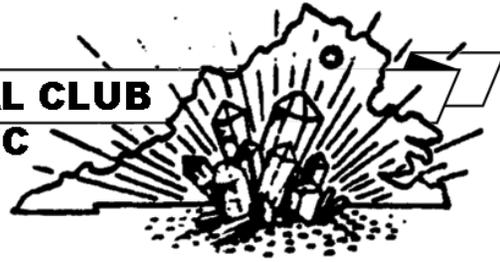




# THE NORTHERN VIRGINIA MINERAL CLUB INC



*Crystals are the flowers of the Mineral Kingdom*



## THE MINERAL NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 52 No. 2

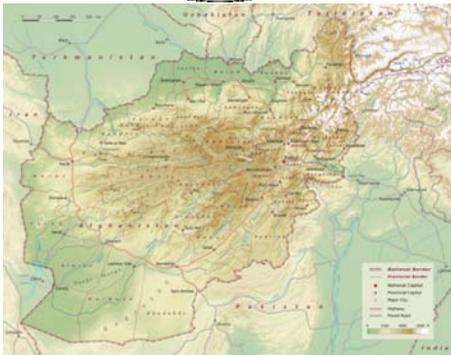
FEBRUARY 2011

Also find information on our Club Website: <http://www.novamineralclub.org>

### Geology of Afghanistan

We will begin our meeting with a discussion of the fall show. Issues concerning the show arise throughout the year (location, parking, publicity, costs, etc.). This year, by starting our discussion early, we want to involve more members in show planning decisions and in making our excellent show even better.

We've invited Steve Johnson to give us a presentation titled, "The Highlights of Minerals and Geology of Afghanistan," based on his many months in the country. We hope that you will join us to learn about the diversity of minerals in Afghanistan, the beautiful minerals that come



Images courtesy Wikipedia

from there, and to hear Steve's stories of acquiring specimens in an environment that is unlike most of us have ever known. Steve's expertise in geology, combined with his interest in minerals and his experience in the cultural and social issues in Afghanistan provide a exceptional opportunity for us to learn about this part of the world from a unique perspective.

For the Share and Tell, let's bring pegmatite minerals, from Afghanistan or anywhere.

We will not be having our usual dinner with the speaker prior to the meeting. We hope to see you at the meeting!

#### NVMC Schedule:

**28 Feb General meeting of the NVMC at 7:45pm**

**28 Mar General meeting and AUCTION of the NVMC at 7:45pm**

**Also, meeting dates for the rest of the year have been determined:**

**March 28**

**April 25**

**May 23**

**June 27**

**September 26**

**October 24**

**November 28 + AUCTION**

**December 19\***

**\* This is a joint meeting with MNCA**

#### Inside this issue:

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### Submit Articles, Art, Announcements

Please consider writing an article or special feature for the newsletter. An article can be about anything related to rocks, minerals, fossils, lapidary, travel, or combination thereof. If you are not a writer but you like to be creative, consider submitting a puzzle, comic strip, artwork, or photograph.

In general, submitted materials that are received 9 days prior to the club meeting will be included in the next newsletter.

If there is an announcement you would like to make to our club, feel free to send the announcement for publishing in the newsletter. Garage sales, club events (need not be NVMC events, we are happy to announce other meetings or shows that may be on interest to our members.

For announcements, please send exactly what you want published.

**Send materials for publishing to [news.nvmc@gmail.com](mailto:news.nvmc@gmail.com)**

## NVMC VISIT JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY

*Story and Photos By Sheryl Sims*

February 19th's field trip to JMU's mineralogy department, at Dr. Lance Kearns's annual invitation, was an extremely interesting one! Well attended by members of NVMC, DCMSC, MNCA, and rock hounds from the Richmond area, the day was spent examining minerals of all types and by being introduced to various machines that x-rayed and identified the same.

