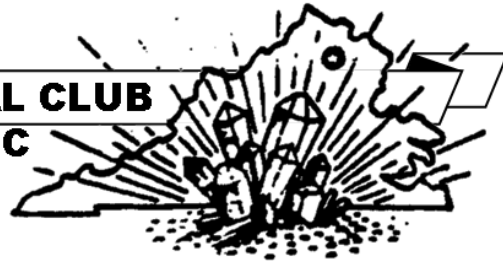




# THE NORTHERN VIRGINIA MINERAL CLUB INC



*Crystals are the flowers of the Mineral Kingdom*



## THE MINERAL NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 50 No. 3

MARCH 2009

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

### The March Auction

Twice a year our club holds an auction at our March and November club meetings. This year is no exception! Come to our March meeting at the Long Branch Nature Center on Monday March 23rd. The meeting will start promptly at 7:30pm (note difference from most meetings) and the regular business part of the meeting will be over before you can say "I move to adjourn". Come early (15 minutes is a minimum) if you are bringing items to auction so that you will have time to

setup and prepare bid slips for your items.

Please see pages 6 & 7 for more information regarding operating procedures for the auction and to get bid slips. Print the bid slips and cut them out so that there is one bid slip for each item you wish to put up for auction.

It is a good idea to bring cash to the meeting, and lots of smaller bills so that you can pay for an item once you have won. In the flurry of bidding, it is usually easiest to handle payment this way.

#### NVMC Schedule:

- 23 Mar NVMC Meeting
- 04 April Field Trip Vulcan Quarry Manassas
- 25 April Ben Clement Mineral Dig (Kentucky)
- 25 April Sterling Hill Super Dig (New Jersey)
- 27 April NVMC Meeting

### 04 April Field Trip to Vulcan Manassas Quarry

Northern Virginia Mineral Club collecting trip to the Vulcan Manassas Quarry at 8537 Vulcan Ln, Manassas, VA on April 4, 2009. 7:30 am at the mine office. 25 to 30 Members

A sign-up sheet will be at the March meeting for members to sign up.

The Vulcan Manassas Quarry is known for prehnite, calcite, apophyllite and stilbite, and best of all, it's local.

Contact Ted Carver at 703.754.2050

This is a hard-rock facility so hard hat, safety eye wear and heavy work boots are required (steel toes preferred). Heavy pants and gloves are recommended. All attendees must be active members of the club for insurance reasons (no guests allowed) and must sign a liability waiver prior to heading into the pits.

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Stellerite found at the Vulcan Manassas quarry in April 2008



### Reminder! Renew Your Membership

It is 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:

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

## March Meeting Agenda

Purchase of "Thank You" Pavilion Canopy for LBNC...Barry Remer may have a picture on display.

Thanks Barry.

No door prize drawing at the auction meetings.

No Exec. Board meeting in April. Email any ideas or issues to the Prez.

**NVMC---ACTION-AGENDA---03/23/09**

Call to order at 7:30 pm.

Recognize guests...

Recognize Past presidents

Announcements:

Field Trips...Copies of materials may be available. Thanks John.

Time-sensitive announcements from NVMC committees.

New Business

Approval of minutes of February '09 NVMC meeting.

Award of Fred Schaefermeyer Scholarship to one of Dr. Kearns JMU geology students. Reflecting the wishes of the NVMC members at the February meeting, Tom Tucker will have a motion ready for action. Thanks Tom.

Other items???

Adjourn for March auction.

Close activities by 9:50 PM

## The Prez Says

**AUCTION!  
ACTION!!  
ACT!!!**

**BRING GOOD STUFF  
BRING STUFF  
BRING \$\$  
bid...bid...bid**

**JOIN YOUR FRIENDS AT THE MARCH NVMC MEETING for A FUN FILLED EVENING**

Wayne Sukow, Prez.

## 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.

## February Meeting Minutes

**Recorded by Kathy Hrechka, Secretary**

23 February, 2009

President pro-tem, Wayne Sukow called the meeting to order at 7:55 p.m.

Guests of Sheryl Sims included Amber Wihshi, and 11 year old Youkyung Lee.

No past Presidents were in attendance.

**Announcements:** Sukow reminded club members that the March 23 meeting will be the Club Auction. The meeting will begin 15 minutes earlier, at 7:30 p.m.

Jeff Cesna had access to a sale for thumbnails. Dave McClean reminded members of the Montgomery Club Gem- Mineral-Fossil Show to be held at the Montgomery Co. Fairgrounds March 21-22. Sat.10-6, Sun.10-5 p.m.

\* Treasurer, Rick Reiber invited club members to pay their annual dues. \$15 individual, \$20 family, \$6 junior.

