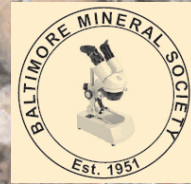


# The Conglomerate

Newsletter of the Baltimore Mineral Society  
<[www.baltimoremineralsociety.org](http://www.baltimoremineralsociety.org)>

Volume 6, Number 11  
December, 2011



## BMS Holiday Party: Saturday, December 18

The BMS December meeting will be the annual Holiday Party, on Saturday, December 18 at 6 p.m. at the home of Alice Cherbonnier home, 1106 Gypsy Lane West in Towson. The club will provide ham, turkey breast, rolls, condiments and beverages; if everyone brings what they brought for the last holiday party, or a variant thereof, we'll have a wonderful feast – chili, vegetable dish (example = latkes!), fruit dish (example = ambrosia!), dessert). Let's not go heavy on the desserts as we rarely have room to eat them! Please call Alice at 410-828-0024 if you have questions or want a suggestion, or email her at <[octahedron1@mac.com](mailto:octahedron1@mac.com)>.



This event serves as our annual meeting with election of officers. See the candidates listed elsewhere in this issue.

Directions to the party site: Take Dulaney Valley Rd. North. Just after crossing over the Beltway, turn right on Hampton Lane (Towson Methodist Church is a landmark) and travel one mile on Hampton Lane, past the historic site, to Gypsy Lane West. Turn right on Gypsy. #1106 is on your right; minerals surround the mailbox.

*Alice Cherbonnier*

## 2011 Dues are Due!

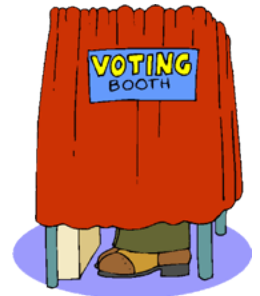


Treasurer Bob will gladly accept your 2011 club dues - \$10 per individual and \$15 per family. Please use the renewal form on page 7 when remitting.

## It's Election Time

The proposed slate of officers for 2011 was announced during the November meeting. We'll hold our vote during the Holiday Party on December 18.

President - Brad Grant  
Vice President - Jim Hooper  
Secretary - Carolyn Weinberger  
Treasurer - Bob Hudjins



Directors:

Bernie Emery  
Jake Slagle

Al Pribula  
Steve Weinberger

Mike Seeds will continue on the board as our immediate past president. Cal Pierson will also be on the Board as Symposium Chair.

Additional candidates for any elected office may be made at the meeting, but please be certain that the candidate you propose is willing to serve.

*Brad Grant*

## Free Stuff!



Alice Cherbonnier reports she has some showcases, display stands, and miscellaneous minerals to give away. First come, first served! Remaining items will be available for 'adoption' during the holiday party. Call 410-828-0024 for info or to arrange a visit.

## 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.

### Officers:

President..... Bradley Grant  
410-515-4293

<bgrant@aberdeen-md.org>

Vice President..... Jim Hooper  
410-747-4321

<jhooper@jhu.edu>

Secretary.....Carolyn Weinberger  
410-833-7926

<cscrystals2@verizon.net>

Treasurer .....Bob Hudgins  
301-865-3212

<hudginswr@msn.com>

### Directors:

Bernie Emery  
Ed Goldberg  
Steve Weinberger

Editor.....Mike Seeds  
717-201-8750

<mseeds@fandm.edu>

### 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

I hope everyone had a great Thanksgiving. I actually behaved myself at the table this year and didn't go back for thirds!!!!

On the rock and mineral front I am in the process of rescheduling our trip for Churchville. I am tentatively scheduling this for January 8th unless it is too cold or frozen!!! I am also looking forward to going to the Fall Festival of Minerals this weekend (December 11) to buy Christmas presents for myself. I always seem to know what to get for me. I hope everyone is getting ready to have a fun and relaxing Holiday Season.



Speaking of the Holiday Season and my unhealthy fascination with eating lots of food, we are having our club's holiday party at Alice's house on December 18th. We're also going to hold elections so this will also be your chance to throw me out of office!!!!

It's been great seeing the large number of people who come out to our meetings and going on collecting trips. I was also very happy that we had 17 people come out for our November meeting on the night before Thanksgiving. I hope everyone is enjoying themselves when they come to the meetings and trips. If there are things the club can do better or you'd like to see us do in the future, please speak up. This is your club and only you can make it better.

I hope to see everyone at the Holiday Party on December 18th and of course I wish you all a very merry Christmas, a belated happy Hanukah and a very prosperous and healthy 2011.

Brad

## Member News

Bob Hudgins underwent back surgery in November. What was scheduled to be a two hour procedure ended up taking more than five and caused him to remain in the hospital for 3 weeks! Unfortunately he also contracted encephalitis which caused numerous additional problems including a temporary inability to speak, some memory loss and extreme muscle weakness and balance problems. He's getting stronger, but still has some difficulties. He and Mary hope to be able to attend the Holiday Party.



