



THE NORTHERN VIRGINIA

MINERAL CLUB
INC



Crystals are the flowers of the Mineral Kingdom



THE MINERAL NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 52 No. 8

OCTOBER 2011

Show and Tell

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

NVMC Schedule:

October 24 General Meeting at Long Branch Nature Center, 7:45 pm.

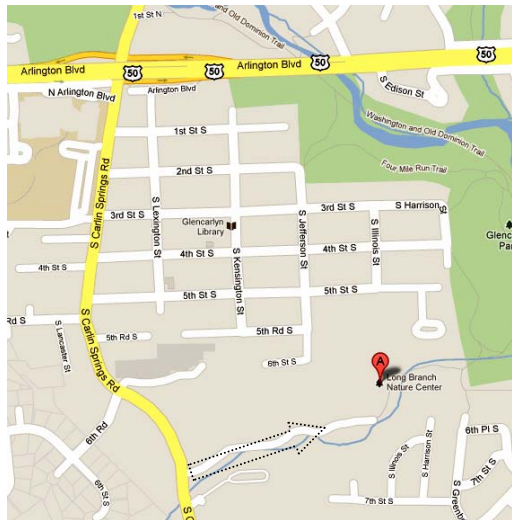
12 & 13 November - The 20th Annual NVMC Gem, Mineral and Fossil Show

November 28 Gen. mtg.

**December 19*
Holiday Meeting
* This is a joint meeting
with MNCA**

The program for our October meeting has not been announced in time for publication of the newsletter. However, it has been a long-standing tradition for us to spend one of our meetings after the summer break to share stories of our adventures over the summer. Stories about digging. Stories about travelling. Stories about what was left behind for the benefit of others. Since last month's meeting was an auction, the meeting this month makes a good choice to spend a bit of time sharing with others. Please bring specimens and stories to share with the club during our meeting Monday the 24th at 7:45 pm at Long Branch Nature Center, 625 Carlin Springs Road, Arlington, VA. Guests are always welcome!

Map of our meeting location courtesy Google maps



20th Annual GEM, MINERAL AND FOSSIL SHOW

Presented by the Northern Virginia Mineral Club, Inc. www.novamineralclub.org

Sponsored by the Dept. of Atmospheric, Oceanic and Earth Sciences at GMU

Date: November 12 & 13, 2011

Place: Student Union II Building
George Mason University Campus
Braddock Rd. & Route 123, Fairfax, VA

Hours: Saturday 10-6, Sunday 10-4

Admission: Adults: \$5, Seniors & Teens (13-17): \$3.
Children 12 & under, Scouts in uniform,
and GMU Students w/ valid ID are FREE.

Demonstrations, Exhibits, and Door Prizes. Mini-mines for children to dig in and get free fossils & minerals. Over 20 dealers with Fossils, Minerals, Crystals, and Gems for sale.

Use Parking Lot A, enter Lot A from Nottaway River Lane.

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September Minutes

September 26, 2011 - Kathy Hrechka, Secretary

Photos by Sheryl E Sims

President Barry Remer opened the meeting at 7:50 p.m.

AFMS/EFMLS Awards: Barry presented junior member, Alec Brenner with an AFMS trophy and name tag for his article "Diggin' Dinos in North Dakota -Become a Real Paleontologist". Alex was also awarded an EFMLS trophy for the same article. Our club was awarded a 100% participation certificate from the Eastern Federation. Kathy Hrechka was awarded a framed certificate, Honorable Mention for the EFMLS "Each One Teach One" award. Wayne Sukow was awarded an Honorable Mention certificate for his non-technical article "Treasure at the end of the Rainbow". Sheryl Sims received an EFMLS trophy for "Drawn Features, Rock, Mineral & Gemstone Word Find". Sheryl also received 9th Place "Educational Articles, An Eye for Diamonds".

F.S. Scholarship Fund Report: Kathy Hrechka reported that Dr. Kearns, JMU has selected a student, Michael Tracey, worthy of \$250. from the Fred Schaefermeyer Scholarship Fund. Tracey will operate the Helicon Focus Pro X64 to upgrade the micromineral photos on the JMU Geology Museum website. A motion was made and approved to send a check to Dr. Kearns. Kathy also asked for a second award of \$250 to be available for retroactive 2010, since no student was awarded 2010. The membership agreed to release monies only if Dr. Kearns found a worthy student in the future. Kathy also made a motion to include our junior members access to scholarships in the amount of \$100. Discussion occurred, resulting in favor of juniors filling out an application form, for review of receiving any funds. Kathy will design an application and present it to the board members for approval.

