



**THE
NORTHERN
VIRGINIA**

**MINERAL CLUB
INC**

Crystals are the flowers of the Mineral Kingdom



The Mineral Newsletter

Meeting: December 17 Time: 6:30-10 p.m.

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

Holiday Party Mon. Dec. 17 at 6:30pm

Our Annual Holiday Party will be fun for all with the Micromineralogists of the National Capital Area Club and the Northern Virginia Mineral Club.

Members of either group with last names starting with A through M, please bring an appetizer or side dish to share. If your last name starts 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 humor

Farewell; New Editor Needed

By Julia Hrechka

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to be the editor of this newsletter. But now, I want to focus on finishing my senior year as best I can, and graduating from High School this June.

Volume 53 No. 12
December 2012
Also find information on our Club website:
<http://www.novamineralclub.org/>



NVMC Officer Elections for 2013

By Wayne Sukow

President – Rick Reiber
Vice President – Kathy Hrechka
Secretary – Dave MacLean
Treasurer – *open*

Northern Virginia Mineral Club

President's Collected Thoughts:

By Sue Marcus, President

A tip of the Rock Hammer to the many, many people have assisted me through my year as NVMC President. We had a marvelous Show last month. Jim Kosta and Tom Taafee, our show co-chairs deserve thanks from each and all of us! They relied upon a bucketful of club members who volunteered. Whether it was a day or an hour, we all appreciate your contributions. Barry Remer has served as a club officer for the past several years--thanks for your great service, Barry! I have relied on Wayne Sukow throughout the year. He's provided guidance based on his experience and wisdom, and I am grateful that he has shared his time and thoughts so generously. Rick Reiber and Kathy Hrechka have been NMVC Treasurer and Secretary, respectively, for countless years--though they may be counting them. I am heartened by their willingness to continue their service to us as candidates for new (to them) officer positions. Julia Hrechka took on the task of Newsletter editor and has done a fine job--while juggling high school classes and college admission applications! Rob Winsor has emailed messages out to our membership. And thinking of membership, thanks to Jim Kostka for getting our membership list organized. Casper Voogt maintains our website. Casper and Rob perform little known though very import tasks for our club, facilitating communications which keep us informed.

During this season of giving, I hope that you have trained your family, as I've trained mine, to give you gifts that enhance your collections. We can start by joining in a fun-filled holiday party on December 17th. If you need ideas for a gift to bring for our exchange, think about a tool or book; there are even specimens for sale online! I look forward to seeing you at the party for food, fun, and fellowship!

Wishing you warm, safe, and Happy Holidays, and a New Year full of specimens! *Sue Marcus*



Thank you NVMC Show volunteers and dealers

Thank you profusely from the Northern Virginia Mineral Club for your dedication in making our show such a BIG success! A major tip o' the Rock Hammer to Jim Kotska and Tom Taffee, our Show Co-Chairs. They put in months and months of volunteer effort. And through those efforts, thanks to all the volunteers, who make the show possible. Someone mentioned to me that they didn't realize how much work went into a successful show--how true--and YOU made it happen! Special thanks to our younger members who volunteered, notably at the kids table. Our member-dealers help bring in and foster our collecting compatriots--thanks for your participation.

A successful show is one where we encourage people, especially young people, to enjoy our hobby and learn about science. We were successful, especially with the Scout programs presented by Jim and Kathy Hrechka. The show is successful when attendance is good and people want to come again. We were successful. The show was also successful in attracting new club members (future volunteers!). And a successful show is when those involved want to do it again....well, next year, after a well-deserved rest.

I encourage you to thank anyone who helped make this show possible. *Sue Marcus*



Northern Virginia Mineral Club

Previous Meeting Minutes: November 26, 2012

By Kathy Hrechka, Secretary



President Sue Marcus opened the meeting at 7:45 p.m. Past president Wayne Sukow was honored. Roger Haskins, husband of Sue was welcomed.

Jim Kostka, Co-Chair NVMC Show, thanked the attending members for volunteering at our November 17-18 Mineral Club show. He highlighted some areas of increased attendance, as noted through Volunteer Spot. More information will be discussed at the January meeting. Jim recognized Geologist, Sue Becker who volunteered to teach the Boys Scout and Cub Scout geology merit badges at our show. The club members welcomed her at her first club meeting. Jim congratulated Dave MacLean for advertising the show at the Hidden Pond Nature Center. Statistics will be reviewed for marketing our show for next year. Rick Reiber, treasurer noted that he has more receipts and money to add to the total show revenue.

