

Southern Maryland Rock and Mineral Club



Rock Talk



November, 2016

Message from the President

I would like to remind members that the dates for the November and December meetings have been changed because of the holidays. The November meeting is on the 15th and the Christmas Party is on Friday, December 16 at the Nature Center. It will start at 6pm. Please bring a dish to share and a gift to exchange.

Also, we are still looking for a volunteer to be the President of the club for 2017.

Bob

In this issue:	
Upcoming Shows and Events	This page
October Minutes	2
Rocks, Minerals, and Fossils in the News	3
Pennsylvania Fall Colors and Flowstone	9
Richmond Swap 2016	10
Member's Finds	12

Next Meeting:
November 15, 2015@7:00 PM

Program: Geode Cracking:
Jim White and Al Raucheisen

Refreshments:
Carole and Polly

**Clearwater Nature Center, 11000 Thrift Road,
Clinton, MD.**

Upcoming Shows and Events: 2016

November 19-20-- Worcester, MA. Worcester Mineral Club 41st Annual show, Worcester National Guard Armory, 701 Lincoln Street.

November 19-20-- Fairfax, VA-25th Annual Gem, Mineral & Fossil Show, sponsored by the Northern Virginia Mineral Club. George Mason University, The HUB Ballroom, Rte 123 & Braddock Rd.

OCTOBER MINUTES

Submitted by David Lines

DATE: Meeting was called to order on October 25th 2016 at 7:10 pm by Bob Davidson. Eleven (11) members present including Jim B. who drove 3 hours from West Virginia.

VISITORS: None.

TREASURER: Dave --- no changes since August.

MEMBERSHIP: No report.

FIELD TRIPS: Dave --- Recent Past Trips --- Tina reported on Utah Trip --- Highly successful and fun. Six (6) club members attended the 10 day trip. Article in RockTalk and on Website. Future Trips --- Oct 29 (Sat) --- Natl Limestone, PA – 2 quarries (Mt Pleasant Mills and Middleburg)– Joint trip with Montgomery County Club. Nov 11 (Fri) – Churchville Quarry in MD ---another Joint trip with Montgomery County Club. December – TBD Short Notice Fossil trips ---depends on actual tides (need strong NW winds). Morefield will be CLOSED this Fall due work on 100 ft level according to Ralph. Long Range --- Jan 7, 2017 (Sat.) – JMU trip (our last such trip before Dr. Kearns retires in July 2017). Mark this on your calendars --- always excellent specimens for sale plus a great mineral museum. This will be a joint trip with Montgomery County Club per Dr. Kearns’ request. Special Report by Ralph G. --- Ralph had been working on setting up a trip to a quarry in Adams County, PA for native copper. They do not allow trips, but offered to send us some specimens for club members. [late note: Ralph email 10-26-16 said two 5 gallon buckets of specimens from that quarry had arrived at Nature Center for our club.] Discussion followed about how to distribute specimens --- decision to announce to club and give away to every member attending Nov

meeting [Nov 15th]. We will number each specimen, draw lots and give out specimens until they run out.

PROGRAMS: Carole ---- Asked for future programs. Trying to reach Bob Farrar to give another program. Nov meeting will be “Geode Cracking” by Jim White. Dave will do April Program about his recent California Trip. Need volunteers to sign up for refreshments. She and Polly provided cookies, candy and mandarin oranges tonight.

WEBMASTER: No report.

NEWSLETTER: Tim was absent (as he had announced previously due to work/moving). No one had a copy of this month’s newsletter or had seen one. Some discussion about trying to get it out a few days sooner.

MINUTES: Minutes from the newsletter were sent around for all to read. Approved as written. A correction was made to Dave's minutes for August 25th 2015 under New Business. The date should be March 2016. Michael reminded us to pay our dues for next year starting November 1st 2015.

OLD BUSINESS: Discussion about upcoming club elections –Most club elected officers agreed to keep their current jobs. Dave said he would be Secretary (plus keep Treasurer and Field Trips). We need a volunteer to be President. Dead silence when Bob asked if anyone wanted the job of President. Rock Show_– no plans for a rock show this coming year. Discussion – need a venue that allows public to access and buy. Rock Swap is okay but not a substitute for a Show. Need about a year of planning for a show.

