

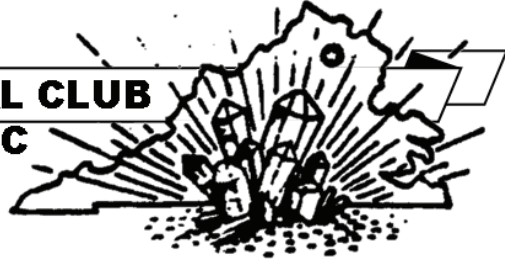


# THE NORTHERN VIRGINIA

MINERAL CLUB  
INC



*Crystals are the flowers of the Mineral Kingdom*



## THE MINERAL NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 51 No. 9

DECEMBER 2010

### Rock On! Party On!

With the Northern Virginia Mineral Club and the Micromounters of the National Capital Area

Our annual Holiday Party on December 20th will be fun for all. Please join us at 7:45pm at the Long Branch Nature Center for a festive evening of fun, food, and friendship.

We need your help to party hardy, so: People with last names starting with A through M, please bring a side dish or appetizer to share.

People with last names starting with N through Z, please bring a dessert to share.

Turkey, nonalcoholic drinks, and tableware will be provided.

To add to the fun, please bring a wrapped, hobby related gift (value ~\$5-\$10), per person, for our gift exchange.

There will be door prizes and games. Everyone bring your sense of ho ho ho!!

#### NVMC Schedule:

**20 Dec Holiday meeting of the NVMC at 7:45pm at Long Branch Nature Center**

**24 Jan. General meeting of the NVMC at 7:45pm**

**19 Feb Annual Field Trip to JMU Geology department**

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

### Trip - JMU Geology

The Mineralogical Society of the District of Columbia would like to invite the Micromineralogists of the National Capital Area, and the Northern Virginia Mineral Club to join us in a visit to the mineralogy labs of Dr. Lance Kearns at James Madison University, and their fabulous mineral museum. The date - Saturday, February 19, 2011.

Spread the word, Thanks,

**Tom Tucker,**

Incoming President - MSDC

*Editor's note - Further information will be forthcoming in a future issue of The Mineral Newsletter.*



Photo by Kathy Hrechka

### Showers

**APRIL SHOWERS MAY BRING FLOWERS, BUT DECEMBER BRINGS METEOR SHOWERS!**

By Sheryl E. Sims

While I was not fortunate enough to see the Geminid meteor shower for myself due to cloud cover, the local news and Marcia Dunn of the Associate Press reported that it indeed took place early Tuesday morning. It's reported that this occurrence takes place every December. According to Marcia Dunn, "the Earth passes through this stream of debris from 3200 Phaethon, once believed to be an asteroid and now considered an extinct - or iceless comet." More than 100 meteors were seen coursing the night sky.

In addition, the only full lunar eclipse appearing this year and visible, according to Ms. Dunn, in North America, Central American, South America, Iceland and Greenland will take place between December 20 and 21.

#### Inside this issue:

November Minutes	2
The Prez Says	2
"O" is for Ornamental	2
Treasure at the end of the Rainbow	3-5
Treasure at the end of the Rainbow Photo Essay	6-11
<b><u>Club information</u></b>	12

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

## Nov. Meeting Minutes

**November 22, 2010 By Kathy Hrechka, Secretary**

President, Barry Remer held a brief meeting to accommodate time for the silent auction. The NVMC Show was discussed, and credit was given to Tom Taaffe, even though he was not present at the meeting. Barry appointed Sue Marcus to head up a nominating committee, to present a slate of officers at the Dec. 20 meeting.

Program for the evening was the Silent Auction.

## The Prez Says

Well it's hard for me to believe yet another year has passed for our club. Membership continues to grow, April and November brought us a few dollars and Tom Taaffe working with Julia steered us through a prosperous year at GMU. Most importantly for me is the sense of fellowship we share whether on field trips, at meetings or at the show.

Our usual Holiday Party will be on Monday, December 20 starting at 7:45p.m. The building will be open at 7:00 p.m. in order for us to set up and decorate tables. Please remember to bring something to share. *As I recall those of us whose last names begin from A-L are to bring appetizers while M-Z bring desserts.*

*If you are interested in getting a swap item please bring one gift wrapped in the \$5-10 dollar amount. Keep in mind the specimen is something you would like to get for yourself. Label the specimen with an F for fossil, M for mineral and MT for micromount.*

*Last of all whatever you celebrate or don't celebrate. Whether it be Chanukah, Ede al-Fitr, Christmas, Kwanza or a sense of the darkness we and our ancestors experienced at this time. Let's enjoy our families and friends and delight in these relationships.*

*Here's looking forward to a new year in good health and prosperity AND LOTS OF GREAT SPECIMENS.*

