Southern Maryland Rock and Mineral Club

ROCK TALK OCTOBER 2025

28 OCTOBER 2025 at 1900 (7:00 PM)
Meeting at OLD WALDORF SCHOOL
(next to the Waldorf JayCees Hall)
North of the RT 301 / RT 5 Intersection

OCTOBER PROGRAM

Finds from Pulsifer Quarry in Maine
Bob Farrar

Bob is back from Morocco and will be talking of his trip to Maine with the interesting finds he was able to make. Not to be missed!!

Other Topics during the Business Meeting - **Elections, Show Final Preps, Thanksgiving Meeting date, Xmas Party date and our Meeting Home.** Please be ready for a "short" discussion to allow our speaker to have sufficient time for his presentation.

IN THIS EDITION

Short Recap of the Rock Show
Three Views from Arkansas
White Mineral and Gem Word Search

SMRMC MINUTES

Southern Maryland Rock and Mineral Club September 23, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Submitted by Sue

The meeting was called to order by President Tim Smith at 7:01 pm.

ATTENDANCE – 30; 4 guests (Maria, Bonnie, Martha, Dale)

SECRETARY– August Minutes in Sept Rock Talk. Minutes approved.

TREASURER – Greta reported the treasury was healthy, and paid the room rental for the rock show.

FACEBOOK GROUP – Kurt reported 900 members.

PROGRAMS – Tonight's program is by Dale Greenwaldt, October is Bob Farrar. Dave mentioned he has a lead on a potential speaker but she lives in England and visits family in southern MD periodically. Gary volunteered to do his meteorite program that he did at the Montgomery rock club meeting recently. Jill said she would put him on the list for a 2026 meeting.

FIELD TRIPS – Dave reported on recent and upcoming field trips (see separate attachment). Dave also read a story about a

Fairy Rock found on a field trip several years ago.

Upcoming Field Trips

September 27 to Kyanite Mining Corporation, Willis Mountain Mine in Dillwyn, Virginia to look for kyanite xls (blue, white or gray), irisdescent hematite, UV reactive massive kyanite, pyrite, quartz, rutile and 29 various. Associated minerals.

October 5-13 at Mount Ida, Arizona. Dig quartz crystals for 5 days – plus 4 days dri8ving to and from. Stay at Airbnbs. Each person is responsible for their own expenses, but group(s) can share housing, driving, food, etc. Dig at 4 different quartz crystal mines over a 5-day period: Twin Creeks (2 days), Wegner's Blue Phantom Mine, Ron Colemean mine in Jessieville and Fischer Mountain (Avant Mining). Plus, there is a rock and mineral show on 10/11/12 at the fairgounds in Mount Ida. 18 people have signed up and confirmed.

November 29, Tentative until an official invite is received from the Calvert Marine Museum Fossil Club. Petrified wood trip to Odessa, Delaware.

November and December - TBD. Short Notice Fossil Field Trips to local tidal waters. It depends entirely on weather conditions around the time of full and new moon (which have the lowest predicted tides.) Need a strong NW wind (20 knots or greater) for at least 1 day (2 days are better) to blow water out of the bay... thus exposing more beach for finding fossils. These trips could continue all winter... IF the air/water temperature remain above freezing. November and December are usually the best months.

NEWSLETTER – went out

Membership – 107 (18 juniors)

OLD BUSINESS

1. Auction – Sue read a summary of the results

2. Rock Show – Publicize! Kenny mentioned areas still needing assistance. He would like to set up a table to show off awards the club members have won, such as at the county fair.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. ***Elections*** – most of the current officers have been in their positions 2 or more years and it is time to get new people into those positions. All members, please think about what role you can fill to help lead the club. More discussion next month (elections are in November).

2. ***Meeting dates*** – November's meeting is the Tuesday before Thanksgiving, do we want to move it? Also December's is the Tuesday before Christmas, we need to move it. Tim to check with Sandi in the Old Waldorf School office.

Meeting was adjourned at 8 pm with door prizes donated by Dave, and refreshments provided by Tim and Lorna Smith.

Tonight's program was by Dr Dale Greenwaldt about Mammal Fossils in Montana.

2025 Programs / Refreshments

Volunteers and topics are *desperately* needed to expand all members knowledge in various related topics. Having outside speakers is a great addition to our meetings, so if anyone knows someone that would speak on a relatable topic - **PLEASE** contact Jill. She will appreciate **ANY** and **ALL** leads. Always, members speaking on their adventures/knowledge is ALWAYS enlightening to the members and visitors.

Refreshment volunteers are usually easier for many to accomplish. But Jill still needs to fill the calendar quickly to ensure the meeting attendees stomachs do not growl during the programs.

Please contact Jill with any assistance you desire to extend!

CLUB ELECTIONS in the NEAR FUTURE

The club will be having elections for all club positions in the upcoming months. Many of the "Old Salts" have filled multiple positions to keep the quality of the events and information flowing well throughout the years. We have been able to increase the club's attendance and it's visibility in the Rockhounding world. But some of the "Old Salts" need a break (hint, hint) and are willing to assist the newer members that desire to take on one of the many Club's positions bringing in new ideas and ways forward to further educate all interested in our club. **PLEASE** contact Tim, our outgoing President, as to your desires and how you may contribute to the club.