Taking a break, we all headed to lunch at a local Italian restaurant. Prior to lunch we had an op-



Cindy Kearns spent time talking with Amber about JMU, locating the bookstore so that Amber could purchase a sweat shirt, and her future career goals.



portunity to visit JMU's mineral museum. The museum contained a beautiful collection of specimens! Two displays of minerals were housed in cases donated by NVMC & MNCA club members, and Fred Schaefermeyer.

Also, of particular note was Bob and Jessica Simonoff presenting Dr. Kearns with the "Friends of Mineralogy" certificate for the 2010 Best Article in Mineral News on "Skeletal Galena Crystals from Madan, Bulgaria - Natural or Fake," authored by Dr. Kearns and Jessica.





## Happy 92nd Birthday! Fred Schaefermeyer 1/28/19

By: Kathy Hrechka

One of our club's most noted members just celebrated his 92nd birthday. One of his greatest mineral accomplishments includes coordinating funding and placement of "The American Golden Topaz" located in Gem Hall of the Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, D.C.

The 22,892.5 carat topaz, roughly the size of an automobile headlight, weighs 12.3 pounds and sparkles from 172 facets. It is the largest faceted golden-yellow topaz gemstone in the world, and was presented to the Smithsonian on May 4, 1988 by William Maloney Jr., Vice-President of AFMS on behalf of the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies and their six regional federations. Fred was instrumental in soliciting funds for the "Friends of the Smithsonian Topaz Fund", which raised forty thousand dollars within seven months in order for the topaz to be cut and delivered to the Gem Hall.



Figure 2: John S. White, curator of the gem and mineral collection at the Smithsonian Institution, setting the topaz in the museum's Gemstone Giants case. Photo by Bill and Isabella Burns.

John S. White, curator of the gem and mineral collection set the Golden Topaz in the museum's Gemstone Giants case.

Geology became Fred's hobby after retiring from the US Air Force in 1968, then again af-

ter a fourteen year career at 3M.

Fred first joined the Northern Virginia Mineral club in the early 1980s, then joined our club. He has held most club offices, as well as Federation offices. He has also exhibited and received awards for his competitive mineral cases at Federation shows.

Many hobbyists know Fred, because he was an active member of most every mineral club in our area. His

micromount collection estimated 7,000 specimens at one time.

Fred's family has been an important part of his life. He celebrated his 50th wedding anniversary in 1999 with his wife, Gerry. He has four children, eight grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren. Gerry has since passed away. Fred later moved back to his roots in Colorado, where he has rekindled a companionship with Muriel, residing in the suburbs of Denver, CO.

Reprinted from *Rocks and Minerals*, published by HELDREF PUBLICATIONS, 4000 Albemarle Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20016.

*Billed as the world's largest faceted gemstone, the American Golden has found a permanent home in the Gem Hall at the Smithsonian Institution.*

## THE AMERICAN GOLDEN TOPAZ

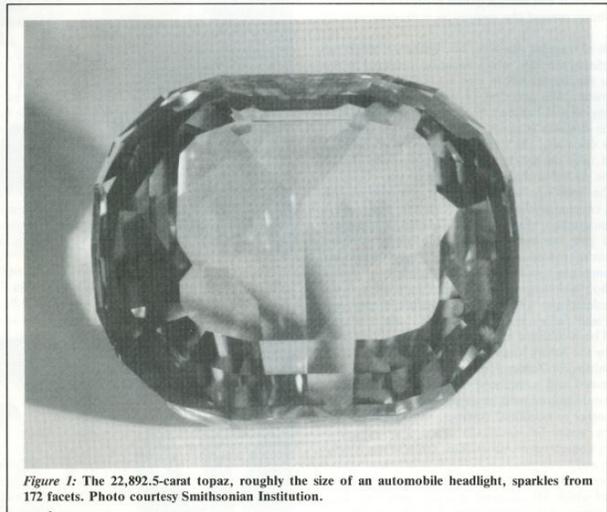


Figure 1: The 22,892.5-carat topaz, roughly the size of an automobile headlight, sparkles from 172 facets. Photo courtesy Smithsonian Institution.

