

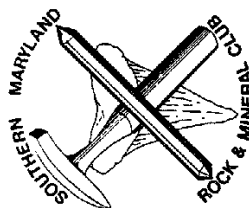
October 2011



SOUTHERN MARYLAND ROCK AND MINERAL CLUB



RockTalk



Message from the President

On August 23rd, an earthquake rocked the east coast causing the Nature Center to be closed for the evening. So we rescheduled our annual potluck dinner and rock auction to August 30th.

On August 27th, a hurricane blew thru the region and knocked out power, downed trees and flooded streets. Houses and cars were destroyed. Yards were "re-landscaped". But the rocks made it through unscathed... and so did many of our faithful rock-hounds.

We stuck with our rescheduled date of August 30th and held our potluck dinner and rock auction with several brave souls.

Attendance was a bit lower than years past, but we enjoyed a bountiful feast and a

fun filled auction.

Dave did a fantastic job as our auctioneer and Bob kept track of the sales records with his ingenious system. The bidding started out a bit slow and then the ball started rolling. The youngest member that night was Kai, and he was a fierce competitor in the bidding arena. He stood up to the adults with determination... and went home with many fine specimens for his growing collection.

Everyone enjoyed the evening (especially because the Nature Center had electricity and many of their homes did not). I want to thank everyone who attended for a very successful event. I would like to express my condolences to those who could not attend due

to damage and destruction at home.

And then came the floods.....stay tuned.

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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.

EFMLS/AFMS News

Submitted by Jessica Dixon

In this month's EFMLS newsletter, you can find an article about the Wildacres Workshop. It's a quick breakdown of the time they had there this fall as well as some pictures. It looks as though Irene had an impact on participation during this session.



Also included in a front page article about the Eastern Foundation Fund, which is a fund that assures the future operation of the Eastern Federation. Eight clubs were awarded with a certification of appreciation for their contributions.

For more information on any of these articles, visit www.amfed.org/efmls



In this month's AFMS newsletter, you can find a reissue of the AFMS Code of Ethics. As we have a lot of new members, this might be worth a look.

Also included this month is a push for junior activities, information on the ALAA, and a memorial for a former AFMS president.

For more information, visit www.amfed.org

Upcoming Shows and Events

Submitted by Ralph Gamba

November 12, 2011: 20th Annual Richmond Rock Swap. Ridge Baptist Church Meeting Hall 1515 East Ridge Road, Richmond, VA 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM Free. Use I-95 to Exit 79 to I-64 West (just north of Richmond City). Leave I-64 at Exit 181A (South) on Parham Road. Proceed south on Parham Road for about 1.5 miles and TURN LEFT ONTO EAST RIDGE ROAD. (A right turn at this intersection takes you onto Quioccasin Road to Regency Square Mall). The Ridge Baptist Church and Meeting Hall are 400 feet on the right, across from Kroger's Grocery. MEETING HALL IS THE WHITE BUILDING at the rear of the parking lot. There is ample parking in front of the Meeting Hall.

November 12 – 13, 2011: 20th Annual Gem, Mineral, and Fossil Show. Northern Virginia Mineral Club (www.novamineralclub.org) Saturday 10 AM – 6PM, Sunday 10 AM – 4 PM. Student Union II Building, George Mason University Campus, Braddock Rd and Route 123, Fairfax, VA. \$5 – Adults, \$3 Seniors and Teens. Scouts in uniform and Children under 12 free.

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

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

Cover Photo courtesy of Microsoft

September Minutes

By Cheryl Reese

DATE: September 27, 2011

MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT: 7:10 p.m.

GUESTS WERE WELCOMED AND INTRODUCED: 2 guests were present.

TREASURER: 10% proceeds from the August auction was added to the treasury.

MEMBERSHIP: There are now 95 members in good standing.

PROGRAMS: Septembers' program is by Mel and Lorna on the William Holland School of Lapidary Arts. The program for October will be given by Ralph on The Minerals of Morefield Mine. Please e-mail him any pictures or info on anything interesting you may have found there.

FIELD TRIPS: October 1 Short notice trip for 5 members to join the Montgomery County Club to the National Limestone Quarry.

