



# The Conglomerate

Newsletter of the Baltimore Mineral Society  
[www.baltimoremineralsociety.org](http://www.baltimoremineralsociety.org)  
Volume 13, No. 11 December, 2018

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The Baltimore Mineral Society 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 November, December, June & August) at the Natural History Society of Maryland. 6908 Belair Rd; Baltimore, MD 21206. Meetings begin at 7:30 p.m. Visit the club website <[www.baltimoremineralsociety.com](http://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: BMS, PO Box 302; Glyndon, MD 21071-0302.

## Holiday Party

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The BMS Holiday Party, famous for good food, friends, and lots of talk about minerals and other things will take place on Saturday, December 22 from 4-8 PM at the home of Al and Linda. Mark your calendars now and plan to attend.

The club will supply meats, and soft drinks and we ask those in attendance to bring a vegetable, starch or salad dish to share with the group. Beer and wine is a good contribution as well.

In addition to good food and conversation we'll have a very short business meeting to elect offices for 2019.

An e-vite with further information will be sent out by e-mail in a couple of days, Please respond when you receive it so that we can plan accordingly.

Directions to Al & Linda's home are on our "Members Only" page of our website.

Because of our party, there will be no regular BMS meeting in December.

## Minutes

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There are no minutes for a November BMS meeting because we do not have a regular meeting in November. Our December meeting will be our Holiday Party, so our next regular BMS meeting will be January 23rd.

## 2018 Officers



### President

Al Pribula

<baltimoremineral at gmail.com>

### Vice President

Chris Altizer

<baltimoremineral at gmail.com>

### Secretary

Jake Slagle

<baltimoremineral at gmail.com>

### Treasurer

Carolyn Weinberger

<baltimoremineral at gmail.com>

### Directors:

Bernie Emery

Jim Hooper

Mike Seeds

Steve Weinberger

### Conference Chair

Mike Seeds

### Editor

Mike Seeds

<baltimoremineral at gmail.com>

### Write for "The Conglomerate"!

Send news, announcements, comments, observations, or articles to <mseeds at fandm.edu>. or hand in your submission at a meeting.

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## President's Message

by Al Pribula, President



Well, November is behind us and December has come in like a lion (well, maybe more like a polar bear). The leaves are off the trees and every one of them has landed in my yard (at least it seems that way!), we continue to have lots of rain, and have already had our first snow of the season. Not exactly the best collecting weather, but a good time to stay inside where it's warm and dry, spending your time cleaning, trimming, mounting, and cataloging the many specimens that you've acquired over the past year. That, and reading that "good mineral book" that I keep encouraging you to read.

It's also time to renew your BMS membership. Don't forget to send your dues payment to Carolyn—or, even better, hand her your payment at the BMS Holiday Party. If you haven't already marked it on your calendar, our party this year will be on Saturday, December 22, 4-8 PM, hosted by Linda and me at our home. Depending on when you're reading this, you will have already received (or will receive shortly) an e-vite to the gathering. Please be sure to respond to the e-vite so that we know how many attendees to plan for. As always, the Society will provide the meat and soft drinks. When you respond, please let us know what side dish or dessert you'll be bringing. If you want to participate in the mineral exchange, bring along a specimen (a nice one (i.e., not a leaverite)) worth about \$15 to be put into the exchange pile for others to choose from. There will also be a door prize provided by the Society.

It's also a good time to consider year-end giving. As I've mentioned before, a (tax-deductible) contribution to Mindat will help to keep that valuable resource going into 2019. If you wish to do that, there's a simple way to do that from their website. They're getting close to reaching the goal that they set at the beginning of the year, but haven't reached it yet, so any further contributions would be welcomed. Making a contribution to the Natural History Society of Maryland (our host for our monthly meetings) would show them appreciation for all that they're doing to further and nurture interest in natural history (including minerals and fossils) in the local area.

And, while I'm on the subject of giving: It would be a wonderful gift to the Society if you volunteer to be an officer, write an article for the Conglomerate, or do a presentation at a monthly meeting. If you have an idea for an article or presentation, but are unsure of your writing or presentation skills, let me know and I'll see that you get the help you need to complete the job. Sharing your experiences and/or knowledge with other Society members at a meeting or in the Conglomerate would make a great gift for everyone concerned.

