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP** is an additional membership that allows special privileges that are not afforded by Individual or Family membership alone, including the use of the Center's Lapidary Facility, and participation in other M-NCPPC sponsored activities.

**HONORARY MEMBERSHIP** may be granted by the Center to individuals who perform over 50 hours of volunteer service to the Center in a calendar year or at the discretion of the Director of the Center. Honorary Members are not required to pay dues.

#### Section 3. Admission to Membership

A. Applicants shall complete and sign the formal application form provided by the Center.

B. Members shall be in Good Standing when their dues are current, they have attended at least four scheduled Club meetings in a 12-month period, and they adhere to the Club's accepted Code of Ethics (attached as an addendum to these By-Laws).

C. Special privileges shall be granted to Members in Good Standing, including one free table at the Annual Jewelry, Mineral, and Fossil Show. Members not in Good Standing may be removed from membership by a majority vote of the members present at a regular meeting.

#### Section 4. Dues

A. The dues amount shall be set by the Center. The Center will collect dues from each member, record and maintain a membership roster, and notify the Club of new members.

B. The year for dues shall begin January 1.

C. All dues are payable to the Clearwater Nature Center. Individuals may elect to join the Club only, or to participate as a Clearwater Nature Associate. A portion of the Club dues also provides membership in the Eastern Federation.

### Article 4. Officers

#### Section 1. Titles

The Officers of the Club shall consist of:

- A. President,
- B. Membership Chairman,
- C. Field Trip Chairman,
- D. Program Chairman,
- E. Secretary,
- F. Treasurer,
- Editor,
- Webmaster and
- Liaison Officer (appointed by the Center).

*Alternates may be elected to co-chair these positions.*

#### Section 2. Executive Committee

The Executive Committee shall consist of current Club Officers, the past President, and the Director of the Center. The Executive Committee shall meet if the President or the Center's Liaison Officer declares a need to do so. Such reasons may be to appoint a new officer to replace one that is unable to fulfill his or her duties, or if a major policy change is made by the Center that affects the Club. The meeting will take place at the Center on a day and time set by the Liaison Officer.

#### Section 3. Elections

If more than one person has been nominated for an Office and has agreed to serve, election of that position shall be by secret ballot at the November meeting. Otherwise, the slate of Officers will be elected by a show of hands representing the majority of members present. Officer's terms shall be for a calendar year, starting January 1.

### Article 5. Duties of Officers

#### Section 1. President

The President shall preside at all meetings of the Club and Executive Committee, shall appoint all committee chairmen, shall be the official spokesman for the club, and shall exert every effort to carry out the provisions of these By-Laws and perform other duties customary to the office.

#### Section 2. Membership Chairman

The Membership Chairman shall work closely with the Center to keep apprised of new members, shall contact new members and answer any questions they may have, shall introduce new members at Club meetings. He or she shall also maintain a current membership roster containing the member's name, address, phone number(s), and email address.

### **Section 3. Field Trip Chairman**

The Field Trip Chairman shall plan field trips that are of interest to Club members, shall discuss upcoming field trips at Club meetings including locations, dates, times, traveling arrangements, a description of specimens that may be found, equipment needed, and other pertinent information. He or she shall designate a Leader for each trip who will coordinate all activities during the trip and ensure that a report is made to the membership at the next meeting.

The Programs Chairman shall seek volunteers to make special presentations at Club meetings that are of interest to the membership, shall coordinate with the Center to ensure that any equipment needed for the presentation is made available.

### **Section 5. The Secretary**

The Secretary shall keep an accurate record of the proceedings of all meetings of the Club and Executive Committee, and conduct the Club's routine correspondence.

### **Section 6. Treasurer**

The Treasurer shall receive all non-membership money and hold it in a cash fund. It may consist of donations, the sale of donated items, or other fund raising activities that are not in conflict with the Center. The fund will be used to cover costs not normally provided by the Center, such as Memorial Contributions to the Eastern Federation. Funds in excess of \$500 will be donated to the Center.

### **Section 7. Editor**

The Club Editor shall create a monthly newsletter for distribution to Club members.

### **Section 8. Webmaster**

The Webmaster shall develop and maintain a Club website with information of interest to Club members and the public in general.

### **Section 9. Liaison Officer**

The Liaison Officer is an employee of the Center who provides logistic and oversight support to the Club.