*Fred C. Schaefermeyer*  
FRED C. SCHAEFERMEYER  
P. O. Box 40119  
Alexandria, Virginia 22310

THE LARGEST FACETED GEMSTONE IN THE WORLD, by weight a 22,892.5-carat (12.3 pounds) golden-yellow topaz, was presented to the Smithsonian Institution May 4, 1988. It has 172 facets, an overall length

of 175.3 mm, depth of 149.4 mm, and width of 93.4 mm. It has a table facet that is 105.3 mm long and 93.7 mm across. In other terms, this rectangular cushion-cut topaz is as large as an automobile headlight.

In early 1987, John Sampson White, curator of the gem and mineral collection at the Smithsonian Institution, contacted me and explained that the Smithsonian had lost the Brazilian Princess, now the second largest cut gemstone, to

360 ROCKS & MINERALS

**Today Fred and Muriel spend their "Golden Topaz" years enjoying their families, and traveling around the world together.**

## January Minutes & Presentation Notes

January 24, 2011

Interim Secretary: Sheryl Sims

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Meeting Convened: 7:45 pm

**Club President:** Barry Remer welcomed members.

**Secretary's Report:** Kathy Hrechka was unable to attend. Secretary's report from last month's minutes was not reported.

**Treasurer's Report:** Rick Reiber stated that he needs someone to serve as backup for him and to allow him to put backup files on their computer using Office Quick Book. (Please note Rick's new email address: [Mathfun34@yahoo.com](mailto:Mathfun34@yahoo.com)). He also mentioned, and discussions were held on the possibility of the club adopting an opt-in email system. A sign-up sheet was circulated after a quick show of hands to see who would in fact be interested in adopting this form of communication. Barry Remer stated other clubs to which he belonged used similar systems and that he was never made aware of any negative issues/abuses of club member's contact information.

Barry Remer recognized new members and visitors: Charles and Laura Bell; Bill Oakley; Douglas Brooks; and Logan Babcock.

Members broke for delicious and much appreciated refreshments provided by Karen Lewis.

Door Prizes were distributed by Sheryl Sims and Amber to four lucky club members. They were: Sue Marcus, Marie Brown, Karen Lewis and Pat Haynes. Congratulations!

Gerry Cox ([gerryannec@verizon.net](mailto:gerryannec@verizon.net)) mentioned that registration is now open for Wild Acres. See the Eastern Federal website as well as ours for additional information of feel free to contact Gerry. She also stated that the Gemological Institute of America meets in Rosslyn once a month for \$15 per session. If you join or take a GIA course, it entitles you to full membership (\$55) to the Alumnae Association of DC. Also, the Atlantic Micro Mounters' Conference will be held April 1-3. Pre-registration is \$30/\$35 at the door. It will be held at the Maryland Hospital Association, in Elkridge, MD.

Dave McLean stated that the Montgomery Gem and Lapidary Society will hold its annual mineral show on March 19 & 20, at the Montgomery County Fairgrounds, in Rockville, MD. Club members agreed that this is a very good show. He also stated that the Southern Maryland club will host it's mineral show on April 19.

It was reported by Robert Clemenzi that Joe Murter is recovering nicely from quadruple by-pass surgery. He is at Westminster Rehab in Lake Ridge, Recovery Center. It's hoped that he will return home in a few weeks. Club members wish Joe a speedy recovery.

**Guest Speaker:** Dr. P. Patrick Leahy, Executive Director, AGI, Alexandria, VA. Dr. Leahy gave an extremely informative presentation on AGI's mission in the following areas: Providing information services to geoscientists; serving as a voice of shared interests in profession; strengthening geoscience education; and increasing public awareness of the role of geoscientists in natural hazard mitigation, resource use, and environmental quality.

