

Southern Maryland Rock and Mineral Club



Rock Talk



June, 2019

**Next Meeting:
June 25, 2019@7:00 PM**

Program
"Beer Flat Social:
Favorite Rock/Mineral/Fossil Show
and Tell

Refreshments
Bill Curtin

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



Bob Simon of Dino Safari's gave an outstanding talk to a packed room. The audience loved it. He explained how he decided to look in Wyoming in the Morrison Formation and how he located a place to dig and how he found 4 complete dinosaurs -- how he prepared them and where each one eventually went. The stegosaurus, which is the most complete specimen ever found, is in London in the British Museum of Natural History, the Camasaurus (95% complete) is in Japan in a new museum, and the other 2 --- both smaller -- are in storage. Fascinating stories went with each one. Bob also gave away several actual dinosaur bones to audience members --- which included 8 people (including 2 very enthusiastic kids) who heard about it through the Nature Center FaceBook page. Photo by Rick Simcsak.

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MAY MINUTES

Submitted by Cheryl Reese

DATE: Meeting was called to order at 7:03 PM by Sondra

VISITORS/NEW MEMBERS:

There were several visitors present due to the nature center advertising the program being presented

MEMBERSHIP: There are 60 up to date paid memberships with only 3 ready to expire.

NEWSLETTER: No report.

TREASURER: see under old business

FIELD TRIPS:

The members that went to the H K Penn Quarry found some very good jewelry grade serpentine.

Upcoming trips:

June 1, 2019 Vulcan Manassas quarry

June 8, 2019 Vulcan Quarry in Garrisonville Va

June 29, 2019 Joint trip with the Montgomery club to National

Limestone, This may be the last chance to go to this

Location

July 20,2019 Possible trip to Contrary creek in Virginia for garnets

Contact Dave if you are interested in going on any of these trips.

PROGRAMS: June program is a “beer flat social”. Fill one beer flat with your favorite rocks, fossils or minerals and prepare a short talk about why they are your favorites.

July program— Sondra will talk about her recent trip to Wildacres

Refreshments are needed for both June and July

WEBMASTER: No report

OLD BUSINESS: Sarah is still designing a logo and card layout for business cards to be handed out to promote the club.

NEW BUSINESS: There are 3 large and 1 small club T-shirts still available for purchase. See Tina is you are interested (however Tina now lives in Pennsylvania)

Ralph suggested we send money to the scholarship fund for AFMLS in memoriam of Carolyn Weinberger who recently passed away. She contributed in many ways and for many years to EFMLS & AFMLS. A motion was made and seconded to send \$60.00.

The fall 2019 schedule for Wildacres retreat can be found in the EFMLS newsletter. Bob Jones, a frequent contributor to Rock and Gem, may be the speaker for the week. He will be 93 years young.

ADJOURNED: Meeting adjourned at 7:25 followed by door prizes, refreshments and a wonderful program by Bob Simon on “A Real Life and Successful Dinosaur Hunter”

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.

For Sale – SMRMC Only 4 remaining t-shirts for sale: size small (1) at \$9.00; and large (3), also at \$9.00 each Contact Tina @ htleague@comcast.net

Letter from Dr. Lance Kearns (JMU):

Hello Mineral Enthusiasts;

I am writing to let your mineral club members know that the James Madison University Mineral Museum (the one located in Memorial Hall) will be closed permanently beginning July 1, 2019. We are presently in the process of constructing a new and bigger Mineral Museum which will be located in the Festival Center on the JMU campus. We expect this new facility will open in the Spring of 2020. Your club will receive notification when the new museum is to open, and an invitation to join us for the Grand Opening.

For now, I am asking you to spread the word (by mouth and newsletter) that the JMU Mineral Museum will be closed permanently beginning July 1, 2019.