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2025 PROGRAMS/REFRESHMENTS SCHEDULE

MONTH	PROGRAM	REFRESHMENTS
28 OCT 2025	**Finds from Pulsifer Quarry in Maine - Bob Farrar**	**Carole, Paul, Polly**
25 NOV 2025	**TBA (Possible Tim Smith Special)**	**Diane**
23 DEC 2025	**HOLIDAY PARTY**	**POT LUCK**

For Best information on forecasted Tide Levels
from Dave Lines

Recommend you keep checking the "water levels" on the NOAA website https://tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov/stationhome.html?id=8577330 so you can choose the best location to look for fossils. The water levels at Solomons Island will be similar to the those on the Bay. Purse/Potomac River is 4 hours later. **Good hunting**.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS/ ODDS AND ENDS

NOVEMBER 28 - 30 - ROANOKE, VA. Roanoke Valley Mineral & Gem Society Show. Roanoke Valley Mineral & Gem Society. Salem Civic Center; 1001 Roanoke Boulevard, Salem, VA 24153. Fri -2:00 - 6:00; Sat - 10:00 - 6:00; Sun - 11:00 - 4:00 Website: https://www.rvmgs.org/

NEWS STORIES WITH POSSIBLE INTEREST

Misclassified for 126 Years, This Fossil Fragment Just Revealed One of the Largest Predators of the Triassic—Long Before T. Rex Ruled the Earth
https://dailygalaxy.com/2025/09/fossil-fragment-just-revealed-one-of-the-largest-predators-of-the-triassic/

Scientists Just Found a Fossil That Rocked the Cretaceous, It Ate Dinosaurs With Teeth Unlike Anything Ever Seen
https://dailygalaxy.com/2025/09/scientists-found-fossil-it-ate-dinosaurs/

Angola seeks to buy minority stake in diamond company De Beers
https://www.ft.com/content/7b0b6880-d7c0-4b7f-b185-cd969c08dea2

Oklahoma family finds nearly three-carat brown diamond at Arkansas' Crater of Diamonds State Park
https://www.kark.com/news/state-news/oklahoma-family-finds-nearly-three-carat-brown-diamond-at-arkansas-crater-of-diamonds-state-park/

Indiana couple unearths rare white diamond at Crater of Diamonds State Park
https://www.independent.co.uk/bulletin/news/diamond-arkansas-state-park-b2841332.html

3 of the Most Famous Fancy Colored Diamonds in History
https://www.naturaldiamonds.com/historic-diamonds/fancy-colored-diamond/

GIA Spots Similar Star Shapes in Two Diamonds
https://rapaport.com/news/gia-spots-similar-star-shapes-in-two-diamonds/

Confirmed by National Geographic - two diamonds found hundreds of kilometers underground reveal a secret of the earth's mantle depths
https://unionrayo.com/en/diamonds-found-underground/

It's As Big As a Softball: How Does Botswana Produce So Many Super-Sized Diamonds?
https://explorersweb.com/its-as-big-as-a-softball-how-does-botswana-produce-so-many-super-sized-diamonds/

It's official—a 2,488-carat diamond, the second largest ever found, has been discovered in Botswana, and its destination could be a museum or a royal palace
https://www.lagradaonline.com/us/diamond-second-largest-found-botswana/

Cracking the code of kimberlite eruptions: How diamonds make their rapid ascent
https://phys.org/news/2025-09-code-kimberlite-eruptions-diamonds-rapid.html

20-Year Dream Comes True: Chemists Grow Diamonds With an Electron Beam
https://scitechdaily.com/20-year-dream-comes-true-chemists-grow-diamonds-with-an-electron-beam/

Earth needs a billion years, China needs a week — More than 20,000,000 roll off the line
https://www.eldiario24.com/en/china-outpaces-earth-in-production/21949/

World's Oldest Intact Reptile Skin Found in Ancient Cave — This Fossil Is Older Than the Dinosaurs
https://dailygalaxy.com/2025/09/world-oldest-reptile-skin-found-in-cave/

Visualized: Over 100 Minerals and Gems Ranked by Hardness
https://www.visualcapitalist.com/cp/minerals-and-gems-ranked-by-hardness/

BLM approves gold mining project near Goldfield
https://www.2news.com/news/nevada/blm-approves-gold-mining-project-near-goldfield/article_583c9f2d-69a1-40b1-83ae-98341d1492e9.html

These countries control 99% of Earth's industrial diamond mines
https://www.earth.com/news/these-five-countries-account-for-99-percent-of-earths-natural-industrial-diamond-mines/

Rare Gold Nuggets Worth $700,000 Stolen From Paris' Natural History Museum in Brazen Heist
https://apple.news/A3gGP8A_aQZuoR7_ROK04pg

Evidence of 'Doomsday comet' that wiped out forgotten civilization 12,800 years ago found in US
https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-15089805/Evidence-Doomsday-comet-wiped-forgotten-civilization-12-800-years-ago-US.html

A man kept a rock for years thinking it was gold—but it turned out to be far more valuable
https://www.complexionsdance.org/a-man-kept-a-rock-for-years-thinking-it-was-gold-but-it-turned-out-to-be-far-more-valuable-49393/

Edelman Fossil Park Reveals New Jersey's Prehistoric Treasures
https://www.popularmechanics.com/science/a66068517/new-jersey-fossil-discoveries/

Nine Million-Year-Old Fossil Sea Creatures Discovered Under School Grounds
https://dailygalaxy.com/2025/10/fossil-creature-found-under-school-grounds/

Newly Released Map Reveals the Largest Gold Reserves in the U.S.—Some States Striking It Rich
https://dailygalaxy.com/2025/10/newly-released-map-reveals-the-largest-gold-reserves-in-the-u-s-some-states-striking-it-rich/