NEW BUSINESS: Low attendance at meetings --- Recent meetings have had only 10 people or so. We have over 50 members. Where is everyone? Bob feels we need a “reason” to meet --- he said our club

mainly offers Field Trips and Programs. People work --- meeting on a “work night” is difficult for some --- not everyone is retired. Also, our membership is getting older. Some cannot drive at night (Bob said he no longer feels comfortable driving at night due to poorer night vision). Some discussion of reducing meetings to once every 2 months – that idea had some who favored it, but was voted down. We discussed creating incentives to attend meetings. Programs have been good, but we need to announce them earlier. In past, a “free table” at the Rock Show was a good incentive. “Rock Giveaways” at meetings was discussed as a suitable incentive to attend. Door prizes were discussed. Beginning at Nov meeting, we will give away rocks (native PA copper). The solution(s): Next year, starting in January, we will give away multiple doorprizes each meeting as an incentive to attend. Dave, Harry and others offered to provide rocks. Program Chairman (Carole) will send out separate email at least 1 week in advance of meeting to announce program and get people interested to attend. Tim has done a great job with the newsletter, but we urge the Editor to email it earlier so people can read it and find out what has happened with the club and what is supposed to happen at the upcoming meeting. Christmas Party -- Will be held at the Clearwater Nature Center on Friday Dec 16th at 6:30 p.m.. Potluck – everyone bring a dish. “Chinese” gift exchange --- bring a rock related gift of about \$10 value.

ADJOURNED: Meeting was adjourned at 8:11 pm.

SMRMC OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

(position open)

Bob Davidson acting President

Membership Chairman

Polly Zimmerman

polly.zimmerman@verizon.net

Programs Chairman

Carole Raucheson

caroleal@verizon.net

Secretary

Linda Holden

lholden@aol.com

Field Trip Chairman

David Lines

Dave.lines@earthlink.net

Ralph Gamba

rgamba@verivon.net

Treasurer

David Lines

Dave.lines@earthlink.net

Editor

Timothy Foard

bmorebugman@yahoo.com

Webmaster

Bob Davidson

Bob.Davidson2@Yahoo.com

Rocks, Minerals, and Fossils in the News

Central Texas fossil hunter names ancient urchin after Trump

By [Marty Toohey](#) - American-Statesman Staff

<http://www.mystatesman.com/news/news/central-texas-fossil-hunter-names-ancient-urchin-a/ns5cQ/>

One of Donald Trump's Central Texas supporters has a tribute for the GOP presidential candidate: an extinct sea urchin named in his honor. Bill Thompson, a Seguin restaurateur, discovered the tetragamma donaldtrumpi species as part of his work in putting together a book on the currently known Texas fossil echinoids: sea urchins, sand dollars, heart urchins and sea biscuits that have gone extinct but had their fossils identified. "I'm just trying to do my part for science," Thompson told the American-Statesman.

By convention, almost all of the naming of newly discovered species happens when a paper is published in a scientific journal. But occasionally the naming comes from "monographic books" such as the one Thompson put together, according to the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature.

Thompson has been a fossil hunter since he moved to Texas in the 1970s, he said. His book catalogs 237 species of Texas echinoids. The Trump urchin he discovered is 110 million years old and from the Glen Rose Formation, a geological area southwest of Fort Worth best known for preserved dinosaur tracks. The remains are now being kept at the University of Texas' Non-vertebrate Paleontology Lab.



Central Texas fossil hunter names ancient urchin after Trump

Thompson said such fossils are often named for celebrities. The fossilized remains of a particularly large, robust-looking urchin were named for Arnold Schwarzenegger.

A flatworm that lives in the lungs of Malaysian turtles was recently named for Barack Obama. A distant relative of the president was among those who made the discovery and named the critter in his honor, though Thompson saw a different sort of significance, noting that, "The worm is a parasite."

Trump, Thompson said, deserves to have a species named after him. "I hope we get good news" on Election Day about Trump, Thompson said. "Even if not, I want to honor him."

