



**THE  
NORTHERN  
VIRGINIA**

**MINERAL CLUB  
INC**

*Crystals are the flowers of the Mineral Kingdom*



# The Mineral Newsletter

**Meeting: May 20 Time: 7:45–9:00 p.m.**

**Long Branch Nature Center, 625 S. Carlin Springs Rd. Arlington, VA 22204**

## **Treasures of the USGS May 20 Meeting**

*by Kathy Hrechka, Vice President*

The program for the next meeting of the Northern Virginia Mineral Club will be “Treasures of the USGS: From Missing Diamonds to the Earliest Records of History and Science.” Our presenter will be Mr. Richard Huffine, former Director of the U.S. Geological Survey’s Libraries Program.

The USGS was founded as a part of the federal government in 1879. It has since become the country’s leading authority on the Earth sciences, amassing the world’s largest library dedicated to Earth sciences research. Mr. Huffine will present a broad program, highlighting some of the treasures contained in the USGS Libraries today.



*Rare photos of  
missing Russian  
Crown Jewels—  
a necklace (top)  
and a diadem  
(bottom).*



**Volume 54, No. 5**

**May 2013**

You can explore our club website:

**<http://www.novamineralclub.org/>**

## **Northern Virginia Mineral Club members,**

Please join our May 20 speaker, Mr. Richard Huffine, for dinner at the Olive Garden at 6 p.m.

*Olive Garden, Baileys Cross Roads (across  
from Skyline Towers), 3548 South Jefferson  
St. (intersecting Leesburg Pike),  
Falls Church, VA  
Phone: (703) 671-7507*

Reservations are under Kathy Hrechka, Vice President, NVMC. Please RSVP to my cell at (703) 407-5393 or [ksrechka@msn.com](mailto:ksrechka@msn.com).

One specific highlight will be the recent discovery of rare photographs of the Russian Crown Jewels that were found in the USGS Libraries’ Rare Book Room. The photographs contain the only known photographs of four pieces of jewelry that are now missing from the official collection of the Romanov family’s regalia.

Mr. Huffine will also provide tips for doing research on minerals, gemstones, geology, and other subjects. The USGS collection can provide valuable if not unique insights for both professional and amateur researchers.



*Photo of a brooch, one of the missing Russian Crown Jewels.*

Mr. Huffine directed the USGS Libraries Program from 2010 to 2013. Before that, he served as the National Library Coordinator for USGS from 2007 to 2010 and for the Environmental Protection

Agency from 2000 to 2005. He is a third-generation librarian and has been active in the library profession since earning a master's degree in Library Science in 1995 from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Mr. Huffine recently left his position at the USGS to join Proquest, LLC, as its Senior Director for the U.S. Federal Market. He is a founding member of the Government Information Division of the Special Libraries Association and past president of the Federal and Armed Forces Libraries Round Table of the American Library Association; the District of Columbia Library Association; the Federation of Friends of the District of Columbia Public Library and Friends of the Mount Pleasant Library in Washington, DC. ➤

## President's Thoughts

*by Rick Reiber*

I didn't have much in the way of presidential thoughts this month until I got a patient reminder from our very own newsletter editor, Hutch Brown.

I'm grateful that all I have to worry about is giving my "thoughts," so I really appreciate the meticulous quality of the articles and the beautiful photographs, all provided by volunteers who already have busy lives.

Hutch is the guy who gathers the articles, provides polite and patient reminders, edits everything, and puts it all together for a very professional-looking newsletter. The newsletter is the public face and historical record of the Northern



Virginia Mineral Club, and it reflects well on all of us.

So the President's thoughts this month are those of recognition and appreciation of the efforts of our newsletter editor and contributors. ➤

## Previous Meeting Minutes: April 22, 2013

*by Kathy Hrechka (filling in for Dave MacLean, Secretary)*



President Rick Reiber welcomed guests at 7:45 p.m.

Vice-President Kathy Hrechka introduced our speaker for the evening, Dr. Andrew Beck from the Smithsonian Institution. Dr. Beck presented a program on the "Antarctic Search for Meteorites Expedition."