October 1-2 Waynesboro, Pa. Rock and Mineral Swap

October 13-15 25th annual Mt Ida Crystal digging championship, info at www.mtidachamber.com

October 29th Morefield Mine, Dave will send out e-mail

November 12-13 No. Virginia Mineral and Fossil show

November 19 Vulcan Quarry in Manassas Virginia, Dave will e-mail info

December 10 Fossil hunting at Purse S.P. in Charles County. Noon

Utah rockhounding trip was a success. 6 members attended, shipping home around 43 boxes of treasures.

EDITOR: No report

WEBMASTER: Bob updated site with field trips including recent trip by Ralph and Mary to Green Farm in Roxbury, Connecticut which is a garnet mine.

OLD BUSINESS: No old business

NEW BUSINESS: Dave reported that the owner of Matoaka cabins in St Leonard, MD has passed away. This has been a good location in the past for fossil hunting and he's unsure what the status will be now for using that site.

ADJOURNED: Meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m. followed by refreshments provided by Ralph and Mary and the program by Mel and Lorna

August Minutes

By Christine Proctor

Rock Club Notes for August 30, 2011

August Meeting Moved from August 23 due to earthquake.

New member- Bill Potter. 6-8 new members and one new teenage member.
Check on undeliverable emails.

Minutes were approved that were in the newsletter.

Treasury- the amount is the same as last time.
10% of tonight's sales go to the club.

Next Program- Lorna and Mel sharing their summer trips and experiences.

Trips- August 13th trip to find amethyst was successful, everyone found something.
Cheyrl Simms was going to provide a trip report.
Vulcan Quarry- little or no blasting at this site. No one in attendance went on the trip.

Upcoming trips- September 12- 22nd Utah
September 24th Kyanite trip, annual open house Willis Mountain.
October 13-15th 25th annual Mt. Ida event. \$75 for three days of digging.
No Lake Anna Swap in September. It has been changed again to spring time.

Web Master- Keeping up with the trips.
Smaller files are preferred for pictures, etc.
Bob has been answering a lot of questions that have been coming in on the web.

Suggestion- Maybe we should have a phone tree for the next event/meeting cancellation.
Maybe membership should be in charge of organizing it.

Rockhound State Park Update

Courtesy of Orcutt Mineral Society, Santa Maria, CA; July 2011 Newsletter, Page 4

Rockhound State Park may have been saved because of the letters written to the state park officials and the public outcry at the public meeting held in Deming, New Mexico. Letters of support for continued collecting within the state park were received from rockhounds all over the country. These letters and the public support at the local meeting have persuaded the park officials to re-examine their position on rock collecting. As of now the Management Plan is being revised and will be released to the public shortly. We will then see if rock collecting is still allowed in Rockhound State Park and if the park has really been saved. Thank you to all who did contact the park officials and voiced their concern the rock collecting issues at Rockhound State Park. Your voices were heard and you did make a difference.

***Update: RSP website states up to 15 pounds can be collected at the park!!!

Aiming for Amethysts!

By Sheryl Sims

It was a mild, misty, morning when Pat Rehill and I, both relatively new rock hounds, made our way to the parking lot in Farmville, VA where we were to meet everyone for our first SMRMC field trip! Having recently joined the SMRMC club, we were anxious to get our boots dirty and our hands on some amethysts. Thanks to a swamp fire in North Carolina, smoke was in the air, but we didn't care because we had *amethysts* on our minds!

As we waited for everyone to arrive, Dave Lines showed us some flats of crystals that he had collected on his previous trip to the farm. That really whetted our appetites! After everyone arrived, Marco took a group shot of club members (*) and we proceeded to follow Dave to the location on Mary Kay Simpson's farm where we were to dig. We were then greeted by Mary Kay and George. Mary Kay was a little thing. George, her Great Dane, was not! However, we couldn't have felt more welcome! (Attendees included Dave, Ralph B., Rich, Joe and Paula, Marco, Sheryl, Patricia, Linda, Laurel and Kai, Ned, Elizabeth and Rebekah, Steve, Harry and Tina plus Tom and Pamm from the Richmond Club)



Since some of us were new to the site and digging for amethysts, Dave gave us a short talk and demonstration on what to look and listen for in terms of finding crystals. He showed us how to dig around and remove them without destroying them. This was extremely helpful. As the day progressed, the canopy, boots, and rain poncho he suggested also proved helpful.

