Southern Maryland Rock and Mineral Club

ROCK TALK WINTER 2021/22

22 March 2022 at 1900 (7 PM)
Meeting at OLD WALDORF SCHOOL
(next to the Waldorf JayCees Hall)
North of the RT 301 / RT 5 Intersection

Time to come out of HIBERNATION!!

We have been "dormant" for almost four (4) months now. Punxsutawney Phil's forecast of six (6) more weeks of Winter is coming to an end (hopefully), we all must get out of the Winter/COVID hiding locations and begin our lives as Rockhounds once again!!

Sondra steps down as President

Over the past four (4) years Sondra has held the Club together with the issues of COVID and a transition to a new location. Speaking from the heart (and as a past President) - Thank you Sondra for the fine job you did keeping the club going well. Below is a letter that was done thanking her for her efforts...

Dear Sondra ---

We thank you for your four (4) years serving as the President of the Southern Maryland Rock and Mineral Club from 2018 through 2021. You did a great job presiding over our meetings and admirably representing our club in all situations including a little known series of unusual and challenging circumstances. In 2018, you accepted the "Winning Rock Club Trophy" on behalf of our club at the 31st Annual World Championship Quartz Crystal Dig in Mount Ida, Arkansas. You spent countless hours during the 2020-21 COVID pandemic as the face and spokesperson of our club during many virtual meetings and discussions with other Club Presidents of the EFMLS (Eastern Federation of Mineral and Lapidary Societies). In 2021, you were the chief negotiator with the new Nature Center Director to try to find a solution to our club meeting in person again at the Clearwater Nature Center. You set up a way for the Club Officers to meet virtually during this critical phase. You continued to lead the club in the summer and fall of 2021 as we found a new meeting venue and revamped how we operated as a club, changing from a totally sponsored organization to an independent, self-supporting club with a strong membership. We are deeply indebted to you for your willingness to serve your fellow club members.

On behalf of our club, please accept our sincerest thanks and best regards,

Joe Davis (Membership VP), Carole Raucheisen (Programs Chairman), Dave Lines (Field Trip Chairman/Treasurer), Cheryl Reese (Secretary). Bob Davidson (Webmaster), Rich Simcsak (Editor)

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2022 PROGRAMS/REFRESHMENTS SCHEDULE		
MONTH	**PROGRAM**	**REFRESHMENTS**
MARCH 22	**Buena Vista Rock Show (Colorado)**	**TBA**
APRIL 26	**TBA**	**TBA**
MAY 24	**TBA**	**TBA**
JUNE 28	**TBA**	**TBA**
JULY 26	**TBA**	**TBA**
AUGUST 23	**Annual Club Auction**	**Pot Luck (??)**
SEPTEMBER 27	**TBA**	**TBA**
OCTOBER 25	**TBA**	**TBA**
NOVEMBER 22	**TBA**	**TBA**
DECEMBER TBD	**Seasonal Party (??)**	**Pot Luck (??)**

Dates are tentative. Changes are possible due to a multitude of reasons.

NOVEMBER 2021 MINUTES

NOVEMBER MINUTES submitted by Cheryl

MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 7p.m. by Sondra

VISITORS/NEW MEMBERS: No visitors

MEMBERSHIP: There are 45 paid memberships at this time

EDITOR: Rich donated posters from the James Madison University Museum Grand Re-Opening open house for members to take if they wanted them. He always welcomes new ideas, articles or field trip reports. He will be sending out newsletters during the months we are "hibernating"

TREASURER: Dave read the report, it will not be published. There was a monetary gift given to the club as a thank you by the Antiques Art Club of Charles County for the talk and program Dave gave for them.

PROGRAMS: No report given. March 2022 will be our next in person meeting of which the program is yet TBD

FIELD TRIPS: Richmond club is going to U.S. Silica mine on 12/4/21. You may attend only if you are member of their club. Dave highly encourages our members to join other local clubs to have the ability to go on their field trips.

FYI. Maryland has eight (8) clubs, Virginia has four (4) clubs , Washington DC has three (3) clubs and Delaware has one (1).

Dave will also be sending short notice emails to members who fossil hunt when the tides are expected to be lower than normal.

OLD BUSINESS: SMRMC will be hosting a rock show on November 5, 2022. The committee members are Ralph and Theresa Boswell, Dave Lines, Bob Davidson, Cheryl Reese and new member Kurt Knower. If you would like to participate in planning and helping out please let us know. There will be many opportunities and needs for volunteers. There was a lengthy discussion about various topics concerning vendors, auctions, raffles, table costs etc. More info will follow when specifics have been hashed out.

NEW BUSINESS: Election of officers did not occur. The office of President is open, Sondra will not be continuing in this role. Dave stated we needed a named president by February to get insurance.

