

Richmond Swap 2016 by Dave Lines



The 25th Annual Richmond Swap (and Sale) was held on Saturday November 12 in the Meeting Hall adjacent to the Ridge Baptist Church Hall in the western suburbs of Richmond. We had perfect Fall weather --- clear, sunny and a bit chilly. There were swappers both outside and inside the small building. Outside swappers had much more room for display --- several swapped out of the bed of their pickup truck --- others brought and set up 5 or more tables. Inside swappers were limited to 2 tables, which was tight, but it was nice and warm.



There were about 35 people who rented tables or spaces, so there was plenty of variety. Lots of mineral specimens, a good deal of jewelry, some lapidary and a surprising array of fossils including local petrified wood, sharks teeth, whale vertebrae and coral. One of the more unusual swappers had both of his tables covered with beautiful, high quality agates --- a real treat for agate lovers.

One of the especially neat things about this event were the many long time members of the RGMS (Richmond Gem and Mineral Society) who brought in some of their older material from classic Virginia locations to swap. There were excellent specimens from all over Virginia. In fact, the quality of specimens from everywhere was generally high.





RGMS also had two tables of specimens from the Sandra Childress collection for sale. Sandra, who had been a very active member for many years, had donated her entire collection to the club after her recent death. Thanks to Andy Dietz and Rudy Bland for organizing, relabeling and pricing Sandra's splendid collection. Their help allowed the club to benefit from the proceeds, while giving everyone the opportunity to purchase some really nice

specimens.

Good deals as well as true bargains were to be found everywhere. I was stunned to see what Dave Hennessey (NOVA club) snagged for just \$20 --- an egg sized clear topaz crystal from the Morefield Mine in Amelia, Virginia. He plans to have Dr. Lance Kearns from JMU (James Madison University) check it out to determine if it is correctly labelled. If so, wow --- that was the bargain of the century!



Throughout the day, attendance was generally very good, with the peak from about 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.. There were lots of kids and families as well as older adults. And there were many folks from other area clubs. I saw rock club members from Northern Virginia, Washington (DC), Montgomery County (MD) and from Lynchburg (VA).



The dealers have always been encouraged to give specimens to kids, which is great because it promotes our wonderful hobby to future generations. Some of these little guys (and girls) were requesting to swap throughout the day. Two brothers about 8 and 10 years old and their sister about 12 years old were especially persistent. Their general approach was to get something from one dealer and then try to swap it for something better with another dealer. They

were hilarious. The two young boys came back to me repeatedly, asking to swap various items. They both had their sights on some magnetic balls (called zingers) that when tossed into the air alternately repel and attract with a buzzing sound. I finally gave them other specimens to bribe them to leave me alone. It did not help --- they were both back in less than 5 minutes desiring to swap. Their older sister (she visited me at least 10 times) finally pestered me enough so that I relented and swapped her a pair of zingers for an agate specimen. About an hour later, she came back holding up three bags full of rocks, gleefully explaining that she had swapped for all of them without spending any money. Watch out --- someday, these little folks will become big time wheeler-dealers.

If you missed this event, you missed a great show. It is well organized and fun and productive. Try to make the effort to attend next year --- it is always held on the second Saturday in November. You will be glad you did.