

Southern Maryland Rock and Mineral Club



Rock Talk



April, 2018

Next Meeting:
April 24, 2018 @ 7:00 PM

Program:
Virginia Minerals
Dave Lines

Refreshments
Harry and Tina League
**Clearwater Nature Center, 11000 Thrift
Road, Clinton, MD.**

At the request by a few members I included a list of members presenting programs and those responsible for refreshments for the next few months:

Program Speaker s

May 22 - Sondra Fielder

June 26 - Orion and Kim Jurkowski

July 24 - Bill Stephens - tentative date

August 28 - Auction

Refreshments

May 22 - Tim Foard

June 26 - Orion and Kim Jurkowski

July 24 - Ralph Gamba

August 28 - Pot Luck

In this issue:	
March Minutes	2
Upcoming Shows and Events: 2018	3
Items Wanted/For Sale	3
Rocks, Minerals, and Fossils in the News	3
Chestnut Ridge Field Trip Report	5
Member's Finds	7

MARCH MINUTES

Submitted by Dave Lines

DATE: Meeting called to order on March 27, 2018 by President Sondra Fielder.

VISITORS/NEW MEMBERS:
no visitors; 3 new members.

MEMBERSHIP: Joe, Membership Chairman. FYI in 2018, so far we now have 46 members who have paid dues.

NEWSLETTER: Tim Foard, Editor – will introduce a “Classified” section in newsletter.

MEETING MINUTES: Dave, Secretary --- Minutes for February meeting approved.

TREASURER: Dave, Treasurer
Treasury in good shape.

FIELD TRIPS: Dave, Field Trips
Chairman

(1) March 17, 2018 ---Odessa, Delaware for petrified wood.

(2) March 24, 2018 --- Chestnut Ridge, Virginia: Trip initially cancelled because of snow, but enough melted for a re-scheduled trip on March 31st.

B. Upcoming trips_----

(1) April 21, 2018 --- field trip to Vulcan Manassas Quarry (for prehnite and zeolite minerals).

(2) May 5, 2018 --- Primitive Technology Weekend at Willow Grove Nature Center

(Baltimore County) , Cromwell Valley Park, 2002 Cromwell Rd., Parkville, MD 21234 --- Contact Kirk Dreier phone = (410) 887-2503; email = kdreier@baltimorecountymd.gov . Highlight events: 1:00 p.m. --- atlats – history and demonstrations; 2:00 p.m. --- Ground Stone Tools and flint knapping; 7:00 p.m. --- presentation re “Artifacts --- Why are they found where they are found?”

(3) Long range planning: Definite (put it on your calendar now): we will do a club trip to Mount Ida, Arkansas on Oct 12-13, 2018 for the 31st Championship Quartz Crystal Dig”. We will rent a large house near Mt. Ida for 1 week. Dig Registration starts June 1st -- \$75 per person.

(4) Possible Central Virginia gold prospectors’ trip in near future.

PROGRAMS: Carole, Programs Chairman --- Tonight’s program is “Our Recent Dramatically Changing View of Dinosaur” by Gary and Cindy Lohman. March snacks also by Gary and Cindy Lohman. April program will be presented by Dave Lines; April snacks by Harry and Tina. Door prizes were given.

WEBSITE: Bob, Webmaster – no issues; website has changed some; less detail.

OLD BUSINESS:

Club T-shirts; 41ordered--\$205 for Tina to purchase. Shirts to be available by Thursday and can be picked up at Harry and Tina’s place before next meeting

NEW BUSINESS: none

ADJOURNED: Business Meeting
adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Upcoming Shows and Events: 2018

May 12, 2018 - Fairless Hills, PA - The Earth Science Show & Sale, Presented by The Rock & Mineral Club of Lower Bucks County, PA. Christ United Methodist Church, 501 Wistar Road, Fairless Hills, PA; 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM

May 19-- 29th Annual Chesapeake Gem, Mineral & Fossil Show hosted by the Chesapeake Gem & Mineral Society. Parkville Armory, 3727 Putty Hill Ave, Parkville, MD 21236. Info: chesapeakegem@gmail.com

ITEMS WANTED/FOR SALE

For Sale – Virginia unakite slabs (approx ¼ inch thick) – \$0.50 per square inch (this is half off regular price). Call Dave (240) 427-7062.

