

Children of All Ages Playing In a Sandbox

Morefield, May 2012
By Ralph Gamba

On May 12, three members of the Southern Maryland Rock and Mineral Club, Marco, Tim and Ralph make the trip to collect at the Morefield Mine, Figure 1. Tom and Linda, Figure 2, from the Lynchburg, VA club joined us. Unlike our last trip in October, where we braved rain and snow, the weather was beautiful; sunny with temperatures in the 70s.



Figure 1. Marco and Timothy awaiting the opening of the Morefield Mine

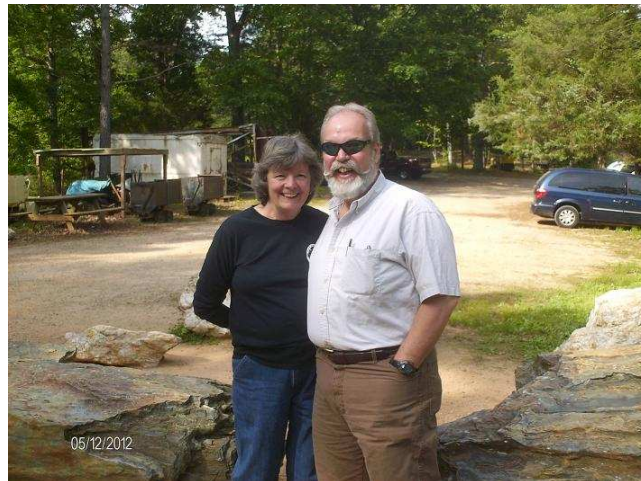


Figure 2. Linda and Tom joining us at Morefield

The three of us arrived around 9 AM and Sam Dunaway, the mine owner, soon opened the gate. I suggested to Tim and Marco to start collecting around the discard piles for micros that most would discard. One collector reported finding a beryl in the discard pile on a previous visit. I found a spent blasting cap.

We then collected leftovers from previous dumps. We found the usual tantalite, but also a small sample of purple fluorite. Another collector found a small crystal of topaz.

At 12:30 Sam fired up his front end loader and dumped two loads. Although Sam mentioned that he had not been finding much cleavelandite in the recent diggings, he had some in the dumps. One piece had some green fluorite. We collected amazonite, mica and pieces of pegmatite for later examination.

About 2 PM, Tim left for home to examine his finds and I went to the car for a drink. I decided to look around at the upper sluice. Sam dumped there last Thursday, but there were plenty of nice amazonite still available. This is where I found my best pieces of amazonite.

At 3:30, Sam made two more dumps and we collected until 4:45, when it was time to leave. I found a piece containing monazite. I thanked Sam for providing wonderful collecting weather. We headed home from a busy day of playing in our sandbox, one we could share with children of all ages.