

PUTTING TOGETHER A DISPLAY FOR THE ANNUAL SHOW

The Shenandoah Valley Gem & Mineral Society (SVGMS) has numerous glass-front display cases stored in the club work room. The purpose of these cases is to provide club members with an opportunity to assemble an educational display for the annual club show (this year – September 18-20!). The cases serve to provide education and inspiration to show attendees as well as illustrate the purpose and function of the SVGMS. Plus, creating a display case is an excellent way to show off your mineral collection or lapidary work.

THE BASICS

- The display boxes are approximately 30” x 24” with a sloping front that ranges from about 5.5” at the back to about 3” in the front.
- Some of the boxes are lined with fabric and some of them aren’t. You can opt to cover the bottom and side with fabric or leave it as-is. I’ve painted the interior of the two boxes that I use with bright white paint.
- The fronts of the boxes are, for the most part, made of glass that is very fragile. Many people have used the displays for years with no problems, while I broke the glass on mine the first day. You may have a piece of clear plastic cut to replace the glass front, if you so desire. Ace Hardware or Lowes are good places to purchase this material. **The club will reimburse the cost of replacing the glass fronts with plastic.** Save your receipt and bring it to the show for reimbursement. While we try to keep an eye on the cases during the show, all it takes will be one small child leaning on a glass front and shattering it to leave us all wishing we had replaced the fronts.

SO WHAT GOES IN A DISPLAY CASE?

- The display cases may contain anything relevant to the SVGMS.
- Since that covers a lot of ground, some examples would be mineral specimens, cabochons or cut stones, finished jewelry, faceted stones or site-specific material.
- If the concept sounds daunting or you don’t think you have enough stuff to put a case together, partner with someone and work together.

SO I’VE GOT AN IDEA, NOW WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO?

- Now you just put items in your display case in a clear, concise way that illustrates the theme of your display.
- Don’t crowd too much into the display case. Allow enough room so that each piece can be fully appreciated. Less is more. (edit – someone remind me of this when I’m making my own display cases!)
- Place larger items in the back so as not to block the view of smaller pieces. Stagger rows of items for the same reason.
- Use pedestals, easels or jewelry displays to elevate smaller specimens. Many of these can be inexpensively purchased (Michael’s, eBay, etc.) or hand made.
- Make sure everything is labeled correctly. Labels can be made from heavy cardstock or other thick material. I use colored cardstock that I laminate on the cheap using clear shelf liner paper. Another labeling method is to print your label text, glue it to a piece of Styrofoam board and then cut the label out using a very sharp Exacto knife. Believe it or not, this is how the Virginia Museum of Natural History makes most of their labels.

POSSIBLE THEMES

- “Golden Calcites from the Elmwood Mine in Tennessee – from Micromount to Doorstop” – (suggested by Michael Pabst)
- Gold Mining – featuring small amount of recovered gold as well as some of the small equipment used in panning/dredging. Could also include photos.
- Cabochon Display – display some of the fine work many of our members have done. Could also include rough material with the finished cab to demonstrate the drastic change.
- Jewelry Display – show off some of the fine jewelry our members have made.
- Field Trip Display – featuring specimens collected on club field trips
- Rocks vs Minerals – highlight the difference between the two and show examples of rocks and the minerals that form them.
- The Crystallographic System – show examples of each crystal system with an explanation. (Note – this would be challenging!!)
- Fossil Display – rocks, minerals and jewelry aren’t the only things out there.
- Petrified Wood – display a variety of different colored petrified wood.
- Calcites (or any mineral you love and have a lot of) – show different specimens from different localities. This illustrates the different appearances of minerals.
- Mineral Collection – don’t have a theme, no problem! Just drop in your favorite rock/minerals, make some labels and you’re done.
- Minerals of the Morefield Mine (or any mine you’ve visited and have material you’ve collected).

**HOPE EVERYONE IS EXCITED TO CREATE A DISPLAY!
PICK UP A CASE TONIGHT AND GET STARTED – SEPTEMBER WILL
BE HERE SOON!**