With George-the-Great Dane planted firmly by my side, I held on to him to keep from slipping in the mud. I was able to maneuver to a spot that other club members suggested would probably be along the vein where they had worked the last time that they visited the site. With visions of amethysts flashing before my eyes, I was ready to dig in. Dirt was just-a-flyin'! It was great! I found some small crystals laying on the ground around me. I was instructed to dig a couple of feet further down. When I did, I discovered more crystals. Wow! I had never done so much digging in my life! I thought that I was doing well until I looked to the right of me and saw that Thomas and Pamm had dug a hole the size of a grave! It looked like they were digging to the center of the earth, but it also looked like it was paying off.

By this time, I had taken a seat on a mound of rock and mud. This would prove to be a painfully bad decision by the end of the day. My arms took over when my back called it quits. Heaving and hoeing until I thought I'd never be able to lift my arms ever again, I was happy to discover that I had filled my bucket up with what I am hoping ends up being more amethyst than white crystal. With all of the mud and muck, I couldn't exactly see much purple. Right around that time, Pat called me to see what was going on at the spot where she was digging. Unfortunately, I was too busy wrestling with my *EZ-Up* tent, with help from Ned, Thomas, and a few other kind souls to come right then. (It takes a village to help me when I'm becoming one with rocks and nature.) Later on, when I finally made my way to Pat's location, I could have kicked myself for not joining Harry, Tina, and Pat there sooner. Frankly, I should have lined myself up in Harry and Tina's shadow to begin with because I know from experience that they always find the good stuff! Harry had been kind enough to help me dig my spot out some and to suggest that I *not* cover back up what he had just dug out. (That kind of patience should really be applauded.) Not wanting to waste anymore time, however, once I was at their spot, I enthusiastically stretched out on the dirt and began scraping away at the line of crystals in front of me. I was hoping to find some *real keepers*. Oh yes, I must admit that I was quite the sight! I was dirty from head to toe, but happy! My position of choice was flat on my stomach with my right leg extended up in a 45-degree angle. In case you didn't know, that's how girly-girls do it. Minus a few broken finger nails, that position allowed me to grip and pull quite a number of crystals out using both hands. The extended leg acted like a rudder and kept me from falling head first into the hole. Try it! Speaking of hands, I had shoveled, hammered, and axed so much that day, that my right hand actually cramped shut in a very weird fist. I truly couldn't open my hand! This was a first! Tina yelled for me to



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A Connection Between Virginia Kyanite and Arkansas Quartz?

By Dave Lines



Willis Mountain near Dillwyn, Virginia is the world's largest kyanite mine. According to Mike Morris --- Kyanite Corporation's Safety manager --- kyanite has the unique physical property of volume stability after it is heated to 2750 degrees Fahrenheit --- which makes it very useful --- and valuable --- to the refractory industry. Several years ago, he told me that their kyanite sold for \$225 per ton --- which may not sound like much, but compare that to \$12 per ton for road rock from Rockville Quarry or \$25 per ton for coal from West Virginia. And they are always searching for more uses of this valuable mineral. Witness the beautiful giant slab of polished kyanite propped up outside their office building. It is designed for uses such as countertops --- and compares very favorably to the huge slab of Italian granite propped next to it.

Despite a previous day and night of rain, the weather on this Saturday morning looked like it was going to clear. Our five Southern Maryland Rock and Mineral Club attendees (* Dave, Polly, Lorna, Ralph G. and Mary) were part of a group of about 80 or so Virginia and Maryland rock hounds participating in the annual event organized by Dave Callahan of the Lynchburg Club.

While waiting for the Company representative to arrive, several folks (who had been here before) began finding glass marbles in the nearby woods. About one inch in diameter and a clear Coke bottle green color, the marbles had been dumped (so went the story) by a trucker who was there to pickup a load of kyanite. I figured (correctly) that the grandkids back home would love them. Many of the group collected some --- kind of fun.



Safety is a huge concern on every field trip --- and especially here. We had two (2) safety briefs --- first by Dave Callahan and then by Mike Morris. Both went over in extensive detail the safe practices expected of us on this trip --- full safety gear --- hardhats, boots, safety glasses --- stay away from all high walls at least the distance equal to the height of the high wall; watch out for other rock hounds --- especially, the less experienced ones; use vehicle seatbelts on company property; etc.. Additionally, each club designated one or more experienced Safety Observers readily seen wearing bright fluorescent orange vests to monitor attendees.