Best wishes,

Dr. Lance E. Kearns
Professor Emeritus
Mineral Curator

UPCOMING SHOWS AND EVENTS 2019

July 21-22, 2019 - Poughkeepsie, NY - Show & Sale. Mid-Hudson Valley Gem & Mineral Society, Inc.; Gold's Gym & Family Sports Center, 258 Titusville Rd

Pink, Brassy, Coppery and Sparkly White in Garrisonville

by Dave Lines with photos by Tim Smith and Sam Linton

It was 7:30 am, the gates were still locked and there was no sign of anyone. The eight souls (Sarah, Rich, Sondra, Ralph G., Tim F., Tim S., Lorna S. and Dave) from Southern Maryland Rock and Mineral Club along with about six from the Montgomery County club were waiting patiently outside the front gate of Vulcan's Stafford Virginia quarry. Our host and Trip Leader Sam was busy on his cell phone trying to reach his Vulcan point of contact. Oh well --- it was a gorgeous morning – sunny and cool. Everyone took it in stride and hoped for the best. Meanwhile, we passed the time looking at a flat of specimens I had brought from the trip the previous week to Vulcan Manassas. I also had another flat of “samples” from this quarry from past trips here --- small calcite, massive pyrite and laumontite crystals – to show others approximately what to look for.

Additionally, we were parked next to an area covered with 3 to 4 inch rock that was spread evenly across a shallow drainage area adjacent to the entry road --- so we did what any good rock hounds would do to pass the time and began searching it for possible keepers. We found both chalcopyrite and calcite.

By 8:00 am or so, Sam finally was able to reach the quarry rep who thought the trip had been scheduled for the following Saturday. The quarry rep said he would head that way asap. In less than 10 minutes, a quarry worker (Dave) who lived nearby showed up and let us in. We followed him to the area in front of the office. While we waited for the quarry sup, several of our group utilized the restroom --- especially important since there were no such "facilities" down in the quarry. A comment of note -- Vulcan prides itself with keeping their quarries neat and plant entrances attractive. The ¼ mile long area leading from Garrisonville Road to the office was neatly mowed and landscaped with flowers, trees, a rock bordered stream and a beautiful pond with a fountain spraying water into the air. A strong first good impression that showed their pride and professionalism.

Aaron, the quarry supervisor, arrived in a few more minutes and, for the safety brief, he passed out a detailed check lists for us to initial each item he went over and then sign regarding safety rules as well as the current status of activity in the quarry. We were going to be restricted to level 5 (the bottom) of the quarry due to men and machinery operating on level 3 and 4. They had several very large pieces of equipment moving, loading and breaking rock in two different

locations. There was a new shot, but we were instructed to stay off it as well as all berms. While it was ok to look along the edges, we were reminded to stay away from all highwalls. Basically we were allowed to collect from the rows and piles of rocks on the quarry floor. And, best of all, he said they had found some large pieces of "rose quartz" which they would move out on the floor for us to collect. That created some high anticipation. And finally, we would be allowed to stay until 1:30 pm due to our late start. Wow!

At 8:30, we all caravanned down toward the pit and stopped just above level 4 and waited for while they moved the "rose quartz" out for us. Awesome. In a few minutes we all followed the quarry rep Dave onto the floor of level 5 and parked. It was not obvious as to where they had placed the "rose quartz", so we spread out and began looking through the maybe 8 short rows of rock. There was a LOT of material laced with very showy pyrite and chalcopyrite crystals scattered throughout the rows plus we found the "rose quartz". It turned out to be pink dolomite which was both solid and pretty. Although it has a grainy texture, it will probably take a nice polish.

Several people found small crystals of light pink stilbite. Sam found a beautiful specimen of pink stilbite crystals on a piece of matrix several inches square.



I saw some nice fresh (as well as weathered) laumontite. Sam also found a good deal of sparkly calcite crystals and a huge boulder with some larger calcite crystals up to one inch across (and he actually persuaded the quarry rep to bring a giant loader to move the boulder to a safer position for him to extract). On a micro level, Ralph G. found several nice specimens (see Member's Finds).



Most of us spent a good deal of time collecting the attractive pyrite and chalcopyrite crystals embedded in white quartz/calcite stringers in various boulders. The crystals were cubic indicating pyrite and they were brass colored when freshly exposed. But the same crystals which were weathered had turned to a beautiful copper color. Very pretty. Also, when viewed with a

loop, there was much iridescence (red, green, purple, blue) which indicated that the pyrite was actually chalcopyrite. This material was very showy and it was really fun to find and collect all these great specimens. We as a group stayed busy collecting quite happily the rest of the morning. Some left at noon and a few remained longer. All in all, it was a great trip. Thank you Stafford Quarry! As Sam put it, "We had a blast!"

