

The official bulletin of the Dothan Gem & Mineral Club, Inc.

ROCKHOUNDS HERALD

920 Yorktown Road, Dothan, AL 36301-4372

www.wiregrassrockhounds.com

APRIL 2016

Diamond Carbon (C)

Words from...

The President

A big "Thank You" to Jeff for putting together a great gem & mineral show. Thanks also go to all the club members who worked tables, auctions, and helped out the vendors. We got nothing but great feedback from the vendors and the shoppers. I would like to give a special shout out to Merino family for making the grab bags and for helping out those who needed an extra hand or two. The attendance figures this year were really, really good and the gem display that Arnie donated for a door prize was a huge hit. Thanks Arnie.

I know some club members will miss the April meeting because they will be digging and swapping at Graves Mountain. If you go to the dig & swap, please bring your treasures to the May Show and Tell.

We would like to express our condolences to Aida and the entire Ward family. L.J.'s passing was totally unexpected. He hosted more than one rock dig at his home and for those of us who had the opportunity to dig in his enormous chert pile, all we can say is "Thank you" for sharing your rock pile and yourself. The entire club will truly miss L.S.'s presence.

Pat

Announcements

Rock Collection for Sale – Steven Tyson of The Rock Shop (<https://www.therockshopfwb.com>) in Fort Walton Beach, FL is in the process of selling his dad's rock collection, which includes petrified wood from Alabama and other specimens. Anyone with an interest in seeing the collection should call 334-216-5268.

Upcoming Shows

April 23 – 24	Memphis Archaeological and Geological Society	Memphis, TN
May 6 – 8	Gem & Mineral Society of Franklin	Franklin, NC
May 6 – 8	Georgia Mineral Society	Marietta, GA
May 28 – 29	Harrison County Gem & Mineral Society	Biloxi, MS
June 4 – 5	Alabama Mineral & Lapidary Society	McCalla, AL
June 13 – 14	Tellus Science Museum	Cartersville, GA

Source: <http://www.amfed.org/sfms/club-shows-456.html>

SFMS Workshops for 2016

We have received the schedule for the Federation workshops at William Holland and Wild Acres.

If you would like more information or a registration form, check out www.SFMSworkshops.com. Or our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/Southeast-Federation-of-Mineralogical-Societies

You can contact the Registrar for each facility:

William Holland—Heidi Wetzel sfms.wh@gmail.com

Wild Acres — Toni Garland waregistrar2016@gmail.com

Session 1, William Holland, 6/5-11/16

Beading	Becky Patellis	Mineral ID	Scott Forward
Cabochons	Dave Bergquist	Opals	Carl Talbott
Casting	Bill Harr	Polymer Clay	Sandra Davis
Chain-Maille-Beg & Int.	Kathy Morris	*SW Silver (advanced)	Nancy English
Faceting—Beg. & Int.	Tom Mitchell	Wire Wrap I	Sandra Bergquist
Gem Trees	Jerri Heer	Wire Weaving & Filigree	Jan Stephens

Session 2, Wild Acres, 8/22-28/16

Session 3, Wild Acres, 9/19-25/16

Fused Chain-Maille	Roy Deere	Chain-Maille 1&2	Roy Deere
*Metalwork Special Proj.	Jeff Sheer	Gem ID	Teresa Polly
Advanced Beading	Self Study	Casting	Bill Harr
Mineral ID	Travis Paris	Flint Knapping	Michael Miller
Chasing & Reposse	Tom & Kay Benham	Wire for Beaders	Leslie Wayment
Display Case Building	Danny Griffin	Faceting—Beg. & Int.	Tom Mitchell
Deep Relief Wood Carving	Clancy Smith	Silversmithing	Pattie Appleby
Metal Clay I	Katie Baum	Scrimshaw	Rich Williams
Gourds	Pat Davis	Cold Connec. & Enamel	Debora Mauser
Wire Wrap—Beg.	Rowan Rose-Morgan	*Chasing & Reposse II	Tom & Kay Benham
		*Metal Clay II	Katie Baum
<i>* Advanced Class</i>			

This is a wonderful perk of belonging to the SFMS. Join in and support your Federation.

