

# Southern Maryland Rock and Mineral Club



## Rock Talk



June, 2014

### Message from the President

Rich Simcsak

The start of summer is finally here! Time to spend the needed time outside and find those specimens we all have dreamt about. Once again, I spent some time in Taiwan for business and with each visit I yearn to learn more about Jade and Pearls. The variations of both materials are unlimited and are copied in a way that rivals the original material. Before the next trip in August, I have a goal to further learn more Jade and Pearls. I encourage each person reading this do the same for a rock, mineral, process, etc dealing with the hobby to expand one's knowledge to understand their "addition" even further. Then sharing this new found knowledge with others is the ultimate enjoyment for all. In Taiwan I saw some "Herkimer Diamonds" in the market and the gentleman selling them, did not know what he had and with my limited knowledge, explained what he had and where they had a chance of being from. The translation, I hope went well.

The next show is in the works. We are looking at the same timeframe as last year - second weekend in March for our 25th Silver Anniversary Event. Each meeting leading up to the show, I would like discussion on how we can better the past show to the point of being the talk of the East Coast! Please come prepared to discuss all ideas!

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**Meetings take place on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of each month at 7:00pm**

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

**For More information, call:**

**(301) 297-4575**

## May Minutes

Submitted by Linda Holden

DATE: May 27, 14

Meeting was called to order at 7:05 by President Richard Simsack.

There were no visitors.

**APRIL MINUTES:** None available. Jim emailed them to Michael today. Will approve or correct April minutes at June meeting.

**TREASURE:** No change

**MEMBERSHIP:** No change

**FIELD TRIPS:** There is a trip planned to U.S. Silica in Montpelier VA on Saturday June 7th. No one received an email about the trip. Jim will resend the info. There is no start time yet. Only a few people showed interest so Jim has invited the Montgomery Club and may invite the Northern VA Club.

No other trips are planned. We may need to repeat places we haven't been to in a while. There is a rumor that Vulcan may not be allowing collecting anymore. It was suggested that Jim call to check on that.

**PROGRAMS:** Tonight Jim Britton will present a program on mineral collecting in several local areas. (He brought samples of prehnite from Centerville, VA and selenite from Bull Run Quarry in Chancellor's Point in St. Mary's Co. He also has fossils from various areas, as well as many samples to give away to club members. Numbers were given to all present, and we were able to choose several samples after the presentation.) Cheryl and Monte Reese provided refreshments.

Next month Penny Masuoka will present the program, "How and Why to Record the Location

of Your Collection Sites Using GPS and Other Methods". Tim Foard will provide refreshments. We still have 4 months with no speakers. We need volunteers for July, September, October and November. Share things you have found, learned or discovered. Our auction is in August.

**NEWSLETTER:** We have no newsletter for this month again. We need someone who is willing to do the newsletter and can get it out in a timely manner. We only had 2 this year, January and February. (Secretary note:I checked)

**WEBMASTER:** No report. Bob may still be in the hospital. Polly will send a card.

**OLD BUSINESS:** 25th Annual Rock Show We have no contract yet. Michael is trying to get a reduced rate. We want the 2nd Saturday in March 2015. We need to get a contract so we can put it on the calendar and then we can meet the deadlines to publicize the show and begin to advertise. We can always cancel at a later date, if necessary. Rich will call Michael. There was no notice of our event this year in the National Publication or Eastern Federation Newsletter. We need to have better advertising for the next show. Rich had various newsletters from Buck Co. PA for us to look at. There was also an article about a fossilized soft shell turtle found at Solomon's Island.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Rich appealed to club members to help out our club by volunteering to be club secretary, publish the newsletter, or any way you can. Rich will not be here in August and November. We will also need a committee by October 1st for nominations of club officers for next year.

**ADJOURNED:** Meeting was adjourned at 7:45.

## EFMLS/AFMS NEWS by Timothy Foard



The EFMLS Newsletter for June/July has articles on eye safety, updates on the WildAcres workshop from September 1-7, the discovery of oxygen, regional VP elections, and school and youth outreach.

