The Purple Crystal Pickers

By Ralph Gamba

(Based on “The Purple People Eater” by Sheb Wooley)

Well, I saw the email; it said amethyst
I knew it was a trip I didn’t want to miss
I pulled off the road and said “hurray"
It looks like we’re picking purple crystals today

We’re the sharp eyed strong handed searching purple crystal pickers
Sharp eyed strong handed digging purple crystal pickers
Sharp eyed strong handed searching purple crystal pickers
On a Saturday.

Saturday April 27 was a cool and cloudy day with a threat of rain, but that did not stop Ann, Greg, Maria, Hugo, Bernie, Mary. and Ralph G. of the Southern Maryland Rock and Mineral Club from venturing to Quarryville, Pennsylvania to search for amethyst, smokey quartz, feldspar and other minerals. We were joined by other local clubs with approximately 50 of us searching for amethyst and other minerals.

Upon arrival, we met Ross, the overall trip coordinator. Ross gave a brief overview and showed us a sample of amethyst that was found at the site and basic ground rules for the site. We provided Ross with the waiver forms and donations and headed to the “middle field” for collecting.

For this trip, we did surface collecting. We could dig for the crystals, but we needed to fill any holes we made. The author made use of his “gardening skills” by using a potato fork to dig into the dirt to search for amethyst and smoky quartz.
Soon, a member of the central Pennsylvania club found a nice amethyst crystal point and allowed me to photograph it.

The author soon found a smaller point. Members of our club found two beautiful clusters and an amethyst crystal.
Two samples found by a club member.

Amethyst cluster found by a club member.
This author found several small amethyst crystals and two clusters along with some smoky quartz points. He also found a small milky quartz cluster and a shell.

Milky quartz cluster (left) and two amethyst clusters (center and right).

Smoky quartz and amethyst crystals and points.

Ann found a wonderful array of amethyst and smoky quartz and provided pictures.
Cluster found by Ann.
Specimens found by Ann.

At about 11:45 AM we headed back to our cars for the day. The farmer’s children brought out a small wagon with amethyst for sale for a small donation.

Ann summed it up best. “I just want to say that this trip was a dream come true for me. The farm was truly gorgeous and riddled with tiny amethyst beauties just about everywhere. I was hoping to find just one sample of my purple passion as I started the day. To my delight, I left with three pockets full!”