



THE NORTHERN VIRGINIA MINERAL CLUB INC



Crystals are the flowers of the Mineral Kingdom



THE MINERAL NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 50 No. 4

APRIL 2009

Find information also on our Club Website:
<http://www.mineralclub.org>

MARS

For the April meeting, Dr. John Grant will be giving a presentation about Mars. Dr. Grant is a Geologist and Chairman of the Center for Earth and Planetary Studies at the Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum. He is a member of the science team for the Mars Exploration Rovers, now in their fifth year of exploring Mars, and the HiRISE high resolution camera orbiting on the Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter. He is also co-leading activities geared towards selecting the landing site for the Mars Science Laboratory to be launched in

2011. At our April meeting, he will be talking about the travels of the Mars Exploration Rovers as they seek out and investigate evidence for past water and potentially habitable conditions that may have once existed on ancient Mars. He will also show examples of the fantastic landforms on Mars that can be resolved at the sub-meter resolution of the HiRISE camera.

Please join us at 7:45 pm at the Long Branch Nature Center in Arlington on Monday April 27th for this program.

NVMC Schedule:

- 25 April Sterling Hill Super Dig (New Jersey)
- 27 April NVMC Meeting
- 02 May Field Trip to the National Limestone Quarry
- 23 May Ben Clement Mineral Dig (Kentucky)

MAY NVMC Meeting Date is still TBD. Come to the April meeting for the announcement or see next month's Mineral Newsletter.

April and May Field Trips

By Robert Winsor

Our Field Trip Chairman, Ted Carver, is off to a fantastic start for the club this season. So far, there have been two field trips, one at the Manassas Quarry (see page 5 for the field trip report) and to the Barger Quarry in southern Virginia (sorry, no field trip report has been submitted for this trip). Currently, there is one field trip planned for early May to the National Limestone Quarry in Mt. Pleasant Mills, PA. Please see page 4 for more information about this field trip.

Ted is currently working on getting us into a couple of new quarries that we have either not been to in a while or we have simply never been there at all. If there is a particular mine or quarry you would like Ted to consider, please let him know, and certainly don't be afraid to lend a helping hand to him. We can not expect our Field Trip Chairman to

attend or even plan every field trip nor have field trips planned to every one of our favorite locations. So please consider volunteering your help and coordinate a field trip with Ted if you are interested in something specific. Planning and organizing a field trip is not hard, but doing it every single month (and sometimes more than once in some months) gets to be a lot of work.

Also, when you reply to one of Ted's messages about a field trip to let him know your interest in attending, PLEASE remember to include your phone number! Sometimes the pits get closed to visitors the day prior to the trip due to safety or weather concerns. If Ted doesn't have your phone number, he can't call you about such last-minute cancellations. If you have email, be sure to check your email the night before the field trip regarding possible cancellations.

Inside this issue:

April Agenda	2
The Prez Says	3
March Minutes	3
Field Trip 02 May	4
Vulcan Field Trip Report	5
Web sites of interest	5
The National Gem Collection	6
BoD Schedule	7
Back cover	8

April Meeting Agenda

INFORMATIONAL AGENDA:

There will be no May Executive Board Meeting
 Status of 2009 NVMC Corporation Registration?
 2008 IRS Forms...where are we??
 2009 NVMC show coordinator... where are we??
 Display of box holding the Pavilion Canopy for LBNC.
 March auction Ops...comments... where are we??
 Committee chairs needed Announcements & Reports:
 Announcements & Reports: Announcements & Reports:

ACTION AGENDA:

Call to order at 7:45 pm.
 Recognize Guests
 Approval of March meeting minutes.
 Financial report on March Auction...Rick Reiber
 Field Trips...John "Ted" Carver.
 Old business... Identify action item and have motion prepared.
 New business... Identify action item and have motion prepared.
 Other items....
 Adjourn meeting.

10-minute Refreshment break

April Program...John Gant from NASA

End Program and Depart for Home by 9:50

Your Article Here!

The Mineral Newsletter is a publication by the members and for the members. In general, the newsletter is enjoyed the most when our club members contribute articles. If you are thinking about writing an article, think no more! Just write! Did you take an interesting trip to a museum and learn something new? Did you attend a seminar? Did you take a cool field trip or visit a fun mineral sale? Why not write up a paragraph or two about it and send it to the Editor for publication?

Don't hesitate to write, and stop worrying about whether other club members will like your article! They will!

Recently we have had some great articles written by members like Sheryl Sims, Sara Brenner, and George Reimherr to name a few. Won't you join them this year?

