

## Tucson 2017 by Dave Lines



Immediately after the January Rock Club business meeting, my wife Ann and I went to BWI Airport and flew the next day to Arizona. We arrived in Phoenix around noon, rented a car and headed north to Sedona for a true “out-of-Southern Maryland experience”. It has just snowed in Sedona and the scenery was magnificent --- red rock cliffs contrasting with the white snow and blue skies. Just incredible beauty.



And for those folks who appreciate “crystal squeezers”, Sedona had some really weird folks and businesses. It seemed like every aging hippie from the late 60’s had moved there and set up shops ranging from very upscale to the very strange and bizarre. I saw signs painted on the sides of buildings that proclaimed “energy crystals for sale”. One said “The vortex is here”. Another sign offered “Night time UFO sighting tours”. Another downtown business had six foot tall replicas of “ET” for sale. No kidding.

We took a Sedona day tour which included a stop where about 10 local Native Americans were selling turquoise jewelry as well as other rocks. We visited a gorgeous church designed by Frank Lloyd Wright which was built into the side of a red rock cliff. An exquisite design that perfectly matched its natural setting. After about 24 hours in Sedona, we drove down to Tucson to meet our son Jeff. He been there a full day and had already checked out several mineral shows. It

was only Thursday January 26<sup>th</sup> which was before the rock shows (over 40 now) officially opened, yet we spent the next 2 days visiting motel room after motel room and various tents set up all over the city trying to decide what to buy. It was a blurr. I spoke with Joe Dorris and his lovely daughter Krystle and thanked Joe for taking the time to pose for a picture with my good 88 year old (?) friend and rock mentor, Saralee, when she and Jeff visited his Smoky Hawk Mine near Crystal Peak, Colorado last summer.

In the evenings, we went out to eat with Jeff and his rock/mineral friends. I met Andy Siebel who showed Jeff around Munich 2 years ago. I also ran into Bob Farrar at the Executive Inn Show (now named the Fortuna Inn) --- recall that Bob has presented at least 2 programs for our club in the recent past.



I thoroughly enjoy meeting and talking with some of the literally thousands of vendors in Tucson. But it is exhausting. I have never seen so many rocks in my life --- more and more each year -- and the quality and quantity of both the specimens and the displays is several quanta above just 10 years ago. I did not take many pictures this year, but I saw some astounding specimens --- one that stands out in my memory was a 14 ton amethyst geode from South America --- it was 20 feet long and 6 feet in diameter. A giant. I stopped in an "all India minerals" show --- they filled a warehouse and divided it into several rooms. Outside hung large banners that said things like "World's Largest Apophyllite and Stilbite Crystal". I had to see this --- it was free to look. I paced off the biggest -- it was a geode-like pocket that was 10 feet long and 4 feet in diameter. They had a whole room full of them which were each the size of a kitchen stove or a refrigerator. They had one large 100'x50' room with tables covered with beautiful flawless clusters of this same India zeolite material. In another location, I saw a plate of Moroccan fossils that looked like brown jellyfish all over a lighter tan matrix --- it was easily 10 feet tall and 15 feet wide and about 6 inches thick. How in the world do they ship such gigantic specimens?



What did I bring home? Not as much as some previous visits, but I had fun. I carefully picked out 20 rose quartz spheres ranging from 1-1/2" to 3" diameter that all have a perfect 6 point star. I also brought back a fabulous flat of 19 spectacularly perfect double (penetrating twin) pyrite crystals from Navajun, Spain. I found some very nicely crystalized native copper with nice patterns/shapes from New Mexico. Other specimens include a nice cubic galena (lead sulfide) crystal with many skeletal faces from Elmwood, Tennessee (unusual for that location). I picked up some fluorite and some galena on marcasite; a small quartz xls cluster with iridescent hematite from a new location (for me) near Mt. Ida, Ark and two polished gemmy dinosaur bone slabs from Colorado.

I also got a nifty battery powered portable UV Light made in Germany.

Overall, we did less rock shopping this time and did more travel plus socializing with son Jeff and family friends.

If you have never been to Tucson, you owe it to yourself to attend at least once. It's a blast.