

Vulcan Quarry

8537 Vulcan Lane
Manassas, VA 20109

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Field Trip Report Submitted by: Renee Eichman, GMSVP Field Trip Co-Chair

The sky was overcast and there was a slight dampness in the air while at the main parking lot of the quarry. That dreadful four-letter word "RAIN" was in the forecast. What will today hold?

As the hosting club for this trip, GMSVP was represented by seven members (six adults and one Pebble Pup). Ten members were present from the Tidewater Gem and Mineral Society and seven from the N. Va. Mineral Club (six adults and one Pebble Pup as well).

After the check-in process and safety briefing with quarry official, Mickey, at 7:30 a.m. everyone drove single-file into the lower levels of the quarry. Most of the GMSVP members began their collecting in the lowest level, which rests at 200 feet below sea level. Most of the prehnite specimens Heather and I discovered were in this general area. As the raindrops slowly fell upon us, we decided we'd head upwards and see where everyone else had been.

We stopped at about -150 ft. benchmark and picked up some small pieces of prehnite and were greeted by Mickey. We were discussing how the economy has affected their facility and staff members quite hard, when several Canada geese came in for a landing on a ledge half way up the quarry high wall. They were running around up there causing a ruckus. Within seconds we could hear a mini-rockslide created by these two flapping around up there. For those of us with acute hearing, it was a compelling reminder why it's so important to stay away from those high walls.

Mickey and I got back to our topic of conversation when all of a sudden I heard a train whistle. I remembered crossing the tracks entering their main parking lot, but wasn't expecting to see a train where I did. I looked up towards the top of the quarry on the far other side and was shocked to see a full-length cargo train rolling down a track right on the edge of the first high wall of the quarry. Let's just say the thoughts of what those train vibrations could do to loose rocks over there made the hair stand up on my neck.

Well it was time to move on and see what people were finding up another level or two. Heather, Hank and I moved up a bit higher and discovered what we believe was a fox den under several very large boulders and a partially

eaten rabbit outside the den's "front door". At the time I didn't have any tools one my person to defend myself if the fox approached, but Hank reminded me there were plenty of rocks available and they make for good deterrents for anyone approaching without an invitation. As I put the last of my two yard rocks in my car, the Bodensick's showed us the stellerite crystals they had collected from the next level up.

Time was running out but Hank, Heather and I decided we wanted to get a few of those crystals and headed uphill. It was a bit of a walk from the car to the stellerite area but we made it. With about 45 minutes of collecting left, we listened to the experienced collectors and before long we looked like we knew what we were doing. It was a great feeling when uncovering one of these caramel-orange colored beauties!

Around 11:30 a.m. Mickey drove through the quarry honking his truck horn, which was our signal to return to our vehicles and drive back to the main office. Before we made it all the way to the office, I spotted the HUGE quarry vehicles Mickey told me to stop at and have Heather stand next to just for size perspective. Wow, the top of her head only came halfway up the tire.

What an unbelievably fun day and everyone left happy! Even though it did rain lightly for a while, it sure was better than the sun beating on us for hours. Both of our guest clubs were extremely appreciative for having invited them and thanked me many times. Hopefully we'll return again soon.