-The Editor

Board Positions Open

Currently our Club President, Wayne Sukow is acting President as the club currently does not have a Vice President and Wayne is seeking a replacement to assume the role of President. Our club Vice President officiates the meetings in the absence of the President, and is typically responsible for planning the program presentation at the meetings (8 meetings per year, since there are no meetings in July and August and March and November are reserved for club Auctions). The club President organizes the meeting of the Board of Directors and manages the agenda for each club meeting.

These are important positions within the club. Please consider serving the club in one of these positions if you have time.

To volunteer for one of these positions, please contact the newsletter editor, Robert Winsor.

The Prez Says

APRIL SHOWERS

What a great turnout for our March 2009 NVMC Auction. I counted something around 53! There was standing room only. I'm looking forward to Rick's report on the financial benefit to the club to say nothing about the many happy buyers, perhaps a bit tired from the spirited bidding but happy at having won some excellent minerals and lapidary items.

Let's have SRO for our April meeting as well. Kathy has arranged for an excellent program about Mars, the planet. Our speaker is Dr. John from NASA. Kathy also plans to take the speaker to the Olive Garden for dinner that evening. I believe the time is 6 pm. Why not join us there to get a close-up and personal opportunity to talk with the speaker? Please let Kathy know if you plan to come.

As I read mineral club newsletters



Latest In Lake Superior Agates



What IS IT??

from across the nation, that's one of the benefits of serving as EFMLS President; you continue to get many newsletters, I keep seeing a monotonous theme. It's very difficult to get club members to take advantage of an opportunity to hone and practice their leadership skills; club offices are left vacant, committee offices are left vacant, show volunteers are reluctant to sign-up to help, junior membership is down...and yet...we have SRO at our auction meeting. I keep reading to find a witty saying that is appropriate such as, "What happens if there are no April Showers? Do you have one??"

The Prez

March Meeting Minutes

Recorded by Kathy Hrechka, Secretary

March 23, 2009 Minutes NVMC

President pro-tem, Wayne Sukow called the meeting to order at 8 p.m.

Guests included: Dorthia Chisholm, and Phillip Garetson. New members included Claire and Kevin McKeller, along with Carol Stolby.

Announcements: Ted Carver, Field Trip Chair announced a trip to the Manassas Vulcan quarry for April 4. A motion to approve the February meeting minutes was moved and seconded. Tom Taafe announced an upcoming mineral show at Clearwater, MD.

Fred Schaefermeyer Fund: Tom Tucker presented

this motion. "I move that as long as funds in the Schaefermeyer Scholarship Fund permit, the club make annual 'grants' in the amount of \$250 to a deserving student who is studying a specific mineral related topic at James Madison University. This student will be selected by Dr. Lance Kearns, Professor of Mineralogy at the university. The recipient will be invited to present the results of their study as a club program, or as an article in the newsletter."

The motion was seconded. Discussion included dropping the professor's name. The motion was carried.

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Club program: Mineral Auction. Auctioneers included: Rob Robinson, Frank Hissong, Dave Hennessy.

Field Trip - National Limestone Quarry

National Limestone Quarry Inc:

Mount Pleasant Mills, PA

Saturday, May 2, 2009 at 9:00 am

Eastern Federation Club Members Only

(The Northern Virginia Mineral Club is in the Eastern Federation)

The National Limestone Quarry is known for wavellite, calcite, cacoxenite, celestine, fluorite and especially strontianite. Rumor has it that they also have some turquoise, galena and even some interesting large snail fossils.

This trip includes a section (wavellite, turquoise and snails) that is largely inaccessible to cars or SUVs, so plan on some walking/hiking/lugging and bring something to carry your tools and samples in. Eric Stahl of National Limestone Quarry will be our host and he likes collectors to donate small specimens.

Don't forget to tip!

Strontianite found in 2007



Directions:

From Harrisburg, PA take Rt. 11/15 N to Rt 104 N (turn left) Continue past Mt. Pleasant Mills to Middleburg (6 miles past Mt. Pleasant Mills) At the Sunoco station



Wavellite specimens extracted in October 2007



turn left Continue 4.5 miles to a "Y" intersection Turn left and continue to the mine office Contact Ted Carver at 703.754.2050 or, preferably, by email at jtcarve@msn.com You'll need the following must haves:

Steel-Toed Boots (gravity can be very unforgiving) Work Gloves (broken stone is wicked sharp) Safety Goggles (breaking stone is surprisingly aerodynamic) Safety Helmet (I refer back to aerodynamics)

Additionally

After the trip if there is time, (and inclination), members can join me on a side trip to an abandoned strip mine near St. Clair, PA. This location has some very nice fern fossils as well as calcite and, as it happens, coal. However, the location is perhaps more interesting because of the WalMart built smack dab into it. Surreal and funny. We'll meet at the far side of the lot and just wander about.