Geologists discover the first evidence of 4.5-billion-year-old "proto Earth" | MIT News | Massachusetts Institute of Technology
https://news.mit.edu/2025/geologists-discover-first-evidence-45-billion-year-old-proto-earth-1014

Scientists unearth a 112-million-year-old time capsule filled with ancient insects
https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2025/10/251011105524.htm

Geologists discover a deposit of more than 1,000 tons of gold
https://www.earth.com/news/hunan-geologists-discover-a-deposit-of-more-than-1000-tons-of-gold/

190-Million-Year-Old Sea Monster Named The "Dragon Sword Of Dorset" Bridges A Pivotal Gap In The Jurassic Timeline
https://www.iflscience.com/190-million-year-old-sword-dragon-of-dorset-likely-the-worlds-most-complete-pliensbachian-reptile-81113

Researchers Have Found the Most Perfectly Preserved Dome-Headed Dinosaur Fossil Ever Discovered
https://dailygalaxy.com/2025/10/perfectly-preserved-dome-headed-fossil/

Rare earth elements found in coal mines
https://www.earth.com/video/rare-earth-elements-found-in-coal-mines/

Microdiamonds discovered in the first three exploratory drill holes
https://www.earth.com/news/microdiamonds-discovered-in-the-first-three-exploratory-drill-holes-of-a-new-deposit/

Incredibly valuable deposit of "white gold" discovered in the U.S.
https://www.earth.com/news/incredibly-valuable-deposit-of-white-gold-lithium-brine-discovered-in-us-arkansas/

New Species of Abelisaurid Dinosaur Discovered in Argentina
https://www.sci.news/paleontology/vitosaura-colozacani-14260.html

Historic discovery in Ecuador—insects trapped in amber 112 million years ago reveal what life was like during the age of the dinosaurs
https://www.lagradaonline.com/us/ecuador-insects-trapped-amber/

Everyone throws it away, but it contains 22-karat gold that could be worth thousands of dollars
https://www.leravi.org/everyone-throws-it-away-but-it-contains-22-karat-gold-that-could-be-worth-thousands-of-dollars-15044/

Incredibly detailed map of Earth's seafloors created from space
https://www.earth.com/news/incredibly-detailed-maps-of-earths-seafloors-created-from-space-nasa-swot-satellite/

New species of carnivorous dinosaur discovered in Argentina
https://www.jpost.com/archaeology/article-871059

New Species of Dome-Headed Dinosaur Identified in Montana
https://www.sci.news/paleontology/brontotholus-harmoni-14294.html

Recreational topographic USGS maps are now free to download
https://www.earth.com/news/recreational-usgs-topographic-maps-available-build-and-download-for-free/

Scientists discover hidden underground oases beneath the shrinking Great Salt Lake
https://www.leravi.org/scientists-discover-hidden-underground-oases-beneath-the-shrinking-great-salt-lake-15594/

Scientists obtain detailed maps of earthquake-triggering high-pressure subsurface fluids
https://physicsworld.com/a/scientists-obtain-detailed-maps-of-earthquake-triggering-high-pressure-subsurface-fluids/

United States Antimony Starts Mining at Stibnite Hill, 4 Loads
https://www.stocktitan.net/news/UAMY/united-states-antimony-corporation-announces-mining-operations-2b9t8qpqiant.html

Near-Complete Fossil in Argentina Is One of The World's Oldest Dinosaurs
https://www.sciencealert.com/near-complete-fossil-in-argentina-is-one-of-the-worlds-oldest-dinosaurs

New map reveals what rocks and sediments are beneath your feet
https://www.earth.com/news/new-map-reveals-us-geological-features-rocks-and-sediments-beneath-your-feet/

Amateur paleontologist opens fossil museum in rural Minnesota
https://www.popsci.com/science/amateur-paleontologist-opens-fossil-museum-in-rural-minnesota/

New ichthyosaur species with robust ribs discovered in Jurassic clay pit
https://phys.org/news/2025-09-ichthyosaur-species-robust-ribs-jurassic.html

This Rock Is Not From Earth, And We Can Finally Reveal Its Story
https://www.sciencealert.com/this-rock-is-not-from-earth-and-we-can-finally-reveal-its-story

NASA confirms a giant dam shifted Earth's axis and made days shorter
https://www.africaninspace.com/science/nasa-confirms-a-giant-dam-shifted-earths-axis-and-made-days-shorter-49214/

Paleontologists Discover New Species of Iguanodontian Dinosaur
https://www.sci.news/paleontology/carioecus-bocagei-14234.html

Hunting Ancient Species: Prehistoric Shark Teeth Can Be Found at Public Lands Near You - Southern Maryland News Net
https://smnewsnet.com/archives/551815/hunting-ancient-species-prehistoric-shark-teeth-can-be-found-at-public-lands-near-you/

Tourist from New York finds a diamond the size of a human tooth
https://www.earth.com/news/tourist-from-new-york-finds-a-diamond-stone-the-size-of-a-human-tooth/

SHOW RECAP
by Kenny Jameson

Congratulations on hosting another wonderful and successful Rock and Mineral Show. On October 4th, 2025 we wrapped up the Southern MD Rock, Mineral and Fossil Show. This was the 4th show held at

the Old Waldorf School, and the most successful. The attendance was better than last year. Every table was rented and filled. The Club showed a profit. The customers had a good time and showed a lot of interest in the variety of vendors. The vendors "brought their A game" along with a variety of products priced to sell. They showed great satisfaction in the event expressing much positive feedback along with expressing commitments for next year.