Barry Remer

## "O" IS FOR ORNAMENTAL

**By Sheryl E. Sims**

What mineral is  $\text{CuAl}_6(\text{PO}_4)_4(\text{OH})_8$ ? If you asked me yesterday, I wouldn't have known. Today, however, after a little research, I can tell you that the answer is, "turquoise chrysocolla" – or Peruvian turquoise. This mineral was widely used by the Incas to adorn their ceremonial garb. Today, some people still believe that the mineral provides healing powers and will bring good luck to those fortunate enough to possess a piece. Well, I do feel lucky. A friend saw a Peruvian turquoise pendant and sent it to me as a Christmas gift! Yes! I must admit that I felt its healing powers as soon as I opened the package! Gifts have a way of making me feel healthy and happy!

Prior to my research, I would have guessed that I had been given a piece of polished malachite because of the green and dark bluish color, but I would have been mistaken. Make no mistake about this, however, wearing turquoise was thought, in ancient times, to provide protection from evil. Blue-colored turquoise meant a direct connection between the sky and lakes. I'm sure that that was a good thing. Did you know that there was a time when people believed that turquoise brought them material wealth? Al Kazwini, a Persian philosopher said, "The hand wearing a turquoise and using it as a sealing stone, will never be poor."<sup>1</sup> Well, I'm not so sure about that, but either way, Peruvian turquoise is a beautiful mineral with a uniquely attractive blue-green hue, that despite a distorted crystal structure<sup>2</sup>, forms quite a specimen of beauty. "O" may indeed be for "ornamental," but oh, how I adore my Peruvian turquoise!

1. [www.inkasecrets.com](http://www.inkasecrets.com)

2. Ibid.

## Reminder! Renew Your Membership

It is time to renew your membership in the Northern Virginia Mineral Club if you have not already done so. Please send your membership dues to the following address:

**RICK REIBER, TREASURER  
NORTHERN VIRGINIA MINERAL CLUB  
PO Box 9851  
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22304**

## Treasure at the end of the rainbow

### THE 2010 NORTHWEST ROCKHOUND RETREAT

*Article and Photo By Wayne Sukow, PhD*

There it was an absolutely beautiful intensely colored rain bow in Central Oregon's high desert country. The 67 rockhounds gathered at the OMSI Field Station all stopped what they were doing and ran for their camera. I was lucky to be one of them and captured IRIS, goddess of the rainbow in all her glory, delivering a message .

There is **treasure** at the end of the rainbow in the high desert country of central Oregon and has been for the past six years. It's at the Northwest Federation Rockhound Retreat (NWFRR). Any rockhound with a bit of planning and a dependable car can find it, usually in early September, at the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry's (OMSI) Hancock Field Station, Figure 2 and 3. This year's event was September 6 to 12 and I was there along with 66 other mineral and lapidary hobbyists. The special sharing, the teaching, the learning, the collecting and the lapidary stories, and capped by the camaraderie were special. For all of us, there certainly was treasure at the end of the rainbow. Let's look at the treasure.

**THE PARTICULARS:** The (OMSI) Field Station is just 75 miles or so East of Madras, OR; it's wise to fill your gas tank there since you won't see another until you return. The NWFRR cost was only \$270 for room and board, \$45 for workshop fee, and \$35 for a field trip to the John Day Fossil beds, if enough people signed up to go. If you bring your own RV there's an additional charge of \$15 for an electrical hookup. That's treasure #1, a cost of only \$350 for a week-long lapidary hobby vacation in a beautiful setting.

Along with many others, I bunked in a nifty "A-Frame" cabin, some held one and some held four of us; a single-bed mattress was provided but bring your own sleeping bag and pillow. In the quiet of the desert and with two windows open all night it was very comfortable, I slept; that's treasure #2. There was no need for AC, even during the day. Showers and toilets were housed in a single building and nighttime trips to them treated you to a magnificent

display of the Milky Way, constellations, and bright stars. It'd be great to have an astronomy course offered during the workshop. Who needs to sleep? I'll suggest that to the Director, Lamar Tilgner.

Some of the lapidary skill workshops had a minimum and/or a maximum enrollment. This is similar to the Eastern Federation of Mineral and Lapidary Societies' (EFMLS)-Wildacres Mineral and Lapidary Workshops, Workshops for this session were: Lapidary, Basic Faceting, Silversmithing, Basic Intarsia, Basic Wirewrapping, Beading, Casting, and Doublets and Triplets, All classes ran from 9 AM to 5:30 PM daily, that's 7 and 1/2 hours a day-every day. That is in marked contrast to sessions at the EFMLS Wildacres Lapidary and Mineral workshops, which run for 5-hours a day for four days with a fifth day being "free day." One very noticeable result was that par-





## Treasure at the end of the rainbow (continued)

ticipants in the workshops had time to complete significantly more lapidary projects

Evening activities began at 7 PM and included three presentations, two on Lake Superior Agates and a third on IRIS Agates from around the world. As guest speaker for the week these evening presentations were my responsibility. It also meant that I had no mid-morning presentations as is the case at the Eastern Federation's Wildacres Lapidary and Mineral workshops. The other two evening sessions were a swap session and on the last night a general wrap-up/cracker barrel session.