Big Rocks; Tiny Minerals: Trip Report for Sanders Quarry, Warrenton, VA

Article and Photos by Timothy Foard

On Saturday, May 18th five members from the Montgomery County Club and two (myself and Sarah) from the Southern Maryland arrived at 7:30 at the parking lot of Sanders Quarry in anticipation of the treasures to be discovered. There probably would had been a larger turnout for this trip but the word went out that nearly all of the minerals present at this quarry would occur as micros only. That resulted in a small turnout. This was my first visit to this particular site and as long as microscopes are not banned, I will maintain an interest in microminerals.

We were waiting for a couple of more rockhounds to arrive, who signed up for the trip, but the time arrived to have the safety briefing and still no signs of them. After signing the liability waivers we were escorted down into the quarry. The first thing I noticed when descending into the quarry was the way the vertical fracturing of the host rock. I have not seen this fracturing in the other quarries in the area I visited.



This is a fairly large quarry. There were plenty of places to explore. Clusters of large boulders were present at the bottom. The base rock is basalt, as in most of these northern Virginia quarries, but here it has a finer grain texture and is permeated with white streaks and patches of mostly calcite. This makes it easy to break with a sledge hammer. Occasionally, the patches are large enough to create a tiny cavity (as in a couple of millimeters) to allow micro crystal growth, a part of which can be seen on the surface of the boulder. Equally as many of these are deeply buried within the basalt with no surface evidence of its presence, so hitting what appears to be a homogenous slab sometimes prove rewarding. The two additional rock hounds did finally arrive about a half-hour after we started collecting. After about two hours of searching and breaking rocks I uncovered a slab several inches across covered with several minerals including prehnite, possibly pumpellyite, and calcite. The crystals were thumbnail size. Several small pieces bore quartz and I managed to find one cluster of babingtonite. I

didn't want to risk damaging the tiny crystals by further trimming with the hammer, so I made several trips hauling big rocks with tiny crystals to the car to trim down further when I get home. Some of the other rockhounds found much of the same, as well as some apophyllite, and the time arrived when we have to leave the quarry. After being escorted out, we thank the quarry representatives for their time and allowing us to collect at Sanders Quarry.



Vulcan Quarry Manassas, Virginia June 1, 2019

Article and Photos by Dave Lines



We all met in the office parking lot at 7:30 am. Since we (Southern Maryland Rock and Mineral Club) had set up the trip and invited other local clubs, we were joined by members from the Montgomery County Club, the Washington, D.C. Club and the Northern Virginia Club — 28 people total. Our club members included Orion, Aby, Arion, Tim S., Loma S., Francesca, Teresa, Sondra and Dave. The quarry rep was Mr. K. T. Odum, a mining engineer who volunteered his time to host rockhound field trips like ours — many times over many years. “KT” welcomed us and gave us a safety brief and pointed out where we could and could not go. He said there had been a recent shot and he would lead us there in a caravan of vehicles and that then we would be free to go in the rest of the quarry after that. There was a drill in place (not operating) which had been preparing holes for the next shot — and we were to stay clear of that area. We were also advised to stay away from the highwalls and to never go over the berms.

At the end of the safety brief, we (Southern Maryland Club) presented a handsome “Thank You” plaque to the quarry in appreciation for letting us come and collect mineral specimens. Everyone applauded and KT seemed very pleased and promised to display it in their office.



By 8:00 am we were all in the quarry near the recent shot searching for minerals. The material was mostly devoid of anything but gray rock that they crush for road gravel, concrete and asphalt. There were a few specimens of calcite found — thin veins, some with small crystals. After about 30 minutes, I gathered up Teresa who was riding with me and we drove to other parts of the quarry hoping to find a more productive area. We checked out some rock piles along the way and Teresa saved a few pieces that contained green prehnite. We continued driving along slowly looking at the berms for “something different” that might indicate collectible minerals, but no luck, so I found KT and asked if we could drive down to the 40 foot level. He said yes and mentioned that there were already 3 others down there.