Fred Parker and Carol tied the knot on November 7th during a ceremony at the VanDiver Inn in Havre de Grace. A mineral collector to the core, each guest was given a specimen of pyrite in matrix from the nearby Havre de Grace Quarry! The wedding cake topper had the groom in hard hat, steel toed shoes and a geologists pick! Best wishes to Fred and Carol.

• 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>

## November Meeting Minutes



President Brad Grant called the November 24th meeting to order at 7:28 pm.

Minutes were approved as printed in the Conglomerate. In the absence of treasurer Bob Hudgins, there was no financial report available.

There was no unfinished business.

### New business:

Brad announced the slate of proposed candidates for 2011 BMS officers:

President – Brad Grant

Vice President – Jim Hooper

Secretary – Carolyn Weinberger

Treasurer – Bob Hudgins

Directors – Bernie Emery, Al Pribula, Jake Slagle and Steve Weinberger

Mike Seeds will continue on the board as immediate past president and Cal Pierson will continue on the board as Symposium Chair.

The election will occur during the December Holiday Party. Additional nominations may be made just prior to the election.

### Announcements:

Alice Cherbonnier announced that the BMS Holiday Party, held in lieu of a meeting at the Fire House, will be held at her home on Saturday, December 18 beginning at 6 p.m. Alice will supply the ham and turkey and members are asked to bring a dish to share – vegetables, starch, dessert. Directions and more details to be in the December Conglomerate.

Brad asked for member input for a new section of the BMS website dealing with the geology of Maryland with more specific detail given for Baltimore City, and Baltimore, Carroll and Harford Counties.

The next BMS field trip will be on Saturday, December 4<sup>th</sup> to the Churchville Quarry. Members must contact Brad in advance. Should the trip need to be cancelled due to poor weather, he will notify members via e-mail.

Members were reminded that 2011 dues were now due.

The business meeting was adjourned at 7:51 pm after which Steve and Carolyn Weinberger showed photomicrographs of minerals found in one of the quarries in the Eifel Region of Germany.

*Respectfully Submitted – Carolyn Weinberger*

## November Program: Minerals from Eifel

The Eifel Mountains of western Germany and eastern Belgium include volcanic areas rich in beautiful minerals, and at the November BMS meeting, Carolyn and Steve Weinberger presented a slide show of stunning minerals all from a single small corner of a quarry known as the Wannenköpfe Quarry. The minerals, all micromounts, were found and identified by the Dutch collector Fred Kruijen.

Carolyn showed slide after slide of mineral specimens extracted from Kruijen's extensive web site while the BMS members present provided a running commentary of Oh's and Ah's and Oh My Goodness's. As usual, the irrepressible BMSers added their own insights to Carolyn's commentary.

At least 46 minerals have been found in that small area, and Kruijen has so far photographed 21 of them ranging from the common biotite to the unusual Jeremejevite. Even the common minerals were dramatically beautiful. The biotite specimens were thin, reddish, transparent plates, Plain old corundum took on astonishing forms including thin plates growing epitactically on the sides of a hexagonal prism of hematite and looking much like shelf fungus growing on a tree stump. In this case, the tree stump is only 0.6 millimeters high.

The images of unusual or rare minerals were especially interesting. Jeremejevite forms strikingly blue crystals, needles, and sprays. Everyone in the audience wanted specimens for their own collections. Sodalite is common as a massive, blue slabbing material, but the specimens from the Wannenköpfe Quarry were well formed white crystals often found on hematite and pseudobrookite. Muscovite is as common as dirt, but the examples collected by Kruijen consisted of thin plates, tabs, spires, and balls. The audience seemed especially taken by a specimen of muscovite laths on sodalite.

Peculiar crystals were in abundance including zircon trees, nosean chisles, and pseudobrookite paint brushes. Among the most fascinating were thin plates of hematite that have been eroded into delicate filagrees and grills. One hexagonal plate has been etched away almost completely to leave only the edge – a hexagonal picture frame with a missing picture.

