



Conglomerate

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• Upcoming Shows

For the latest information, check out the web site of the Eastern Federation of Mineral and Lapidary Societies:
<http://www.amfed.org/efmls>.

JUNE 2008

28 & 29: State College, PA - Nittany Gem and Mineral Show sponsored by Nittany Mineralogical Society, Inc. Park Forest Middle School, Amblerwood Way off Valley Vista Drive, Exit 69 of Route 322 & 220. Saturday 10:00-6:00, Sunday 11:00-5:00. Admission \$5.00; children 12 and under and scouts in uniform free with an adult. Children's sections, demonstrations, displays, door prizes, free parking. Driving directions and details at www.ems.psu.edu/nms

JULY 2008

12 & 13: 42nd Annual Jewelry, Gem and Mineral Show. Organized by: Gem & Mineral Society of Syracuse. Held at the Verizon Center of Progress Building (New York State Fairgrounds, Route 690).

AUGUST 2008

2 & 3: 59th Annual Gem & Mineral Show sponsored by the Gem, Lapidary & Mineral Society of Washington, DC. Stone Ridge School, Bethesda, MD. Formerly known as the "New

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June BMS Meeting: Diamonds!!

The next meeting of BMS will be Wednesday June 18th at the Cockeysville Public Library. Doors open at 6:30 pm and the meeting begins at 7:15 pm. The program will be **Diamonds: Mostly from North America**, presented by Bob Hudgins. If you have diamonds to show off, bring along a handful. Does anyone have a piece of Kimberlite? Jake will host the meeting.

BMS Heroes at the Pequea Silver Mine

Perhaps it is just an accident or perhaps it is a character-revealing episode, but BMS members were heroes for a day during the Community Day Celebration at the Pequea Silver Mine on May 17th.

The silver mine is located in Pequea Township Park, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. (Pequea is pronounced "Peck-Way.") When the township board decided to hold a Community Day Celebration, they asked John Cooledge to have the mine open for tours. That was an obvious choice because John has been Master of the Mine for years, maintaining it, building security doors to keep vandals out, and conducting occasional tours for individual visitors. He has also worked for the township restoring a hundred plus year-old stone barn and a limekiln on the park property. John has also constructed a self-guided geology walk on park property. As an experienced spelunker, John was the obvious choice to lead the mine tours.

The site was first worked in pre-colonial times by local Indians who dug galena out of the hillside to use as decoration. When colonists arrived they began mining the galena as lead ore and followed the veins of quartz and galena into the dolomite eventually twisting a mostly horizontal shaft 250 feet back into the hillside. William Penn heard about the valuable mine, and sent his personal representative around to collect the proper taxes. The mine was worked by prisoners during the French and Indian War (1754-1763) and the lead became musket balls.

Pennsylvania and Maryland both claimed the mine, but when Mason and Dixon made their survey (1763-1767), the mine lay 12.6 miles north of their famous line -- firmly in Pennsylvania. Again during the Civil War, the mine was worked heavily for lead. After 1875, production declined with some small mining efforts around 1900.

The galena is lead ore, but it does contain some other heavy metals, and some unknown amount of silver may have been recovered as a byproduct of smelting. In any case, the mine was mainly a lead mine for most of its history, and was operated as the Lancaster Lead Company during and after the civil war.

During the 1930s, the mine was salted with real silver ore from Arizona, the silver was "discovered," and shares were sold in the Pequea Silver Mine. Those old mining share certificates have some value as collector's items, but there wasn't nearly enough silver in the mine to make it profitable. The investors lost their money but don't seem to have learned a great deal about mining. Silver was "discovered" in the mine again in the 1950s, more shares were sold, and the money disappeared.

The mine is now part of the Pequea Township Park and no collecting is allowed. There is no visible ore inside the mine, and the old mine dumps are tree covered and closed to collecting. Some dumps extend outside the park onto private land, but those properties are also closed to collecting. There is no legal collecting at the mine.

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Carrollton Show,” but has relocated.

SEPTEMBER 2008

13 & 14: 3rd Annual Gem, Mineral & Jewelry Show sponsored by the Central Pennsylvania Rock & Mineral Club. *NEW LOCATION:* Eagle View Middle School, Mechanicsburg, PA.