We drove down about a quarter mile --- it is a HUGE quarry --- until we reached the sign indicating the 40 foot level where we parked close to the low piles of gravel blocking vehicle access. I grabbed some tools, my backpack and a heavy sledge and went over to a location that in the past contained small but attractive light yellow stilbite crystals in vugs in the quarry floor. We found the area very quickly and could see where we had collected them on trips in years past. This location requires hard rock mining of the rock into the quarry floor to reach the crystals. It is difficult hammer and chisel work, but with time and patience, it is possible to find some very nice specimens. Today was no different. I spent the next hour clearing rock by hammering a pointed chisel into the rock with a 3 pound hammer. When the 3 pounder would not break it, I switched to the 40 pounder and usually after a few well-placed whacks, the rock would give way. Eventually I dug down about 6 to 8 inches until I reached the next layer of small vugs which contained the stilbite. Then I began to remove the rock in a horizontal direction hoping to uncover a vug. Within 30 minutes I uncovered a small pocket which showed crystals of stilbite poking through fine gray mud. So I called Orion, Sondra and Tim S. on their cell phones and left messages for them to come join us on the 40 foot level. Since Teresa is a new rockhound, all along I showed her what I was doing and how to proceed. By the time the others started arriving, I had recovered the first small pocket and had uncovered 2 more. Each pocket was different. The first had stilbite crystals only. The second had stilbite, tiny red chabazite cubes and druzy calcite. The third pocket had 2 parts --- one had mostly calcite crystals with a few stilbite crystals interspersed, and the second part was all calcite with 1/4 inch "squarish" shaped crystals which were fairly clear. The druzy calcite was actually not visible until later when I rinsed the specimens off with plain water later and gently brushed them with a soft tooth brush. I also saved as

much of the contents of the pocket in small plastic bags so I could sort through the gray grit and crystal bits later since there seemed to be a lots of stilbite and chabazite laying loose in the bottoms of the pockets. In the end, I gave this potential "micro material" to other rockhounds who enjoy collecting micros.

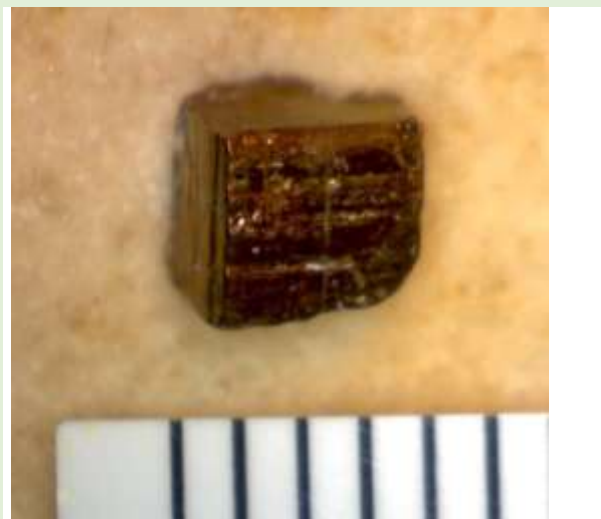
The word seemed to spread that we were finding stilbite and folks from the other clubs joined us, although none of them seemed inclined to tackle the hard rock of the quarry floor. Nevertheless, they picked up right many single stilbite crystals laying loose among the rubble around this area. One father and his young daughter from the Northern Virginia club had previously collected in this spot and returned to look for more specimens. They also found a good many single stilbites.

We continued to remove rock and look for pockets until about 11:15 am when we decided to start packing up to leave. We all cleared out of the quarry by 11:40 or so and reconvened up in the office parking lot where everyone showed each other what they had found. Dave Hennessey of Northern Virginia had found right much prehnite scattered among the rock piles near the picnic area closer to the top of the quarry and he laid out a whole flat of prehnite for others to take. Everyone appreciated his generosity and took home some colorful and sparkly specimens. Thank you Dave.

Most of us waited until KT returned from his final security check of the quarry and thanked him again for allowing this field trip to take place. Vulcan Quarry in Manassas is a great location because it is close to most of the local clubs and because we always seem to find something worthwhile.

Member's Finds

SMRMC member Ralph G photographed these microminerals: stilbite (top) and pyrite (bottom) he collected from The Vulcan Stafford Quarry in Garrisonville, VA.



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.

SMRMC OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

Sondra Fielder

Sondra611@verizon.net

Program Vice President

Carole Rauchaison

caroleal@verizon.net

Membership Vice President

Joe Davis

J1964d@netzero.net

Secretary

Cheryl Reese

cheryl_59@comcast.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

Subj: Official Southern Maryland Rock and Mineral Club (*) Field Trip to National Limestone Middleburg and Mt. Pleasant Mills Quarries on Saturday June 29, 2019 from 9:00 a.m. to 1 p.m. (*This trip is Hosted by Montgomery County Club and may include other local EFMLS clubs.)