Directions:

From Middleburg, PA take Rt. 522 E to Rt. 11/15 N (turn left) Cross the Susquehanna at Shamokin Dam (Rt. 61) Pass through Sunbury on Rt. 61 E Continue on Rt. 61 (turn left at Centralia, still Rt. 61) to Frackville Turn left at Frackville (also still 61) Pass over I 81 and had down the mountain until you see the WalMart

Vulcan Quarry Field Trip Report

By Ted Carver

April 4, 2009

NVMC Members Seek Manassas Quarry

Chilly and windy, still at least 36 members showed up (55 signed up) at the Vulcan Manassas Quarry to scour the available scree for sundry minerals. For those not familiar with the Vulcan Manassas Quarry it is a great huge hole in the ground within a stones throw of the manassas business district, if you have an especially good arm. 550 feet deep and half a mile wide, descending 250 feet below sea level, you'd think it would be more obvious to the locals, but if you ask directions expect to be misled. There was a long list of finds in the 4 or so hours we were there. Mindat has some 45 minerals that have been found there in the past and our group did our best to find them all. We didn't, but none were disappointed, I hope. If you were disappointed feel free to contact Robert Winsor, he's very diplomatic. Of the available gets I know the following got gotten: Calcite, Chalcopryrite, Dolomite, Galena, Hematite, Malachite, Prehnite, Quartz and Stilbite. Some were mildly spectacular, (large crystal clusters and prehnite "grapes", others were closer to actually

spectacular, especially the clear white crystal geode half flecked with Chalcopryrite (I think) found by Rich Palaschak. Ask him about it, it's gorgeous. The final score; Members 36, Minerals 9 (at least), Casualties 0. All in all a successful day.

April 18, 2009 - NVMC Members at the Barger (not Sonny) Quarry with the Lynchburg Club. I couldn't make this one so details will have to wait.

From the Editor: I have to add that I was *amazed* at the specimens that Dave Hennessey pulled out during this trip. I hope he brings them to the April meeting, just so that I can see them again. Prehnite with datolite crystals that were very impressive. Yes, I have been to this quarry several times, and never been disappointed, but still awaiting the day that I get to find the cool things that I have seen others take out of this place!

Sorry, no photos of this trip. Drat my memory and forgetting to bring the camera! -Robert Winsor

Interesting web sites

By Robert Winsor

There are many websites now that are very useful for our club members. Most of us are familiar with this one: <http://www.mindat.org>

If you aren't familiar, check it out! This is a great website that is arguably the most widely used among collectors and prospectors. It has a ton of information about locations where minerals are found, the selection of minerals that can be found at a given location, as well as a host of identification information.

There are a couple of other web sites with information about minerals, check these out, too:

<http://webmineral.com>

<http://www.minerals.net>

http://www.galleries.com/Minerals/By_Name.htm

And then there are websites that cover area clubs. Many people are familiar with the with AMFED and EFMLS websites:

<http://www.amfed.org/>

<http://www.amfed.org/efmls>

And did you know that our very own Robert Clemenzi maintains this handy site?

<http://mc-computing.com/other/DCMineralClubs.html>

Another highly useful website was sent to me recently by Georgia Olmstead regarding events in the area:

<http://www.mineralfest.com/calendar.html>

Do you know a helpful website that you would like to share with fellow club members? Please send it to the Editor and we'll include it in a future Mineral Newsletter.

THE NATIONAL GEM COLLECTION

At The Smithsonian Institution

By Sheryl E. Sims

On March 19, 2009, I visited the National Museum of Natural History, located at Constitution Avenue at 10th Street, NW, Washington, DC. In the Janet Annenberg Hooker Hall of Geology, Gems and Minerals you will find one of the most impressive collections of minerals and gemstones you'd ever imagine. And, to think, it's all free and right in our nation's capital! There was one incredible display after another of gemstones, unusual elbaite, artifacts, and even a large meteorite collection!

As I walked through the exhibit snapping picture after picture, I was overwhelmed by the beautiful colors and incredible formations of the various minerals around me. I knew that my photography wouldn't do justice to



Elbaite (with quartz and albite)

$\text{Na}(\text{Li}, \text{Al})_3\text{Al}_3(\text{BO}_3)_3\text{Si}_3\text{O}_{18}(\text{OH})_4$

Tourmaline King mine, San Diego County, California



Fluorite
With sphalerite and barite
Café
Elmwood mine, Carthage,
Missouri

what was being shown, so I purchased a book about the exhibit called, "The National Gem Collection," by Jeffrey E. Post. It has wonderful photographs by Chip Clark. The

book is \$30 and worth every penny.

