



Southern Maryland Rock and Mineral Club



ROCK TALK

DEC /JAN 20/21

NATURE CENTER REMAINS CLOSED TO GROUP MEETINGS

Message from Stephanie Jacob of the Clearwater Nature Center...

"Here at Clearwater Nature Center we continue in a holding pattern waiting for the County Executive to give us permission to reopen. With the increase in COVID cases we can expect that there will be a delay until the daily cases goes back down. We will not be renewing memberships until the building is reopened and we have permission for meetings to gather here again. Park and Planning just sent out a notice this morning (Dec 18) that Rental Cancellations will continue through February 2021."

The Clearwater Nature Center will keep their ongoing effort ensuring best practices ensuring the lowest chances of spreading COVID-19 between the animals and humans.

So the SMRMC meeting scheduled for December, January and February 2020 /2021 is cancelled. (And not due to "Lack of Interest!!")

The Lapidary workshop is also closed until further notice - both because of the COVID-19 shutdown

MINUTES

No minutes for April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November and December 2020 meetings due to COVID-19 closure of the Clearwater Nature Center. Also it appears due to COVID-19 conditions, January and February Meetings will not be done UNLESS we have a meeting via a "ZOOM-like" on line meeting is held. Unfortunately "No News does not mean "Good News" in this situation.

AFMS 2020 Web Site Contest

Congrats to Denise Harrison, the webmaster for the Clackamette Mineral and Gem Club of Oregon City, OR www.clackamettegem.org/ for having the TOP Web site 2020. Two EFMLS Clubs, Chesapeake Gem and Mineral Society of Baltimore, MD (Michael J. Royer) and Orange County Gem and Mineral Club of New York of Orange County, NY (Heather Shields) were Honorable Mentioned

One can find the detailed listing of those that placed and were Honorable Mentions and 2021 Web Site rules at <http://www.amfed.org/web/ContestResults.htm>

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2020 / 2021 PROGRAMS/REFRESHMENTS SCHEDULE		
MONTH	PROGRAM	REFRESHMENTS
DECEMBER	MEETING CANCELED.	MEETING CANCELED
JANUARY	MEETING CANCELED.	MEETING CANCELED
FEBRUARY	MEETING CANCELED.	MEETING CANCELED
MARCH	DEFINATE MAYBE (Or Not)???	Rules may change

NATURE CENTER POLICY

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic, the Nature Center is **not** allowing personal food into the facility for group meetings. This and many other COVID-19 related limitations/rules/etc are being routinely reviewed in an attempt for a return to normality. The Nature Center will keep us informed on any changes to the ongoing COVID policies that PG County has instituted.

If anyone has noticed, there are many TBDs listed. These are not meant as "Surprise" events. We are in need of speakers/topics to enrich fellow members knowledge and interest. **Carol** is our current POC for this and will be **VERY** happy

to have people volunteer to fill the TBDs list in the calendar. **PLEASE** help **Carol** smile by removing the TBDs from this table.

Any changes to the schedule will be documented in the meeting minutes (when there is a meeting) and reported in this table.

From the Crowded and Messy Desk of the Editor:

I started this Newsletter effort the last month we met. I was hoping that the COVID-19 stoppage of our gatherings and taking on this job was only a coincidence, not a premonition of things to come. But we all want all things to go back to

"normal". But unfortunately, all of us know what we knew as "Normal" will not return. No matter what we think, some of the changes we are currently enduring will continue for the rest of lives. The freedoms we all grew up with, have and will continue to change how we all live out our lives for some years in the future.

We all must start to realize what our group will now be able to do during our meetings, outside events, shows, and field trips to mention a few of the events our club has done. Thinking "outside of the box" is needed more and more to accomplish what has done before.

One way forward could be "Virtual Meetings". The Eastern Federation has gone ahead and acquired ten (10) ZOOM accounts that can be shared across its many clubs within its region. **IF** we want to move to VIRTUAL group meeting until we can actually see each other in person....this is an option we can explore.

On the Virtual Meeting Front, I (in a weak moment) volunteered to attend the Eastern Federation Editors Group ZOOM meeting. Approximately eighteen (18) editors across the region have connected for the two (2) meetings so far. Items discussed have been the transmission of the Newsletters, how topics are generated and collected, computer programs used for news letter generation, historical storage and multiple other minor topics. This Group will meet initially monthly for a few months then spread the meetings out over the remainder of the year. Agendas will be generated by the attendees prior to the

meeting. It has been a good discussion group and promises to continue to be an outstanding way of sharing information.

