



THE NORTHERN VIRGINIA MINERAL CLUB INC



Crystals are the flowers of the Mineral Kingdom



THE MINERAL NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 52 No. 3

MARCH 2011

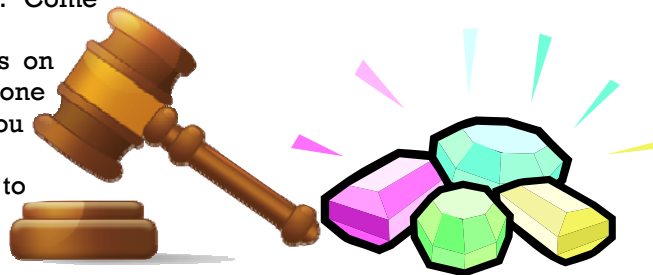
Also find information on our Club Website: <http://www.novamineralclub.org>

March to our Auction!

Our March meeting is traditionally an auction. No exceptions to that rule for this month. This is a meeting that tends to be heavily attended, so it is recommended that you come early to setup - as early as 7pm. Also, parking is limited and tends to fill up early. Come early for a good space.

Sellers, please find bid slips on page 3. Print out and bring one slip for each specimen you wish to sell.

Buyers, please remember to write-in a bid on the bid slips for items you want to purchase. Items with bids on them will be auctioned first. It is not uncommon for there to be several items that are not auctioned due to lack of time. The auction will end promptly at 9:50 so that there is sufficient time to clear out of the Nature Center prior to the 10pm closing time.



NVMC Schedule:

28 Mar General meeting and AUCTION of the NVMC at 7:45pm

Also, meeting dates for the rest of the year have been determined:

April 25

May 23

June 27

**** NOTE CHANGE****

September 26+ AUCTION

October 24

November 28

December 19*

*** This is a joint meeting with MNCA**

Auction Details....Operating Procedures

Members who've participated in Northern Virginia Mineral Club auctions know that they are a lot of fun, and contain spirited bidding. For efficient use of time we have developed the following procedures:

We have the old rule that says, you must be a member of the NVMC to sell material at the auction.

We have the old rule that says, anyone can be a bidder and buyer at the auction. NVMC membership is not needed to be a buyer.

We have the old rule that says, all material for auction must be hobby related.

We have an old rule; all bid increments must be at least \$1 for bids on items between \$1 and \$25. Above \$25 bid increments must be \$5.

We have an old rule; items with multiple bids on the bid slip before the auction begins will be auctioned early in the evening.

All bidders must sign in, and be given a numbered card. You bid by raising your number.

All payments are made when the bidding is ended. The bidding will be stopped at 9:30 p.m. so we can be the out of the building by the 10 p.m. requirement.

In full force is the trusted and true old rule that's at the heart of all auctions; bid often and bid quickly. Winning is fun. Bidding against friends and yourself are not only allowed, they are encouraged. Remember that the NVMC gets 15% of the sale price of all items and 100% of the sale price of club items.

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February Minutes

By: Kathy Hrechka, Secretary

28 February 2011

President, Barry Remer opened the meeting at 8 p.m. He welcomed guest, Steve Smith. Remer opened discussion to change our traditional November Auction to the month of September. Sue Marcus made a motion to change the club auction from November to September. The motion was seconded, and voted on with a majority in favor.

Old Business: Tom Taaffe, Show Chair announced that Julia Nord was already coordinating our 2012 club show with GMU. Taaffe reported that the show may be moved to November 11-13. He is requesting contract details for our 2012 club show. Remer requested more volunteers to help in setting up and running the club show.

Gerry Cox recommended and volunteered to use "Survey Monkey" with an Excel spread sheet for scheduling of duties and volunteers for next year. It would be the sort of program where members could email their sign-up requests. Discussion occurred about Tom Taaffe concentrating on dealers for the show, and Jim Kostka taking over other show responsibilities.

New Business: Kathy Hrechka promoted the "Fred Schaefermeyer Fund", referring to her article in this month's newsletter. Dr. Lance Kearns, James Madison University would provide a student if our club would continue sponsorship. Monetary donations are being accepted through Rick Reiber, our club treasurer.

