



The Mineral Newsletter

Next meeting: January 25, 2021 Time: 7:30 p.m.

The meeting will be remote due to the coronavirus pandemic.



Wulfenite

Red Cloud Mine, Arizona

Source: Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History.
Photo: Dana Penland.

Deadline for Submissions

January 10

Please make your submission by the 10th of the month! Submissions received later might go into a later newsletter.

Volume 61, No. 10

December 2020

Explore our [website](#)!

No meeting in December

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Mineral of the Month Wulfenite

by Sue Marcus

Editor's note: The article first appeared in the February 2017 issue of *The Mineral Newsletter*.

Wulfenite is an eye-popping mineral (as you can tell from the cover). It is found in exquisite crystals and colors. It is a welcome addition to most mineral collections.

Although some collectors pay tens of thousands of dollars for a single wulfenite specimen, the rest of us can afford lovely smaller pieces to grace our collections. Wulfenite specimens may also be purchased at our mineral club auctions. That's where I obtained my favorite wulfenite.

Collectors should be grateful that wulfenite was re-named. In 1772, it was originally called "plumbum spatiosum flavo-rubrum, ex Annaberg, Austria." In 1781, it acquired the German name *kärnthnerischer Bleispath*, which translates roughly as "lead spar from Carinthia" (in Austria). (The term *Spat*—as in *Feldspat*, or feldspar—connotes perfect cleavage.)

Other names were also used before the name it was given in 1845 finally stuck. Wulfenite was named for a Jesuit, Franz Xavier von Wulfen, who authored a monograph on the lead ores of Bleiberg, Austria. The mineral (of whatever name) was apparently first reported from Austria.

Wulfenite is often associated with other lead minerals or with vanadium or zinc minerals like vanadinite, smithsonite, mimetite, and galena. Tungsten can substitute for molybdenum atoms so that wulfenite forms a solid solution series with stolzite; that is, the minerals form a chemical spectrum from containing only molybdenum (wulfenite) to containing only tungsten (stolzite).

Wulfenite occurs as a secondary mineral in deposits rich in lead and molybdenum oxide. The deposits are left by water and other fluids leaching materials from the host rock or as hydrothermal fluids percolating upward through the rock. Host rocks in Austria are carbonates (limestones and dolomites). In Arizona, altered igneous rocks are the hosts.

Crystals of wulfenite appear to be tabular. They are more beautiful when they are transparent or translu-



Merry Christmas!

Happy Hanukkah!



Northern Virginia Mineral Club members,

No in-person social events for now!



Wulfenite, Ahumada Mine, Sierra de Los Lamentos, Chihuahua, Mexico. Source: [Smithsonian Mineral Gallery](#); photo: Chip Clark.

cent, perched on the host rock, showing off (like the specimen on the cover).

Thicker, opaque, tabular orange crystals are more common, such as those from Sierra de Los Lamentos, Chihuahua, Mexico (like the specimen on the previous page). Wulfenite can be used as an ore—economic source—of molybdenum, so many stunning specimens have probably gone to the crushers.

Red Cloud, AZ, is a world-famous locality for exceptional wulfenite specimens. Wulfenite is also found at other sites in Arizona. Mexico also has several noted wulfenite localities.

China and Iran are relatively recent specimen producers, while Congo, Morocco, and Namibia are also well-known localities for specimens. The old locality of Bleiberg, Austria, though not an active mine site, is still treasured for lovely historic specimens.

Most wulfenite specimens are not fluorescent, although some specimens from Arizona are reported to fluoresce under short-wave ultraviolet light, probably with uranium as an activator. Long-wave fluorescence is also reported, although without specific details about where the specimens came from, along with confirming photographs.

Though attractive, wulfenite is far too brittle, fragile, and soft for jewelry. Still, it has been faceted or used in jewelry as a novelty.