On this day, the East Ridge plant would not be visited due to muddy conditions, so about 9:45 we started caravanning up the gravel roads toward our first stop on Willis Mountain. A great deal of mining had occurred since our last visit in September 2010. Three (3) large benches had been carved out from extensive mining near the top of the mountain. Kyanite --- mostly massive --- was everywhere in all sizes from fine dust (mud) to huge truck sized boulders. The predominant colors were light gray and red. Closer examination revealed dark brown and black hematite coatings --- some showing iridescent colors of green, pink, blue and red.

Other minerals included pyrite --- mostly small crystals --- disseminated in massive kyanite or in a mix of kyanite, mica and quartz. These specimens were very flashy and showy. I kept watching for apatite and rutile crystals, but found none this trip.

Later in the morning I walked up to the top bench and there found Polly and Lorna. By then, the earlier fog and clouds had given way to a brighter day with spectacular views. I snapped a great picture of Lorna -- high above the surrounding countryside.

While on that top bench, another rockhound offered to share his discovery of some beautiful pyrite in kyanite. It was plentiful. A short while later, I was able to return the favor when I shared a boulder of white

Kyanite and Quartz

CONTINUED



bladed kyanite crystals with this same fellow. He picked up a huge chunk of it (50 pounds, at least) --- together with his already full bucket of pyrite --- and started back toward his car down below. I was amazed at his strength all the while being a bit concerned for his back --- and said as much. He assured me that he was okay and that *his wife* would carry the large rock herself. “Incredible!”, I thought to myself. A little while later we passed this guy and his wife --- sure enough, she was putting the large chunk into a bag to carry down. What a gal!

When we reached the area where the vehicles were parked, I found Mike Morris and asked if I could take a group over to the other (older) side of Willis Mountain to look for some blue kyanite. He agreed and suggested that all of the group might go along with me. Just before driving to this second area, I spotted the gal from the top of the mountain carrying that big chunk of kyanite, so I invited her and her husband to follow us and drew a map on the ground of how to get there.

About 10 to 15 cars and trucks followed Lorna and me. Upon arrival, I spotted a large (200 pound) chunk of kyanite with nice blue crystals all over the face. Ted Carver from the Northern Virginia club helped me carry that big rock to my van --- thanks Ted. Blue kyanite crystals which had weathered out were visible on the ground all over this area and, with careful looking, one could collect a lot of them. The source seemed to be where a heavily rutted dirt road crossed and cut through a vein of the blue kyanite. Some of the crystals were small and some were larger. With persistence, most folks found all they wanted.

Here’s where the story takes an interesting twist.

While showing Dave Callahan where to find the blue kyanite, he mentioned that he had just met a young couple who owned two (2) quartz mines in Mt. Ida, Arkansas. WOW! That got my attention since I planned to go to Mt. Ida in a few weeks for the World Championship Quartz Crystal Dig.

A few minutes later, Dave introduced me to this couple --- it was the *same* fellow with the pyrite that I had met on the top bench --- and his wife who carried big rocks! David and Jessica Suit. I spent the next half hour talking with them about Mt. Ida and their crystal mines. As it turned out, they had recently purchased the Arrowhead Mine (where several of our club members had dug in 2008) and renamed it the “Avatar Mine”. Additionally, they had purchase 18 acres between Wegner’s Blue Phantom Mine and the Arrowhead --- and there was a house on it which was rented to someone at the moment, but would soon be where David and Jessica would live. They knew all the miners in Mt. Ida and knew Maureen Walther at the Chamber of Commerce --- in fact, Maureen had been trying to persuade them to open their mine this year for the contest. And --- Bobby Fecho was going to work for them and operate the equipment --- Bobby is my friend from the 2005 contest at Fiddler’s Ridge Mine. They also bought another private mine.

Turns out that they also are planning to open a mining/slucing operation for recreational mining in Virginia. I mentioned that the Morefield Mine was for sale --- and they said they had already tried (unsuccessfully) to buy it from Sam and Sharon.

Anyway, we traded email addresses and promised to stay in touch. David and Jessica also offered to let us stay at their place if we come to future contests --- a very kind and generous offer. Time will tell --- I certainly hope to see them again.

