

The Conglomerate

Newsletter of the Baltimore Mineral Society
<www.baltimoremineralsociety.org>

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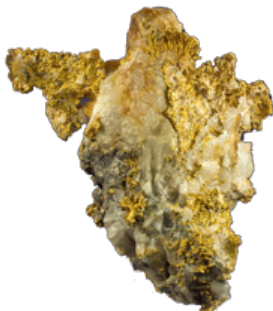


Next Meeting - September 28

from Jake Slagle, Program Chair

The next meeting of the BMS will take place on Sept. 28th at the Cockeysville Fire Hall. The meeting starts at 7:30 pm.

The program will be "The Edgar T. Ingalls Collection" presented by Jeff Nagy of Damascus, Maryland. Jeff will talk about the collection of specimens and gold mining memorabilia assembled by Ingalls. For more information please consult <mineralbliss.blogspot.com/2011/07/maryland-native-gold-classic.html>.



No one signed up to host our fall meetings so unless someone volunteers, we will have no refreshments.

MinRec Collection

The Baltimore Mineral Society owns a complete collection of The Mineralogical Record, and you can have access to it with a little forethought. The collection covers the entire run of the magazine and BMS maintains a subscription so the newest issues are added as they are published. The collection is kept at the home of Alice Cherbonnier. and she has agreed to act as Librarian.

If you need to see a particular issue, contact Alice, and she will bring that issue to the next meeting. You can study it at the meeting, or you can take it home for a month, and Alice will maintain a record of who borrows what so nothing gets lost.

the
**Mineralogical
Record**
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Desautels Micromount Symposium

by Mike Seeds, Co-Chair

BMS will present its world famous Symposium at the weekend of September 30 - October 2. Located at the Maryland Hospital Association Pierson Conference Center, 6820 Deerpath Road, Elkridge, MD 21075, the conference will attract collectors from all over the US and Canada and often from abroad.

The symposium begins Friday at 7 pm with a light supper and informal mineral slide shows. The main program beginning at 9 am Saturday will include giveaway tables filled with free, labeled mineral specimens ranging from micromounts to hand-size chunks. A silent auction of minerals will precede lunch and a voice auction will follow. Auction items usually sell for a few dollars although rare items have sold for 10's of dollars.

Saturday afternoon, Jim Hurlbut from Denver and Pete Richards from Ohio will be inducted into the Micromounters Hall of Fame. The Hall of Fame presentations will be "Breckinridge" given by Jim Hurlbut, followed in the evening by "Minerals from a Fire in a Devonian Shale in North Central Ohio" by Pete Richards. Hall of Fame member, Dan Behnke, famous as one of the best photomicrographers of minerals in the world, will give a slide show "Clark Mine, Keweenaw County, Michigan" on Sunday morning.

As always there will be lots of free specimens on the giveaway tables, dealers in minerals and tools, and lots of mineral talk. Registration is \$30 in advance and \$35 at the door for the entire weekend and includes three light meals so you can keep on dealing. Even if you are not a micromounter, the talks alone are well worth the price of admission!

Baltimore Mineral Society

The BMS was established in order to allow its members the opportunity to promote the study of mineralogy and to act as a source of information and inspiration for the mineral collector. We are members of the Eastern Federation of Mineralogical Societies and affiliated with the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies.

Meetings are held the 4th Wednesday of each month (except October, December and June) at the Cockeysville Volunteer Fire Hall beginning at 7:15 p.m. Visit the club website <www.baltimoremineralsociety.com> for directions.

Yearly dues are \$10 for individual members and \$15 for family memberships. Send payment along with your name, list of family members, if applicable, address, phone and e-mail to: Bob Hudgins, 6713 Balmoral Overlook, New Market, MD 21774.

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Write for "The Conglomerate"!

Send news, announcements, comments, observations, or articles to <mseeds@fandm.edu>. No e-mail? Hand in your submission at a meeting.

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Rubble from the President

by Brad Grant, President

With the cool evenings signaling the rapid approach of fall going on field collecting trips will become much more comfortable.