Seven Keys To Building a Great Mineral Collection – Part 2 of 2

3. Become Super Knowledgeable! Part 1 – Essential Criteria for Fine Mineral Specimens

I could have started with knowledge as Key #1, as your own knowledge is what will make the difference as to the mineral collection you are able to build.

If you've already read the articles I cite at the end of this post, you'll know that each of them contains a full discussion of various criteria and factors that should be considered by all collectors of fine minerals when buying minerals for a collection, and in particular a display collection. If you haven't read the articles, they are thoughts from some of the top people in mineral collecting, so it's really worth tracking them down! Since they already more than do the topic justice, I'm not going to write about the different criteria at any length.

However, in case you have yet to read any of them, here is a list of some essential criteria that everyone in mineral collecting would agree are important in determining the desirability of a mineral specimen, to at least some degree (and depending on the context of a particular specimen) and they will typically impact a specimen's price:

- overall aesthetics (yes, this is both objective and highly subjective at times)
- condition/quality
- excellent crystal development
- physical attributes including colour, transparency and lustre
- rarity
- matrix
- size
- provenance (history as to the find and former collections in which the specimen has been included), and
- balanced proportion (size of crystal(s) on matrix).

Very few mineral specimens hit on all of these – they are just each factors to consider. Many will not apply to a given specimen – for example, if a mineral is black, colour won't matter, but crystal form will, likely; some minerals from a find never have matrix; many specimens have no important provenance, and so on (and we could discuss provenance as a factor some other time... some people rank it highly and others do not). My purpose here is simply to highlight that these are fundamentals, and they are discussed in good thought-provoking writings. Whether or not you ultimately agree with the points made in these writings (you will at least rank the criteria in your own order and may discard a few of them as less important to you), they would be considered

generally to be the most commonly applied criteria in discerning differences among – and pricing of – fine mineral specimens.

Once you've spent time thinking about these essentials and applying them to the specimens you see (in your collection, online, at shows, in museums and collections) you will have developed this body of knowledge and will be able to refine your thoughts.

4. Become Super Knowledgeable! Part 2 – Minerals and Localities

Part 1 was the easier one. If you're going to build a great collection, it's all in the facts you know about minerals and localities. The more you know, the better your acquisition decisions will be. Many people in Mineral Word love sharing and helping others to add to their knowledge – I know I do, and hope that will be obvious from the website.

No matter what help you obtain, the challenge offered by this Key #4 will take you the rest of your life and you still won't know them all – there is always more we can learn (I love that!). Don't be daunted – just absorb as you go and you'll pick things up quickly.

Knowledge of minerals can include: for a mineral, its attributes, how it occurs, what other minerals are often associated with it, how common or rare have fine specimens been over the long term, how many fine specimens have been found, how frequently are specimens available on the market, what are the best specimens that have ever been found and which are the finest in collections.

Knowledge of localities can include all of the factual details (location, history, production), and specifically how many fine mineral specimens has the locality produced, and of what minerals; how often has the locality produced; is the locality still producing fine mineral specimens; how likely is it that the locality will continue to produce specimens, or, if not producing, produce specimens again in the future...

The good news is we really do live in a Golden Age when it comes to fine mineral publications and information (I know I've said this in other posts too – it's true though – this is an amazing time for excellent publications!). There are many high quality enjoyable sources of information on minerals and localities in print and online.