The following are filled/needed

President: Joe Davis
Treasurer: Dave Lines
Field trip leader: Dave Lines
Membership/VP: Vacant
Webmaster: Bob Davidson
Editor: Rich Simcsak
Secretary: Cheryl Reese
Programs: Carole Raucheisen

*** Joe and Carole were not present to verify if they would continue in their roles.

Other new business discussed was about starting a FACEBOOK page for the club and how to set up zoom /phone meetings if needed in the future while we can't meet. Kurt Knower is working on the FACEBOOK page. Tim Smith volunteered to help with communications aspect.

ADJOURNED: 7:55 pm followed by door prizes, refreshments from Sondra and a very interesting program on "The paint rocks of Paint Branch Creek" by Kurt Knower

2021 IN REVIEW

2021 - SMRMC made some changes

The past year the club restarted meeting with the COVID issues/concerns decreasing (not gone) but at a "new" location. The "Old Waldorf School" gave the club additional possibilities to further expand and a move from the Prince Georges Clearwater Nature Center was made.

2021 Year in Review - What happened ?!?

July 2021 -Move from the Prince Georges Nature Center (Clinton, MD) to the Waldorf Old School (Waldorf, MD)
COVID and Restrictions
Masks Required at meetings
No Christmas Party/Gathering due to COVID Issues/Concerns
Facebook Page started
New President - Joe Davis

2021 Meeting Topics

Setting up New Location and "Beer Flat Social"(July)
Silent Auction (August)
Video Night (September)
Fossil Fish (Dead Fish Exercise) (October)
Paint Branch Creek, MD - Clay Painting (November)

2021 Field Trips

Odessa, DE - Petrified Wood (May)(Nov)
National Limestone, PA - Calcite, Fluorite, Flow Stone, Blue Celestite (July)
Contrary Creek, VA - Gold and Garnets (Aug)
Haines & Kibblehouse Pennsylvania-Maryland Quarry, PA (HK Penn Quarry)-(TWICE) - Chromites Family (Sept/Oct)
Willis Mountain, VA. Kyanite (Sept)
Purse State Park, Charles County, MD - Fossils, Shark Teeth, (Multiple)
Choate Chromite Mine, Owings Mills, MD (Oct)
James Madison University (JMU), Harrisonburg, VA - Mineral Museum Grand Re-Opening (Oct)
US Silica, Montpelier, VA - Garnet, Feldspar, Rutile -(Dec)
MULTIPLE Lower Tide Warnings for fossil collecting

What 2022 may hold for the Club

Field Trips to other sites with other clubs
Rock Show in Nov 2022 at Old Waldorf School
Less COVID Restrictions (fingers crossed)
Continued Good Health for all Members and the Club
Near Future Field Trips
Odessa, Delaware and Chesapeake Canal Spill Piles, Delaware
Chestnut Ridge, Virginia
Graves MT, Georgia

Calendar of Events

Many events are still being postponed/cancelled and/or rescheduled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Please check with the sponsoring club to make sure the event has not been cancelled due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic before attending any event.

March 26 - 27, 2022 - Wysox, PA - **52nd Annual Gem & Mineral Show 2022** Presented by Che-Hanna Rock & Mineral Club, Inc., Saturday March 26 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Sunday March 27 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM, WySsox Vol. Fire Co. Social Hall, 111 Lake Road, Wysox, PA. OUTSTANDING GEOLOGICAL EXHIBITS Presented by Susquehanna River Archaeological Center and FLUORESCENT MINERAL PROGRAMS By UV-BOB, DEMONSTRATIONS OF CABOCHON MAKING, GEODE CUTTING, EXHIBITS OF MINERALS, GEMS, & INDIAN ARTIFACTS, MINI-MINE FOR KIDS, DEALERS WITH MINERALS, GEMSTONES, FOSSILS, JEWELRY AND HOBBY SUPPLIES, DOOR PRIZES, FOOD AVAILABLE ON PREMISES. Admission: Adults $3.00, Students $1.00, Under 8 Free. For more information visit http://chehannarocks.com/

March 26 - 27, 2022- Plymouth Meeting, PA - **Philadelphia Mineralogical Society 2022 Mineral Treasures & Fossil Fair**. Saturday March 26, 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Sunday March 27, 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Lulu Temple, 5140 Butler Pike, Plymouth Meeting, PA., (PA Turnpike Exit 33; or I-476 Exit 20) Free Parking. Adults: $7.00. Kids 12 and under: $2.00; Uniformed scouts and troop leaders free. Special Features: On both days a line-up of distinguished professional speakers will be presented. In addition, there will be fossil and mineral displays, educational materials, door prizes and a food concession. Thirty dealers will offer fossils, minerals, crystals, and jewelry from all over the world, as well as books, decorative items, and other merchandise. Demonstrations of micro-specimens will be presented throughout the show by the Leidy Microscopical Society. Young visitors can enjoy the annual fossil dig for children, and the kid's corner with free mineral gifts. Information: www.phillyrocks.org. Contact: Cheryl Leibold, cleibold@verizon.net