Rocks, Minerals, and Fossils in the News

Blue Diamond Breaks Record at Sotheby's Auction

Ariel Shapiro

April 20, 2018 5:27 p.m. ET

<https://www.barrons.com/articles/blue-diamond-breaks-record-at-sothebys-auction-1524259654>



This blue diamond broke records at Sotheby's this week. *ILLUSTRATION: SOTHEBY'S*

A 3.47-carat fancy intense blue diamond ring sold for \$6,663,300 at a Sotheby's auction on Wednesday, setting a new sales record for a stone of its grade with a \$1.92-million-per-carat price. The sale nearly tripled Sotheby's estimated price range of \$2 million to \$2.5 million.

Blue diamonds are the rarest—and most expensive—variety of the stone. Additionally, the value of blue diamonds has been rising at a higher rate than that of their pink and yellow counterparts, according to data from the Tel Aviv-based Fancy Color Research Foundation. Fancy colored stones are graded

based on their color quality. Fancy intense, which this stone was designated, is the second highest color grade after fancy vivid, according to the Gemological Institute of America.

The stone itself has an unlikely backstory, according to Robin Wright, senior specialist with the Jewelry department at Sotheby's. The ring was acquired shortly after World War II by a Pan Am pilot who gave it to the woman he would marry, who was a Pan Am stewardess. Although the pilot died shortly after, his wife held on to the ring for many decades, wearing it at a time before fancy colored diamonds were extremely valuable. "There was no market for them," Wright says. "They would have been priced considerably less." The stone even bears a chip from when it was briefly dropped in a garbage disposal in the 1970s.

After the owner died in 1990, the ring passed on to her daughter, who got it appraised in 2006 by a local jeweler in the Midwest. He estimated that it was worth \$150,000. The family was "extremely pleased" with the auction result, Wright says. "It's a real American story."



Christie's sold this beautiful diamond this week. ILLUSTRATION: CHRISTIE'S

Another fancy intense blue diamond fetched nearly as high a price at a Christie's auction on Tuesday. The 3.09-carat ring sold for \$5,375,000, with a price of \$1.74 million per carat. That sale also far surpassed the auction house's estimate, which expected the price to fall in the range of \$2 million to \$3 million.

Why Michigan's gorgeous state gemstone is so rare

By Emily Bingham | ebingham@mlive.com |

http://www.mlive.com/expo/erry-2018/04/64a09f0d318324/isle_royale_greenstone.html



Photo via [keewenaw.silversmith](https://www.instagram.com/keewenaw.silversmith) on Instagram

Michigan's state gem is as arrestingly beautiful as the Lake Superior shores where it's found -- and you won't find it anywhere else.

Chlorastrolite, a variety of the mineral pumpellyite, is pretty much exclusively found along the Keweenaw Peninsula and throughout the Isle Royale archipelago -- Michigan's most remote national park. Its

occurrence in that region is what gives this mineral its arguably prettier common name: Isle Royale Greenstone.

The state legislature named chlorastrolite Michigan's official gemstone in 1973. The mineral's history dates back roughly 1.1 billion years ago, to the age of the Midcontinent Rift: A time when North America began to split apart at the seams, causing lava to spill out of the Earth's crust along a fissure that ran from Kansas up to present-day Lake Superior and back down to where Detroit now is. Those lava flows, which could be thousands of feet thick in some places, eventually cooled into a rock we call basalt. Within that basalt were small pockets of empty space left behind from gasses in the lava -- and that is where chlorastrolite eventually formed.

Of all the land along that original Midcontinent Rift, the Lake Superior region is the only place where those veritable floodplains of basalt became exposed, making it the only place to find chlorastrolite. Adding to its scarcity, chlorastrolite is also difficult to find because of its size. Large pieces are very rare; more often they are found as pea-sized nodules or needle-shaped crystals lodged within larger chunks of basalt or, when water has eroded the basalt around it, as pebbles or even granules.

Naturally, gem-quality chlorastrolite specimens are often used in jewelry. When polished, the mineral becomes a beguiling green-blue color laced with a web of turtle-shell style markings vaguely reminiscent of Petoskey stones. The mineral's unique

patterning inspired its name, which means "green star stone."

One important point for rock hounds to remember: Because Isle Royale is a national park, it is illegal to collect rocks, minerals and other geological specimens there, so the Keweenaw Peninsula is your best bet for hunting down this Michigan treasure.