5. Understand Pricing

Mineral specimen pricing can be all over the map, and if you are going to build a great collection it is essential that you develop a feel for how minerals are priced, how different dealers price minerals, and ultimately a good sense about good mineral prices. I feel strongly enough about this issue that I have written a separate post on it – **Wild West Economics? Mineral Buying and Mineral Pricing.**

6. Golden Rule: Buy the Best You Can Afford

A golden rule of mineral buying, we've all learned this one along the way. Buy the best mineral specimen you can afford at the time. When you are building a mineral collection, there is always the temptation to buy many specimens of all sorts of different minerals – they are all so cool – can't resist! Just one more small one! Be as disciplined as you can. Life is long: you will have lots of time to buy more, and lots of time to rue truly lesser purchases. Buy the highest quality, finest specimens you can. (Of course if we took this one to the extreme we'd all just save indefinitely and never purchase specimens for our collections, so obviously there is moderation and balance required in applying this!)

7. Don't Let Anyone Shake Your Confidence

Depending on where you are in your mineral collecting, it may be some time before you have developed enough knowledge to have confidence, but if you haven't, you will. Of course it's always key to keep your mind open to learning new things, no matter how much you've read and experienced, since one of the great things about mineral collecting is that you simply can't learn it all – there is always more we can learn. But once you have confidence in your knowledge, this last key will become relevant. As with many other things in life, you will likely come across people out there who will voice their opinions about your specimens or your collection. There will be other collectors with their own views, and you may well come across dealers who try to steer you in particular directions. If you've read and absorbed what the top writers and collectors in specimen mineralogy have written, and you've learned well from trusted dealers, you know your stuff. Once you know the essentials, the mineral collection you build will reflect you personally – your taste, and your own understanding of why you collect minerals. Listen politely and then stay the course, building the great collection you have happily chosen to build.

Articles – Recommended Reading:

Currier, Rock H. ***About Mineral Collecting*** (2009) Series of essays by the author published in ***The Mineralogical Record***, compiled into a single inexpensive soft-cover publication. Impossible not to become engaged by the writing style. I think this is one of the best reads ever put together for mineral collectors! (I can't recommend this highly enough.)

Halpern, Jack. “***Criteria for Selecting Crystallized Mineral Specimens for a Display Collection***” published in the March-April 2005 issue of ***The Mineralogical Record***. Perhaps my favourite article on the criteria that make a fine mineral specimen.

Smale, Steve. ***The Smale Collection: Beauty in Natural Crystals***. In the “Introduction”, the author describes his perspectives on the criteria that make a great mineral specimen. (Edited by Gloria Staebler and Gunther Neumeier, Published by Lithographie LLC). Beautiful Jeff Scovil photographs of a remarkable collection, and in particular the author’s insight into the concept of “horizons” in viewing mineral specimens is great.

Thompson, Wayne A. ***Ikons: Classics and Contemporary Masterpieces*** (2007) Supplement to ***The Mineralogical Record***. In particular, the chapter entitled “Desirability Factors in Mineral Specimens.” Amazing publication with many insights and lots of photographs of world-class mineral specimens.

Wilson, Wendell E. “***The Discerning Eye***”, an essay published in Bartsch, Joel A. and Wilson, Wendell E., ***Masterpieces of the Mineral World – Treasures from the Houston Museum of Natural Sciences*** (2004) (Published by The Houston Museum of Natural Sciences and The Mineralogical Record.) Remarkable publication with photographs of wonderful specimens from the museum’s collection.

Wilson, Wendell E. “***Connoisseurship in Mineral Collecting***”, an essay in the January-February 1990 issue of ***The Mineralogical Record***. A great early article on the issue, which preceded many subsequent writings by others in the field.

Reprinted with permission from Mr. Raymond McDougall of McDougall Minerals in Bancroft, Ontario, Canada (www.mcdougallminerals.com)

Source: <http://www.mcdougallminerals.com/blog/seven-keys-to-building-a-great-mineral-collection/>

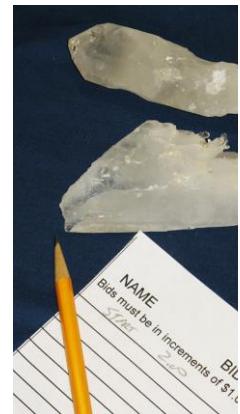
Links to additional articles mentioned in Part 2 of **Seven Keys To Building a Great Mineral Collection:**

Wild West Economics? Mineral Buying and Mineral Pricing –
<http://www.mcdougallminerals.com/blog/wild-west-economics-mineral-buying-and-mineral-pricing/>

Editor’s Note: Part 1 of **Seven Key To Building a Great Mineral Collection** appeared in the March 2016 issue of the *Rockhounds Herald*.

Gem & Mineral Show – March 2016

Photos by Pat & Bruce



**Lots of smiles
as the crowd
shopped the
displays.**



Gem & Mineral Show – March 2016

Photos by Pat & Bruce



Raffle Winners

Clock

Judy Bell
Enterprise, AL

Necklace

Don Hooper
Beulah, AL

Minerals & Case

Linda Madden
Ozark, AL





Mineral Classification

The Dana System

Mineral classification can be an organizational nightmare. With over 3,000 different types of minerals a system is needed to make sense of them all. Mineralogists group minerals into families based on their chemical composition. There are different grouping systems in use but the Dana system is the most commonly used. This system was devised by Professor James Dana of Yale University way back in 1848. The Dana system divides minerals into eight basic classes. The classes are:

Mineral Classification	
	Native Elements This is the category of the pure. Most minerals are made up of combinations of chemical elements. In this group a single element like the copper shown here are found in a naturally pure form.
	Silicates This is the largest group of minerals. Silicates are made from metals combined with silicon and oxygen. There are more silicates than all other minerals put together. The mica on the left is a member of this group.
	Oxides Oxides form from the combination of a metal with oxygen. This group ranges from dull ores like bauxite to gems like rubies and sapphires. The magnetite pictured to the left is a member of this group.
	Sulfides Sulfides are made of compounds of sulfur usually with a metal. They tend to be heavy and brittle. Several important metal ores come from this group like the pyrite pictured here that is an iron ore.



Sulfates are made of compounds of sulfur combined with metals and oxygen. It is a large group of minerals that tend to be soft, and translucent like this barite.



Halides form from halogen elements like chlorine, bromine, fluorine, and iodine combined with metallic elements. They are very soft and easily dissolved in water. Halite is a well known example of this group. Its chemical formula is NaCl or sodium chloride commonly known as table salt.



Carbonates are a group of minerals made of carbon, oxygen, and a metallic element. This calcite known as calcium carbonate is the most common of the carbonate group.



Phosphates are not as common in occurrence as the other families of minerals. They are often formed when other minerals are broken down by weathering. They are often brightly colored.



Mineraloid is the term used for those substances that do not fit neatly into one of these eight classes. Opal, jet, amber, and mother of pearl all belong to the mineraloids.

Using this mineral classification system not only helps to organize the thousands of known minerals but it also helps us understand mineral formation.

Source: www.rocksandminerals4u.com/mineral_classification.html
Reprinted with permission from Doug Mann

Who What Where When Why How

April Birthdays

APR 7 Joe Schings
APR 13 Diane Rodenhizer
APR 14 Jane Whitton
APR 23 Neil Pollan
APR 25 Ken Johnson
APR 27 Bruce Fizzell
APR 29 Elliott Whitton

Random Rock Facts

All rocks begin as igneous rocks. Before rocks can be transformed by sedimentation and weathering or metamorphosed by the heat and pressure of plate tectonics they must first be cooled from the intense heat of the earth's mantle.

Whether they are formed from plutonic rocks deep within the crust of the earth or extruded onto the surface of the earth by volcanoes all rocks have a fiery beginning as igneous rocks.

Source: http://www.rocksandminerals4u.com/igneous_rocks.html
Reprinted with permission from Doug Mann

Meeting Information

Time: 2:00 PM
Date: Fourth Sunday of each month (except June, July and August)
Place: Fellowship Hall – Tabernacle United Methodist Church
4205 S. Brannon Stand Road
Dothan, AL

Website: www.wiregrassrockhounds.com

Objectives

To stimulate interest in lapidary, earth science and, when necessary, other related fields.
To sponsor an educational program within the membership to increase the knowledge of its members in the properties, identifications and evaluations of rocks, minerals, fossils and other related subjects.
To cooperate and aid in the solution of its members' problems encountered in the Club's objectives.
To cooperate with other mineralogical and geological clubs and societies.
To arrange and conduct field trips to facilitate the collection of minerals.
To provide opportunity for exchange and exhibition of specimens and materials.
To conduct its affairs without profit and to refrain from using its assets for pecuniary benefit of any individual or group.

Classified Ads

Looking for an item to round out your rock collection?

Got a specimen, tool or handicraft for sale or trade?

Submit the pertinent details to me by the 10th of each month and your inclinations will be made known to the membership in the next bulletin.

N. J. Blackwell
28 Lakeview Trail, Apt. C
Daleville, AL 36322
Phone: 334-503-0308
Email: Tsavorite7@aol.com

Annual Dues

Single \$15
Family \$20

Officers

President – Pat LeDuc
334-806-5626

Vice President – Garry Shirah
334-671-4192

Secretary – Bruce Fizzell
334-577-4353

Treasurer – Diane Rodenhizer
334-447-3610

Bulletin Editor – Joan Blackwell
334-503-0308
Tsavorite7@aol.com

Webmaster – Pat LeDuc
334-806-5626

Membership Chair – Diane Rodenhizer
334-447-3610

Show Chair – Jeff DeRoche
334-673-3554

Field Trips Chair – Garry Shirah
334-671-4192

Hospitality Chair – Vacant

Club Hostess – Vacant

Club Liaison – Garry Shirah
334-671-4192

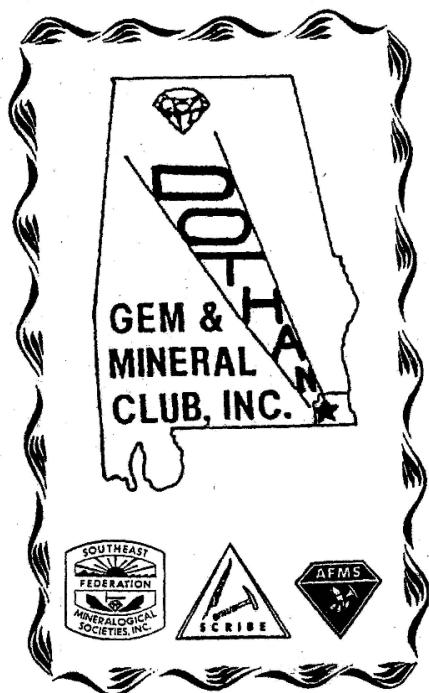
Refreshments

APR 24 – Potluck Refreshments

ROCKHOUNDS HERALD

Editor – N. J. Blackwell
28 Lakeview Trail, Apt. C
Daleville, AL 36322

www.wiregrassrockhounds.com



Where you might hear...

The rate at which the magma cools determines the kind of rocks that are formed.

Faster cooling surface lava creates rock that is fine grained or **aphanitic**. The rapid cooling doesn't allow large crystals to form. In addition most of the gasses are driven off into the atmosphere.

The slower cooling that takes place underground allows larger crystal formation. Granite is an example of this type of rock formation. Other igneous rocks are pumice, scoria, gabbro, basalt, ryolite, dacite, andesite and obsidian.

http://www.rocksandminerals4u.com/igneous_rocks.html
Reprinted with permission from Doug Mann

Member of
Southeast Federation of Mineralogical Societies, Inc.
American Federation of Mineralogical Societies