



# Chippers' Chatter

Newsletter of the Chesapeake Gem & Mineral Society  
Baltimore, Maryland <chesapeake.rockclub.us>

## PROGRAM NOTES

by Keith Kaneda

The Sweet Home Mine near Alma, Park County, Colorado was one of the most productive mines for spectacular mineral specimens in recent history. The mine was closed and reclaimed in 2004 after the last of the specimens was mined out. For the September 12th program, we'll be showing a documentary DVD entitled "Rhodochrosite - Red Treasure of the Rockies: The Story of the Sweet Home Mine".



The Alma Rose  
photo by C. Weinberger

The DVD traces the history of the Sweet Home Mine from its modest beginnings as a silver mine in the 1870's through its rebirth as a producer of world-class rhodochrosite specimens to its closing in late 2004. The DVD contains footage of underground mining and how science was used to guide the search for these mineralogical treasures.

One of the spectacular displays at the 2008 Tucson show featured some of the specimens mined by Bryan Lees and his partners. To see them, point your browser to: <[www.dese.rtwindsgem.sandmineral.com/tucson2008\\_convention.html](http://www.dese.rtwindsgem.sandmineral.com/tucson2008_convention.html)>.



## NEW EDITOR NEEDED

by Gil Charlton

It's with sadness that I received the following letter of resignation from Becky Kays.

"Dear CGMS members,

It is with a very heavy heart that I find I must officially step down as editor of *Chippers' Chatter*, due to health issues. Hopefully when I'm healthier, I can apply for the position again.

My many thanks to all in the club, the EFMLS and AFMS, whose praise, and critiques, have made me a better editor, and a more confident person overall.

Carolyn, words cannot express my thanks for being such an incredible teacher and I am so appreciative to you for covering the newsletter since March 2007. Hopefully, the new editor will realize what an asset you are as a mentor.

Thanks again. Becky"

We're now faced with the immediate need of finding a new editor. Carolyn has indicated that she really cannot continue with *Chippers' Chatter* – she's already doing three others. So now it's up to one of you to step forward and become our new editor.

The task is not that difficult and Carolyn has indicated that she will help whoever takes over. What is needed is a computer and a program such as "MSWord". Carolyn has also indicated that she will gladly take over the printing, mailing and e-mailing of the newsletter so the task becomes easier and less time-consuming.

We really must have someone to handle the job. Clubs without newsletters often disappear and we don't want that to happen to us! Questions? E-mail Carolyn at <[cscrystals2@verizon.net](mailto:cscrystals2@verizon.net)> and ask away. If she's at home when your message comes in, she'll call you back, otherwise watch your e-mail box!

Please step up to the plate and help keep our membership informed. Call me (410-296-8129) – and say "Yes".

<[www.dese.rtwindsgem.sandmineral.com/tucson2008\\_convention.html](http://www.dese.rtwindsgem.sandmineral.com/tucson2008_convention.html)>. Double click the two images making up the second row of images on the web page to enlarge them.

If you have any Sweet Home Mine Rhodochrosite specimens, bring them to the meeting for all of us to see.



CHESAPEAKE  
GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY

Members of the Eastern Federation of  
Mineralogical & Lapidary Societies  
Affiliated with the American  
Federation of Mineralogical Societies

The Chesapeake Gem & Mineral Society was established in order to allow its members to gain knowledge and skills in various phases of the Earth Science field. Through field trips, exhibitions, and cooperation with other societies, we endeavor to further not only our own knowledge, but also that of the general public.

Meetings are held on the 2nd Friday of each month except August at the Women's Club of Catonsville, St. Timothy's Lane & Frederick Rd in Catonsville, MD. Meetings begin at 7:30 P.m. and visitors are always welcome.

Dues are \$10 for individuals \$15 for husband and wife, and \$20 for family memberships.

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<b>2008</b>	<b>2008-09</b>
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Deadline is the 15th of each month.

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## FROM THE RECTANGULAR OFFICE

by Gil Charlton, President

A special thanks to Richard Hoff for organizing the July picnic. We all had a good time.

- Thanks to Barry Berlin for acting as moderator of the rocks bingo game. Barry you did a great job.
- Our compliments to our chef Bernie Emery. The hot dogs and chili were excellent.
- For all those who brought the food and helped to serve it, we appreciate your help.
- I hope everyone enjoyed the ugly rock contest as much as I did.

