



# Conglomerate

SEPTEMBER 2009 • Vol. 5, No. 8 <http://edisk.fandm.edu/mike.seeds/BMS.htm>

## • **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>.

### SEPTEMBER

**12-13: Harrisburg, PA** - 44th Annual Gem & Mineral Show sponsored by the Central Pennsylvania Rock & Mineral Club. *Zembo Shrine, Third & Division St. Harrisburg, PA.*

**26-27: West Friendship, MD** - 45th Annual Gem, Mineral & Jewelry Show hosted by the Gem Cutters Guild of Baltimore. *Howard Co. Fairgrounds, MD 144 nr. MD 32 & I-70; West Friendship, MD*

### OCTOBER

**2-4: Elkridge, MD** - 53rd Annual Desautels Micromount Conference hosted by the Baltimore Mineral Society. *MHA Conference Center, Elkridge, MD. Info & Registration: C. Weinberger, <cscrystals2@verizon.net>. See story, pg. 1.*

**31: Fairless Hills, PA** - The Rock and Mineral Club of Lower Bucks County, PA presents "Ultraviolation," an all-Fluorescent Mineral Show, at the *First United Methodist Church, 840 Trenton Road, Fairless Hills, PA.*, 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM, \$2.00 Donation, Children 12 & younger FREE.

*see next page*

## Sept. 16 BMS Meeting: 'Linarite and Cinnabar' and '3D Photos of Your Minerals'

The next meeting of BMS will be held Wed., September 16, 2009 at the home of Larry and Alice, 1106 Gypsy Lane West, Towson. The meeting will begin at 7:15 pm. The program will be in two parts. "Linarite and Cinnabar" will be given by Phil Greenberg. Phil suggests that members bring their own linarite and cinnabar specimens to display. The second part of the program, "3D Photos of Your Minerals," will be given by Mike Seeds. *Come at 6:30 pm if you'd like to put something on the grill for your supper!*

## Not to be Missed!: The Desautels Symposium, October 2-4, 2009

The BMS claim to fame is our fall symposium, first presented in 1957. It will take place at the MHA Pierson Conference Center, 6820 Deerpath Road, Elkridge, MD 21075. The program this year includes a number of great speakers:

- **Marco Ciriotti**— "Minerals of the Luserna Stone"
- **Quintin and Willow Wight**— "Gems and Minerals of Russia"
- **Keith Williams**— "Mining and Minerals of Bulgaria"
- **Mike Skebo**— "From Russia: With Memories and Minerals"

There will be dealers and an auction and giveaway tables and exhibits and lots of mineral talk. Micromounter or not, you should put this event on your not-to-be-missed list. Registration is \$25 ahead of time or \$27 at the door. Give your registration fee to Bob.

*How can you help?* We need volunteers to help set up tables, chairs, etc on Friday afternoon starting about 3:30 pm, and to help clean up on Sunday afternoon beginning about 1 pm. Also, consider donating good rocks with interesting micromount possibilities to the giveaway table. Be sure to include location information.

## Lafarge Field Trip on Saturday, September 12

The next BMS collecting trip will be to the Lafarge Quarry in Churchville, Maryland on September 12. Collectors must be 18 years and must have full safety gear (hard hat, goggles, and steel-toed boots); Lafarge will provide reflective vests. The quarry is at 1219 Calvary Road, Churchville, Maryland. For information contact Brad Grant.

Minerals that may be found at the quarry are: **Calcite, Chabazite, Clinozoisite, Epidote, Heulandite, Laumontite, Pyrite, Quartz, and Stilbite.**

The quarry is at 1219 Calvary Road, Churchville Md. Use Google for exact directions.

## July 15th BMS Minutes

President Mike Seeds called the July 15th meeting to order at 7:16. Minutes of the June meeting were approved as printed in the *Conglomerate*.

Treasurer Bob Hudgins reported that the club remains solvent.

*see next page*

Info: 856-663-1383 or e-mail:  
[ultraviolation@yahoo.com](mailto:ultraviolation@yahoo.com)

## NOVEMBER

**7-8: Frazier, PA** - 49th Gemarama, 2009, "Gems of Myth, Legend & Lore," sponsored by the Tuscarora Lapidary Society. The School at Church Farm, 1001 E. Lincoln Hwy., Exton, PA.