Many reported an increase in sales from the year before. Some even more than double the sales from last year. Which was already a large increase from the year before. And most important of all The SOMD Rock and Mineral Club made a huge impression on the community. There is a lot more interest generated for our club. Even new members.

This was made possible because of a countless number of our Club Members. I can't list all of the names that helped to make this the best show yet because there were so many. Helping to set the tables up, take them down, putting signs out, providing food and drinks for the volunteers and vendors, running errands, check in's, greeting customers, answering questions about our club, promoting, being a club ambassador. On and on. It may not take a village, but it did take a club to make this happen. So thank you (insert name here)!

You know who you are. It was your engagement, excitement and positivity that helped create an open and welcome environment for customers to come and stay and engage with the vendors and club members. It was an honor for me to be a part of this.

Thank you again. We are all already looking forward to next year!

Twin Creek Pocket Dig on October 8, 2025

by Tom Zunino

Well before our trip to Mount Ida, Arkansas, Dave Lines and I went back and forth about purchasing a pocket dig. A few weeks before the trip, we made the commitment and reserved the dig. I was very happy with this decision and hopeful that it would pay off.

We arrived at the Twin Creek Mine at 9:00am on October 8th. It was a beautiful fall day with total cloud cover, and I was feeling very positive about this dig. We met the mine owner, Bobby Fecho, at the office trailer. After introductions and paying for our pocket, Bobby instructed us to follow him in our truck to the lower section of his mine. This was a good omen for two reasons. First, Dave told me many times that the best collecting is in the lower mine. Second, the lower mine had been shut down to collecting for a long time. Bobby just got access to this section of the mine a few days before our dig. Things were looking really good.

As we drove into the mine, I was generally concerned about taking my mid-size truck down these washed out and steep mine roads. I keep thinking I had 1,300 miles to travel to get back home and my truck needed to be in top condition. We finally made it to the dig site and Bobby showed us our pocket. It was a large area where he had removed about 20 feet of sandstone to get down

to the crystallization zone. As he explained the details of how the pocket

was situated and running, he said with a sincere smile, “this is where my very best specimens come from.”

Dave had experience digging in this mine, so he jumped right in and got to work. This was my first time digging in this area and I must say it looked intimidating. To easy my concerns Bobby took the time to show me how to approach the pocket. He explained the importance of widening the pocket to make room to work. Then he proceeded to show me how this is done. I must say his techniques were very helpful and a great learning experience.

As I got to work, I first removed sandstone from the right side of the quartz vein that I was following. This was hard rock mining with hammer, chisel and a pry bar. To widen the work area, you are digging straight down all along the length of the area you are digging. Within the first half hour, I dug to a point where the pocket widened, and it was filled with sticky red clay. At this point I starting using my deer antler and plastic garden tools to remove the clay. As I carefully removed the clay, I started seeing flashes of crystal faces gazing up at me through the clay.

My mind started racing as I was deciding how to extract these crystals

from their home without doing damage to everything. I kept thinking that this is the first time these crystals are seeing daylight and I am the first person on earth to see them and to have the opportunity to touch and hold them. I didn't want to mess this up by breaking or dinging these beauties as I attempted to loosen the grip of the compacted sticky clay. My approach was slow and steady, using the tip of a deer antler to remove the clay from the tops and sides of each crystal. There were about ten crystals showing and each facing upwards. As I worked, I exposed more and more of the actual crystal. These were all large crystals that appeared black in color as they were embedded in the clay. I knew from experience that this most likely meant they were very clear specimens. One by one I loosened them and carefully wiggled them from their home. When I got the first one out, it was amazing. It was approximately 3 inches long and 2 inches in diameter. As I removed just enough of the clay from the smooth surfaces, I could see it was clear as water. I yelled over to Dave and held it high into the air, "check out this beauty". Dave looked up and over my way and said: "way to go, keep digging." So I did. It turned out that this pocket was a real honey hole. It was about a foot wide, 2 feet long and just kept going down. Layer after layer of crystals, some loose in the clay and others attached to the sides. I did my best to carefully remove all that I could as I worked this hole the rest of the day.

At the end of the day, I had 4 flats of crystals to show for my work. I was completely worn out but the adrenalin rush was still going strong. I was one happy camper and could not wait to see these specimens cleaned.

One last thought takes me back to the beginning when we were trying to decide about doing this dig. There are no guarantees if you do it. So, is a pocket dig worth it or not? Is it worth your precious time and hard-earned money? From a monetary point of view, I'm not sure. I don't buy or sell specimens, so I don't know the value of these things. Everything in my collection I have collected myself. However, from a lasting memory and experience point of view, the answer is definitely yes. After all, it is the adventure of possibly making that great find that keeps us going back to the field to collect. A pocket dig increases the potential of opening that treasure chest and experiencing the thrill of exposing crystals for the first time. The experience of being the first human to see and hold one of these wonders of this beautiful world we share, is certainly well worth it to me and is a memory for a lifetime.

Mount Ida Arkansas 2025

by Dave Lines.