The club has trips scheduled for October 15th and October 29th. The 15th will be to Havre De Grace and the 29th will be to Churchville. I am also trying to work one more trip in on the 12th of November and in early December.

The Club has two big events this month that it will need help for. The first one is the weekend of September 24th when BMS will have a booth at The Gem Cutters Guild show. While I have commitments from Jake and myself, I need more folks to help work this booth for two hour shifts to tell people about our club. Those signing up to work in advance (by September 21) will receive free admission to the show.

The second event is on the weekend of September 30th. The 55th Desautels Micromount Symposium and International Micromounters Hall of Fame induction is how the rest of the rock and mineral community sees The Baltimore Mineral Society. Micromounters come in from all over the country to attend this symposium. This years inductees to The Micromounters Hall of Fame are Jim Hurlbut and Pete Richards. The presentations done during the symposium are very informative and fun. There are also mineral sales, auctions and give-aways that are always interesting. It costs \$30.00 to register in advance or \$35.00 to register at the door. In my opinion, it is worth the money to attend the symposium even if you're not a micromounter.

I had a chance over the Labor Day Holiday to finally get some collecting in. I hope to write an article about that little adventure for the next Conglomerate.

Until then I hope to see everyone at our September Meeting.

Brad

Free Mineral Magazine

by Mike Seeds

There is a new, full color mineral magazine out and you can read it free. It is filled with beautiful photos of minerals and stories about mines and crystals.

The first issue of Australia and New Zealand Micromineral News can be found at <tinyurl.com/anm-01-sep-2011>. It comprises 22 pages containing 36 full-color, screen-filling photos of minerals and famous mines. The three articles in this issue will appeal to anyone whose collection contains minerals from down under. "Some Minerals From the Dome Rock Copper Mine, South Australia" by John Haupt describes the copper arsenate minerals from this little known site. One photo shows an amazingly beautiful specimen of botryoidal hyalite overcoating conichalcite balls. Gold is also found in the mine, and pho-

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• Other Local Clubs

♦ **American Fossil Federation.** Meetings are held the 2nd Sunday of alternate months (Jan., March etc.) at 10:30 am at the Bowie Community Center, Bowie, MD. <americanfossilfederation.com>

♦ **Chesapeake Gem & Mineral Society.** Meetings are held the 2nd Friday of each month (except August) beginning at 7:30 pm at the Woman's Club of Catonsville, 10 St. Timothy's Lane. Catonsville, MD.

♦ **Gem Cutters Guild of Baltimore.** Meetings are held the 1st Tuesday of each month except January, July and August beginning at 7:30 pm at Meadow Mill at Woodberry, 3600 Clipper Mill Rd, Suite 116; Baltimore, MD 21211. <gemcuttersguild.com>

♦ **Maryland Geological Society.** Meetings are held the 3rd Sunday of alternate months (January, March etc.) beginning at 11 am at the South Bowie Community Center. <www.ecphora.net/mgs>

♦ **Patuxent Lapidary Guild.** Meetings are held the 3rd Monday of each month at 7 pm. at 169 Defense Highway, Annapolis, MD. <www.patuxentlapidary.org>

July Meeting Minutes

by Jake Slagle, Secretary

President Bradley Grant called our meeting to order at 7:36 pm. He announced the following:

•Our member, 12 year old Jessica Simonoff, was recently featured in Earth Magazine

•The BMS Desautels Micromount Symposium is the weekend beginning Friday, September 30, and ending Sunday, October 2. Volunteers are needed at different times through this period to help with a range of duties and are urged to step forward to do so.

•The Baltimore Mineral Society will not meet in August.

•The Gem Cutters' Guild of Baltimore Show will be the weekend of September 24-25 at the Howard County Fairgrounds. Once again members are requested to volunteer in conjunction with Baltimore Mineral Society's presence there.

•Thanks to Alice Cherbonnier for once again, on June 18, for hosting a great BMS picnic.