\* Barry Remer gave an update on the request for a 10x10' Pavilion Shade Canopy for Long Branch Nature Center. He reported that it could cost between \$280 - \$600. A motion was made to authorize Reiber to make a payment for a canopy. The motion was carried & seconded with unanimous favor.

\* Sukow asked Kathy Hrechka to serve as the Temporary Chair, enabling him to make a motion and participate in the discussion of it. Sukow then stepped down as Chair and presented the motion: "On behalf of Fred Schaefermeyer and at his request, I move that the Fred Schaefermeyer account be closed and the money in the account be used to pay for the Pavilion Canopy, which is the Northern Mineral Club's 2008 gift to the Long Branch Nature Center. That gift is in recognition of the hospitality and room space, which the Center extends to the club for its monthly meeting." The motion was seconded

and after discussion it was defeated. Sukow then resumed his duties as Chair. Barry Remer was appointed Chairperson to develop that fund and make recommendations for an annual expenditure aligned with the original Fred Schaefermeyer Scholarship Guidelines.

The minutes of the January 26 meeting were approved as published in the newsletter.

**2009 Club Budget:** A motion to approve the budget passed as presented by the Treasurer, Reiber.

Robert Winsor spoke about our new Field Trip Chairman, John (Ted) Carver. Winsor said a field trip sign-up sheet would be at the next meeting.

**Membership list:** Reiber will supply a club membership list at the next meeting. There was discussion concerning email addresses and password protections.

Barry Remer, Nominating Committee Chair called for nominations from the floor for a club President, and a Vice-president. No volunteers spoke.

The business meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm for the Refreshment Break. Karen Lewis provided home made goodies and beverages.

Following the refreshment break, Tom Tucker, National Speleological Society member, presented slides of various rare cave minerals and formations at Cave of the Bells, Arizona. He stressed, "take nothing but pictures, leave nothing but foot-prints."

## The Lessons of Contamination

By Robert Winsor

George Reimherr reports that one of the minerals he brought to the James Madison University Geology Department field trip (covered in last month's newsletter) was identified as calcite. He wanted to convey that this occurred despite placing the sample mineral in HCL for a period of time sufficient to remove all calcite, and the remaining mineral is what was attempted to identify. A resulting ID of calcite suggests that the sample was contaminated somehow (perhaps while pulverizing the mineral in preparation for placing in the diffractometer?). This is of course a very important lesson for all to remember when working with highly sensitive scientific equipment that is capable of working with very small samples. Extra caution is important to ensure a pure sample and therefore an accurate identification. This is also the primary reason why virtually any scientific measurement is backed up with secondary forms of measurement for verification. It really has nothing to do with scientists *wanting* more cool toys to play with - they *need* those tools!

## Omnibus S.22 Defeated!

At our January meeting, John Culberson gave a brief talk about congressional bill S.22, the "Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009". This was also reported in the February issue of The Mineral Newsletter.

This started a strong email campaign by members of many rock, mineral, and fossil clubs around the nation to get their members to contact their representative in the House and express our voting wishes. Many members were opposed to this legislation.

According to govtrack.us, the House defeated the bill on 11 March 2009 *by just one vote!*

With this defeat, the bill is now dead.

## 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

## Wildacres Spring Workshop

The EFMLS sponsors two annual lapidary and jewelry-making workshops at Wildacres each year. Each session lasts for one week during which classes are given in areas such as Mineral Identification, Cabochon Making, Faceting, Soapstone Carving, Chain Making, Wire-wrapping and Wirecraft Jewelry, Precious Metal Clay, Lost Wax Casting, Intarsia, Micromounting, Glass Engraving and Etching, Fused Glass, Lampwork Beads and Pewter Fabrication. We also offer a course in Certified Judging and Exhibiting for those interested in improving their display cases or becoming judges.

This year the Spring Workshop will be held 17-23 April

Please visit this website for more information and to register:

<http://www.amfed.org/efmls/wildacres.htm#Spring>



## The Schaefermeyer Scholarship fund

By Barry Remer

The Northern Virginia Mineral Club has a scholarship fund separate from our regular funds. The scholarship fund was named after Fred C. Schaefermeyer, a founding member of our club. Fred was President of NVMC several times. He was also President of the Eastern Federation of Mineral and Lapidary Societies. He currently resides in Colorado. EFMLS is our umbrella organization that provides insurance for our club members in the event of damage to equipment in quarries. This enables our members to enter quarries for our field trips and covers any damage club members

might do to their facility or equipment.