Announcements: Dave MacLean invited members to the Micromounter's Conference April 1-3.

The Montgomery club is having their show March 19-20 at the Montgomery

Co. Fairgrounds. Sue Marcus informed us that Joe Murter is recovering very well from quadruple bypass heart surgery. Jim Kostka invited members to Milton Wiser's home to help liquidate his late wife's mineral collection. Flyers were available at the meeting.

Door Prizes: Kathy Hrechka won an adamite, and Michelle Harris won a hemamorphite.

Barry Remer called for a break before our program for the evening. Meeting adjourned by 9 p.m.

Program: Geology of Afghanistan by Lieutenant Colonel Steve Johnson.



Photo Courtesy Sheryl Sims

**Bid Slips - Please print
and bring one for each
item you wish to auction**

AUCTION BID SLIP

ITEM # _____
DESCRIPTION _____
FROM _____
DATE of FIND _____
Starting Bid
amount: _____

*Bidders: You need to bid on this item if you
want it to be auctioned! Place bid below.*

NAME	BID
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Cut along line and bring one for each item

AUCTION BID SLIP

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_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Cut along line and bring one for each item

THE PEARL

By Sheryl E. Sims

Images courtesy of Wikipedia the free encyclopedia

The Pearl! Such a thing of beauty! Have you ever found a pearl? I have – twice! Oh, no, I didn't dive for them or anything *that* exciting. I was merely enjoying a plate of oysters when on two occasions, I discovered a small pearl in the middle of my meal. What a happy surprise! What is it about this shiny, hard sphere, produced within the mantle of a mollusk that we find so appealing? Is it the many colors in which a pearl may be produced? Whether white, silver, pink, cream, golden, blue, green, or black (known as black Tahitian pearls) in color, we simply can't resist them.

As most of us know, pearls are caused by an irritation from a microscopic object that is trapped in the mantle folds of the mollusk. Layers and layers of "nacre" builds up creating the iridescent appearance. This is the same processes found in the secretion of the mother of pearl lining of a shell¹. Classified as a mineral, pearls or "calcareous concretions" have the chemical makeup of: CaCO_3 + organic substance + water². Some pearls even fluoresce! Genuine black pearls fluoresce a reddish color and river pearls fluoresce a pale green color³. While pearls may be found in a variety of shapes, which are called baroque pearls, favored one are perfectly smooth and round. Pearls found from the sea are valued more than cultured pearls or ones farmed. Gemstone quality pearls are almost always iridescent whether they are cultured pearls for found "in the wild." Wild pearls form without the aid of human intervention. These are very rare. The luster of pearls is dependent upon refraction, diffraction of light, and reflection; and, the thinner the layers, the more fine the luster⁴.

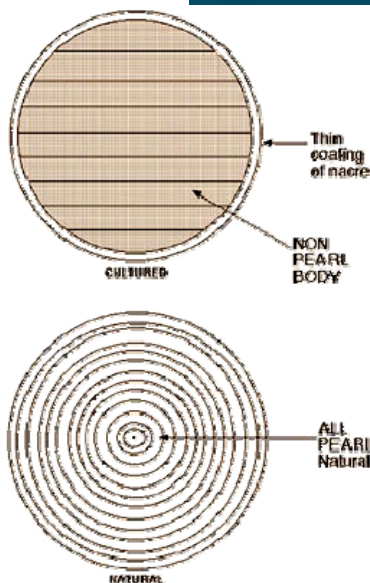
Pearls are found in varying sizes. While most come in the familiar sizes, unexpected ones do



Lao Tzu -
largest known pearl

surface, albeit very rarely. For instance, the Pearl of Lao Tzu is the largest known pearl in the world⁵. It is a clam pearl or "Tridacna pearl."

Although not gem quality, this pearl weighs 14.1 pounds and is about 9.45 inches in diameter⁶. It is from the Philippines. Wilburn Cobb was given the pearl as a gift by a tribal chief in 1936 after saving his son's life when he was stricken with malaria⁷. The pearl is valued at \$3.5 million and was exhibited at the Ripley's Believe It or Not! Odditorium in New York⁸. The Lao Tzu pearl has quite a legend attached to it, dating back 2,500 years and involving the pearl having been transferred to larger clams, thus, allowing it to grow in size. It is said that wars have been fought over it and that legal battles have been fought over it. Currently, the pearl is owned in equal parts by three families (heirs of Joe Bonicelli, Peter Hoffman, and Victor Barbish). So, the next time you are referred to as a "pearl," know that you are "indeed rare, quite fine, notably admirable and, of course, very valuable!"



1. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/pearl>
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/pearl_of_Lao_Tzu
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.

September Auction

By R. Winsor Yes, you read correctly - our November meeting will not be an auction meeting. Our second auction of the year will (at least this year) be held in September rather than November. This change was proposed, discussed and voted on at our February meeting, with most members voting in favor, but not all of them.

There is still concern that moving the auction to September could result in many members not realizing that the first meeting after our summer vacation will be an auction meeting. So please spread the word. Although this announcement is in the newsletter, many members don't even read the newsletter, so spreading the word by mouth helps also.

To further help disseminate the message, each issue of the newsletter will have a message about the September auction just to hammer the message and hopefully get all the members to realize the change.

Computer Problems!

By R. Winsor Our club Treasurer, Rick Reiber, has had a massive computer failure, which occurred in the month of January. Getting his computer repaired/replaced and the data restored has been very time consuming. We are therefore asking all members to please be patient with the process of getting notification of receipt of club dues. Surely this may also cause confusion about the newsletters as well. Our apologies are extended to members that are expecting newsletters but not receiving them. Obviously a member not receiving this newsletter would not see this message - so please pass the word along.

Membership Renewal

By R. Winsor This is just a reminder that club dues need to be sent to Rick Reiber, and NOT the Editor of this bulletin.

I have to date received dues for several club members, and this creates a significant delay in your membership status being recorded.

Please refer to the back page of the bulletin.

Geiger Counters Scarce

By R. Winsor Due to the tragedy in Japan and the concerns that many have over radiation exposure, many vendors of Geiger counters are out of stock. So, if you are interested in getting started in the unique hobby of collecting radio-active minerals, you may be forced to delay your acquisition of a detector. Even replacement probes are scarce right now.

Geology Photos - WIRED

By R. Winsor The online version of the magazine, WIRED, is holding a geology photo contest. Entries are due by 30 March, and must be original photos submitted by the photographer. Check it out at this website:

<http://www.wired.com/wiredscience/clasticdetritus>

In fact, the Clastic Detritis Blog, through which this is being held, has some rather interesting geology articles that may be of interest to club members, even those not interested in submitting a photo for the contest.

Sterling Hill Super Dig

By R. Winsor The date of the 2011 Sterling Hill Super Dig in Ogdensburg, NJ has been announced for 30 April, 9am - 11pm. Several club members have attended past events and enjoyed it considerably. Registration for the event is open online at the following website:

<http://www.uvwworld.org/>

Registration costs \$20, and note that you will need to show proof of membership in an EFMLS club (such as the NVMC) to attend, otherwise you will be forced on-site to join the Delaware Valley group (another \$15, and an extra \$5 for each extra family member). If you want proof of membership, please contact either the Editor or Rick Reiber and we can send you proof of membership to show when you arrive.

CALCITE – CALCITE - CALCITE

by Sheryl E. Sims

C – carbonate mineral

A – acid neutralizer

L – limestone component

C – chemical formula: CaCO_3

I – colorless, white, gray, yellow, red, orange, green, blue, violet, brown & black

T – twinning

E – even found in volcanic or mantle-derived rocks

When I first began to grow my mineral collection, one of the minerals that caught my eye, and, I discovered, could be found in an array of colors, was calcite. Calcite is very common and can be found all over the world in sedimentary, metamorphic, and igneous rocks such as limestone (sedimentary) and marble (metamorphic), and is used to produce concrete¹.

There are many other uses for calcite as well. It is used to neutralized acids in the chemical industry and, when mixed with flavoring and sugar, can be made into chewable tablets commonly used to neutralize stomach acids². Calcite has a hardness of 3 as defined by the Mohs standard and its crystals are trigonal-rhombohedral³. In addition, calcite can be crushed into a power which is extremely white, and in this form, is called “whiting,” and is used in paints as well as a whitewash⁴. It fluoresces red, blue, yellow and a number of other colors when viewed under short-wave, long-wave, ultraviolet and phosphorescent light. In addition, calcite was found to have been a component in the eyes of trilobites (an extinct arthropod species commonly found all over the world as far back as 250 million years ago)⁵. Today, calcite is used in numerous optical structures.

