

Southern Maryland Rock and Mineral Club



Rock Talk



August, 2014

Message from the President

Rich Simcsak

By the time you read this newsletter, I should be in Taiwan working my daily job. This month's Auction and Pot Luck Dinner is not a meeting I wanted to miss with all of its different items up for auction (that I usually get out bid for) and the different array of snacks we all enjoy during this event. Please - Bid high! This funding is a way the club gets funds for making contributions to many worthy causes throughout the year. Please treat Polly as you treat me each month while she is running the meeting.

Last meeting we discussed the unavailability of a show date in March 2015 for the 25th Annual Show at the Showplace Arena. A date of 14 February was penciled in for us and the Nature Center was negotiating the date. At this time, we are still not confirmed for the Showplace Arena in February. Appears the backing and action from the Nature Center is minimal and non-willing to spend the funds for the Arena and prefers we try another venue that has a minimal cost, if any.

Also Penny, our Program Director Extraordinaire, has a work conflict that will cause her to be unable to attend meetings until November and after that will be unable to attend meeting for an indefinite time period. At this time, programs are scheduled for the remainder of the year, but we WILL need a new Program Director this Winter. Penny has done a tremendous job having educational programs and many group participation programs for us also. I personally want to thank Penny for all she did to help the SMRMC. We all can learn from her planning and work to keep all of us entertained each month.

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**Next Meeting:
August 26, 2014@6:00 PM**

Program

Auction and Pot Luck Dinner

Refreshments

Everyone—it's a Pot Luck after all!

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

JULY MINUTES

Submitted by Dave Lines

DATE: July 22, 2014; Meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm by president Richard Simsack.

VISITORS/NEW MEMBERS: --- Beth Hancock and her son Isaac. (*Plus past long time members Bob and Jan Simmons returning to club again.)

JULY MINUTES: Approved as written.

MEMBERSHIP: No Report.

NEWSLETTER: Out on time! Thanks to new Editor Tim Foard from everyone.

FIELD TRIPS: (Jim White) --- Recent trips to Vulcan Manassas, VA and Churchville, MD successful; Trip to Gettysburg this Sat (July 26th) – sign up by Thursday.

PROGRAMS: Christine Proctor did a program on "Geode Cracking." Snacks tonight provided by Jim White and Mary Burns --- thank you! August will be our annual auction. Rich will be out of country --- Polly Zimmerman will be acting President. Picnic/potluck will start at 6 p.m. --- bring a dish. Auction will follow --- lots of donated rocks from Clearwater Nature Center will be auctioned PLUS you can bring your own to sell (10% to Club). Bring lots of cash and/or your checkbook. Sept and Oct --- 2 part (40 minutes each) film about famous rodochrosite specimen mining at Sweet Home silver mine in Alma, Colorado by Brian Lees of Collectors Edge. They recovered world class xls including the "Alma King" – a brick sized rhombohedral crystal valued at \$1 million and later purchased and donated to Denver Museum of Natural History by Coors. November --- presentation by Ed Masouka. The December meeting will be on Thursday December 11, at 6:00 pm for a potluck and gift exchange.

ELECTION: September - October for nominations.

WEBMASTER: Bob Davidson ---- had to re-do website due to technical problems. Ok now.

OLD BUSINESS: Rock Show dates still NOT firm --- lost March 8th date and none left in March; Letter to Michael Patterson from Rich (?) presented (contents?). Discussion about possible Feb 14th date followed --- they want full price for one day; Bob D. said weather is big scary factor and

could cancel show; Gary L. said go for it because venue (Showplace Arena) is important and location is great; Dave L. said “location – location – location” is key to successful show and great time of year when no other shows causes lots of pent up demand. This will be our 25th Annual Show and we need to get a firm date so we can send out notices to vendors and announcements/advertising as soon as possible.

NEW BUSINESS: Region IV Vice President of Eastern Federation (EFMLS) nomination discussed --- Jean Charsky and Carl Miller are nominees --- we voted to support Jean Charsky (since Carl has had the job several times and job needs new blood).

ADJOURNED: Meeting adjourned at 7:44pm.

Sad News

From Carolyn Weinberger (BMS)

Jake Slagle forwarded the news that Joe Dague's wife Jeanne passed away. Some of you had purchased specimens from the Dagues over the years.