Funds are provided to college students who are interested in opportunities working in the Earth Sciences. Usually the recommendations are provided by faculty at George Mason University, James Madison University, and NOVA. As the club is listed through the IRS and is a 501c7 non-profit organization, contributions are tax deductible.

One of our club and Federation missions is to provide education and outreach. Any donations to the Fund provides funds to the rising generations and furthers our interest in Earth Sciences. Donations will be gratefully accepted and members will be provided with verification in the event the member itemizes their taxes.

## Proposed use of Schaefermeyer Scholarship fund

By Tom Tucker

At the February meeting there was some discussion, a motion, and a vote taken (which was defeated) concerning the disposition of monies in the Schaefermeyer Scholarship fund.

I believe these funds were given to the Club by Fred Schaefermeyer, or derived from sales of minerals and books donated by Fred, when he moved several years ago to his new life in the Denver, Colorado area. They were supposed to be used for educational purposes.

Following that theme, I have contacted Dr. Lance Kearns at the James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Va., and asked him if he would be interested in selecting a deserving student to receive a "grant" in the range of \$ 200 - \$ 300, for assistance in their studying a mineral related topic.

I received a reply the next morning enthusiastically accepting the challenge of selecting such a student, complete with the name and project of a possible deserving recipient.

I have just spoken with Fred Schaefermeyer by phone - he's 90 years young, enjoying his life in Colorado, and sounds great. He and Muriel are taking off on a trip to California next week. We should all be so well when we reach his age.

Fred heartedly approved of this suggested distribution from the Scholarship Fund.

Because the school semester at JMU will end in early May, the time available for getting a grant to a student

this year is very short. So I propose to make a motion at the March club meeting - before the auction - as follows:

"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."

Some of our newer members probably have not had the pleasure of knowing Fred. I knew him more through the Micromounters where he and Paul Smith were very active cohorts. I think Fred served several years as president of both the Northern Virginia Mineral Club and the Micromineralogists of National Capitol Area, and he later served as national president of the American Federation of Mineral Societies.

Fred developed macular degeneration with advancing age, and was forced to curtail many of his mineral activities. He moved to Colorado a few years ago to share his life with an old childhood friend, Muriel.

Since the meeting will be "auction night", I hope we can keep discussion short and to the point. If anyone has questions or comments about the proposal, please contact me at: 540-347-9098, or email at: threedogtom@earthlink.net

## **Auction Details....Operating Procedures**

Members who've participated in Northern Virginia Mineral Club auctions know that they are a lot of fun, and contain spirited bidding. For efficient use of time we have developed the following procedures:

We have the old rule that says, you must be a member of the NVMC to sell material at the auction. Check the list of 2008 members that the Treasurer has to date. Current membership will be posted.

We have the old rule that says, anyone can be a bidder and buyer at the auction. NVMC membership is not needed to be a buyer.

We have the old rule that says, all material for auction must be hobby related.

We have an old rule; all bid increments must be at least \$1 for bids on items between \$1 and \$25. Above \$25 bid increments must be \$5.

We have an old rule; items with multiple bids on the bid slip before the auction begins will be auctioned early in the evening.

All bidders must sign in, and be given a numbered card. You bid by raising your number.

All payments are made when the bidding is ended. The bidding will be stopped at 9:30 p.m. so we can be out of the building by the 10 p.m. requirement.

In full force is the trusted and true old rule that's at the heart of all auctions; bid often and bid quickly. Winning is fun. Bidding against friends and yourself are not only allowed, they are encouraged. Remember that the NVMC gets 15% of the sale price of all items and 100%<sup>^</sup> of the sale price of club items.



**NVMC AUCTION '09**

DONOR \_\_\_\_\_  
ITEM DESCRIPTION \_\_\_\_\_

LOCALITY \_\_\_\_\_

MINIMUM BID \_\_\_\_\_

Bidder's Name	Bid Amount
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Buyer's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Price \_\_\_\_\_



**NVMC AUCTION '09**

DONOR \_\_\_\_\_  
ITEM DESCRIPTION \_\_\_\_\_

LOCALITY \_\_\_\_\_

MINIMUM BID \_\_\_\_\_

Bidder's Name	Bid Amount
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Buyer's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Price \_\_\_\_\_



**NVMC AUCTION '09**

DONOR \_\_\_\_\_  
ITEM DESCRIPTION \_\_\_\_\_

LOCALITY \_\_\_\_\_

MINIMUM BID \_\_\_\_\_

Bidder's Name	Bid Amount
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Buyer's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Price \_\_\_\_\_



**NVMC AUCTION '09**

DONOR \_\_\_\_\_  
ITEM DESCRIPTION \_\_\_\_\_

LOCALITY \_\_\_\_\_

MINIMUM BID \_\_\_\_\_

Bidder's Name	Bid Amount
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Buyer's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Price \_\_\_\_\_

## Growing Crystals part 3

By Robert Winsor

**SUGAR!** The great thing about growing sugar crystals is that you not only have an interesting crystal shape, but you also have candy. So if you don't like what you see, well it's sure to please in some other way.

