

# The Mineral Minutes

## Zoom Meetings Continue

Please connect to our November program at our usual time and date: **7:30PM Eastern Time** on **December 2nd, 2020**. You should have received a link in an email from the MSDC Treasurer, John Weidner. If you have not, please email John (jfwidner42 at gmail dot com) and he will forward the link to you.

## December 2, 2020 Program: “NMNH Recent Mineralogical Acquisitions” by Dr. Jeffrey Post

Our presenter in December will be Dr. Jeffrey Post, the National Museum of Natural History Gems and Minerals Curator-in-Charge. We are fortunate to have Dr. Post as a regular speaker, annually updating us on the Smithsonian minerals collection. While our planned spring meeting with Dr. Post had to be cancelled because of the pandemic, he graciously agreed to make a presentation for us now that our meetings have resumed online. Dr. Post will talk about recent activities related to the collection and share images of recent Smithsonian acquisitions, notably from the 2020 Tucson Show.

## Sharing Time

by Dave Hennessey, MSDC President

There is no particular theme for sharing time this month so just show us some of your favorites or recent acquisitions. Whatever pleases or interests you is going to please and interest the rest of us as well.

## MSDC Members Will Elect Our 2021 Board Of Directors at Dec. 2 Meeting

Please be thinking about who you want to serve as your club’s officers for 2021, perhaps including someone you want to nominate (with their permission) or even yourself. The current officers who have served during 2020 have included the following members.

- President, David Hennessey;
- Vice-President for Programs, Yury Kalish;
- Treasurer, John Weidner;
- Secretary, Andy Thompson.

Each of these positions is for a term lasting one year. All are willing to step down or to continue, depending on the availability of replacements and on the will of the membership as expressed through voting during the December meeting.

In addition to the above four executive positions, the Board of Directors (“BOD”) includes three positions as Directors, each lasting for a period of three years with one person completing his or her 3-year term each year. The Directors’ role is to provide advice and recommendations as needed.

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Volume 78-12

December 2020

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## Prez Says...

by Dave Hennessey, MSDC President



Reflecting on this past year, I don’t think I can find enough words to say just how awful the year 2020 has been. So, I will just mention a few ways it has been awful to the local mineral collector community. The two main shows in the DC area are the March show organized by the Gem Lapidary and Mineral Society of Montgomery County (GLMSMC) and the November show organized by the Northern Virginia Mineral Club (NVMC).

*(continued on p.2)*

Ken Reynold's term ends this December. Leslie Nanney, whose term ends in December of 2022, is stepping down. Therefore, we have room for two new directors and we welcome anyone who wants to run for these positions to submit their name to MSDC President, Dave Hennessey ([davidhennessey@comcast.net](mailto:davidhennessey@comcast.net)). In the meantime, Alex Venzke has been nominated and he has accepted, if elected, to serve on the board for a new term running from 2021 through 2023 to replace Ken. Ken has volunteered, if elected, to remain on the board to complete Leslie's term. If no new individuals step forward to run, the Nominating Committee will recommend Alex and Ken for those Directors' positions. Dan Tiech's term continues through December of 2021.

In addition to the above positions, there is another very important role, namely that of Editor of the monthly Mineral Minutes Newsletter. Since Yury is already fully employed as the V.P. for Programs, we would especially welcome someone stepping forward to take on one of his two roles.

The above slate of officers is open and by no means a done-deal. Self-nominations for the open positions are most welcome. Your willingness to serve is the life-blood of our club. Thank you for giving this your consideration. We will vote on the four executive and director positions at our December meeting.

## November 2020 Business Meeting

by Andy Thompson, MSDC Secretary

President Dave Hennessey called the November 4th Zoom meeting to order, welcomed all members and visitors and thanked them for joining the meeting. For their service to the club, he also thanked the three MSDC past-presidents attending the meeting.

