

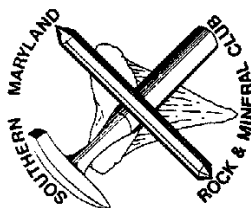
January 2009



SOUTHERN MARYLAND ROCK AND MINERAL CLUB



# RockTalk



## Message from the President

Happy New Year! I hope everyone had a great time over the holidays. As your new incoming President, the first thing I would like to do is to extend a big THANK YOU to David and Jennifer Knies for hosting the annual rock club Christmas dinner meeting at their unique house in Marbury MD. The food was great, there was plenty of room for all of us, and the Chinese auction of rock gifts was very entertaining. If you didn't go, you don't know what you missed.

I drove to Texas over the holidays to see some old friends. I promised my 11 year old son Sam that I would try and find him something to add to his rock collection while on the trip. Surely, in over 3000 miles I would be able to find something, I thought. Well, I saw a

lot of displays by local rock clubs, but it wasn't until I got into Arkansas that I connected. I went by the Crater of Diamonds park on January 1, 2009 but it was closed. So were the local rock shops in the area, although they did have large tables outside of rocks for sale. Most of it appeared to be "leaverite" though.

I noticed on the maps that Mt. Ida was fairly close to where I was, so I headed in that direction. Because it was New Year's Day, almost everything was closed. Almost. I found a rock shop on Highway 270 that was open, and so I stopped in and bought a quartz cluster for Sam.

Actually it is only 2 big points, but the specimen weighs over a pound! And it cost me less than seven-sixteenths of a cent per

carat! (Prize to the first person to figure the cost in dollars: a quartz or citrine point keychain, deliverable at the January 2009 rock club meeting). I will bring this item to the January meeting for all to look at, before it gets confiscated and imprisoned in Sam's rock collection.

Don't forget that our annual Rock Show will be at the Clearwater Nature Center on Saturday, March 28th, 2009. See elsewhere in this issue for more information.

In closing, this is YOUR rock club, and I am merely your President. What sort of programs, trips, events, articles etc. would YOU like to see in 2009? Tell me your ideas and together we will see if we can get it done.

Alex Schuman

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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.

# A Fond Farewell

From Sandy Lyon



To all members of the Rock Club,

I want to thank you all so much for all your kindnesses to me over the years. To the new people who may not even know me, thanks for joining the club, it is you that keep this group alive.

To the people I have known for some 10 or 20 or 30 years, thanks for teaching me all those lessons that God wanted me to know. It seemed that when I was the director, anything that I asked you for, you made happen, whether it was for the show, the lab, classes or the meetings, and I thank you. I

have made many new and good friends and I have had a lot of fun collecting and learning about rocks. You are part of a very special group for me.

Our new home is in Churchville VA and I hope you will stop by if you travel south on I 81. Now till April, our address is P.O. Box 978 Churchville, VA 24421. You have my email address so please stay in touch!  
Sandy

## SMRMC Rock Show

### The 19th Annual Gem, Mineral & Fossil Show

March 28, 2009  
10 AM - 4 PM.

Clearwater Nature Center, 11000 Thrift Rd., Clinton MD 20735.

Vendors and exhibitors- selling minerals, fossils, gems and original jewelry designs.

Demonstrations of cabochon making, bead stringing, wire wrapping, and gold panning.

Crafts for children and door prizes.

Live birds of prey will be on display.

Adults and children 7 & up \$2. Children 6 & under free.

For table and set-up information and all other questions, contact:

Michael Patterson, 301-297-4575.

[www.freewebs.com/smrmc/2009rockmineralshow.htm](http://www.freewebs.com/smrmc/2009rockmineralshow.htm).

## SMRMC OFFICERS

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

# Holiday Party

By Jessica Thomson



Alex and Larry talking as everyone arrives



Lorna and Polly laughing together



Everyone enjoyed the Potluck meal and company of friends



The favors at the tables were a nice touch added by our hosts



The gift exchange was an experience



It was nice to have everyone together for the holiday.