See you at the Holiday Party.



## Emerald Mine Robbery

Text and photo by M. Seeds

The Emerald Hollow Mine in Hiddenite, North Carolina was broken into in late October, 2018, and an estimated \$100,000 in emeralds, diamonds, and gold were taken. Glass cases were smashed open and both cut and uncut gems mounted in gold and unmounted disappeared with the criminals. Faceted emeralds the size of quarters were among the loot. The losses included specimens of hiddenite, a rare gemstone found in a number of mines near the town of Hiddenite, North Carolina.

BMS members who have visited the Wildacres programs in the mountains of north-west North Carolina may have visited Hiddenite and its mines. It is located less than two hours east of Wildacres by car and is a favorite side trip with collectors.

Hiddenite ( $\text{LiAlSi}_2\text{O}_6$ ), sometimes confused with emerald, is a variant of spodumene given a green color by the presence of small traces of chromium. Emerald ( $\text{Be}_3\text{Al}_2\text{Si}_6\text{O}_{18}$ ) is a variant of beryl and also derives its green color from traces of chromium. Compare the chemical formulas to see the similarities and differences between the two minerals.



Hiddenite from Resplendor, Doce Valley, Minas Gerais, Brazil. The crystal is transparent with a green tint. This specimen contains internal fractures that make it unsuitable for faceting.

It is unusual to find emeralds in the United States, but there are a few such sites in North Carolina. Most Emeralds come from the Muzo area of Columbia. Sometimes people say hiddenite is found only in the mines near the town of Hiddenite, but the mineral is found in a few other locations around the world. The mineral hiddenite was named in 1881, and the town was incor-

porated as Hiddenite in 1913.

Hiddenite  
Alexander Co, NC  
Photo: Rob Lavinsky, I-Rocks.com



## Editor's Note

from Mike Seeds

This is a short issue of The Conglomerate. We are all busy with the holidays, so this Conglomerate is mainly aimed at reminding you that the big, giant, fun BMS Holiday party will occur on Saturday December 22nd. You can read about the details elsewhere in this issue. Please return the online invitation and plan to be there.

This is also a short issue because the editor didn't receive the article you sent recently. Please resend it. We would love to hear about your recent visit to a rock shop or a quarry, your favorite mineral, the reaction of your family when they saw your collection, or whatever is happening rockwise at your house. If you don't have time to write an article, send a list of notes, details, and impressions, and your editor will assemble them for your approval.

We all want to see photos of you at the recent mineral show, pictures of your best (or worst) specimen, snaps of you and friends digging in a road cut, and so on. Keep your camera handy.

Send it all to [mseeds@fandm.edu](mailto:mseeds@fandm.edu), and the next issue will be longer and more fun.

From everyone at The Conglomerate, both editorial and production, the very best wishes for the holiday season and Peace.

## BMS Webpage



The BMS website contains lots of information about our club, and a number of new members first learned about BMS from the web site. Carolyn Weinberger, the BMS Web Master, reminds everyone to submit photos and articles for inclusion on the web site. Your best mineral photos or snapshots of a collection trip, etc. are always welcome.

Make the BMS website your first click for the dates of club meetings and functions. Those dates are right on the first page.

## Shoebox Adventures 81: Just for Fun

Photos and text by Mike Seeds

Three tough guys have been bullying me for the last week and I'm getting fed up. They are three little chambersite crystals in a plastic box, and they are the last specimens to come out of my shoebox of goodies from the Springfield show last August. They have been sitting beside my microscope for a week demanding to be mounted, and they claim that I'm not allowed to open my next shoebox, which is from the Desautels Symposium and is full of good stuff, until I give them the mountings they deserve.

I bought the three crystals for a few dollars because Chambersite is an interesting mineral that forms crystals that look almost tetrahedral, and the three crystals are nice. One is a little less than transparent, but that's no reason to discriminate. The trouble is they are just over a millimeter on a side, and I really don't feel like dealing with such tiny crystals right now. I got my own troubles and I don't need a gang of little crystaletts trying to push me around.



*Chambersite, Barbers Hill Salt Dome, Chambers County, Texas*

I know how to deal with these guys. That's not the problem. I'll poke a little hole in some tablet-back cardboard, and tip one of the crystals into the hole point down. Then I stick a brush bristle to some stickum on a little block of wood, put a drop of glue on the tip of the bristle, and position the wood block so the gluey tip touches the crystal. When the glue is dry, I turn the wood block over and the crystal is stuck point up on

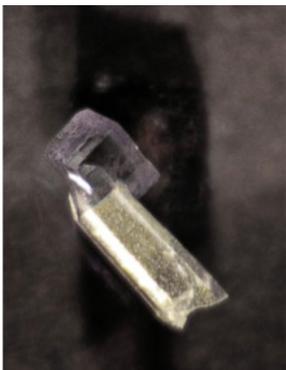
the bristle ready to go into a box. Easy peasy. I just don't feel like fiddling with such little crystals right now.

Bigger crystals are easier to handle. The Allargentum (silver antimonide  $\text{Ag}_{1-x}\text{Sbx}$ ) in the photo is big enough for finger work although it is better to grab it softly with forceps. Given its openwork formation and dark color, it seemed to deserve to be mounted on a white dot of paper. It was fun to mount. No stress dealing with such a nice bundle of crystals.



*Allargentum, Bouismas Mine, Bou Azer, Morocco. (Field of view 7 mm)*

In contrast, the fluorite on quartz shown here is kinda small. The quartz crystal is only 4 mm long, but the specimen is so beautiful it is a pleasure to work on it. Of course, it is much too nice to glue on a dot of paper. It deserves to be mounted on the tip of a brush bristle so it floats in its display box. Working on such a nice specimen from such a famous location and getting it just right is satisfying and relaxing. Just what I need right now.

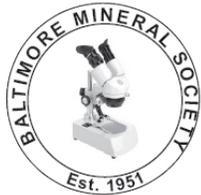


*Fluorite on quartz, Sweet Home Mine, CO*

Those three little chambersites will just have to wait. I don't owe them anything; in fact, I own them guys. Maybe I'll feel like dealing with them someday soon. It is kinda fun to mount really tiny crystals, but right now, I just don't feel like struggling with them. After all, I just do this for fun.

# The Conglomerate

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## Upcoming Events

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### December

22: BMS Holiiday Party. Details on page 1

### February

14-17: Tucson Gem and Mineral Show, Tucson Convention Center, Tucson, AZ 85701

### March

2-3, 2019: 56th Annual Earth Science Gem and Mineral Show presented by the Delaware Mineralogical Society at the Double Tree by Hilton, 4727 Concord Pike (Rt 202), Wilmington, DE.

8-9: Leidy Microscopical Society Micromount Symposium, Advent Lutheran Church, 45 Worthington Mill, Rd, Richboro, PA 18954. INFO: [www.don-mcalarnen@outlook.com](mailto:www.don-mcalarnen@outlook.com)

23-24, 2019: 50th Annual Rock and Minerals Show presented by the Cha-Hanna Rock & Mineral Club.

30-31, 2019: Mineral Treasures and Fossil Fair, presented by the Philadelphia Mineralogical Society and The Delaware Valley Paleontological Society, Lu Lu Temple, 5140 Butler Pike, Plymouth Meeting, PA.

### April

5-6: Atlantic Micromounter' Conference, Holiday Inn, Alexandria, VA, Speaker, Robert Lauf of TN - author of Mineralogy of Uranium and Thorium, INFO: [www.dcmicrominerals.org](http://www.dcmicrominerals.org)

11-14: Rochester Mineralogical Symposium, Radisson Hotel Rochester Airport at 175 Jefferson Road Rochester, NY 14623, Info: <https://www.rasny.org/minsymp/>

### May

18: Earth Science Show & Sale presented by the Rock and Mineral Club of Lower Bucks County, PA Christ United Methodist Church, 501 Wistar Road, Fairless Hills, PA, 9 am to 3 pm.

