

MINERAL CLUB



Crystals are the flowers of the Mineral Kingdom

THE MINERAL NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 49 No. 5 May 2008

May Meeting Date - 19th not 26th

This month's newsletter is late due to a miscommunication regarding the meeting date. Unlike previous newsletters that advertise the meeting date ahead of time, this month it is mentioned after the meeting is over.

For the month of May, our club meeting date of the 4th Monday of the month would fall on Memorial Day, a day on which the Long Branch Nature Center is closed. So, the meeting is normally held on another date and usually mentioned well ahead of time but unfortunately this month the information just did not get out in time.

Although this month's newsletter is late, you can still expect your June newsletter to arrive before the June meeting date, which will be on the 23rd.

<u>Did you Know?</u> The NVMC has a new mailing address for membership renewals and other correspondence via regular mail to the Board of Directors. The new address is:

Northern Virginia Mineral Club PO Box 9851 Alexandria, VA 22304 Find information also on our Club Website: http://www.mineralclub.org

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NVMC Schedule:

Club Meeting 19 May at 7:45 pm

Bonus Field Trip 29 May to Calvert Cliffs

June Board Mtg. on 12th

Field Trip 14 June to Willis Mountain

June Meeting on 23rd
July Board Mtg on 10th
July meeting on 28th

June Field Trip - The Willis Mountain Kyanite Mine

FIELD TRIP – Saturday, June 14th: June's field trip is to the Willis Mountain Kyanite Mine, 30 Willis Mountain Lane, Dillwyn, VA 23936. The main mineral is kyanite and a host of other minerals which can be viewed on www.mindat.org - do a locality search for Willis Mountain Mine. You can also view the kyanite at www.kyanite.com and take notice of the special activities occurring at the mine that weekend.

Club members only. Meet at the Manager's Office no later than 9:30 am. We will collect from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. Kids are welcome if accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. This is a hard rock quarry and you will need steel toed boots, hard hat, safety goggles, heavy work gloves, rock hammer, rock chisels, buckets/egg cartons and paper to wrap specimens. Don't

forget plenty of water, snacks and sunscreen.

John Boyer must know of your plans to attend this field trip by email net or call John's cell phone at 703-304-3489. Provide John with a good contact phone number to warn you of last minutes changes or cancellations. John will call you, not email you, to be sure of getting the message through.

jwskboyer@cox.net



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Field Trip Report - Hunting Hill Quarry

May 4th, 2008 By Robert Winsor

This years first visit to the Hunting Hill Quarry, aka the Rockville Crushed Stone Quarry, had a total of 29 members attending. There was an initial limit on the number of attendees at only 20 members, but given the number of families bringing spouses or children, Jeff, the Quarry manager, agreed to allow more people to show up as long as "family units" tried to stay together so that the numbers would be manageable. Most of the members stayed at the bottom of the pit, so the added numbers proved to be quite manageable.

The weather was very cooperative and the entire morning was breezy and sunny, a beautiful day for rockhounding. The main minerals obtained seemed to be the ubiquitous Calcite as well as the less common Clinozoisite.





Some garnets were found, especially by Buck Keller and Dave Hennessey. Many other minerals were found including the common serpentine, the fibrous Actinolite and Tremolite, the soft, greasy feeling Molybdenite, and Coalingite to name a few. One mineral found seems yet unidentified. On appearance (crystal shape and habit) it looks like Clinozoisite, but the hardness is soft like calcite and has a more green-brown color as opposed to the commonly yellow-orange color of the Clinozoisite.



MINERAL AND LAPIDARY SALE June 7 & 8

LARGE PRIVATE COLLECTION (OF the late Robert Mills) includes a large assortment of polished gem stone cabochons ready for setting. A large assortment of rough lapidary materials: many slabs (more than a dozen shoe boxes), agates, petrified wood (1" rounds) dinosaur material, tourmaline, amazonite, garnets, amethyst, turquoise, and many small and large geodes (cut and uncut) are also available. Lapidary equipment including saws, polishing and grinding equipment will be sold. Also, included are Lapidary Journal magazines, rock-craft items such as clock drilled polished

rounds, numerous electric clock mechanisms, and mineral specimens.