New business related to our Club's role with regard to safety regulations at collecting facilities, namely at quarries during field trips. Brad announced that BMS had been mentioned in a safety meeting relating to activities during a field trip to the Vulcan Quarry in Havre de Grace. He noted that while our Club is still in good graces, measures must be taken to assure strict compliance on future field trips. Ensuing discussion concluded that rules need to be strictly laid out at a safety meeting prior to collecting and that these rules must be acknowledged by all who attend in the presence of the appropriate quarry representative.

Old Business regarded the need for a Club Librarian to be responsible for custodianship of its complete collection of Mineralogical Records and other printed materials. Alice Cherbonnier stated that she had the MinRecs and other printed materials at her house and would be happy to continue to keep them there to be available to members upon request.

The Club's annual Tucson program consumed the rest of the meeting, which ended at approximately 9 p.m. Carolyn & Steve Weinberger and Jake Slagle showed and discussed slides relating to the 2011 Tucson Gem and Mineral Show, which included images of numerous significant and fascinating mineral specimens.

Respectfully submitted,
Jake Slagle



Minerals Newspaper

The second issue of MINERALS, the newspaper for collectors, is now available. The issue has articles on the new pegmatite pocket found at Strzegom, Poland, fluorite mining at the Rogerley Mine, England, and an interview with

Jolyon Ralph, creator of mindat.org.

It is available as a free download from Mindat.org at <www.mindat.org/article.php/1216/Minerals+Newspaper++Issue+2>.

Cataloging Your Collection

by Jim Hooper

How do you catalog your collection? BMS members have devised many ways to keep records of their mineral specimens from one member who maintains elaborate double-entry data files to a member with a big collection who said, "It's all on the labels and in my head." If you haven't started cataloging yet, you might like to know how other members keep track of their minerals. This month, Jim Hooper describes his catalogue.

I'm in the process of cataloging my collection on my pc and I have roughly 1/3 of my specimens entered so far. I'm using the Microsoft Access database program that came with the beast. It's all ancient. I'm still running Windows 98 and the Office software is from back then. You can design your own database with help from the software, create your data tables with fields/items. I decided to use an already made up database Microsoft supplied with the Access package. It was designed to catalog your book collection. Having fiddled around with Access for a few years I figured I could modify it enough to accept rocks instead of books.

I created my own data entry sheets (see sample below) after renaming the salient book fields. I use a Specimen ID number for each specimen. This catalog number is unique to each specimen. While listing the rocks on the data entry sheet, I use Elmer's paper type glue to stick little itty-bitty code numbers printed out previously to an inconspicuous place on the rock. Often near any older number that might already exist.

Spec. ID	Specimen	Family	Provider	Locality	Cost	Venue	Date Acquired	Notes
0C2770	Fluorite	Halite	Octahedron	Cave In Rock, IL	4.00	So. PA Club Show	5/15/07	2" deep purple cube
MM0207	Sulfur	Nat. El	Mikes Min.	Brimstone, UT	2.00	CGMS Annual Show	5/25/10	3" mass yel. xtls

I've learned to keep any and all paper that comes with specimens so I have some data to enter and also for making the little labels. I'll use letters that sort of connect with the providers name and then a random 4-digit number. I make little lists of numbers this way using MS Excel. Font size 9 seems a good size. Rather than try to log them specimen by specimen, I'll label a bunch of rocks and fill them in on the data entry sheet and then enter them into the very similar looking data table on

the pc. I made a UK#### code category for 'unknowns' for providers I didn't get paper on or otherwise don't have any records.

The cataloging process is a combination of absorbing and tedious. But afterwards I can sort by various aspects on the pc and see for instance, how many of a particular mineral I have, how many have I bought from a certain provider, how much have I spent on fluorite, and so on.

I downloaded some free label making software from Bob Jones' website. You can print out blanks to fill in by hand or supposedly merge with your database to print labels with whatever data you want on them. I haven't quite figured out how all that works yet. Maybe after we get another 2 feet of snow this winter I'll have more time.