Meeting Time --- **Meet at the Quarry Office parking lot** at Middleburg Quarry, 3499 Quarry Rd., Middleburg, PA 17842 **at 8:45 a.m. (no later!!)** for listening to owner's Christian testimony (his personal requirement as the cost of admission), a Safety Briefing and signing waiver forms. After the 1st 2 hours, we plan to drive 8 miles --- as a group --- to Mt. Pleasant Mills Quarry, 217 Quarry Rd., Mt. Pleasant Mills, PA 17853. The owner --- Mr. Eric Stahl --- is now using 2 canes to walk due to an inoperable bad hip and he said he does not think his son will continue coming in on Saturdays to allow rock collectors in --- so-o **this may our last time** to visit here.

Trip Leader --- Dave Lines for SMRMC and Dave Fryauff for Montgomery County club

Location --- Our first 2 hours will be at Middleburg Quarry, 3499 Quarry Rd., Middleburg, PA 17842 (Approx. 200 miles and a 3-1/2 hour drive from La Plata according to MapQuest) and our second 2 hours will be at National Limestone Quarry, 217 Quarry Rd., Mt. Pleasant Mills, PA 17853.

Directions --- (recommend follow directions from MapQuest)

Special Requirements --- 1st, The road to the small wavellite area is on the back side of a ridge behind the Mt. Pleasant Mills Quarry and is one way and narrow --- we may have to take turns digging. 2nd, The quarry owner collects rocks and would appreciate the gift of any labeled specimens. 3rd, kids (10 years old minimum and be a club member) are allowed, but must be closely supervised on a ratio of 1 parent per 1 kid (max) and remain next to their parent at all times.

Safety --- **steel-toed boots, hardhat, safety glasses, long pants, heavy gloves and bright colored safety vest --- to be worn by everyone at all times.** Stay clear of all high walls.

Note to Experienced members --- please keep a watch on all of us and say something to those who may not recognize danger before they get into trouble.

What to Collect --- **Middleburg Quarry** --- Lots of recent quarry activity in this quarry, so this is our best bet for finding calcite xls. Calcite and Fluorite are the most abundant. Also (fluorescent) flowstone (travertine stalagmites from ancient limestone caverns) and several minerals. Sphalerite and galena (other sulfides) have also been found there as micros. **Mt. Pleasant Mills Quarry** --- Strontianite, Calcite, Dolomite, sometimes Fluorite --- and Wavellite. Strontianite is best found by breaking open likely looking rocks. A LARGE sledge hammer is helpful. Strontianite is DELICATE. Bring toilet paper/old newspaper to wrap your specimens in. On the top of the ridge, above/behind the quarry, we can dig for Wavellite. A recent report from a Delaware Brachiopods and moonsnails seem to be most common. On occasion some rarer minerals have been found here as micros --- Variscite and Turquoise.

Equipment/ clothing --- Full safety gear for everyone at all times --- steel toed shoes/boots, safety glasses, hardhat, work gloves, long pants. Recommended tools --- rock hammer, 3 - 4 pound crack hammer, chisels, **stiff scrub brush**, garden scratcher, 5 gal. bucket, old newspaper for wrapping specimens, small pry bar. Optional -- large sledge hammer, long pry bar, extra buckets, loupe/magnifying glass. Your best tools are sharp eyes. Clothing depends on the weather --- long sleeves are recommended. Rain poncho nice to have. A bow saw is nice to have if the road to the wavellite site has a fallen tree across it. Ticks and bugs -- it will be summer and you should apply bug spray as a preventative -- I use 100% Deet.

Quarry Description / Hints --- Both quarries are limestone quarries mined for material to be crushed for road construction and riprap. **Hint** --- Carefully search and *investigate anything that is different.*

Vehicles --- We will be allowed to drive our vehicles into both quarries.

Misc. --- Drinking water, sunscreen, bug spray, lunch/snacks, "Thank" the quarry owner. Bring a camera and PLEASE take some pictures for our Newsletter.

Sign-up List --- Best if you sign up early as it will help my planning. Sign up at the May club meeting or by email to dave.lines@earthlink.net **before June 14th.**

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:

