

# THE CAPITAL ROCKHOUNDER



Publication of the Capital District Mineral Club, Inc.  
Chartered by the Education Department of the State of New York  
P.O. Box 12814, Albany, New York 12212-2814

## December 2010

### Next Meeting

There will be no December meeting in Albany this month. We will have a banquet and auction at the Comfort Inn in Glenmont instead. Details inside.

### December Dinner/Auction

Our Dinner/Auction will be on December 2 at the Comfort Inn in Glenmont for all those that signed up by November 28 with Mark Kilmer.

**AUCTION:** Each member is allowed to bring up to three (3) items to include in the auction. Please know the name of the specimen and the specific location where it was found. We are accepting items having to do with earth science which would include rocks, minerals, fossils, lapidary, books, equipment, etc. The split is 80/20 with 80% of the proceeds going to the seller. Please bring your checkbook or cash (we prefer cash). We do not accept credit cards.

**GIFT EXCHANGE:** And as always, we are doing a gift exchange. Bring a gift with a value of about \$5 wrapped, and exchange it with someone else who has done the same. Make sure to give them all to Bob Ballard upon arrival who will then make sure no one gets their own gift back. Please make sure that the gift is rock related.

### Final Notice of Dues Due

This will be your last newsletter if your dues is not paid by December. You will be removed from the club list and forfeit all club benefits.

-- Bob Hartig

### January Program Reminder

All who are interested in creating a "painting" with polished stones, please bring a drawing, in color, to review with Rich Stein. Rich will bring small quantities of each of the available materials for your examination. Please Note: avoid yellow in your designs – Rich has been unable to find naturally yellow rocks to polish, and thus far has not been able to find a white variety that will accept yellow dyes he has available. The January meeting will be devoted to laying out your designs, ready to glue in place. Size recommendation – about 6" X 8". When finished with a nice frame this is a convenient size for wall or desk.

-- Rich Stein

### Keeper of the Name Tags

We have relinquished the 'Keeper of the Name Tags' to Al Smith. In the future he will bring the Name Tags and urge you to wear them. The name tags were instituted because

new members didn't know the names of the old members and were reluctant to start a conversation. The same is true of the old members, they didn't know the names of the new people and didn't always speak to them. Of course, there are some members who will speak to anybody and for that we thank them. Wear your name tags and say hello to people. But taper off when the program starts.

-- Bruce Murray "Retired Name Tag Dispenser"

### George J. Gearhardt

Husband, Father, Educator, Student, US Navy Veteran, Past President CDMC, Enthusiastic Rockhound, NYS Museum Volunteer, FRIEND. George died at home on Tuesday, August 31, 2010, at age 82. Born in Albany, he attended Vincentian Institute and Siena College, where he received his BA and MA. He taught at the high school in Wells, NY, then in Guilderland, where he served as business department chairman until retirement in 1983. He is survived by his wife Barbara, six children and their families.

George was an enthusiastic supporter of CDMC and NYS Museum activities. He was an active participant – sharing the work while encouraging others to join in. George and Barbara spent countless hours inventorying, cataloging and photographing minerals at the State Museum; their photographs have enlivened several posters announcing the annual February Museum Mineral Show and have appeared in special issues of Rocks and Minerals dealing with New York minerals. There were also special projects at the Museum for Mike Hawkins. In his spare time, George served as the CDMC representative to the Eastern Federation of Mineralogical and Lapidary Societies for more than 10 years, and attended annual meetings whenever they were within reasonable driving range. And, as with all good rockhounds, continuing education was a part of the hobby; to this end, George and Barbara attended sessions at Wildacres, the EFMLS sponsored training programs held in the mountains near Spruce Pine, NC, for 8 or 9 years. A very busy person. We shall miss you, George.

-- Rich Stein

### Walworth Quarry

This fall's trip to the Walworth Quarry was my first. I was there as a member of the Wayne County club and in the course of the lead up to the trip I was invited to take my kids on the dig. Kid rules seemed simple enough – hard shoes, safety glasses and a bike helmet – no problem there. As the weekend approached my eldest dropped out leaving only me and 5 year old Isaac.

We checked in and met Pat Chapman who organized the dig for her club. We made our introductions, signed in and took seats over in the corner. It looked to me that Isaac was the only kid there, certainly the youngest and smallest. During check in, I recognized a few faces from earlier digs with Wayne County and from our club, but for us social hour could wait. The quarry manager briefed us and offered assistance. We got in our car and set out as a part of the convoy. Walworth is a working quarry. It is a huge hole in the ground with big machines, big trucks, heavy equipment and lots of rocks and dirt everywhere. This is the stuff kids like us dream of and Isaac went from real talkative to real quiet and back several times before we hit our designated level. We parked, got out of the car and I got that "mosquito over a nudist camp" feeling. I didn't know where to begin.