Close up of the new mineral merelaniite

<http://phys.org/news/2016-10-mineral-merelaniite.html>



The tiny whiskers, which look to the naked eye like very fine hairs on other larger crystals, have probably been regularly cleaned off their host rocks. Credit: Michigan Technological University

A team led by a physicist from Michigan Technological University has discovered a new mineral, named for the region in Tanzania where it comes from. John Jaszczak, a professor of physics, knew that something was very unusual about the mineral specimen he was examining under the microscope of a Raman spectrometer in the basement of Fisher Hall at Michigan Tech. On a hunch, Jaszczak decided to look into it further. The diagnostic studies with Raman spectrometry and scanning electron microscopy showed a layered structure rich in molybdenum, lead and sulfur that may be a new mineral. Now, Jaszczak and the team he pulled together can confirm that gut feeling: The tiny, silvery, cylindrical whiskers are indeed a new mineral—merelaniite. The journal *Minerals* published the team's findings this week.

All in the Family: Cylindrite

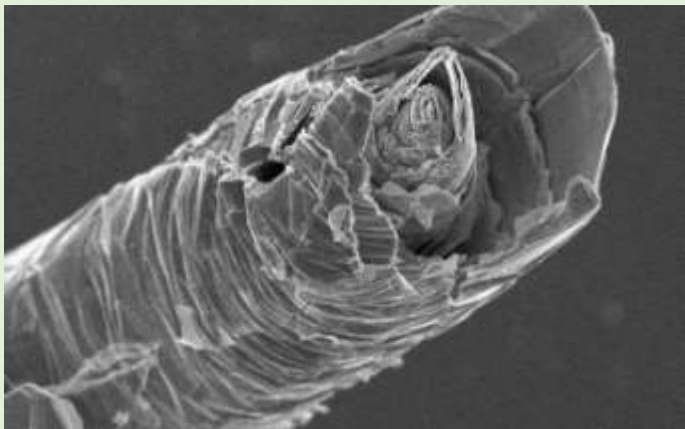
Detailed chemical and physical analyses of merelaniite—a member of the cylindrite group—

revealed a neatly stacked layered structure with sheets rolled in scrolls like tobacco in a cigar. These tiny whiskers, which to the naked eye look like very fine hairs on other larger crystals, have probably been regularly cleaned off their host rocks containing other more recognizable minerals that occur at the famous gem mines near Merelani, Tanzania.

"Minerals have a natural wow factor, and while we use many of them daily without thinking twice, some specimens are truly art," Jaszczak says, adding that minerals like the gems tanzanite (a blue/purple variety of zoisite) and tsavorite (a green variety of grossular garnet), which come from the same mines as merelaniite, can be more eye-catching. But it doesn't negate the value of less showy minerals. "Minerals also have an internal beauty in their crystal structures and in the way that influences their properties," he explains. "Learning about minerals with unique crystal structures grants insight into the nature of matter, and sometimes leads to new human-made materials, their inspiration comes from natural sources."

To Name a Mineral

In the age of fast-paced global communication, it's no wonder that teasing apart the anatomy of merelaniite took a team from around the world. Most mineral discoveries start with boots on the ground—or, rather, below the ground. The [Merelani mining district](#) is a well-known locale. Not only for prized tanzanite and tsavorite used in jewelry, but also for hosting a [suite of other minerals](#) increasingly prized by mineral collectors. Jaszczak has written numerous articles on the subject including a [study on sulfides](#) from the region.



High-resolution images reveal merelaniite's complex structure, which form a scroll-like cylinder made of neatly stacked sulfides. Credit: Michigan Technological University

"The Merelani district has been famous since the late 1960s for the blue gem variety of zoisite known as tanzanite, but this is really a mineral collector's paradise and an exciting place to look for new minerals," says Jaszczak, who has co-authored three other papers on the district's minerals. "The importance of the area is the reason we wanted to give tribute to the miners and name merelaniite for the district."

