

Neither Rain nor Snow....
By Ralph Gamba
Photographs by Ralph Gamba and Richard Simcsak

Neither rain nor snow nor dark of morning could keep four members of the Southern Maryland Rock and Mineral Club from making the 140 mile plus trip to the Morefield Mine. The four people who braved the storm of October 29 were Lorna, Mike, Rich, and Ralph, Figure 1.



Figure 1. Lorna, Rich and Mike at Morefield Mine

Collecting in the rain at Morefield does have some benefits. One, it washes the dirt off the rocks and makes specimens, especially the amazonite, easier to spot. Two, it keeps the crowd down. Three, if you find something unusual, Sam Dunaway, the mine owner, is readily available to identify your find.

When leaving Southern Maryland, the rain was moderate. During the visit to the Mine, the rain was light to nonexistent. Around 3:30 PM, the sun paid us a visit.

For the first couple of hours the four were the only ones collecting. Around eleven, another collector, Perry, joined us. In the early afternoon, about the time Sam did a small dump for us, a woman and her son joined us.

The rain exposed plentiful amazonite on the ground. Lorna, Figure 2, exclaimed that this was the most plentiful amazonite she had ever collected. Rich, who made his first trip to Morefield, was gathering sample of the different minerals, such as tantalite and green fluorite. Mike found a chunk of cleavelandite which had tantalite, monazite, and spessartine with its telltale ring of mica, Figure 3. Mike also found a chunk of white topaz. While chatting with Perry, Ralph reached down and found a piece of beryl in the mud. Ralph also found a piece of North Carolina dunite, an igneous rock consisting mostly of olivine. Ralph, Mike, and Rich also took chunks of cleavelandite to examine for micros.



Figure 2. Lorna Collecting Amazonite.



Figure 3. Mike Holding His Sample of Cleavelandite and Micros.

Although it was a cold and wet day, the four who went to Morefield had a wonderful time. Lorna, Mike, and Ralph made purchases in their gift shop. The four headed home after a successful trip.