**Thank you**  
**David and Jennifer Knies**  
**For hosting the holiday party at your home in Marbury.**

# The Curse of the Hope Diamond

By Jessica Thomson

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Everyone knows what the Hope Diamond is. We've all looked at the amazing beauty of the brilliant blue diamond surrounded by a circle of white diamonds. But not many people know of the legendary curse that surrounds the spectacular gem.



The Hope Diamond is believed to have originated from the Kollur mine in Golconda, India. According to legend, the original 112 3/16 carat diamond was plucked from the forehead of an idol in India around 1642. Tavernier, the man who supposedly stole the diamond, was the first to fall victim to the curse that befell the diamond when it was stolen. He is said to have been torn apart by wild dogs in Russia at the age of 84 after having sold the diamond to King Louis XIV of France.

In 1673, King Louis XIV had the diamond re-cut to 67 1/8 carats in order to enhance its brilliance. He often wore the diamond from a long ribbon around his neck. King Louis XIV's great-grandson, Louis XVI and his queen Marie Antoinette, were both beheaded during the French Revolution. This only adds to the legendary curse that surrounds the gem.

When the royals were executed in 1791, the crown jewels were subsequently stolen and the blue diamond disappeared. It did not resurface until around 1813 in the hands of jeweler Daniel Eliason, but at an estimated 44 carats. It is believed that the thieves had the diamond re-cut to hide its origin. Dutch jeweler Wilhelm Fals acquired the gem. He was murdered by his son, Hendrick who, eventually committed suicide. Diamond merchant Francis Beaulieu acquired the stone and sold it to King George IV of England. Upon his death, the diamond was sold to pay off the king's debts.

Before 1839, the diamond was in the hands of Henry Philip Hope, the man the diamond took its name. The Hope family was touched briefly by the curse. Hope was a collector of fine art and gems, which made him an appropriate owner of the beautiful diamond. He never married and upon his death, the diamond was left to the oldest of his nephews, Henry Thomas Hope. His grandson eventually inherited the diamond and tried to sell it to pay off his debts. The family name tarnished, he was finally allowed to sell the diamond in 1901 to Simon Frankel, an American jeweler. Thus the Hope diamond finally made its way to the United States.

The diamond frequently changed hands over several years, all subsequent owners suffering great misfortune and only three not dying. The diamond finally ended up in the possession of Pierre Cartier. He found a buyer in Evalyn McLean in 1910. McLean's husband was a Washington Post tycoon, giving her the finances to acquire the jewel. Evalyn was intrigued by the idea of the diamond having a curse. She believed she had the ability to turn objects of bad luck into objects of good luck. Cartier had the diamond set into its current mounting to appease McLean and convince her to buy the spectacular diamond. It worked.

McLean wore the diamond constantly, only barely convinced to take it off for a goiter operation. Though she wore the diamond as a good luck charm, bad luck took its toll on Evalyn McLean. Her first born son died in a car crash when he

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# The Curse of the Hope Diamond

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was nine, her daughter committed suicide at age 25, and her husband was declared insane and confined to a mental institution until his death in 1941.

Upon her death in 1949, the family sold McLean's jewelry in order to settle debts to the estate. Harry Winston, a New York jeweler bought the Hope diamond and offered it to be worn at numerous balls to raise money for charity. But the legend of the curse followed the stone and Winston decided to donate the diamond to the Smithsonian Institution in 1958. Winston liked the idea of the stone being the centerpiece of a national gem collection.

On November 10, 1958, Winston sent the diamond by registered mail from New York to Washington DC. The \$1 million gem was shipped in a plain brown package for a cost of \$145.29. Some believe Winston donated the gem to be rid of the curse. Even the mailman who delivered the package to the Smithsonian, James Todd, was not untouched by the curse. He had his leg crushed in a truck accident, his head injured in a car accident, and his house burned down. The unfortunate mailman was not the final victim of the Hope Diamond curse.