We all want to see each other and share our experiences once again. Stay in touch via mail, phone and email.

WILDACRES 2021

If all goes well, the dates for the EFMLS Wildacres Spring Session are May 17-23. The unknown, of course, is the situation regarding the Corona virus. Because of this, we are not including a registration form, and asking everyone not to send in checks at this time.

Tentative classes include wire wrapping, chain mail, cabochon making, micromount preparation, faceting, beading, and PMC. These may be subject to change as conditions change. Cost for the entire week will be \$435 which includes room and board, classes, lectures, and other activities.

We hope to know by March if Wildacres will be able to open and if the conditions in the eastern states permit travel. **Stay tuned. Steve Weinberger, Wildacres Director**

YOU TUBE VIDEOS.....

Morefield Mine Tour:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u5aQp57HMso>

Rock collecting guide for geology beginners

<https://www.basementguides.com/rock-collecting-and-geology-basics/>

Calendar of Events

Many events have been postponed/cancelled and/or rescheduled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Please check with the sponsoring club to make sure the event has not been cancelled due to the ongoing Covid-19 Coronavirus pandemic before attending any event.

16-17 January 2021—DELAND, FLORIDA: Annual show; Tomoka Gem & Mineral Society; Volusia County Fairgrounds, 3150 E New York Ave., Tommy Lawrence Arena; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; Adults \$4, free admission for children 12 and under when accompanied by a paying adult; 50+ vendors, demos, door prizes, grand prize raffle, free parking, and activities for children; contact Mary DeJan, P. O. Box 1613, Ormond Beach, FL 32175, (386) 871-6221; Email: tomokagmsvendor@gmail.com; Website: tomokagms.org

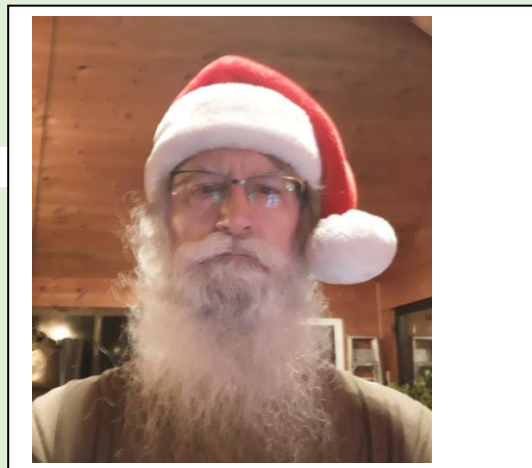
27 January to 8 February 2021 —TUCSON, ARIZONA: Wholesale and retail show; JOGS International Exhibits; Tucson Expo Center, 3750 E. Irvington Rd.; daily 10-6; No children under 14 allowed on show site.; Show Hours: 10am-5pm daily; 10am-4pm on Feb. 8 (last day) Free for qualified buyers with a Tax ID/Resale certificate. On-site registration is available but it's recommend that buyers pre-register online. Public guests may purchase tickets at the Show or online: <https://jogsshow.com/account/>; contact Yelena Masenko, 650 S Hill St, Suite 513, Los Angeles, CA 90014, (213) 629-3030; Email: info@jogsshow.com; Website: jogsshow.com

28-30 May 2021 —SALEM, VIRGINIA: Annual show; American Gem, Mineral And Jewelry Shows LLC; Salem Civic Center, 1001 Roanoke Blvd; Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 11-5; Adults \$7, children age 11-17 \$2, free admission for children 10 and under; Featuring vendors with gems, minerals, jewelry, beads, fossils, and meteorites; contact Alan Koch; Email: agmjs3@gmail.com

EFMLS Holiday Zoom Party 16 Dec 2020

EFMLS had a Zoom Holiday party and multiple contests of best collected "piece", holiday decorations, attire, best fossil and Best Santa Beard. I represented SMRMC at the event that had approximately 36 people. Good conversation and sharing of beautiful collections and fossils were done.

In the Post ZOOM email was the following: **Give a shout out to Richard Simcsak of Southern Maryland Rock & Mineral, who won the best Santa Beard Contest at the 2020 EFMLS Holiday Bash/Festivus.** Rumor has it, Santa also tips his hat to Dennis Nelson- Gem, Lapidary & Mineral Society of Washington, DC for 2nd place.



Why NORAD Tracks Santa Claus

December 21st, 2020, 2:07PM / BY Amelia Grabowski

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/blogs/air-space-museum/2020/12/21/why-norad-tracks-santa-claus>



Gen. Glen VanHerck, Commander of North American Aerospace Defense Command and U.S. Northern Command talks on the phone as part of a video celebrating the NORAD Santa Tracker's 65th year.

