

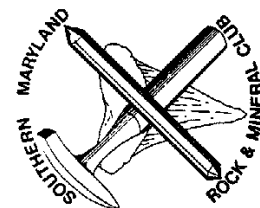
April 2009



SOUTHERN MARYLAND ROCK AND MINERAL CLUB



RockTalk



Message from the President

I hope everyone came by to the rock show last month. If you missed it you should know that it was our largest show ever, with more people (270) and vendors (18) than ever before. Several people told me that I had really found my niche calling out door prize winners. It was fun, although a microphone and sound system would have helped immensely-but that will happen next year. It was really great watching the people claim their door prizes; they all were so surprised and grateful. If I had it to do all over, I would have pre-selected each door prize, so that I could have announced it in advance of the drawing, described it at length, talked up the vendor that donated it, and maybe even had Sam run through the show showing it off, all

before the winner's name was drawn. As is, each winner got a randomly selected door prize. Maybe we will use a combination of methods next year. I must tell you that there were dozens of people throughout the day that didn't leave the show because they wanted to see if they would win the next door prize. Some stayed for several more drawings. I was surprised at how powerful the door prizes were.

Here are a couple of rock show stories that you may not have heard: a vendor got his truck stuck in the parking lot and several of us helped push him out. A kid bought some faceted lapis at the show and dropped it by mistake on another vendor's table. The vendor turned it in to club members and I ended up with it. The kid's

dad returned to the show later looking for it and so we were able to return it to him. All's well that ends well. I would like to thank everyone; vendors, nature center folks, club members, and everyone that helped make the rock show a success. Your efforts were really appreciated and made a great show.

By the time you read this I will be in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, at the International Fireworks Symposium, and I will not be back in time for the April rock club meeting. I spoke with my friends down there and they promised to take me out to get some rock and mineral specimens for Sam's collection. If everything works out right, I'll see you at the May meeting with a beer flat full of Mexican rocks. Hasta la vista.

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Meetings

...are held the 4th Tuesday of each month at 7:00pm.

Clearwater Nature Center 11000 Thrift Road
Clinton, MD.

For more information, call Michael at (301) 297-4575.

SMRMC 2009 Show Pictures

Jessica Thomson



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***If corrections or additions are needed, please contact Rocktalk Editor

Minutes...

Polly Zimmerman

Meeting was called to order at 7:10 pm.

Treasurer – Amounts remaining in treasury were discussed.

Secretary - The minutes were approved as printed in the newsletter.

Programs - There are 2 openings for programs and 2 months still open for refreshments. Contact Larry if you are interested in helping.

Field trips - Our field trip leader, Dave, is known around town for running a “tight ship”. Make sure you have your membership card in order to take part in field trips.

Editor - Please send any new materials to Jessica.

Webmaster - Our web address is SMRMC.com. Visit the website if you have a minute.

Old Business - The final arrangements were made for the rock show. Flyers, road signs, set-up, vendors, open times for the center, tax forms, and sign up list for the front door were discussed.

New Business - Volunteers are needed to represent our club....

May 9-10 Water Front Festival

Piney Point 10-4 pm on the 9th / 12- 4 on the 10th.

See Michael at the center if you are interested.

Meeting was recessed at 8:35 pm.

Program was provided by members bringing a “soda flat” of their favorite rocks. A great time was had by all. Thanks to our great time keeper, we concluded the evening about 9:45 pm.

*** Remember “**do not park near the bird cages**”. When you turn on your car lights, the birds panic. Thanks

Smiling Crystal Clams

By Dave Lines



It was three feet across with eyes and a big grin --- and teeth made of honey-colored calcite crystals. Yep --- this was the home of the now world famous "calcite crystal filled fossil clams". This was "Ruck's Pit" in Fort Drum, Florida. Now touted on the internet as "Fort Drum Crystal Mine", it is about the only thing in Fort Drum --- except a gas station.