George Switzer, a scientist for the Smithsonian, was responsible for acquiring the Hope Diamond for the institution. He spent years convincing Harry Winston to donate the diamond for the institution. Switzer was a calm and rational scientist and even he was tempted to believe in the curse. When he traveled with the stone to Paris in 1962 for an exhibition, the trip was accursed almost immediately. The original flight was cancelled after a faulty landing in Philadelphia. He spent the entire trip worried he would be mistaken as a smuggler if caught by custom officials in Germany. He arrived nine hours late in Paris and was involved in a fender bender on his way to the Louvre.

Many people were touched by the Hope Diamond curse. Some suffered small misfortunes, like George Switzer, while others, like Marie Antoinette, lost their lives. Whether the diamond is truly cursed or its owners' just victims of bad luck is in the eye of the beholder. But whatever the truth, the legend of the curse surrounding it makes for a captivating story with a history so surrounded in mystery that the truth might never be known.

Sources:

Holly, Joe. "George Switzer; Got Hope Diamond for Smithsonian." Washington Post 27 Mar. 2008: B07.

<<http://www.bebimi.com/hope-diamond-story.htm>>.

Stefko, Jill. Curse: Hope Diamond, Blue Gemstone Ha Legacy of Tragedy and Death. 2008. 27 Dec. 2008 <[http://paranormal.suite101.com/article.cfm/curse\\_hope\\_diamond](http://paranormal.suite101.com/article.cfm/curse_hope_diamond)>.

<[http://www.postalmuseum.si.edu/museum/1d\\_Hope\\_Diamond.html](http://www.postalmuseum.si.edu/museum/1d_Hope_Diamond.html)>.

<<http://www.pbs.org/treasuresoftheworld/hope/hcurse.html>>.

# New EFMLS Guidelines

From January 2009 EFMLS Newsletter/ Edited by Jessica Thomson

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Due to circumstances beyond their control, EFMLS was forced to go to a new insurance carrier. As a condition of keeping our old rate, Burlington Insurance Company has stated that there must be a signed contract for covered activities. This would include meeting and show facilities where the club pays a fee for the use of such facilities.

While no written contract is needed for field trips, there is a verbal contract between the clubs and the quarry, mine, etc. where the club activity is to take place.

In order to guarantee, for insurance purposes, that all activities that might be covered by insurance are legitimate club activities, they must be described in our club newsletter. EFMLS knows that there are times when a field trip or club activity will come up at the last minute and we won't have time to get the details into the newsletter and information is spread by word of mouth or e-mail. To cover times when this happens, we need to either include information about the trip in the minutes of our meeting the following month and print them in our newsletter or have an article about the trip printed in the newsletter.

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So, what this means is that we are going to have to keep a more detailed account of trips and make sure they are all presented in the newsletter. We do have our faithful reporters of trips, but as a club, everyone needs to share the responsibility of reporting trips. If you attend a field trip, discuss as a group who will be reporting for the newsletter. Remember, pictures accompany an article wonderfully. Not only will this comply with the guidelines, but everyone enjoys reading about what happened on trips.

## Possible Fossil Trips

By Dave Lines

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"... winter time is best for finding fossils as the tides are much lower than in the summer --- for two reasons (1) the sun is actually closer to the earth in the winter and the gravitational pull of the moon (at times of full and new moon) and the sun together produces lower low tides and (2) more opportunity for strong, sustained northwest winds which lowers the tide even further than the regular winter low tides. And at those times when NW wind blows for 2 or more days at full or new moon, the tide is phenomenally low. When the tide is extra low, many more fossils are exposed on the beaches of the bay and rivers.

Upcoming times to especially watch the wind forecasts are Jan 26th (new moon), Feb 9th (full moon) and Feb 25th (new moon). We may have short notice fossil trips (announced by email the night before) during those times."

## Rock Meeting Buying Opportunity

By Lorna Larson

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"I will be bringing some rough rock to sell to benefit the club. This comes from the Montgomery Club and consists of a lot of Namibia green moss, rhodonite, a little agate & jasper, and some pieces of Thompsonite. The last are approximately pea size nodules of rhyolite coated in green stone embedded in matrix. I'm familiar with it coming from Minnesota. Don't know if it comes from anywhere else, but it is relatively rare. There are several small pieces and a few large chunks of this material. This is a chance to get some nice rough reasonably priced."