With a view to getting the meeting started, Dave proposed and all agreed to forgo any Treasurer's monthly report and other administrative details. Similarly, there were no Old Business or New Business items needing discussion.

With regard to "Geology in the News" Dave gave a well-deserved special "thanks" to Yury Kalish for his extraordinary service in producing, month after month, excellent editions of the club's newsletter. Dave also called attention to the October edition of the Mineral News which published Andy Thompson's article: "A Mineralogical Game of Connecting the Dots" about a Czech Republic silver and pitchblende mine.

Ken reported that due to Covid-19, the internationally famous Tucson mineral show has cancelled its main programs for 2021 but that several of its smaller side-shows are currently scheduled to go forward.

Before bringing the Business Meeting to a close, Dave noted that to comply with legal limits, no one has been authorized to record the evening's Zoom meeting. With no further items on the agenda, Dave called for a motion to close the Business portion of the evening's meeting. He then called on MSDC's V.P. for Programs, Yury Kalish, who introduced the club's November presenters and program.

Both shows were canceled this year and with their cancellation we all missed the opportunity to enjoy demonstrations and cases of mineral specimens on display, not to mention the opportunity to improve our collections with "silver pick" acquisitions from the dealers who participate. Also canceled in April was the Atlantic Micromounter's Conference sponsored by the Micromounters of the National Capital Area (MNCA), an event that attracts micromounters from around the country. Another casualty has been field trips. Our favorite local collecting spot, the Vulcan Quarry in Manassas, Virginia, decided that there was too much risk of spreading COVID and did not allow visits after the virus hit. It is heartbreaking to think about the prehnite, apophyllite, stilbite, stellerite, calcite, and chabazite specimens that no doubt went straight to the crusher without us there to rescue them. And our home base of operations, the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History with its world class mineral collection, has been closed since the virus hit. It will be a happy day when the virus is behind us and we are able to participate in all these activities once again.

Amid the doom and gloom, there have been some bright spots. After realizing we were going to be in this situation for a while, the club showed its resilience and has been able to deliver quality presentations using the Zoom platform. This avenue for presentation has allowed participation not just of local members but also participation from members and guests all over the country and the world. It is clear we are going to have to look into the possibility of continuing Zoom participation even after we are again able to meet in person. Also, we have shared our programs with our sister clubs, like GLMSMC, NVMC and MNCA and they have been sharing their programs with us. Win - win.

As you all know, in recent years we have foregone a formal meeting in December and have instead met at a member's home to enjoy a holiday party. This year, because of COVID concerns, that is not going to happen. But all is not lost. Instead of our usual holiday party we are going to get together on Zoom to enjoy a presentation by Dr. Jeffrey Post, curator of the Smithsonian's mineral collection. Dr. Post has been making annual presentations to our club for a number of years now and his presentation is always one of our most highly anticipated and best attended programs of the year. I know we will all enjoy the presentation.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas, Hannukah Sameah, Habari Gani, Mele Kalikimaka, Feliz Navidad, Eid Mubarak, and of course Festivus for the rest of us. Hope I didn't miss anyone! And Happy New Year! After a crummy 2020, I'm sure 2021 is going to be awesome.

