

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

JANUARY 2004

Meeting Note change of date!!!

January 8th will be the second Thursday of the month. Our by-laws have set this as the only exception to the first Thursday meeting date. So the meeting will be held on January 8th at the New York State Museum, Madison Avenue, Albany, NY. The doors will be open only between 7:00 and 7:15 PM. Please be on time as we have special museum personnel there to assist. A reminder: all programs are open to the public, so bring a friend. That's one of the reasons the program is the first item on the agenda.

January Program Collecting -- Now What?

This will be Part 2 of our November meeting with that title. It will entail a quick review of collecting which will include: display techniques (including trimming) and building an inventory of what you have; where it came from (location); how you got it and when; and more important - where it is now (garage, basement, living room, etc.)

Main methods of cutting and grinding the minerals will be discussed. Many items will be passed around to illustrate how the minerals look when handled correctly and also when something goes wrong. Tears of frustration will be shared.

December Banquet

Vice President Paul Van Schaick. reports the following: "THANX!!! We have had a banner year at our monthly raffles and our two auctions. Many thanks to all those people who donated their minerals and fossil specimens for these events. Without you the money would not have found way to the club's treasury. A special thanks to Helen Eckler and my wife Linda for registering the bidders and tallying the totals. A big hand to our auctioneer Richard

Stein who did a great job. And last but not least to our other "runner" George Gearhardt, who kept things hopping. Thanks again to all club members for a very successful year!"

Special thanks are extended to Gerald Boileau for dinner arrangements and to Betty Philips for taking the dinner reservations.

Note: The proceeds of both auctions amounted for \$533. added to our treasury. Thirty-three members and guest attended the banquet/auction.

This space is where we intended to list the names and donated items used in the auction. George requested it. Paul obtained it and gave to George at the end of the meeting. Guess who lost it!

Trustees' Meeting

The next trustees' meeting will be held in January to set budget and special projects for the coming year. If any members wishes an item to be placed on the agenda, please contact any of the trustees' listed below: Joe Almasi, Bob Ballard, Gerald Boileau, Fred Dobert, Mary Dushek, Helen Eckler, George and Barbara Gearhardt, Mark Kilmer, Charlyn and Bruce Murray, Jim Palmer, Betty Phillips, Elaine and Bob Royer, Ruth Schmidt, Richard Stein, Paul Van Schaick, Chuck and Joyce Vedder, and Anne Woods.

Wildacres News (from EFMLS News by Esther Dunn)

Bob Jones is coming back to Wildacres!

That's right, Bob Jones, senior editor of *Rock & Gem* magazine is scheduled to be the guest speaker for the first EFMLS Wildacres workshop scheduled for June 26 - July 2, 2004.

He's a dynamic speaker, knowledgeable rock and mineral collector, and all around great guy. You'll love hearing his tales of adventure from his journeys around the world. Bob knows everyone, has been almost everywhere, and always has lots of wonderful information to share with the group. We know you won't want to miss the opportunity of spending a week with a terrific guy.

I'm also pleased to tell you that we have a new registrar for Wildacres. John Milligan, who served in that capacity last year has received a major promotion at his job and will not be able to continue. We'll miss him, but know that this is wonderful news for John and his family, and we congratulate and wish him well.

The new registrar will be Debbie Bard. Debbie lives in Warfordsbury, PA, a tiny community between Breezewood, PA and Hancock, MD. She's our director Ginger's daughter and has been at Wildacres the past two years. We know she will do an excellent job and welcome her to our team.

Wildacres is truly a special place. Just ask members of your club who've been there before. Also ask your club president for a copy of the special Wildacres brochure which was mailed to your club last month. The retreat is off the road on a private mountain in the midst of the Blue Ridge Mountains. There are no TV's, newspapers, or radios to interrupt the silence. Accommodations are in motel type rooms with meals taken family style in the modern dining hall. The cost of the week, which includes room, board, and tuition for classes and gratuity for the staff is \$280 per person. (There is a minor additional charge for materials for most classes, but this is normally under \$25.)

Anyone wanting an application form and details about the Wildacres workshops should contact the Gearhardt's at <ggear@atecone.net> or 518-355-0670.

Nominating Committee

The committee comprised of George and Barbara Gearhardt and Richard Stein reported the entire slate of officers be re-elected at the January 8th meeting. This is possible because the bylaws were amended last May to allow the president and vice president to be elected from two one-year terms of office. The office of secretary and treasurer have always been available for re-election. The current officers and time in office are: Mark Kilmer (President - 1 year), Paul van Schaick (Vice-President - 1 year), Helen Eckler (Secretary - 13 years), Ruth Schmidt (Treasurer - 30 years).