Club Show Report: Chairmen Tom Taaffe gave a brief update with flyers to hand out to members. Jim Koska is seeking volunteers to sign up with Gerry Cox.

Guests included Ty Bateman, Bonnie Grinem, Mark Totsi, Kathryn & John Erickson, Scott Draley, and Lisa & Robert Reznik.

Break for Refreshments.

Program: Club Auction Reported by Sheryl Sims; Master auctioneers, Rob Robinson and Matt Charsky, conducted yet another lively auction before a packed room. While they may not prove to be any real threat to Vanna White, they gave her some stiff competition in the way that they enticed bidders to open their wallets. Members and guests had a variety of minerals from which to bid, from meteorites to microscopes, and everything in between. Numerous battles of the bucks took place resulting in smiles and hard fought acquisitions for the winning bidder. The best part is that each purchase helped the NVMC club!



The Prez Says

Our V.P., Sue Marcus, will provide us with a speaker for the first part of our October meeting. The rest of the meeting will be about the show and need for volunteers from the members to help with the show.

This is a great time to step forward and help make the show a success. Tom, Jim, and Julia have done all the preparatory work. Now it's time for us to help. It is the Northern Virginia Show. Please do all you can to keep some time available to support your club. We have many field trips and excellent speakers throughout the year for your enjoyment. Now it's time for everyone who can to step forward and help. It's a great time to meet other members who cannot come to meetings too. This is a good time to socialize as well. I'll look forward to seeing you at the show Saturday and Sunday, November 12 and 13.

Regards to all,

Barry Remer

Flat Lap For Sale

Long-standing Club member Marie Brown has a machine for sale. It is a 6" flat lap made by Ray-Tilt. It comes with 23 metal disks with soft pads and 2 copper cutting flats. It also comes with a table, 24" x 24" by 32" high with a shelf. Asking price is \$140. Please contact Marie directly if interested at:

703-256-8343



Helpful Club Officers

NOTE: There was an error in the last newsletter for the email address and phone number for our Treasurer, Rick Reiber. Please use the email address listed below and delete his old email address from your address book.

Do you have a question about the club? Contacting one of the following can help:

Club President: Barry Remer

bsbremer @ comcast.net

Vice President - Sue Marcus

rlhaskins @ verizon.net

Secretary: Kathy Hrechka

kshrechka @ msn.com (703) 765-3187

Treasurer: Rick Reiber

mathfun34 @ yahoo.com (NEW!!)

Show chairman - Tom Taaffe

rockcllctr @ aol.com



More pictures of the September Auction courtesy Sheryl Sims.

Webelos Discover an Outdoor Adventure in Geology

*Article and Photos
By Kathy Hrechka*

**Boy Scout Camp Snyder
Haymarket, Virginia 10/15/11**

Webelo Scouts had the opportunity to earn their Geologist badge and belt loop at the Colonial District Webelos-Ree held October 15 at Camp Snyder, Haymarket, Virginia. Northern Virginia Mineral Club members Kathy Hrechka and Jim Kostka spent the day teaching the boys about minerals used in our homes, the Moh's hardness scale, sedimentary, metamorphic, igneous rocks and other interesting features about geology by using mineral study boxes. Pyrite and mica were the boys' two favorite minerals. They were surprised that tooth paste contains calcite, and that their bedroom walls are made of gypsum.

The Webelos were engaged in the hands on learning, and were most appreciative of our time volunteering on behalf of our geology club.



AFMS/EFMLS Convention

"Gems Along the Erie Canal" Syracuse, NY July 6-10, 2011

Article and Photos By Kathy Hrechka

I had the pleasure of representing our club at the AFMS/EFMLS Show at the local fairgrounds in Syracuse, New York this past summer. It was a reunion of great mineral friends as well as dealers from across the United States.



Herkimer Diamonds were featured in the showcase area, including "The Herkimer American Eagle" collected & designed by Tom Kapelewski and his sons. My

favorite showcase featured past AFMS Presidents containing Fred Schaefermeyer 1994-95, with his

signature pyrite micro; and Steve Weinberger 2000-01, with his fine self-faceted zircon.