# November 2020 Program: The James Madison University Mineral Museum Presented by Drs. Lance and Cindy Kearns

Synopsis by Andy Thompson, MSDC Secretary



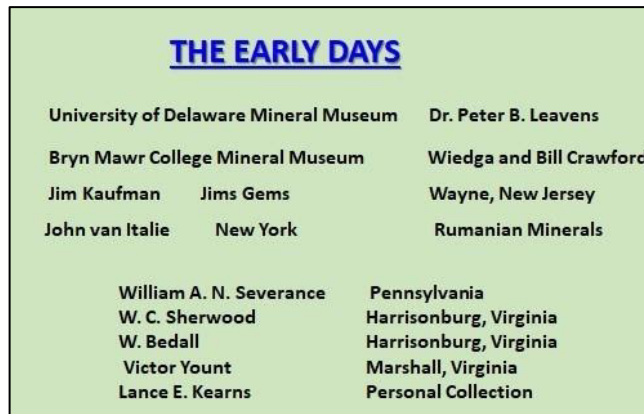
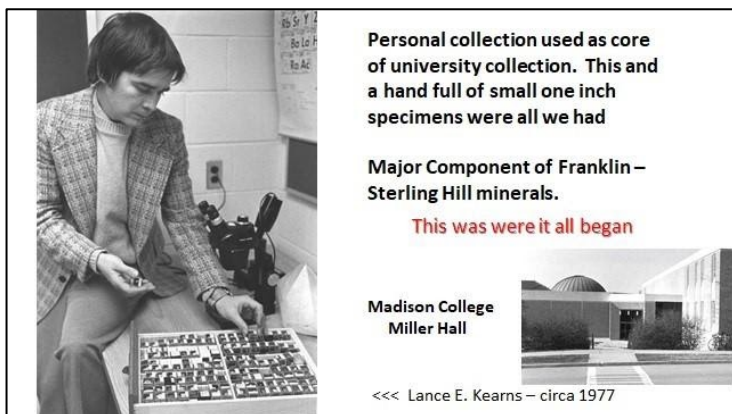
“The James Madison University Mineral Museum is now a destination site drawing mineral enthusiasts from near and far, from the amateur to the professional.” Drs. Lance and Cindy Kearns told the fascinating story of how this museum began in the mid-1970s with a relatively sparse collection of micro-mount specimens. Today it is a secure repository which displays a world-class collection of rare, large and beautiful minerals including calcite, rhodochrosite, sapphire, emerald, almandine, etc., from across the U.S. and around the world.

The story of the JMU museum’s growth is one of steadfast commitment to the principles of

trust and sharing among enthusiasts from various levels of the mineralogical community, from curious scout troops visiting the collection to entrepreneurs donating their life-time world-class collection.

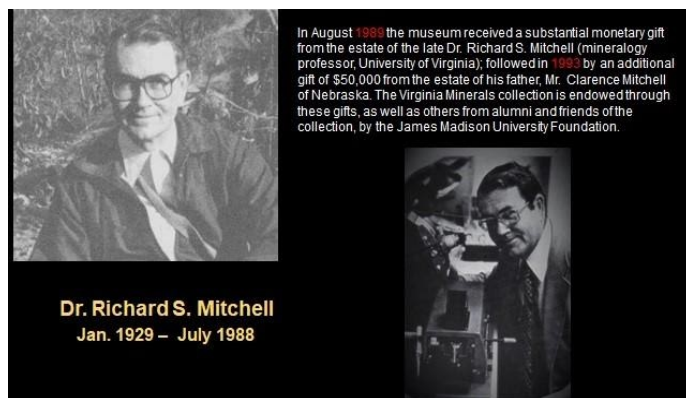
## The Early Days: Welcoming the Community

It all started with Lance, as a new Ph.D. starting his college career teaching geology at Madison College, the forerunner of JMU, with only a few tiny mineral specimens for his students to examine.



As a recent Ph.D. graduate of the University of Delaware, Lance gratefully received support from his former geology professors in the form of mineral donations. With donations from colleagues from other colleges and individual mineral collectors, some noted below, the collection grew.