After Dr. Beck's presentation, Rick presented him with a \$500 check, made payable to the Smithsonian Institution. The check was intended to promote our mineral hobby.

Dr. Beck later expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to join us: "It was a pleasure speaking with your group Monday night," he wrote, "and thank you again for the donation. Tim (my boss) is going to deposit the donation in a general meteorite fund for future use."

The Smithsonian's official letter of thanks follows on the next page.

Dr. Beck also sent links that appeared on the last slide of his presentation. The Antarctic Search for Meteorites website contains the field blog from the 2012–2013 expeditionary season. You can find it at <http://artscilabs.case.edu/ansmet/>.

After a break for refreshments, our meeting resumed at 9:30, focusing on club business.

Rick announced the dates for the Federation shows and asked if anyone planned on attending. Treasurer Kenny Loveless collected dues for 2013.

Jim Kostka announced that our club show is officially scheduled at George Mason University for the week-end before Thanksgiving. The meeting concluded by 9:50 p.m. ➤



Smithsonian  
*National Museum of Natural History*

April 30, 2013

Kathy Hrechka, Vice-President  
Northern Virginia Mineral Club  
7201 Ludwood Ct.  
Alexandria, VA 22306

Dear Ms Hrechka,

On behalf of all of us in the Dept. of Mineral Sciences at the Smithsonian Institution, I would like to thank the Northern Virginia Mineral Club for your generous donation of \$500. The Smithsonian is proud to partner with gem and mineral clubs throughout the Virginia-Maryland-DC area to bring the excitement of geology, gems and minerals to the community. While our Museum provides a first-rate opportunity for the public to examine world-class specimens, the Northern Virginia Mineral Club gives them a chance to interact with individuals knowledgeable and passionate about this history recorded in rocks and minerals. I hope you enjoyed the presentation that Andrew Beck gave to your organization. He is an outstanding young scholar working at the frontiers of exploration of our Solar System. As a postdoctoral fellow, he has both the scientific expertise to work on the Dawn mission to asteroid 4Vesta and an extraordinary gift for explaining science to the public. Your donation will be available to help Andrew and other young scholars pursue their passion through field trips and scientific meetings. As you recognize, the stories we tell the public begin with our own experiences in the field and on the outcrop. With the tightening of Federal budgets, gifts like yours allow us to continue the important work of experiencing the geologic history of this and other planets. Again, thank you for your support of our mission and we look forward to working with you in the future to present the exciting work we do in mineralogy, petrology, volcanology, and planetary science.

Sincerely,

Timothy J. McCoy  
Chair, Dept. of Mineral Sciences  
Curator-in-Charge, National Meteorite Collection  
National Museum of Natural History

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION  
National Museum of Natural History  
10th & Constitution Avenue NW  
Washington DC 20560

## New Membership Application Form

The membership application form for the Northern Virginia Mineral Club has been updated.

The new form can be found at:

[http://www.novamineralclub.org/images/stories/Member\\_App.pdf](http://www.novamineralclub.org/images/stories/Member_App.pdf)

↗.

## Federation Shows—A Great Opportunity!

by Kathy Hrechka, Vice President



Club members, if you would like to represent our club at a Federation show/meeting this year, contact President Rick Reiber at [Mathfun34@yahoo.com](mailto:Mathfun34@yahoo.com) for consideration by the Board.

To help defray your costs, the Northern Virginia Mineral Club is offering \$400 to a member who attends a Federation show/meeting as a representative of our club. We ask that you prepare an article on your experience for publication in the NVMC newsletter or a presentation for delivery at a club meeting.

Coming up (see page XX for more details):

- May 31–June 3—Annual Convention and Show of the Eastern Federation of Mineralogical and Lapidary Societies, Long Island Sheraton, Haughpauge, NY.
- September 20–22—Southeastern Show of the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies, Jacksonville, FL.

↗.

## Club Quartermaster Needed

The Northern Virginia Mineral Club is looking for a Club Quartermaster / property manager - with space enough to store club property; including crates, buckets, trays, display cases, and the like. To have enough space, the quartermaster will need to live in a house, not an apartment or townhouse. Your service to the Club would be greatly appreciated and would save the Club storage fees we are currently paying.

