



THE NORTHERN VIRGINIA MINERAL CLUB INC



Crystals are the flowers of the Mineral Kingdom



THE MINERAL NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 52 No. 6

JUNE 2011

Williams Collection

Also find information on our Club Website: <http://www.novamineralclub.org>

By Sue Marcus

Join us on June 27 for a glimpse of the fabulous Williams Mineral Collection. Amassed by the family that owned the famous tin mines of Cornwall, England, the collection was featured at the 2011 Tuscon Mineral Show. Thanks to club member Ruth Goen, Sue Marcus and her husband Roger Haskins had the good fortune to have a private and personal tour of the collection at its home in Caerhays Castle. Some of the world's best-in-species were rediscovered here and the curator also wrote a feature article in the latest Mineralogical Record. Come share the sto-

ries behind this collection and enjoy the landscapes of the English West Country as Sue takes us on a vicarious journey. Want to gather at the Olive Garden for dinner before the meeting (dinner and a show!)? Call Sue Marcus at 703-502-9844 so she can make the reservations for us.

Our meeting will start at 7:45pm at Long Branch Nature Center in Arlington.

Guests are always welcome, as well as prospective new members. Show and tell specimens are also encouraged.

NVMC Schedule:

June 27 Gen. mtg. at Long Branch Nature Center, 7:45pm

02 July - Field Trip - see page 5

**** NOTE THIS CHANGE**
September 26+ AUCTION**

**October 24 Gen. Mtg.
November 28 Gen. mtg.**

**December 19*
Holiday Meeting
* This is a joint meeting with MNCA**



20th Annual GEM, MINERAL AND FOSSIL SHOW

Presented by the Northern Virginia Mineral Club, Inc. www.novamineralclub.org

Sponsored by the Dept. of Atmospheric, Oceanic and Earth Sciences at GMU

Date: November 12 & 13, 2011

**Place: Student Union II Building
George Mason University Campus
Braddock Rd. & Route 123, Fairfax, VA**

Hours: Saturday 10-6, Sunday 10-4

**Admission: Adults: \$5, Seniors & Teens (13-17): \$3.
Children 12 & under, Scouts in uniform,
and GMU Students w/ valid ID are FREE.**

**\$1 OFF
Adult Admission
with this card.**

Demonstrations, Exhibits, and Door Prizes. Mini-mines for children to dig in and get free fossils & minerals. Over 20 dealers with Fossils, Minerals, Crystals, and Gems for sale.

Use Parking Lot A, enter Lot A from Nottaway River Lane.

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May Minutes

May 23, 2011 - *Kathy Hrechka, Secretary*

President Barry Remer opened the NVMC meeting at 7:55 p.m. He welcomed guests Tim & Rebecca Ford.

Secretary's Report: The minutes of the previous month were approved and seconded as published in the May newsletter.

Show Report: Tom Taaffe announced that the club show is advertised on our club website, and postcards will be printed. Jim Kostka requested that club members should promote the show to their respective zip code address to libraries, schools, via PDF, etc.

Old Business: Kathy Hrechka spoke favorably about the Fred Schaefermeyer Scholarship Fund.

Dr. Lance Kearns, JMU will be designating qualified students in the fall for scholarship application.

Announcements: Jim Kostka shared his collecting success story from Vulcan Quarry.

Break for Refreshments

Reminders

- **There is no meeting in July or August**
- **Our next AUCTION will be during the September meeting**
- **Our club show will be earlier this year**
- **Have a great summer**
- **Send an article into the newsletter**
- **Send pictures of your summer mineral/fossil adventures**
- **Prepare for show and tell at the October meeting**

Show & Tell:

Laurie Steiger - Fossil trip to West Moreland State Park; Sharks teeth, vertebrae, fossils.

Gerry Cox - Self-Faceted quartz from Spruce Pines, NC

Jim Kostka - Vulcan material for give-aways

Bill Oakley - Obsidian from Eastern Turkey

Steve Johnson - Franklin material, and Warwick & Herkimer, NY

Casper Voght - Mine run dump at Sterling Hill totaling 95 pounds veins of willemite and sphalerite

Sue Marcus - Selenite crystal from Naica Cave of Swords, Mexico

Pat Rehill - Snorkeled at the sunken SS Copenhagen, Ft. Lauderdale, FL

Tim & Rebecca Ford - Topaz & amazonite, Morefield Mine, Amelia, VA

Gerry Cox had the winning ticket for Show & Tell.

Program: 5/23/11 "Cave of Swords Giants" Discovery in 2000 at Naica, Chihuahua, Mexico.