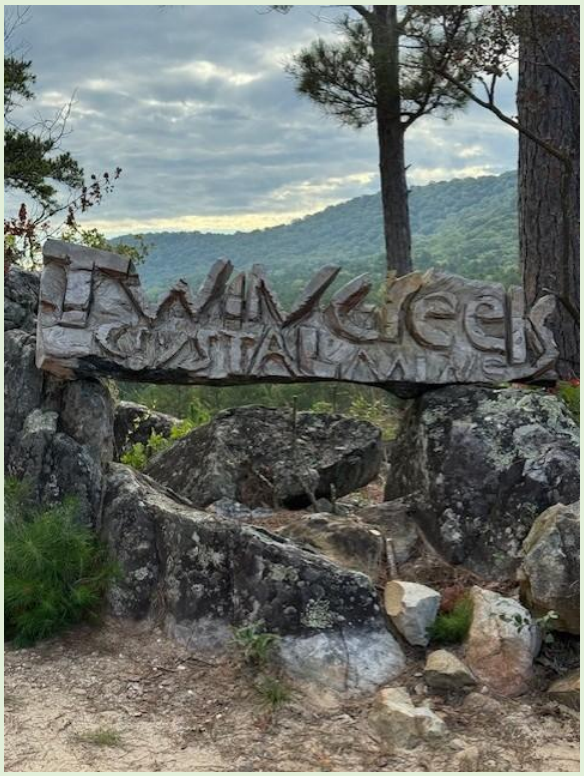
Photos taken by Renee, Harry, Tina, Tom, Paula, Rich, and Dave.

1,132 miles by car each way from La Plata. Or by plane to Little Rock, then rent a car. It all started late last winter in conversation with Southern Maryland Rock and Mineral Club member Tom Zunino. He wanted to dig some nice Arkansas quartz crystals for his rock collection --- all of which he had self-collected. So, we started talking with others about a trip to Mount Ida. Amazingly, there seemed to be a lot of serious interest. If we went, it would be our club's third trip there --- our first was 20 years ago in October 2005 for the World Championship Quartz Crystal Dig. The second was in 2018 when 13 members competed in the 31st Annual contest --- and brought home a handsome trophy for First Place in the Club Division. Sadly, the contest stopped in 2020 due to COVID

concerns and is no longer. So, for 2025, we decided to offer visits to several different mines, spread over several days. For added interest, we would schedule the trip to coincide with the local rock and mineral show held on the second weekend of October.

After several months of research, planning, and many phone calls to the various mines (mostly done by Tom Zunino), we emailed our club a very detailed description of each quartz mine --- address, fees, hours of operation, rules, and so forth. Each attendee would be responsible for providing their own living accommodation, food and transportation. We then set up a proposed schedule of visits to 4 different mines over 5 days. Bottom line --- 17 club members (Tom, Harry, Tina, Greta, Becky, Marie, Joe, Paula, Ralph B., Mike S., Lorna L., Faye (Lorna's sister), Rich, Renee, Debbie, Diane E., and Dave) signed up and went on this trip!

Day One was at the Twin Creek Mine where some decided to pay the general admission $25 fee to search for crystals in the designated area which was several acres in size. Some elected to pay a $100 fee to search the "commercial" portion of the mine. Rich and I went a step further and shared a $300 "pocket dig". It was in the very top of the mine behind a roped off area adjacent to a 15-foot highwall. It was a quartz vein that trended vertically (straight down). Where the vein widened from 2 to 4 inches to 8 to 12 inches, crystals could be found in sticky red clay which filled each of several pockets. We used deer antlers to carefully remove the clay (because the antlers were softer than quartz and would not damage the crystals). Some of the crystals were free floating in the clay and some were firmly attached to the pocket wall. Many of the crystals had been broken by previous earthquakes through the millennia.



Since the weather was hot that afternoon (86 degrees), Rich and I set up our 10' x 10' pop-up tent for shade. That was a big help. Rich found a good pocket which kept producing more crystals the deeper he dug. Unfortunately, nearly all the crystals were firmly attached to the matrix, and it was almost impossible to remove them without some damage. Nevertheless, we both found some very nice specimens up to 3 inches long and 1-1/2 inches in diameter

In our roped-off pocket area, there was also a vertical wall of exposed crystals about 4 feet tall and 6 feet long that interested me. Later in the afternoon, I decided to try to collect crystals from that wall. The matrix rock throughout the mine is sandstone which is relatively soft. The exposed sheet of crystals was on the very outside edge of a "shelf" of the matrix which extended out about 8 inches from the highwall. My plan was to break off the entire shelf. I started hammering a pointed chisel into the sandstone along the back edge of this shelf until I created a narrow crack that went down vertically. Then I hammered a thin flat bladed chisel into that crack to widen the crack. Eventually, I set 4 flat chisels in a line along the lengthening crack and began to hammer them down. The sound of success for a series of steel chisels as they are hammered down into the matrix is different tones with increasingly louder and higher pitches --- something like "*bong, bong, bong, bing, bing, bing*". Those sounds mean the crack is

beginning to deepen and the matrix rock is splitting. I spread several layers of newspapers on the ground below this wall to catch the crystals where they would fall. I continued to hammer the chisels until a 2-foot-wide section of the shelf broke off and I eased it down the newspapers. I repeated this process twice more. (Much later back at our Airbnb, I used a small chisel and hammer to remove most of the matrix attached to the crystals.)

Since Rich and I stayed in our pocket area all day, I did not have the opportunity to check with all the rest of our group, so I do not know what everyone found. We talked with Harry and Tina who wisely searched for crystals in the shade from the tall trees in the upper right section of the general admission area. The main reason they chose the shade was for their poodle "Karma". Tina reported that they found some excellent clusters and singles. I received some emailed pictures from Renee and Tom who were in the "commercial section" of the mine. Tom showed me some of the clear quartz "jewelry points" up to finger sized that he found there.

As a group, everyone found some quartz crystals with varied degrees of success.