Always Awesome Albany Gem, Mineral, and Fossil Show

With the Christmas rush fast approaching and soon, after that, a New Year on the horizon. Wouldn't it be nice to focus on the post season? (And we don't mean post-season football.) We mean the season after all the holiday harassment. We're talking rocks, minerals, gems, and fossils. We're talking Tucson and Quartzite and Albany. They are all mid-winter mineral oases and a promise of other forthcoming exciting shows prior to the rocking fieldtrips.

If you're like us, you can't afford Tucson or Quartzite but need some mineral and fossil inspiration. A very good location to do some pre-season prospecting is the 11th Annual James Campbell Memorial Gem, Mineral, and Fossil Show and Sale. The show will be held on February 21 and 22, 2004 from 10am to 5pm daily. The location is the south concourse level of the Empire State Plaza in Albany, New York.

The show is an annual event sponsored by the Capital District Mineral Club and the New York State Academy of Mineralogy associated with the Geological Survey Section of the New York State Museum. Proceeds from the show go to funding new acquisitions for the museum's gem and mineral collection. At the museum, staff will conduct tours of the mineral and fossil galleries.

More than 20 fine vendors will display and sell gems, jewelry, minerals, fossils, lapidary equipment as well as books and related publications. Members of the museum staff will be available to provide identification of visitor's fossils or minerals. A full schedule of lectures is ongoing in various rooms of the museum.

Admission is only \$3 per adult, with children under twelve being admitted free when accompanied by an adult.

We have traveled to Albany every year since 1994; never a disappointing show. Even though we travelled in the face of snow. The New Jersey and New York thruways are great, even in the depth of winter.

(submitted by members Don and Linda Kauffman, Reading, PA)

Why - H.R. 2416 / S. 546 or why not? Part One

As hobbyists and members of mineral clubs/societies, we all need to be up-to-date and informed as to any actions

that may effect our often-endangered pastime. Being busy living and honest with ourselves, admittedly, we more than often fail to keep current. Without any guidance there is tendency to jump in to support a ready-made opinion without a complete picture of what real issues may be. Thus you may find yourself in a quandary regarding newsletter articles you have seen between July and November this past year making dire pronouncements against pending actions in Congress to legislate the Paleontological Resources Preservation Act. (H.R. 2416 and S. 546) This article is second in a series designed to help clarify issues.

My interest in legislation to protect significant natural paleontological resources began when I read an about the Riverbluff Cave find in Missouri. (See December 2003 club newsletter.) I then looked back in club newsletter files to recall past articles referring to efforts to produce “unified federal policy” about protection and collection of fossils. All commentaries harbored clear antipathy regarding legislation. Real issues appear muddled and muddied, I saw no actual presentation of facts that may have had more than a negative and perhaps one-sided influence on club member’s views.*

Intent here is not to make a blow by blow, point and counter point assault on authors of those articles. However several comments are illustrative of just what their comments meant to me.

One commentary declared, and correctly so, that we need a national “unified policy on fossils.” But in the end, the author, without explanation decided that due to the vastness of federal land holdings, the greatest danger to our fossil heritage is WEATHERING, not vandalism, theft of landed heritage or significant loss of paleontological resources due to combined evils of pillage and thievery.

A second opinion about pending legislation generalized “another attempt at hindering fossil collecting in the U.S.” At some point in reading the bill, emphasis on protecting “resources and fossils of significant scientific interest” was missed.

Another voice opposing the Senate portion of the PRPA (S546) described the bill as an “anti-rock hounding bill.”

Further interpretation of the congressional piece decided “placing severe penalties on recreational rockhounding” to be the main focus. There appear to be no attempts to inhibit rock collecting on federal lands in my through reading of the bill.

Finally, one interpreter of Senate to House twin bills saw congressional efforts as a witch-hunt. Although not in those very words it was said, in effect that “dreadful penalties for those found with these fossils in their possession if prior ownership cannot be proved.” Identification of vertebrate fossils was the only correct point. There has been no suggestion for a registration of currently held fossils or a threat to do a house-to-house search for illegally collected materials. What the bills actually say is that any materials collected prior to enactment of the law would not be considered illegal if authenticity of prior collection could be proved. The only people accused of lawbreaking would be those who disclosed or attempted to sell or trade vertebrate fossils in public or on the open market.