## Online Rock and Mineral Sites

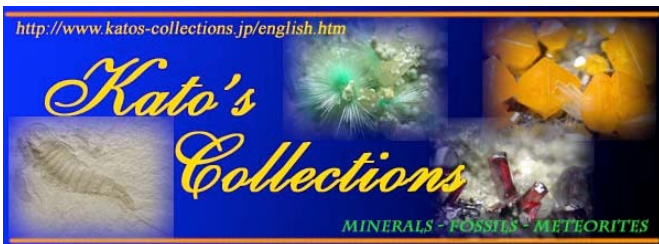
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### Bob's Rock Shop

<http://www.rockhounds.com/rockshop/table.shtml>

Rock&Gem Magazine has joined Bob's Rock Shop online and is working to provide a first class topical information and connectivity resource for rockhounds on the Internet. In addition to publishing featured articles here, Rock&Gem provides an extensive online show list and submission form, an interface to search thousands of R&G back issue article titles for topics of interest, writer's guidelines and more.

Other features to browse include downloadable freeware and shareware software for rockhounds, a collecting site catalog for the United States and Canada, the Rock Net bulletin board, several collections of entertaining and informative mineralogical articles and essays, contests for rockhounds, the free use, form-accessible Rock Trader classified ads, an extensive US Club list, and rockhound tailored visitor information for Tucson, Arizona, including the annual Tucson Gem and Mineral Show. The gallery of specimen images, which now features over 150 specimens, remains a primary focus of the Shop. The Shop's extensive link list is being continuously updated and expanded and provides links to many categories of kindred rocky sites.



<http://www.katos-collections.jp/english.htm>

Every mineral you can think of....find it on the list, click and you'll see an amazing picture with the origin of the specimen. Definitely a site to bookmark in your favorites!

### THE MINERAL AND GEMSTONE KINGDOM

[www.minerals.net](http://www.minerals.net)

Mineral and Gemstone guides include detailed information about the geology of the selected specimen. A photo gallery includes photos of specimens. With the site's glossary you will find a comprehensive list of terms with definitions and explanations regarding the subjects of minerals and gemstones.

### The Mineral Gallery

*Online Rock Shop and Mineral Auction*

<http://themineralgallery.com>



Pretty self-explanatory. Some amazing specimens... especially if there's something you want and can't go hunting for yourself.



# ROCKTALK

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

**Next Meeting  
January 27,  
2009**

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

## Message from the Editor

By Jessica Thomson

Happy New Year!

I hope that everyone had a safe and happy holiday season. I know I did and can't believe how fast last year went.

With the start of a new year, we have the start of a new set of officers and a chance for more involvement.

I would like that involvement to bring some fresh ideas and fill the pages of our club newsletter. I tried to start things out on the right foot this year and did something different myself: I wrote an article. That took some time, but I found it to be fun. I would love to see some different names gracing the pages of the RockTalk and encourage you to do some writing of your own.

As the editor, it is my job to organize and publish the information coming from club members, so I challenge

each of you to share something with the rest of us. Even our junior members have something to offer.

Each month this year, I will be requesting different types of pieces for the newsletter. I ask each member to contribute something during the course of the year and we will have an exciting year!

Of course, as always, I also encourage everyone to sign up for programs and refreshments. Our slate is dismally empty and I would like to see that filled up. Please contact Larry O'Callaghan to sign up for those things.

I look forward to seeing everyone at the January meeting.

Until then, happy hunting!

### PROGRAMS/ REFRESHMENTS

January	Program: BobDavidson Refreshments: Tom and Cobb Allison
February	
March	
April	
May	
June	
July	
August	Annual Potluck/Auction

#### January's Newsletter Challenge:

**Poetry: Write or find a poem with a topic of rocks and minerals. Poems can be of any style, free verse, limericks, haiku, etc. Summon your inner poet! Send poems to rocktalkeditor@yahoo.com**