The recipe is simple: roughly 3-1/2 cups sugar to 1 cup water. Bring to a *mild* boil until all sugar is dissolved, but add sugar a half-cup at a time and dissolve completely before adding more. Do not vigorously boil.

Transfer the solution to a container that is ideally plastic (like high density polyethylene) so that removal of crystals that form at the edge and bottom of the container is easier. Place the container in a box filled with foam peanuts (or similar) to insulate it from the surroundings and cover the top (a cooler can also be used). Allow it to cool overnight undisturbed. If you want to be particularly ambitious about a slow cooling solution, place the container inside a much larger container of boiling water, with the container of boiling water placed within the insulated box or cooler. Depending on the size of the container, it may be worth waiting two days before opening the box to see the results (any time you open it you allow a lot of cool air inside - not good unless the contents have already cooled). The longer it takes to cool, the better the results will be.

This type of cooling (slow) allows fewer, larger crystals to grow. When cool, there will be a crust over the top and many crystals on the walls of the container. In my experience, the most interesting crystals form on the top crust.



Sugar Crystals grown on a string, first with slow growth and then with fast growth. Note the many small crystals that grew on top of the fewer much larger crystals. Lesson: seed crystals work best if the growth is slow!



Sugar crystals grown with yellow food coloring. This growth occurred as part of the top crust, and took approximately 10 weeks. Largest crystal measures 6mm.

As a variation, add a wooden kabob skewer to the center of the container prior to cooling and crystals will grow on the skewer. If you are using a plastic container with a lid (especially a disposable container), use the lid to hold the skewer in the center of the solution. Just be sure to also cut large holes in the lid so that the lid will *not* hold in humidity - water vapor needs to escape when growing sugar crystals (contrary to some crystals like copper sulfate).

If you like some color to the crystals, add small amounts of food coloring (several drops per cup of water). The crystals will take on a translucent color of the food coloring, somewhat weaker in color intensity than the solution.

It is important to realize that the crystals you grow will not be as large as you find at a local candy store selling "rock candy". Growing larger crystals requires a larger volume of solution, and therefore a larger container, a larger insulator to allow the crystals to cool slowly. Or, you need to use a multi-step growth process using the skewers of one batch as the seeds for the next (more about that below).

Another way to get some added growth from the crystals is to let the solution evaporate long-term. The process will be slow and perhaps somewhat disappointing as far as just how long it takes, but patience pays off. Since the container forms a crust on the exposed surface, water evaporation is slowed tre-



## Growing Crystals part 3

mendously. This is a very good thing for crystal growth, though, because the imperfections are reduced from such slow growth. You can speed up the evaporation process slightly by taking a tooth pick and poking through the crust in one location near the edge every few days.

Long-term evaporation allows another very interesting coloration to occur: banding. You can start with one color for the initial overnight cooling (maybe no color at all). Then, each week for the next 4 weeks, put one drop of food coloring in solution where you poke a hole in the crust at the edge. Do not stir - the natural currents in the solution will allow the coloring to dissolve. Over the course of a few months, you can migrate from pink to red to violet

## Schedule

Upcoming Events to plan for:

**23 Mar NVMC Meeting**

**04 April Field Trip to Manassas Vulcan Quarry**

**17-23 Apr Wildacres Spring Workshop**

**25 April Ben Clement Mineral Dig (Kentucky)**

**25 April Sterling Hill Super Dig (New Jersey)**

**27 April NVMC Meeting**

**23 May Ben Clement Mineral Dig (Kentucky)**

## 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.

by adding red and then eventually changing to blue. Patience is required!!

For even better results, take one of the largest crystals from an overnight growth and use it as a seed crystal for another batch. Just re-boil the solution you took the crystal from, and cool again but this time you will want to put the seed crystal into the solution *after it has had time to cool* for at least an hour, preferably 2 hours. Crystals grown on a skewer overnight are excellent choices for seeds, and with time and multiple growth stages, you can achieve candy-store quality crystals.

Enjoy!

Edge view of top-crust crystal growth. Note muted coloration in the crystals.



## 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](mailto:photech@comcast.net)

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**Vice President: Vacant**

**Secretary: Kathy Hrechka**

**[kshrechka@msn.com](mailto:kshrechka@msn.com) (703) 765-3187**

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

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## 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.