March 26 - 27, 2022 - Chambersburg, PA - **42nd Annual Gem, Mineral & Jewelry Show! Presented by the Franklin County Rock & Mineral Club.** Saturday March 26 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Sunday March 27, 2022 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Located at the Eugene C. Clarke Jr. Community Center, 25 South 3rd Street, Chambersburg, PA. Jewelry-Gemstones-Minerals-Fossils-Displays-Door Prizes. Admission $6, Children under 12 free with adult. Present this flyer and receive $1 off admission price! For more information visit: https://www.facebook.com/Franklin-County-Rock-and-Mineral-Club1601767103396099/

April 23, 2022 - **31st Annual Chesapeake Gem, Mineral, Jewelry & Fossil Show**
Saturday, 10 AM – 4 PM
New Location - Howard County Fairgrounds
2210 Fairgrounds Rd. West Friendship, Md 21794
Minerals, Original Jewelry, Fossils, Rough & Cut Gemstones, Silent Auctions, Door Prizes
Free minerals for kids
www.chesapeakegemandmineral.org
Directions: From Baltimore take I-70 to Rt. 32 south; Turn right on Rt. 144 west Fairgrounds Road is half a mile on the right.

From Washington area – Routes 29 or 95 North to Rt. 32 west/north; turn left on Rt. 144 west- Fairgrounds road is a half of a mile on the right.

April 23, 2022 - Ogdensburg, NJ **- Super Diggg 2022.** The Super Diggg 2022 will be back at the Sterling Hill Mining Museum on April 23, 2022. Save the date and start planning. More information will be forthcoming as plans are finalized. For more information visit: http://SuperDiggg.com

April 30, 2022 to May 1, 2022 - Leesport, PA - **Berks Mineralogical Society Presents the 53nd Annual "World of Gems & Minerals, Gemstones, Jewelry, Rock Mineral & Fossil Show**. Located at: The Pavilion at Leesport Farmers Market next to the Banquet Hall 312 Gernant's Church Rd. Leesport, PA 19533. April 30 and May 1st 2022, Sat 10-5 | Sun 10-4, SATURDAY ONLY TAILGATE SECTION. Admission Donation $4, Mineral Displays, Activities, Speakers, Tailgaters Welcome! Educational! Great for kids of all ages! The Best show in Berks County

October 29 2022 - ULTRAVIOLATION Show
Where: First United Methodist Church, 840 Trenton Rd, Fairless Hills, PA
When: 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM
What: ULTRAVIOLATION is the ULTIMATE annual show for the fluorescent mineral enthusiast, whether a novice or serious collector. The show features many of the world's premier fluorescent mineral COLLECTORS AND DEALERS who strive each year to bring the biggest, brightest and best fluorescent minerals to satisfy the insatiable cravings of the fluorescent collector. ULTRAVIOLATION highlights fluorescent minerals exclusively and is the next best thing to night collecting. Free admission and a fluorescent mineral specimen for each junior mineralogist 12 years and younger when accompanied by an adult.
Admission: $2.00 Donation, Children 12 & Under Free
Dealers: 8' TABLE $30 – ½ TABLE $15
ADVANCED REGISTRATION FOR DEALERS IS ADVISED
SEND YOUR CHECK MADE PAYABLE TO: Lee McIlvaine, 8510 Elliston Dr. Wyndmoor, PA 19038 Or Paypal electronic payment to leemcilvaine@yahoo.com
For information call Lee McIlvaine at 215-713-8020 or email uvgeologist@yahoo.com

Future Field Trips

Contact Dave Lines for further information, space availability, and needed details...

Official Field Trip of the SMRMC to Chestnut Ridge, VA for Quartz Crystals Saturday, March 26, 2022 (loose and clusters) --- Max of 30 people. *Must be a paid up member of SMRMC due to liability insurance. Trip Leader Dave Lines

Official SMRMC Field Trip to National Limestone at Middleburg Quarry and Mount Pleasant Mills Quarry on Saturday April 9, 2022 from 9:15 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
[* This trip will include the Montgomery County rock club (GLMSMC) --- our local sister EFMLS club.]

Official Field Trip of Calvert Marine Museum - SMRMC has been invited to ODESSA, DE for collecting Petrified Wood Saturday 16 April 2022. Contact Dave Lines for details (Trip Leader wanted)

"How to answer an inquiry about our Rock Club" .

"Recently (2-21-2022), our Club Secretary Cheryl received a phone call from a lady who asked Cheryl some questions to which Cheryl was uncomfortable giving an answer. The gist of it was a lady called her from a telephone number which Cheryl said was verified by Comcast to be a legitimate phone number. She asked what were the people like in our club. Cheryl tried to explain that our members were just ordinary people who liked to find and collect rocks, minerals and fossils. When the lady pressed for further details, Cheryl again told the lady to go to the Club website. Cheryl asked who she was again and she said she was from the "Research Council" and that she had clients who were interested in certain types of clubs. Cheryl told her she was no longer going to talk with her and ended the conversation. Cheryl was upset and called me about it. I told Cheryl that I suspected it was a scam caller gathering information from her and/or others.