Actually, the adventure began four years ago in January 2005 in Quartzsite, Arizona when I met Bobby Fecho --- of Fiddlers Ridge Quartz Mine in Mt Ida, Arkansas. Bobby had a rather large selection of these same clams from Ruck's Pit. Seems he got them shortly after Eddy Ruck (son of Edwin) stopped by to see how Bobby was doing while digging in the very hard, almost solid limestone and shell, layer that contained the crystal clams. Bobby had been in Florida seeking employment repairing houses after the bad hurricane season of 2004. According to Bobby, the conversation had gone something like this: Eddy: "How are you doing?" Bobby: "Not much. This rock is purdy hard and it takes forever to dig down to the clam layer." Eddy: "Well, at the rate you are finding clams, you are never gonna to fill your bucket. Heck --- you can take all you can get."

Up to that time, Bobby had only found 6 clams in as many hours, but this started Bobby thinking. The result was that Bobby spotted a fellow in a big earth moving machine that scoops up a huge amount of dirt at once and carries it away. Seems that Bobby waved two \$20 dollar bills at the earth mover driver and motioned to remove the four feet of rock-hard overburden just above the layer of crystals. The driver gave Bobby a "thumbs up", Bobby gave the guy the \$40 and the huge earth mover machine proceeded to make 5 or 6 passes and suddenly the four feet of overburden was gone --- and Bobby filled up his pickup truck with calcite clams. In Quartzsite, I got one of Eddy Ruck's business cards from Bobby and, when I returned to Maryland, I called Eddy. Eddy was in Tucson selling clams. But try as I might to get down to Florida to Fort Drum over the next 3 or 4 years, I couldn't seem to make it happen. In fact, rumors abounded that the mine was filled with water and that you couldn't find any clams.

Then in February of this year, I called an old Navy buddy of mine living in Jupiter on the east coast of Florida and asked if Ann and I could come visit them for a long weekend. He said yes. So we planned to go down there from a Friday to a Monday in March --- but we couldn't get a return flight on Monday with our free frequent flyer tickets --- so we planned to come back on a Tuesday. The day before we left, Ann suggested that I use that extra day --- Monday --- to go to Fort Drum to dig crystal clams. Hallelujah!!!! According to *Mapquest*, Fort Drum was only 75 miles from Jupiter. I dragged out two extra suitcases and packed boots, coveralls and some digging tools. Then I called Fort Drum and spoke to Edwin --- and asked him if the mine was still open. Yes!!! It was \$50 per person for digging from 8 to 5. So I told him I expected to come see him on Monday. That was fine with him.

In Jupiter, we had an enjoyable and relaxing weekend with our friends --- and on Monday, we headed for Fort Drum. I called Edwin on the way, he gave us directions and met us at the gate about 10 am. The plan was for me to stay at the mine and Ann would drive off and explore. The actual mine is now a beautiful 110 acre lake and Edwin and Eddy have big plans to make it into an RV park and campgrounds --- and to hold concerts and rock shows there. Before they shutdown the mine (which they had mined for road aggregate), they removed as much of the crystal clam

Smiling Crystal Clams

CONTINUED

layer as they could and stock-piled it in a 40 acre field. Now they use a front end loader to bring some the clam bearing material over to a special area where rockhounds can use water from garden hoses to wash off the mud and sand to reveal the clams. Edwin figures they have enough material for the next 25 years.

At the digging location, I was the only customer and I quickly figured out that I needed more tools --- specifically, a potato fork, a steel chisel and a pistol gripe hose nozzle. Edwin loaned me a potato fork, and I called Ann on the cell phone and asked to see if she could find the chisel and hose nozzle in town. Meanwhile, Edwin brought me 2 new scoops of stockpiled clam dirt. It was a lot of sand/mud/clay/old shells, some cemented together with limestone. Everything looked the same. It just looked like dirt. I used one of the hoses to wash some of the dirt off, but I did not see any clams. But on one of the adjacent hills of the same material, I spotted some yellow calcite crystals --- lots of them. So I began to explore around the hills and found quite a bit of broken clams which were partly filled with calcite crystals. Then Ann returned with the tools I wanted. Ann left for more adventure and I began breaking open hard chunks of cemented together limestone/fossil clams. I worked steadily for about 3 hours, but in the final analysis, I found mostly broken stuff. A few nice clams and a small conch shell filled with crystals --- the shell had dissolved and the exposed honey calcite had nicely filled in the conch.



About noon or so, 2 ladies arrived. One was experienced at this mine --- a member of the Southwest Florida Fossil Club --- and had found many clams in the past. The other lady was her friend and a first timer. I offered my fresh dirt piles, but they turned down my offer and spent their time looking for crystals exposed on the older, rain washed piles.