The next day, some of our group (Joe, Paula, Ralph B., Harry and Tina) decided to go to Ron Coleman's Quartz Mine up in Jessieville (30 miles northeast of Mount Ida) to dig in the large tailings area. They reported that they did poorly until a bulldozer came in the late afternoon and stirred up the piles. That changed their luck to "very successful". They also witnessed a man who found a too-big-to-carry cluster of large crystals in the very muddy loads of tailings dumped by the staff that day. Harry and Tina said that "Karma" laid down several places in the shade of large rocks in the dry tailings piles –- and whenever Karma got up each time, they found crystals where she had been laying. Great rockhound!

Day Two for the rest of our group was spent at Twin Creek again. Tom and I purchased a BIG pocket in the "Lower" portion of the Twin Creek Mine. As a related aside, I have considered the mine owner Bobby Fecho to be a friend for over 20 years. It began in Quartzite, Arizona, when I purchased a high-quality quartz "burr*" from him. *("Burr" = a cluster of quartz crystals that has crystals on every surface for 360 degrees and has only one small attachment point.) Bobby, and then Mount Ida Chamber of Commerce representative Maureen Walthers, invited me to the 2005 World Championship Quartz Crystal Dig. That year we (club) went to his family's mine at Fiddler's Ridge where we dug crystals both prior to the contest and later for each day of the 3-day contest. Through the years, I remained loyal to Bobby and in each of the four additional Championship Digs that I participated in, I only dug in the mines that Bobby was associated with. Thus, when Tom set up this special pocket dig with Bobby, I knew it would be a good experience. When Bobby led us into the lower mine, I immediately recognized the area. But 20 feet of rock had been removed from above the pocket area. I remember that in 2018 Joe had dug crystals almost exactly above the same pocket area where Bobby now led us. It was also where the winning entries for the 2018 Contest were dug. It was a super location for finding high quality crystals.

Bobby showed us the limits of our pocket area and recommended where to start digging. There were 5 holes in a straight line in the main quartz vein. These stretched for 30 feet. Tom was at one end,

and I was at the other. [Note: Tom has written an excellent first-hand account of this fabulous pocket dig in a stand-alone article following this Trip Report.] My hole was a huge pocket (2 feet wide and 6 feet long) of sticky red clay laced with small broken pieces of crystals. The bottom of this hole was at least 8 feet *below* the surface of the nearby access road. That meant I must dig down, fill a 5-gallon bucket, then climb up, and empty it --- repeatedly. I first removed about a foot of loose dirt and clay covering the pocket and started to find sticky red pocket clay. A good sign. At the end of my hole closest to Tom, I uncovered a few crystals as floaters in the clay. As I dug deeper (slowly with a deer antler), I started uncovering the tips of quartz crystals. At one time I had the points and sides of 6 or 7 crystals up to 2 inches in diameter all showing. Sweet

Tom took a video of me trying to remove them. Unfortunately, as it turned out, I realized that they were all very firmly attached to a solid quartz matrix wall. If I had had a thin diamond coated wire, I might have "sawed" them off. As it was, I spent several hours digging around them only to find that I must sacrifice some of them to remove the others. I collected about a flat of crystals from that area. Then I returned to the larger area of the pocket hole and spent two full hours digging down another 18 inches into the sticky red clay, hoping to find some crystals. It was hard work digging that pocket clay and getting the removed material out of that hole and throwing it far enough up the ever-steepening bank, so that it would not roll back down into my hole. I understand that there are no guarantees when digging into a pocket. I have already had my share of good finds in the past, so I was not disappointed. I was very happy that Tom was having fun removing excellent quality crystals from his hole. Since we had to finish the pocket dig and be out of the mine by 3:30 pm, we decided to stop at 2:00 pm and divide our finds. Tom had first choice. It took us over an hour to complete. As we went along, we wrapped our crystals in old

newspaper for protection against damage. The slightest damage can ruin a specimen. Overall, it was an excellent pocket dig, and I am glad we did it.

That evening for supper, all of us gathered in downtown Mount Ida at “Shack Attack Pizza” for the all-you-could-eat family night buffet held each Wednesday evening. A great salad bar and pizza of many types and flavors. Their dessert pizza

tasted like a Cinnabon. The bargain cost of $12.50 per person included soda with unlimited refills. Another bonus was that former club member and now Mount Ida resident Jennifer Knies joined us around 7:30 pm so we could catch up with her and her husband David. The evening was a lot of fun.

On Day Three of our adventure, we all met at Wegner's Ranch at 8:30 am to go to their Blue Phantom Mine. The trip required a minimum of 15 people (reserved and paid for in advance --– special thanks to Tom for setting this up and paying for all of us in advance and then being reimbursed by each of us.) We took several "group pictures" –--- *none of which included all 17 of us*.

It was truly like herding cats. There were too many distractions and attractions. The sales office/showroom in the barn at Wegner's was worth a visit while we waited. They also had several tables of various crystals and rocks outside for sale. There were numerous specimens of locally dug quartz crystals of all sizes on display all around the Barn area. Also, newly dug specimens from the Blue Phantom Mine still covered with sticky red clay were being unloaded and laid behind the Barn. Also, there was a magnificent 15-foot-tall sculpture of "Michael the Archangel" meticulously carved and polished from a large 150-year-old white oak tree that had died. Lots to see.

WEGNER
CRYSTAL
RANCH

At 9:30 am we boarded a small school bus and began a 40 minute very bumpy ride over a rough woods' road to the Blue Phantom Mine. We arrived, had a safety brief, unloaded, and spread out to search the tailings area which covered about 4 acres.