PLACE: 1608 North Potomac Street

Arlington, VA 22205

DIRECTIONS: Take Washington Blvd. to North 18th Street (turn left going towards Falls Church)

Westover Area-- Potomac Street is off 18th Street--2nd house on right

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General Mineral Miner Certification

In the last month there has been two opportunities in the Northern Virginia area to attend a class and receive a General Mineral Miner Certification. This certification is becoming a minimum requirement for entry into an increasing number of mines and quarries in Virginia. On the 27th of April there was a course held at the Long Branch Nature Center. This course was special because it was organized by and for NVMC members. The Virginia Department of Mining Minerals and Energy was very helpful in holding this special course for us, especially on a weekend! Of the 18 members that signed up for it, 11 attended.

On the 15th of May, another course was held in Manassas. This was one of the normal courses, open to anyone, and generally held for those that wish to seek employment in the mining industry. Ten people showed up for this course. However, not one of them was an individual trying to work in mining. All attendees were members of various mineral clubs in the area. The instructor for this course commented on the sudden interest in the course by mineral club members, and even talked briefly regarding the course that was held at Long Branch Nature Center.

The course is approximately 5-6 hours long and is not difficult to follow. The material presented is valuable in the sense that it offers a good overview of mining operations and safety concerns that exist. At the completion of the course, the instructor asked many questions to the attendees to make sure they were paying attention. The course finishes with the paperwork needed to submit to the DMME for your Certification to be valid.

Overall this is a very valuable course. Some people may find some of the material boring, but certainly a substantial amount of the material can help encourage a safer experience in the mines and quarries we visit. For example, there was discussion regarding the bench height regulations and why those are important. Can you look at a bench and know at what distance it is safe to be near it? The answer might surprise you. Do you know why some quarries drive their heavy trucks on the left hand side of the trails?

If you are a regular attendee at field trips, you should highly consider attending one of the DMME General Mineral Miner Certification courses, regardless of whether the mine or quarry requires it!

17th Annual Gem, Mineral & Fossil Show November 22 - 23, 2008

17th Annual Gem, Mineral & Fossil Show sponsored by the Northern Virginia Mineral Club Show site - George Mason University, Student Union Bldg II, Rte 123 & Braddock Rd, Fairfax, VA
Hrs: Saturday 10:00 AM - 6:00 PM, Sunday 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Approximately 20 Dealers selling Minerals, Fossils, Crystals, Gems, Jewelry, Meteorites & more! Also, Demonstrations, Exhibits, Door Prizes & Kid's Activities including Mini-mines & Fossil Dig. Silent Auction on Sunday afternoon. Adults \$4, Seniors (65+) \$3, Teens (13-17) \$3, Children (12 & under) FREE, Scouts in uniform FREE. Follow directional signs to designated Mineral Show parking on GMU campus.

Contact: Tom Taaffe, rockcllctr aol.com Website: http://www.mineralclub.org/

Chesapeake Gem and Mineral Show

Saturday, 24 May 2008 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

Ruhl Armory, Towson, MD

Free Admission

Take I-695 Baltimore Beltway to exit 26 York Road South. Ruhl Armory is on the East side of York Road (across from car dealer and funeral home) just inside I-695.

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The Prez Says

CHANGE!

NVMC members participated and supported the EFMLS Wildacres lapidary workshops in April. The picture on the left is for April '07 and the one on the right is for April '08. Watch the EFMLS Newsletter for a summary of the April '08 session. You can still signup for the September 8-14, 2008 session, which is still a "best buy" at \$330 for the week it's small change. The NVMC Prez has application for



The NVMC Annual Show dates for 2008 are November 21-23. Plan on participating: set up an exhibit of your lapidary or mineral collection, help with the setup of tables, etc. for the show, tend the kids table, sell tickets, drive the van, take charge of the silent auction, show off a lapidary skill, or help with the take-down after the show closes. There's a lot to do but as the saying goes, "many hands make light work" and it is fun when thee are many hands. Tom Taffee has stepped up to continue serving as the Dealer Coordinator, that's no change, but we still needs a Show Coordinator to take charge of getting volunteers for the many other tasks. Who'll step up to do it; that's a change from 2007? Let the Prez know... ASAP.