27-28: West Friendship, MD—43rd Annual Atlantic Coast Gem, Mineral & Jewelry Show hosted by the Gem Cutters’ Guild of Baltimore. Howard Co. Fairgrounds, MD 32 at I-70; West Friendship, MD

27-28: Franklin, NJ—52nd Annual Franklin-Sterling Hill Mineral, Gem & Jewelry Show sponsored by the Franklin Mineral Museum. Franklin School, Washington Av; Franklin, NJ.

OCTOBER 2008

25: Fairless Hills, PA - Ultravioletation 2008 Fluorescent Mineral Show sponsored by the Rock & Mineral Club of Lower Bucks

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Baltimore Mineral Society

Mike Seeds, *president*, 717-285-3745; Al Pribula, *vice president*; Bob Hudgins, *treasurer*; Carolyn Weinberger, *secretary*; Larry Krause, *newsletter*, 410/828-0024.

E-mail news or questions to: mseeds@fandm.edu or managingeditor@verizon.net
Write c/o 1106 Gypsy Lane West Baltimore, MD 21286.

FIELD TRIP INFO:

E-mail Edmund.A.Goldberg@usdoj.gov *to learn about upcoming mineral field trips.*

As John Coolidge began planning for the public tours, he wasn’t sure how many people would want to visit the old mine. Nevertheless, he assembled a team of volunteers to welcome guests and conduct small groups back into the mine. Three things went wrong. In the days before the Community Day Celebration, many of the volunteers cancelled. At 8 am on the big day, the crew was reduced to John and Kate Coolidge, John’s son Cory, Louis Stedman, and Mike and Janet Seeds, as it happens, all members of BMS. No BMS members canceled.

The second thing that went wrong was that recent rains had filled the mine 6 inches deep with muddy water at a chilly 52 degrees. The third thing that went wrong, if that’s the proper word, was huge numbers of people who wanted to visit the mine. They were all warned that they would have to wade through cold, dirty water and would get their shoes and pant legs wet, but only a few backed out. Mike, Janet and Kate provided release forms, hard hats, flashlights and preliminary talks on history and geology. John, Cory and Louis conducted tours 200 feet back into the mine with almost no time to rest between groups. Visitors waded through the cold water for only 10 or 15 minutes, but John, Cory and Louis were in the water all day. The BMS heroes worked for 10 hours straight and conducted nearly 450 people through the mine.

The township board hopes to have Community Day Celebration every spring, and John hopes to have the mine open again next year. He also hopes to have more volunteers and less water.

—Mike Seeds

A Delightful Day: Chesapeake Gem & Mineral Show

The annual Chesapeake Gem & Mineral Show, held on May 24th was a delightful event. Formerly held at Goucher College, the show was moved indoors this year because Goucher would no longer rent their facilities for this type of activity. All were a bit apprehensive, but the new venue worked quite well.

Our BMS’ers were active. A number of us are also members of the host club, and as such were busy helping out at the show. Bernie and Lynne served as show chairs while Steve and Carolyn helped out wherever they could. Al, Jake and Larry had tables loaded with minerals for sale. Business appeared to be brisk! Carolyn set up a display promoting BMS that appeared to garner a good bit of interest and she and Steve along with Al, Larry and Jake talked with lots of people about our club.

The show is always a fun activity. Vendors are a mix of “professional” (like Larry) and non-professional (like Al) dealers. Available for purchase were materials for cutting cabochons and carving, fossils, jewelry, old books and of course minerals of all sizes (even Bernie sized ones!). Perhaps the busiest table was the one presided over by one of the DC clubs whose members were selling minerals, cutting rough and books from a deceased members collection – all at bargain prices. Besides shopping, many of us spent the day talking to old friends and prospective members. Some of us even brought home a few new treasures for our collection.

—Carolyn Weinberger

The Rock Dump: News & Notes about Minerals

- **Jake Slagle** reports that he met a mineral collector at a friend’s house and talked up the merits of BMS. The collector joined on the spot. That’s the way to do it. We are not conducting a membership drive, but we should be alert for new members. Those new members make it more likely that BMS will survive for years to come. Also, the more members we have the more fun we have.