There are 5,179 minerals listed by the International Mineralogical Association, and their Commission on New Minerals, Nomenclature and Classification (CNMNC) receives more than 80 proposals each year for new ones. Many turn out to be variations of existing minerals. To discern the new from the variable, mineralogists and physicists put samples through a battery of rigorous tests, particularly to discern their chemistry and crystal structure. "It is one thing to find a mineral that is probably new; it is quite another thing to be able to perform all of the required analyses to satisfy the CNMNC for approval of its status and a new name," Jaszczak says.

Although **Raman spectroscopy** gave Jaszczak the first hard evidence that the mineral may be new, more work needed to be done. Because merelaniite is composed of two different kinds of layers at the atomic scale, and because they curve to form

cylinders with a scroll-like structure, it was particularly difficult to determine the fundamental crystallographic parameters. The chemistry of the new mineral was also a challenge to determine with precision. For both of these challenges, Jaszczak needed additional help.

Atomic Details

Jaszczak teamed up with Mike Rumsey and John Spratt at the Natural History Museum in London to determine the chemical composition of the new mineral with precision. To help with understanding the [crystal structure](#), Steve Hackney, professor of materials science at Michigan Tech, was able to provide crucial high-resolution images and diffraction patterns using transmission electron microscopy on ultrathin samples prepared with a diamond knife by Owen Mills, director of Michigan Tech's Applied Chemical & Morphological Analysis Laboratory.

The growing team then sought the help of Luca Bindi, a professor at the Università di Firenze in Italy and an expert in solving complicated crystal structures. He helped run x-ray diffraction studies to put all of the pieces together. The results revealed a complex structure made up of layers of molybdenum disulfide alternating at the atomic scale with layers of lead sulfide, along with other elements, including vanadium, antimony, bismuth and selenium.

Although it is not a showcase gem, merelaniite is attractive, and as the analyses show, it has an intricate, microscopic internal beauty as well. A better understanding of the crystal chemistry of these exotic materials may eventually find useful applications.

Echoing physicist Richard Feynman, Jaszczak notes, "Science is about taking pleasure in finding things out and we're delighted to have uncovered and described this beautiful new mineral."

More information: John Jaszczak et al. Merelaniite, Mo₄Pb₄VSbS₁₅, a New Molybdenum-Essential

Member of the Cylindrite Group, from the Merelani Tanzanite Deposit, Lelatema Mountains, Manyara Region, Tanzania, *Minerals* (2016). [DOI: 10.3390/min6040115](#)

Provided by: [Michigan Technological University](#)

Want Your Tombstone to Last Forever? Make It Out of Quartzite

ERIK KLEMETTI

<https://www.wired.com/2016/10/want-tombstone-last-forever-make-quartzite/>



GETTY IMAGES

GRAVESTONES! IT'S CEMETERY season here in the States, so what better time to discuss how to be remembered forever? If you wander through any graveyard, you'll find grave markers made of all manner of the same thing: stone! Now, I'm sure many people don't give a second thought to what kind of rock they should use for their monument beyond which might be the most attractive. But they should. All rocks are not the same when it comes to how they handle the wear and tear of the hereafter.

Most gravestones made over the last few centuries are made of a few types of rock: marble, slate, and granite are the big three. Sometimes you run into darker stones made of [gabbro](#), maybe a few sandstone markers, but especially in more recent

monuments, marble and granite (and other plutonic rocks) rule the roost. Older graveyards tend to use rock that was available locally, so they can be variable. [Around central Ohio](#), a lot of the old gravestones are made of readily available limestone. They're attractive—but are they the best choice if you want your marker to last as long as possible?

It turns out that making your gravestone (or any monument) from materials like marble is not a good idea for longevity. [Rocks can break down](#) two ways: physically and chemically. [Physical weathering](#) is the toll put on rocks by processes like frost/ice splitting, abrasion (from things hitting it), plant roots, decompression at the surface (remember, most rocks are formed deep under our feet at high pressure, so the surface is way out of their ideal conditions) and more. [Chemical weathering](#) are reactions that occur when the rock interacts with water, air, and acids. The two types of weathering work together to make the tallest mountain into nothing more than a pile of sand given enough time.