In last month's NVMC newsletter there was an obituary for Bob Mills. I understand from his daughter that they will be holding a mineral and lapidary equipment sale on June 7th and 8th Plan on attending and adding to your collection.



May Meeting Agenda

- 1. Call to order at 7:45 pm.
- 2. Recognize Past Presidents & Guests...
- 3. Announcements & Reports:

June Executive Board Meeting

March Auction...Rick Reiber

Field Trips...John Boyer

Other short announcements from committee chairs or audience. Identify action item and prepare motion for introduction under New Business.

- 4. Old business...Action Items...
- 5. New business...Action Items...

Approval of March and April meeting minutes.

Status of the Fred Schaefermeyer scholarship for 2008?

Other items.... Please identify the action item and have a motion prepared.

- 6. Adjourn meeting.
- 7. 10-minute Refreshment break
- 8. May PROGRAM...
 WELCOME TO THE UNKNOWN
- 9. END PROGRAM BY 9:50

THE MINERAL

April Meeting Minutes

By Kathy Hrechka, Secretary

Minutes of the April 28, 2008 Meeting

President Wayne Sukow called the meeting to order at 7:45 p.m.

7th grader, Alec Brenner was recognized and congratulated for having won "First Place in Rocks & Minerals" in the Virginia State Science Olympiad. A feature article will appear in next month's newsletter.

Program: Diamonds - Out of Africa. Denise Nelson, GG, NAJA spoke on the "Forbidden Zone", the restricted area along the Namibian coast of Africa. She gave a great presentation on the mining industry of Southern Africa.

President Sukow resumed the business meeting at 9:30 p.m.

Announcements:

Field trips - Robert Winsor announced the Hunting Hill

Quarry trip for May 4 at 9-3 p.m.

Gem & Mineral Show W. Springfield, MA $\,$ Aug 8 – 10, 2008 reported by G. Reimherr.

Ruhl Armory of Towson, MD May 24-25, 2008 reported by Dave Hennessey.

Old Business: None

New Business: Tom Taaffe proposed a revised club show admission rate for Nov. 2008.

Current admissions are: Adults - \$4. Seniors - \$2. Teens - \$2. Children under 12 - free.

A motion was made, and seconded to keep the rates the same. The motion was substituted and amended to change the Senior & Teen rate to \$3.

Meeting adjourned by 9:45 p.m.

Schedule

Upcoming Events to plan for:

24 May: Chesapeake Gem & Mineral Show 29 May: Bonus Field Trip - Calvert Cliffs, MD

12 June: Board Meeting

14 June: Willis Mountain Kyanite Mine

23 June: NVMC meeting 10 July: Board Meeting

19 June: GMMC in Charlottesville

28 July: NVMC Meeting 18 Sept: GMMC in Manassas

Your Article Belongs Here!

Please send your newsletter articles to the Editor! This is the club's newsletter—by the club for the club. That means that we can all contribute to it.

At this time I would especially like to ask for articles about particular specific subjects of Earth Sciences. A good article could be as broad as the geology of Virginia, or as specific as a particular fossil that is found in the Northern Blue Ridge.

In upcoming months, especially late summer, I would like to get a few articles regarding the Lapidary arts. Please share your skills with fellow members by writing an article. If we could get enough articles by late summer, maybe our club members can spend their winter months practicing the skills on the specimens obtained on summer field trips.

-Editor

New Members?

If you would like to join the NVMC, please fill out a membership application available on our club website or at one of our monthly meetings.