If I entered the rock data the same day I acquired them, I'd be ahead of the game. Maybe once I get more caught up that might happen. With a few hundred specimens, it'll take a little time. If you know of any ways to streamline the process or where I might be making a mess or wasting time, please let me know, and thanks.

There are many ways to keep track of a mineral collection and there is no "right" or "wrong" way to do it. What method do you use?

Members would like to hear from you. Send your article to Mike for publication in the Conglomerate.



One of the best things about collecting minerals and fossils is that everyone can join in the hobby regardless of financial circumstances. There's plenty to be collected for free, and many beautiful things, if they're common, can be collected at low cost. Little by little, as interest builds, collectors aspire to higher realms and upgrade their collections. Excess specimens can be given away, traded or sold to make space for the new material (well, maybe that doesn't happen as often as it should!). Eventually they may arrive at the point where, if they're very fortunate, they'll be able to spend up to \$1,000 or so for a specimen.

There's a whole other stratosphere of collecting, however, that most of us rarely see, as practiced by the super-wealthy. I was reminded of this when reading a recent article in Forbes Magazine (<http://www.forbes.com/forbes-life-magazine/2011/0509/at-auction-collecting-edward-cope-othniel-marsh-fossil-hunting.html>) about fossil collecting.

In this rarefied high-end world, author Jonathon Keats reports, a collector might pay \$5,000 for a "choice pile of dinosaur excrement" (coprolite). (Less choice pieces can be had by John Q. Collector for perhaps \$4, and it's still coprolite.)

It appears that dinosaurs have long held particular fascination for the uber-collector, perhaps reflecting a subconscious species recognition; Keats quotes Henry Fairfield Osborn, president of the American Museum of Natural History in the early 1900s, as calling the *Tyrannosaurus Rex* (discovered in 1902) "the most superb carnivorous mechanism among the terrestrial Vertebrata," extolling its "raptorial destructive power."

The story notes how difficult it is to find important dinosaur fossils, because the conditions for fossilization were rarely present. Their rarity—and the valuable scientific information the remains can reveal—has caused the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology (<http://www.vertpaleo.org//AM/Template.cfm?Section=Home>) to oppose private ownership of these fossils. The Forbes article suggests that fossil fish, ammonites and trilobites be col-

lected instead, and discusses how their value can be enhanced by careful preparation. The best way to extract a fossil from its matrix, for example, is to do the work under a microscope; this process can take hundreds of hours. Specimen prices can be substantially boosted when a recognized master craftsman does this work. Mike Hammer and his son Jeff, for example, of Hammer & Hammer Paleotek in Oregon, are noteworthy commercial fossil hunters whose preparation work is considered exceptionally fine.

References: Fossil Galleries mentioned in the story include The Bone Room (<http://boneroom.com>), Chris Moore Fossils (chris@chrismoorefossils.com), and Maxilla & Mandible (<http://maxillaandmandible.com>). Dealers include Black Hills Institute (<http://bhigr.com>), Dinosauria International (<http://dinosauriainternational.com>), The Stone Company (<http://stonecompany.com>), and Western Paleontological Laboratories (<http://westernpaleolabs.com>).

What I Saw at the Fair! (The Springfield Show)

by Jim Hooper

Word has gotten out that this tenderfoot made it to the Martin Zinn big East Coast Rock Show in Springfield, MA this past August and has been asked to share some observations of the experience. I've thought of going these past two years or so; but wasn't jumping at the prospect of a longish drive, an overnight, and the drive back. This year I had the very good fortune to be invited to ride up with another club member. The condition being that it meant staying for the weekend and arranging accommodations, etc..

It sounded like a great way to do it, so off we went. We got off I-95 early on and took the greener, less traf-ficked parkways and interstates through New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, and Massachusetts. We hit one traffic snag that slowed us down briefly but otherwise rode right along. We arrived in Springfield (actually West Springfield) at dinnertime with plenty of light left and great, cooler, drier, weather.