Joe's address, should you wish to send him a note is

Joseph Dague
1296 Falling Spring Rd
Chambersburg, PA 17201

Upcoming Field Trips

Combined (with a number of area clubs) field trip to the Willis Mountain, on Saturday, September 27, from 8:30AM to 1PM. The address is 30 Willis Mt. Plant Ln., Dillwyn, Virginia 23936. Because of changes effective this year, I felt it was important to copy the email sent by Jim White to members on August 6th outlining the changes:

“Safety Equipment- Hard hats (LESS than 5 years old, check the date stamped into the hard hat), Steel-toed boots, Safety glasses, gloves, and LONG pants. Chocks for your vehicle (EVERY time you park you MUST shut off the engine, put your vehicle in park, apply the parking brake and chock it. I'm told that home-made chocks or even a rock is sufficient, just be sure to USE them).

There are NO age restrictions on this trip, but all minors MUST be accompanied and SUPERVISED by an adult.

The quarry may be operating, this will limit the areas which we have to collect in and make awareness of your surroundings, and those of anyone under your supervision, that much more important.

One other significant change to note. There are several clubs attending this event, each club's field trip leader MUST act as Safety Observer for the members of their club. This means that you will have to stay together as a group, no wandering off to "do your own thing". I expect to be away so I need someone to volunteer for this, unless my plans change.

If you're interested let me know (whitejs1@verizon.net) and I will provide details and directions.”

Upcoming Shows and Events

August 23-24: 47th annual Rock and Mineral Show sponsored by the St. Lawrence Co. Rock and Mineral Club. Madrid Community Center, 1835 St. Hwy 345, Madrid, NY

September 27-28: 50th 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).

October 18-19: 41st Annual Jewelry, Gem, Mineral, and Fossil Show sponsored by the Kanawha Rock and Gem Club. So. Charleston Community Center, So. Charleston, WV

October 25-26: 45th Annual Rochester Gem, Mineral, Jewelry, and Fossil Show sponsored by the Rochester Lapidary Society. Main Street Armory, 900 E. Main St., Rochester, NY

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



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

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Green Green:

Field Trip to the Gettysburg Quarry Ralph G. and Mary C.

On 26 July, Mary C., Jim W., and Ralph G. of the Southern Maryland Rock and Mineral Club journeyed to Gettysburg PA to collect minerals at Gettysburg Quarry, Figure 1. Joining us were six members of the Montgomery County and Northern Virginia clubs, including Jonathan Harris who arranged the trip. The weather was cloudy and cool, making it a comfortable day to collect.



Figure 1. Gettysburg Quarry

After signing release forms, Bruce from the Quarry gave a short safety briefing. The quarry shot some new material which no one had yet collected. He did warn that there was no berm on the cliff near the shot, but he would mark it with yellow tape. If we crossed onto the other side of the tape, everyone would be told to leave.

Bruce escorted us to the collecting site, Figure 2, warning us to stay clear of the high walls, but we could collect in the berms of the road leading to the collecting site and the pile of rocks from the shot.



Figure 2. Gettysburg Quarry Collecting Area

The Gettysburg Quarry, also known as the Valley Quarry and once known as the Teeter quarry, is a diabase (trap rock) quarry. The rock is approximately 90 million years old. Mindat lists 43 different minerals and mineraloids in the quarry. The most common minerals are epidote and stilbite. The mineralization occurred in cracks and seams in the diabase, with occasional vugs containing epidote. This occurrence does not allow for large crystal formation and the crystals easily break when splitting the rock.

At about 7:30, Mary C. made the first big find of the day. She spotted a boulder with blue-green areas indicating copper minerals, most likely chrysocolla. She broke the boulder into pieces and shared them with other collectors. We all gathered pieces of epidote, Figure 3, ranging in color from bright green to olive green. Mary, Ralph, and Jonathan found dendrites. Ralph found small pieces of chrysocolla and epidote in vugs.

Around 10 AM, Jim, Figure 4, found a large boulder with intact stilbite crystals, Figure 5. After chipping what he could get, he let Ralph collect. Ralph obtained a few samples.



Figure 3. Epidote



Figure 4. Jim Searching for Stilbite



Figure 5. Stilbite

Ralph and Mary left and celebrated their successful collecting trip with ice cream at McDonalds.

