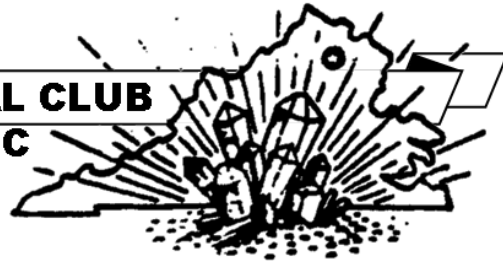




THE NORTHERN VIRGINIA MINERAL CLUB INC



Crystals are the flowers of the Mineral Kingdom



THE MINERAL NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 49 No. 6

JUNE 2008

Smithsonian Mineral Sciences, 1964-1975

Our June Program speaker is Dr. Bill Melson from the Smithsonian Institution's Natural History Museum. His presentation is the History of the Smithsonian's Department of Mineral Sciences During the Golden Age of the Earth Sciences, 1964-1975.

A short bio for Dr. William G. Melson:

Senior Scientist Emeritus, Division of Petrology and Volcanology

Numerous publications between 1966 and 2002

Papers and abstract published or in press over the past five years deal with three areas of research:

Geoarcheology, Volcanology, and Geological History of the Central Appalachians.

Education: Ph.D. Princeton University (1964)

Please join us for this June meeting program

We would like to invite club members to get-together for dinner with Dr. Melson before the meeting on the 28th at the Olive Garden on Route 7/King St. (near Bailey's Crossroads, across the street from Skyline Mall). The dinner get-together is planned for 6:30pm.

The address for the Olive Garden is: 3548-52 S. Jefferson Street Falls Church, VA 22041 703-671-7507

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

NVMC Schedule:

Club Meeting 23 June at 7:45 pm

Summer Break—No meetings in July or August

Next meeting 22 Sept.

No field trips currently planned for July or August

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John Boyer no longer active with NVMC

Our Field Trip chairman, John Boyer, has recently dropped out of the club, at least from the standpoint of field trips and possibly meetings at the Nature Center. This is a tough blow to the club, but John has some very important matters to attend to and will be unable to organize or attend field trips. Therefore, the club now needs a new Field Trip chairman.

If you are interested in helping the club by taking on the task of organizing field trips, please inform Robert Winsor (Newsletter Editor) or mention it during the June meeting if you can attend.

If we can not find an individual willing to take this task, then it may be wise to have a Field Trip committee whereby multiple members would each individually organize a field trip. By spreading the load amongst multiple members, perhaps this will be less laborious.

John's contributions to the club have been enormous. He has organized and attended just about every field

trip since I have been a member, and he is the reason why some of us have joined. He has educated us on the joys of field collecting, and in particular, how to do it in a safe manner. He will be missed, but I think I speak for most of us when I say that this club extends the best wishes for his future

-Robert Winsor

July Field Trips cancelled

There was an email circulated by John Boyer regarding two field trips in July. Each of these field trips has been cancelled by the quarries. One was going to be at the Montpelier Mine on the 12th and the other was going to be at the Manassas quarry on the 26th. No other possible dates for these field trips have been arranged.

Field Trip Report - Willis Mountain Kyanite Mine

June 14th, 2008 By Robert Winsor

This last Saturday was a warm day for heading down south on HWY 15 to the Willis Mountain Kyanite Mine. This mine proclaims that it is "The World's oldest and largest producer of Kyanite and Mullite and the World's only producer of Kyanite dimensional stone."

The visit to this mine started with the manager bringing people into the office for a brief "tour" of the products of the mine. These products are mainly used in the ceramics industry, and therefore many of the products shown were almost sand-like in consistency. In fact, one of their products is a variety of sand that is a byproduct of their operations. Sold heavily to golf courses, it is an example of taking an otherwise waste product and turning it into a source of revenue.

In the manager's office, it was mentioned that there are two locations where people can collect. One is the summit of the mountain, and the other is a more distant location about a mile to the east of the mountain. There are many minerals to be found at this mine, but the manager indicated that the mountain is the best place to find Kyanite and the eastern location is the best place to find all their other minerals.

The manager wanted to keep all the visitors together, either at the mountain top or at the other location, so we all started at the mountain top. It was about



10:30am by the time everyone got into their vehicles and reached drove to the top. The drive was very odd, as we all drove *uphill* to reach the mineral deposits! The view at the top was fantastic.

Indeed, most people quickly found Kyanite. Most of the specimens were not a good bright blue color, however, as can sometimes be found (with luck), but rather a grey-ish color or a very light blue color (see photos).

