



The Rostrum

The Newsletter of the Maryland Geological Society
Baltimore, Maryland
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President's Message

"The Future of Meetings"

What does the future hold with regards to having in-person meetings for our organization? Even after the end of the pandemic, there are other factors that will affect future gatherings. The most immediate issue is the status of the Bowie Community Center. We have been informed that the center will no longer be open on Sundays and they have given us no guidance on whether this is a temporary or permanent situation. With members attending meetings from a variety of directions, Bowie has been a relatively central location to gather. We have scheduled a short on-line Zoom meeting for Thursday evening, October 14th. I would like to use the first thirty minutes of the one-hour meeting to initiate a discussion about how we will meet in 2022 and beyond. This obviously precludes a lengthy discussion at this time. The hope is to get members thinking about the path forward and how best to address the situation, followed by another on-line meeting where we can debate the merits of ideas proposed by the membership. My feeling is that everything regarding meetings is open for discussion. This includes:

- 1) When (which months, day of the week, time) we will hold in-person meetings,
- 2) Where we will hold meetings (a single location, various locations) and includes what distance members are willing to travel to attend,
- 3) Should we try to have presentations at the meetings,

Etc., etc., there is much to consider and this is just a starting point. The second half of the October 14th meeting will be a presentation by member Jim Stedman on Maryland Miocene microfossils. Hopefully that will be enough of an inducement to have you connect for the meeting.

Cheers, Rick

Dates to Remember

Thursday, October 14, 2021 - Zoom Meeting/Presentation by Jim Stedman
Please note: This is a mid-week, evening event.

Meeting Time

7:30-8:00 PM (discussion)/8:00-8:30 PM (presentation)



Every great advance in science has issued
from a new audacity of imagination.

John Dewey



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Bob Farrar
Bob Asreen
Dave Andersen
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Maryland Geological Society

Founded in 1991, MGS is comprised of both amateur and professional mineral and fossil collectors. The organization emphasizes collecting, identification, study and display aspects of the geological sciences. MGS is a nonprofit organization affiliated with the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies (AFMS) and the Eastern Federation of Mineralogical and Lapidary Societies (EFMLS).

Dues

Annual dues are \$15.00 per individual adult member. Applications for membership may be obtained from the MGS website or by contacting the Membership Chairman, Mike Folmer, at 417 West Maple Road, Linthicum, MD 21090, (410) 850-0193. Dues are payable by January 1st of each year.

Meetings

Meetings are held bimonthly, beginning in January at the Bowie Community Center, located at 3209 Stonybrook Drive, Bowie, MD - (301) 464-1737. The doors open at 11:00 AM and the meetings are completed by 3:00 PM. Club meetings will be held as scheduled so long as the Bowie Community Center is open.

Tentative Meeting Dates & Programs for 2021

January 17: Zoom Meeting

July 18: No Meeting

March 21: Zoom Meeting

October 14: Zoom Meeting

May 16: Zoom Meeting

November: TBD, Zoom Meeting

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The Rostrum

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Website

www.mdgeosociety.org
Material for the website should be sent to Jim Stedman at stedmanjim@gmail.com.

Featured Mineral: Wavellite

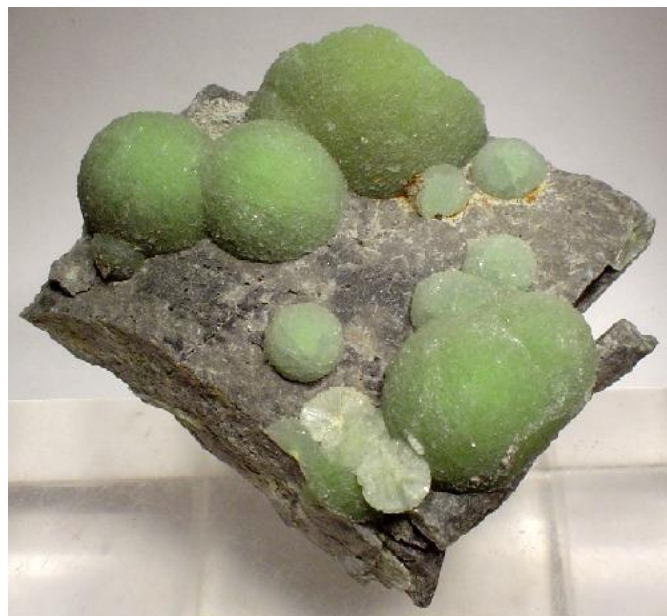
Bob Farrar

The Featured Mineral for September will be wavellite. Named for British naturalist William Wavell, wavellite often forms attractive specimens that are favorites of mineral collectors.