On November 30, 1955, a phone rang on Col. Harry Shoup's desk at Continental Air Defense Command (CONAD). CONAD was tasked with watching for a Soviet attack by air and alerting Strategic Air Command. In the midst of the Cold War, a phone call to Colonel Shoup's desk could have brought critical news for national security.



Colonel Harry Shoup became known as the "Santa Colonel" due to his role in establishing the tradition of NORAD tracking Santa's safe flight. (U.S. Air Force)

However, when Colonel Shoup answered, the little voice on the other end asked "Is this Santa Claus?"

"There may be a guy called Santa Claus, at the North Pole, but he's not the one I worry about coming from that direction," was Shoup's reply, according to an article that ran the following day. One can only imagine how the young caller reacted.

Why call CONAD to reach Santa? It all started with a misdial. That year, Sears ran an ad where Santa invited young people to "Call me direct on my telephone." However, one caller didn't heed the ad's warning to "be sure and dial the correct number," and instead reached Colonel Shoup—sparking a chain of events that would become a Christmas tradition.



A 1955 Sears' ad inviting children to call Santa on his personal phone. (Sears)

The week of Christmas, Shoup's staff added Santa and his sleigh to the plexiglass map CONAD used to track unidentified aircraft. The joke sparked an idea and CONAD told press they "will continue to track and guard Santa and his sleigh on his trip to and from the U.S. against possible attack from those who do not believe in Christmas."

Journalist Matt Novak of *Gizmodo* points out that both Shoup and CONAD's responses were less "Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus," and more "Yes, Virginia, there is a Cold War." Their messaging, that CONAD was there to protect Santa against threats, aligned with a larger media campaign focusing on the importance of air defense.

However, the Cold War wasn't the first time the U.S. military reported seeing Santa. According to Yoni Appelbaum for *The Atlantic*, during World War II, General Eisenhower issued a press release confirming "a new North Pole

Command has been formed ... Santa Claus is directing operations ... He has under his command a small army of gnomes," although the censored version cut out the location of Santa's headquarters. In 1948, the Air Force reported one of their early warning radars had detected "one unidentified sleigh, powered by eight reindeer, at 14,000 feet, heading 180 degrees."

CONAD would soon set itself apart from these earlier messages of Santa Claus levity. In 1956, one year after Colonel Shoup spoke with the young caller, the Associated Press and United Press International called to ask if Shoup's team planned to track Santa again, and CONAD confirmed they did. In 1958, the newly established North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) continued—and grew—the tradition.

In the 1960s, NORAD sent records to radio stations with updates on Santa's path to play for their listeners. The 1970s brought with it Santa Tracker commercials. By 1997, Santa Tracker went digital—launching the website many of our younger readers will be familiar with. (Which has, of course, received some enhancements since then.)

How NORAD tracks Santa has also evolved over the years. Their website explains that they now use a combination of radar, satellites that "detect Rudolph's bright red nose with no problem," and jet fighters. "Canadian NORAD fighter pilots, flying the CF-18, take off out of Newfoundland and welcome Santa to North America," explains NORAD, and in the United States, "American NORAD fighter pilots in either the F-15s, F16s or F-22s get the thrill of flying with Santa."

Quartzite - The metamorphic rock composed almost entirely of quartz.

Article by: [Hobart M. King](#), PhD, RPG

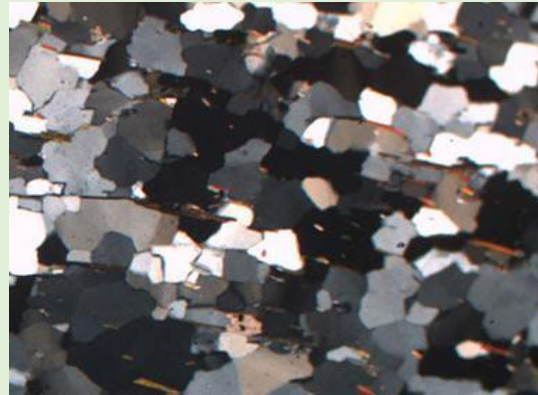
What is Quartzite?



Quartzite: A specimen of quartzite showing its conchoidal fracture and granular texture. The specimen shown is about two inches (five centimeters) across.