Now, rocks are made of minerals and certain minerals are more susceptible to breaking down at the Earth's surface than others. If we wanted to rank common gravestone minerals in terms of how quickly they weather, it would look something like this (from most to least weatherable):

- Calcite (Marble is almost 100% calcite)
- Olivine (Gabbro)
- Plagioclase feldspar (common in gabbro, granite and almost every igneous rock)
- Pyroxene (common in gabbro)
- Amphibole (common in diorite to granite)
- Biotite (common in granite)
- Orthoclase feldspar (common in granite)
- Muscovite (somewhat common in granite)
- Quartz (really common in granite, quartzite, sandstone)

So, what is the first thing you notice? Calcite is terrible when it comes to withstanding the ravages of chemical weathering. This is why the old gravestones

of the Midwest are barely legible because acid rain created by factory pollution has dissolved a lot of the calcite in the limestone and marble gravestones. Even more hardy minerals like plagioclase feldspar, found in everything from gabbro to granite, can be susceptible to breaking down into clays when they react with acidic water.

What rock types might withstand the ravages of chemical weathering? Granite is a good start, as is sandstone, because they are rich in more-stable minerals like quartz and orthoclase (a potassium-rich feldspar). However, physical weathering can hit them hard. Sandstone might be mostly quartz (depending on what kind you select), but sandstone is really just sand grains cemented together. Water can alter the cement or get into cracks between the grains, and when it freezes it can split! This is what happens in gravestones made of slate, where the prominent parting known as cleavage can allow water into the rock to split it apart. Who knew that water was such an enemy of rocks?

What are you going to do if you want your gravestone to last forever? Beyond putting it someplace out of reach of most weathering like the Atacama Desert or, I don't know, the Moon, you want to choose a rock that is made of a resistant mineral that is fused together and lacks cleavage (planes of weakness in the rock). That would get you into two places. First would be non-reactive metals, so yes, make your gravestone out of solid gold and it would last a long time (or as long as it takes for someone to steal it and melt it down). You could also be remembered as your refrigerator with a stainless steel marker as well, but they aren't called gravestones for nothing.

Second would be something made entirely of what we call "resistant" minerals that are resistant to chemical and physical weathering. There are a bunch of uncommon minerals like zircon, monazite and

sphene that can take a beating and persist. That's why when you look at sand under a microscope, you might see a lot of these minerals — and why the oldest stuff on Earth is zircon (the ~4.4 billion year old zircon of the Jack Hills, themselves "gravestones" of rocks that came before them). However, making a gravestone out of these minerals might mean a very, very small marker.



Quartzite: the ideal gravestone material. ERIK KLEMETTI

What more common minerals might work? Well, the two best might be garnet and quartz. Now, depending on your desire to stand out in a cemetery, trying to make an average size solid garnet or quartz marker would be hard. Typically these minerals don't form enormous blocks that can be carved into headstones. However, quartz is the primary constituent of quartzite (shocking, isn't it?). Quartzite (above) is a metamorphic rock made from heating up sandstone under pressure—it fuses all those quartz sand grains together into an interlocking network of quartz. All the weakness between the grains is removed and instead you get an almost solid block of quartz. Quartzite would be highly resistant to chemical weathering because it's quartz. And because it lacks a lot of space for water to sneak in, very resistant to physical weathering as well. Make your tombstone out of quartzite and you're looking at a rock for the ages. Or at least until the sun envelops the planet (so better get that interplanetary probe prepped to launch your earthly remains into space).

Pennsylvania Flowstone and Fall Colors

by Dave Lines

On the last Saturday in October 2016, no less than 21 rockhounds from the Mid-Atlantic area met at the National Limestone quarry at Mt. Pleasant Mills, PA. The clubs attending included the organizing club Montgomery County, plus Northern Virginia, Southern Maryland, Delaware and Northern New Jersey. Quarry owner Eric Stahl, during his safety brief and Christian testimony, mentioned that our group was the last of 20 straight Saturdays groups who have come to his private quarry this year. He said North Carolina was the most distant club that had visited.