## **Article 6. Standing Committees**

### **Section 1.**

Except as otherwise provided herein, the President shall appoint the chairmen of all standing committees, the Nominating Committee, and special committees he or she deems advisable to fill club needs.

### **Section 2.**

Each committee shall consist of the chairman and such members as he or she shall select.

### **Section 3.**

The Nominating Committee for the selection of new officers shall consist of the committee chairman and two other members appointed by the President. At the October Club meeting, the Committee will announce the names of the nominees. Voting by Club members will take place at the November meeting as stated in Article 7, Section 3.

### **Section 4.**

Except as otherwise stated herein, the President shall outline the duties of the Committees.

## **Article 7. Club Meetings**

### **Section 1.**

Regular monthly meetings shall be held at the Center at 7:00 p.m. on the fourth Tuesday of each month, unless changed by the membership.

### **Section 2.**

Special meetings for specifically announced purposes may be called by the Executive Committee on 5 day's notice to the membership.

### **Section 3.**

The Annual meeting of the Club shall be the regular meeting for November. Election of Officers shall be held at that time. Newly elected officers shall assume their duties on January 1<sup>st</sup> following the November elections.

## **Article 8. Order of Business**

The normal order of business at regular meetings of the club is:

Call to Order, followed by:

Introduction of guests and new members

Approval of the Minutes of the previous meetings

Treasurer's Report

Membership Report

Program Report

Field Trip Report

Editor Report

Webmaster Report

Old Business

New Business

Special Announcements

Refreshment Break

Program Presentation

Adjournment

The presiding officer may vary the order of business.

## **Article 9. Amendments**

### **Section 1.**

All proposed amendments to these By-Laws shall be presented by the President, on behalf of the Executive Committee, at a regular meeting of the Club. The proposal shall be presented in the following month's issue of Rock Talk. The vote for adoption shall take place at the next regular meeting.

### **Section 2.**

Five members, by written demand, may require the Executive Committee to present proposals for amendment at any meeting; the Executive Committee shall have at least 31 days to study and prepare the proposed changes before they must be presented to the membership at a regular meeting.

## **Article 10. Termination of the Club**

### **Section 1.**

The Club shall be considered terminated when  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the voting membership votes at a regular scheduled meeting of the Club that the Club no longer complies with the purposes set forth in Article 2. Notice of Intent to Present such a Motion shall be approved by the Executive Committee and provided in writing to all members at their last known address, at least 20 days before the date of its presentation. Absentee ballots, signed by the member(s) shall be accepted.

### **Section 2.**

The Club shall be considered terminated when there remains 6 or fewer members, as defined in Article 3, Section 2.

### **Section 3.**

Immediately upon termination of the Club, as defined herein, all assets remaining after payment of just debts, shall be transferred to the Clearwater Nature Center, its successors, or the M-NCPPC.

**END OF THE CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS**



# ROCKTALK

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



**We're on the web:**  
[www.freewebs.com/smrmc/](http://www.freewebs.com/smrmc/)

## Message from the Editor

Well, my trip out to ND was relaxing, though the seven hour delay in Minneapolis was not so much fun. I wish the weather and time would have allowed me to do a little rocking while I was there, but alas, I must be satisfied with what I have at the moment. At least I came back completely refreshed. It sounds like I missed a great meeting last month, though. I hope everyone who attended enjoyed themselves.

This month's newsletter is a bit longer than normal because of the addition of the Club's Constitution and By-Laws. Please make sure you really take a look at it and be ready to vote in June! There is some interesting stuff in there.

There is some great information being sent my way for the newsletter and that is great! Remember, even if you just have an idea for something that you would like to see in the newsletter, let me know! I'm sure someone in the club knows something about it or would be

willing to find out. We can always learn a little more.

Those that are keeping me up-to-date, THANK YOU! You all are wonderful!!! See you on the 22nd!

### PROGRAMS/ REFRESHMENTS

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| April     | Program-Ralph Gamba-Goedes<br>Refreshments-Diane Porter    |
| May       | Program-<br>Refreshments-Mike and Faith Antonioni          |
| June      | Program-<br>Refreshments-Larry O'Callaghan                 |
| July      | Programs-Diane Porter<br>Refreshments-Tom and Cobb Allison |
| August    | Annual Auction and Potluck                                 |
| September | Program-<br>Refreshments-Ralph Gamba                       |
| October   | Program-<br>Refreshments- Polly Z and Jessica T            |