We'd been to the State Museum and had seen a Fluorite crystal from Walworth so we knew what to look for, but we were surrounded by tons and tons of dolomite blocks, rocks and boulders. We'd have to get out the big hammers to find Fluorite. Like every novice collector, I found some nice little Dolomite crystals (probably of the "leaveitrite" variety) and tossed them in the bucket. No matter what, we wouldn't be shut out. There is an anxiety formed by the combination of inexperience and needing to justify the trip that doesn't go away until you find what you come for. I've felt it at every new location and have found that the best way to work through it is to put my head down and dig, so we did. Isaac and I started pounding rocks.

It didn't take long to figure out that you could pound rocks for a very long time and come up empty at Walworth. Success demanded that you find a particular rock to pound, one with vugs. We walked around a bit and a glint of a crystal caught my eye from half way up a slope. We climbed up and sure enough here was a rock with a vug and in that vug was a little Fluorite crystal – the object of our search. Now, we could pound with a purpose. To little avail. I ended up breaking the crystal out and sticking it in my pocket.

"Daddy, I've got to go to the bathroom." All stop. We load into the car and drive back up past all of the neat equipment and go into the office to use the facilities. We take the time to chat with Pat and have a snack. Isaac shows off the crystal and grudgingly hands it over to me to put in my pocket. Rule one of collecting with kids – take charge of the finds. Their pockets are not to be trusted. Encouraged, we return to the pile and resume the search. After a while it begins to set in that there is a good deal more hunting to do. We walk around, look at the geese and the clouds, and generally enjoy the day. I pick up a piece of Dolomite with Sphalerite in it, asking a guy nearby what it was. Good going, another specimen for the collection. Rule two of collecting with kids – keep moving around. Changing the scenery is necessary and with Isaac, that meant doing about anything other than collecting minerals. Not a bad thing, but not an ice blue Fluorite cube either.

It was at about this point that I noticed that we were one

hammer short. Rich Stein's warnings came flooding back to me as I realized that I'd committed the sin of losing a hammer. We looked and looked, but couldn't find it. We knew where it should be, because we'd only been in one spot, but it must have fallen into a crack and disappeared. Off to the quarry guys to tell them as instructed. They took it in stride and we went back to our search. As bad as I felt, it seemed like they'd done this before and Sunday morning I found out why.

The next day, the crowd had thinned and we were in with the die-hards. I reminded the quarry manager about the lost hammer and pointed out its location with as much specificity as possible. He warmed up a loader and dug out the entire area around the lost tool and piled it to the side. They had enough rock to keep them busy for years and the few bucket loads set aside really didn't mean much to them. They didn't find the hammer. They buried it. After tending to that little problem, the manager came over and made one little boy happier than he'd been since Christmas – he gave Isaac a ride in the loader. They tooted around for a while, dug up and dumped a few buckets full of rocks then set out toward a rusted hulk of a structure that was sitting nearby. Boom, they crashed into the steel framework and pushed it around for a bit. I figure he had kids of his own because he sure knew how to make mine happy. It got better. They offered all of the kids (there were two by now) a ride in one of the huge quarry trucks. They went up and down the hill and around the digs for a couple of laps. It must be nice to be 5 years old and have every adult in the place envious.

The quarry folks had a tracked vehicle with a giant jackhammer like device that they used to break up boulders for us. We'd walk around and find something and wait for a bit. The guy with the hammer would creak and rattle up and Bam, Bam, Bam, the rock to pieces. I'd found an interesting rock and asked Bob Ballard to help saw it apart. Bob helped out and we marked a few boulders to break. A few seconds of loud pounding and we were looking at misc. Gypsum crystals, some nice Fluorites in Dolomite and some real nice crystals in a vug that we couldn't really get at. Pat Chapman rolled up watched and entertained Isaac as we slaved over saw, chisel and sledge, but at the end of the day (literally) we had to flip the boulder over and leave it for the next time.

We'll keep going back to Walworth. Our techniques will get better, our tools will improve and we'll find more and better crystals, but the next trip won't be the first trip and the ride in the truck will never again be as nice.