Thinking more about this, I recommend that if you receive a similar call, you tell the inquiring person to go to the Club website and to fill out and submit the "Contact Us" form found under the heading "About Us". Then I recommend thanking them and hanging up. The "Contact Us" form asks for their name and email and is handled by our webmaster Bob who in turn either answers the questions or sends it to someone who can. In this day and age of identity theft and scams of various kinds, rather than engaging in a conversation in which you are uncomfortable, it is wise to be a bit skeptical and keep such inquirers at arms-length by telling them to use the email form. Nuff said. Best, Dave"

The Southern Maryland Rock and Mineral Club now has two Facebook pages!

One is "Private Southern Maryland Rock and Mineral" that only club members will be able to join and see posts. We can use this to communicate club business and upcoming activities. To join, search Facebook Groups for the group name, click join, and answer the question to have your membership approved.

The second one, "Southern Maryland Rock and Mineral Club," is a public group that anyone can see. We can use this to publicize club events and recruit new members. Rock club members should join this too, to interact with the rock collecting community.

Club members can share pictures of recent finds, lapidary projects, equipment, fossil collecting, or anything else rock related to both groups. Pictures and comments shared in the private club group will only be seen by club members, and those posted to the public group can be viewed by anyone on Facebook. Sharing our love of rocks, minerals, and fossils with the public will draw more interest in the club and start generating excitement for our show in the fall!

If you don't have a Facebook account but still would like to share pictures to either or both groups, you can send them to Kurt Knower at theallknower@comcast.net and he will post them on your behalf.

Chestnut Ridge Quartz Finds - Dave Line

In preparation for the proposed Trip to Chestnut Ridge for Quartz Crystals, the following examples are provided by Dave Lines as examples that one can find.

These quartz crystal specimens come from a location on National Forest property for which, by their recent regulations, the removal of any rocks is specifically prohibited, but I have obtained written permission from the National Forest Service for us to collect specimens of quartz crystals there. Additionally, this location has limited access due to being surrounded by private property which is all posted against trespass. Again, I have received written permission from one of these owners for us to park our vehicles there and to cross his land while we are there to collect crystals. Anyone desiring to legally collect at this excellent location may do so by joining our club and attending this upcoming March 26th, 2022 Field Trip with us. Dave Lines, Field Trip Coordinator, Southern Maryland Rock and Mineral Club

This nice plate of crystals was formed in a crack between larger rocks of sandstone. This one was originally found covered with red clay which was later carefully cleaned with water and a soft scrub brush. It is important to carefully wrap your finds as soon as you find them and before you put them next to other specimens to protect the crystals from damage in the one mile trip back down the mountain.

This small, but sparkly quartz cluster has only been cleaned with water.

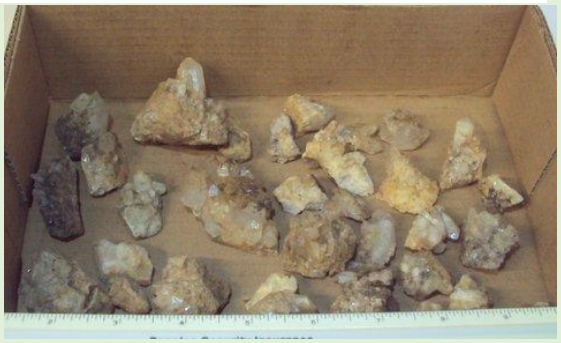
Singles are plentiful.

This little beauty has many, well formed crystals of different sizes.

Most of the quartz crystals found at Chestnut Ridge are well formed and less than 1 inch long. This nicely balanced cluster is typical of those clusters containing crystals of several sizes in the same cluster.

This is the largest quartz crystal I ever found there and I found it in 2 parts (note repair) 2 years

This is a unique collecting location for the Mid-Atlantic area and we must take care of it by keeping it clean (by removing all trash) refilling any holes and keeping the ground covered with old leaves to prevent erosion. If you do this, there are enough crystals here to last for many generations.



You can find a similar box of quartz clusters if you join us on our field trip. Caution --- you need to be in good physical shape for this trip because it requires a very rugged hike about 1 mile up a steep mountain. Most people take between 1 and 2 hours to reach the top. I recommend you start your physical training now.

WILDACRES 2022

If you have had Wildacres on your bucket list, the Spring Session of Wildacres (May 16-22) is open for you to register. Wildacres, sponsored twice a year by the Eastern Federation of Mineralogical Societies (EFMLS), provides room and board, classroom instruction with a small number of students, lectures by the Speaker-In-Residence, a tailgate with a chance to buy or sell hobby related items, an auction, a chance to meet old friends and make new ones, the comradery of being with others in the hobby, to name a few perks of attending Wildacres sessions -- all this for a very reasonable fee.

Why not join the thousands who have attended Wildacres, made lasting friendships, took home new skills and knowledge, and much more. This is saying nothing about the bond of friendship and fun while being on top of the mountain.

