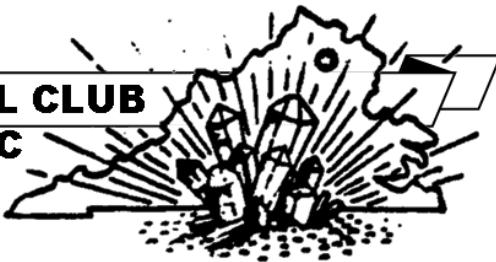




THE NORTHERN VIRGINIA

**MINERAL CLUB
INC**

Crystals are the flowers of the Mineral Kingdom



THE MINERAL NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 49 NO. 7

SEPTEMBER 2008

Summer Experiences

Come to the September meeting and share your experiences from the summer. This meeting is when we like to have some "show and tell" and share stories of our summer adventures.

Please bring to the meeting any interesting or amazing finds or stories you have and share them with all of us.

The meeting is at Long Branch Nature Center (LBNC) at 7:45pm on Monday the 22nd.

Glendon Talc Mine, North Carolina

by Robert Winsor

I have attended one trip in the past to the Standard Mineral Company mine in Glendon, NC. This is a mine where ubiquitous amounts of massive Talc (var. pyrophyllite) can be found (its really good for practicing carving small figurines), but this mine is really famous for its pyrite cubes. Other minerals such as fluorite can be found, but people generally show up for the pyrite. Historically, this mine has opened twice a year (April and October) to the public allowing collectors to carry out buckets of pyrite. However, this year the April opening did not occur. I contacted the mine, and apparently the October opening also will not occur. The employee at the mine that organized the previous openings is no longer with the company.

I am still trying to get more information about future possibilities to visit this mine, and will report my findings in future issues of The Mineral Newsletter.

October Field Trip - Your Help Needed!

Currently, there is no field trip planned for September or October (or any future months). We really need someone to come forward and volunteer to plan a field trip. Doing so is an easy thing to do. It really does not take a lot of time, but it does require someone to do several tasks. Here is a breakdown of the things that a field trip organizer needs to do: (1) Decide on a time and location and set a date by coordinating with the quarry or mine while being sure to leave your contact information with the site manager, (2) Send out an email to club members notifying them of the event, (3) take note of attendee names and phone numbers (those who reply), (4) Contact the site manager again a day or two prior to the trip to verify that the visit is still safe and permissible (send cancellation notice to attendees if needed), (5) bring a copy of the liability waiver to the site and have members sign it upon arrival, (6) organize attendees at the site and deliver a safety briefing - involve the site manager in this, and (7) help the site manager keep track of attendees.

Anyone wishing to manage a field trip can get help with all of these steps by contacting Robert Winsor (see back page next to mailing label).

When planning a trip, try to take note of travel time to get to the site and adjust starting time if possible.

The club has a list of many contact names for many of the sites previously visited, and also has an email list ready to use, so this is really not a lot of work. It just takes a willing (and able) person.....

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

NVMC Schedule:

**Club meeting 22 Sept
7:45pm at LBNC**

27-28 Sept. Gem Cutters Guild Show, Howard County Fairgrounds

09 Oct. NVMC Board Mtg

27 Oct. NVMC meeting at LBNC

13 Nov. NVMC Board Mtg

22-23 Nov. NVMC Mineral Show, George Mason University, Student Union

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The Houston Museum of Natural Science Mineral Display

By Erich Grundel

One of the notable changes in our country in the past 50 years has been the explosive growth of the South and the West. Economic development has spurred a transfer of population to these regions. Houston, Texas has been one of the major benefactors of this change. Long the center of the American oil and gas industry, Houston has gained from this and other important commercial enterprises in the form of significant cultural institutions. An outstanding complex of museums located in the downtown area of the city is testimony to this.

The Museum of Natural Science has received generous support from corporations and wealthy individuals as it strives to achieve national and international recognition. The Cullen Hall of Gems and Minerals is probably its crowning achievement. This is a very new collection. Most of the specimens have been obtained in the last 30 years, starting with the efforts of a Texas oilman, Perkins Sams and then Smithsonian curator of minerals Paul Desautels. A description of the history of the museum and the beginnings of the mineral collection can be found in the Jan./Feb. 1992 issue of *The Mineralogical Record*. The stated goal of the museum is to obtain the finest or near finest specimens available. They have succeeded. The quality of the specimens is extraordinary. The exhibit is phenomenal but unfortunately is inexplicably flawed by the lack of labels on a few of the cases. Some of the pieces instantly woo even the raucous crowds of school kids that crowd the galleries.

The total number of specimens on display is not as large as some of its rivals; 750 according to the museum's website, but they have as a whole almost no equal in the mineral world. Here is just a small sample of these specimens that have been described in a book as masterpieces.