The next day we arrived at the show shortly before the doors opened and joined a hundred or so people lin-

continued on next page

ing up for tickets. Great weather again and it was almost a shame to be headed indoors. The building is a huge thing set in a vast parking lot that is obviously used for other fairs and shows. Similar to the building used for the Gem Cutters Show at the Howard Co. Fairgrounds only twice as big and with a partial second floor. Just inside we were guided into a display case area that I heard people talking about pretty much the entire time I was there. I would estimate in 30-40 cases, maybe more, was Scott Rudolph's private collection. Case after case of exquisite, museum class specimens as bright and brilliant as you could want including at the end of the row a massive, roundish dish of the Sweet Home rhodochrosite about a foot



Rhodochrosite
on Tetrahedrite
Graham's Pocket
Sweet Home Mine
Alma, Park Co. CO

in diameter with bright, inch or inch and a half, cherry red cubes in matrix. I came back many times during the show to take it all in. I was not aware previously of Mr. Rudolph, but he appears to be a very serious collector of some renown. He was at the display a couple times I was there and I thought he looked rather young to have put together a collection like

that. That's my own age showing I guess. It could've been pretentious; instead it was, as I said, brilliant.

Exiting the display area I was suddenly on the main floor gawking at a vast sea of vendors. Many times the numbers I've gotten used to seeing at local shows. I thought, "This could take a while." I started at one corner and began marching the aisle, one side, then the other. I started seeing vendor names I recognized from ads in the rock 'zines. There were beautifully loaded display cases with pretty little specimens going for \$20-30K. Mounts like I've only seen in the mags. And then the next booth might be more modest but more accessible too. And then I saw my favorites; flats that already read 50% Off! I have to at least look, right?

The minerals were abundant and well prepared. I found some pyrites, sphalerites, galena, fluorites. Stuff you see at local shows but with a little more heft to them and at very good prices. Fewer micromount vendors than I thought there might be but they had

loads of specimens. Takes a good hour and more to re-ally cruise the aisles and see everything.

Along the aisles I ran into a few other club members, and that was fun. My travel mates were very happy finding friends among the vendors and organizers since they've been going for several years. Friday was for finding folks and Saturday was for hunting minerals. This is how I met Bob Jones, editor of Rock and Gem magazine and long time collector and hobby aficionado. He was there not only to take in the show, but to do a couple lectures on gold and emeralds. He was a very down to earth guy and very friendly and very much enjoying it all. I thought there was a pretty good number of people there both days, but neither day did it feel too crowded or clumped up.

At a combo mineral and books vendor I found a paper cover publication that had a stamp and signature as being from the library of Paul Desautels. I thought it might make a club auction article at the symposium next month. The vendor let me have it a very reasonable cost.

The variety of inventory was great. The wide price ranges were pretty amazing. I believe I did see a piece tagged at a little over \$100K. It pretty much had it all, minerals, fossils, meteorites, gem stones, jewelry, tools, beads, spheres, metaphysical, literature, classic and modern on a huge variety of mineral related subjects.

My favorite thing I took away might be a solid, one piece, wood carving of a little dinosaur breaking out of an egg. That and the fact that the more minerals I recognized, the better my own collection looks in my eyes. I have to return because I didn't go into the 'wholesalers' side which I'm told can be a smaller show in itself.



Gold "El Fuego"
Colorado Gold Mine
Mariposa Co., CA



Lepidolite on Tourmaline
Pederneira Mine
São da Safira
Minas Gerais, Brazil

Do you find it hard to throw things away? Do you think, "Maybe I'll need something like that someday." If you are seriously afflicted with that feeling, your house might fill up so full there's no room for new stuff. But you do need to be careful what you throw away. There might be treasure in that ugly waste rock.

Last spring at the Rochester Mineralogical Symposium, one of the egg cartons on the giveaway table contained rock from Augusta Ridge in Cherokee County, Alabama. Cherokee County is known for phosphates, so I looked at a few pieces under my 'scope and saw some cacoxenite. Other people had been through the egg carton, so not too much was left, but I picked out a rock that had a patch of yellow sprays. It wasn't great, but it was worth putting the rock in a baggie and dropping it into my shoebox to come home. Later I broke the rock down to size and got that little spot of cacoxenite mounted in a micro box. It wasn't stunning, but it was worth the effort. You can't have too much cacoxenite.