For more information, visit [www.amfed.org/efmls](http://www.amfed.org/efmls)



The May/June/July newsletter of the AFMS has an article on the 2009 Paleontological Resources Act and RS 2477 (Right of Way for highway construction across public lands) and what it means for collectors. Also in this issue is a tribute to Glenn M. Lee and his contributions to the rockhounding community.

For these and other information, visit [www.amfed.org](http://www.amfed.org)

### Upcoming Shows and Events

August 27-28: 50<sup>th</sup> Atlantic Coast Gem, Mineral & Jewelry Show hosted by the Gem Cutters Guild of Baltimore. Howard Co. Fairgrounds, 2210 Fairgrounds Road; West Friendship, MD 21794 (MD 32 just off I-70).

## SMRMC OFFICERS

### PRESIDENT

**Rich Simcsack**

### Membership Chairman

**Polly Zimmerman**

### Programs Chairman

**Penny Masuoka**

### Secretary

**Christine Proctor**

### Field Trip Chairman

**Jim White**

### Treasurer

**Cheryl Reese**

### Editor

**Timothy Foard**

### Webmaster

**Bob Davidson**



### **Field Trip to U.S. Silica Mine in Montpelier, VA by Dave Lines**

On Saturday June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2014, two members of the Southern Maryland Rock and Mineral Club were joined by invitees from two other local clubs --- Richmond (VA) and Montgomery County (MD) -- with six and three members each --- on a morning field trip to the U.S. Silica mine near Montpelier, Virginia in Hanover County. The weather was beautiful --- clear and in the 70's.

Our host was Mr. Elmo Hall who has been the Mine Manager for several years. During his introductory safety brief and remarks, he mentioned that the aplite which they were mining was approximately 1,030,000,000 (one billion 30 million) years old. Incredible! Another fact mentioned was the mine originally began as a titanium mine. Interestingly, today, titanium dioxide (rutile) bring \$1,600 to \$1, 800 per ton while their current product --- basically aplite sand --- brings only \$40 to \$50 per ton.

Elmo led our caravan of vehicles first to the location where several clubs had found an isolated lens of massive rutile last Fall, however only a few small pieces of rutile were found. As a group, we spread out and searched the area for other minerals and located a stockpile of gray and silver flash moonstone (basically gray feldspar). A few

pieces of translucent moonstone were also found. One of the Montgomery County club members (Jonathan) also searched for materials that fluoresced under UV light --- so there was large black cloth bag moving slowly around the mine floor.

After an hour or so at this location, we all moved to the traditional area where we could find more gray and silver flash moonstone. We were not disappointed as the supply was plentiful and well washed off. We all found some excellent specimens as well as some bronzeite (enstatite) which polishes beautifully with unique internal brassy or coppery colored reflections. Inside one large chunk of material we found some very translucent moonstone which will also probably show a nice schiller when polished.

We then moved to the very bottom of the mine for our last hour where we again spread out and searched. I saw specimens of small, but very gemmy almandine garnets embedded in white aplite. Some folks spent most of their time collecting almandine garnets --- which ranged in size from marbles to lemons and which had weathered out of the material so completely that they could be picked up like pebbles. Some other folks collected similar garnets embedded in a black biotite mica matrix --- which made for very attractive specimens of yard rock.

Other collected specimens which I saw during the field trip included the iron titanium mineral "ilmenite" and nice sized chunks of blue quartz.

All in all the weather cooperated nicely, everyone found some specimens to take home and we all remained safe.

## Some Days Are Diamond...

By Ralph G. and Mary C.

On our trip home from Florida, we like to visit other areas. This year, we chose Louisiana. After touring Louisiana, we were not too far from the Crater of Diamonds State Park and Mt. Ida, Arkansas, two places we wanted to collect.

Friday, February 28 was a cold day with scattered drizzle when we made our way from Shreveport, Louisiana to Murfreesboro, Arkansas to the Crater of Diamonds. We arrived around noon, ate a quick lunch and paid our fee, \$8.00 per person. We watched a short film on how to mine for diamonds. We decided to do surface mining. We searched for about three hours but neither of us found any diamonds. We did find some nice agate and jasper, along with the lamprolite host rock.



Mary Looking for diamonds.

About a dozen other people also searched; no diamonds found. Alas, disappointed, we will enjoy our jasper and agate.