If this is something you might be able to do to help out the club, please contact Jim Kostka at [jkostka@juno.com](mailto:jkostka@juno.com). ↗.

## Have You Had Your Rocks Today?

by Barry Remer

Sue Marcus recently made mining seem more real and personal for a group of 19 adults, leading us through an imaginative hands-on program at the Loudoun campus of George Mason University.

The program was part of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, a national organization that supports learning for older Americans at a network of colleges and universities across the country.

Sue's program was called "Have You Had your Rocks Today?" She started by explaining the minerals we use every day, such as bismuth in Pepto-Bismol and fluorite in toothpaste, showing specimens of these and other minerals in daily use. Sue also told us where some of these minerals are found.

The program included a hands-on activity illustrating mining challenges. Each participant received a chocolate chip cookie to "mine," along with \$18 of play money to buy "tools" (such as paper clips) for digging out "ore" (chocolate chips). Once all the "ore" was removed, the participants had to pay again to haul away the "debris" (cookie crumbs).

Lastly, Sue left time for questions. By then, she had enthralled the group with her program, and the participants left with new insights into the importance of minerals in our lives—and the challenges associated with mining. ↗.



*Bismuth (top), used in Pepto-Bismol; fluorite (below), used in toothpaste.*



## Colonial District Spring 2013 STEM Boy Scout Camporee

by Kathy Hrechka, Vice President

Club members Kathy Hrechka and Robert Clemenzi demonstrated geology and physics at a weekend camp for Boy Scouts on April 19–21 at Gunston Hall in Lorton, VA. Two hundred Boy Scouts rotated through 11 stations oriented toward science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM).

Kathy exhibited displays on various geology tables, including element and mineral study boxes, a Moh's hardness display, "minerals in the home," and the three rock types.

Robert promoted physics with his "Gravity is Optional" club, conducting interesting experiments. The sun shone on our exhibits, and plenty of Boy Scout excitement brightened the day. ➤



## Archiving Strategies

*Editor's note: The article is adapted from The Hound's Howl (newsletter of the Aiken Gem, Mineral, and Fossil Society in Aiken, SC), May 2013, pp. 5–6. The original article was based mostly on Alan Goldstein, "Curating Your Fossil and Mineral Collection."*

A self-collected specimen might come from a mine, privately owned land, or a road cut. Wherever it comes from, there are simple ways to prevent your specimen from adding to future landfills.

You might groan at the thought of making the effort to record information about each of your many specimens. But remember: most museum collections are based on donations by amateurs, and a high-quality but poorly identified specimen might not be interesting enough for a museum to assess.

Of course, you could give it to a local school. Earth science teachers are always looking for material their students can touch, and if it comes from a nearby locale it can help bring geology to life. But for it to be truly useful, the teacher would want it fully identified.

### Document, Document, Document!

The first step is to create a log book—a master record of your collection. Each entry has a number, along with the type of mineral or other specimen, whether it was collected or purchased, where and when it was acquired, and other notes. You might also include a digital photo or scan.

It's never too late to begin! Start with the most important specimens and spend an hour or two a week on the project. Get others in your family to help; it can make a great family project.



*An egg carton is an inexpensive way to store small specimens, protecting them from chipping and scraping.*

There are many ways to organize your log book. Small collections are easy—just number each specimen. For larger collections with multiple samples of the same specimen, use a number for the type of specimen, followed by a hyphen and a second number for the sample. Or find out how experts catalog their collections.

Don't forget to add your own perspective to the documentation! Anecdotal information can prove quite interesting a century from now. The story of how you acquired an item and figured out what it was (using books or websites or asking an expert) might prove fascinating for posterity.

### Location, Location, Location!

Your specimen can probably be identified long after you found it, but it is crucial to record where you found it right away. Details might include the strata within the outcrop or mine; the site, including city/county/state; a map to the site or description of how to get there, including landmarks; and, for the technologically sophisticated, a GPS point. For some fossils, the names might shift over time, so noting the source of identification is useful.

If your specimen was not self-collected, name the person who gave it to you or the place where you acquired it (such as a silent auction). If the item was purchased, record the purchase price, dealer's name, and any other details of the transaction.