At about 9:30 a.m., we divided into 2 groups and one went to the quarry at Middleburg about five miles away and the rest of us (Dave, Jim W. and Tim F.) remained at Mt. Pleasant Mills where we again divided – half going to the wavellite site on the back side of the ridge and the other half going to the main quarry pit.

Our three from So. MD. (Dave, Jim W. and Tim F.), plus some others, started in the main pit searching for calcite crystals, purple fluorite and strontianite. We found some of each mineral, but no outstanding pieces as the calcite was scarce and small while the fluorite was found very scattered all over the quarry

area in limestone rocks with veins of massive white calcite. In addition, Jim found a very interesting fossil of coral with clearly visible individual cells. Tim found numerous fossils including brachiopods while he spent most of the morning looking through his loupe. I found purple fluorite, some pink dolomite, small calcite crystals in clusters in vugs and cracks and a mud-covered slab of flowstone covered with round bumps resembling wavellite crystals. Other participants found similar minerals.

At 11:30, our group of three split --- Tim remained in the main pit, while Jim and I shifted to the wavellite area. But first we drove up to the upper bench on the north portion of the quarry to take some pictures of the beautiful fall colors in the valley below. Very pretty.



At the “wavellite holes” on the back side of the quarry property, a gent was in the first one placing rocks in his pick up truck – I did not see his specimens, but he seemed happy. At the second area, there were 4 vehicles parked and no one had found much as the owner had (with an excavator) previously moved at least 2 feet of over-burden onto the area where we dug last year because the area pretty much had been dug out. The back of the “pit” was the most likely place to find some good wavellite, but most of the group had not wanted to invest several hours of hard work digging down

through 3 feet of weathered limestone and sandstone to reach the layer containing the wavellite.



Tom from Delaware was the exception. He had been digging continuously for 2-1/2 hours when we arrived to watch him. At about 12:15 p.m., sweating profusely, yet still smiling and in good humor, Tom hit bedrock at the bottom of his 3' by 2' hole which was at least 3 feet deep. Undaunted, Tom pounded into the bedrock layer with heavy tools and broke through with great effort. In a couple of minutes he began bringing up rock with a one inch thick vein of light green wavellite --- mostly massive. He nearly filled an old plastic crate, before he finally found a chunk with a beautiful 3 inch vug of beautiful, untouched balls of 1/2 inch diameter wavellite crystals. His dedication, sweat equity and great faith that the layer was down there, had finally paid off. Well done --- but he sure earned it. Incidentally, I began examining rocks while I watched Tom --- turning each one 360 degrees to check all sides for wavellite. My efforts paid off by finding a pretty decent specimen with light green wavellite bumps. Jim said it was better than anything he had ever collected there. Sometimes it is better to be lucky, I guess. Also several good fossil specimens of brachiopods were found.

At about 12:35 p.m., Jim and I left --- Jim skillfully backed his truck out the entire length of the narrow one lane dirt road --- over 300 yards. We met with

the rest of the group from the main quarry pit and we all caravanned over to the Middleburg quarry about 5 miles to the west. Immediately upon arrival there, we all spread out looking for specimens. We had already debriefed the group that had visited the Middleburg quarry in the morning --- they had found small calcite crystals and lots of flowstone as well as purple fluorite. We did about the same.

FYI, flowstone is basically water dissolved calcite that had precipitated out in layers in the form of stalagmites millions of years ago in underground limestone caves. One such small cave had been blasted into during their normal quarry operations and the quarry owner had saved the flowstone for visiting rockhounds. Very large boulders of flowstone were piled in a row along the southern edge of the quarry. Some of the boulders were huge. With chisels, hammers and sledges, we broke off many pieces of this material to take home.

“Travertine” is the distinctly banded portions of this flowstone and --- although relatively soft --- is very suitable for making handsome polished spheres, bookends, carvings and even cabs. We found very strongly patterned travertine with nice curving lines of many shades of brownish-yellow.

Overall, we were very pleased with our finds and all of us departed around 3:30 p.m. for our long drives back to Maryland and other states.