Wavellite consists of hydrous basic aluminum phosphate, $\text{Al}_3(\text{OH})_3(\text{PO}_4)_2 \cdot 5\text{H}_2\text{O}$. It crystallizes in the orthorhombic system, but distinct crystals are rare. More commonly, it occurs as rounded masses with a radiating structure, or as crusts. Wavellite is typically green or white, but may also be yellow, brown or black. Other physical properties include a hardness of 3.5 to 4.0, specific gravity of 2.4, and glassy to silky luster. When it occurs as green radiating masses, wavellite is fairly distinctive. Otherwise, chemical tests for aluminum and phosphorus may be necessary to distinguish wavellite.

Wavellite occurs in altered aluminum and phosphate-bearing rocks, sedimentary beds, hydrothermal ore veins, and some pegmatites. The best-known locality is Arkansas, including Garland and Montgomery Counties. There it occurs as bright green radiating spheres, up to 4 cm, in a fractured novaculite (a silica-based sedimentary rock) formation. Arkansas has produced thousands of novaculite specimens, and they are commonly seen at rock shows. In recent years, Mt. Pleasant Mills, PA, has been producing green specimens that rival those from Arkansas. White material is found at Mt. Holly Springs, PA, where it was mined as a source of phosphate. Prismatic crystals up to 6 mm have been found in the tin mines of Llallagua, Bolivia. Other notable localities include Brazil, The Czech Republic, Germany, and England.

Wavellite is of minor importance as a source of phosphate. However, well-formed green, radiating specimens are popular with mineral collectors. Thanks to the abundance of material from Arkansas, modest specimens can be had for reasonable prices



Wavellite specimen from Arkansas. Image by Rob Lavinsky and reproduced under Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license. Image is available at [Wikimedia Commons](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wavellite_specimen_from_Arkansas.jpg).

Field Trips

Field Trip Coordinators – Marci Robinson & David Shore

The Maryland Geological Society is an advocate of responsible collecting. The society has permission to collect in all of the sites listed that require such permission. Most trips are weather dependent and some require at least an average level of physical fitness. Field trips are restricted to MGS members only.

No field trips currently scheduled.

**"In Pursuit Of The Small And Beautiful ~
Collecting Maryland Microfossils":
Presentation for the October 14th MGS Zoom Meeting
Jim Stedman**

The philosopher Immanuel Kant is said to have written, "Look closely. The beautiful may be small." I like to think that Kant or whoever actually wrote this had microfossils in mind because they are both small and beautiful. I define microfossils as small fossils requiring magnification throughout their study. After the business portion of the October 14th MGS meeting on Zoom, I will be presenting a short talk introducing microfossils in general (what they are, why they're important) and offering a brief "how-to" guide for collecting two kinds of Miocene microfossils in Maryland: the fossilized shells from foraminifera (single-celled organisms) and ostracodes (tiny crustaceans). These minute fossils are often overlooked (literally) by collectors which is a shame because they come in an amazing array of shapes, they are abundant in many places, and you can search for them in the comfort of your living room.

**EFMLS & AFMS 2021 Journalism Awards
Rick Smith**

Congratulations are in order to the following members of MGS for a variety of literary awards that were presented at the 2021 conventions of the Eastern Federation of Mineral & Lapidary Societies (EFMLS) and American Federation of Mineralogical Societies (AFMS) held in Syracuse, New York and Big Piney, Wyoming, respectively.

EFMLS 2021 AWARDS

ORIGINAL EDUCATIONAL ARTICLES

2 nd Place	Maryland Geological Society	Jim Stedman	Sad State of Affairs for <i>Conus Marylandicus</i>
3 rd Place	Maryland Geological Society	Jim Stedman	Julia Anna Gardner—A Life of Science and Service

NON-TECHNICAL ARTICLES

1 st Place	Maryland Geological Society	Bob Farrar	An Amazing Anti-Atlas Amethyst Adventure
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WRITTEN FEATURES ADULT ARTICLES

Trophy	Maryland Geological Society	Bob Farrar	Featured Mineral: Native Copper
2 nd Place	Maryland Geological Society	Bob Farrar	Featured Mineral: Cordierite

POETRY (ADULTS)

Trophy	Maryland Geological Society	Rick Smith	A Kayak Trip to the Maryland Miocene
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AFMS 2021 AWARDS