The Smithsonian featured two faceted eggs crafted by John Sinkankas. One weighed 7,478 carats from Brazil, and the other was 4,570 carats from California.

I was captivated by the show cases



featuring minerals from the Lillian Turner estate, as she was the key person responsible for the first U.S. Postal mineral stamps. Today Wendell Mohr is soliciting hobbyists to lobby the Post Office for twelve new mineral stamps. His display invited many new signatures.

I attended the Award's Banquet along with Matt Charsky and his wife; and Gerry Cox, our NVMC member and EFMLS Secretary. Serving the Eastern Federation, Matt heads the Convention Advisory Committee, as well as heading the nominating committee. Wayne Sukow serves on the Nominating Committee. Our club members received numerous awards at the banquet, as well as the Editor's Breakfast the following morning. Those results were published last month.



NVMC's LADIES OF LAPIDARY: Marie Brown, Karen Lewis, & Lois Dowell



(left to right: Marie Brown, Karen Lewis, & Lois Dowell)

Photos and Article By Sheryl E. Sims

The NVMC is always excited about the arrival of new members to the club. We are most fortunate, however, to have a number of senior members within its ranks who joined during the early years of the club's formation. Three such members are our "ladies of lapidary," Marie Brown, Karen Lewis, and Lois Dowell. If you have ever attended our annual gem, mineral and fossil shows over the years, you have no doubt seen their handiwork. While each has a definite interest in minerals, they possess a distinct passion for lapidary work. The fruits of their labor have produced beautiful silver work, bead work, scrimshaw, and various types of jewelry.

Marie Brown has been a club member since about 1964. Initially, she joined because of her lapidary interest. While stationed in Germany, Marie introduced lapidary work as a craft project to the Cub Scouts. This was a result of her having seen a case of pretty jewelry while on post one day. She asked about it and learned that some GIs had made the pieces from stones. One of the GIs offered to help her learn how to use the lapidary equipment. Even though she thought that it was not something she could learn to do, she did in fact learn! Before she knew it, she had made a bracelet! With that, she was hooked!

Later, Marie asked about polishing stones. No one knew anything about stone polishing. Fortunately, she found a small blurb in a local paper about the Northern Virginia Mineral Club. During that time, the

club was meeting at a local Baptist church. Marie got in touch with a club member and attended her very first meeting. The meeting offered a presentation on micro minerals.

Marie said that there are only about 10 club members at the that time. Dues was about \$1.00 per year. Because there were so few members, it wasn't long before she was asked to serve as the club treasurer. Happy to do her part, she served as treasurer for a several terms and also served as secretary. She was also the club historian she served as a judge for poetry for the Eastern Federation several times. Marie taught scrimshaw at Wild Acres and even served as an Assistant Field Trip Chairman. In addition, Marie found time to join the gem and mineral hunters in Prince William County.

Eventually the member who started the club was transferred to New Mexico. Therefore, club members could no longer meet at the Baptist church. That led to the club holding its meeting at the Annandale library. They continued to meet there for some years and the club continued to grow. As a result, they needed an even larger place in which to meet. Therefore, the club began meeting at the Coca Cola building in Baileys Crossroads. After a long while, they had a member who worked for the Arlington Park Association and were able to meet Long Branch Nature Center, where the club has been ever since.

Over the years, the club's mineral shows were held at Tyson's Corner, the National Wildlife Center and finally, at George Mason University. Marie stated that she and former member Jenny Smith started doing

LADIES OF LAPIDARY (continued)

school programs and enjoyed introducing the world of minerals to students. They wanted to educate kids and spread the word about minerals and this led to their giving presentations to first-graders. Their program spread throughout Alexandria and Arlington county schools, and even a few Fairfax County classrooms. Eventually, they extended the program to fourth graders and also did programs for the Prince William County Parks Association. They also shared their knowledge of minerals with schools on career day.

As time progressed, Marie wanted to learn more about rocks and minerals in order to continue her lapidary work. Several members had rock shops. One of those members was Jim Leggett. He taught faceting at Wild Acres and gave classes in his home. Fred Schaefermeyer promoted minerals, so more emphasis was given towards minerals.