Two specimens of gold from Eagle's Nest Mine in California greet you near the entrance. One is the famous "Dragon" while the other is a quartz pocket with quartz crystals to about 5cm covered over an area that measures, I would guess, at about 20x7 cm in crystallized

gold! A platinum nugget, at least a pound in weight, from Russia is thrown in for a topping. Silver from all the famous mining districts of Germany, Mexico, Michigan and Norway are the dessert.

Rhodochrosite from the Sweet Home Mine in Colorado seems to have caught the eye of more than one person because there are several of these specimens on display. Just one of them would be worthy of any museum (except Denver) but to have so many is hard to absorb.

Gem minerals such as beryl, spodumene, topaz, and tourmaline from all over the world are the best portion of the displays. Afghanistan, Brazil, California and Pakistan have contributed a dazzling array of large specimens with colors that are only rivaled by the rainbow. It is hard to choose the best among these but one candidate is the unbelievable emerald from Hiddenite, North Carolina that was collected in 2003. This specimen has received a lot of coverage in collecting circles as well as the general press. It surely is the best and most important American mineral specimen found in this century and among the best in any century.

There is a small but exceptional suite of minerals from Tsumeb, Namibia. Most of these specimens have long pedigrees but have now been assembled into one location to make seeing them a treat. Excellent reticulated cerussite groups, fine azurites, a very large diopside group and one of the best, if not the best, leadhillite specimen.

To learn more about this collection visit the museum's web site. Better yet, make plans to go to Houston and see them for yourself. You will find the trip worth it.

References:

<http://www.hmns.org>

Bartsch, Joel A., Mauthner, Mark and Wilson, Wendell E., *Masterpieces of the Mineral World*, 2004

The Trip to New England, and to the West Springfield Show, 2008

By George Reimherr

It was Wednesday, August 6th – 2 days before the big mineral show at West Springfield, Massachusetts – and it was raining. My wife and I had arrived at the local motel the evening before, intending to go sightseeing during those 2 days. The local weather was unsettled during the period, with sunshine and rainfall each day. The countryside was lush and green. This year, instead of the usual trips to state parks, we decided to travel to 2 mineral museums – one in Connecticut, the other in Vermont. As these destinations are in rather opposite directions, it was decided to schedule a separate day for each.

Wednesday's trip was to the Connecticut Museum of Mining and Mineral Science, located one mile north of Kent, CT, off Route 7 (North of Danbury, CT). The museum is in one of a group of buildings of the Connecticut Antique Machinery Association, located in a wooded country-like area. It is open to the public from May through October, Wednesday through Sunday, 10:00am to 4:00pm. The Museum contains histories of Connecticut's mines, mining artifacts and technology, and mineral displays which include many specimens from Connecticut. One display shows prehnite and apophyllite specimens from Connecticut quarries; another display contains almandine garnets in matrix from the famous Roxbury, CT site. There is a rather large room displaying fluorescent minerals from CT and from Franklin/Ogdensburg, NJ, and elsewhere. There is also a small rock shop in the museum, where one may buy specimens from CT or from worldwide sources. Travel distance from the motel was about 76 miles.

The plan for Thursday, August 7th, was to travel north to Vermont Country Store at Rockingham, VT – a store well stocked with gift items for friends back home – then onto the Vermont Museum of Mining and Mineral, located in a small house at 55 Pleasant St., Grafton, VT. The museum is normally closed on weekdays, but we had made arrangements so it would be open for us; we were to arrive between 1:00pm and 2:00pm. Well, fate intervened.

The trip began an hour late while we corrected a minor car problem; then on to the welcome center on Route 91, then to the Vermont Country Store. The clouds had been building up and they unloaded when we got to the parking lot at the store, with much thunder and lightning accompanying the cloudburst. Rather than become soaking wet, I decided to wait in the car a few minutes until the rain let up a bit. A half hour later, with the parking lot resembling a small lake, I entered the store. By the time we left the store, it was already 2:00pm. I tried to contact the museum person by cell phone, but it was a cell phone dead area (can you hear me now?). So we drove several miles toward Grafton, VT, by the

shortest route, only to find that the road had washed out ahead. So, we went back to the Country Store and got permission to use their house phone, dialed the proper number and got the answering service. So, we took the longer route, arriving at the museum by 3:00pm, too late to find anyone there. I later contacted the museum person by phone from our home in Virginia. The situation was straightened out, and we are invited to try again when visiting the area.