**WHAT I NOTICED:** As the guest speaker at the Northwest's Rockhound Retreat I had time to visit all lapidary workshops and participated fully in one, that's treasure #3. I face polished 14 copper replacement agates. Since I had served as the Director of the EFMLS Wildacres Lapidary and Mineral workshops I couldn't help but notice similarities and differences in Wild acres and the NWFRR. The differences fall into three categories; the geographical locations, programmatic and procedural, and administrative.

Each geographical location is unique in ways that cannot be changed and each program adapts to theirs. The programmatic, procedural, and administrative differences are open to change.

Among the programmatic and procedural, differences in the Northwest's and Easterns Federation's program are several that have been noted: 1.) The daily and total class time is longer for the NW Federation's program, 2.) The camp-like lodging and sanitary facilities for the NW's program are in contrast to the EFMLS's motel-like lodging with private bath and toilet facilities. Clearly, this gives the NWF workshops an outdoorsy camp-like feel. 3.) The 3-presentation schedule for the guest speaker means that a person can participate in one or several lapidary workshops. I liked that.

Continuing with the differences between the programs: 4.) What is meant by multi-workshop participation and what makes it possible? Recall that, the daily and total class time is longer for the NW Federation's program, People attending the NWFRR signup for a particular workshop but if room is avail-

able in another they can transition to it. This means people can do projects that involve several lapidary skills. For example, you might sign up for lapidary and cut several cabochons and then transition to a wirewrapping or silversmithing class to use your cabs for making pendants or bracelets. Or, you might sign up for the doublet and triplet making course and then transition to wirewrapping to complete a bracelet or brooch. I'm sure you can envision other combinations that you'd like to try. That's treasure #4. 5.) The site also has well-marked trails that invite people to see the flora and fauna close up. The geological features are huge, interesting, and always visible; they also are inviting and provide opportunities for extending the workshops on your own. For example, the John Day fossil beds essentially surround you and thunder egg locations are closer than gas stations; that's treasure #5. 6.) Some folks came in and lived in their RVs, which would make it easy to stop and collecting sites on the way back home.

**Shared features** of the NWFRR's program and Easterns Wildacres program include: 1. the cost for participants is essentially the same and both are excellent bargains. 2. The week-long duration is the same although activities within that week differ. 3. Participants in both programs are active rockhounds and many are leaders in their local club and the Federation. 4. Invariably, the workshops are characterized by enthusiastic teachers who are fellow rockhounds and their enthusiasm is matched by that of the "students" who are also active rockhounds. Sharing of enthusiasm, lapidary skills, and collecting stories is a hallmark of both and is a contributing factor in the enrollment of many returning students. 5. The lapidary artifacts, in many cases jewelry or polished cabochons and faceted gems, some set in self-made silver castings or wire wrapped, are generally of excellent quality. Even beginners, along with those whose lapidary skills have gotten rusty, (I am among the latter.) get a good polish on their cabs, triplets, intarsia, knife handles, and faceted gems. Creative designs are common. 6. While there are designated instructors there is a great deal of peer teaching where those who are more skilled in a lapidary technique mentor the less experienced. I experienced

## Treasure at the end of the rainbow (continued)

this first hand as I face-polished some small copper-replacement-agates from the Wolverine #2 Mine in Upper Michigan; I was shown that I had to remove the 80 grit scratches with the 200 grit wheel before I went to the 400 grit and then to the polish. You can't polish out 80 grit scratch marks. 7. Overall expenses are offset by an auction of donated lapidary rough and finished jewelry. The bidding is spirited and the very high winning bids are applauded. 8. Friends are quickly made and all seem to feel the workshops end too soon. As I left a group of six was still sitting on a cabin patio working on lapidary projects.