If you have been a member but let your membership lapse, you may be able to become a member again by sending your dues payment to:

Northern Virginia Mineral Club Rick Reiber, Treasuer PO Box 9851 Alexandria, VA 22304

Go Emerald

Electronic Newsletter: You can save some paper by electing to have the electronic-only newsletter. Just send email to the editor to have your newsletter delivered by email only. It saves money, you get the newsletter sooner, and it is in full color. Send email to photech@comcast.net

THE MINERAL NEWSLETTER

Junior Member Alec Brennar Continues winning streak

Alec won first place in the "Rocks and Minerals" event at the Virginia state Science Olympiad championship this past weekend. And, because his school's team (Longfellow Middle School) won the overall competition,



which has 23 events, Alec's team will advance to the national tournament on May 30-31. There will be 60 teams at the national competition, and Alec will again test his skills in the "Rocks and Minerals" event.

Congratulations, Alec!



How to build a Shortwave Lamp by Robert Winsor

I have had several requests lately for information about how to make a shortwave lamp. This article serves as one method can be used to build one, but there are many variations that can be made to this plan.

The heart of the shortwave lamp is a simple fluorescent lamp. Many types will work, but some may be more convenient than others. For example, one possible starting point is to purchase a fluorescent "trouble light". These are automotive type lamps with a cord built-in and have compact fluorescent bulbs inside. Another type of lamp that can be made to work is a desk lamp. Whatever lamp is chosen is likely to work, but keep in mind that the bulb type should be one that emits a lot of light in a small area. For example, compact fluorescent lamps have "U" shaped bulbs so that this is accomplished.

The next step is to remove the bulb. Notice on the bulb there is a designation of the bulb type. Common types are the 9watt, the 13-watt and the 18-watt. The bulb needs to be replaced with the same bulb type but rather than using a bulb that emits soft white light, you want to purchase a germicidal UV bulb. These are commonly available via mail order (e.g. http://www.bulbs.com). Now place the germicidal bulb into the socket where the fluorescent bulb was removed. BE CAREFUL NOW! The light fixture is now capable of emitting shortwave UV light, and prolonged exposure will result in sunburns. You should never look into the

light without wearing safety glasses—the same type you use to protect your eyes from flying debris (they also block SWUV).

Any "window" on the fluorescent fixture needs to be removed or altered. In its place needs to be a short-wave UV filter. Replacement filters for many commercial SWUV lamps can be obtained from this website: http://www.uvsystems.com/

Follow the links to Products, then the link to UV filters. Pick one with dimensions that will match your lamp (i.e. a 2" x 5" size is a good choice).

A housing needs to be constructed to hold the bulb, ballast and filter together and block the visible light emission. This can be done a number of ways, but if you start with a "trouble light" much of the work is already done. You only need to make a new window. Most of the windows are plastic, so altering it is easy. Make an undersized cutout in the window where the UV filter will be placed, and using epoxy or a hot glue gun, bond the filter to the window over the cutout. Then, use a coating of primer paint and then flat black paint to cover the rest of the window to prevent visible light from escaping.

Using this technique and some planning and elbow grease, you can construct a SWUV lamp for about \$130—\$150 in parts, about half to a third what you would pay for it retail.

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Tool of the Month

This month's tool is the common bricklayer's (or, mason's) hammer. Why not a geologists hammer? Well, frankly, because according to Estwing, they are the same tool when talking about the chisel-edged hammer. This may seem odd, especially since Estwing indicates a separate part number for its geologist's hammer and its bricklayer's hammer. So what is the difference? According to them, the difference is a slightly different appearance for the handle. But, for the most part, they are the same hammer. The head and main shaft are the same, but the handle is just slightly different. However, the big difference is price. The bricklayer's hammer is typically available at more stores (i.e. your local hardware store) whereas the geologist's hammer is hard to find locally. The bricklayer's hammer usually costs about 20% to 30% less than a geologist's hammer.

Another type of geologist's hammer has a pointed end rather than a chisel end. However, these are more commonly referred to as geologist's picks or pick-hammers rather than just hammers. These types of hammers have their unique advantages, too.

The bricklayer's hammer has two ends on the head. One is a rectangular (almost square) face that performs most of the impact functions, but the other end of the hammer has a chisel edge that makes it particularly useful for rockhounds.