EFMLS WILDACRES HISTORY

In 1973, the Eastern Federation began a new venture – Wildacres. Located just off the Blue Ridge Parkway near Little Switzerland, NC, Wildacres is a non-profit facility dedicated to the betterment of human relations. The first session was held in August 1973 and several years later the second session was added -- Years of providing excellent instruction in new and old areas of the hobby!

SPRING SESSION, MAY 16-22, 2022

The **Speaker-In-Residence** will be Dr. Nathalie Brandes – See attached Speaker-In-Residence for a bio.

Classes – Whether looking to learn a new aspect of the hobby or just wanting to improve your knowledge and skills in an area you already know, with eight (8) classes to chose from, there is sure to be a class for anyone. See attached Wildacres 2022 Spring Class Schedule for a description of the class offerings.

Registration – Fill in and follow the instructions on the attached Registration Form to register. Note that single rooms will be available for an additional fee.

FALL SESSION, SEPTEMBER 5-11, 2022

More information on the Fall Session to be announced.

QUESTION?

If you have any questions, concerns, etc. for either session, you can contact:
Steve Weinberger, Chairman of the Wildacres Committee (cscrystals2@gmail.com)
Suzie Milligan, Registrar – for info regarding registration (smilligan@stny.rr.com or 607-687-5108)
Mark Kucera, Director – for info regarding classes and instructors (mark_j_kucera@yahoo.com or 914-423-8360)

P.S. The Speaker-in-Residence, Class Schedule, and Registration forms are also available on the EFMLS website -- www.efmls.org.

Hi SMRMC Members new and old ---

From my perspective, **Wildacres** is a unique and very rewarding experience. My wife Ann and I attended the Spring session in May 2017 and took the "basic and intermediate silver smithing" course taught

by Richard Meszler --- he is an OUTSTANDING instructor. You may want to read the May 2017 Trip Report on our club website --- I went into great detail explaining what we did and took lots of pics. The cost of the week at Wildacres may seem high ($445 per person), but consider that you get three (3) delicious meals each day PLUS four (4) days of classes all day long taught by true experts PLUS a free day to explore the area PLUS a truly serene and beautiful mountain setting, especially in May in the Spring PLUS you are entertained by a wonderful Guest Speaker each evening PLUS you get a room and bed to sleep in. Have you stayed in a motel recently? Just the room alone will cost more than Wildacres – with zero ambiance!] And guess what --- there are no TVs or computers and almost no cell phone reception --- you will unplug from the rest of the world and truly have fun for a week. And a memorable week it will be!

Best, Dave Lines

Trip Report for a Field Trip at US Silica, VA with the Richmond Gem and Mineral Society on 12-04-21

by Dave Lines

It is always good to participate in any opportunity to collect rocks in a commercial quarry. One of the great advantages of belonging to a rock and mineral club is that most (not all) local rock clubs have liability insurance. Our home club --- the Southern Maryland Rock and Mineral Club (SMRMC) --- as a member of the Eastern Federation of Mineral and Lapidary Societies (EFMLS) --- is insured by a $1 million liability insurance policy obtained through EFMLS. This alone --- as well as our adherence to strict safety standards --- is the reason that commercial quarries are willing to allow us to collect specimens on their property. Nowadays, you cannot simply walk in off the street and expect a quarry to allow you to collect rocks. So joining a club like our SMRMC gives you a HUGE advantage if you like to self-collect rocks and minerals.

I belong to several different clubs in the local area in order to maximize my chances of going on more field trips. Rich and I (Dave) both also belong to the Richmond Gem and Mineral Society (RGMS) and when we received an email Trip Announcement from their field trip coordinator, we both immediately signed up for the trip. Fast forward a month --- We arrived at the quarry office at the designated time of 8:00 am and greeted the other members of RGMS that we knew and introduced ourselves to the ones we did not know. We were also happy to see an old friend back as the Quarry Manager. The quarry manager held an excellent safety briefing and updated us on all the current conditions inside the pit. They had a rock breaker operating in a portion of the quarry which put a large area off limits. He then led us in a vehicle caravan to one of my favorite areas at this quarry – where we could collect some great specimens of andesine and enstatite. Both of these minerals are fantastic lapidary material.

Andesine is better known as “silver or gray flash moonstone”. When polished, it has a beautiful internal adularescence of silver or gray color. Enstatite, known also as “bronzeite” has an internal copper-colored flash or chatoyancy that when polished is quite pleasing. When we arrived at the initial area, Rich immediately pulled over and parked his truck where we had found both of these materials on previous occasions.