Technical Details

Chemical formula PbMoO_4
Crystal formtetragonal
Hardness2.5–3
Density6.5–7.0, g/cm^3 (measured)
(depending on source)
Color:usually orange but can range
from yellow to orange-red and brown
Streakwhite
Cleavageperfect in one direction
Fractureconchoidal to uneven
Lusterresinous, adamantine, vitreous (sources vary) ↗

Sources

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Velebil, 2006. [Lead and zinc deposit Bleiberg in Carinthia \(Austria\)](#). Abstract. Mineral 13(1): 41.
Wikipedia. 2016. [Wulfenite](#).
Wilt, J.C.; Keith, S.B. 1980. [Molybdenum in Arizona](#). Fieldnotes 10(3): 1–12.

February Mineral of the Month: Chrysoberyl

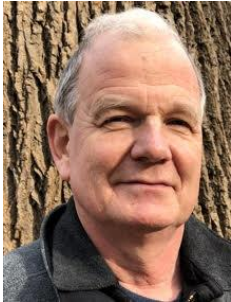
See your chrysoberyl photos in print!

Send your photos with locality descriptions to
Hutch Brown at editor@novamineral.club by
February 1 for possible publication in the February
NVMC newsletter to illustrate one of the next
Minerals of the Month.



Correction

Susan Fisher took this striking photo of *scolecite* from the Ahmednagar District, Maharashtra, India. The photo appeared in the November issue of The Mineral Newsletter under an incorrect name for the photographer. Thank you, Susan—with apologies!



Note From the President

by Tom Burke

We decided to cancel the online NVMC meeting for December which would have taken place on Monday the 21st. Normally our December meeting is our holiday party and election of officers for the coming year. But this year we will be doing the election online, and we haven't managed to come up with an interesting (and relevant to our hobby) activity for an online party.

Our next online meeting will take place on Monday, January 25. ↗

Tom



Meeting Minutes November 16, 2020

by David MacLean, Secretary

President Tom Burke called the Zoom meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. There were no minutes from the Zoom meeting in October, and there was no old business.

New Business

At a past meeting, Treasurer Roger Haskins had asked about using some of the NVMC's Fred Schaefermeyer Scholarship funds to support science programs in local public schools. Mike Kaas followed up by asking the science supervisor of Arlington Public Schools about what help they might need.

Needed help includes judges for school science fairs and especially for the regional science fair; a virtual fair is scheduled for late March 2021. Arlington Public Schools staff defines criteria for judging projects, with logistics and details of the regional science fair yet to be worked out due to the COVID pandemic. However, the fair has a coordinator, and judging requires about half a day of time.

The science fair categories of likeliest interest to NVMC members are Earth and Space Science and Earth and Environmental Science. The number of science fair participants has decreased; students have had so many other activities that participation has been made optional by many teachers.

Club Officer Elections Committee Report

The NVMC will elect club officers for 2021 online. Nominated are:

President Tom Burke
Vice President Sue Marcus
Secretary David MacLean
Treasurer Roger Haskins

Club T-Shirts Still Available

Presents for all occasions! Our NVMC T-shirts are available in sizes 3T (very limited) to S for \$15 each. Contact Sue Marcus at akumaldreams@gmail.com



Arlington Public Schools also needs mentors to help middle school and high school students choose science fair projects, find resources, and complete their projects. The time required for mentoring could vary from a little to a lot, depending on the student and project.

The best option might be to contact an individual school science department directly through science teachers you know. If a number of NVMC members wanted to do this, a list could be circulated by the science coordinator.

For anyone wanting to make a greater volunteer time commitment, Arlington Public Schools has a program together with the American Association for the Advancement of Science for volunteers to work with science teachers weekly during the school year.

Announcements

Elections of club officers for 2021 will take place online. Nominated are:

PresidentTom Burke
Vice President.....Sue Marcus
SecretaryDavid MacLean
TreasurerRoger Haskins

Participants in the meeting discussed the possibility of a virtual holiday party in December.