**21-22: Fairfax, VA** - 18th Annual Gem, Mineral & Fossil Show sponsored by the Northern Virginia Mineral Club Show site—*George Mason University, Student Union Bldg II, Rte 123 & Braddock Rd, Fairfax, VA*. Hrs: Sat. 10:00 AM-6:00 PM, Sun. 10:00 AM-4:00 PM. Adults \$4, Seniors \$3, Teens (13-17) \$3, Children 12 & under and Scouts in uniform free. *rock-cllctr@aol.com, http://www.mineralclub.org/*

## BMS Website!

Bradley Grant has started up a standalone BMS website at <http://www.baltimoremineral.society.org>. Check it out—there's lots of good information!

## 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](mailto:mseeds@fandm.edu) or  
[managingeditor@verizon.net](mailto: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.

## Unfinished Business:

After checking out several places to hold our meetings, the Board has found that the churches in the area are either unavailable on Wednesday evenings or charge a very high rental fee. The Towson Library is also unavailable. Lynne Luger found that the Cockeysville Fire Hall is not available on the 3rd Wednesday of the month, but is available on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday evenings and that there is no cost for renting the facility for non-profits such as ourselves.

Carolyn Weinberger moved, seconded by Bob Hudgins, that Mike reserve the fire hall for the months of November, January and February and that we use that time to evaluate the facility and to also explore other options. Motion carried.

## New Business:

Mike announced that it is time to begin looking for officers for the coming year and that he would be stepping down as president at the conclusion of his term in December. Those interested in serving should contact Mike. Elections will be held at the Holiday Party in December.

## Announcements:

- The September meeting will be at the home of Alice and Larry. Phil Greenberg will probably give the program. Alice indicated that if anyone wanted to come a bit early and use their grill to cook something to eat, they would be glad to fire it up.
- Harold Levey had a variety of give-aways, Larry Krause brought books to sell and Carolyn and Steve Weinberger offered some of Harvey Cantor's minerals for sale.
- Mike has appointed Steve and Carolyn Weinberger to review the club bylaws and make recommendations for bringing them up-to-date with current club practice. No timetable was set for accomplishing this.

• The Desautels Micromount Symposium is October 2-4 at the Pierson Conference Center at MHA. Members were encouraged to attend.

Following adjournment of the business meeting at 7:40, Fred Parker presented a talk entitled "Adventures in Collecting," in which he told of numerous collecting finds he's made in Maryland over the years. Fred brought several specimens from each of these trips to illustrate.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

—Submitted by Carolyn Weinberger, Secretary

## Meeting Room News: 4th Wednesdays at Cockeysville Fire Hall, starting Nov. 25

The meeting room at the Cockeysville Public Library is no longer available for BMS meetings, as the library is undergoing major renovations. The BMS Board, thanks to the efforts of Lynne Lugar and Bernie Emery, has found a free meeting space at the Cockeysville Volunteer Fire Hall on York Road just south of Shawan Road. Our first meeting there will occur on November 25th. Note that this is the 4th Wednesday of the month. Specific directions will be published in the November newsletter.

**\*\*\* Please recall that we do not have a regular BMS meeting in October because we will be presenting the Desautels Micromount Symposium October 2-4, 2009.\*\*\***

## —BMS MEETING SCHEDULE—

**7:00 P.M.** Sept. meeting at home of Larry Krause, 1106 Gypsy Lane West in Towson; after that on 4th Wednesdays at Cockeysville Volunteer Fire Hall, York Road just south of Shawan Road. No meetings in Oct. (Micromount Symposium); December (BMS holiday party), May (BMS Picnic).

## —It's time to renew your BMS Membership!—

**Individual memberships \$10; family memberships \$15. Send payment along with your name, list of family members, address, phone and e-mail to: Bob Hudgins, 6713 Balmoral Overlook, New Market, MD 21774.** Or: renew at the next BMS meeting!

### Other Local Clubs

#### Chesapeake Gem And Mineral Society, Inc.

(<http://chesapeake.rockclub.us/>) meets the 2nd Friday of each month except August at 7:30 P.M. Women's Club of Catonsville, St. Timothy's Lane & Old Frederick Rd; Catonsville, MD.

#### Gem Cutters Guild of Baltimore, Inc.

(<http://www.gemcuttersguild.com>) meets the 1st Tuesday of each month except January, July and August at 7:30 P.M. at Meadow Mill at Woodberry, 3600 Clipper Mill Rd., Suite 116; Baltimore, MD

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### Write for "The Conglomerate"!