Serving Time in South Florida Timothy Foard

From time to time I get the opportunity to work at clinics in the Ft. Lauderdale or West Palm Beach area to test new products formulated to kill or repel head lice. That typically means long hours of observations in the lab, not returning to the hotel until very late at night. This latest work trip—during the week of July 14th--took me to West Palm Beach. Conducting two separate studies and gathering material for a third meant little or no free time to look for minerals or fossils in the surrounding area, which I had done in past trips. The arrival day will have to do.

After arriving at the clinic and setting up for the next day's tests, I checked in at the hotel then headed off to John D. MacArthur Beach State Park, in Palm Beach County, and only about 3 miles from the hotel. This park is a beautiful, pristine place almost at the doorsteps of the oceanfront high-rises to the south. A boardwalk takes visitors through a subtropical shallow mangrove lagoon before ending at the beach. A shuttle is also available for those who prefer not to walk the expanse.



Figure 1. Boardwalk crossing lagoon at the John D. MacArthur Beach State Park

If I had visited the park earlier this year, swimming advisories would have been posted because of the presence of jellyfish, particularly Portuguese man-of-war, which invades the south Florida beaches during the winter and early spring. There were no jellyfish advisories during this time, but there were areas of the dune marked off to protect sea turtle nests.

I had only about 2 hours to explore the park before the park closes. The tide was low and I remained on the beach the entire time. I walked north along the beach, picking up a couple of shells, and examining almost every rock specimen I came across for fossils. Most of the rocks looked like what appeared to be sandstone with abundant shell material. Eventually I came across the source of the rock specimens. Exposed at low tide was a sandstone outcrop with sufficient erosion pocketing on the surface to function as tidal pools.



Figure 2. Rock outcropping exposed at low tide.

I saw a few marine invertebrates in these pools. I also saw rock specimens very different from and embedded within the brown sandy host rock.



Figure 3. Sea anemone, one of the denizens of the rocky tidal pools.

These rocks certainly had their origins elsewhere. In fact, some of them look metamorphic or even igneous in nature.



Figures 4 and 5. Rocks not native to area embedded in sedimentary rock.

Most of these rocks were too embedded to extract without hammer and chisel (which wouldn't be allowed in the park), but one had

eroded enough from the host rock that I was able to pry it out with much effort and with the help of a diving knife I found in the state months earlier and now a part of my pocket arsenal. I will make a serious attempt to identify this specimen. It was time to leave the park and look for a place for dinner.

I spent the rest of the time running tests at the clinic. On the second morning before heading to work, I scooped up some beach sand and placed in a plastic bag to examine under the microscope whenever I get the opportunity. The experiments took considerably longer than anticipated because of logistical problems which I will not elaborate. This resulted in working a 48-hour day, changing hotel and flight arrangements, and remaining an additional day in order to complete the work.

During the first all-nighter I examined some of the moist sand grains under low power to determine the composition. I was looking mostly for microfossils, if they were present. I found specimens of what I initially thought were fossilized parts of fish. These very small objects were calcareous in nature, mostly oval or round, with pits and grooves on the surface, but they did not appear to be from anything I recognized. I placed these in a small vial and set it aside along with the sand to identify at a later time.

The second all-nighter was spent in part drying the moist sand collected a couple of days earlier, picking out more of those odd round objects, and some internet search. It turned out that the calcareous objects were foraminifera, which are single-celled marine organisms that construct "shells" (or tests) of various size and shapes which serve as housing for the organisms. Even though these organisms are single-celled, some can be

quite large, for example the coin-size nummulites, which are present as fossils in the limestone blocks used to build the great pyramids of Egypt. The specimens I found were not fossils, but they are widely distributed in the fossil record. Many of the fossil species are index fossils—those species which have a wide geographical distribution but a narrow enough geological range that they are useful in determining the age of rock layers of marine origin.



Figure 6. Modern day foraminiferans from beach sand at West Palm Beach

Also during this time it didn't take long to identify the rock formation I encountered in the state park. A search on the USGS web site for Florida identified this outcrop as the Anastasia Formation, occurring over much of the state's east coast. The formation dates to the Pleistocene (oldest part of formation roughly 2.5 million years; youngest part, about 12,000 yrs.) and consist of sand, sandy limestone and coquina. I couldn't find any info regarding the presence of the non-local rocks specimens embedded in the host rock.