At about 12:30, most people felt they wanted to visit the eastern location, so everyone headed over there. This other location revealed much less volcanic rock and was primarily sedimentary mixtures of mica, hematite, and pyrite, with some other minerals thrown



in for variety. Due to the sedimentary nature, all of this material consisted of crystals typically less than 3mm.

The day was hot and humid, reaching a high of at least 5 degrees warmer than forecast. The air was hazy, so this affected the views somewhat. The heat also seemed to affect some people adversely.

This was a mine where gloves should be used, as the Kyanite tends to form splinters as does the sedimentary rock at the eastern location. Although the splinters are usually small, they can be irritating. The Kyanite is capable of producing splinters that can cause significant bleeding.

Junior Member Alec Brenner Performs at Nationals



Alec did very well at the Science Olympiad National Tournament on May 30-31, finishing in 11th place in the "Rocks and Minerals" event. The tournament was held at The George Washington University.

He competed against 60 other teams that came from all over the United States -- including Alaska and Hawaii.

Alec's team competed in 23 different science and engineering events. His team, from Longfellow Middle School in McLean, finished in 21st place overall out of the 60 teams at the national tournament. Alec was the only 7th grader on his school's team.

Some of the 23 events will change for next year's competition. For example, the "Rocks and Minerals" event will be replaced with a "Fossils" event, and Alec is already excited about studying for it.

Congratulations, Alec, as well as for the rest of your Longfellow Middle School Team!

GLMS-DC 59th annual Gem Show and Sale

August 2nd & 3rd

Stone Ridge School
9101 Rockville Pike
Bethesda MD 20814

Located at the corner of Rockville Pike and Cedar Lane, 3 blocks from the Medical Center Metro stop. Plenty of free parking.

Hours: Saturday 10:00am - 6:00pm
Sunday 10:00 - 5:00pm

Admission: Adults \$6, Seniors \$5, under 16 free
Visit their website to download and print a \$1 off Discount coupon.

<http://www.glmsdc.com>

"Something for the whole family. Gems, Jewelry, Mineral Specimens, Fossils, Beads, Display Cases of Exquisite Gems, Jewelry and Mineral Art. Kids room with activities and free minerals for kids 12 and under. And, much, much more"

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

17th Annual Gem, Mineral & Fossil Show November 22 - 23, 2008

17th Annual Gem, Mineral & Fossil Show sponsored by the Northern Virginia Mineral Club Show site - George Mason University, Student Union Bldg II, Rte 123 & Braddock Rd, Fairfax, VA

Hrs: Saturday 10:00 AM - 6:00 PM, Sunday 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Approximately 20 Dealers selling Minerals, Fossils, Crystals, Gems, Jewelry, Meteorites & more! Also, Demonstrations, Exhibits, Door Prizes & Kid's Activities including Mini-mines & Fossil Dig. Silent Auction on Sunday afternoon. Adults \$4, Seniors (65+) \$3, Teens (13-17) \$3, Children (12 & under) FREE, Scouts in uniform FREE. Follow directional signs to designated Mineral Show parking on GMU campus.

Contact: Tom Taaffe, rockclctr@aol.com Website: <http://www.mineralclub.org/>

The Prez Says, Part 1

Jenn Hammond, Vice Prez

Wayne was unable to contribute to this month's edition of "Prez Says," so I am going to be filling in for him. I wracked my brain trying to think of what to write about, and only one thing kept coming to mind – the mineral and lapidary sale (the late Robert Mills' collection) this past weekend.

To a budding rock-hound like me, Robert's collection was simply breathtaking. I found specimens of many minerals that I had never even heard of, and was astounded at the quality and quantity of the ones that I do know. Be sure that I will be bringing quite a bit in with me to the next meeting for identification help. I'm getting off topic though, as this is not the reason I wanted to write about Robert and the sale.

As I said, Robert's collection was simply incredible – standing in his basement looking at all the full shelves and cabinets, you could tell that this was truly his passion; more so than just a hobby. I could only think of all the hours he must have spent collecting, and then molding the minerals into some sort of creation – be it one of his beautifully crafted cabochons, or something else. I think of the life he devoted to his love of minerals, he and his wife going out together rock hunting - and I find it all inspiring. I don't believe that I ever had the opportunity to meet Robert, but I wish I had. So to those of you that I can say this to – thank you to all of you out there who are an inspiration to us newbie rock-hounds. Thank you for your help and advice, for showing us the ropes, for lending a spare hardhat or pair of gloves when needed, and for everything else you do.