AGI is a nonprofit organization and was formed in 1948. It consists of 49 geoscience member societies in the federation and has over 120,000 geoscientists represented in its headquarters in Alexandria, VA. (see website: [www.agriweb.org](http://www.agriweb.org)).

## January Minutes & Presentation Notes (cont)

AGI contributes to geoscience workforce development in the areas of education: K-12 grade; limited college impact; and work force demographics. Large education efforts have been made in the K-5 curricula; teacher training; online courses; publications; monetary awards (to teachers); and videos. (see: [www.agiweb.org/geoeducation.html](http://www.agiweb.org/geoeducation.html)).

The *Earth Science Summit*, held in Houston, is another important area of focus for AGI which focuses on: K-12 challenges; what can be done as a community; and the importance of investing in education. The *Earth Science Literacy Standard* is yet another area of interest. It identifies what every American should know about earth science and drives what will be taught at the K-12 level.

AGI provides *Information Services* and produces a lot of much needed funding. They offer access to the following publications: *GeoRef*; *AusGeoRef*; *Glossary of Geology*; *CanGeoRef*; *Geoscience World*; and *GeoRef Thesaurus*. (see: [www.agiweb.infoservices.html](http://www.agiweb.infoservices.html)). There is also online access to *MINABS*, mineralogical abstracts, posted in their entirety. There are more than 135,00 abstracts which were published between 1982 and 2008.

*Communication/Public Awareness* is another goal of AGI. It publishes *Earth Magazine*, *GeoSpectrum*; and *Earth Science World*. (see: [www.earthmagazine.org](http://www.earthmagazine.org)).

*Outreach*—AGI hosts Earth Science Week during the first week of October. It reaches 40 million U.S. citizens. It also instituted the National Parks Program, Multi Media, and Collier Book Service, and Exhibit.

In the area of *Government Affairs*, AGI held a leadership forum; Congressional Visit Day and Fisher Congressional Fellowship (in the fall and spring for students during their first year out of school. They spend a year working for a congressman.); and *Monthly Review*, which deals with legislation affecting geoscien-

tists.

*Workforce*—AGI has collected data from the past 25 years on the Minority Participation Program, Indicated Profession Metric; Career materials; and in hosting GeoWebinars. Dr. Leahy stated that they are challenged by Geoscience Age Demographics by the Professional Society in the areas of: petroleum geologists; exploring geophysicists; and economic geologists.

There is some decline in the area of *Work Force Supply*: projects; job growth for geoscience occupation with replacement for attrition (2006-2016). It's at a crisis level. However, the employment outlook below indicates good incomes in a variety of geoscience fields:

|                           |      |
|---------------------------|------|
| Petroleum engineers –     | 120K |
| Geoscientist –            | 110K |
| Atmospheric and Space –   | 100K |
| Environmental Engineer –  | 90K  |
| Mining Geologist –        | 80K  |
| Life Physics –            | 70K  |
| Hydro Science –           | 60K  |
| Geoscience –              | 50K  |
| Environmental Scientist – | 40K  |

Lastly, in terms of *Environmental Affairs*, another arm of AGI, it features the Environmental Awareness Series, which had aired on the Discovery Channel; Mineral Foundation of Society; Living with Earth; Metal Mining and the Environment; Living with Unstable Ground; and Meeting Environmental Challenges.

Meeting Adjourned: 9:45 pm

## The Amber Room

By Sheryl E. Sims

**Amber...** A name and substance after my own heart, having named my own daughter, Amber. Therefore, I couldn't resist offering a bit of information on The Amber Room. As many people know, the Amber Room is considered to be the eighth wonder of the world. The inspiration of King Frederick I, of Prussia, it is located in the Catherine palace and was installed in 1765<sup>1</sup>. Formerly, it had been installed in the smoking room at King Fredericks' Berlin palace in 1711 just two years prior to his death<sup>2</sup>. In face, a panel of the Amber room has the Prussian king's emblem – an eagle – inlaid in its surface. Cottfreid Wolffrani, a Danish craftsman, was commissioned by the King to create the Amber room. He was later replaced by Ernst Schacht and Gottfreid Turow, who actually completed the Amber room<sup>3</sup>.