New Business: Bill Oakley presented professional business cards which he designed for our club. He gave cards to club members for future use in promoting our mineral club. Sue announced the date for our Holiday Party to be Monday, December 17 at 7:30 - 10 p.m. Sue asked members to provide games and door prizes. She also reminded members to bring a wrapped gift to exchange, labeled fossil, mineral, or micro.

Junior member, Alec Brenner was awarded \$100 from the Fred Schaefermeyer Scholarship Fund. He has been an active junior member for many years, and has interned for NASA this past summer, as well as USGS currently.

NVMC Board member elections will be held on December 17. Rick Reiber will run for President. Kathy Hrechka will run for Vice-President. Secretary and treasurer positions remain open. Rick explained how his present treasurer's position is well organized with Quick Books program. Sue reiterated that if we do not have board members to fill all positions, the club will have show & tell all year long.

Earth Science in the News: Jim Kostka promoted the sale of lapidary equipment, etc. with photos.

Door Prizes were won by Bill Oakley & Alec Brenner. Meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m. Break for Refreshments.

Program: Risks and Rewards of Uranium Mining in Virginia

by Charlie Grymes

Charlie spoke about how Virginia has a very large uranium deposit worth as much as \$10 billion. The General Assembly has put a moratorium on uranium mining in the Commonwealth, though that may be lifted. He presented how the uranium development has implications on water resources over a wide area. His program was a debatable topic with much club member enthusiasm.

Field Trip: Manassas Quarry Dec. 15

SHORT NOTICE MAYBE TOO COLD TO DO

Northern Virginia Mineral Club
sponsored

**Vulcan Manassas, VA
and Ice Follies! (Weather Permitting)
December 15th, 2012, 7:00 am to
Noon-esque (Subject to the whim of
Winter)**

Contact John T. Carver jtc carve@msn.com

Northern Virginia Mineral Club

Move over Hope Diamond

By Dave MacLean



On Tuesday 4 December 2012 the Metro Section of the Tuesday Washington Post announced that Dom Pedro a 35cm (14") long obelisk of clear aquamarine beryl with carved starbursts will be on display in the Hall of Gems at the Smithsonian Natural History Museum beginning 6 December 2012. This obelisk (10,363 carats) is the largest known aquamarine ever found. This obelisk is named after the first two emperors of Brazil.

In the 1980's the original aquamarine beryl crystal was found by two garimperos (prospectors) in Estado do Minas Gerais in a pegmatite. This crystal was 90 cm (36") long and weighed 45 kg (100 pounds). The garimperos dropped the crystal breaking it into three pieces. The mine owner sold the top two pieces and kept the largest 60 cm (24") long weighing 27 kg (60 lb).

Henn, a German gem broker and dealer from Idar-Oberstein, Staat Rhineland heard about this gem, visited the owner, and saw it. He recognized that such a stone must not be cut into small stones but cut into one stone. He realized that only Henn's friend and business partner Bernd Munnsteiner could cut this crystal into one piece. In the 1960's and 1970's Bernd Munnsteiner had pioneered a new style seeing big crystals as a sculptor saw a block of marble.

In the early 1990's Bernd Munnsteiner, his son Axel, Herman bank, a dealer, and Tom Henn's son spent several years negotiating buying the crystal. They "spirited" the crystal out of Brazil. Bernd Munnsteiner examined the crystal for four months and took six month to cut it. In 1993 the obelisk was shown.

The mine owner wanted money and threatened to cut the crystal into small pieces. The German group needed a buyer. Jane Mitchell, a business woman, had seen the original crystal and the obelisk it became. The sultan of Brunei and Saudi Sheiks collect Bernd Munnsteiner gems and hide them away. Jane Mitchell and her husband Jeff Bland bought Dom Pedro and displayed it in Houston and Paris for 13 years. They finally donated it to the Smithsonian. Mitchell and Bland trusted Dr. Jeffrey Post and the Smithsonian as the final guardian of Dom Pedro.



People in photo, left to right: Jeff Bland, Dr. Kirk Johnson, (Sant Director of the Natural History Museum) Jane Mitchell, Dr. Jeffrey Post, Coralyn Whaitney (gem enthusiast and friend of Mitchell).

There are many gem bearing pegmatites in Estado Minas Gerais and to a lesser extent in Estado de Bahia to the northeast. These pegmatites have been famous for the gemstones they produce probably for more than 300 years. A visitor can find samples of pegmatite minerals in shops and cut gems in Belo Horizonte and the 17th and 18th century gold mining town of Our Preto. Ouro Preto exported gold to Portugal during the 17th and 18th centuries until the gold output decreased in the 1740's. The town preserved its 18th century buildings and is now a tourist destination.