Edwin returned about 1:30 pm, examined my progress and told me that I had better take another look at those piles he had brought over for me. He was telling me the answer. So I immediately returned to using the hose nozzle to wash off the dirt in the fresh piles while raking it with the potato fork. Bingo --- I found a good one --- a whole clam, filled with fantastic honey-colored dogtooth calcite crystals. Very nice. This find spurred me into high gear as time was growing short and I had plenty of fresh dirt to search. By the time Ann returned at 4 pm, I had nearly filled a 5 gallon bucket with good clams --- the limit for one day. Just before we left, I high-graded my finds and left behind most of the specimens I had found in the morning. Back at our friends house, I examined my finds more closely. I had found 20 good ones.

I highly recommend this trip to everyone --- there are still plenty of great specimens to be found. For more info, simply *Google* "Fort Drum calcite clams" or "Ruck's Pit" or "Fort Drum Crystal Mine".

Upcoming Field Trips

Dave Lines

Upcoming Field Trips (with Confirmed dates) --- for your long range planning: (by Dave Lines)

<u>Date(s)</u>	<u>What/Where</u>	<u>Trip Leader(s)</u>
Apr 26 (Sun)	garnets, chrome diopside, Rockville Quarry, MD	Dave Lines
May 2-3 (Sat-Sun)	Primitive Technology Weekend, Oregon Ridge Nature Center, Cockeysville, MD (contact [Tues-Fri] 410-887-1815)	do-it-yourself
May 11-15 (Mon-Fri)	Herkimer diamonds, Herkimer, NY (contact Bob D. for details)	Bob Davidson
May 23 (Sat)	amazonite, complex pegmatite, Morefield Mine, Amelia, VA	Dave Lines
Sept 19 (Sat) (backup Sep 26)	kyanite, asso. minerals, Willis Mtn, Dillwyn, VA	Dave Lines
Oct 8-10 (Thurs-Sat)	quartz crystals, 23rd Quartz XL Championship Dig, Mt Ida, Ark	Lorna & Mel Larson

Field Trip(s) within the Next Month (more details at next meeting and via email to those who sign up/have signed up)

<u>date</u>	<u>Location / other info</u>	<u>point of contact</u>
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4/26 (Sun) Rockville Quarry --- joint trip with Richmond Club ---- 10 people per club (you can still sign the backup list) --- adults only --- grossular garnets, chrome diopside, many minerals --- 8:30 am to 2 pm --- full safety gear required --- tools: rock, hammer, 3 lb hammer, chisels, old newspaper for wrapping, bucket --- allowed to drive into quarry (if muddy, recommend carpool with SUV/truck) --- \$5 honorarium fee --- sunscreen advised --- signup list full: confirm that you will attend by calling Dave lines NLT 6 pm, 4/24/09

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Upcoming Field Trips

CONTINUED

5/11-15 (Mon-Fri) Herkimer, NY --- Herkimer diamonds (double terminated clear quartz crystals) --
- \$10/day fee --- hard rock mining tools a must --- expect all kinds of weather extremes --- recom-
mend stay in local motel or campground --- all ages ok --- contact Bob Davidson if you are interested

5/23 (Sat) Morefield Mine, Amelia, VA --- amazonite, mica, beryl, complex pegmatite minerals --- 9
to 4 --- special opportunity at a world famous location --- mine currently up for sale --- future access
unknown --- \$10 fee allows one 5-gallon bucket of specimens --- attendees (adults and/or kids, but
all must be club members) must sign up before trip --- mine will not be open to the public --- Sam
(owner) has also offered to take us on underground tour (\$20 per person extra [adults only]) ---
tools: (no breaking of rocks allowed) garden scratcher, 5 gal bucket, old newspaper to wrap speci-
mens, short shovel --- usual procedure (may vary) is to look on surface of old dumps until 11 am
when Sam dumps (with a dozer) some of the blasted material brought up from the mine; at noon, the
2nd portion of dump opens for looking; at 1 pm, second "dozer dump" occurs --- store has specimens
(many from the Morefield) for sale at reasonable prices --- sign-up list at April meeting --- contact
Dave lines by email if you want to sign-up early.