Bob Cooke urged club members to send their photos of minerals (micros, thumbnails, or larger) to help illustrate the Mineral of the Month articles in *The Mineral Newsletter*. Available upcoming Minerals of the Month (January is already covered) include:

Feb 2021chrysoberyl
Mar 2021elbaite
Apr 2021.....prehnite
May 2021.....kyanite
Jun 2021staurolite
Sep 2021rutile

You can get a clip-on adapter for taking photos with your cellphone. Use a low F-stop to increase depth of field; you can include a ruler in the photo to show the size of the mineral. Please send photos to Sue Marcus or Hutch Brown.

A 15-carat pink diamond from Russia sold at auction for \$26.6 million. Pink diamonds larger than 10 carats are exceedingly rare.

National Fossil Day fell during the week of November 1.

Online exhibit items included:

- a large clear mass, presumably gypsum, locality unknown (Germaine Broussard); and
- halite from Poland (Sue Marcus).

Program

Roger Haskins presented a slide show of his 1975 field explorations for mineral deposits in Manitoba, Canada. ↗

Science Fair Judges Needed

Science fairs are a wonderful way to encourage students to pursue their interests in the STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) fields. In northern Virginia, student projects are judged at the middle school, high school, and regional fairs. The best projects can advance to the Virginia State and International Science and Engineering Fairs.

Every year, hundreds of judges are needed. The diverse technical backgrounds of mineral club members make them excellent volunteer judges. If you volunteer, you are sure to have a rewarding experience.

Late January through March is science fair season in northern Virginia. The pandemic has disrupted the normal process, and many fairs next year are expected to be online events.

One thing is certain: volunteer judges are needed at all levels of competition. The middle and high schools have designated science fair coordinators. Just call any school and they will tell you who to contact.

The regional science fairs in Arlington and Fairfax will be virtual. Their websites have signup forms for prospective judges, and they have designated fair directors and coordinators:

- Arlington County: Chris Reid (chris.reid@apsva.us); website: <https://www.apsva.us/science/regional-science-fair>
- Fairfax County: Yaara Crane (ykcrane@fcps.edu); website: <https://www.fcps.edu/sciencefair>

Roger Haskins
Field Explorations for Mineral Deposits
in Manitoba, Canada, in the 1970s
November 16 Program

by Sue Marcus

Those who joined us for our November Zoom meeting enjoyed a slide show presentation by Roger Haskins on his geologic field studies in the Manitoba bush in the 1970s. We learned that he'd "autorotated" onto a lake in a float-equipped helicopter. For those not in the know, that means a somewhat planned crash. Once wasn't enough, so he tried it again, and we are pleased that he survived. One chopper pilot took him trolling for northern pike, using the chopper to boat around the lake with an outboard motor attached to its crossover bar.

Manitoba geology is varied and very old. Roger was mostly working in the Superior geologic province, which is more than 2 billion years old. Base metals (nickel/copper/zinc/lead) were the targets of the exploration program, though rich deposits in Manitoba typically contain enough precious metals to pay most of the production costs. He worked for the Manitoba Department of Mines, which had an exploration division at the time.

Exploration occurred in both summer and winter. Roger showed us the summer camps (occupied from June through August, when the lakes were ice free) and the winter camps, where his team did geophysical studies on the frozen lakes for a couple of months. There was a scary story about a colleague who fell through the ice with his snowshoes on and a daring rescue by another geologist who jumped into the icy water to cut off the snowshoes. All came away safe, aided by generous consumption of alcohol.

That reminds me of another of Roger's stories. Float planes delivered food and other supplies to the camps about once a week. Roger's crew needed a piece of geophysical equipment repaired, so they sent it back with a return flight.



De Havilland DHC-2 Beaver.

Source: Wikipedia; photo: Robert Frola.

They were pleased to see the crash-proof box come back as requested—full of bottles of booze.

Otters and beavers are common in Canada, both as animals and as kinds of planes—the de Havilland Beavers and Otters that flew the field crews in and out as well as between camps. Dating to the 1940s, the de Havillands were older planes, as were the real workhorses, the DC-3s, some of which were older than many of the people at the Zoom meeting where Roger spoke. The planes, whether de Havillands or DC-3s, all landed on lakes, whether frozen in winter or open water in summer.

