

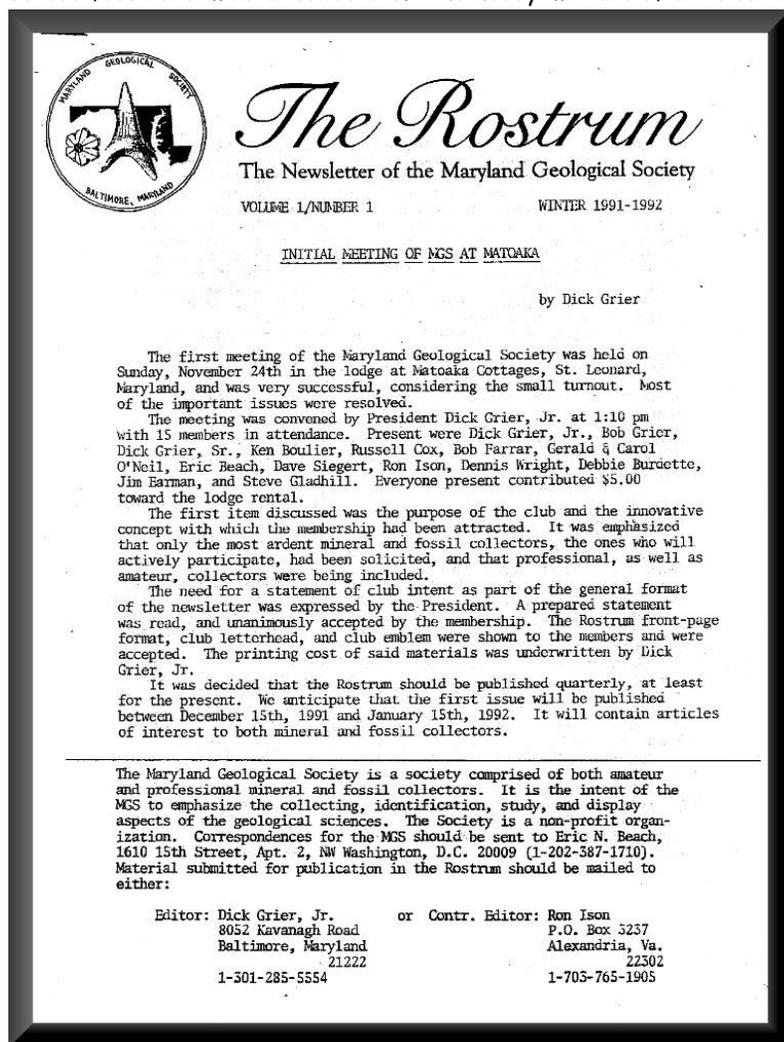
The First Issue of *The Rostrum* - A Look Back 20 Years

Jim Stedman

*It was 20 years ago today,
Sgt. Pepper taught the band to play.
~ John Lennon/Paul McCartney*

The men and women who gathered at the Matoaka Cottages on Sunday, November 24, 1991, to create the Maryland Geological Society may not have "taught the band to play," but they certainly set the standards that today's members know and enjoy. I've spent some time reading the first issue of the club's newsletter, *The Rostrum*, which came out shortly after that founding meeting and I come away with a deeper appreciation of the good work and foresight of those charter members. As the current associate editor of the newsletter, I am particularly interested in the origins of *The Rostrum*.

At that first meeting, among other things, the founders agreed on the format, cover page, and logo that would mark the new club's newsletter. Twenty years later, the newsletter remains faithful to the original agreements reached then and the best of what appeared in the premier issue of *The Rostrum*. Dick Grier, Jr., a moving force behind the newsletter, became its first editor; Ron Ison held the contributing editor position. From the outset, the newsletter served fossil and mineral collectors. The heady mixture of articles in the first issue included such items as:



- a featured piece by Dick Grier, Jr., on the mineral Tourmaline started the tradition of essays on different minerals that Bob Farrar, also one of the founding members, carries on so ably today;
- reports on collecting trips to such places as Lee Creek (one of my favorites describes how Jim Earman, Steve Gladhill, and Debbie Burdette went scuba diving for shark teeth before the Matoaka meeting and, to quote Jim Earman about the wealth of teeth they found, "We're killing 'em out there.");
- an illustrated technical article by Dick Grier, Jr., on how to distinguish among cow shark teeth;
- a listing of upcoming mineral and fossil shows;
- an announcement of planned trips including one in late January (1992) to Purse State Park and one down to the National Museum of Natural History;
- a membership application that stated the annual cost of a membership was \$5 for an individual and \$8 for a family;
- an announcement of the topic of discussion by the featured speaker at the next meeting ("Minerals and Fossils" by Dick Grier, Jr.);
- several pages devoted to pictures of members of the new MGS at collecting sites like Lee Creek; and
- an appeal for articles (some things really never change!!).

During our 20th anniversary year, looking back at the roots of the club offers us an opportunity to see what has changed in the intervening two decades and what has endured. An award-winning newsletter is one of the legacies of that meeting in November, 1991.