I also would like to thank Robert Mills' daughter for inviting us into Robert's home for the sale, and for some of us that didn't know him to experience a part of his life.

June Meeting Agenda

Call to order at 7:45 pm.

Recognize Past Presidents & Guests...

Short announcements from committee chairs or audience.

Old business...Action Items...

New business...Action Items...

The Prez Says, Part 2

Wayne wanted to mention the following:

Put Blooms on Your Hobby

If many contribute, we have a beautiful bouquet.

#13



Have a wonderful summer. Enjoy collecting, picnics, and shows. I will miss the June NVMC meeting so I'll see you there in September. Please remember that there is no NVMC meeting in July or August.

The Prez

Approval of May meeting minutes.

Other items

Adjourn meeting.

10-minute Refreshment break

June Program and adjournment by 9:50 PM

May Meeting Minutes

By Kathy Hrechka, Secretary

Northern Virginia Mineral Club

Minutes of the May 19, 2008 meeting

President, Wayne Sukow called the meeting to order at 8 p.m. (Our meeting date for May was changed due to Memorial Day.) Sukow suspended Roberts Rules and moved ahead, as a result of no quorum.

Club members welcomed Sharon Urquhart, a new guest.

The minutes of the April meeting were approved as printed in the May newsletter.

New Business: Dave McClean reported that a new mineral 'hollandite' from the Montreal Mine, Montreal, WI was identified by Jeffrey Post at the Smithsonian.

Meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Program: "Splendid Stones" by National Geographic

Did you Know? The NVMC has a new mailing address for membership renewals and other correspondence via regular mail to the Board of Directors. The new address is:

Northern Virginia Mineral Club
PO Box 9851
Alexandria, VA 22304

New members as well as any membership renewals should be sent attention to Rick Reiber, Treasurer.

Schedule

Upcoming Events to plan for:

23 June: NVMC meeting

19 June: GMMC in Charlottesville

11 Sept: NVMC Board meeting

2-3 Aug: GLMS/DC Show in Bethesda

22 Sept: NVMC meeting

18 Sept: GMMC in Manassas

New Members?

If you would like to join the NVMC, please fill out a membership application available on our club website or at one of our monthly meetings.

If you have been a member but let your membership lapse, you may be able to become a member again by sending your dues payment to:

Northern Virginia Mineral Club
Rick Reiber, Treasurer
PO Box 9851
Alexandria, VA 22304

Your Article Belongs Here!

Please send your newsletter articles to the Editor! This is the club's newsletter—by the club for the club. That means that we can all contribute to it.

At this time I would especially like to ask for articles about particular specific subjects of Earth Sciences. A good article could be as broad as the geology of Virginia, or as specific as a particular fossil that is found in the Northern Blue Ridge.

In upcoming months, especially late summer, I would like to get a few articles regarding the Lapidary arts. Please share your skills with fellow members by writing an article. If we could get enough articles by late summer, maybe our club members can spend their winter months practicing the skills on the specimens obtained on summer field trips.

-Editor

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

A Gem in Jeopardy

Owners say they might have to close Morefield Gem Mine

By Jamie C. Ruff

Times-Dispatch Staff Writer

First published in the Richmond Times-Dispatch Monday, May 26, 2008

Edition: Final, Section: Area/State, Page A-7

Next Saturday could be the last day the Morefield Gem Mine, a landmark and destination for many of the area's schoolchildren, will be open.

Sharon Dunaway and her husband, Sam, have had the mine up for sale for the past couple of years and said if they are unable to sell the operation they will not reopen it.

The mine is well-known. Morefield is one of several mines with displays at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, as well as being a mainstay of field trips for area schools. Some people in Washington on business will drive down to visit the mine, Sharon Dunaway said. Every state and a number of countries are represented in the guest books. "On a given year, it's been as much as 20,000 guests from around the world," she said.

The mine offers rock hunters "panning" with a screen in a trough of running water, collecting from mine dumps and outcrop digging for more advanced collectors.

Discovered in 1929, the mine is famous for its Amazonite, but about 85 different minerals, some rare, can be found there.

James and Anne Dandeneau of Lovingston were sitting at the front gate Thursday morning waiting for the mine to open. They had been there the day before and had so much fun that they spent the night at a hotel and returned.

The couple only recently got into visiting gem mines. "It's a fun hobby," said James Dandeneau, who works for a plastics-manufacturing company. "You may never make a lot of money on it, but it's a good education. I've learned a lot about rocks by [doing] this."