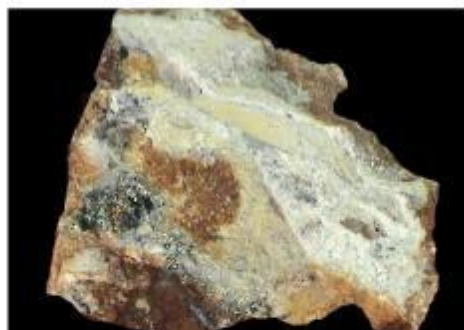
Some dealers will not be able to provide a complete record, but ask for everything they can tell you about the specimen and collecting site. Especially for vertebrate fossils, if you suspect that the specimen might have been taken illegally, don't buy it.

### Label, Label, Label!

Early collectors dabbed paint on the underside of a specimen, let it dry, and penned in a number. Today's collectors might use small paper labels, but inks can fade and the labels themselves can be crushed or thrown away.

On stable specimens, you can use a white or colored correction fluid, acrylic paint, or other markable thin layer that won't harm the item, along with a pen with acid-free ink. For unstable, tiny, or delicate specimens, a label can be glued to whatever container you already use to house the specimen.





Numbered specimen and accompanying label (top); detailed label with specimen (bottom).

If the specimen is sufficiently large, identify it by number and add a small paper identifier with basic information, such as the collector's name, type of specimen, and when and where it was collected. Lightly hot-glue the label to the specimen. Seal both the painted number and paper label with a clear fixative that won't deteriorate over time.

Develop a larger, more detailed accompanying paper label, no smaller than a business card; you can make a template using Word or Excel. Store the label with the specimen and make a copy for your log book.

### Protecting Your Collection

Always keep at least one paper copy of the log book; computers and software can quickly become obsolete.

Consider storing a copy of the log book away from the collection, for example in a safety deposit box or relative's house, in case of a fire, flood, or other disaster. Secure valuable specimens against theft. If you think you might have found something important, ask a university or museum geologist or curator to evaluate it. ⚡

## The Lure and Lore of Rocks: Kyanite

by Kristin Lolmaugh

*Editor's note: The article, lightly edited and modified, is from The Rockhounder (newsletter of the Gem, Lapidary, and Mineral Society of Montgomery County, MD), May 2013, p. 4.*

Kyanite derives its name from the Greek word *kyanos*, meaning blue. Some say Archangel Michael's sword is made of kyanite—it cuts to the heart of the truth. It was once believed that kyanite suspended from a human hair could follow the Earth's magnetic force. Early travelers sometimes used it as a compass.



The color of kyanite can be blue, white, gray, or green. Color is often not consistent throughout the crystal and can be blotchy or in streaks.

Some people believe blue kyanite helps open psychic ability, enhance telepathic communication, and assist in lucid dreaming. It is thought to combine well with green kyanite to open the heart chakra. The fanlike clusters or blades that are formed by kyanite are believed to restore energy balance, and it is thought to be an effective energy conduit that can balance most systems of the body. Some people use it to create stillness and tranquility, thereby facilitating meditation.

Dillwyn, in Buckingham County, VA, is home to the world's largest kyanite mining operation, owned and operated by the Kyanite Mining Corporation at Willis Mountain. Occasionally, the corporation will allow rock and gem clubs to spend a couple of hours collecting rocks on the mountain. ⚡

## Field Trip: Havre de Grace Quarry

June 8, 7 a.m. to noon

by Hutch Brown

The Havre de Grace Quarry is located in Maryland, on the west bank of the Susquehanna River near the Chesapeake Bay. In operation as early as 1905, the quarry was acquired by Vulcan Materials Company in 2007. The site covers about 670 acres, including about 300 acres of buffers. About 60 employees now work there.

The quarry supplies crushed stone products for use in making concrete and asphalt, as well as for direct use in roads, bridges, and other kinds of construction. In 1994, the quarry furnished stone for the base of the Maryland Monument at Gettysburg National Battlefield; Ocean City's jetties were also created from its stone.