## ...Some Days Are Quartz

We left Murfreesboro on Saturday, March 1. After a stop in some town shops where we could see the local diamonds, we headed for Mt. Ida, about 40 miles away. We arrived in Mt. Ida and

searched for an open mine to collect quartz. A rock shop gave us some ideas. We chose the Sweet Surrender Mine. We arrived at 2 PM, paid \$20 each and Aaron, one of the owners, showed us where to search. Other collectors were there – a family from Louisiana and one from Canada. Aaron took us to a pile of freshly dug rocks. Aaron quickly found a quartz crystal which he gave to Mary. Ralph turned over a boulder, tapped on it and it sounded hollow, indicating space for quartz crystals to grow. Ralph worked the boulder, extracting quartz crystals. Meanwhile, Mary searched the pile for loose crystals and found quite a few.



Sweet Surrender Mine Pit

Another collector pointed out a large boulder, two feet by four feet, containing crystals. It had a crack on the top. As Ralph hammered, the crack began to widen and finally broke into three large pieces. Ralph recovered two of the pieces to take home and clean. Mary looked over the other piece and gathered nice crystals.



Mary with Aaron and another collector at the Sweet Surrender Mine

It was about 4 PM when we packed up to leave. I asked Aaron "What time do you close." He said 4:30 and took us to another location to look for quartz with chlorite inclusions. We searched and Aaron found another specimen for Mary. Mary found two and Ralph found three more. Mary found the shale attractive and took a couple of pieces. By 4:30, it was time to leave. Aaron recommended a motel to stay for the night. With only 2 ½ hours of digging, we had a lot of fun and got many nice crystals.

When asked about the annual crystal dig, Aaron said that no decision has been made about the 2014 dig. The Sweet Surrender mine was one of the two participating mines last year but they lost money in the dig.

### *Upcoming Field Trips*

*Combined field trip to the Enterprise Manganese mine in Lynchburg Va. on **Saturday, June 28, 2014** from 9AM-2PM.*

*Combined (with N. VA club) field trip to the Vulcan Manassas quarry on **Saturday July 12th** beginning at 7AM*

*If interested, contact Jim White at:  
whitejs1@verizon.net*

### **Under Construction Quartz** by Timothy Foard

During the week of June 16<sup>th</sup> one of my co-workers, who is also a rockhound, showed me a plastic bag containing small quartz crystals he collected the previous weekend from a construction site in the Pikesville area. This particular site was known to rockhounds from the Baltimore area clubs for some time and I was invited to come along. I was interested, but I was only able to stay for no more than an hour before leaving to pick up my son.



Five of us—myself, 2 Maryland Natural History Museum members and 2 rockhounds from Chesapeake Gem and Mineral Society-- arrived at the site on June 18<sup>th</sup>, after construction workers left for the day. Collectors were allowed after hours; in fact some boulders containing quartz crystals were placed near the entrance for rockhounds to extract specimens. I didn't have any tools except a diving knife I found in Florida months ago, so I spent the hour collecting surface finds. The crystals range in size from ¼ to nearly 1 inch or more in length and occurred in vugs in the host rock. In addition to quartz, some tiny to small pyrite crystals were present in the host rock. I was able to collect between 10 and 15 pounds of material strewn about the area. As much as I wanted to stay longer, I had to leave the area to points south. The site will no longer be available for collecting within a few weeks.

## Member's Finds

These fern fossils were collected from St. Claire, Pennsylvania by Cheryl and Monty Reese during a collecting trip with the Calvert Marine Museum Fossil Club.



### ROCKTALK

Clearwater Nature Center  
Maryland-National Capital Park &  
Planning Commission  
11000 Thrift Road  
Clinton, MD 20735  
301-297-4575

### Next Meeting:

**July 22, 2014**

**7:00 PM**

### Program

Geode Cracking by Christine Proctor

### Refreshments

Christine Proctor and Mary

### We're on the web:

**SMRMC.org**

Collected any interesting specimens recently?  
Send a photo or two to the editor at  
[bmorebugman@yahoo.com](mailto:bmorebugman@yahoo.com) for inclusion in  
the next issue of Rock Talk.