The scenery was pretty flat, with rock outcrops around shorelines changing to bog and then to forests of spindly spruce as you went inland. Peat bogs, anywhere, could be literal pitfalls.

Sadly, Roger found no crystals during his exploration work in Manitoba. The metamorphism of the region had left no open spaces for them to form.

Most of us would agree that the parts of Manitoba where Roger worked would be interesting to see but we wouldn't want to live there—or visit in winter, with daytime temperatures of 30 below zero or worse! ↗.



Zhangye National Geopark, Gansu Province, China. Source: Wikipedia; photo: Han Lei.

The Rainbow Mountains of China

Editor's note: Thanks to Sue Marcus for the reference!

The Rainbow Mountains of northwestern China are a geological wonder of the world. Part of the Qilian Mountains in Gansu Province, the area was designated in 2009 by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site and in 2016 by the Chinese government as the Zhangye National Geopark. The 124-square-mile park has become a popular tourist attraction.

The rock is Cretaceous sandstone and siltstone once buried deep underground. Ground water percolated through the porous sediments, leaving various trace minerals that gradually filled the pores and cemented the stone.

Beginning about 55 million years ago, the Indian Plate collided with the Eurasian Plate, giving rise to the Himalayas and mountain ranges to the north, including this one. Uplift tilted and folded the colored sandstones, and erosion of the overlying rock layers finally exposed them.

The result is a spectacular display of banded sedimentary rock in hues of red, yellow, green, orange, and blue. ♪

Sources

Nace, T. 2016. [The Rainbow Mountains of China are Earth's paint palette](#). 2 March. Forbes.
Wikipedia. N.d. (no date). [Zhangye National Geopark](#).

Wildacres Is Coming Back!

Great news! Wildacres will hold its spring session on May 17–23, 2021. More information will be available early next year. (No dates have yet been selected for the fall session.)

—Steve Weinberger, Wildacres Workshop Committee





The Rocks Beneath Our Feet **Brandymore Castle and Other** **Ramblings**

by Tom Tucker

I enjoyed reading Hutch Brown's article in the November newsletter about exploring a large quartz outcrop near Annandale, VA. It brought back memories of similar explorations of my own at Brandymore Castle in Arlington, VA.

I was fortunate to grow up in Arlington back in the days when it was an easygoing, less crowded, less busy suburb of Washington, DC. I lived just to the north of the Arlington community of Westover in a neighborhood that has changed very little to this day.

They did move the creek in our backyard over to the local playground and enclosed it in a large pipe so you don't even know it's there. Back when they were installing those pipes, we explored them from the upstream end near 19th and Kenilworth Streets, passing under the large park at Walter Reed School and past the bank (new at the time) on McKinley Road to the lower opening of the culvert just across Washington Boulevard in Westover. It was like a cave or mine tunnel with some water in it.

In times of thunderstorms and hurricanes, of course, the pipes would fill nearly to capacity with raging torrents of muddy water. The path to school along the new pipeline was of interest after a good rain: we would find small natural placer deposits of magnetite, which we could collect with a magnet—an early introduction to minerals.

Once we got our bicycles (we were about 14 years old at the time), any ground between White's Ferry and Mount Vernon on the Potomac and between the Capitol building in Washington, DC, and the Manassas Battlefield in northern Virginia was open for exploration—and explore we did. I was fortunate to have very trusting parents who allowed our excursions throughout the region over the years. It's hard to imagine kids having that kind of freedom today.

Hutch mentioned Brandymore Castle, near what used to be Roosevelt Street (now Sycamore Street) and the Washington and Old Dominion Railroad tracks. I had a close buddy who lived nearby, on 12th Road just west of McKinley Road. Brandymore Castle was only a few blocks to the west, so we had ready access.