Before I threw the waste rock away, I turned each little piece over and over under the 'scope. It was mostly waste rock, but one piece contained a little vug with a few small sprays of cacoxenite and a bump. Higher magnification revealed that the bump was a perfect sphere of cacoxenite. It looks like a glittering sugar plumb, although it is yellowish instead of purplish. The sphere is much more interesting than the little sprays of cacoxenite that first attracted my attention, and it's a nice surprise to find in a piece of junk rock only seconds away from the trashcan.



Cacoxenite sphere 0.6 mm in diameter.

Mindat.org lists the site as Augusta Ridge Iron Quarry, Cherokee Co., Alabama, but the mineral list for the quarry includes only two minerals: dufrenite and

beraunite. Cacoxenite isn't listed. It's possible the label on the egg carton was wrong and the specimen came from somewhere else in the area, but although Mindat is a wonderful tool and an astonishing accomplishment for the creator and the hobbyists that make it work, not every mineral list is complete. Perhaps this Cacoxenite ball really did come from the Augusta Ridge Iron Quarry. In any case, we only do this for fun, right?

Waste rock is good hunting ground, and more treasure turned up in scraps left over from some celestine. At the Atlantic Micromount Conference last spring, a friend handed me a 2-inch size rock and said, "There's yellow celestine there." The rock was from the Meckley Quarry, and there was indeed yellow celestine on it. Celestine is usually pale blue, but it is known in a yellowish form, and this rock broke to make three nice mounts of yellow celestine.

When I started checking all of the leftover scraps, I found one with a little vug containing a perfect, frosty white cross of strontianite. The curving, pointed crystals of strontianite grow from the top of a tiny crystal of celestine protected inside the vug like a jeweled display hidden inside in a Russian egg. The celestine crystal is only faintly yellow. Celestine is SrSO_4 and strontianite is SrCO_3 , so you might expect to find these two minerals in close association.



Strontianite cross on celestine. The cross is 2.5 mm across

Strontianite is well known to come out of the ground water clear, but it quickly turns frosty in air. The crystals on the little cross seem clearer than many strontianites. Of course it is delicate, but it's now in a microbox where it is safe. If it was a glass sculpture a foot across, you could sell it in a Manhattan gallery for big bucks. But the delicate little cross is not worth a lot in cash. Nevertheless, it's gorgeous treasure to find in junk rock.

The 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>.

September:

28: BMS September meeting. 7:30 pm at the Cockeysville Fire Hall.

30 - Oct. 2: 55th Desautels Micromount Symposium. MHA Conference Center, Elkridge, MD.

October:

2: Gem-Mineral-Fossil Auction sponsored by the Gem, Lapidary & Mineral Society of Washington, DC. Knights of Columbus, 9707 Rosensteel Ave; Silver Spring, MD. Preview 1 pm; Auction begins at 2 pm.

November:

5 - 6: 42nd Annual Gemarama 2011 sponsored by the Tuscarora Lapidary Society. School at Church Farm, Exton, PA.

12-13: 20th Annual Gem, Mineral & Fossil Show sponsored by the Northern Virginia Mineral Club. George Mason Univ., Student Union Bldg, Rt 123 & Braddock Rd; Fairfax, VA.

Free Mineral Magazine

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tos illustrate how the gold accents colorful copper minerals such as chrysocolla.

The second article, "Twinning in Pseudobrookite" by Donald G. Howard explains how this common mineral forms unusual twins of various types including prisms and plates. Specimens illustrated in color photos come from such places as Arizona, Oregon, and Australia. Lovers of crystal structure will find the details here.

The third article, "Micromounting for Beginners" by the well known micromounters Noel and Ann Kennon is a good two-page introduction to the hobby.

Whether you are a micromounter or not, you will want to look at this new magazine. It is to be published quarterly, and editor Steve Sorrell (steve@crocoite.com) requests articles from anyone who loves minerals.