1. <http://geology.com/minerals/calcite.shtml>

2. Ibid.

3. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/calcite>

4. <http://geology.com/minerals/calcite.shtml>

5. <http://hexagonaldipyramidal.wordpress.com/2011/02/05>

$\text{Cu}_2\text{CO}_3(\text{OH})_2$ A/K/A MALACHITE

By Sheryl E. Sims

Resembling the leaves of a mallow plant, malachite was given the name “*molochitis lithos*” or “mallow-green stone.”¹ A beautiful shade of green, it was often used as a mineral pigment in green paints dating as far back at the 1800s. Malachite can be found in Egyptian tomb paintings and also in 15th and 16th century European paintings. It is a basic copper carbonate and varies in colors and is acid sensitive².

Malachite has been found in abundance in Russia, Zambia, Mexico, Arizona, and the Democratic Republic of Congo³. (Malachite stalactites were found in Kasompi Mine, Katanaga Province, in the Democratic Republic of Congo.) It was also found in King Solomon’s Mines, in Israel at a location called Timna valley during the 10th century BC and has been smelted and mined at that site for over 3,000 years⁴. It can be banded much like an agate and has a hardness of 3.5 – 4.0⁵. Mala-



THE TAZZA

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Linda_Hall_Library

chite can be found with blue Azurite and it is said that when it is discovered in large pieces, banded malachite is used to make precious ornamental objects such as boxes, figurines, and even a large, beautiful cup called a “Tazza.”⁶ It is a vessel used for food or drinking and which rests on a stem and/or foot. One such tazza, a large one, was given by Czar Nicholas II to August Hecksher in 1910 and then to Linda Hall Library in 1972 by Helen Spencer⁷. Linda Hall is located in Kansas City, MO. “The Tazza is one of the largest pieces of malachite in North America.”⁸

1. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/malachite>
2. <http://www.webexhibits.org/pigments/individ/overview/malachite.html>
3. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/malachite>
4. Ibid.
5. <http://www.mindat.org/min-2550.html>
6. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tazza>
7. Ibid.
8. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/malachite>

A PIECE OF THE ROCK – WHICH WAY DID IT GO?

By Sheryl E. Sims

As you may remember, I almost had a *very* close encounter with a meteorite that came crashing through the roof of the office where doctors Marc Gallini and Frank Ciampi practiced in Lorton, Virginia. Since this was only about 10 minutes or so from where I live, I scurried to their office one morning after an excited telephone conversation with their receptionist, hoping to get a teeny, tiny, piece of the rock! Unfortunately, that was not to be. To make a long story short, the meteorite was no longer in Dr. Gallini’s possession. Shortly thereafter news emerged that litigation was in the works over who had rights to the meteorite. Did Dr. Gallini have rightful ownership to the meteorite or did the doctor’s landlord.

Sadly, the missing link to this whole story was ME! Feeling like the gal in second, okay, even third place, I was so close, yet so far, from having a small part of this historic event. I didn’t make the local news. I

didn’t make *The Washington Post*, and I didn’t make the acquisitions of a life time. I did, however, write about my experience! Perhaps that is why I received numerous emails and calls from friends about “my” meteorite when news broke, Saturday, March 19, 2011, that after some legal haggling, the meteorite would indeed land in the Smithsonian where everyone could enjoy having a long awaited view of the rock from outer space.

The \$10,000 that the doctors received for the Lorton meteorite, which it is now its official name, has been donated to Doctors without Borders. How perfect is that? After all, it only took 4.5 billion years for the Lorton meteorite to break out of its orbit between Mars and Jupiter, cross galactic borders, come crashing through Dr. Gallini’s office roof, and wind up in the Smithsonian. Does that mean that I have to stop calling the Lorton meteorite “my meteorite” now? Happily, I think not!

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

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Round Hill, VA 20141

Or via email: news.nvmc @ gmail.com

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.