ORIGINAL EDUCATIONAL ARTICLES

5 th Place	Maryland Geological Society	Jim Stedman	Sad State of Affairs for <i>Conus Marylandicus</i>
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WRITTEN FEATURES

2 nd Place	Maryland Geological Society	Bob Farrar	An Amazing Anti-Atlas Amethyst Adventure
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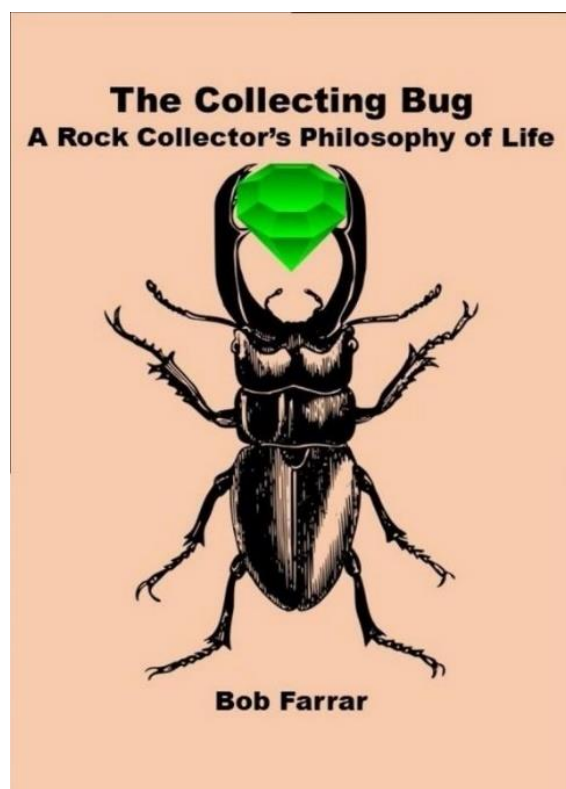
POETRY (Adults)

4 th Place	Maryland Geological Society	Rick Smith	A Kayak Trip to the Maryland Miocene
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Review of Bob Farrar's *The Collecting Bug*

Jim Stedman

MGS Life Member Bob Farrar lays out what every new rock collector should understand and bring to the hobby in his interesting book *The Collecting Bug: A Rock Collector's Philosophy of Life* (2020, available from Amazon). A veteran rock collector might also do well to be reminded of some of the advice Bob offers. The core subject of this brief book is not *how* to collect rocks, but *why* to collect them and *what* key principles to follow in the process. In truth, the scope of the book is much broader than what its subtitle suggests, being decidedly applicable to nearly any kind of collecting, from fossils to stamps.



The roots of the collecting bug run deep in human history, perhaps having its origins in basic survival instincts and perhaps being innate. Bob makes clear that his own drive to collect is a manifestation of his interest in knowledge, particularly of the natural world. In a nutshell, I read the book as positing that the "generation, preservation, and dissemination of knowledge" (p. 41) is the *why* of collecting.

Bob walks the reader through various ways to enter into the rock collecting hobby, including how one of his own fourth-grade teachers fueled his passion. Anyone with an interest in collecting of any kind is advised to read a basic text on the subject (he recommends a specific one for rock collecting) and to seek out others with knowledge in a local club. Beyond these initial steps, the reader is introduced to one of the most vexing decisions any collector has to make: what to collect. Bob's chapter on this issue is succinctly titled *I Specialize in Everything*. This approach has its advantages, among them, the increased chances of finding things of interest, and its disadvantages, among them, as Bob writes, "I have filled my house with rocks, and have trouble finding places to display new acquisitions" (p. 9).

The book is rich with advice for a rock collector (or any collector, for that matter), offering strong, cautionary words about key aspects of the hobby: don't expect the hobby to be a moneymaker (the chapter on this is wonderfully titled *Get Rich Quick - NOT!*); always adhere to ethical and legal codes of collecting; keep the collecting impulse in check, lest it turn into hoarding; follow the imperative to label everything that you find in the field or acquire; and plan for the final disposition of your collection.

I thoroughly enjoyed the book and salute Bob for having organized his thoughts so well. My primary takeaway is that those of us who collect (whatever we might be collecting) should be very deliberate in our actions, that's the responsible way to do this.

Shows & Events

Due to restrictions in place for social gathering in many states resulting from the current pandemic, the majority of previously scheduled shows and events have been canceled or postponed. Consequently, no events are being listed here. Check with organizers for their latest guidance before planning on attending any event.

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