Presenter - Rob Robinson, Geologist

JADE – SUITED FOR BURIALS

By Sheryl E. Sims

During 206 BC-AD 220, the Han Dynasty used jade burial suits to preserve the bodies of their dearly departed. Constructed with small plaques¹ of jade and sewn together with metal wires, burial suits of this kind determined one's social standing. For instance, only royalty could wear suits sewn with gold. The suit of Prince Nanyue, who died around 122 BC was discovered in Guangzhou and was made up of 4,000 tiny jade plaques, thus, adding a whole new meaning to going out in style!



(photo courtesy of Wikipedia)

Jade burial suit at the Museum of the Mausoleum of the Nanyue King, in Guangzhou²

The making of a jade burial suit was no easy job, because it had strict requirements on techniques. First, jade materials transported from far-away places were processed into thousands of small jade pieces of certain shapes and sizes after lots of procedures; second, each jade piece was polished and drilled, with the shapes and sizes of the holes undergoing special scrutiny and delicate processing; third, a lot of specially made gold, silver or copper threads were used to join the jade pieces. The finished suits were respectively called "gold thread sewn jade burial suit", "silver thread sewn jade burial suit" and "copper thread sewn jade burial suit". The shape of the suit was the same as a human body. The cost of making a medium-sized jade burial suit was almost equal to the property values of 100 then middle-class families put together³.

Properties -- Group: Silicates; Crystal system: monoclinic; Color: white, green, lilac, pink, brown, orange, yellow, red, blue and black; Hardness: 6-7; Transparency: transparent to translucent.

1. Smithsonian Rock and Gem, Ronald Louis Bonewitz, p.282-3.
2. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jade_burial_suit
3. <http://arts.cultural-china.com/en/32Arts415.html>

Helpful Club Officers

Do you have a question about the club? Contacting one of the following can help:

Club President: Barry Remer

bsbremer@comcast.net

Vice President - Sue Marcus

rlhaskins@verizon.net

Secretary: Kathy Hrechka

kshrechka@msn.com (703) 765-3187

Treasurer: Rick Reiber

rickgr3@comcast.net (703) 578-4224

Show chairman - Tom Taaffe

rockclctr@aol.com

SHINING STARS

By Sheryl E. Sims

I get stars in my eyes when it comes to gemstones! The gemstones to which I'm referring are star stones and cat's eyes. They come in all colors, sizes, and shapes and are the types of gemstone that exhibit certain properties called "chatoyancy." Chatoyancy refers to the light reflected from microscopic inclusions found within the gemstone. We can see these best when a single-source light is shown upon the gemstone. What causes chatoyancy? Usually, chatoyancy comes from titanium oxide and the alignment of rutile crystals. Below are few eye catching star stones and cat's eyes:

The Star of India is a 563-carat star sapphire with rutile crystals, and has a milky appearance.

The Star of Asia is a 330-carat star sapphire from Burma. It's size, color and shape have made it quite famous.

Rosser Reeves star ruby is a 138.7-carat from Sri Lanka. It's one of the world's finest star rubies. It was cut to center the star.

The Star of Bombay is also from Sri Lanka. It has 182 carats and was given to Mary Pickford from her husband, Douglas Fairbanks. It's was bequeathed to the Smithsonian Institution.

One black sapphire, from Sri Lanka, consists of 70.8 carats, and has a rare, 12 pointed star.

The Art Deco Star, is a 60-carat star sapphire. It's sky-blue and comes from Sri Lanka. It, too is a part of the Smithsonian's National Gem Collection.

Yellow Chrysoberyl is a smooth cat's-eye stone made from beryllium aluminum oxide with iron and chromium.

Red-Brown Chrysoberyl possesses a dark color which lends to a striking stripe of light due to the reflections from its microscopic inclusions.

Hawk's Eye, Tiger's Eye and Pale Quarts are three different varieties of quartz that contain inclusions or blue asbestos or crocidolite. This creates the cat's-eye effect which cut into cabochons. These types of quartz may be found in Sri Lanka, Brazil, Australia, India, and the U.S.

Asteriated stones, *i.e.*, star sapphires and chatoyant stones, *i.e.*, cat's eye are cut into a domed cut, or cabochon, because it shows the star, or eye, as is it sometimes referred. If the stones were faceted, the star would not be visible.

1. Smithsonian Rock and Gem, Ronald Louis Bonewitz, p.153.
2. Ibid.
3. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cabochon>

The Star of India (left) and the Star of Bombay (right).