It had been several years since we were here and the weeds and grass had covered much. Nevertheless, we were able to find several places where we dug beautiful specimens out of the floor of the pit. All too soon, our collecting time in that area ended and the Quarry Manager led us to another location where we searched for “white flash moonstone” and quartz crystals. We saw some massive quartz, but no one found a crystal. I did find two pieces of moonstone – one was a very nice piece about 1 inch square and was almost clear with a strong white flash. Shortly afterward, we were directed to search an area just across the road from where we had parked. We found some ½ inch to 1 inch almandine garnets that were very gemmy. At least one other person found another piece of white flash moonstone there. We then moved to another part of the quarry (which is quite large --- about 50 acres by my estimate) where the ground was very sandy. Andy (from RGMS) immediately spotted some large garnets in the quarry floor and began digging them up. They were not as gemmy as in the other location, but they seemed plentiful. I settled in near Andy and continued digging after he left. My largest garnet was the size of a tennis ball and quite heavy. Amazing. I gave a quick walk around of that area, but found nothing else very exciting. I eventually dug more garnets from that initial spot. At about 11:45 am, we took a group picture and thanked the Quarry Manager profusely for his time (Saturdays are usually his time off --- so when he conducts a field trip, it is done during his free time). We all followed the quarry manager out in a caravan and when we reached the office, most departed for home. I stayed and talked with the Quarry Manager for a while and he agreed to hosting a trip for our Southern Maryland club some time next spring. Super! Hope you will be able to join us.

Very Large boulder imbedded with multiple balls of Garnets

Fossil Wood and Fossil Belemnites from Odessa and the C&D Canal (Feb 26, 2022) by Dave Lines

Have you ever found something that, upon closer examination, you realized was extraordinarily rare? I did --- just recently. This "something" was a piece of petrified wood that tells a story. A story that is millions of years old and yet is still surprising. I have been very fortunate over the past 25 years to have found hundreds of pieces of petrified wood in several states across America. In Texas I found petrified palm wood as well as several varieties of grained wood that had become chert and flint. In Colorado, I found petrified wood that had become solid jasper in colors of mustard yellow, red and black. Some of this Colorado wood showed the smoothed edges of wear from tumbling in rocky streams. In Arizona, I have found on a private ranch near the Petrified National Forest, beautifully colored flint (petrified wood) in bright reds, yellows, grays and black with some containing black dendrites in tiny tree branch patterns. In North Carolina, I found petrified wood that was fine grained sandstone, and I was given a whole log at least 15 feet long --- which is still there because I have no way to move it.

From Virginia, I have petrified wood that had thousands of tiny quartz crystals both inside and out that sparkle brightly in sunlight. In Maryland, I have found petrified wood on the shores of the Potomac and Patuxent Rivers and on the beaches of the Chesapeake Bay that were almost white and relatively light in weight --- yet in another part of southern Maryland, I found petrified wood in a stream that was black and very heavy while showing every detail of the wood grain and, in another case, had turned into a very solid chunk of chert or jasper. And in Delaware, where I have found the largest quantity of petrified wood, each piece shows the sharp detail of the wood grain. Some of the Delaware specimens show knots, twists in the wood grain and anomalies like a break that was healed including tree sap that had turned to rock. Yet in all these petrified wood specimens, none have matched the special uniqueness of the recent one.

But first, let's back-up to the beginning of this story. About a week before the trip, I sent out an email to our Southern Maryland Rock and Mineral Club members (SMRMC.org) inviting them to a field trip in Delaware --- for both petrified wood near Odessa and for fossil belemnites at the C&D (Chesapeake and Delaware) Canal. At that time, I was not sure of a date, so I asked if anyone would be interested. I received only 2 replies --- from Rich and from Ray. I also spoke with Lorna and asked if she wanted to --- yes, she did! We eventually decided on Saturday February 26th. Ray had to back out due a foot injury, so Rich and I picked up Lorna in Annapolis that morning. We arrived in our first location south of Odessa about 10:30 am and promptly headed into a wooded area to search for petrified wood. We found some as well as other items like

jasper and some old bottles, but frankly, we were disappointed. The problem was too much ground cover (primarily fallen dead leaves). We had been spoiled on past visits there when we found significant quantities of petrified wood with minimal effort. So, at about 1 pm, we moved to another likely location in a woods that we had visited several years before. This time the ground cover, bushes and briars were very heavy, so we were limited to looking in a small stream. Lorna elected to remain in the truck while Rich and I split up, with him going down stream and me going up stream. For the first 100 yards the water was simply too deep, and I found nothing. Then I came to an area with pieces of rock and large gravel that had been arranged in the stream (by kids?) to create a series of dams and pools of water. "Ah hah!" I thought "…a great place to find a piece of wood." But no luck. Then I spotted a "long skinny" rock in one of the pools about 10" to 12" under the somewhat cloudy water. As I soon found out, the water was ver-r-ry cold (we had seen some ice on puddles earlier) --- but I rolled up my sleeve and reached down and grabbed it. A nice chunk of petrified wood weighing about 2 pounds! Success! That was enough to keep me going and in the next 100 yards of the steam, I found about a dozen more pieces --- half of which were at least as large as the first one. Due to the air temperature of 39 degrees combined with my wet hands from reaching into the stream, I quit about 2 pm because I was getting cold. I headed back to the truck and compared notes with Rich. He had had good luck and spread out a bag of his petrified wood finds up to 5 inches long. I spread out my finds on the tailgate and took a picture.