It is a *small world* --- who would have thought that a field trip for kyanite at Willis Mountain in Virginia would yield new friends who owned a quartz crystal mine in Mt. Ida, Arkansas?



California Dumping Official State Rock?

By Jessica Dixon

About a year ago as I was surfing the internet, I saw an interesting article from the New York Times. California dumping its State Rock? Why on earth would they decide to do that? What could possibly be wrong with a rock?

California was the first to designate a state rock in 1965, making theirs Serpentine, a shiny green and blue rock. For those of you, like me, who don't know what this rock is, it looks like it would be a fun rock to look for while rockhounding in California. The rock is found in many places around the state, so seems easy enough to find.



Lawmakers in Sacramento are working to take the rock off of the state's listings. If lawmakers get their way, California would be the only state in the country without a state rock. The reason is not because of an over-harvesting of the stone nor because of its value, but because of what the rock is made of. The stone contains chrysotile, a form of asbestos, which is a substance linked to cancer.

Scientists argue that serpentine contains such low levels of asbestos that it is not harmful enough to warrant such an act. The only way serpentine could be harmful is repeated exposure from breaking the rock for years. Casual exposure is not enough to do damage. But there are those who have been affected by asbestos exposure that want to make people aware of the damage it can do.

Apparently legislators didn't realize that there would be such an uproar about this issue, one stating "This is not about being anti-rock. But why do we need a rock?"

Really? Why do we need a rock? Obviously politicians need to do a little more research before demonizing a piece of earth.

Sources: <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/14/us/14rock.html>

<http://www.statesymbolsusa.org/California/CAstatesymbolrock.html>

Photo: <http://www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/communities/serpentine/adaptations.shtml>

Message from the Editor

By Jessica Dixon

Fall is here! It is the perfect time of year to spend outdoors and open the windows at home to let the crisp air in.

I hope that many clubmembers have been able to get out there and find some wonderful pieces to add to their collections. And remember, if you do, we'd love to hear about your adventure and see some photos of your finds.

Also, remember if you find articles online as you are surfing the internet, you can use that information and write a piece to share in the newsletter. There is some great information out there and it's impossible to find it all. Sharing with each other is a great way to learn something new and stay excited about being a rockhound. Enjoy the Fall everyone!

AFMS Code of Ethics

Published in AFMS Newsletter, October 2011

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, 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.

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 those 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.

Aiming for Amethysts!

CONTINUED

wedge the handle of the hammer in my hand. I did and pried it open. This made Ralph laugh. That, and my leg being in a 45-degree angle. I'm sure that he's never worked along side of anyone quite like me. Neither had Thomas, for that matter. Earlier in the day he had to save me from a family of frogs. I almost croaked! Just as I was about to hack into their happy home, I spotted two beady little eye balls staring out around a wall of mud at me. I was too far down in my hole to jump out, so I let Thomas and Harry know that nature had gotten just a little too close to me. Thomas calmly reached in the hole and discovered not one, not two, but *three* frogs. He tossed them safely out of reach of my pick ax. I know, I'm a home wrecker and there will be no prince charming for me.



By the time that Pat and I prepared to head back Alexandria, we had both had a pretty productive day. We were dirty beyond belief—especially one of us. Still, we so happy to have finally experienced the joy of the Farmville field trip that we had both heard so much about. We had the best time ever! Thanks to expert field trip planning by Dave, we reached our destination safely and were well-prepared for the weather and hard work. Thanks to many of you, we enjoyed lots of laughs and camaraderie—and, our buckets were filled to the brim! Now, we are looking forward to the SMRMC pot luck/meeting and auction. In the meantime, I will continue to clean my crystals in hopes of finding purple! I know that this isn't your usual trip report, but then, I'm not your usual rock hound! Until my next trip, "happy hunting!"





ROCKTALK

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

Next Meeting
October 25, 2011
7:00 PM

We're on the web:

SMRMC.org

October's
Refreshments/
Programs

Refreshments:

Gary and Cindy Lohman

Program:

The program for October will be given by Ralph Gamba.

Program Subject : "Mineral of Morefield Mine."

Members are asked to bring any **UNUSUAL** minerals they have found at Morefield Mine.