Lots of big and small rocks and plenty of red dirt. There were also plenty of crystals of clear, yellow, and phantom quartz –-- although many were broken or damaged, one could find good crystals with persistence. Techniques varied. Digging, surface searching, breaking open rocks. It was a sunny and very warm day with the high temperature reaching 87 degrees.

By noon, many of us had retreated to the shade of the trees along the edges of the collection area where we continued to search for crystals. We all boarded the bus by 2:00 pm for the return trip. Everyone found something worthwhile. After leaving Wegner's, Rich and I headed back to Mount Ida to check out the Rock show as it was setting up. We found a few vendors willing to sell us some specimens. Then we returned to our Airbnb where we spent a couple of hours cleaning and trimming some finds from Day One.

Day Four was a visit to the Ron Coleman Quartz Mine in Jessieville on the northeast side of Lake Ouachita about 30 miles away. We arrived about 9:00 am along with many other hopeful customers. The admission fee of $25 was reduced for Seniors, then reduced more for those who were also retired from the Military to only

$16.50. Wow. The mine was a very deep, very large hole. The tailings (now a hilltop) had been dumped nearby continually since WWII. This was an active mine, and they were still dumping tailings in the same 10-acre area

When we arrived, people were everywhere searching for and finding crystals. Many people were digging into the piles to find crystals. Some of the freshest tailings were very wet and covered with black mud. Everything in those wet piles was black and indistinguishable. The technique used by those who chose to get really dirty was to wade in and feel through the mud until they found a crystal. Those who participated found some great crystals. One lady (her first time digging) found a huge white crystal of about 10 pounds in size. She was covered in mud from head to toe --- and very happy with her find.

I "found" a large pile of clean crystals in a road rut dumped there by a pair of men who had searched through another nearby mud pile and washed their finds in a bucket of water, selected the best, and dumped the remainder in the road. I called Rich by phone to join me. Harry came along and picked up a bunch with us. Within 30 minutes there was not a crystal left. The entire mining operation was a beehive of activity --- a museum, a showroom of beautiful and very pricey quartz crystals, customers constantly entering and leaving the tailings area, tours of the mine in a noisy old 2-1/2 ton army truck, two very active ziplines over the quarry, several large dumps of new tailings, and dozens of people crawling all over the piles finding crystals. People were finding all sizes and types of rocks ---– matrix quartz, small and large clusters, and single crystals. Several folks had homemade contraptions used to transport large quantities of rocks and crystals from the tailings area back to their vehicles. It was a busy place.

Despite all this fun, Rich and I decided to leave around 2 pm and head back to the Mount Ida rock show. We stopped at one of the "county line" (**) liquor stores to get some empty beer flats for our finds. The guy there, who was very friendly, gave us a big pile of flats. (**Mount Ida and Montgomery County are "dry" and have no liquor stores.) At the rock show, we visited many of the 30 vendors set up in a great location in a large field beside the main road (US Rt 270). We also talked with many local vendors and customers to get a sense of the best places to dig crystals. We shopped until they closed around 5 pm, then returned to our Airbnb.

The intel gathered at the rock show led me to change our plans for Day Five on Saturday. We selected a location about 1 hour 20 minutes away nearer to Hot Springs on a 200-acre family farm in Paron. The cost of $30 per person was similar to Avant Mine on Fisher Mountain, but the difference was that instead of looking through picked over tailings, we would be digging in the woods for virgin quartz veins. The place was called the "Willie Rickard Rock Farm". It sounded good, but the reality was disappointing. We and many other people (including a couple from Stafford Virginia who were interested in joining our club) met at 10 am at the Paron Community Center (a very run-down, dirty, former school building), signed waivers, and paid our fees. Then we caravanned for fifteen minutes and parked in a small field

and walked 200 yards into the woods. The owner showed us a series of 8-foot-deep holes that he had dug by hand around huge white quartz boulders which followed a quartz vein through the woods. Several large (4-to-5-inch diameter) white and cloudy quartz crystals could clearly be seen attached to the sides of these boulders. He allowed us to go down into the hole if we wanted to "dig" --– but only by his rules –-- which meant he allowed us only one very thin piece of stiff wire to carefully remove the hard clay around the crystals. Basically, we were working for him. Some of our group started digging in his tailings and some dug in his holes. I decided to look elsewhere. White quartz rock was scattered all through the woods. I selected a location where the owner or someone had removed about 2 feet of dirt and rocks from a hole about 10 feet across. It looked like it was a part of the main quartz vein, so I planned to continue digging down in that hole. I jumped in, removed the surface dirt and all the rocks that I could lift. I uncovered a very large boulder of massive white quartz on one side of the hole. I dug on the open side of that boulder. I could see several small crystals in the quartz, but I left them. For over 2 hours, I dug straight down with my pick and digging bar almost another 2 feet deeper. My final hole was 4 feet long and 3 feet wide and 4 feet below the surface.

Since we were supposed to leave around 4 pm, I stopped digging down around 3:30 pm and began using my digging bar to break off the smaller (1 foot diameter) pieces of white quartz somewhat attached to the large boulder. Some of the quartz was rotten and easier to remove. For my efforts, I recovered several very narrow veins of small quartz crystals. Nothing to brag about, but they gave me a sense of accomplishment. Near the end of

my digging, the owner came and watched me dig. He was amazed and pleased with my progress. Rich received permission to drive his truck back into the woods near me, so our load up was brief and efficient. Everyone else had already departed. We returned to our Airbnb, showered, packed most of Rich's truck for the trip back to Maryland, then headed to Mount Ida for Saturday night dinner at the local Mexican restaurant. The food was plentiful and delicious.