Upcoming Shows and Events

Submitted by Ralph Gamba

April 24th - 26th, 2009 Rock, Gem, Mineral and Fossil show and sale. Friday & Saturday 10 AM to 6
PM; Sunday 11 AM to 5 PM at 233 Hydraulic Ridge Road, Suite 203 Charlottesville, Va.; across from
Albemarle High School Hydraulic Rd. & Whitewood Rd. [http://www.varockhound.com/events/var-
show.shtml](http://www.varockhound.com/events/var-show.shtml)

May 2-3 Oregon Ridge Nature Center's Primitive Technology Weekend 10 AM to 4 PM each day.
Oregon Ridge Nature Center, 13555 Beaver Dam Road, Cockeysville, MD 21030 410-887-1815.
www.oregonridge.org.

May 23 Towson, MD Chesapeake Gem and Mineral Show, Ruhl Armory, Towson, MD 10 AM to 4
PM. Free Admission. I-695 exit 26 – York road South, across from car dealer and funeral home

September 26 – 27 Howard County Fairgrounds Atlantic Coast Gem, Mineral and Jewelry show.
Saturday 10 AM to 6 PM, Sunday 10 AM to 5 PM Route 144, West Friendship, MD adults \$5.00

September 26 & 27, Morgantown, WV Gem, Mineral and Fossil Show. West Virginia Geological Re-
search Center at Mont Chateau. Mont Chateau Road, Cheat Lake I-68 East, Exit 10 Saturday 10 Am
to 6 PM, Sunday 11 AM to 5 PM

November 7 – 8 Gemarama 2009. Tuscarora Lapidary Society. CFS, The School at Church Farm,
Exton, PA. North side of Business Route 30, ½ mile west of Frazer-Rt 30 exit of Route 202 Saturday
10 AM-6 PM, Sunday 10 AM to 5 PM \$6 admission

December 12 – Fall Festival of Fine Minerals 10 AM to 4 PM. Holiday Inn, 9615 Deereco Road, Ti-
monium, MD. I-83, exit 17

If anyone has information on any other local shows or rock events, contact Ralph Gamba at
rgamba@verizon.net, so they can be included in this list.



ROCKTALK

Clearwater Nature Center
Maryland-National Capital Park &
Planning Commission
11000 Thrift Road



We're on the web:
www.freewebs.com/smrmc/

Message from the Editor

Happy April everyone!

I hope everyone is enjoying the weather getting slightly warmer. Now it just needs to remain consistent so we can do something with it!

Last month's rock show seemed to be a success. It was my first show, so I was pretty impressed with everything everyone had. I enjoyed myself and even bought something. I hope next year's show can be just as successful.

I am working on trying to find new ideas for the newsletter. I can't stress enough that everyone really needs to be involved in this process. Even if you just have some ideas on something you'd like to read about, send them my way. It's better if you write up something so we can get some different perspectives. Just think about it.

This month's newsletter challenge is magazines and websites. Is there rock-hound magazine you read regularly, a website (other than our own) that you check? If so, write up a short paragraph about the source of your information and submit it for a newsletter piece. I'd like to put together a compilation of sources so others can check them out if they'd like to. Want to see an example? Check out January's edition of the RockTalk. I did a website page. It's just a brief summary of what's to be found on the sites that I found interesting. But, what do you find interesting??? Share it with the rest of the club! Please be sure to include the title, address, and a brief 4-5 sentence summary of the types of information to be found from your source.

Looking forward to hearing from everyone! See you on the 28th.

PROGRAMS/ REFRESHMENTS

April	<u>Program:</u> Gold Mining History of MD <u>Refreshments:</u> Carole and Al Raucheisen
May	<u>Program:</u> Minerals of Spain <u>Refreshments:</u> Bob and Jan Simmons
June	<u>Program:</u> Stone Carving <u>Refreshments:</u>
July	<u>Program:</u> _____ <u>Refreshments:</u> Ralph Gamba
August	Annual Auction and Potluck
September	<u>Program:</u> Ralph Gamba <u>Refreshments:</u> Lorna and Mel Larson
October	<u>Program:</u> Geology of Maryland <u>Refreshments:</u> Polly Zimmerman and Jessica Thomson