(Continued on next page)

Northern Virginia Mineral Club

I visited both towns in 1999 including the mineral museum in Ouro Preto. For a small price one could buy spectacular hematite from Ouro Preto. Guides are easily available to take mineral hunters out to the pegmatite localities.



Dom Pedro Aquamarine 10,363 carats Pedra Azul, Minas Gerais, Brazil

An immense beryl crystal found in the late 1980s yielded the Dom Pedro--the largest known aquamarine gem. The original crystal was almost two feet in length and weighed nearly 60 lbs. In 1992-1993, gem artist Bernd Munsteiner fashioned the gem and named it after the first two emperors of Brazil. A pattern of tapering "negative cuts" is faceted into the two reverse faces of the obelisk. These facets reflect the light, making it appear to glow from within. The vertical "lines" near the base are hollow tubes that formed naturally in the original crystal.

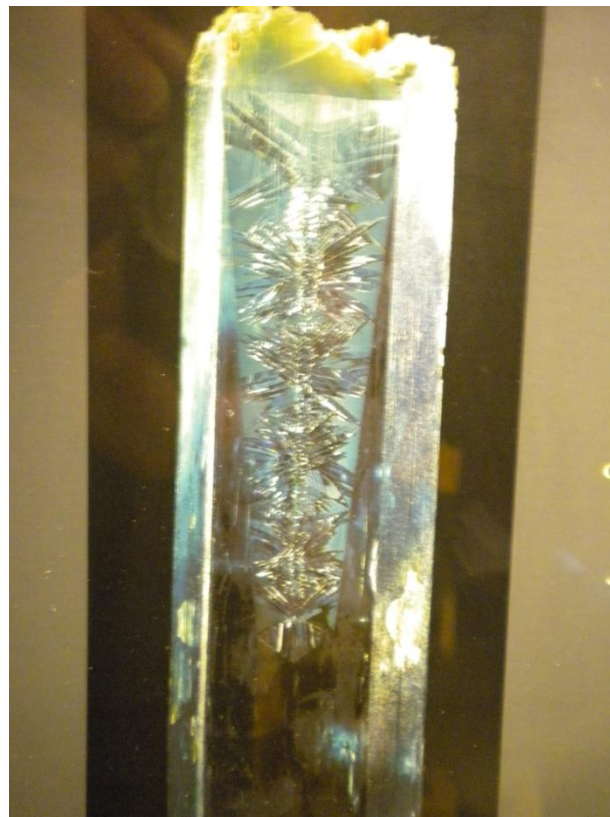


Photo depicts overlay of carved obelisk and original aquamarine crystal



Kathy Hrechka shared in the excitement on December 6th, the opening day of the Dom Pedro Aquamarine.

Photos taken by Kathy Hrechka

Northern Virginia Mineral Club

21st Annual Gem, Mineral & Fossil Show

By Tom Taaffe - Show Co-chair

Photos by Tom Taaffe

Even after all these years it never ceases to amaze me and it never gets old. It is still quite amazing to see how a vacant room and a bunch of empty tables can be so remarkably transformed. We have held our show at GMU's student union ballroom for at least 14 years now. Each year on a Friday evening in late November, our most stalwart club volunteers are joined by a fresh crop of Julia Nord's Geology students to make the ballroom ready for the big event. There are supplies to load in, exhibit cases to build, table coverings to affix, electrical loads to balance, cords to tape down, kid's mines to assemble, quizzes to arrange, signs to put all over campus and much more.



By Saturday morning at 10 AM, preparations are complete. Our 25 dealers are all ready and waiting and the vacant room of the night before has now become an exquisite array of their Gem, Mineral & Fossil wonders. When you add in our educational tables, hobby and science demonstrations and collector exhibits, everything has magically come together to create a truly special venue.

Mineral and fossil enthusiasts, from all around the DC area, annually make their way to our Mineral Show at GMU and they always find



that their time and effort is very well rewarded. First time mineral show-goers, however, are typically amazed and even a bit overwhelmed by a room overflowing with minerals, crystals & fossils. They often comment that they had no idea such a thing as a mineral show even existed but they are thrilled to have stumbled across ours.

From the beginning on Saturday morning, the 2 minivan shuttles (operated mostly by GMU student volunteers) were running nonstop and by 10:30 AM, the ballroom was nearly full and buzzing. That the ballroom filled up so quickly on Saturday morning is a testament to both the reputation of our annual show, the fresh efforts this year to get the word out and a pretty darn efficient shuttle system. The crowd did not let up; the ballroom remained busy all day Saturday.

Sunday was quite busy too, particularly in the middle of the afternoon, when the Silent Auction was in full swing. It was very gratifying to look out over the ballroom over the course of each day to see so many people so thoroughly enjoying themselves. Thanks again to all our club members who generously donated their time so that so many folks could enjoy all that our show had to offer.