The gem collection contains the Hooker Emerald,

Hope Diamond, Rosser Reeves Start Ruby, and the Logan Sapphire. One the most breathtaking pieces that I saw was the diamond and silver crown or diadem which was a wedding gift from Napoleon I to his second wife, Empress Marie-Louise. Initially, the crown, which was commissioned in 1810, had emeralds in it. They were replaced, however, by Persian turquoise in the late '50s. Marjorie Merriweather Post, who was a collector of French and Russian art, later owned it, and, eventually donated it to the National Gem Collection. Just imagine what the 168-carat Mackay Emerald, which was mined in Muzo, Colombia looks like! Set in an Art Deco diamond and platinum necklace, this token of love was a wedding gift to Clarence H. Mackay's wife.

Also of interest, were the displays of iron, copper, and gold. I can barely describe how beautiful the various beryls, aquamarines, and topazes were. After reading Robert Winsor's article in our last newsletter about crystals, my visual appetite was ripe for the various colored quartz crystals housed in the collection. One crystal had a band of rose quartz crystals growing from a piece of smoky quartz crystal. They say it has a "rose tutu". It was

found in the Sapucaia mine, located in Minas Gerais, Brazil. Ironically, I gave away a large piece of calcite to a friend who is moving to Wisconsin. She loves rock gardens and moves her rocks with each move. The formation of that piece of calcite reminded me a bit of the natural ruby crystals on display

The Author standing next to one of the massive displays at the museum



THE NATIONAL GEM COLLECTION (continued)



Logan Sapphire

which grew on a piece of calcite mined in Mogok, Burma. Just imagine finding something that wonderful!

Unbelievably, the very best part of seeing this exhibit was "touching" the specimens. There were actually signs that read, "Please Touch"! Did I tell you about the molten rock exhibit? What about the labradorite carvings? Did I mention the opals, feldspar, and ornamental stones such as the jade exhibit? No? Well, you'd better head over to the museum to see for yourselves! It's simply a dolomite – I mean dynamite exhibit!

All photos courtesy the Author.

Schedule

Upcoming Events to plan for:

25 April Ben Clement Mineral Dig (Kentucky)

25 April Sterling Hill Super Dig (New Jersey)

27 April NVMC Meeting

02 May Field Trip to the National Limestone Quarry

23 May Ben Clement Mineral Dig (Kentucky)

MAY NVMC Meeting Date is still TBD. Come to the April meeting for the announcement or see next month's Mineral Newsletter.

The Board of Directors

Do you have a question for one of our Board members? To the right you can find email addresses and phone numbers for club officers (Note imminent changes for Prez and Vice Prez!).

Also, if you would like to attend a meeting of the Board of Directors, please contact Wayne Sukow and let him know ahead of time. All club members are welcome at Board meetings!

Board Meetings are held the second Thursday of each month at 7:30pm at Wayne's home in Fairfax. Please contact Wayne for directions.



An Amazin' Amazonite!

Reminder! Renew Your Membership

It is *PAST* time to renew your membership in the Northern Virginia Mineral Club if you have not already done so! Please send your membership dues to the following address if your membership has lapsed....

**NORTHERN VIRGINIA MINERAL CLUB
PO BOX 9851
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22304**

Go Emerald

Electronic Newsletter: You can save some paper by electing to have the electronic-only newsletter. Just send email to the editor to have your newsletter delivered by email only. It saves money, you get the newsletter sooner, and it is in full color. Send email to photech @ comcast.net

President (Interim): Wayne Sukow

d8olite @ fastmail.fm (703) 280-8108

Vice President: Vacant

Secretary: Kathy Hrechka

kshrechka @ msn.com (703) 765-3187

Treasurer: Rick Reiber

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PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE:
[HTTP://www.mineralclub.org](http://www.mineralclub.org)

The Northern Virginia Mineral Club

You can send your Newsletter articles to:

Robert Winsor
35740 Roundleaf Ct.
Round Hill, VA 20141

Or via email: photech @ comcast.net

Visitors are Always Welcome at our Club Meetings.

TIME TO RENEW!

Renew your membership in the Northern Virginia Mineral Club!

NORTHERN VIRGINIA
MINERAL CLUB
PO Box 9851
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22304

Purpose: To promote, educate and encourage interest in geology, mineralogy, lapidary arts and related sciences. The society is a member of Eastern Federation of Mineralogical and Lapidary Societies (EFMLS)

<http://www.amfed.org/efmls> and American Federation of Mineralogical Societies (AFMS)

<http://www.amfed.org>.

Dues: Due by 1 January of each year; \$15.00 Individual, \$20.00 Family, and \$6.00 Junior (under 16, sponsored by an adult member).

Meetings are held at 7:45 p.m. on the fourth Monday of each month (except

May and December*) at **Long Branch Nature Center**, 625 Carlin Springs Road, Arlington, VA 22204. Phone (703) 228-6535. (No meeting in July & August.)

(*Changes announced in the newsletter.) Snow schedule - Arlington county schools.