Our rock trip to Arkansas was safe, fun, and productive. Everyone in our group said they had enjoyed it. Some asked if we could plan more long trips to other places like the Southeast, or out West. Time will tell.

Editor's Crazy time

As all know, I do things a "little different" from time to time. Actions that make one scratch their head and sometime a thought about my sanity. Believe Einstein may have once said "there is a fine line between sheer genius and insanity"...yep, I cross that line repetitively! So... on my truck bed there is a cup that made it from Southern Maryland to Arkansas and back over the nine day trip. A multitude of people did try to get our attention of the coffee cup left on the truck bed. I have to post the pic!

Your safety is YOUR responsibility

by Joe Davis

On a recent field trip to Arkansas, I was involved in an incident where I was nearly crushed by two large boulders. Let me explain.

We were collecting crystals at the Ron Coleman mine. At the Coleman you dig through tailing piles dumped in a mountain of a pile. They have been dumping on this pile for the last 75 years according to the nice young lady that checked us in. We were told that crystals are heavy and they settle so it is best to dig a low hole and work forward.

The "dumps" are random. When the mine has enough dirt in their way, they fill a large earth moving style dump truck

and bring it to the top of the tailings pile and dump into an area much like a hard packed dirt parking lot. People descend like crocs going after the lone wildebeast at a river crossing. There is much pushing and jockeying for a position hoping to find the largest crystals in the pile. If a new dump is done, they leave the old dump and run to the new one and the jockeying starts all over.

On the day in question, I had already been to the Coleman mine two other times during this trip. I decided to find a quiet place, a pile towards the back and work at a leisurely pace. I was finding some crystals so I was happy. I spent five hours working the same hole. I worked down to the hard packed lot and worked forward. During those five hours there were at least two dumps. One off to the left of me, and one to the right. The state of Texas has a fall break and all of the children are out of school. It seemed that all of them came to the mine. When there was a dump, the adults ignored their children and let them do anything. I had small children throw rocks at me, climb into the hole with me, and one even tried to walk off with my tools.

Let's get back to the safety issue. One of the mine employees saw me and recognized me from the previous days. I had been zip lining and this employee was working the zip line the day that I did it. He asked if I was doing well collecting. He then proceeded to tell me that he was expecting a dump to come soon. He walked away but came back to tell me that there would be no dump because the dump truck driver was now operating the loader. Within less than ten minutes I heard a truck coming. The mine does tours with old military trucks so I was expecting it to be a tour. To my surprise it was the dump truck and he was heading toward me. It all happened so fast, I tried to pick up my tools and get out of the hole but after five hours of sitting on my legs I was a little slow. (I am over 60 and my legs were stiff). The driver started dumping before he even stopped. Two boulders that were at the back of the truck fell off and were coming right at me. Luckily, they hit a large boulder that I had in my hole. They sounded like billiard balls when they struck the boulder in the hole. With a rush of adrenaline, I scrambled out of the hole with my bag of tools. The only injury that I suffered was ripping the tip of my fingernail off at some time during the scramble. While I was trying to get out of the hole all of the by-standers were screaming for the driver to stop. The only thing that he said was "When the truck comes you gotta move."

I immediately went to the mine office and asked to speak to someone in charge. I was told that the owner could not be reached because he goes to church on Sundays. A manager spoke with me and said: "Let me see what I can do for you." He walked away and returned about five minutes later. He said: "All I can tell you is that when a dump comes you got to get out of the way."

I was furious. I told him that I would never return to their mine. Paula and I packed our gear and left.

I was going to call the mine owner. I was going to call OSHA. I was going to write a bad review. I was blaming everyone but me. After calming down (which took more than one day), I did some reflecting. Who is responsible for my safety? Me and me

alone. I never should have stayed in a hole for five hours and let my legs go to sleep. I should have moved the first time the children caused my wall to collapse or when they took my tools. I should have selected a site far from where they were dumping. I probably should have picked a safer mine. But my safety is my responsibility. No one else is going to do as good of a job at it as I can. The Ron Coleman is a working mine. If you go there, you will find crystals. If you go there, beware because your safety is **YOUR** responsibility. As for me, I am going to keep to my word and never return to the Ron Coleman.

SUNDAY 2 NOV 2025

CLOCKS FALL BACK QNE HOUR

AT 2:00 AM

Sunday, November 16, 2025. 2:30 free *public lecture by CMM Research Associate* ***Stephen Groff****, in the Harms Gallery at the Calvert Marine Museum. Stephen will present on the discovery of tiny but incredibly well-preserved* ***Miocene fossil pea crabs from along Calvert Cliffs****.*

CMM Department of Paleontology Research Associate, ***Stephen Groff.***

WHITE MINERALS AND GEMS - OCTOBER 2025

By Rich Simcsak

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

Theses are few of the **WHITE** Minerals and Gems one can find in the world.

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CALCITE
CATS EYE MOONSTON(E)
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GOLD RUTILE
GOSHENITE
JADE
KYANITE
MAGNESITE
MOISSANITE
OPAL
ONYX
PREHNITE
RAINBOW MOONSTON(E)
SAPPHIRE
SCAPOLITE
SCOLECITE
SELENITE
SPAR
TOPAZ
WATER PEARL
ZIRCON

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

Nothing at this time.....

We all realize we have a little too much of a good thing and must share those items with others - but at a cost.

If any member wants to sell material to other club members, they can request to post it here for other club members to evaluate if they really need it for their collection / needs..

Contact the ROCK TALK Editor for advertising space!!