Quartzite is a nonfoliated [metamorphic rock](#) composed almost entirely of [quartz](#). It forms when a quartz-rich [sandstone](#) is altered by the heat, pressure, and chemical activity of metamorphism. These conditions recrystallize the sand grains and the silica cement that binds them together. The result is a network of interlocking quartz grains of incredible strength.

The interlocking crystalline structure of quartzite makes it a hard, tough, durable rock. It is so tough that it breaks through the quartz grains rather than breaking along the boundaries between them. This is a characteristic that separates true quartzite from sandstone.



Quartzite Under a Microscope: A specimen of the Bo Quartzite collected near South Troms, Norway, observed through a microscope in thin-section under cross-polarized light. The quartz grains in this view range in color from white to gray to black, and they form a tight interlocking network. Photograph by Jackdann88, used here under a [Creative Commons license](#).

Physical Properties of Quartzite

Quartzite is usually white to gray in color. Some rock units that are stained by iron can be pink, red, or purple. Other impurities can cause quartzite to be yellow, orange, brown, green, or blue.

The quartz content of quartzite gives it a hardness of about seven on the [Mohs Hardness Scale](#). Its extreme toughness made it a favorite rock for use as an impact tool by early people. Its conchoidal fracture allowed it to be shaped into large cutting tools such as ax heads and scrapers. Its coarse texture made it less suitable for producing tools with fine edges such as knife blades and projectile points.

Where Does Quartzite Form?

Most quartzite forms during mountain-building events at convergent plate boundaries. There, sandstone is metamorphosed into quartzite while deeply buried. Compressional forces at the plate boundary fold and fault the rocks and thicken the crust into a mountain range. Quartzite is an important rock type in folded mountain ranges throughout the world.

How the Name "Quartzite" Is Used

Geologists have used the name "quartzite" in a few different ways, each with a slightly different meaning. Today most geologists who use the word "quartzite" are referring to rocks that they believe are metamorphic and composed almost entirely of quartz.

A few geologists use the word "quartzite" for [sedimentary rocks](#) that have an exceptionally high quartz content. This usage is falling out of favor but remains in older textbooks and other older publications. The name "quartz arenite" is a more appropriate and less confusing name for these rocks.

It is often difficult or impossible to differentiate quartz arenite from quartzite. The transition of sandstone into quartzite is a gradual process. A single rock unit such as the Tuscarora Sandstone might fully fit the definition of quartzite in some parts of its extent and be better called "sandstone" in other areas. Between these areas, the names "quartzite" and "sandstone" are used inconsistently and often guided by habit. It is often called "quartzite" when rock units above and below it are clearly sedimentary. This contributes to the

inconsistency in the ways that geologists use the word "quartzite."

Hammer With Caution !

Wise geologists, who have memorable experiences with quartzites, hit them with a [rock hammer](#) only when necessary. If a freshly broken piece is needed for examination, they break off a small protrusion with a light tap. That small piece is usually more than enough.

Don't hit quartzite hard with a rock hammer. It's not a good idea. If you must, be sure that you are wearing impact-resistant goggles, gloves, long sleeves, long pants, and sturdy shoes. A sharp hammer blow usually bounces off. That bounce can cause injury. When the rock does break, the impact often yields sparks and sharp pieces of rock traveling at high velocity.

Be certain that nearby field partners are warned and safely away. Hold the base of your goggles with your free hand before striking the rock. That will protect the lower half of your face from sparks and sharp flakes of high velocity rock. You have been warned.

Uses of Quartzite

Quartzite has a diversity of uses in construction, manufacturing, architecture, and decorative arts. Although its properties are superior to many currently used materials, its consumption has always been low for various reasons. The uses of quartzite and some reasons that it is avoided are summarized below.

Architectural Use

In architecture, [marble](#) and [granite](#) have been the favorite materials for thousands of years. Quartzite, with a [Mohs hardness](#) of seven along with greater toughness, is superior to both in many uses. It stands up better to abrasion in stair treads, floor tiles, and countertops. It is more resistant to most chemicals and environmental conditions. It is available in a range of neutral colors that many people prefer. The use of quartzite in these uses is growing slowly as more people learn about it.

Construction Use

Quartzite is an extremely durable [crushed stone](#) that is suitable for use in the most demanding applications. Its soundness and abrasion resistance are superior to most other materials.

Unfortunately, the same durability that makes quartzite a superior construction material also limits its use. Its hardness and toughness cause heavy wear on crushers, screens, truck beds, cutting tools, loaders, tires, tracks, drill bits, and other equipment. As a result, the use of quartzite is mainly limited to geographic areas where other aggregates are not available.