Chestnut Ridge Field Trip Report by Rebecca Henry

On Saturday, March 31, 2018, 14 members from the Southern Maryland Rock and Mineral Club (SMRMC) and Delaware Mineralogical Society (DMS), 10 and 4 respectively, met up in Staunton, VA, to go on a crystal collecting trip at Chestnut Ridge. We started out at 0800 from Burger King in nearby Staunton, VA, on the relatively brisk spring morning to begin our hour long caravan through the countryside to a farm at the base of Chestnut Ridge, where we had been given permission to park and cross the property into the collecting area. After arriving at the farm around 0900, Dave Lines gave us a safety briefing and outlined the plan for the day. We had been advised that the trip would be somewhat strenuous and this advice was indeed accurate. We took a group photo at the farm to commemorate the event, and began the steep and steady climb through the woods. If you could imagine climbing on a Stairmaster or Jacob's Ladder machine that does not stop, covered in leaves whilst carrying your collecting equipment, snacks and water, and beginnings of your specimen collection for the day, you have a good idea of the experience of hiking up this ridge.

Fallen leaves and branches were abundant, and not long into the hike we began to see signs of beautiful shiny quartz crystals coating and filling crevices in rocks. We knew we were heading in the right direction! The first collecting spot was about a 30 minute climb up the lower part of the ridge (about 1/4 mile). After the group arrived at the “lower” collecting area, which was the planned stop for the day, we spread out and began searching through the leaves and patches near downed trees for crystals and crystal covered boulders. It was quite soothing to hear the gentle, yet chilly breeze in the woods and the occasional sound of rock hammers trimming specimens. We found clear and smoky single quartz crystals, most about 1/4”- 1” in length, as well as the occasional spray. There were even a few double terminated crystals, similar to “Herkimer Diamonds”. Many clusters of crystals are found on boulders or smaller rocks formed of sandstone, some heavily iron stained, and some are covered in a black iron-oxide crust. It’s my understanding that some of the inclusions in the crystals may be sphalerite. Most of the larger rocks covered in crystals remain in their original location because there was no easy way to navigate them off the mountain. Around noon, Dave advised the group he was going to blaze the trail up to the top of the ridge and spend some time collecting up there. Four members made the hike to the top, 2 from SMRMC (Dave and Wendy) and 2 from DMS (Russ and Rebecca (me!)). I must say, if this trip is held again in the future, I highly recommend making the trek to the top. The hike to the top is about 3/4 mile from the lower collecting location, and takes about 45 minutes to an

hour from the lower site. Dave marked the path with flagging tape which we took down on our way back down the mountain. In addition to the amazing view out across the Blue Ridge Mountains thanks to the lack of foliage on the trees, there are even more crystal covered rocks and as many float crystals as you care to collect. Many loose crystals were found simply by looking under leaves. We did dig a few small holes, sifted some dirt, and found even more loose crystals and some nice crystal sprays. We were careful to fill in our holes and brush the leaves back to as close to their original position as possible in order to leave no trace. Around 1600 we decided to head back down the ridge towards the farm. Dave and Wendy stayed up top a little after us to gather a few more specimens. The trek down the mountain takes almost as long as the trek up because you are tired and now carrying the weight of your new found treasures. When we reached the parking area at the farm, we compared specimens and shared a few tales of other rock-hounding adventures. I think I can speak for all 14 members on the trip that it was a memorable and fun day finding crystals and admiring the beauty of Mother Nature deep in the woods of VA. I can barely wait to go back down to Chestnut Ridge for another day of collecting!

Member's Finds

An example of a quartz cluster collected from an earlier trip to Chestnut Ridge, Virginia. Photo by Wendy Nikolich.



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 OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

Sondra Fielder

Sondra611@verizon.net

Program Vice President

Joe Davis

J1964d@netzero.net

Membership Vice President

Carole Rauchison

caroleal@verizon.net

Secretary

David Lines

Dave.lines@earthlink.net

Field Trip Chairman

David Lines

Dave.lines@earthlink.net

Treasurer

David Lines

Dave.lines@earthlink.net

Editor

Timothy Foard

bmorebugman@yahoo.com

Webmaster

Bob Davison

Bob.Davison2@yahoo.com