The quarry yields Port Deposit gneiss, diabase, and mettagabbro. Minerals found there include epidote, pyrite, zeolites, siderite, titanite, feldspar crystals, and quartz.

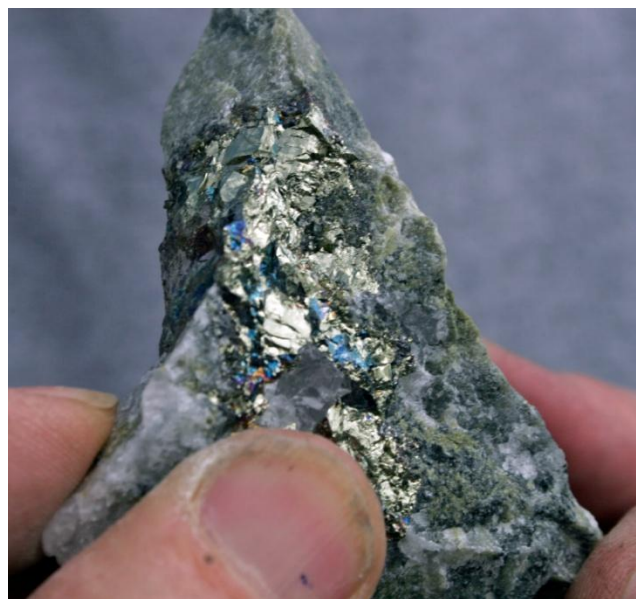
Jonathan Harris, the field trip organizer, is hoping for no more than 20 participants. Minimum age for attending is 10; minors under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a parent, and both must be club members.

To attend, please notify Jonathan by June 4, preferably by e-mail at [jgharris7@gmail.com](mailto:jgharris7@gmail.com) or by phone at 301-545-0808. In your e-mail, please include "Havre de Grace" in the subject line, and please ask about the waiver and rules—you will need to read and agree to them.

Weather or problems at the quarry can cause last-minute cancelations, so be sure to check e-mail on Friday night before the trip for any changes.

The quarry is located off Interstate 95 at 938 Quarry Road, Havre de Grace, MD, about 2 hours northeast of Arlington, VA. For directions, go to Mapquest at <http://www.mapquest.com/>.

Field trip participants will meet on Saturday, June 8, at 7 a.m. at the quarry office. Please be on time; latecomers who miss the safety briefing cannot collect at the quarry.



*Pyrite chip found at the Havre de Grace Quarry.*

## NVMC Gem, Mineral, and Fossil Show

November 23–24; Fairfax, VA

The Northern Virginia Mineral Club and the Department of Atmospheric, Oceanic and Earth Sciences at George Mason University are pleased to announce the 22nd Annual Gem, Mineral, and Fossil Show in November 2013.

**Where:** The Hub (former Student Union Building II) at George Mason University. The campus is located at the intersection of Rte. 123 and Braddock Road in Fairfax, VA.

**Hours:** Saturday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
Sunday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

### Features:

- 20-plus dealers selling minerals, fossils, crystals, gems, jewelry, carvings, meteorites, and more.
- Demonstrations, exhibits, and door prizes.
- Kids' activities, including Kids' Minimates and a Fossil Dig.
- Silent auction on Sunday afternoon.

For an overview of the NVMC mineral show, see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xq-EsM1w74A>

**Admission:** Adults \$5, seniors \$3, teens (13–17) \$3; free—children (12 and under), Scouts in uniform, GMU students with valid ID.

**Parking:** Campus parking lot A. Enter lot A from Nottaway River Lane off Braddock Road; a courtesy



shuttle will provide rides from lot A to the show. (For handicap parking, follow our van back from lot A.)

**Campus map:** <http://eagle.gmu.edu/map/fairfax.php>

**Contacts:**

- Jim Kostka (Operations Coordinator)  
jkostka@juno.com
- Tom Taaffe (Dealer Coordinator)  
rockclctr@aol.com ↗

**EFMLS Annual  
Convention and Show  
May 31–June 3, 2013; Long  
Island Sheraton,  
Haughpauge, NY**



The Eastern Federation of Mineralogical and Lapidary Societies is cohosting its annual convention this year together with the Island Rock Hounds and Suffolk Gem and Mineral Club. The convention will be held on Long Island, NY, and the date is rapidly approaching!