As many of us know, Marie has indeed learned a lot about minerals over the years and her collection is quite a good size. We enjoyed her beautiful lapidary work and had a great day at her mineral yard sale last year.

Karen Lewis lived many years as a military officer's wife. After travelling the world, she joined the NVMC in 1987. Karen taught lapidary classes at the Wakefield and Kenmore Senior Centers in Arlington. She was joined by Lois Dowell. Enjoying lapidary work, Karen has created many beautiful pieces of jewelry and objects. Working with silver, casting, scrimshaw, Karen keeps herself busy and even participates in Wild Acres workshops. Over the years, she has held the positions of secretary and hospitality chair. Hospitality Chair is a position for which she is perfectly suited. Karen is always the first to encourage others. Full of spunk, you can often catch a twinkle in her eyes when she laughing or teasing you.

Having once been a ballerina, Karen is quick to plop down on the floor to show you a specimen or help you identify something. Generous with specimen and time, she is just as quick to offer you a few bits and bobs from her vast lapidary collection. A tour of Karen's basement led me to take my first lapidary

class. She was also the first to back my efforts to create the NVMC yearbook. Thinking it was a fine idea, Karen offered money and encouragement to begin work on the yearbook.

Karen has spent time going to many field trips with the Washington Gem and Lapidary Society. She created displays for area library and the Potomac Women's Club on "rock to gems." She has all sorts of lapidary equipment in her basement and still enjoys creating and teaching others. Karen does an excellent job making newcomers feel welcome and plying club members with delicious refreshments.

Karen is, in fact, responsible for me joining the NVMC. After finding her name in the on the club's website, I called to obtain information about the club. I had absolutely no real experience with rocks and minerals. A few weeks prior to meeting Karen, I had visited Little Switzerland for a day of rock hunting. Although a perfect stranger, Karen was kind enough to invite my daughter and me to her home so that she could help us identify our finds. Karen mentioned that the club didn't meet over the summer, but that I should attend the September meeting, which I did. The rest is history.

Lois Dowell, who joined the NVMC in the late '50s and used to join Karen on visits to various senior centers. As with both Marie and Karen, Lois' handiwork is always present at NVMC club shows.

Lois is very generous with her time and talents.

At both our club meetings and at shows, many of us had the opportunity to view many pieces of the beautiful jewelry that Lois has made. After seeing all of the rings, bracelets, pendants, and more.

Below, Lois tells us in her own words how she navigated the twists and turns of her lapidary life:

How many people wonder what their lives would be like had they taken the other fork in the road? In my case my destiny came about in late 1950. I had always wanted to learn china painting, so when such a class was offered by Arlington County Adult Education, I signed up immediately. Then at the last minute I received a call informing that the class had been cancelled, but suggesting that I switch to jewelry-making where there was an opening. I agreed, little knowing that I was



LADIES OF LAPIDARY (continued)

entering a whole new exciting world.

It was there I met Karen Lewis, my friend for nearly four decades. Many, many long time friends were made until they went on to join the ranks of the majority. Karen and I were constant class repeaters year after year when in the 1980s we were appointed instructors. We were also Wild Acres repeaters for 15 years, two sessions each year. Wild Acres is a retreat in the North Carolina mountains for members of clubs in the Eastern Federation.

I can't say enough in praise of our instructors in the Arlington County program at Wakefield High School — Roger Hicks and Bill Beals. Class was a joy! Everyone designed his project which could involve cabbing, faceting, casting, and of course construction. We were all on a first name only basis. Knowing and associating with such a splendid group of people certainly enriches one's life. To name a few other fellow students: John Sinkankas, a Naval officer assigned to the Pentagon; a Finn, Mike Mikkola, a nuclear scientist who, when absent, we assumed he was being flown to a nuclear sub or ship that was in trouble; doctors and dentists too numerous to list; and of course little we-uns.

Enthusiasm led me to membership in the NVMC as early as the late 1950s, and in the Washington, DC club in the 1960s. As a result, I joined in many field trips which included State line Pitts and others in Pennsylvania; Cape May, NJ; Rockville, MD; Franklin, NC; and Amelia and other places in Virginia. Most trips were uneventful but rewarding. However, a few generated some excitement.