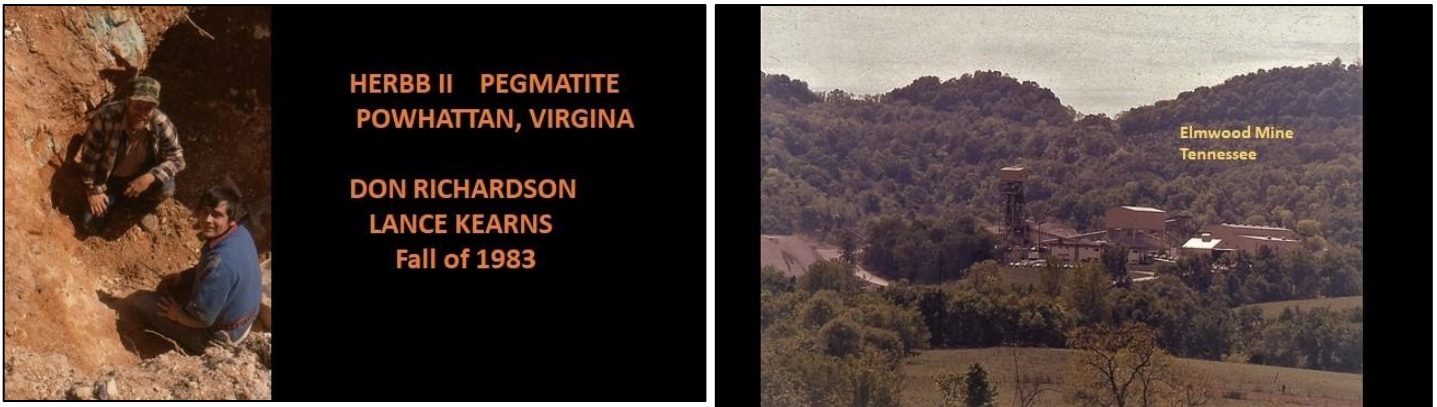
As the JMU collection expanded, it fit nicely into 24 cases recessed in the hallway of Miller Hall which at the time housed the Geology Department.



From the beginning, however, Lance and the Geology Department had a strong commitment to warmly welcoming the broader community by inviting groups to visit the displays and eventually the lab. Local mineral clubs, scouts, families, tour groups and members of the general education community at JMU were frequent visitors. That increasing visibility helped build the Department's credibility within the world of professional mineralogists and donors. Dr. Richard Mitchell (above), a geology professor from UVA, and his family made substantial fiscal contributions which allowed for purchases to expand the mineral collection and display cases and make the collection more accessible for public viewing.

### Expansion Through Continuing Donations and Field Trips

Additionally, Lance said, he and fellow collectors' field trips continually unearthed mineral specimens which were donated to the JMU Museum, as shown in the photos below from a 1983 visit to a local VA dig site and the Elmwood, TN mine.



**HERBB II PEGMATITE  
POWHATTAN, VIRGINIA**

**DON RICHARDSON  
LANCE KEARNS  
Fall of 1983**

**Elmwood Mine  
Tennessee**

It became clear from Lance's and Cindy's presentation that the growth of the JMU mineral collection was as much about interacting and building relationships with communities of the general public and mineral specialists, as about the minerals themselves. By their many open house events, they went out of their way and demonstrated their respect and support for mineral collectors outside the academic community.

As a result of those trusting relationships, the collection grew and at that point consisted of four substantial sub-collections. The events and people behind each of those four collections are stories in themselves. As the mineral communities expanded, so did the number of display cabinets. In 2007, JMU Dean David Brakke recognized the value of the collection and moved it into more secure cases in a separate museum space in Memorial Hall (below). The collection was organized based on the chemical composition of the specimens.



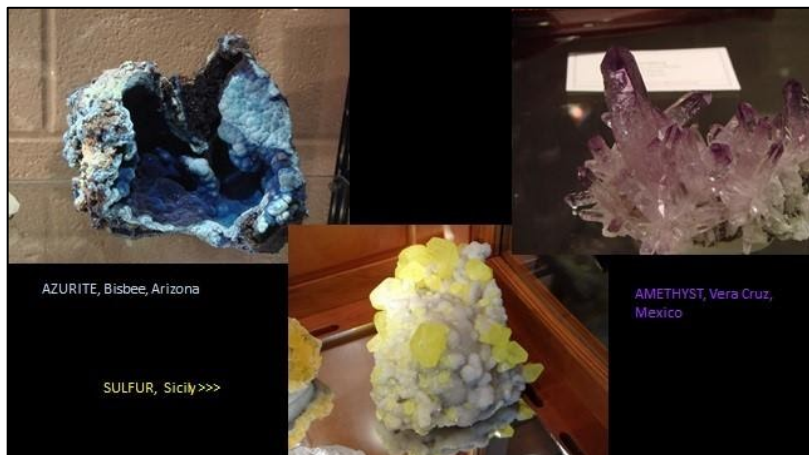
### The Peter L. Via Donation Made JMU a Destination Site for Mineralogists