**Theme:** Long Island light houses and geology.

**Features:**

- Friday, May 31—An afternoon lighthouse tour will be followed by a Cracker Barrel session and the annual meeting at 7:30 p.m.
- Saturday, June 1—An auction and the EFMLS Annual Awards Banquet will be held.
- Sunday, June 2—The Editors' and Webmasters' Breakfast Buffet will take place.

For more information, go to <http://www.amfed.org/>.  
↗



**AFMS/ Southeastern  
Federation Show  
September 20–22, 2013  
Jacksonville, FL**



You are invited Thursday night to Hanna Park at the beach. There will be star gazing with Northeast Florida Astronomy Society members and telescopes (Saturn will be spectacular!) and a cookout provided by the host society, JGMS. Other events include:

- SFMS Cracker Barrel Meeting: Friday 7 p.m.
- SFMS Annual Meeting: Saturday 9 a.m.

- ALAA Meeting: Saturday 2:30 p.m.
- Awards Banquet: Saturday 6 p.m.
- Editors and Webmasters Breakfast: Sunday 9 a.m.
- 40+ retail dealers, fantastic exhibits, and speakers from around the country. See the NASA Moon Rock; hear lectures on near-Earth bodies and meteorites; enjoy demonstrations and workshops. There are hourly door prizes, silent auctions, and more.

All AFMS and SFMS meetings will be hosted at the: Marriott, 4670 Salisbury Road Jacksonville, FL 32256, 904-296-2222 or 1-800-962-9786. Mention AFMS meeting for \$82 room rate. Offer expires August 5, 2013. This rate is good from September 15 to September 25.

**Geology Events**

**May 18<sup>th</sup> – Field Trip into Vulcan Quarry Manasaas**, meet at office at 2:30, go in at 3PM.

**May 25: 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Gem and Mineral Show, Chesapeake Gem and Mineral Society.** Saturday, May 25, 10 a.m.–4 p.m. Ruhl Armony, 1035 York Rd., Baltimore, MD. For more information, go to <http://www.chesapeakegemandmineral.org/club-show.html>.

**May 31–June 3: Annual Convention and Show of the Eastern Federation of Mineralogical and Lapidary Societies.** Long Island Sheraton, Haughpauge, NY.

**June 8: Vulcan Havre de Grace Quarry.** Field trip. Contact GLMSMC Jonathan Harris at [jgharris7@gmail.com](mailto:jgharris7@gmail.com).

**June 15: Field Trip – Out West** – to see and collect fossils, coordinated by Ted Carver. Meet in Gainesville at 9am.

**TENTATIVE** - One of the Saturdays at the end of August – **Walking Tour of Thoroughfare Gap, and Club Picnic on Bull Run Mountain.**

**September 2–8: EFMLS Workshop at Wildacres.** Speaker pending. Register early. Tuition is \$380 per person. Go to <http://www.amfed.org/efmls> and click on the Wildacres tab.

**September 20–22: Southeastern Show of the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies.** Jacksonville, FL.



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

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## 2013 Club Officers

President: Rick Reiber  
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All American Club: Sheryl Sims  
sesims4@cox.net  
Greeter/Door Prizes: Ty Meredith  
twhtknig@aol.com  
Refreshments: Karen Lewis

## The Northern Virginia Mineral Club

You can send your newsletter articles to:

news.nvmc@gmail.com

**Visitors are always welcome at our club  
meetings!**

**RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP!**

**SEND YOUR DUES TO:**

Kenny Loveless, Treasurer, NVMC  
PO Box 10085, Manassas, VA 20108

**OR**

Bring your dues to the next meeting.

**Purpose:** To promote and 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, <http://www.amfed.org/efmls>) and the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies (AFMS—at <http://www.amfed.org>).

**Dues:** Due by January 1 of each year; \$15 individual, \$20 family, \$6 junior (under 16, sponsored by an adult member).

**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 22204. (No meeting in July or August.) 2013 Dates: **June 24, September 23, October 28, November 25, December 16** / Holiday Party

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