On another note, Steve has reviewed our financial records and found them to be in good order. One suggestion he made that Marilyn has already implemented is to change our checking account from a regular one to a "community" type account. The bank will no longer charge us a monthly service charge, saving us a good bit of money each year. Thanks Steve and Marilyn.

Again, I hope you have an enjoyable summer. See you in September.

Gil

## PERSONALS

from Phyllis Dyer and Lynne Luger

**Ray Petrinko** called to say he is at home recovering from an eleven day stay at the hospital and a blood transfusion. He wanted to thank the club and members for the cards of encouragement he has received during these long term health issues. Teresa has been a wonderful nurse to him during all these difficult days.

**Eilene Boulier** is now in her new home and still unpacking.

We have good news that **Steve Dyer** is doing very well after his surgery in June. We saw him at the GLMS/DC show and he looks great.

**Richard Mezler** is also do-

ing well after hernia surgery.

**Virginia White** was also under going some tests, but hopefully is O.K. now.

Condolences to **Paul Senstad** on the passing of his father.

**Helen and Andy** are in Greece where, besides visiting family and doing the site-seeing routine, Helen will be giving a talk in Corfu on gem carving. She's still waiting word on the "Artist of the Month" honor, but hopes to hear something soon.

We wish all of these members continued good health.



## FIELD TRIP NEWS

from Ed Goldberg

I have arranged a field trip to the Valley Quarry (a/k/a Teeter Quarry) in Gettysburg, PA for Saturday, September 20th. Members of both the Baltimore Mineral Society and Chesapeake are invited to attend.



We'll meet at the Quarry at 8:00 a.m. with collecting allowed until noon. As always, all attendees must wear safety equipment: hard hat, gloves, eye protection, and steel-toed boots. We will need to individually sign a quarry release form and of course, obey all quarry instructions.

Minerals to be found at Teeter include: actinolite, albite, andradite, apatite, calcite, chabazite, chalcopyrite, chrysocolla, copper, chalcotrichite, diopside, epidote, goethite, hematite, magnetite, malachite, pyrite, quartz, rutile and titanite. Many others can also be found.

The quarry, located at 1575 Baltimore Pike in Gettysburg, can be reached by taking I-795 to US 140 towards Westminster. Take MD Route 97 north into Pennsylvania. The quarry is located on the left right before you come to the main part of the Gettysburg Battlefield.

Thanks to Randy Van Scyoc of Valley Quarries for arranging this trip for us.

If you are interested in participating on the trip, please contact Ed Goldberg at <edmund.a.goldberg@usdoj.gov>. Sign-up date is Wednesday, September 17.

## CHESAPEAKE TABLE AT THE GEM CUTTERS SHOW

by Lynne Luger

The annual Gem Cutters Show is September 27 and 28 at the Howard County Fairgrounds and, thanks to their generosity, we will again have a table there to talk about our great club and encourage people to join.

I will have sign-up sheets at the meeting. If you will not be there and want to volunteer a time, please call me. EVERY club member who attends the show should plan on spending an hour or two at the club table. It's a lot of fun meeting and talking to the show visitors.

It would be great fun to see our members put in showcases at the show. What a wonderful way to share with the public (and show off!) what you've been creating or collecting. I will finally be able to do that myself this year!

The Guild has the display cases for you to use and some liners are also available. Contact Dave Mitchell <caverdave@comcast.net> or call him at 410-772-3423 to reserve your spot and case.

## URGENT...THE LATEST ON THE PALEO BILL....

from Carolyn Weinberger

Congress is about to reconvene after the summer recess. This means you have a very short window to contact your representative and ask them to vote against HR 554 - the "Paleontological Resources Protection Act". The bill is slated to be pulled from committee and sent to the full house for a vote at anytime. Take advantage of it of the opportunity to urge your representative to vote against the legislation. Although this bill is aimed at fossils, it's possible that the next piece of legislation will target the collection of minerals or cutting rough!

We're not in this battle alone. At least one Congressman, John Culberson of Texas, has been working to have this bill killed or favorably amended, but he cannot do this by himself.