Images courtesy
Wikipedia



Northern Virginia Mineral Club

Special Collecting Trip Announcement

Fort Valley, Shenandoah County, Virginia

Saturday, July 2nd, 2011

9am until we're sick of it

This trip is unusual for several reasons:

Firstly, we are going to meet with Bill Melson, retired from 41 years with the Smithsonian institution.

Secondly, Mr. Melson will be talking to us about the geology of Fort Valley and its environs.

Thirdly, Mr. Melson has graciously allowed our group to visit his field laboratory.

Fourthly, due to limited space Mr. Melson has placed a limit of 15 attendees.

Fifthly, after meeting with Mr. Melson the plan is to visit nearby for fossils. Specifically, silicified trilobites.

WHEN: At 9:00 am on Saturday, July 2nd, 2011 (meeting at the Gainesville, VA Starbucks just west of the I66/US29 interchange at Gainesville (not Centerville, not Manassas) VA. (7375 Atlas Walk Way, Gainesville - (571) 248-8830). At that time – and this time no later – we the intrepid explorers will give our “View haloos”, and stock on caffeine at Starbucks.

From that point and at 9:30 we will make our way to the next meeting point, which will likely be the Elizabeth Furnace Recreation area in the Fort Valley.

(Those folks who might be meeting us from the Shenandoah club can meet us at Elizabeth Furnace.)

Whether or no, our intent will be to meet with Mr. Melson. Be prepared with questions, observations and quips on the subject of Fort Valley geology designed to make you sound smart.

WHERE:

1. Take the 1st right onto Gateway Center Dr 0.1 mi
2. Take the 2nd right onto Linton Hall Rd 0.1 mi
3. Take the 1st right onto US-29 N/Lee Hwy 0.1 mi
4. Take the Interstate 66 W ramp to Strasburg 1.0 mi
5. Merge onto I66 W 35.6 mi
6. take exit 6 for US-340 S/US-522 S Toward Front Royal 0.2 mi
7. Turn left onto US-340 S/US-522 S/Winchester Road 1.2 mi
8. Turn right onto VA-55 W/W Strasburg Road 5.1 mi
9. Turn left onto Fort Valley Road/State Route 678 1.2 mi

Approximately 52 minutes (Elizabeth Furnace is actually a bit further into the valley but, this will be just the first of several sites we will visit.) Carpooling is strongly recommended.

WHY: To get all smart brained about geology stuff.

WHO: Any and all members in good standing of Northern Virginia Mineral club and select members of the Montgomery County club and the Shenandoah club until we have 15 attendees.

If you, reader of this announcement, are not a member Of the Northern Virginia Mineral Club (a.k.a. NVMC or if you prefer: NorVirMinClu) you should make haste and go to our website, www.novamineralclub.org, print off the membership form, fill it out and show up at the trip meeting with that and the appropriate of membership dues, because otherwise you are just being sneaky.

WHAT: (stuff to bring – We will be whacking at a few rocks in search of the ever elusive trilobites.)

Steel-toed Boots - required. Keep your wee digits out of harms way.

Safety Helmet - a must. Dandy protectors of the cranium and immensely stylish, to boot!

Safety Goggles - needed. I prefer to avoid unnecessary screaming. Painful and icky.

Heavy Work Gloves - a necessity. Refer above to the howling that accompanies injury. No fun at all.

Other Handy Objects – These are items which, while not absolutely necessary, are still a very good idea. Rock Chisels, Small Sledge Hammers, Large Sledge Hammers, Remote control meteorites, Geologists Picks, Heavy Plastic or Cardboard Containers (for large specimens), Egg Cartons (for small specimens), Newsprint (for wrapping specimens), Frankenberry Breakfast cereal, First Aid Kits, Snacks, Water, Plastic Sheeting (to protect the interior of your car) and an attitude of quiet confidence, good for a lulling the always vigilant fossils into a sense of complacency.

LASTLY: Due to the vagaries of weather, world events, and my own erratic whims, the event may be canceled for no other reason than it has become a particularly bad idea. If there is any question as to whether the trip will come off or if you simply want to go on the trip contact me at

jtcarve@msn.com, 571.344.4959 (c) or

703.754.2050 (h).



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

The Northern Virginia Mineral Club

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Visitors are Always Welcome at our Club Meetings.

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP!

SEND YOUR DUES TO:

**Rick Reiber
Treasurer, NVMC
PO Box 9851
Alexandria, VA 22304**

**OR
Bring your dues to the meeting**

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.