The chisel end of the hammer is a great substitute for what would otherwise require two tools, a hammer and

chisel. With a separate hammer and chisel, the coordination needed to break apart rocks along a particular edge is more challenging and re-

quires two hands as well as a good place to put the rock while it is being worked. With this hammer, however, a person can hold the rock in one hand and chisel away pieces with the other hand. Using this hammer most effectively reguires some skill that can be most readily obtained with good old fashioned practice. By working a rock with the chisel edge, it is possible to get the rock to split along a predictable path (well, not always, but more often than not). This can be very useful when you are backpacking to collect minerals and you don't want to lug around a 5lb rock attached to your gorgeous 4oz. mineral specimen. Use the chisel edge to break off the undesired material. It is also helpful for backpacking because rather than carrying a hammer and a chisel, you can get by with just this hammer which has a chisel built into it.

To obtain good skill with the hammer, it is a good idea to practice on rocks of the same material that your mineral specimen is attached to. Get the "feel" for how the rock behaves and how much work needs to be put into the chipping before you can get it to break predictably. This will vary from rock type to rock type. This will take some time to master!

Don't worry too much about the wear you are creating on the chisel edge. This is normal wear and tear.

The Board of Directors

Do you have a question for one of our Board members? To the right you can find email addresses and phone numbers for club officers.

Also, if you would like to attend a meeting of the Board of Directors, please contact Wayne Sukow and let him know ahead of time. All club members are welcome at Board meetings!

Board Meetings are held the second Thursday of each month at 7:30pm at Wayne's home in Fairfax. Please contact Wayne for directions.

The June Board meeting will be on the 12th.

President: Wayne Sukow

d8olite@fastmail.fm (703) 280-8108

Vice President: Jenn Hammond (703-585-3046)

cherryflamez@yahoo.com

Secretary: Kathy Hrechka

kshrechka@msn.com (703) 765-3187

Treasurer: Rick Reiber

rickgr3@comcast.net (703) 578-4224

Bonus Field Trip, 29 May 2008 to Calvert Cliffs, MD

The Northern Virginia Mineral Club has been cordially invited to participate in a field trip coordinated by Ken Rasmussen of the Northern Virginia Community College. The trip is on a weekday, Thursday 29 May.

Below is an excerpt from the NOVA flier for their Summer field Geology courses.

One full day trip Thursday, 5/29 to the Calvert Cliffs of southern Maryland. This field trip will consider the Miocene fossils, sedimentation, stratigraphy, and paleoenvironments exposed along the western shores of the Chesapeake Bay.

Members of the NVMC that wish to attend this field trip should contact Ken as soon as possible. Let him

know you are an NVMC member!

Contact Ken at: <u>krasmussen@nvcc.edu</u> or by phone at 703-323-2139 (office phone).



Gear for the Field Tripper Wondering what to take on your first field trip?

If you are a new member and you are thinking about trying the process of heading into the field to look for minerals, you may be wondering what equipment is needed. Although the club is ready and willing to loan gear to new members, it may not always be available. Here are some things to consider for any field trip you might take (not necessarily just club field trips).

Probably the most important piece of equipment costs less than \$4: a pair of safety eyewear. For this, you should shop around, as many hardware stores carry several different types so your options are numerous. If you are confused and you are looking for a good place to start, try a set

that has adjustable temples, and avoid the elastic-band type as they can become uncomfortable after extended use and sometimes fog internally.

The next important piece of equipment is a good pair of boots. Steel toes are preferred,







but you can get by with simple heavy work boots if you do not intend to do a lot of climbing or heavy lifting. Always wear heavy pants when climbing amongst loose boulders, as the jagged edges will cut skin very easily. A bare leg is an open invitation for a bad scrape.

Your next purchase should be a hard hat. This is not required for some places, but is required for working in mines or quarries. These can be obtained at nearly any home improvement or hardware store for about \$7. One size usually fits all, even kids (ages of about 7 or older).

A pair of leather-hide gloves are a very good idea. Heavy rocks have jagged edges, and you can prevent bad scrapes just by wearing them. They can also reduce fatigue on hands while swinging a hammer.

A bucket or heavy-duty backpack is a good choice to carry the minerals you collect.