One rare experience was on one of my numerous trips to Syria, Virginia to look for unakite with friend Myra Lisagor. Two friends at work, Katherine and Bessie Ross, were from Syria, and they gave me valuable information re-

garding the whole area. Their neighbor, Jimmy Graves, owned most land in the area. We drove to Syria, called on Mrs. Ross and Mr. Graves, and drove down a side road that was more of a cow path, called a road out of courtesy. We drove to the end of the road ending at the foot of a huge mountain, where Mamie Smith lived with her two adult sons. She reportedly had a pile of unakite for sale. We bought a few choice pieces and headed back.

(The Ross sisters had said the Smith brothers were bootleggers and raided unakite from Federal land and President Hoover's retreat.) We stopped at a creek to look for unakite when suddenly bullets began to whiz near us. Then an old model T came rumbling toward us nearly boxing us in. We managed to make a fast exit out of there and headed back to civilization.

On our way back we stopped at a nearby filling station. The proprietor said there was a still near the creek and the operators wanted to frighten us away thinking we were scouts for Federal revenuers.

In the early 1970s I went with a group to Harris Mica mine to look for honeymoon stone in a small creek. Tiffany had explored the area. A couple came along saying they were looking over the place before bringing scouts for a camp out. I yelled, "Absolutely no — there is an open well over by that old foundation." They seemed unconcerned. Needless to say, my boys were never allowed to go on such camp outs. I noticed the well as I had the habit of giving a sweeping glance to areas ahead of me on chance of finding a treasure. Virginia has a shocking number of deserted water-filled bottomless pits of old mines. They are more than a disgrace — death traps for humans and animals.

Early 1960s found a small group including myself at Steele's Tavern down in Virginia. After



LADIES OF LAPIDARY (continued)

gloating over our finds we were confronted with a bull coming full stream ahead. Buckets and treasure became air bound and all headed for the fence.

Then, at Amherst, Virginia in pursuit of amethyst the landowner led us to the proper location. We came to what appeared to me to be a deep washed out gully with parallel sides. About a foot of water was in the bottom eight feet below. The only way to cross was via a telephone pole laid across. I froze as I get dizzy just standing on scales. I managed to find a place where I could sliver down the bank and cross through the water. Previous groups had almost cleared out the place — so not recommended.

My old time rock hunting buddies were mainly from NVMC and school and included Myra Lisagor, Erna Hallock, Elsie Heckman, Willa Fleming, Jim & Dorothy Legett, and Clarice Hill.

The International Gem Show sponsored by

Herb Duke was to be held in DC in the 1960s. I was then a member of the DC club at the time and was invited to be one of the hostesses. Being a proud Virginian I jumped at the chance to wear my prized unakite pendant I had created at Wakefield. Out-of-towners were required to register. A man approached my table to fill out the form and explained, "You are wearing Virginia Rose River unakite." I replied that I highly appreciated our unakite. After he left I was shocked to see he signed his name Frederick H. Pough. What a blow! The world-renowned mineralogist, author, and authority on gems and minerals! I had to retire to my chair, feeling faint.

What a world and creation. I believe that we do not own the land, the land owns us, and the Creator scattered a few gems around so we would appreciate His creation. Luckily I accidentally took the right turn. Want to enrich your life? Just join in.

Bench Tips

By Brad Smith

HOMEMADE WAX TOOLS

Save your used X-Acto or scalpel blades for utility work on the bench. They're wonderful for delicate wax work. Use a cutoff blade or a grinding wheel to shape the blades to what you need. For instance, you can carve away excess metal on the spine to make yourself some narrow carving knives that do a great job of detailing small areas of your waxes.

RING SIZE VARIATIONS

The numerical sizes marked on ring gauges and ring mandrels are often not the same across different manufacturers. If you're using a ring gauge to measure a customer, be sure to compare the markings on the gauge with the markings on the mandrel you use to make the ring. They may not be the same. Also, you may have to adjust a little for the width of the ring shank. If you're making a wide shank ring, the ring generally has to be a little bit larger in diameter

than the ring gauge size in order to get a comfortable fit.

More BenchTips by Brad Smith are at

groups.yahoo.com/group/BenchTips/

Or [facebook.com/BenchTips](https://www.facebook.com/BenchTips)





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Visitors are Always Welcome at our Club Meetings.

**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.