Brandymore Castle, a quartz outcrop overlooking Four Mile Run in Benjamin Banneker Park, Arlington, VA.

*Photos: Arlington Public Library (top);
Hutch Brown (bottom).*

In those days, Four Mile Run was a natural creek, the largest in the area, and it was often the center of our attention. Before Interstate 66 was built, McKinley Road crossed the creek and the railroad tracks. About 200 yards upstream from the crossing was a waterfall maybe 5 feet high over rugged bedrock, with deeper water just below. Hot summer days would find us swimming in the creek or trying to catch little fish with a net made from old curtains or maybe with a crude fishing pole, with pieces of hotdog for bait.

Just to the west of McKinley Road and to the north of the railroad tracks, I found some interesting rocks—impure talc with relatively large altered phenocrysts of an amphibole (I assume). The talc was obviously from the Cambrian metamorphic rocks underlying much of the area, part of the Sykesville Formation (fig. 1).

The waterfall on Four Mile Run has been reduced in size, but you can still find the outcropping Sykesville rocks in the creekbed. The creek itself seems much smaller than when we played in it.

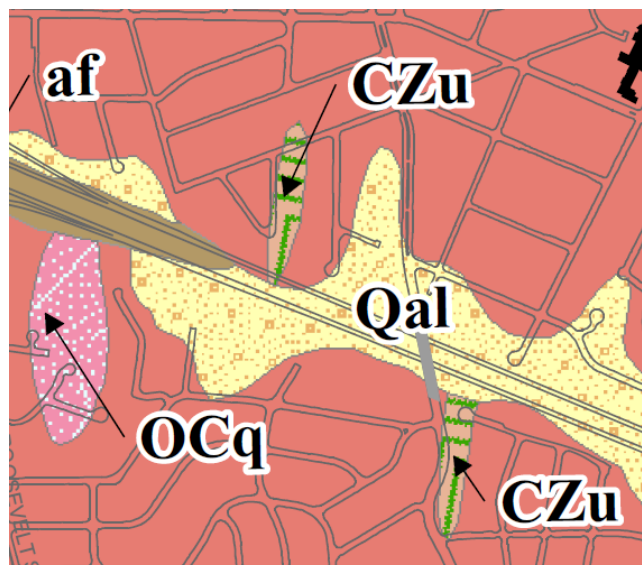


Figure 1—Geologic map (detail) showing the area near Brandywine Castle (OCq), including the Sykesville bedrock (pink) and olistoliths of talc-bearing actinolite schist (CZu). The Sykesville Formation is a metamorphosed sedimentary melange formed in a Cambrian deep-sea trench containing olistoliths: massive pieces of older (Cambrian or Proterozoic) bedrock that broke off and slumped into the trench. Later (Ordovician or Cambrian) tectonic events led to intrusions of quartz into the Sykesville bedrock, leaving the Brandymore quartz lens (OCq). Qal (buff) = Quaternary alluvium along Four Mile Run in Arlington, VA; af (brown) = artificial fill. Source: Frost and Ernest (1999).

Along the railroad tracks to the west was a derelict woodframe farmhouse. I don't know why, but we imagined that it must be the home of a witch, and we avoided it. Farther west, we came to the railroad bridge over Roosevelt Street. I always admired the massive cut-stone abutments supporting that bridge. I've wondered what became of the stones when I-66 was built. Surely they were salvaged.

Just to the south were the rocks we played among, now known as Brandywine Castle. It was a local high point, a rugged outcrop of rocks set in sparse woods and brambles. There was no nearby development that I can recall, so we were free to play as we liked. The abundant small pieces of talus made good throwing stones, so we'd pick a target and fire away; or we would pretend that we had a castle and hide behind the rocks from our enemies. Ah, the days of carefree youth!