Keep in mind that where you find minerals will almost surely be far from your vehicle. Be prepared to carry your pre-

vehicle. Be prepared to carry your precious finds! Some people like to use two buckets. One bucket is used for carrying hammers and chisels and the other

Gear for the Field Tripper (continued)

is used for carrying specimens. This can also be good for returning to your vehicle, as now you have two heavy buckets to carry rather than one. Carrying two buckets "evens the load" and actually makes it easier for some people to carry.

Small containers are good to bring for carrying small specimens or fragile crystals. Newspaper or paper towels can be used to wrap small specimens and egg cartons can be used for storage.

The next good item to get is a loupe. For about \$30, you can mail-order a nice 10x loupe with a lanyard to hold it on your neck. The loupe allows you to see many more details on your mineral find, and can also help tremendously with identification. Features such as crystal shapes tend to be much better quality and therefore more easily identifiable if the crystals are very small (just ask any micromount enthusiast!). Get yourself a loupe and start exploring the fascinating microcosm found in many small mineral pockets.

Finally, the hardware. The most common hardware is the hammer and chisel. You can kill two birds with one stone by purchasing a bricklayer's hammer, which is both a hammer and a chisel, but requires some practice to master. It is a good idea to have other chisels as well. For heavyduty work such as splitting larger rocks, you should only use chisels that have a hand guard. The hand guard is a rubber or plastic handle that wraps around the chisel (usually mounted to the chisel—see the pictures to the right). These will help protect your hand from a hammer blow that misses the chisel. It is also a good idea to have a small set of cold chisels. A set of 3 of these can be obtained for less than \$15 and these allow you to chip away very small features on a stone.

Then there are the sledge hammers. How many of these you choose to get and how big they are is largely a function of how much WORK you are willing to perform. Most rockhounds like to start with a small sledgehammer called a crack hammer. These are 3lb or 4lb sledges that are 12" to 18" in length, depending on the handle. Many rockhounds like to

use these hammers to drive their large chisels or to hit larger rocks directly. The longer handled crack hammers tend to deliver more energy with each blow, but also require more strength in the hand and wrist.

Then there are the serious sledge hammers. These are 24" to 36" long handles with heads that weigh anywhere from 6 lbs to 16 lbs (imagine swinging a hammer the heft of a bowling ball!). The larger hammers can be very valuable at breaking up the large boulders—boulders that are too big to lift but can sometimes be pulled or rotated into an orientation such that a chunk

can be broken off with a few blows (or more!). These hammers can require some very serious amounts of labor to operate, and are not for everyone!

Other hardware that becomes useful include devices such as pick-axes and prybars, sieves and screens, and water sprayers. As your stash of tools grows, you might also want a tool belt for carrying the tools in an

organized manner (and they have pockets for stashing some of your finds). These are items you can add as you go along and become more skilled.

For a "must-have" list for the first timer, here is a prioritized list. You don't need all of this, but start low and work up:

1. Safety glasses. 2. Heavy work boots (preferably steel toed). 3. Hard Hat. 4. leather gloves. 5. buckets and egg cartons with wrapping paper or paper towels. (or, a backpack if you prefer) 6. bricklayer's hammer. 7. Magnifying

loupe, 10x 8. Crack hammer. 9. Chisels with hand guards. 10. Small set of cold chisels. 11. Water sprayer. 12. Tool belt. 13. pry bar. 14. you choose from here on!

Enjoy, and happy hunting!





NVMC Newsletter Editor Robert Winsor 35740 Roundleaf Ct. Round Hill, VA 20141

Phone: 540-751-0922 Please call between 7pm and 9pm E-mail: photech@comcast.net



PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE: HTTP:\\www.mineralclub.org

The Northern Virginia Mineral Club

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). Please send membership renewals to: Northern Virginia Mineral Club PO Box 9851

Alexandria, VA 22304

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.

Visitors are Always Welcome at our Club Meetings.



ATTENTION

Please send articles to the newsletter editor! The deadline for submission is 10 days prior to the club meeting.

You can send your Newsletter articles to:

Robert Winsor 35740 Roundleaf Ct. Round Hill, VA 20141

Or via email: photech@comcast.net