Send your observations to *octahedron1@mac.com* or *mseeds@fandm.edu* for inclusion in *The Conglomerate*. Don't have email? Hand in your submissions at a meeting or by snail mail.

## Shoebox Adventures: Wolf Creek Pass

There is a big shoebox at the end of my microscope table, and when I need a new rock to work on, I pull out a random baggie containing a rock and a slip of paper with location and identifications. A few months ago, the box was full to the top with specimens from the giveaway table at the **Rochester Mineralogical Symposium** last spring, but I'm down to the last few baggies now. A few days ago I pulled out a baggy full of fun.

The rock in the baggie was the size of a box of matches and contained vugs full of brown stuff. The slip of paper I had put into the baggy in Rochester said, "Wolf Creek Pass Colorado." Under the scope the brown stuff became glittering balls of thin brown plates with golden edges. *Nontronite!* The vugs were a bit dusty, but breaking the rock revealed pristine vugs full of clean, brown, sparkling nontronite balls.

One vug was peculiar in that some of the balls formed arches across the bottom of the vug. How could that be? The answer was at the edge of a vug—tiny golden whiskers of pyrite so thin they can't be called wires. The nontronite coats some of the whiskers to form brown caterpillars doing caterpillar pushups across the vugs.

Two vugs contained thin white crystals in sprays—*Mordenite!* The sprays aren't very big, but they look pretty against the sparkling brown background—definitely worth mounting.

Most of the vugs are lined solid with brown nontronite, but in a few places some pale turquoise-green shows through. *MinDat* reveals that it is celadonite—a complex potassium, aluminum, iron silicate. Maybe you've heard of Celadon. He was a character in a French play published in 1610 who wore pale green ribbons. *MinDat* says, "He was a weak verdant lover of insipid tenderness." Maybe that's insulting; it's hard to tell, but he gave his name to the color. Celadonite forms linings and coatings in altered volcanics, so it isn't something that most people collect. Yet it is a beautiful, pale green and makes a striking contrast with the nontronite. Two vugs with celadonite went into micro boxes.

Perhaps you've heard the word "celadon" used to refer to the glaze on pottery. It is a lustrous deep glaze usually green in color made by using iron oxide in the glaze and firing the pot in a reducing atmosphere. Celadon vases from ancient China are fabulously beautiful. The mineral celadonite has nothing to do with the green glaze on pottery, except that they both contain iron and share the same color.

*MinDat* also reveals the Wolf Creek Pass in Colorado is an interesting place. There are four collecting sites along Highway 160 over the pass, but only one, the Treasure Falls locality, lists all of the minerals found in the vugs. If the *MinDat* lists are up to date, then the rock in the baggy comes from Treasure Falls. There really is a waterfall there called Treasure Falls after the story of French explorers who buried a chest of gold nearby when they were attacked by Indians. You can hike to the falls and back in an hour, but be warned; the trail gains 800 feet.

Wolf Creek Pass is even more interesting. It is a 10,837 ft.-high pass where US 160 crosses the San Juan Mountains. It is a 7 to 8% grade on either side, and used to be a two-lane road with switchbacks. It is not a fun trip in a snowstorm. You may have driven over it if you've gone from Colorado to New Mexico or Arizona. Developers are now building a resort near the top of the pass at 10,000 ft. No doubt it is breathtaking in more than one way.

Wolf Creek Pass was made famous in 1975 when C. W. McCall recorded a song about two guys driving an old truck over the pass. The most memorable line of the song may be, "...if you don't apply some brake real soon/they're gonna have to pick us up with a stick and a spoon..."

If you visit Wolf Creek Pass, don't go in winter, check your brakes, and watch for rocks with brown stuff in vugs. And take some baggies.

—Mike Seeds

see next page

## The Rock Dump

• Recall that **we elect our officers at the December Holiday Party**. If you would like to serve as President, Vice President, Secretary, or Treasurer, you can nominate yourself or ask someone else to nominate you. You can also nominate someone you think will do a good job, but get their permission first. BMS is even more fun if you are involved.

• **Having trouble locating a mine or quarry?** Look at the website called “BrainyGeography” ([www.brainygeography.com](http://www.brainygeography.com)). It can help you locate towns, cliffs, dams, mines, etc. giving you latitude and longitude plus lots more. It even links to you maps and satellite images. I used it to verify that Indian Mountain and Augusta Ridge Mine are separate locations. I could even see Indian Mountain in the satellite image.