- A special thank you to **Carolyn and Steve Weinberger**, who set up the BMS display at the recent Chesapeake show and, although they were busy as members of the Chesapeake club, found

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BMS MEETINGS:

3rd Wednesday of the month at 7:00 P.M. Cockeysville Public Library except Oct. (Micromount Symposium); December (BMS holiday party), May (BMS annual BBQ) & August

Co. First United Methodist Church, Fairless Hills, PA.

SAVE THE DATE!

OCTOBER 2008

10-12: Elkridge, Maryland

Paul Desautels Micromount

Symposium, organized by:

Baltimore Mineral Society.

The event will be held at the Maryland Hospital Association Conference Center (6820 Deerpath Road, Elkridge, Md.).

Did You Know?

RHODOCHROSITE

Mike Seeds' story in this issue about how we can help educate the public mentioned rhodochrosite—named the State Mineral of Colorado in 2002. Its name is derived from a Greek word meaning “rose-colored.” The Incas believed rhodochrosite is actually the blood of their former rulers; thus it's sometimes called “Rosa del Inca” (Inca Rose).

Soft (3.5 to 4 on the Mohs Scale) and difficult to cut, this mineral (manganese carbonate, $MnCO_3$) is found in many places, but rarely in red crystal forms. One of the most celebrated sites for these rare crystals is the Sweet Home Mine, near Alma, Co. The largest known rhodochrosite, nicknamed the “Alma King,” is displayed at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science.

Other Manganese Carbonates are Ankerite, Kutnohorite, and Manganoo Calcite.

Though this mineral is best known in its pink and red colors, it can also be found in brown to yellow or gray to white colors.

time to talk to visitors about BMS. Thanks also to **Al Pribula**, who distributed BMS brochures at his table and promoted BMS to visitors.

- **Ed Goldberg** and **Phil Greenberg** report nothing. Ed's exact words describing the May 18 collecting trip to Hunting Hill Quarry were, “Nothing worth taking home.” Ed and Phil and other diggers had a good time but didn't turn up many astonishing finds. But not everyone got skunked. **Cal Pierson** took home a carload of beautiful garden rocks, and another collector found a green twinned 1.25” titanite crystal perched on calcite.

- **New Tool Alert:** The Dust Devil Detailer is a cordless vacuum cleaner about the size of a flashlight. It will suck dust and dirt off of your workbench after you have been cleaning or trimming a mineral specimen, but the opening is only about 3/8 inch, so it is for small bits and not chunks. You can pull off the nose cone, empty the bits, and shake the dust off the inner cloth filter. It comes with its own recharging base and a brush attachment. \$20 at Office Max.

- In case you want to go to California and dig for benitoite, you should watch for a rerun of the Discovery Channel program “Cash and Treasures.” In a recent episode, Kirsten Gum visited the benitoite mine. It is a 3-hour drive from the nearest sizable town, some of it over unmarked 4-wheel-drive roads. It costs \$100 a day to dig on the dumps and \$500 a night if you want to collect with a fluorescent light. You can collect a 5-gallon bucket full of rock but you will have to etch away the natrolite to reveal any gems, so you may not know what you have found till later. Kirsten found a valuable gem-quality benitoite. Having a TV crew with you seems to bring good luck.

—compiled by Mike Seeds

Report: April Wildacres

Although the temperatures outside were a bit cool, the April EFMLS Wildacres Workshop was a warm experience. Guest speaker Alfredo Petrov gave five talks about minerals and mineral localities that he's visited. Alfredo was born in England, raised in Bolivia and is married to a Japanese-Bolivian. He makes trips to both Bolivia and Japan several times a year and has collected extensively in both. His talks took us high into the Andes, and to Japan and Okinawa and featured lots of wonderful photographs about not only the minerals, but culture and history of each place. A terrific speaker, he enthralled the group with his charm and knowledge...and even was the subject of a betting pool among some of the single ladies who wanted to know “how old is Alfredo?”

In addition to the talks, participants enjoyed a variety of classes, a field trip, tailgate, auction and fun night. Steve and Carolyn were busy during the week—Steve taught faceting and served as the fun night emcee (have you ever heard some of his stories?). Carolyn produced a daily newsletter for the group, helped out with the auction, and gave an introductory program on the first night of the session.