Then we called Lorna from the truck and when she saw our finds, she was thrilled. Before giving some of my finds to them, I checked over the pieces a bit more carefully and noted that one --- the first one --- seemed especially nice. Then I turned it over and whoa! It had termite holes all over it! Wow!! In all the petrified wood I had, I had found only one tiny little 1-inch piece with a single termite hole. This new

piece had at least 25 termite holes which were of several sizes. This was TRULY A PRIZE. A museum quality specimen --- indeed, a rare one!

Think about it. This petrified wood --- according to the best estimates of the Delaware Geological folks --- was a variety of cypress tree that had been living during the Miocene period (over 5 million years ago) --- and was somehow covered and became petrified. Geologists believe the pieces of petrified wood were later uncovered and re-deposited at some time during the Pleistocene era (as much as 2.5 million years ago). A few of the pieces show signs of water wear due to tumbling in rocky streams. In the vicinity around Odessa, the petrified wood may be found over an area of two- or three-square miles. Just imagine --- in all those pieces scattered all over that large area --- what are the odds of finding one showing extensive termite damage? Termite damage that occurred before it was petrified?! Termites only eat dead trees. In this case, the dead tree had probably been lying on the ground for an extended amount of time. Time enough for it to have been infested with living termites. Then --- and only then --- it was covered up quickly and catastrophically with the rest of the living cypress trees which may have been blown down and buried. Perhaps in a hurricane? Or knocked over and buried by a tsunami? Termites have been around for a long, long time and this petrified wood specimen is proof. Scientists today say termites existed long before the dinosaurs. Anyway, I am delighted to have found this specimen and will display it prominently in my collection.

Continuing our adventure, we headed north to toward Delaware City and crossed over the C&D Canal on DE Rt 9 Reedy Point bridge. We turned left at the end of the bridge and followed the road back south and onto the gravel road running east alongside the canal. We reached our destination about 2:30 that afternoon and parked out of the way with 4 other vehicles already there. When we walked up the gated access road to the spoils area, we were surprised to see a several parked pieces of heavy earthmoving equipment and a large dug out “basin” at least the size of a football field. Obviously, something big was going on. Our little group walked east about 200 yards until I spotted some fossil shells on the surface --- a good indicator that more fossils lay underneath. Looking around, I spotted a piece of belemnite – so we all stopped and started digging and sifting. In a few minutes we found several good pieces of fossil belemnites which, by the way, are the Delaware State Fossil. After about 30 minutes, a young fellow came by and chatted with us --- turns out that he was from Maryland and had heard that this location would soon be covered with dredge spoils from a location that had no fossils. He said everyone was panicking and collecting as many fossils as they could find before the area was covered up and lost.

That explained the 4 other vehicles there. He went on to say he had been having good luck finding the fossil oyster shells a bit further east. I invited him to join our club. After he left, I decided to do some looking further east as well --- but it was mostly a waste of time --- except for a single fossil oyster shell that I found. It was nicely shaped and in good condition. (Later, some research online from the Fossil Guy said it is an exogyra cancellata oyster fossil from the Mount Laurel Formation of the Late Cretaceous period and was 85 to 65 million years old. Amazing what a person can find on the computer.) Anyway, we continued digging and sifting the sand for more belemnites until 4 pm when we decided to call it a day. We all had a good time, and we all found some good specimens.

A trip to the beach by Dave Lines

Yesterday afternoon, I went to Nanjemoy Wildlife Management Area (formerly called Purse State Park) to look for fossils on the beach since tide was very low due to north winds and high barometric pressure.

At 1:00 pm, the air temperature was 24 degrees F and Potomac River water was 40 degrees. Beach was partly frozen in middle part, while upper part unfrozen. Near the water, beach was unfrozen where waves were breaking, but freezing to all obstacles above the water.

Lots of open beach to look for fossils. Note the downed cedars due to recent heavy wet snow that uprooted them."

Can you find the sharks tooth in this picture?

'Rarest of rare' blue diamond expected to fetch nearly $50 million at auction

by Virginia Aabram, Breaking News Reporter
February 19, 2022 06:45 AM
https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/rarest-of-rare-blue-diamond-expected-to-fetch-nearly-50-million-at-auction

The De Beers Cullinan Blue diamond is expected to fetch nearly $50 million at auction in April.
Courtesy Southeby's Asia

A rare blue diamond exceptional in both size and beauty is expected to fetch nearly $50 million when it heads to auction in Hong Kong in the spring.

The "flawless" De Beers Cullinan Blue Diamond is the first of its kind to top 15 carats, according to Sotheby's, which is brokering the sale. Only five other auctioned blue diamonds have ever tipped the scale at more than 10 carats.

The stone received the highest possible color rating, Fancy Vivid Blue, achieved by only 1% of diamonds submitted to the Gemological Institute of America, which also rated its clarity as “internally flawless,” according to the press release.