The couple said they hope the mine remains open, but they can understand the Dunaways desire to retire.

"They have a life, too," said Anne Dandeneau, who works at Wal-Mart. "Everybody needs to live their life instead of working all the time."

The Dunaways bought the mine in 1996. Sam Dunaway was an engineer in Alaska before they acquired Morefield. What they will do once retired, Sharon Dunaway, said, is "up to

where the Lord takes us."

The business is profitable, and there is the advantage of being a small-business owner and being able to set your own hours, she said. But there is also the expense of running a business and the list of regulations that must be adhered to - some implemented after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks and

some after recent mine disasters in other states, Sharon Dunaway said.

The Dunaways have taken the mine "further than it had ever been" with the improvements they made and the next owners will have to take it to a higher level with more mechanization and expansion of the operation, Sharon Dunaway said.

On Thursday, a group of 116 students from DuPont Elementary School in Hopewell were at the mine. Sam Dunaway was

telling the children the rules - no running, take your time looking through the rocks, wash the bigger rocks separately - and quizzing them about the types of rocks they could expect to see. Then the children - accompanied by their adult chaperones and the Dandeneaus - headed off to the mine.

"They will have a good time," Sam Dunaway said. "Their bedroom or garage will be full of rocks and that's the way we like it. We've peppered Virginia with Morefield Gem Mine rocks."

Contact Jamie C. Ruff at (434) 392-6605 or jruff@timesdispatch.com.

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Tool of the Month

Pump Sprayer

This month's tool is the "garden variety" (pun intended) pump sprayer. These are sprayers that are normally used to dispense garden chemicals (pesticides, herbicides, fertilizer, etc.). They have two large handles. One handle is for carrying and the other is for pumping (some just have one handle that does both). They have a tube that is usually a few feet long and has a sprayer gun attached to it. The gun usually has an 18" long snout on it and has a valve for controlling spray volume. At the tip of the sprayer is a nozzle that is usually adjustable from a fine spray mist to a narrow jet. The amount of water they will hold can vary from model to model, but 2 gallons is a common size that works well for a day of work.

These sprayers are great for cleaning mineral specimens at home, but show their true value on field trips. Most mines and quarries generate a tremendous amount of dust. If there was insufficient rain prior to a field trip, the dust generally coats all the rocks and minerals such that good specimens can be hard to find. These sprayers offer a convenient way to clean the crud off, and with the narrow jet setting, it is possible to reach into some small nooks and crannies.

These sprayers range in price from about \$20 to \$40,



or more if you want "frills." It is a good idea to stop into a local home improvement store and look at the models available. Most stores have a few different models to choose from.

The only nuisance with these sprayers is the length of the gun. It is usually about 18" long, much longer than needed for cleaning dirt. Some sprayers have a nozzle tube that can be shortened if you are handy.

Due to the nature of using this sprayer, you should have one that is only used for cleaning minerals, and only use water in the container. Use of other chemicals in the sprayer could leave residue inside that would contaminate future batches of water. It is therefore a good idea to get one new, and designate it for use with water only. Be sure if you buy one that it is not one that has been used by another consumer and returned to the store. Even with these precautions, never drink water from the sprayer, as they are not made with FDA approved materials.

Another benefit with these sprayers is that on hot summer days, the sprayer can be turned to the mist setting and you can spray a bit of water mist on yourself to keep cool.

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.

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.

President: Wayne Sukow

d8olite@fastmail.fm (703) 280-8108

Vice President: Jenn Hammond (703-585-3046)

cherryflamez@yahoo.com

Secretary: Kathy Hrechka

kshrechka@msn.com (703) 765-3187

Treasurer: Rick Reiber

rickgr3@comcast.net (703) 578-4224



NVMC Newsletter Editor
Robert Winsor
35740 Roundleaf Ct.
Round Hill, VA 20141

Phone: 540-751-0922
Please call between 7pm and 9pm
E-mail: photech@comcast.net



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

The Northern Virginia Mineral Club

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). Please send membership renewals to: Northern Virginia Mineral Club
PO Box 9851
Alexandria, VA 22304

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.

Visitors are Always Welcome at our Club Meetings.

ATTENTION

Please send articles to the newsletter editor! The deadline for submission is 10 days prior to the club meeting.

You can send your Newsletter articles to:

Robert Winsor
35740 Roundleaf Ct.
Round Hill, VA 20141

Or via email: photech@comcast.net