I've left comments about the administrative aspects until last. However, I believe that just as the workshops procedures and protocols are malleable, so are the administrative ones. 1.) Perhaps most obvious is the single session of the NWFRF compared to the two times a year sessions of Easterns Wildacres. 2.) From the outset The NWFRF welcomed participants from all Regional federations while Eastern did not. However, Easterns enrollment protocols are changing in the direction of the NWFRFs. 3.) As in the Eastern Federation, NWFRF volunteer instructors means they share their lapidary and mineral experience, instructional skills, equipment as needed, and high quality items for the auction. Some workshops seemed to have multiple instructors, which is different. I'd call those items treasure #6. 4.) In the NWFRF here is no Registrar and no Functioning Committee. The Director does it all including teaching, WOW. Hold on a second; his wife contributes full-time in all aspects of the program as well. WOW! WOW 5.) There's no daily NWFRF newsletter; mealtime announcements and a blackboard suffice to keep all up to date. I'd call that treasure #7. 6.) There is no tailgating session but there was a lot of giving and exchanging a specimen of rough or a slab or two. 7.) While in both programs any profits are given to the federation in the Eastern Federation, Wildacres Workshops are a program of the federation while in the Northwest Federation at this early stage of its existence the NWFRF is recognized by the federation. 8.) On opening night at dinner, the Director introduced all the past NWF and EFMLS Past Presidents and immediately announced that they would be honored by being the first mealtime clean-

up crew; that meant clear dishes, wash dishes and load the dishwasher, wipe the tables, and take out the trash. It was well received by all and similar mealtime cleanup was done voluntarily and automatically the remainder of the week by all participants. My comment...what a great community building procedure!

Attending the NWFRF was the highlight of my summer and I'd do it again...I have some more copper replacement agates to polish. I applaud the strong volunteer effort that enables it and marvel at it. There is a sense of the pioneering spirit that hovers in the nooks and crannies of the sidebar conversations. I applaud the diversity of participants from young folks, those less than 55 years, to myself and those who negotiated the unpaved pathways using a walker. I was impressed by both the quantity of finished materials and the quality and the high skill workshops that enabled both. I was delighted to have the opportunity to stroke the exceedingly soft fur of a wild bobcat and share several head-butts with it. Finally, I thank Lamar Tilgner who invited me to be the guest speaker thereby enabling me to discover the treasures at the end of the rainbow.

Wayne W. Sukow, Ph.D

*A photo essay follows on pages 6-11*

## A Special Thanks

To the Northern Virginia Mineral Club Members;

I wish to thank you all for your thoughts, prayers and get well wishes; cards flowers and phone calls. Many thanks to all who were still in the parking lot when I fell: for your patience, care and help getting me to the hospital, calling my sone, and returning my car to my driveway!

I am in (it seems) slow recovery but better every day. I never realized how much I needed my left arm! With my battered face, arm and leg I was home and ready to face the trick or treaters. I hope to be 'out & about' and at the January meeting.

- Marie Brown

## Treasure at the end of the rainbow (photo essay)



The sign greets you and says, you're here



The A-frame that you call home for a week



My home was known as TOAD



An open air lapidary classroom shop



The Intarsia class hard at work.



A bit of one-on-one teaching in faceting



## **Treasure at the end of the rainbow (photo essay)**



**Preparing your daily lunch**



**LAPIDARY, first you shape with 100 grit**



**Selecting the best cabochon from a slab  
The Director, the teacher and the student**



**Wire wrapping up front with triplet and  
doublet making in the back**



**The beading class with good lighting**



**The open air cabochon class, Pete's Place**

## Treasure at the end of the rainbow (photo essay)



Getting acquainted with a bobcat



Friendly head butting with the bobcat



Looking at items made during the workshops



An ammonite triplet...I quit bidding at \$120



Silversmithing and cabochons



Silversmithing, doublets, and a cab



## **Treasure at the end of the rainbow (photo essay)**



**Intarsia, doublets and triplets**



**Knife handles...both sides**



**Silversmithing and cabochons**



**Cabochons and wire wrapping**



**The auction..one ah-one ah...one ah...two**



**Auction items**



## Treasure at the end of the rainbow (photo essay)



After the end of the workshops...still working



On the road again...homeward bound



Goodbye to the dry hills and junipers



Huge pillars just over the hill from the camp



The pillars...close up



Dry land flower at a wayside



## **Treasure at the end of the rainbow (photo essay)**



**Shaniko, OR ...the grand old hotel**



**Shaniko Wool Gathering...sheep shearing**



**Shaniko Bank...the original**



**Shaniko Mercantile...the original**



**Mt. Bachelor wearing a cloud cap**



**New Wind Machines...along Columbia Gorge**

**The end of the trail. See you'al next year.**



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

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



---

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

---

## The Northern Virginia Mineral Club

You can send your Newsletter articles to:

Robert Winsor  
35740 Roundleaf Ct.  
Round Hill, VA 20141

Or via email: [news.nvmc @ gmail.com](mailto:news.nvmc@gmail.com)

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

***Reminder!***  
**Renew Your Membership**

Send your dues to:

**RICK REIBER, TREASURER  
NORTHERN VIRGINIA  
MINERAL CLUB  
PO BOX 9851  
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22304**

**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.