If you missed the November meeting, you missed a program that inspired attendees to go forth and collect minerals. But you can see the photos yourself on Krui-

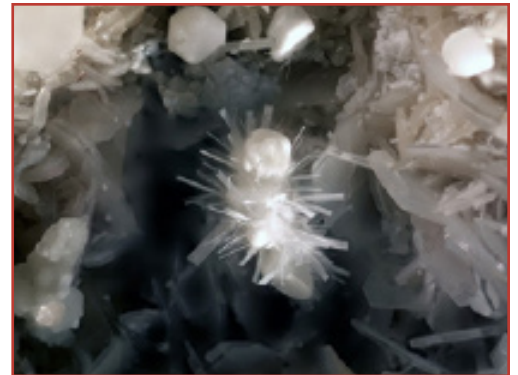
jen's web site <http://wannenkopfe.strahlen.org/>

The photos that Carolyn showed were so stunning it is easy to overlook some important points. Fred Kruijen is a gifted collector who has put in a lot of time at his microscope to locate and identify these minerals. Furthermore, he is a talented photomicrographer. Another point is that only in micromounting could you find so many minerals in such unusual structures from such a small area of a single quarry. And finally, only under the microscope do you see such perfect crystals.

*Mike Seeds*



Plates of corundum around hexagonal prismatic hematite. .6mm high



Sodalite with long drawn colorless muscovite. Image width 3.5 mm



Pseudobrookite  
"Brush"  
Image width 2.5 mm

## Shoebox Adventures: Colemanite

My shoebox is full of stuff I've bought, traded for, or harvested from giveaway tables. It's usually good stuff, but when I pulled out a lump of colemanite, I wondered why I kept it. It came from my favorite rock shop, The Dusty Old Rock Shop in Tucson, and I paid \$3 for the half-inch hunk of rock, but it is ugly. Seriously ugly. The matrix is white, but the crystals on top look like they are deformed and covered with fine brown crud.

The microscope only magnifies the ugly until you look closer. The crystals are actually beautiful and clear with nice terminations. The crud is fine grains included as phantoms inside the clear crystals. Evidently the colemanite began to grow crystals but there was a disturbance in the fluid and grains of brown grit settled onto the crystals. What could have happened? A flood? An earthquake? The colemanite didn't care. It kept on growing and enclosed the grains. Under the scope you can see the shape the crystals had when the grit was deposited. It's outlined by the crud inside the clear crystals.

The specimen comes from Death Valley, which makes it interesting to start with. Even in winter, Death Valley is hot and dry. If you have an air-conditioned motel room reserved for later, Death Valley can be described as interesting. Furthermore, the specimen is colemanite  $\text{Ca}[\text{B}_3\text{O}_4(\text{OH})_3]\cdot\text{H}_2\text{O}$ , a boron ore, and that makes it even more interesting. Colemanite is not rare but it is uncommon. Of the 131 photos of colemanite on MinDat, 27 come from Turkey and 58 from Death Valley. A few are from Iran, Argentina, Kazakhstan, and one from Nevada. These sites are generally dry evaporate formations. Colemanite crystals are often small and occur in large masses, but at least one crystal has been faceted to produce a beautiful 8 mm white gem of 2.47 carats. You can see it in one of the photos on MinDat. The mineral has a hardness of 4.5 on the Mohs scale.



*Colemanite with phantoms.  
Death Valley, California  
photomicrograph by Mike Seeds*

Death Valley is a famous source of borate minerals. Best known is borax, which is actually a mixture of minerals such as sodium borate, sodium tetra borate, etc. These are used in a number of industrial and laboratory processes and are even used as food additives in some countries, although they are outlawed in food in the US because they have been linked to liver cancer and other problems. Caviar in the US contains a lot of salt as a preservative; in many countries, they use borax, and consequently that caviar can't be imported into the US. Some of the minerals in borax are listed as hazardous because they are mildly corrosive. Colemanite is associated with the minerals in borax, but it contains calcium instead of sodium, and MinDat says there is no information about health risks on file for Colemanite. Nor is there any comment on how it tastes.

You know borax mostly as Boraxo, a cleaning compound marketed as 20-Mule Team Boraxo and sponsor of a long running TV show called Death Valley Days (1952-1975). In 1965 and 1966, the host was actor Ronald Regan introducing each story and making commercials for 20-Mule Team Boraxo. He made Boraxo a household name, and, some say, Boraxo rejuvenated his career. You know where that led.

My little specimen of Colemanite joins three others in my collection, but none of the three have as nicely formed crystals nor do they contain phantoms. All four fluoresce under UV a bright creamy yellow, and MinDat says colemanite also phosphoresces. That is, it continues to glow after the UV light is snapped off. I can't see that in my samples under my small UV light.

Furthermore, MinDat says colemanite is very slightly soluble in water, but is quite soluble in boiling hydrochloric acid. Well sure. Lots of things are soluble in boiling hydrochloric acid including fingers. Don't try that at home.

*Mike Seeds*



### ***Get Warm!***

Come to the BMS Holiday Party on December 18th.

You're guaranteed to find warm food and even warmer friendships!

## Minéraux à Montreal

My son and daughter-in-law and I enjoyed attending the 51st annual "Salon annuel de gemmes et minéraux" in Montreal on Saturday, November 6. Over 100 dealers crammed a huge space in Place Bonaventure, one of the city's convention centers. Imagine a show with no parking lot nearby available for loading up one's car or van with purchases. But thousands of attendees, most of whom arrived using the city's public transit system (recently designated "number one in North America"), were eagerly roaming the aisles.