King Fredericks' son, Frederick William I, later made an alliance with Czar Peter I and gave the Amber Room to the czar to symbolize the importance of occasion. Incredibly, the panels were crated up and moved, by horse and wagon, to St. Petersburg in 1717, where they stayed until 1755. During that time, Empress Elisabeth I then had them moved to Catherine Palace. Because the room there was much bigger, 10 more panels were commissioned and the room was finally finished in 1763<sup>4</sup>. Each panel is exquisitely decorated and is set alternately between 24 Venetian-mirrored columns. There is also a mirror, which was a gift to Empress Elisabeth from King Frederick II, worked into the design. The over all design is baroque and rococo. In other words, it's extremely ornate.

Fortunately, the Amber room wasn't destroyed during the Russian Revolution in 1917. However, in 1941, the German army stripped it of it's beautiful panels. They ended up in Konigsberg Castle, which is east of Prussia. It's thought that the panels were destroyed in a fire at the castle, but some believe they were hidden

by the Nazis. At any rate, they were never found and in 1979, the Amber Room was rebuilt in Catherine Palace and completed in 2003<sup>5</sup>. Clearly, the Amber Room, like my daughter, is indeed a jewel!

\* \* \* \* \*

**Amber** (general composition  $C_{10}H_{16}O$ )<sup>6</sup>: A fossilized tree resin, known for it's beautiful color, is sometimes used in perfumes, as a healing agent, and as jewelry<sup>7</sup>. (It was the practice to burn amber during large festivals in ancient China<sup>8</sup>.) It dates back 320 millions years and can be found in yellow-orange-brown colors, white, pale yellow, brown, red, green and black. The red, green, and blue are more uncommon colors and greatly sought after<sup>9</sup>. Research shows that the

oldest amber, which contains arthropod inclusions, was found in Jordan and Lebanon, and dates as far back as 133 million years ago.



Image courtesy Elisabeth Walraven via Wikipedia

**Inclusions:** Succinosis—abnormal development of resin. Firniss—impure amber. Bony amber—cloudy, opaque and contains tiny bubbles in its resin. Black amber—is actually jet. Bluish-colored amber—contains pyrites. Counterfeit amber—made with plastic resin<sup>10</sup>. Inclusions

often contain insects such as beetles, spiders, roaches, etc.

1. Rock and Gem, Smithsonian, by Ronald Louis Bonowitz(Consultants: Margaret Carruthers, Richard Eftim).

2 - 5. Ibid.

6. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amber>

7 - 10. Ibid.