Quite possibly that dedication to sharing came to the attention of Peter L Via, a Roanoke businessman, philanthropist and very private mineral collector. Over the 7 years from 2011 to 2018, as their relationship grew, Peter donated several high-quality specimens, such as the azurite, amethyst and sulfur pictured below.

When Peter Via passed away in 2018, he willed his entire collection to the JMU Mineral Museum. It was so extensive it took two days to box the donations for transport. With extraordinary support from JMU's administration, and a police

escort for protecting the high-value collection, the transfer from Peter's Roanoke home to the Harrisonburg campus Festival Conference and Student Center was successfully completed. Today's JMU collection displays 378 specimens from 39 countries and 24 states.

Speaking about Peter L Via, Lance said: "Not only did he have an eye for high-quality minerals, Peter had a fascinating mind which delved deeply into a wide range of subject areas." His generosity in giving his entire collection to the JMU museum is what has substantially made JMU a destination for serious mineralogists from the U.S. and abroad. The world knew the Via collection existed but, as a private collection, no one had seen it. Now it will be available to everyone. Professionals will come to see the extensive collection of beautiful specimens, while the specialists will come to see the rare minerals Peter Via donated.

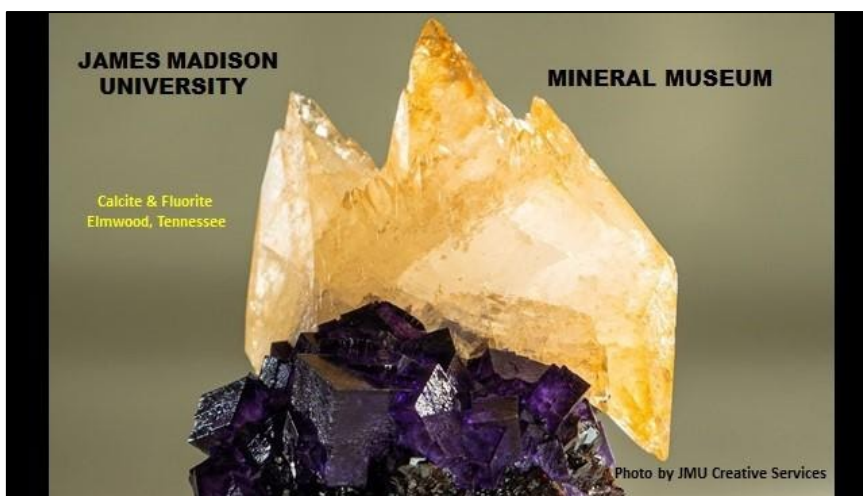


The Museum's much anticipated grand opening in its new location has been necessarily delayed due to Covid-19. When it does open at a date as yet undetermined, visitors will see a vast array including individual cases displaying specialties such as for beryl, tourmaline and fluorite, rather than the more general earlier structure based primarily on individual classes of minerals.

Lance and Cindy concluded their presentation by showing their mineral department's JMU school "icon" specimen (on the right below) which displays the school's colors of purple (fluorite) and gold (calcite). It was collected from the Elmwood-Gordonsville zinc mines in Smith County, Tennessee.

After the presentation, the Kearns fielded questions from about a dozen MSDC's Zoom participants, including the following:

- what happened to the JMU older mineral cases (perhaps used for the Earth Science displays),
- whether the collection contains galena minerals from a specific mine
- how we will learn when the Museum opens (we will be notified)
- of the 250 Via specimens only 50 or 60 have been photographed by Jeff Scovil
- curators' possibly giving tours for individuals during this time of Covid?
- Kathy displayed a JMU lab manual obtained decades ago from Lance
- The Sept/Oct 2020 Mineral Record publication featured Peter Via donations
- Patti raised a question about a donated milk-glass collection.



President Dave Hennessey thanked the Drs. Kearns for sharing highlights from their 43 years of interesting stories about building the collection. The Zoom gallery of viewers enthusiastically applauded the excellent program. For a colorful video introduction to the JMU Mineral Museum, very recently produced, see the article and link below which further illustrates and explains the Museum's collections.

## JMU Museum Video

Short Video for Visiting JMU Mineral Museum and Via Collection  
 by Andy Thompson, MSDC Secretary

We encourage *Mineral Minutes* readers to visit the following website to view an excellent 3-minute video introducing the spectacular JMU Mineral Museum which will be opened when it is medically safe to do so. Many specimens are world class and make this a “destination site” for mineral lovers. Even a short overview of the specimens demonstrates the entire collection is extraordinary. True to Drs. Lance and Cindy Kearns’ hospitality, and that of the Geology Department as well, the Museum’s new location continues their longstanding tradition of welcoming the public, professionals and amateurs alike. The video’s brief text reveals the multi-million-dollar worth of the Via collection, which explains why a police escort accompanied the transfer from the Via private household to the public JMU campus.

<https://www.jmu.edu/news/2020/11/06-via-gift-to-mineral-museum.shtml>



Photo Credit: Jeff Scovil. Used with permission.

## MSDC Club Information

**Due to COVID-19, our meetings will be virtual over Zoom. No in-person meetings are planned until further notice.** In non-COVID times, meetings are the First Wednesday of the Month (Jan-Jun and Sep-Dec). We meet in the Constitution Avenue lobby of the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History at 7:30 pm.

Website <http://mineralogicalsocietyofdc.org/>

Facebook [www.facebook.com/Mineralogical-SocietyOfTheDistrictOfColumbia](http://www.facebook.com/Mineralogical-SocietyOfTheDistrictOfColumbia)

## 2020 Officers and Directors

**President** - Dave Hennessey | davidhennessey@comcast.net

**Vice President** - Yury Kalish | yury.kalish@gmail.com

**Secretary** - Andy Thompson | thompson01@starpower.net

**Treasurer** - John Weidner  
mail: 7099 Game Lord Dr, Springfield, VA 22153-1312

### Directors

Ken Reynolds | KennyReynolds62@gmail.com

Dan Teich | danteichdvm@yahoo.com

Leslie Nanney | DNanney@cox.net

### Webmasters

Betty Thompson | bdthompson01@yahoo.com

Casper Voogt | casper.voogt@gmail.com

### THE MINERAL MINUTES



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NEWSLETTER OF THE MINERALOGICAL SOCIETY OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Mineralogical Society of DC  
Time Sensitive Dated Material  
First-Class Mail

## Useful Mineral Links

	<p>American Federation of Mineralogical Societies (AFMS)</p>	<p><a href="http://www.amfed.org">www.amfed.org</a></p>
	<p>Eastern Federation of Mineralogical and Lapidary Societies (EFMLS)</p>	<p><a href="http://www.efmls.org">www.efmls.org</a></p>
 <p><a href="http://mindat.org">mindat.org</a></p>	<p>MINDAT</p>	<p><a href="http://www.mindat.org">www.mindat.org</a></p>
	<p>Mineralogical Society of America (MSA)</p>	<p><a href="http://www.minoscam.org">www.minoscam.org</a></p>
	<p>Friends of Mineralogy</p>	<p><a href="http://www.friendsofmineralogy.org">www.friendsofmineralogy.org</a></p>
	<p>WebMineral</p>	<p><a href="http://webmineral.com">webmineral.com</a></p>
	<p>The Geological Society of America (GSA)</p>	<p><a href="http://www.geosociety.org">www.geosociety.org</a></p>
	<p>Jeff Scovil Mineral Photography (not advertising - just great photos)</p>	<p><a href="http://scovilphotography.com">scovilphotography.com</a></p>
	<p>United States Geological Survey (USGS)</p>	<p><a href="http://www.usgs.gov">www.usgs.gov</a></p>
	<p>The Geological Society of Washington (GSW)</p>	<p><a href="http://www.gswweb.org">www.gswweb.org</a></p>





## AFMS Code of Ethics



- I will respect both private and public property and will do no collecting on privately owned land without the owner's permission.
- I will keep informed on all laws, regulations of rules governing collecting on public lands and will observe them.
- I will to the best of my ability, ascertain the boundary lines of property on which I plan to collect.
- I will use no firearms or blasting material in collecting areas.
- I will cause no willful damage to property of any kind – fences, signs, and buildings.
- I will leave all gates as found.
- I will build fires in designated or safe places only and will be certain they are completely extinguished before leaving the area.
- I will discard no burning material – matches, cigarettes, etc.
- I will fill all excavation holes which may be dangerous to livestock. [Editor's Note/Observation: I would also include wildlife as well as livestock.]
- I will not contaminate wells, creeks or other water supply.
- I will cause no willful damage to collecting material and will take home only what I can reasonably use.
- I will practice conservation and undertake to utilize fully and well the materials I have collected and will recycle my surplus for the pleasure and benefit of others.
- I will support the rockhound project H.E.L.P. (Help Eliminate Litter Please) and will leave all collecting areas devoid of litter, regardless of how found.
- I will cooperate with field trip leaders and the se in designated authority in all collecting areas.
- I will report to my club or Federation officers, Bureau of Land management or other authorities, any deposit of petrified wood or other materials on public lands which should be protected for the enjoyment of future generations for public educational and scientific purposes.
- I will appreciate and protect our heritage of natural resources.
- I will observe the "Golden Rule", will use "Good Outdoor Manners" and will at all times conduct myself in a manner which will add to the stature and Public "image" of rockhounds everywhere.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR RENEWAL  
THE MINERALOGICAL SOCIETY OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA (MSDC)

( ) Family – \$25.00 per year. One address.

( ) Individual – \$20.00 per year.

( ) New \* ( ) Renewal Dues are for Year \_\_\_\_\_\*

For new members who join in the last months of the year, membership will extend through the following year with no additional dues.

**ANNUAL DUES – PLEASE PAY YOUR DUES PROMPTLY.**

Pay at next meeting or mail to:

Mineralogical Society of DC  
c/o John Weidner  
7099 Game Lord Drive  
Springfield, VA 22153-1312

Name(s) (First and Last) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone(s): Home/Work/Mobile \_\_\_\_\_

Email(s): \_\_\_\_\_

OK TO INCLUDE YOU ON CLUB MEMBERSHIP LIST?

( ) Yes – Include name, address, phone, email.

If you want any information omitted from the membership list, please note:

Omit my: ( ) Email; ( ) Home phone; ( ) Work phone; ( ) Mobile phone; ( ) Address; ( ) Name

SPECIAL CLUB-RELATED INTERESTS? \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting Dates, Time, and Location: The first Wednesday of each month. (No meeting in July and August.)

**(Due to COVID-19, our meetings will be virtual over Zoom. No in-person meetings are planned until further notice.** Normally, the MSDC meetings take place at the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, 10th Street and Constitution Ave, Washington D.C. We usually gather at the Constitution Avenue entrance at 7:30 PM to meet our guard who escorts us to the Cathy Kerby Room.)