

25th Annual World Championship Quartz Crystal Dig

By Dave Lines



Harry, Tina and Dave from the Southern Maryland Rock and Mineral Club plus Bill Gilbert (former Southern Maryland and Richmond club member) and Jeff Taylor, (Richmond Gem and Mineral Society member) all rendezvoused in Mt Ida for the World Championship Dig from October 13-15, 2011. They joined about 50 other rock hounds from as far away as Alberta, Canada for the 25th Annual contest. We were all vying for \$1,500 total prize money as well as beautiful trophies. The top 5 winners in each category (best single crystal and best cluster of crystals) received cash and the top 3 in each category also received handsome trophy plaques.

After visiting the Bear Mountain Mine the previous day and after comparing notes with other diggers, we chose to dig at Bear Mountain Mine about 8 miles south of Mt Ida. The rules this year emphasized safety above all with no digging in any walls.

At Bear Mountain, because there is basically only one long deep trench with 50 foot high walls, we were limited as to where we could dig. The owners solved this problem by pre-digging about 20 dump truck loads of material right from the bottom of the mine. The piles contained great singles and super clusters of beautiful quartz crystals. It was just a matter of carefully and thoroughly digging through the piles.

The results of the contest proved that Bear Mountain was the best choice because virtually

all of the top winners came from Bear Mountain. The overall winning cluster score for 3 days of Bear Mountain quartz clusters by one person was 224 points --- or \$224 of retail value --- an amount determined by a panel of three expert judges. The winning singles from Bear Mountain were valued at \$146 --- those are really nice singles to average nearly \$50 each.

The top winner in the “single crystal” category was Dale Almond. And the winner of the “cluster” category was David Walker. Interestingly, both of these gents have participated in the Dig just about every year for the past 25 years and each has placed in the top 3 winners many times. I have dug along side them for several years and they are really very good.



Now for the ***GREAT NEWS*** --- our very own Harry and Tina each placed in the Top 10 overall. That is super and they deserve our congratulations. Think about it ---Harry and Tina are each officially ranked as one of the 10 Best Quartz Crystal Diggers in the WORLD!!!! --- (at least in 2011). Now that’s something to tell the grandchildren about!!