Here are a few things you can mention when you contact your congressman:

1. Tell them you are a rockhound/amateur collector.

2. Tell them that as the bill stands, anyone can be put in jail for picking up a rock that might look like a fossil to the "untrained eye" of a BLM or Forestry person. This would result in the confiscation of their vehicle and all equipment and the burden of proof will be on the individual in court of law!. Do these representatives really like the idea of their parents, grandparents or constituents being arrested? Remind them that these people are voters!

3. Amateur collectors have been responsible for many of the finds of important fossils over the years. If the bill is enacted into law, this will stop.

4. Fossils are not renewable. Once fossils are exposed by wind and rain they will disintegrate. Professional paleontologists usually don't have the time, the money or the staff to check out paleo sites found by amateurs, but they don't want us to collect them either.

5. This bill is a disaster for rockhounds, and I urge you to stop it.

## GOODIES "N SUCH

from Liz and Wendy Stanne

Many thanks to all of our members, who came through with fabulous dishes for our July Picnic! Everyone had an opportunity to sample a great assortment of salads, entrees, and desserts. Our members proved, once again, that they are all culinary artists!

We would like to thank the people who came early, to help set up, and those who stayed, to help clean up. Hope to see everyone in September!

The following members are scheduled to provide the refreshments for the September meeting: George & Viva Handler, Paul Senstadt, and Liz Stanne.



## ROSTER CHANGES/ADDITIONS

by Phyllis Dyer

I'd like to welcome **Dale Fisher** back to the club after a brief absence.

Please add Dale to your roster and make a change for Eilene Boulier.



Dale Fisher  
6319 Golden Hook  
Columbia, MD 21044-3710  
410-992-5428

Eileen Boulier  
8103 River Crescent Dr  
Annapolis, MD 21401  
410-224-2291

## BE SAFE — BE WELL

by Don Monroe, AFMS Safety Chair  
from the AFMS Newsletter, Sept. 08

*Oh Say Can You See?*

Many, many of us do not see as well as we would like or as well as we once could. All of these vision problems are not the result of aging. In some cases, other factors play a part in creating the problem.

Pre-teens and older teenagers may have sustained eye injuries while at play due to flying objects or missiles such as a shot from an air rifle. I well remember being hit in the eye with the "ball" from a sweet-gum tree. My cousin could really throw well for a girl. Yes, it was very painful and it took several days to heal. A small amount of permanent damage resulted in what the doctor called a "floater" which is in my eye to this day.

Excessive exposure to bright sunlight has a long-term effect on our eyes. This exposure can result in cataracts and other eye damage. Sun glasses that reduce UV exposure can help.

Are we properly concerned with the lighting that we rely on when we read, write or do close work?

The latest information I received from my ophthalmologist indicates that all of us will have cataracts as we age. These will show up as yellowing in the eye and, for the most part, surgery will not be required. Good lighting will assist us minimizing this effect.

Regular eye examinations and corrective lenses must become a way of life for us if we are going to safeguard our sight. I personally do not see any pleasure in standing on a street corner with a white cane and a tin cup or having our grandchildren read for us because we can't see.

## IT'S BRISTOL IN 2009

from Matt Charsky, Show Coordinator

I'm delighted to announce that the Bristol Gem & Mineral Club of Bristol, Connecticut will be the host for our 2009 Eastern Federation Convention. The show is scheduled for mid-October.



Established in 1972, the Bristol Gem & Mineral Club is an active one. In addition to their monthly meetings, they have numerous field trips, their annual show and a variety of other social and educational activities including a tri-club "rockfest" each summer.

You'll read more about the Convention as we get closer to the big event - but for now, mark your calendar and plan on visiting central Connecticut the weekend of October 16 - 18, 2009. It should also be "leaf-looker" season in New England!!!

## URGENT...THE LATEST ON THE PALEO BILL....

from Carolyn Weinberger

Congress is currently in recess and will reconvene on September 5. **This means you have a very short window to contact your representative. Take advantage of it!** Remember too, although this bill is aimed at fossils, it's possible that the next piece of legislation will target the collection of minerals or cutting rough!

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5. This bill is a disaster for rockhounds, and I urge you to stop it.

For the status on the bill and the full text see <[www.thomas.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d110.h.r.00554](http://www.thomas.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d110.h.r.00554)>.

## MINERAL OF THE MONTH

by Steve Weinberger

The minerals for this month are all members of the calcite group. These include:

Calcite	CaCO <sub>3</sub>
Gaspéite	NaCO <sub>3</sub>
Magnesite	MgCO <sub>3</sub>
Otavite	CdCO <sub>3</sub>
Rhodochrosite	MnCO <sub>3</sub>
Siderite	FeCO <sub>3</sub>
Smithsonite	ZnCO <sub>3</sub>

If you noticed a pattern developing, you probably have figured out the definition of a mineral group, namely that all members should have a similar chemical formula and the same general crystal structure. All members of the calcite group are in the trigonal crystal system. A group



Calcite on Barite  
Elmwood Mine  
Carthage, Smith Co., TN  
Photo: C.Weinberger

should also have at least three species, since one is singular and two is a pair.



Smithsonite  
Kelly Mine, Magdalena Dist.  
Socorro Co. NM  
photo: S.Weinberger

Usually the group name is selected based on the mineral which was first discovered, although there are a number of exceptions.

So, dust off your collections and bring in some of these members of the calcite group to show them. If you have been to Medford you should have some fine examples of calcite. With the program this month being on the Sweet Home Mine, don't forget to also bring in any specimens you have from there as well.

## THE TRIVIA VUG

by R. J. Harris from Rock Buster News, August 2008

- A geoduck is a large clam.
- Aa and Pahoehoe are Hawaiian words that describe hardened lava fields.
- Stone is a slang word for crack cocaine.
- Silver must be 92.5% pure to be considered "Sterling".
- The word Alluvial, as in alluvial deposits, is rooted in Latin, meaning "to be washed against."

References:

5087 Trivia Questions and Answers  
Wikipedia



Moonstone is the best known gem variety of orthoclase feldspar, being potassium aluminum silicate  $KAlSi_3O_8$ .

It is usually polished as a cabochon, and is often carved with a moon face. Its importance as a gemstone arises because of its schiller, which in moonstone has been given the name adularescence. This is caused by a feature of its crystal structure.

Orthoclase feldspar and albite are present in close association, arranged in layers. This causes an interference effect of light. The color of this schiller regarded as most desirable is blue, which usually occurs in a white or grey body color. If the albite layers are too thick this schiller appears whitish which is less attractive.

Moonstone was very popular early in the 20th century and was extensively used in Art Nouveau jewelry. Moonstone has a hardness of 6 and a specific gravity of 2.57. It is monoclinic; it has one two-fold axis of symmetry.

Adularia is a common type of moonstone. Oligoclase is another type of moonstone; Labradorite and albite are rare forms.

#### Inclusions:

Moonstone contains a number of typical inclusions which appear to be stress cracks. These give the appearance of centipede type insects, Chinese "aeroplanes" looking like characters from Chinese writing, negative cavities looking like rectangular crystals, and needle-like shapes. If present in large numbers, the needle shaped inclusions can cause a cat's eye chatoyancy effect.

#### Color:

The most desirable color of moonstone is blue, but it also occurs in grey, white, pink, green and brown.

#### Mythology:

All qualities related to the moon - sensitivity, intuition, and clairvoyance -- are also connected to moonstone. Even its appearance is subtle. It's not a brilliant stone; all specimens, from the peach and gray hues to the gem quality blue-, and rainbow-colored pieces, cast a light which is soft and translucent. The physical appearance of a stone often suggests its spiritual qualities, and moonstone's foremost attribute is the ability to assist us in calming and soothing the emotions. When one has achieved a state of emotional calmness, this stone may be used to open people to an intuitive understanding of spirituality.

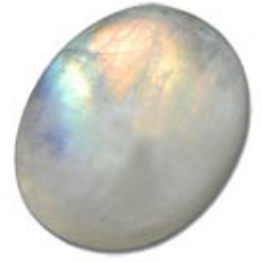
Hence, moonstone soothes and balances the emotions; helps eliminate fear of "feeling"; encourages inner growth and strength; aids peace and harmony and psychic abilities; aligns vertebrae; digestive aid.

#### Lore:

Probably the most famous moonstone of all was not a moonstone but a diamond. In the well-known classic book "The Moonstone" by Wilkie Collins, a large diamond was stolen from an Indian shrine, and a retired policeman is hired as a private detective to investigate a murder and robbery. Wilkie Collins is recognized as the inventor of the English detective novel, and was a friend and colleague of Charles Dickens.

Although "The Moonstone" was written in 1868, it remains to this day a masterpiece of English literature. The book is clearly based on a number of stories about famous diamonds which have disappeared and reappeared over the centuries.

Moonstone is the anniversary gemstone for the 13th year of marriage and is the state gemstone of Florida and New York. Moonstone is also said to balance yin/yang.



## JEWELRY CARE

via Burrow Express, April 1998

- Wear pearls frequently to absorb natural skin to give them greater luster. Put pearls on after applying cosmetics, perfume, and hair spray.
- Opals are sensitive to extreme temperatures so avoid very hot or cold weather, direct sunlight, or dish washing.
- Have emeralds oiled by a jeweler every few years to maintain beauty.

## CREATING AN EFFECTIVE DISPLAY CASE

by Dee and Russ Cable, from the Spherical World Newsletter, 2006

*Ed. Note: Although the original article was designed for displaying spheres, the principles also apply to other kinds of displays.*

We all know the beauty of a highly polished sphere, but when you display these spheres at a gem and mineral show, the spectators can't enjoy the wonder of how a sphere feels in your hand. The exhibitor must rely upon eye appeal to help others enjoy the beauty of gemstone spheres. Most exhibitors use glass-fronted display cases. By following a few simple steps, you will soon have a sphere exhibit worthy of the Smithsonian.

### First Step

The first step is to cut liner-boards of fairly heavy cardboard for the two sides, the back, and the bottom of the case. Make sure that the cardboard does not have lettering that will later show through the fabric lining. Allow for a slightly loose fit with your liner-boards since the fabric covering, which will be applied later, will make them tighter. Cut the back first, then the two sides, and finally the bottom.

The next step is to measure these pieces so you will know how much fabric lining you will need. Fabric choice is a matter of personal preference, but I can tell you from experience what not to

choose. Velvet is a no-no. Any heavy objects placed in it will cause permanent marks, and you may want to arrange your spheres differently for another show. A medium-weight fabric with a slight two-way stretch works best. If your fabric is stiff or heavy, it is hard to

form neat corners. My favorite liner is a soft beige pseudo-ultra suede that I found on a remnant table. I prefer neutral colors or black as liners, but color choice depends on the color range of your spheres. Always avoid prints because they will clash with what you're trying to display. Your liner should not detract from your display - if the color of the fabric is what people see first when they look at your display, you've made a poor choice.

Always buy extra fabric to cover risers and display steps.

You will need a large work area to cover your liner-boards with fabric. Lay the cloth good-side down, and lay a piece of your cardboard on top. Cut the fabric, leaving a two- or three-inch border to turn back.

### Glue Gun

An electric glue gun works well for gluing the fabric to the cardboard. Starting at one edge, turn the fabric back and glue it in place. Do the opposite side next so that you can stretch the fabric tight. It's good to have two people at this point. Then do the side edges in the same way.

If your side pieces are slanted, make sure that you have them turned correctly, or you will end up with two right or two left sides. When all four liner boards are covered with fabric and ready for the case, put the back in first, then the two sides, and finally the floor. The bottom

piece (floor) will generally hold the others in place, but at times you may need to put a donut of duct tape behind at the top edges to hold the boards tight.

### Risers

Now that your case is beautifully lined, you want to plan your display. For spheres, I like to use a riser across the back of the case. Use a piece of Styrofoam the same width as the case. Cut a piece of cardboard or poster board to

fit the top of the riser. Don't use the glue gun on the Styrofoam as it will melt and make a lumpy mess. To cover your riser, lay your fabric right side down, and pin the fabric to the riser, using straight pins. Put your pins in on the bottom, and they will never show. Wrap your corners like you were doing a neat gift wrap. It's easier than it sounds. I also use the left-over fabric to cover circles. Half-circles and triangles of Styrofoam give me more flexibility in my displays. We find that brass candle sticks and brass napkin rings make nice display stands. Always buy in pairs to help balance the case. It is much easier to place the empty display stands in the case first and then choose the spheres in appropriate sizes to balance the case in terms of both size and color. I lay the spheres out in rows according to size in a nearby area so the choices are easier. This way works best for me, but you may find a better way.

My husband has enjoyed making spheres more than any other lapidary project he has undertaken. I hope that these hints on displaying your spheres help in sharing this beauty with others.



A neutral background color allows the viewer



In this example, the pattern, color and texture of the background material com-

# NATURE'S WINDOW ON THE WORLD

by Elmore Easter. From the *Vug Examiner*, February 2008

"Oh granite, finite vaults of ingenious rock, come ignite my eyes."

Diane Ackerman

It all began when I read that fascinating article in the *Lapidary Journal* in 1993<sup>1</sup>. Mr. Frank of Tyler Texas wrote that for 20 years he had been crafting framed rock pictures, and selling them at mineral shows at many places in the west. I was more than intrigued because I had practiced lapidary from ~1967, when I became a member of the Club<sup>3</sup>, and was looking for novel applications. I wrote to him who helpfully sent me a sample picture of Arizona limestone, plus some squares and templates to get started -- and I was on my way!

For the procedure, slabs of most any kind of stone (agate, jasper, limestone, rhodonite, etc.) in which a picture could be envisioned by the beholder, might be used. The picture is carefully framed rectangularly, using an adjustable template, and then marked off. The rectangle containing the optimum scene is trimmed to size using a small 6" diamond saw. The cutout is then checked for squareness, and adjusted using a diamond-grinding wheel of perhaps

100-200 grit. The picture face is then polished on a horizontal vibrating lap.

Wooden picture framing (small) is cut at 45 degrees with a miter saw, using exact millimeter measurements, and glued with 5-minute epoxy, being clamped by a rubber band until set.

The polished picture slab is dropped into the frame, and then sealed by a layer of spackle -- and applying a backing of sticky felt paper. Plastic easels are usually used in a display mode, or whatever seems best. I've exhibited these pictures in several libraries, and for a few years at the Club's annual show, receiving many favorable complements.

Lately a new photographic book was published which had great interest for me<sup>2</sup>. The author depicts photos of colorful polished slabs of minerals, much like the ones I've written about here -- but with some differences-- dwelling mostly on esthetic qualities of the scenes. He assigned well-known science writers to compose short essays and poems on what they extracted from each of the photographs, which was quite interesting. However, they didn't

dwell much on the scenic aspects of the pictures, as I do. I stressed the idea of perceiving natural scenes, such as panoramas, portraits, or faces imagined in the pictures.

My idea was imagination running amuck-- and with satisfying results. The best picture rock I have worked with is called Ocean Picture Rock, from British Columbia. It has the best ocean scenes in blue, white and brown that I have seen. -- very realistic.

Even now, I have numerous picture blanks in the lab waiting to be polished and framed as works of art. It takes real ingenuity and imagination --- ending with a full feeling of satisfaction.

Conclusions: Extracting natural and beautiful scenes from faceless rocks has been a wonderful and rewarding experience, and I hope to the viewer also. Loose your imaginations, and find the joy in nature!

## References:

1. "Picture This", *Lapidary Journal*, March 1993, p61, by G.E. Frank, Tyler, Texas
2. *Within the Stone*, Bill Atkinson, 2004
3. *Stamford Mineralogical Society History: 1954-2000*, by John Kenny, Historian, 2001

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Award-winning displays of jewelry, gems, minerals and lapidary art.  
Choice rough, slabs, tools, finished gems, beads and jewelry for sale.  
Demonstrations show how to make your own beautiful jewelry and finished stones.  
Visit our website <[www.gemcuttersguild.com](http://www.gemcuttersguild.com)> for news about our classes and show.

September 27- 28, 2008

Hours:  
Saturday: 10 A.M. - 6 P.M.  
Sunday: 10 A.M - 5 P.M.

Visit our website....  
<[www.gemcuttersguild.com](http://www.gemcuttersguild.com)>  
for news about the show and our jewelry and gem cutting classes.

## MINERAL OF THE MEETING

by Bob Farrar, from *The Rostrum*, March 2008

The Mineral of the Meeting is going to be rhodochrosite. Rhodochrosite is a beautiful and interesting mineral that is extremely popular with both mineral collectors and gem cutters. It is not however, to be confused with rhodonite, which has a similar-sounding name and is sometimes similar in appearance.

Rhodochrosite is a carbonate, specifically manganese carbonate,  $MnCo_3$ . Within the carbonates, it is classified in the calcite group. As such, it shares many properties with calcite. For example, both minerals crystalize in the hexagonal system. The most common crystal form of rhodochrosite is the rhombohedron, but it is also found as scalenohedrons (dogtooth crystals).. It can also occur as stalactitic formations, as does calcite, and as massive material. It has perfect rhombohedral cleavage, again like calcite. Where rhodochrosite differs from calcite, and what makes it so popular though, is its color, which typically varies from various shades of pink to deep red to orange-red. Other physical properties include a hardness of 3.5 to 4, and solubility in acid. Color, crystal habit, hardness and solubility in acid are usually sufficient to distinguish rhodochrosite. Rhodonite is sometimes similar in appearance, but is much harder and insoluble in acid.

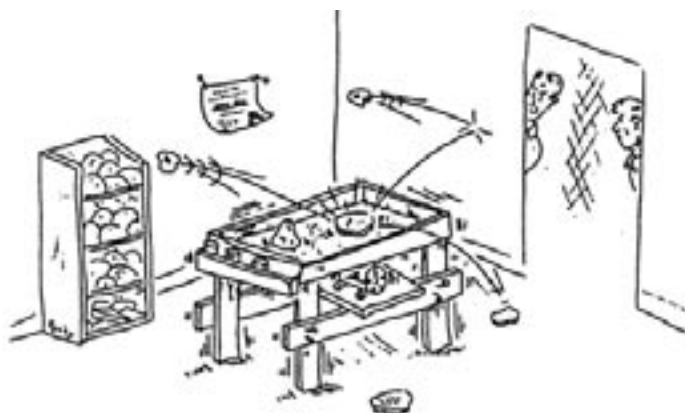
Rhodochrosite typically occurs in ore veins, metamorphic manganese deposits and pegmatites. Perhaps the finest rhodochrosite crystals ever found were mined from ore veins at the Sweet Home Mine, Alma, Colorado. Sweet Home Mine specimens are characteristically deep pink to red



rhombohedrons up to 16 cm. Numerous other ore veins in Colorado have also produced good specimens. The Kalahari Manganese Fields of South Africa are another source of particularly fine specimens. This locality is known for intensely red, transparent scalenohedrons. Peru is the source of numerous specimens, including rhombohedral crystals from Pasto bueno and scalenohedrons from a skarn at Uchucchacua. More specimens come from the Santa Eulalia area of Mexico. Most gem rhodochrosite comes from the Catamarca Province of Argentina. This material forms as stalactites that resemble onyx (calcite) stalactites in structure. An interesting occurrence is at Mt. St-Hilaire, Quebec, where it occurs as hexagonal tablets. Also interesting is the Cerch Peninsula of Russia where rhodochrosite replaces fossil clam shells. Pegmatite occur-

rences of rhodochrosite are uncommon; such localities include the Bennett Mine, Buckfield, Maine and Kings Mountain, North Carolina.

Rhodochrosite is popular as a gemstone as well as a mineral specimen. The material from Argentina is usually cabochoned, while transparent material is sometimes faceted. Faceted rhodochrosite is not common, however, it is a bit too soft, and besides, when transparent it is usually better as a mineral specimen. Well-formed crystals of rhodochrosite of good color and any size are not common, and there is great demand for them from collectors. As a result, prices of good specimens can be very steep. However, there are enough lesser, but still nice, specimens on the market that most mineral collectors can add this mineral to their collections.



YOU'RE RIGHT FRANK ---  
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By Hartan "Rocky" West  
From T-Town Rockhound 11/61 & 7/98



Carolyn Weinberger  
PO Box 302  
Glyndon, MD 21071-0302



## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

### September:

12: Chesapeake meeting - 7:30 pm.

17: Baltimore Mineral Society meeting. Cockeysville Library - 7:00 pm

27-28: Atlantic Coast Gem, Mineral & Jewelry Show. Howard Co. Fairgrounds.  
*Please volunteer to help out at our club table!*

### October:

7: Gem Cutters Guild meeting - 7:30 pm at Meadow Mill at Woodbury

10: Chesapeake Auction Night - 7:30

10 - 12: Desautels Micromount Symposium - MHA Conference Center. Contact Steve Weinberger for info and registration.

### November:

4: Election Day!

22 - 23: Northern VA club show. Geo. Mason University, Fairfax, VA.

## 43rd ANNUAL GEM MINERAL & JEWELRY SHOW

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