After pulling two consecutive all-nighters I finally went back to the hotel and slept for about 2 hours. It was time to pack and check out. I was still wired up and heavily caffeinated, so at this time I headed back to

the state park. The tide was high this time, completely covering the formation. I spent less than an hour on the beach, ate lunch at a nearby restaurant, and made my way to the airport for the flight home.

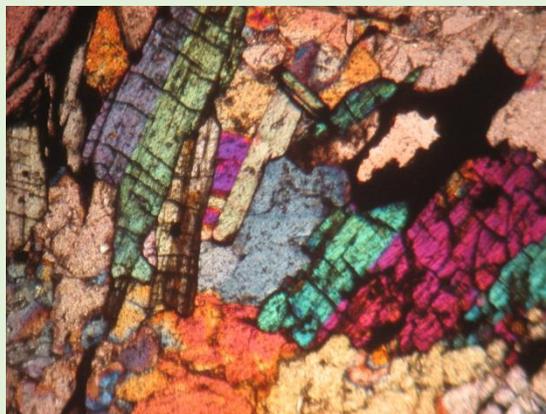
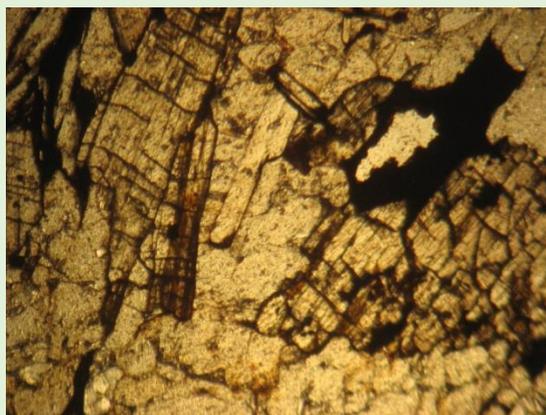
New Kid on the Rock: American Rockhound Magazine Timothy Foard

Earlier this month I received word of a new quarterly publication tailored to rockhounds, aptly named "American Rockhound Magazine". The publication's editor and owner, Rick Jacquot, is also the president of M.A.G.M.A. (Mountain Area Gem and Mineral Association). The magazine started this year and is based in western North Carolina. The first issue almost exclusively features articles from that state, and is particularly heavy on the subject of emeralds. Also, in this issue, Rick contributed to most of the articles. As to be expected from a new publication, the first issue is also the introductory issue, with info on the magazine staff and the direction the editor wishes to move with this new magazine. The regular columns for the first two issues include a field trip section, a kid's corner, laws pertaining to the hobby, a featured rockhound, and even a recipe corner. The second issue, while also heavy-handed in NC minerals and localities, did include a familiar Virginia locale, the Simpson's Farm Amethyst site. Lapis from Afghanistan was another feature article from this issue. The first two issues contained no articles on fossils, although the editor wishes to include them as well as artifacts in the magazine. The third issue, to be released in

September, will feature an article on South Carolina fossils. In order to break away from being a local or regional publication, a lot less emphasis on the Tar Heel State will be required, something I am sure he realized and which is probably the reason for the outreach to rockhounds from other areas of the country. Submissions are welcome; the home page has a "Writer's Guide" section. Yearly subscription is \$36.00 (\$6.00 shipping) for hardcopy; \$15.00 (\$6.00 shipping) for electronic versions. Single (quarterly) paper and electronic issues are \$10.00 (\$2.00 shipping), and \$5.00 (\$2.00 shipping), respectively. Address is: American Rockhound, PO Box 542, Leicester, NC 28748. (www.americanrockhoundmagazine.com)

Member's Finds

Top photo is a hand specimen of kyanite gneiss from a previous trip to Willis Mountain, Virginia. Middle photo is a 30-micron thin section of the specimen viewed under plane-polarized light from a petrographic microscope, and the bottom photo is the same section viewed under crossed-polarized light. Most of the colorful crystals in the bottom photo are from the same mineral, kyanite, viewed from different crystal orientations. The black area near the upper right corner is an opaque mineral, probably a metallic ore. At the bottom of the photos is a feldspar, probably albite. This specimen was collected by Penny Masouka.



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**