

Mineral of the Month Club Newsletter

April 2015



Hello Mineral of the Month Club Member:

Here in New York we are absolutely thrilled to be thawing out from this winter's freezing temperatures and abundance of snow. It took several weeks for the piles of snow along the sidewalks to melt or be washed away. It seems that everyone across the country had a rough winter for one reason or another this year. We are looking forward to the warmer spring months as we are sure most of you are too.

Featured Mineral: This month we have a lovely composite specimen of gyrolite and apophyllite from the Mumbai District in the state of Maharashtra in India. A composite specimen consists of two or more minerals that are generally of equal prominence. The gyrolite forms translucent, white spherules and the apophyllite occurs as well-developed, colorless, transparent crystals. These composite specimens provide both a pleasing visual contrast and an opportunity for side-by-side comparisons of the different physical properties of these two minerals. Because we featured apophyllite as our Mineral of the Month in December 2013 and had not yet featured gyrolite, this month gyrolite is the primary mineral in our write-up. We will include both the 2013 apophyllite and 2015 gyrolite write-ups in this month's email. If you are not on our email list, contact Christine at christine@celestialearthminerals.com and she will add you to the mailing list.

Our specimens are from India's Deccan Traps, one of the world's largest volcanic regions. The Deccan Traps ("traps" is a general term for formations of dark, volcanic rock) were created by massive volcanic eruptions that began 68 million years ago and extruded some 300,000 cubic miles of basaltic magma. Today, even after eons of erosion, the Deccan basalt formations still cover 200,000 square miles to a depth of 6,000 feet. In the Deccan Traps, collectible minerals occur in cavities or vesicles within the basalt. These cavities formed from gas bubbles in the original magma as it was extruded and as mineral-rich, alkaline groundwater circulated through the basalt's fractures, it filled the cavities and precipitated many minerals, including the gyrolite and apophyllite-(KF) in our specimens.

Rock Hound Tidbits: A member recently called and asked, "What is the difference between mineral density and specific gravity?" Density is an important physical property that is expressed numerically as specific gravity.

Our write-up defines density and its relationship to specific gravity, and explains how specific gravity is calculated. The special section of our write-up, titled "Mineral Density and Specific Gravity," suggests an exercise that you can perform with the specimens from your Mineral of the Month collection to determine their density and gravity.

What's new in the Office: Lora just finished processing over 90 flats of minerals that Christine had shipped back from the Tucson Gem, Mineral & Fossil Show. The shipment arrived

at the office at the same time that workers were giving our offices a face lift by installing new granite floor tiles and painting the offices. For about a week we had flats of specimens stacked all over the place. Now, our offices look better than ever and several thousand minerals have a nice cozy home here. If any of you are ever in the New York area, please give us a call and Christine will be happy to show you around and let you have a sneak peak at the upcoming features and offerings.

We are now conducting monthly workshops that take place one Friday night a month here at the office. The workshops last between an hour and an hour and a half and focus on a specific mineral or topic of interest. They are both fun and informative.

Welcome New Members: Welcome to our newest members Elizabeth K. from Pennsylvania, Evan M. from Ohio, and Perry W. from Kentucky. Last but not least, a warm welcome back to Tammy T. from Arizona, who rejoined after several years away from the club.

And to all our returning members who renewed for yet another year, thank you!

Membership Rates: Over the past several years silver-level members have expressed a desire to have slightly larger specimens and gold-level members have requested a slightly lower cost. After much consideration we have come up with what we think, is a great solution that will meet all member's needs. Starting this month any new members and any renewing memberships will be at one rate and one standard size. The cost for membership is \$250.00 for the year and the specimen sizes will average between 2" x 2" to 2.5" x 2.5".

If you would like to set up a payment plan, we will bill your credit card \$23.00 on the first of each month. Note, by paying in full you will save \$26.00 a year.

Coming in May: Our Mineral of the Month for May will be the rock crystal variety of quartz from the Ouachita Mountains of Arkansas—one of the world's greatest sources of rock crystal. These specimens consist of beautifully developed, lustrous, hexagonal prisms of colorless, water-clear quartz. Our write-up will include a special section on the fascinating legacy of quartz-crystal mining in Arkansas that dates back to prehistoric times. Club members will also learn that Arkansas quartz crystals were a strategic material during World War II, and that thousands of pounds of crystals were mined for use in electronic and optical wartime instruments.

We are here for you: We are here for you and all your collecting needs. If you have any questions please contact Christine, our Mineral of the Month Club manager, by telephone at 1-800-941-5594 or via e-mail at christine@celestialearthminerals.com.

You can visit our Facebook pages, Mineral of the Month Club and Mineral Crew to mingle with other members and as a forum for discussions among fellow rock hounds.

Thanks again to all our members, and we'll visit with you again in April.

Dimitri, Mary, Christine, and Lora

www.celestialearthminerals.com Phone# 800-941-5594