"Blue diamonds of any kind are rare on the market, but this is the rarest of the rare; nothing of remotely similar caliber has appeared at auction in recent years," Patti Wong, chairman of Sotheby's Asia, said in a statement shared with the *Washington Examiner*. "Brought to dazzling life by the hand of one of the world's most skillful cutters, it is the ultimate masterpiece — as rare and desirable as the very greatest works of art."

The diamond was discovered in the Cullinan diamond mine in South Africa in April 2021. The mine has provided several exceptional blue diamonds, including the 12-carat Blue Moon of Josephine, which in 2015 sold for $48.5 million and holds the record for highest price-per-carat gem sale at auction.

Bruce Cleaver, CEO of De Beers Group, which bought the diamond from the mine, said the De Beers Cullinan Blue is "one of the best" diamonds the company has ever seen.

Sotheby's decision to auction the diamond in Hong Kong reflects the luxury market's shift toward Asia. All but one of the last six Sotheby's blue diamonds were auctioned in Geneva or New York. The number of bidders from Asia participating in Sotheby's auctions has increased by 60% since 2019, with Asian bidders willing to pay double that of bidders elsewhere, the auction house said.

"As the results demonstrate, Asian collectors are a big force in today's art market, and particularly at the top end, where they account for almost half of the activity on higher value lots sold at Sotheby's, worldwide," Wong said in the 2021 regional year-end report. "Their bids carry a lot of punch too: when Asian collectors really want something, they are rarely constrained by auction estimates."

The De Beers Cullinan Blue may fetch far beyond its $48 million estimate when it hits the market in late April.

Odds and Ends

For those that enjoy "**Vintage Rock and Gem**" magazines, go to this website and see some of the years issues gone by!!

https://archive.org/details/rock-gem/2003%20-%2009/ Archival Rock and Gem Magazines - Free for the viewing!!

For a good pictorial of the upcoming trip **to Chestnut Ridge, the following You tube video** will show the challenges and rewards one will have. Contact Dave for more details and interest in the trip!!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NssLCNSnsfQ

Quartz Crystals from Chestnut Ridge, Virginia

2021 DRAFT LIST OF CRITICAL MINERALS

D	Q	V	R	M	U	N	A	H	T	N	A	L	R	D
Y	U	A	N	I	O	B	I	U	M	G	K	U	H	E
S	E	N	C	E	F	B	I	S	M	U	T	H	O	A
P	E	A	M	C	O	B	A	L	T	H	M	A	D	L
R	N	D	U	E	W	D	N	W	E	U	N	O	I	O
O	E	I	L	R	K	I	Y	N	I	T	M	O	U	R
S	T	U	A	I	T	S	I	M	I	U	M	T	M	A
I	S	M	T	U	K	U	Y	M	I	U	H	M	L	P
U	G	H	N	M	M	D	O	N	I	U	M	U	B	S
M	N	I	A	W	O	N	F	N	R	R	M	I	A	R
Z	U	G	T	E	Y	A	A	W	M	I	Q	R	R	B
I	T	H	S	J	H	T	A	S	N	L	Z	T	I	U
N	G	A	L	L	I	U	M	U	Q	Z	K	T	T	L
C	R	J	W	T	F	B	M	K	I	D	L	Y	E	F
P	L	A	T	I	N	U	M	M	U	I	D	I	R	I

26 of the 67 Critical Minerals are in this month's Word Search. Numbers behind each mineral is how they are listed for highest to lowest supply chain risk in the Federal Register. The entire list is found in the Federal Register / Vol 86, No 214 / Tuesday, November 9, 2021 / Notices.

https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/11/09/2021-24488/2021-draft-list-of-critical-minerals

GALLIUM (1)
NIOBIUM (2)
COBALT (3)
NEODYMIUM (4)
RUTHENIUM (5)
RHODIUM (6)
DYSPROSIUM (7)
ALUMINUM (8)
FLUORSPAR (9)
PLATINUM (10)
IRIDIUM (11)
PRASEODYMIUM (12)
CERIUM (13)
LANTHANUM (14)
BISMUTH (15)
YTTRIUM (16)
ANTIMONY (17)
TANTALUM (18)
HAFNIUM (19)
TUNGSTEN (20)
VANADIUM (21)
TIN (22)
TITANIUM (26)
ZINC (27)
BARITE (31)
LEAD (37)

The Southern Maryland Rock and Mineral Club

Meetings take place on the 4th Tuesday of each month at 7:00pm

Held at the OLD WALDORF SCHOOL

Next to the Waldorf JayCees Hall

3074 Crain Highway, Waldorf, MD 20601

North of the RT 301 / RT 5 intersection

We're on the web: SMRMC.ORG

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ITEMS WANTED/FOR SALE

For Sale – Virginia Unakite slabs (approx ¼ inch thick) – $0.50 per square inch (this is half off regular price). Call Dave (240) 427-7062