**CURIOUS CROSS WORD  
PUZZLE**

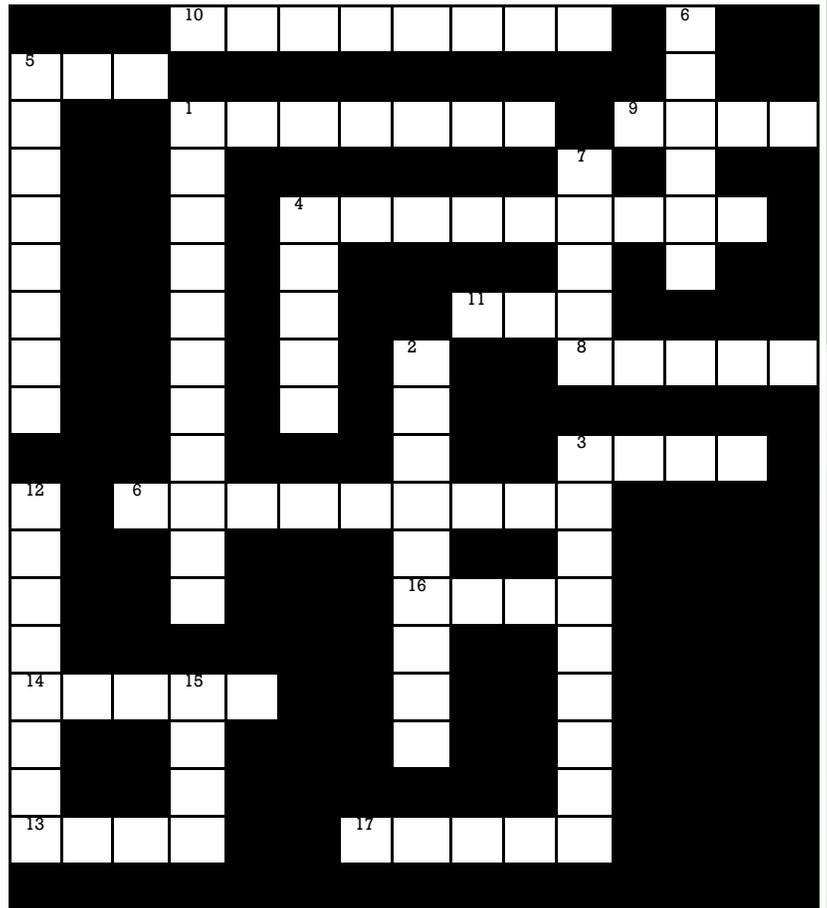
By Sheryl E. Sims

**DOWN**

- 1 also called dark ruby silver
- 2 blood-red/orange translucent variety of chalcedony
- 3 most important member of silicate group
- 4 hollow cavity within rock, lined with crystals
- 5 hydrated sodium calcium aluminosilicate (Greek: to shine)
- 6 rock from space that vaporizes while passing through the atmosphere
- 7 uncut gem crystal
- 12 luster resembling glass
- 15 opposite of push

**ACROSS**

- 1 another name for shadow of termination
- 3 first type of skeletal remains found in Devonian.
- 4 cobalt iron arsenic sulfide (Greek name for blue).
- 5 O, Say can you \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 a lead tin sulfide named in 1826 for a German mineralogist
- 8 mode of growth and appearance of a crystal
- 9 Venus, the morning \_\_\_\_\_
- 10 formed in grains
- 11 carry heavy load
- 13 sheet-shaped igneous intrusion following bedding of existing rocks
- 14 spill over
- 16 graphite
- 17 external flat surface of crystal's shape



Solution



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Round Hill, VA 20141

Phone: 540-751-0922  
Please call between 7pm and 9pm  
E-mail: news.nvmc @ gmail.com



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PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE:  
[HTTP://www.novamineralclub.org](http://www.novamineralclub.org)

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## The Northern Virginia Mineral Club

You can send your Newsletter articles to:

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Round Hill, VA 20141

Or via email: news.nvmc @ gmail.com

**Visitors are Always Welcome at our Club Meetings.**

**TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP!**

**SEND YOUR DUES TO:**

**Rick Reiber  
Treasurer, NVMC  
PO Box 9851  
Alexandria, VA 22304**

**OR  
Bring your dues to the meeting**

**Purpose:** To promote, educate and encourage interest in geology, mineralogy, lapidary arts and related sciences. The society is a member of Eastern Federation of Mineralogical and Lapidary Societies (EFMLS) <http://www.amfed.org/efmls> and American Federation of Mineralogical Societies (AFMS) <http://www.amfed.org>.

**Dues:** Due by 1 January of each year; \$15.00 Individual, \$20.00 Family, and \$6.00 Junior (under 16, sponsored by an adult member).

**Meetings** are held at 7:45 p.m. on the fourth Monday of each month (except

May and December\*) at [Long Branch Nature Center](#), 625 Carlin Springs Road, Arlington, VA 22204. Phone (703) 228-6535. (No meeting in July & August.)

(\*Changes announced in the newsletter.) Snow schedule - Arlington county schools.