• I recently visited a mineral collector (not a BMSer) who has no computer. I showed him some unusual minerals, and each time we looked at a new specimen he pulled books from his shelf and thumbed through them. I explained about *MinDat* and other online sources such as *WebMineral*, but he wasn't interested. He has a stunning collection and is a widely known expert, but he is missing out on **a world of information** about his minerals.

• Do you receive “**The Mineral Mouse**,” published by Rudy Bland and distributed free by email? Even if you aren't a micromounter, you would love the September 2009 issue. It describes his setup for photographing fluorescent minerals of all sizes. The photos are in color and the setup is both ingenious and simple. Ask him for a free subscription at [rudybland@worldnet.att.net](mailto:rudybland@worldnet.att.net).

—Mike Seeds

## Fred Parker: A Maryland Mineral Perspective

**F**red J. Parker grew up in New Jersey, where he became renowned as a second generation collector, dealer and expert specializing in Franklin/Sterling Hill material. His focus expanded to Maryland mineralogy after he moved here in 1983. With an eye to history as well the present and the future, Fred shared his Maryland perspective with the Baltimore Mineral Society at its July 15, 2009 meeting.

Upon arriving in Maryland, he was told that our state had little to offer in the way of minerals and that that all the action happened in Pennsylvania and Virginia. Within weeks, he joined several mineral societies and met a few key “local characters” with different ideas and more extensive knowledge. He soon accompanied them on a visit to the LaFarge Redland GenstarQuarry in Medford. Access was wide open at the time, and wonderful calcite crystals were everywhere.

Even so, Fred didn't become completely “hooked” on Maryland minerals until 1987, when he and Maryland's “Mr. Garnet,” Ertman, uncovered a major pocket of gem grossular at Hunting Hill in Montgomery County. Twenty two years hence, Fred still likes to refer to this locality as “my baby.” In 2005, when *The Mineralogical Record* published the definitive Fred J. Parker piece, “The Minerals of Hunting Hill Quarry, Rockville, Maryland,” the mineralogy of the Free State received a level of recognition not seen in decades.

This article, of course, figured prominently into an arena long a Parker passion, namely the history of mineralogy in Maryland. In his personal collection, historical Maryland mineral specimens are understandably ubiquitous. They include pieces that once belonged to such noted collectors as Don Fish, Mike Elwood, and Dick Grier. His biggest recent score was the Maryland suite from the Philadelphia Academy of Sciences Collection after its sale in 2006 for millions of dollars to two mega-mineral dealers. Thereafter, after extensive but quiet negotiations with Collectors Edge, the suite became part of the Parker collection.

When addressing the Baltimore Mineral Society, Fred described history as where “the real adventures begin.” He mentioned two long-out-of-print books as especially relevant: *Minerals of Maryland*, by Ostrander and Price, published in 1940 by The Natural History Society of Maryland, and *Minerals of the Washington, DC Area* by Lawrence R. Bernstein, published in 1980 by the Maryland Geological Survey.

Numerous sites mentioned in these books now lie beneath shopping centers or apartment complexes, but a few remain accessible. More important: Who's to say what's under the ground where “progress” has yet to claim accessibility? To find out, knowledge of Maryland geology helps, but isn't entirely necessary. Another approach that Fred has embraced is visiting and questioning the locals near where intriguing specimens were collected in the past. Most important, he says: “Check every road cut, excavation, and blast along the way. To share the anecdotes he shared in making his point would extend beyond the allocated space for this post. Just about every story deserves its own post. For example:

- The road cut near Columbia where the pegmatite **autunite** and **torbernite** covered the pegmatite.
- Rediscovering a long-forgotten **smoky quartz** occurrence exemplified in near Clarksville in excavations making way for future McMansions.
- The amazing **amethysts** near Laurel that the workmen threw into the pit to permanent burial.
- The man who took home a **quartz boulder laden with gold** from the Cabin John Bridge excavation and used it as a door stop.
- Buck Keller's major **gypsum** find in 2007 amidst excavations for the Woodrow Wilson Bridge.
- The presence of **quartz crystals** in soil beginning just south of Thurmont and extending almost to Harpers Ferry.

These stories are history now. But others are in the works. And there should be plenty more before too long.

—Jake Slagle