The variety of dealers was remarkable; many were specialists in material from particular collecting venues. Everyone seemed able to speak English as well as French, so there was no problem communicating. The province of Quebec has wonderful mineral resources; specimens on offer from the Jeffrey Mine were particularly noteworthy. Dealers from other provinces were also in the show, but we didn't notice a single dealer from outside Canada. Several dealers were interested in acquiring "old collections," and I gathered up their business cards just in case they might want to come to Baltimore for a look in the basement!

I tried to resist, given the number of specimens already in the house, but did buy something: a beautiful chunk of Australian polished rhodenite with modern-art patterning. It's from Woods Mine in Tamworth, Darling County, New South Wales—and will be available for inspection at the holiday party.



The Montreal mineral club members were friendly and eager to share their enthusiasm. Anyone wanting to expand mineral horizons might want to consider taking in a Canadian show. The one we attended was sponsored by the Montreal Gem and Mineral Club ([montrealgemmineralclub.ca](http://montrealgemmineralclub.ca)). Another big show, with even more dealers, will be held there in April, sponsored by the other club: Club de Mineralogie de Montreal ([clubmineralogiemtl.com](http://clubmineralogiemtl.com)). Show details aren't yet posted online. This could be a field trip opportunity of quite a different kind! Anyone interested?



Alice Cherbonnier  
photos by Mitch Strohmeyer

## The Ten Gifts of the Holidays Some Gifts of Lasting Value

From - Agri-News, November 1982  
via SCRIBE, Oct-Dec. 2010

### **A Sense of Purpose:**

The ability to set a goal and to work toward it.

### **A Sense of Values:**

The ability to pick and choose values that will enhance life. The art of living lies in the knowing what you can do without.

### **A Sense of Involvement:**

The ability to communicate with those around you and to really get to know them.

### **A Sense of Responsibility:**

The ability to enjoy the things that happen to you and to enjoy even more the things that you make happen.

### **A Sense of Celebration:**

The ability to celebrate. This ability enriches the moment and the future and leaves a treasure chest of memories.

### **A Sense of Wonder:**

The ability to marvel at the wonders of the world. As we grow older we are inclined to lose this gift.

### **A Sense of Beauty:**

The ability to open oneself fully to the beauty of the world around, both the natural world and the man-made world of the arts.

### **A Sense of Timing:**

The ability to use time wisely. Time is the most precious possession we have.

### **A Sense of Self:**

The ability to assess one's own abilities accurately and to find the best outlet for them.

### **A Sense of Fun:**

The ability to see the funny side of things. Without this gift, the others are diminished. With it, they are reinforced.

**MeRRY Christmas**  
**happy Hanukah**  
**happy New Year**



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*Baltimore Mineral Society • Membership Renewal*

Please complete this form and submit it with your membership renewal

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Names of family members included in membership:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Amount enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Checks should be made payable to Baltimore Mineral Society**

Submit or mail to:

Carolyn Weinberger  
PO Box 302  
Glyndon, MD 21071-0302

# *The Conglomerate*

Mike Seeds,

Editor

516 Bald Eagle



## *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>.

### December:

11: Mineral, Fossil & Jewelry Show & Sale. Holiday Inn Hotel, 9615 Deerco Rd; Timonium, MD (I-83, exit 17, Padonia Rd.). 10 am - 4:30 pm. Dealers: Mike's Minerals, Octahedron, Highland Rock & Fossil and Parker Minerals.

### February:

1 - 13: Annual Tucson shows.

10 - 13: Tucson Gem & Mineral Club Show - Theme - "Minerals of California". Tucson Convention Center.

### March:

6 - 7: 48th Annual Gem, Mineral & Fossil Show sponsored by the Delaware Mineralogical Society. Delaware Technical & Community College, Churchman's Rd; Newark DE (Exit 4B on I-95).

19-20: 47<sup>th</sup> Annual Gem, Mineral & Fossil Show. Montgomery County Fairgrounds, Gaithersburg, MD.

### April:

1-3: Atlantic Micromounters Conference, MHA Conference Center, Elkridge. Featured speaker: Tom Loomis.

11-17: EFMLS Wildacres Workshop.

14-17: Rochester Mineralogical Symposium

### May:

Chesapeake Gem & Mineral Show. Date to be announced soon.

### July:

9-10: Gem & Mineral Society of Syracuse annual show combined with the EFMLS /AFMS annual conventions. NY State Fairgrounds, Syracuse, NY.

AFMS Annual meeting: Thursday, July 7

EFMLS Annual meeting: Friday, July 8