I stopped by the Castle a year or two ago on my way to a mineral club meeting in Washington, DC. Of course, the roads had changed due to the construction



Quartz boulders at Brandywine Castle.
Photo: Hutch Brown.

of I-66, so now Brandywine Castle is near the termination of a truncated segment of Roosevelt Street with what appears to be 19th Street, the same street I once lived on a mile or so away. It's now one of those "interrupted" streets that the powers-that-be seem to like in order to cut down on through traffic. It works!

Like Hutch's "Rock Fort" in Fairfax County, Brandywine Castle is a lens of mostly quartz that is Ordovician to Cambrian in age, surrounded by the regional Sykesville metamorphic formation (fig. 1). It has nothing collectable, unless you want throwing rocks.

I enjoy exploring old maps, and I've seen the Castle area depicted with a quarry on one map; another map shows a short spur of the railroad at the Castle. (Unfortunately I didn't note the titles of those particular maps.) None of the old maps in Richard Stephenson's "The Cartography of Northern Virginia" depict these features; I suppose that I must have seen them on maps displayed at the Library of Virginia in Richmond. It would be interesting to find out whether anyone actually contemplated making use of the rock resource at the Castle.

Other explorations in those days took us to some of the gold mines near Great Falls. Along Rock Run in Montgomery County, we found the adit of an abandoned mine, perhaps the Hoffman Mine—I'd have to check that identification. The hole goes in perhaps 50 feet that are walkable, if you're short.

I was surprised to find the same site a few years ago surrounded by a golf course and residential neighborhoods, yet with the adit still open! (Don't tell the bureaucrats.) And you can still pan for gold in Rock Run.

On the Virginia side of the Potomac, we explored the area around Swinks Mill on Scotts Run; there were gold mine workings on nearby Bullneck Run in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (the Kirk Mines). We never found any artifacts, but there was an old abandoned home sitting above the Potomac, with a cellar filled with canned garden produce, probably 30 or 40 years old. That ridge has private mansions on it today. On a hot summer day, the Potomac River at Scotts Run made a decent swimming hole.

Closer to Great Falls, there were other abandoned gold mines, but we never found them. We did find the old dam just above Great Falls, which directs river water into the metropolitan area's water system. Just before the old Glen Echo Amusement Park, there's



The area near Swinks Mill (circled) in Fairfax County, VA. The geologist George Hamilton marked places where he found gold in Scotts Run and in Bullneck Run to the west. Source: Saum (2012).

the magnificent arched bridge for the aqueduct and McArthur Boulevard over Cabin John Creek. Beneath the eastern abutment, we found a real stalagmite about 2 inches tall, formed by water dripping from the aqueduct overhead; perhaps the mineral derived from the mortar in the masonry. (Notably, there are long "soda straw" stalactites beneath the marble Lincoln Memorial—I've seen pictures somewhere.)

The water in the aqueduct eventually gets to treatment facilities near Dalecarlia Reservoir. In about 1960, new tunnels were being dug for delivering the water, and the workers stumbled upon a bright shiny metallic-looking mineral. Remembering the old gold mines in the area, those in charge suspended tunnel construction for a few days pending evaluation of a possible gold discovery. Of course, any of us could have told them it was just pyrite, but they didn't ask. The story made the local newspapers.

I'm thankful for having been reared in Arlington and the metropolitan area. I think we had many opportunities for exploring the world around us. Today, with security considerations, the density of development, and more time spent sitting in front of a monitor rather than out in the sun and fresh air, I doubt that youngsters get to explore as much as we did.

Source

Frost, W.; Ernest, T. 1999. Simplified geologic map of Arlington County, Virginia, and vicinity. Arlington County, VA.

Saum, D. 2012. [Prospecting for gold near Washington, DC](#): Swinks Mill map.



Safety Matters Leading by Example



by Ellery Borow, EFMLS Safety Chair

Editor's note: The article is adapted from EFMLS Newsletter (November 2020), p. 8.

It is real. It is here. It is now, and it matters.

COVID-19 is here, and how we deal with it matters. Some like to debate the wearing of masks. You might have health reasons (related to pulmonary function, for example) for not wearing a mask, and that's fine.