If you've never been to Wildacres, consider coming. The facility is nestled on its own private mountain top in North Carolina and is modern and comfortable. The fall session, which still has openings, will be held September 8–14. Guest speaker will be Denise Nelson, a DC-area gemologist. One of her talks will be on a recent trip she was able to take to the DeBeers diamond operation in Namibia. For details, see Steve or Carolyn or visit the EFMLS website www.amfed.org/efmls/wildacres.htm.

—Steve & Carolyn Weinberger

How BMS Can Save the World, Partially

BMS is an educational organization, and we have lots of room to work. In a survey conducted last year, a third of adult Americans didn't know the Earth goes around the sun, forty percent believed that astrology was scientific, and eighty percent couldn't explain what a molecule is. BMS could do its bit to help, but we might have to change the way we talk to the public about our minerals.

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Mineral Clubs in Maryland

In addition to our own **Baltimore Mineral Society, Inc.**, Maryland members of the Eastern Federation of Mineralogical and Lapidary Societies include:

American Fossil Federation
E-mail George Powell, Jr. for info: Powelli1@aol.com

Chesapeake Gem and Mineral Society, Inc.
Meets at Women's Club of Catonsville, St. Timothy's Lane & Old Frederick Rd; Catonsville, MD;
stevedyer4@juno.com

Gem Cutters Guild of Baltimore, Inc. Meets at Meadow Mill at Woodberry, 3600 Clipper Mill Rd., Suite 116; Baltimore, MD;
info@gemcuttersguild.com

Gem, Lapidary and Mineral Society of Montgomery Co., MD, Inc. Meets at Rockville Sr. Center, 1150 Carnation Drive; Rockville, MD
mddahlman@yahoo.com

Maryland Geological Society, Inc. Meets at Bowie Community Center, 1717 Pittsfield Ln; Bowie, MD.
www.ecphora.net/mgs

Patuxent Lapidary Guild
Meets at 111 N Langley Rd; Glen Burnie, MD 21076

Southern Maryland Rock and Mineral Club
Meets at Clearwater Nature Center; Clinton, MD.
Michael.patterson@pgparks.com

When we show our minerals to visitors we tend to tell them things like, "This is malachite. I collected this in Arizona. It polishes up really nicely so you've probably seen it in jewelry."

That would interest most people but you could do them a service if you went a bit further and introduced some atoms. You might say, "The malachite molecule contains two copper atoms and a carbonate unit that is made of a carbon atom and three oxygen atoms. Those atoms always link together the same way and produce crystals like little needles, and that's why malachite catches the light. You are looking at all those little crystals lined up side by side." So what if you left out the hydroxyl radical? You mentioned atoms and molecules and showed them how to see the little crystals.

If you have time you could go further. "Malachite molecules contain two copper atoms, but if you replace one of those copper atoms with a zinc atom, you get Rosasite, and it is green and forms little needles too." If you are standing at your collection or at a display table at a show, you have examples to show people. "If you make both metal atoms zinc, then you have smithsonite, and it forms elongated crystals in bunches too. And here is rhodochrosite; it is like malachite except the metal atoms are manganese instead of copper, and that's why it is pink. But it tends to form larger crystals and not needles."

Educating the public about atoms and molecules is easy, and you don't have to get into complex chemistry. "This is quartz, and it is made up of silicon dioxide molecules. Each of those molecules contains a silicon atom and two oxygen atoms. They always link together to form the same shape molecules, and those molecules always stack together the same way to make quartz crystals that have faces and angles that are the same. Whenever you look at a crystal, you are seeing how atoms make molecules and molecules make crystals. Big things are made of little things."

Even if the chemistry is forgotten, it is a revelation to many people that big things are made of little things, and that the shape of a crystal is determined by the properties of its atoms.

Next time you talk to a non-collector or a public group about your minerals, listen to what you are saying and see if you can educate your guests about atoms and molecules. You could save the world a little bit at a time.

—Mike Seeds

If you haven't already done so: **Join BMS Now!**

Individual memberships are \$10 and family memberships are \$15. (List family members by name.)

Please send names, address, email address, and phone numbers, along with with check made payable to the Baltimore Mineral Society, to:

Bob Hudgins, BMS Treasurer, 6713 Balmoral Overlook, New Market, MD 21774