Manufacturing Use

Quartzite is valued as a raw material because of its high silica content. A few unusual deposits have a silica content of over 98%. These are mined and used to manufacture glass, ferrosilicon, manganese ferrosilicon, silicon metal, silicon carbide, and other materials.

Decorative Use

Quartzite can be a very attractive stone when it is colored by inclusions. Inclusions of [fuchsite](#) (a green chromium-rich variety of [muscovite](#) mica) can give quartzite a pleasing green color. If the quartzite is semitransparent to translucent, the flat flakes of mica can reflect light to produce a glittering luster known as aventurescence.

Material that displays this property is known as "[aventurine](#)," a popular material used to produce beads, cabochons, [tumbled stones](#), and small ornaments. Aventurine can be pink or red when stained with iron. Included dumortierite produces a blue color. Other inclusions produce white, gray, orange, or yellow aventurine.

Stone Tools

Quartzite has been used by humans to make stone tools for over one million years. It was mainly used for impact tools, but its conchoidal fracture allowed it to be broken to form sharp edges. Broken pieces of quartzite were used for crude cutting and chopping tools.

Quartzite was not the preferred material for producing cutting tools. [Flint](#), [chert](#), jasper, [agate](#), and [obsidian](#) all can be knapped to produce fine cutting edges, which are difficult to produce when working quartzite. Quartzite served as an inferior substitute for these preferred materials.



Fuchsitic Quartzite: A specimen of quartzite that contains significant amounts of green fuchsite, a chromium-rich muscovite mica. This specimen measures about 7 centimeters across and was collected from a small abandoned quarry where the flaggy rocks were produced and cut for use as decorative stones. The quarry is in the Elmers Rock Greenstone Belt, Wyoming. Photograph by James St. John, used here under a [Creative Commons](#) license.



Ridge-Forming Quartzite: An outcrop of the Chimney Rock Formation in Catoctin

Mountain Park near Thurmont, Maryland.

Catoctin Mountain is part of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The Chimney Rock Formation in this area caps many of the ridges, drapes the flanks of the mountains as scree, and is made up mostly of quartzite. Photo by Alex Demas, United States Geological Survey.



Quartzite scree: A steep slope covered with an unstable blanket of quartzite scree. Scree is a name used for resistant pieces of broken rock that cover a talus slope. This photo was taken near Begunje na Gorenjskem, Slovenia. A [Creative Commons](#) image by Pinky sl.

CLUBS OF EFMLS

BY RICH SIMCSAK

D L I U G S R E T T U C M E G
 A S C E N T R A L P A F G H N
 B D R E T A W E D I T K J O V
 A M E R I C A N T Y U L R T A
 L Y N C H B U R G T E T E T P
 T Q T J W A Y W W H H R R N E
 I N U P S T P P A E O O A E N
 M N P A I T L O R E L F W X I
 O M M C N L D N E L U Y A U N
 R X M A W N V E V T T A C T S
 E E S P A A P S M R M C E A U
 G D A N B U R Y H E L P D P L
 A B E H I R D N O M H C I R A
 C H E S A P E A K E G E M L L
 S S L O W E R B U C K S C T Y

This month's Word Search has the names of some of the EFMLS clubs in the "local" area that we may have had time collecting with, meeting or even just talking over the interesting aspects of this great hobby of ours.

Some of the club names have been shortened due to the length of the name. Those with parentheses were not placed in the word search. Apologizes to those clubs in advance.

AMERICAN (FOSSIL)
 BALTIMORE (MINERAL)
 CENTRAL PA
 CHESAPEAKE GEM
 DANBURY
 DELAWARE
 GEM CITY
 GEM CUTTERS GUILD
 LOWER BUCKS CTY

LYNCHBURG
 NORTHERN VA
 PATUXENT (LAPIDARY)
 RICHMOND
 SHENANDOAH (VALLEY)
 SMRMC
 TIDEWATER
 VA PENINSULA



The Southern Maryland Rock and Mineral Club
Meetings take place on the 4th Tuesday of each month at
7:00pm
Clearwater Nature Center, 11000 Thrift Road, Clinton, MD.
For More information, call:
(301) 297-4575
We're on the web:
SMRMC.ORG

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Field Trip Chairman David Lines Dave.lines@earthlink.net	Treasurer David Lines Dave.lines@earthlink.net

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ITEMS WANTED/FOR SALE

For Sale – Virginia Unakite slabs (approx ¼ inch thick) – \$0.50 per square inch (this is half off regular price). Call Dave (240) 427-7062