But few debate whether masks really help. They do help, significantly reducing the risk of transmission. You can show no outward signs of COVID and still have it, unknowingly spreading it, so the old adage is still sound: an ounce of prevention (a mask, social distancing, and hand washing) is worth a pound of cure (and there is no cure for COVID—you just have to endure the sickness and hope for the best).

Rockhounds are leaders. They write articles, deliver speeches, and Zoom all they want; but the best leadership is by example. You don't need words for that style of leadership. Go on a field trip and wear goggles while hammering or chipping rocks. Have gloves on and wear ear plugs if noise levels are high. Mind the chips flying when using rock splitters. Use protective guards when operating machinery. All that is leading by example, and it works—rockhounds are smart.

Children are little sponges. They may not show it, but they watch everything, especially what adults do. Children want to be adults some day, so they watch adults and learn by observation. Setting a good example for kids will give our hobby a boost.

Sources of information on COVID include the World Health Organization, Centers for Disease Control, National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, and National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

Check these sources as well as your own trusted personal sources and your state and local resources for the latest mask advice.

Your safety matters. Please be extra cautious as long as COVID is still a threat.

Disclaimer: This article does not profess to offer medical advice but merely to compile data from credible sources about masks and COVID. ↗

The Paleontologist Boys



by Jennifer Haley, AFMS Historian

Editor's note: The article is adapted from A.F.M.S. Newsletter (November 2020), p. 4.



It is rare for a group of kids, ages 10 to 17, to startle scientists with important facts, especially in the form of new and rare fossil animals no one else has found. But it happened from 1944 into the 1950s. They became known as the Paleontologist Boys.

Mentors for the boys included Mr. and Mrs. Bell, owners of Bell Sand and Gravel pits in Irvington, CA, and a man named Wesley Gordon. Wesley visited the Bells' quarry and picked up a few fragments of a mammoth fossil from the ground. Four years later, he organized a group of boys and began bringing them to the quarry to collect fossils.

Wesley taught the boys how to locate and remove fossils from the quarry walls and from the gravel in the pit, along with how to clean and prepare the fossils. The Bells were fond of the boys and would give them fossils that had been rescued from the gravel washer during the course of everyday work at the quarry.



The Paleontologist Boys. Photo: Children's Natural History Museum, CA.



Merycodus, an ancient antelope species discovered by the Paleontologist Boys. The fossil specimen was on display in the Smithsonian Institute's National Museum of Natural History, Washington, DC. Source: Wikipedia; photo: Daderot.

Life Magazine featured the boys' story, illustrated with photos showing their scientific finds. In the 1940s, the Associated Press teletyped photos and stories about the kids throughout the United States. Scientists encouraged the boys by visiting them at their digs.

You have to admire the boys' strength of character at such a young age. They believed that what they found belonged in the public domain of science, not to themselves.

In addition to the Irvington deposits, the boys discovered a Pliocene fossil bed in the Livermore Hills east of Hayward, CA. The clay strata contained thousands of rodent remains. Horse, camel, and dog teeth were also found there, as were turtle fossils.

The most important remains were the jaws, teeth, and toe bones of a tiny antelope, the *Merycodus*. Seventeen jaws were recovered from one 300-pound chunk of clay, collected and preserved for scientific study.

Visitors could see the fossil antelope on display at the Smithsonian Institute's National Museum of Natural History in Washington, DC. ♪

2020 Newsletter Contest Results

by Hutch Brown, Editor



Each year, the regional and national club federations hold a contest for newsletters from the previous year. The 2020 contest winners reflect articles from 2019.

Our regional federation, the EFMLS, judges the submissions first, then sends the top three winners in each category to the national federation, the AFMS, for the national contest. (Results for the EFMLS contest and for the newsletter itself appeared in the November newsletter.)

At the national (AFMS) level, our club's submissions placed as follows:

8th Place: Sue Marcus, "Mineral of the Month: Cassiterite" (April 2019) (2nd place in the EFMLS contest).