Richmond Swap 2016

by Dave Lines

The 25th Annual Richmond Swap (and Sale) was held on Saturday November 12 in the Meeting Hall adjacent to the Ridge Baptist Church Hall in the western suburbs of Richmond. We had perfect Fall weather --- clear, sunny and a bit chilly. There were

swappers both outside and inside the small building. Outside swappers had much more room for display -- several swapped out of the bed of their pickup truck --- others brought and set up 5 or more tables. Inside swappers were limited to 2 tables, which was tight, but it was nice and warm.



There were about 35 people who rented tables or spaces, so there was plenty of variety. Lots of mineral specimens, a good deal of jewelry, some lapidary and a surprising array of fossils including local petrified wood, sharks teeth, whale vertebrae and coral. One of the more unusual swappers had both of his tables covered with beautiful, high quality agates --- a real treat for agate lovers.



One of the especially neat things about this event were the many long time members of the RGMS (Richmond Gem and Mineral Society) who brought in some of their older material from classic Virginia locations to swap. There were excellent specimens from all over Virginia. In fact, the quality of specimens from everywhere was generally high.

RGMS also had two tables of specimens from the Sandra Childress collection for sale. Sandra, who had been a very active member for many years, had donated her entire collection to the club after her recent death. Thanks to Andy Dietz and Rudy Bland for organizing, relabeling and pricing Sandra's splendid collection. Their help allowed the club to benefit from the proceeds, while giving everyone the opportunity to purchase some really nice specimens.

Good deals as well as true bargains were to be found everywhere. I was stunned to see what Dave Hennessey (NOVA club) snagged for just \$20 --- an egg sized clear topaz crystal from the Morefield Mine in Amelia, Virginia. He plans to have Dr. Lance Kearns from JMU (James Madison University) check it out to determine if it is correctly labelled. If so, wow --- that was the bargain of the century!

Throughout the day, attendance was generally very good, with the peak from about 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.. There were lots of kids and families as well as older adults. And there were many folks from other area clubs. I saw rock club members from Northern Virginia, Washington (DC), Montgomery County (MD) and from Lynchburg (VA).



The dealers have always been encouraged to give specimens to kids, which is great because it promotes our wonderful hobby to future generations. Some of these little guys (and girls) were requesting to swap throughout the day. Two brothers about 8 and 10 years old and their sister about 12 years old were

especially persistent. Their general approach was to get something from one dealer and then try to swap it for something better with another dealer. They were hilarious. The two young boys came back to me repeatedly, asking to swap various items. They both had their sights on some magnetic balls (called zingers) that when tossed into the air alternately repel and attract with a buzzing sound. I finally gave them other specimens to bribe them to leave me alone. It did not help --- they were both back in less than 5 minutes desiring to swap. Their older sister (she visited me at least 10 times) finally pestered me enough so that I relented and swapped her a pair of zingers for an agate specimen. About an hour later, she came back holding up three bags full of rocks, gleefully explaining that she had swapped for all of them without spending any money. Watch out --- someday, these little folks will become big time wheeler-dealers.



If you missed this event, you missed a great show. It is well organized and fun and productive. Try to make the effort to attend next year --- it is always held on the second Saturday in November. You will be glad you did.

Member's Finds

A large specimen of a fossil coral (top photo), likely a species of *Favosites*, a tabulate coral, collected by Jim White from Devonian deposits in the National Limestone Quarry, Mt Pleasant Mills, PA. Several specimens were present on boulders littering the bottom of the quarry, but Jim's specimen was the largest seen. Bottom photo is a close-up of the same specimen, enlarged 4X, showing pores and the horizontal partitions (tabulae) perpendicular to the long axis of the corallites, the tubes which housed the individual coral or polyp. Excellent find, Jim!



Collected any interesting specimens? Send a photo or two to the editor at bmorebugman@yahoo.com for inclusion in the next issue of Rock Talk.



The Southern Maryland Rock and Mineral Club

Meetings take place on the 4th Tuesday of each month at 7:00pm

Clearwater Nature Center, 11000 Thrift Road, Clinton, MD.

For More information, call:

(301) 297-4575

We're on the web:

SMRMC.org