Northern Virginia Mineral Club

21st Annual Gem, Mineral & Fossil Show continued

The truth is that the Northern Virginia Mineral Club had an outstanding result at the 2012 show. Many thanks are due to GMU's Department of Atmospheric, Oceanic and Earth Sciences who regularly sponsors our annual event and through which we are able to secure such a fine facility. Our event was afforded excellent cooperation from GMU Events, helping hands from the staff at the Hub and allowances from GMU's Parking Mgmt. Thanks again to Dr. Julia Nord for her student volunteers and for her time and effort in making our Gem, Mineral & Fossil show a big success.



Overall, our 25 contributing dealers and their customers were quite happy and very engaged with each other. GMU students and faculty who stopped in at the show were clearly wowed. Families and Scout groups who had not previously experienced a mineral show will certainly be telling their friends. And the Northern Virginia Mineral Club has boosted its image and may even get a few new members!



Collectively, we were able to manage a fairly sizable crowd, the courtesy shuttles and campus parking arrangements. Numerous NVMC club members helped throughout the course of the show but special mention goes rightly to those who were extra busy on the front lines.

Working with the Scout troops (Jim K. and Kathy H), running the Silent Auction (Diane and Jeff) and managing the ever busy Kid's Mini-mines (Alec B. Julia H. and Talaya R.). The high energy and enthusiasm that the volunteers brought to the show made all the difference!



More Show Photos in Shutterfly by Sheryl Sims
<http://share.shutterfly.com/share/received/welcome.sfly?fid=0a2919f0adb7f2f&sid=2Eat2rly1asPM>

Northern Virginia Mineral Club



**American Federation of
Mineralogical Societies**

(AFMS)

www.amfed.org

The **American Federation of Mineralogical Societies** is composed of the following seven similar regional organizations of gem, mineral, and lapidary societies. The official boundaries of each Regional Federation is indicated by the states listed. Clubs or societies may although be members of Regional Federations outside of their respective boundary as determined by Article XII of the AFMS By-Laws.



◆ **California Federation of Mineralogical Societies**

CA, HI, NV

◆ **Eastern Federation of Mineralogical and Lapidary Societies**

CT, DC, DE, KY, MD, ME, MA, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VA, VT, WV

◆ **Midwest Federation of Mineralogical and Geological Societies**

IA, IL, IN, MI, MN, MO, OH, WI, Eastern Portion of (ND, NE, SD)

◆ **Northwest Federation of Mineralogical Societies**

AK, ID, MT, OR, WA

◆ **Rocky Mountain Federation of Mineralogical Societies**

AZ, CO, KS, NM, OK, UT, WY, Western Portion of (ND, NE, SD)

◆ **South Central Federation of Mineral Societies**

AR, LA, TX

◆ **Southeast Federation of Mineralogical Societies**

AL, FL, GA, MS, NC, SC, TN



**Eastern Federation of
Mineralogical and
Lapidary Societies**

(EFMLS)

www.amfed.org/efmls

**Communication and Involvement
Are the Keys to Our Success!**

Geology Events:

By Matt Charsky

February

16: 23rd Annual Mineral, Jewelry & Fossil Show sponsored by the So. Maryland Rock & Mineral Club. The Show Place, Marlboro, MD.

March:

2 – 3: 50th Annual Earth Science Gem & Mineral Show sponsored by the Delaware Mineralogical Society. Delaware Technical & Community College, Newark, DE.

23-24: 44th Annual Gem & Mineral Show sponsored by the Che-Hanna Rock & Mineral Club. Athens Township Volunteer Fire Hall, Sayre, PA.

June:

1 - 2: EFMLS Convention & Show hosted by the Island Rockhounds and Suffolk Gem & Mineral Club. Plainview, NY.

EFMLS Meeting; Friday, May 31.



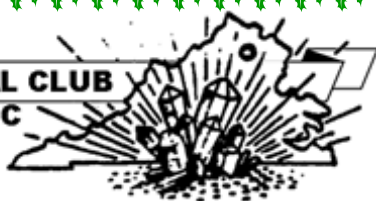
Happy Hanukkah



Merry Christmas!

THE
NORTHERN
VIRGINIA

MINERAL CLUB
INC



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

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Refreshments: Karen Lewis

The Northern Virginia Mineral Club

You can send your
Newsletter articles to:

news.nvmc@gmail.com

**Visitors are Always Welcom e at our Club
Meetings.**

RENEW YOUR
MEMBERSHIP!

SEND YOUR DUE 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.