Friday, August 8th began cloudy and cool, but there was already a crowd of people waiting for the 10:00am opening of the mineral show. Upon entering the show, one sees this year's special exhibit, from the collection of Herb and Monika Obodda. This included 53 cases showing minerals, gems, gem carvings, old books, mining artifacts, and mining related collectibles. The onto the dealer's area; according to the dealer directory, there were 128 retail and 59 wholesale dealer spaces. In the author's experience, most retail dealers had mineral specimens for sale. Wide, Helen, enjoyed watching the kids doing their treasure hunting in the gem and fossil panning area. The dealer with the unopened Mexican geodes was there again. It was fascinating to watch him crack open one's chosen geode using his special apparatus.

As usual, there were guest speakers, and there were three different presentations on each of the 3 days of the show. We attended the 3 lectures on Friday and the first lecture on Saturday, leaving at about 2:00pm that day to return home. The topics and speakers for the four lectures we attended were as follows:

"America's Finest Minerals" Bob Jones

"The Geology of Quartz" Nancy Millard

"Women and Mineral Collecting" Gail Spann

"Exploring Caves Worldwide" Kevin Downey

Gail Spann, who gave the third lecture, along with husband James Spann, were the winners of the 2008 Desautels Award at the Tucson show (see Mineral Record photo, May-June 2008 issue, page 245). Their mineral collection will be featured at next year's West Springfield show, August 7-9 2009. Bob Jones, who gave the first lecture, was scheduled to give two more talks, probably with color slides, at this year's show.

The Prez Says

Plan On Participating and Sharing

The Top Row of Lake Superior Agates Are 4-7lbs Each!



A "Laker" Exhibit From A Virginia Collector

September is the month when we kick off the NVMC New Year. It's our first meeting in several months followed by a busy October getting candidates for club officers for 2009. Then it's the November Show and the December Christmas Party. There's a lot of work to be done and fun to be had if you participate. Plan on it.

I'm looking forward to the September meeting and hearing stories about your summer activities. Mine included getting to two excellent mineral shows. First it was the Montgomery Club show with a great turnout of club members and the public. Did you see the numerous club member exhibits? I really enjoyed them even if they were not being judged by the AFMS rules. Then there was the **"Wonderful World of Agates Symposium in Menasha, Wisconsin with 76 exhibits** (Again, they were not being judged by the AFMS rules.) of world-class agates. You've never seen such collections of Lake Superior Agates of great size and great color and patterns. Bring your stories to the September and other 2008-09 NVMC meetings. Plan on exhibiting specimens from your collection at the NVMC show in November. The public loves seeing them.

One more comment about the NVMC November 2008 show. While Tom Taffee is continuing as the Dealer Chairman for the Show we still need a Show Chair for coordinating all the other aspects. Plan on helping the NVMC 2008 Show Chair. It can be fun when there are many hands.

Wayne Sukow, Prez.

September Meeting Agenda

NVMC---AGENDA---09/22/08

Call to order at 7:45 pm.

Recognize Guests...

Door Prizes

Announcements:

Field Trips

Other **short announcements** from committee chairs or audience.

Show & Tell materials.

Recess for presentation by our speaker.....

Reconvene after refreshments.

Approval of minutes of June '08 NVMC meeting.

Committee Chair Reports...Identify Action Item and Prepare Motion

Old business...Action Items...

Status of Nov. '08 Show...

New business...Action Items...

Please forward any new business item(s) to the Prez. prior to the meeting, if you can, and be prepared to offer a motion. Thanks..
The Prez email address is on page 7.

Adjourn Meeting by 9:50 pm.

Schedule

Upcoming Events to plan for:

22 Sept. NVMC meeting at LBNC

27-28 Sept. Gem Cutters Guild Show, Howard County Fairgrounds

09 Oct. NVMC Board Mtg

27 Oct. NVMC meeting at LBNC

13 Nov. NVMC Board Mtg

22-23 Nov. NVMC Mineral Show, George Mason University, Student Union

24 Nov. NVMC meeting at LBNC

June Meeting Minutes

Recorded by Robert Winsor

Meeting called to order at 8:04pm

Dr. Bill Melson from the Smithsonian Institution's Natural History Museum gave a presentation on the "Golden Age of the Earth Sciences"

Two gem and mineral show tickets were raffled

Break for refreshments at 9:02

Business meeting started at 9:23pm

Recognize past presidents

New member Holt Apgar introduced himself

No old business

Flyers were handed out for the August mineral show

May minutes were approved.

There was some discussion regarding field trips due to John Boyer's resignation as field trip chairman. Other members were encouraged to step forward and organize new field trips.