-- Ken St. John

#### Show Dates

February 26 & 27, 2011 - 18th Annual James Campbell Memorial Gem, Mineral & Fossil Show - Albany, New York: New York State Museum, Empire Plaza, Madison Ave. Saturday & Sunday 10-5. General Admission \$6 (includes Flower Show). Children under 12: Free. 25 dealers, museum tours, fossil & mineral ID. Information: Michael Hawkins @ 518 486-2011 or mhawkins@mail.nysed.gov

Opened at 7:30 by Pres.

Vistors recognized, and introduced themselves.

Program presented by Dr. Ed Landing, NYS Paleontologist, on the origin of fossil animals with skeletons. An informative slide presentation and lecture. He also passed out copies of the "Geologic Time Scale".

No Secretary or Treasurer reports. Both absent.

Committee reports: Board will meet probably before next month to draft changes to constitution and bylaws.

MINERAL of the MONTH – PYRITE. Specimens brought in by members were outstanding. A tough job for judge Mark Kilmer.

AWARDS: Best Speciman: Tom Ebert  
Best Single xl: Bruce Murray  
Best Self Collected: Tom Ebert  
Most Asthetic or Unusual: Anne Woods  
Best Pyrite xl in Matrix: Bill Cotrofeld

UGLY ROCK CONTEST: Judge–Rich Stein. Winner – Bob Ballard. Massive Scheelite.

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Bill Cotrofeld brought FREE pocket notebooks for members,
- Pres. had copies of Committee List available.
- Bob Hartig received samples of diamond drills in the mail. Anyone interested could take one.
- Allen Smith brought more loupes with LED lighting for sale.
- Ray McKinney announced a field trip Oct 16/17 weekend by the New York Mineralogical Society This will be a fossil collecting trip. Anyone interested see him after meeting.
- Gem & Mineral Show in Johnstown, NY, Oct 16/17 at Moose Lodge
- Rich Hartnett will head field trip to Goshen, MA on Oct. 30th. See him to sign up. This was postponed from earlier in the month due to lack of members wanting to go.
- Vermont Field Trip, Oct. 23 & 24 sign-up sheet. Info will be mailed out by Pres. within a few days to those interested.
- Rich Stein passed out list of items that Barbara Gearhardt would like to sell to club members.
- Gerry Boileau reported on Tom Halleran's condition. He had a tree fall on him while taking it down. He was in a coma for about 4 days. He is currently in Albany Medical Center, ICU. Room D332. Cards would be appreciated.
- Bill Cotrofeld had copies of "Trilobites of New York" for sale at 50% off retail price.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: none

NEW BUSINESS: none

Minutes from  
October 7, 2010

Both the October and November club minutes were submitted by President Cotrofeld in the absence of club secretary Curtis Breuer.

Minutes from  
November 4, 2010

Opened at 7:35 by Pres.

Visitors recognized & introduced themselves.

Bruce Murray introduced speaker of the evening – Robert Titus, Phd. who also is the author of several books on Catskills Geology and Paleontology. He gave an informative talk on the Ice Age in the Catskills. He also had copies of his books available for club members to purchase.

Secretary's report from last meeting was read by Pres.  
No Treasurer's report.

Short break was taken with Deb Hewson doing the raffle. Raffle netted \$46.

#### Committee reports:

**BANQUET COMMITTEE:** Richard Hartnett reported that he could not get a check for the deposit on the room for the December banquet from the Treasurer. President Bill Cotrofeld will give Richard the money for the deposit. Banquet will be at the Comfort Inn in Glenmont on Dec. 2nd.

**MINERAL SHOW COMMITTEE:** Rich Stein is looking for rocks to polish and drawings for a picture to be made with the polished rocks for the show. Also we need a person to do the advertising and notices for the show. NO volunteers. President will ask Barbara Gearhardt if she would give us a list of the publications that she and George sent notices to in the past. If no one wants to do this, President and Vice President will take care of it.

Bill Cotrofeld had a few more copies of "Trilobites of New York" for sale at 50% off retail price.

Some discussion on club purchasing Gearhardt's equipment, but problem is where to put it.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30.

Group to head to Denny's as usual.

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**All submissions to the newsletter must be in my hand before the 18th of any given month, or they will be used in the next subsequent newsletter.**

The purpose of our club is:

- To promote and encourage the study of mineralogy and other applied sciences.
- To cooperate with educational and scientific institutions in order to bring about a better and more general understanding of earth sciences.
- To provide a program with suitable speakers for scheduled meetings.
- To sponsor, direct, and assist in the planning of excursions to mineral localities and other places of geological interest.
- To cooperate with organizations whose purposes are similar to those stated in the foregoing items.

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