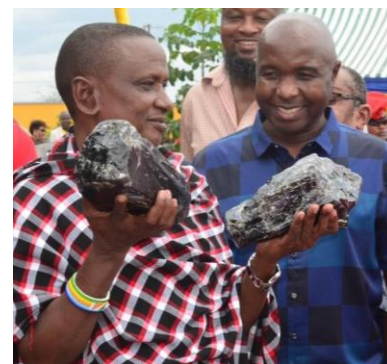
Honorable Mention: Bob Cooke, "Mineral of the Month: Barite" (January 2019) (3rd place in the EFMLS contest).

In addition, Jeff Guerber's article "Researching a Mineral With a Historical Label" (September 2019) took 4th place (Trophy in the EFMLS contest). The original version of Jeff's article appeared in *The Mineral Mite* (newsletter of the Micromineralogists of the National Capital Area). ♪

One Lucky Miner

Editor's note: The piece is from EFMLS News (August/September 2020). Thanks to Roger Haskins and Sue Marcus for the reference!

Saniniu Laizer, a Tanzanian miner, found not one but two of the largest tanzanites ever found. One of the stones weighed in at a whopping 20.4 pounds and the other at 11.25 pounds. It was reported in numerous news outlets in July 2020 that he sold the two stones for \$3.4 million. The BBC reported that he has four wives and over 30 children. He was planning to kill a cow, host "a big party," and invest in his district in Tanzania. ♪



December 2020—Upcoming Events in Our Area/Region (see details below)

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 MSDC meeting	3	4	5
6	7	8 GMLSMC meeting	9	10 Hanukkah begins	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21 Winter begins	22	23 MNCA meeting	24	25 Christmas	26
27	28	29	30	31 New Year's Eve		

Event Details

2: Mineralogical Society of the District of Columbia—meetings via Zoom until further notice; info: <http://www.mineralogicalsocietyofdc.org/>.

8: Gem, Lapidary, and Mineral Society of Montgomery County—meetings via Zoom until further notice; info: <https://www.glmsmc.com/>.

23: Micromineralogists of the National Capital Area—meetings via Zoom until further notice; info: <http://www.dcmicrominerals.org/>.

Disclaimer

All meetings/shows are tentative during the coronavirus pandemic, and club meetings might well be remote. Check the website for each organization for more information.



Hutch Brown, Editor
4814 N. 3rd Street
Arlington, VA 22203



**Mineral of the
Month: Wulfenite**

PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT:
<http://www.novamineralclub>

2020 Club Officers

President: Tom Burke
president@novamineral.club
Vice-President: Ti Meredith
vicepresident@novamineral.club
Secretary: David MacLean
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Treasurer: Roger Haskins
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Editor: Hutch Brown
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Field Trip Chair: Vacant
Greeter/Door Prizes: Ti Meredith
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Historian: Kathy Hrechka
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Photographer: Julia Burke
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Show Chair: Tom Taaffe
show.chair@novamineral.club
Webmaster: Casper Voogt
webmaster@novamineral.club

The Northern Virginia Mineral Club

Visitors are always welcome at our club meetings!

Please send your newsletter articles to:
hutchbrown41@gmail.com

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP!

SEND YOUR DUES TO:

Roger Haskins, Treasurer, NVMC
4411 Marsala Glen Way, Fairfax, VA 22033-3136

OR

Bring your dues to the next meeting.

Dues: Due by January 1 of each year;
\$20 individual, \$25 family, \$6 junior (under 16,
sponsored by an adult member).

Purpose: To encourage interest in and learning about geology, mineralogy, lapidary arts, and related sciences. The club is a member of the Eastern Federation of Mineralogical and Lapidary Societies (EFMLS—at <http://www.amfed.org/efmls>) and the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies (AFMS—at <http://www.amfed.org>).

Meetings: 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. (No meeting in July or August.)

**Changes are announced in the newsletter; we follow the snow schedule of Arlington County schools.*

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