An announcement was made regarding newsletter articles, encouraging members to contribute

There was discussion about the NVMC mineral show. A motion was made to increase the per-table fee from 40 to 45, Barry seconded the motion. Discussion was held and then a vote. The motion was unanimous.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:39, followed by show and tell

Go Emerald

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Summer Field Trips

This summer the members of NVMC have been to two field trips. One was on July 12th at the Manassas quarry. Back at the June meeting, one of the issues of discussion was that John Boyer had to step down as field trip chairman, and this trip to the Manassas quarry was tentatively cancelled. However, Dave Hennessey stepped in and headed up this trip. So, many of you may have thought that the field trip did not occur, when in fact it did occur. This was a case where having an email address proved a necessity to be able to be informed (or, by word of mouth with a member that has email). Anyway, the trip occurred.

Another field trip this summer that was initially cancelled was the trip to the US Silica Montpelier mine. This trip ended up being postponed to late August (23rd), and again unfortunately members were only informed via email or word of mouth.

For any members that would like to attend the club field trips but *do not have email*, you can still stay informed of such trips and trip changes by calling Robert Winsor (see return label of this newsletter) and leaving a good phone number to call for more information.

The trip to the Montpelier mine seemed like it could have been terribly hot. Late August, lots of bright reflective silica all over the place combine to make a good recipe for uncomfortable HEAT. However, this was quite a pleasant morning for a field trip. The high temperature for the day was in the mid 80s, and

for most of the morning, the temperature hovered around 80. Indeed, the silica made it seem warmer when the wind died down, but there was just enough of a breeze (most of the time) to make collecting quite pleasant for this rockhound.

The POC at the mine, Anna, told us that several months prior they had started blasting at the part of the mine where all the moonstone resides. To get an idea of how much moonstone is at this mine, imagine a 30-foot tall, 50-foot wide section of nothing but solid moonstone, and that's where they had been blasting. Indeed, since our visit last year, this section of the mine had considerable material removed. This produced a lot more material in that area to find garnets, as they tend to reside near the edge of the moonstone (and can be found in many places in this pegmatite mine). Most of the garnets were massive pockets packed in mica schist. Individual crystals were typically the size of grains of sand.

One new member, Ted Carver, found a very nice garnet specimen, however. It had much larger spessartine garnets, typically on the order of 8-12mm, but there was at least one garnet on the bowling-ball sized specimen with >20mm faces. What a find!

The moonstone had greater variety this time as compared with our last visit. Moonstone from pure white could be found, albeit in much smaller quantities than the gray variety. Still, all shades of grey moonstone were in plentiful supply!

-Robert Winsor

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/>

Tool of the Month

When many people think of tools, they think of steel. In some way, shape or form, steel is involved in so many of the tools we use. However, this month's "tool of the month" is something that will easily destroy most people's steel tools (and many non-steel tools as well). It is a dangerous tool, something to be handled with extreme care.



The tool is Hydrochloric acid (HCl). It is not a tool for the faint of heart, as the handling precautions are numerous. For instance, when using this product you must be in a well ventilated area (OUTSIDE). You must remember that this stuff can cause severe burns on your skin as well as your breathing surfaces (nose, mouth, lungs) and your eyes. Hydrochloric acid emits a gas that readily dissolves in the tissue in your eyes and respiratory tract, and when the vapor is dissolved, it turns into acid. It is very painful.

So, use this stuff outside, and have plenty of water nearby to rinse a spill or to flush the eyes.

That being said, Hydrochloric acid is commonly sold at home improvement stores as Muriatic acid. Ask for it in the gardening area, as it is commonly used to clean concrete (it etches concrete). It may be sold in single gallon jugs, but it is also commonly sold in a cardboard box holding two one-gallon jugs.

The purpose of this acid is that it does a fantastic job of cleaning unwanted residue from some minerals. And, in some cases, it removes the unwanted mineral. For example, the picture at the right shows what happens to a specimen. This specimen came from the Hunting Hill quarry, and the main mineral apparent was calcite. The clinzoisite was much less apparent, visible only at the broken edge. When this sample was placed in

HCl, the calcite was dissolved away, leaving just the clinzoisite, and here the crystals are clearly visible. This sample is about the size of a fist and took about 1/3 cup acid from the jug, and 2/3 cups water to do the job. A little goes a long way! Total time to remove the calcite was about 60 minutes.

When using this acid, it is a really good idea to dilute it at least 2 parts water to 1 part acid. Always dilute by adding acid to the water rather than water to acid.

Always use rubber gloves that are at least twice as long as the depth of the acid bath you are using. Only make an acid bath that is large enough to cover your specimen. Always have a large (i.e. 5-gallon) bucket of water nearby to place the specimen and rinse your gloves when finished with the bath. Soak your specimens in water for about as long as it was in the acid.

Last, be careful with the specimens you etch. HCl may remove or damage minerals that you want to keep. Try small pieces first, and if the bath behaves the way you want, you can move to a larger piece.



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

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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).

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