Thus we have four opinions about the sending of H.R. 2416 and S. 546 to committee for evaluation and perhaps voting into federal law. Based on these views, would you to take a stand for or against the measures? Without a fair presentation or self-analysis of legislative bills, could you fairly be expected to decide why or why not support them?

Before we make take sides, isn’t it wise to read as much information as we can find? Should we not make an examination of the bills for ourselves? Or can we honestly say that the views as presented are equally representative of the real concerns from all sides about fossils put before Congress?

Next issue, Part Two will touch on background of laws passed to protect our national resources and a look at real issues contained in H.R.2416 and S.546.

*Respective club members may consult past newsletters:

See Capital District Newsletter, June 1999 and CAPITAL ROCKHOUNDER, October 2003.

(Submitted by Don Kauffman, member from Reading, PA)

GEOTALES: A COLLECTION OF STORIES ABOUT EARTH SCIENTISTS

Stuart E. Jenness and Jean M. Spencer Jenness

CHAPTER SIX: ORE HUNTERS (continued)

Dishwashing Procedures

Dr. **Clayton G. Ball**, after working from 1928 to 1935 under the guidance of the renowned coal geologist Dr. Gilbert H. Cady at the Illinois Geological Survey, and completing his Ph.D. at Harvard, joined the Paul Weir Company in 1937. He ultimately became President of the company and later Chairman of the Board. In 1981 he was honored for his many contributions to coal geology, and Jack Weir, the son of the Paul Weir Company's founder, recalled an experience Ball had had in Vietnam many years earlier.

"In South Vietnam, Clayton, together with other Weirco engineers, was investigating an anthracite deposit near the village of Nong Son (Nong Son is located 60 km southwest of Da Nang, near the Laos border). Although the living conditions at Nong Son were rather primitive, the Weirco living quarters did have indoor plumbing — shower, john [toilet], etc. After enjoying the first morning breakfast, an inspection of the kitchen disclosed that the Vietnamese cook (a former cook for the French Foreign Legion) had his own automatic dishwasher - the 'john'. Needless to say, the dishwashing procedures were revised."

(Weir, J., 1982, p. 368.)

Pyrite Problem

For two years before he joined Kennecott Copper Corporation in 1952, mining geologist **C. Harry Burgess** was treasurer of a mid-western coal company based in Chicago. During that period he was a frequent visitor to the geology faculty at Northwestern University. On one such visit, he discussed with Professor Robert M. Garrels a research project on pyrite in midwestern coal, with the practical purpose of lowering the sulfur content of coal and recovering a by-product. A few days later, Burgess called Professor Garrels to say that the project was off. The president of the coal company, as part of his own review of the project proposal, had boiled some pyrite in water overnight and, observing no change, had decided the proposal had no promise.

(Bailey, P.A., 1985, p. 2.)

Reverse Salting

Franc R. Joubin, a few months after graduating from the University of British Columbia in 1936, teamed up with a seasoned miner named Dutchy Streider and leased a gold prospect on which was an old 100-foot-deep inclined shaft. The old prospect had the name 'The Bay'. An increase in the value of gold the previous year from \$20 per ounce to \$35 per ounce had given new life to many old gold prospects about that time. To descend their 120-foot mine-shaft they had a 40-gallon oil drum to serve as elevator cab, which hung on a rusty cable hoisted by a rebuilt automobile engine. Joubin and his partner were required to mine and ship not less than 30 tons of gold ore per month to a custom smelter at Trail, British Columbia. A shipment of high-grade ore aroused the interest of the smelting company, who sent a senior engineer named Davis to examine the mine. Joubin later described the visit.

Davis refused to trust our 'hoisting' system. Tediously, he descended into the mine by wooden ladders, accompanied by me as his guide and helper. When we reached the ore section, he peered at the mineralization and exclaimed, "What attractive steel galena!" Galena is a lead mineral. I was too embarrassed to correct him. It was not galena that had provoked his remark but telluride minerals, which accounted for the very rich gold and silver content of the ore.

In chipping his general samples, Davis seemed to delight in throwing disproportionately large amounts of what he mistakenly thought was 'steel galena' into the empty container I was carrying for him. I became alarmed, realizing that his samples would assay several ounces of gold per ton, as opposed to the actual average of about one ounce per ton. If he took such rich ore back with him, the logical conclusion of his superiors would be that his samples had been salted, or tampered with, probably by me! There was only one course to follow, in my view, if I was to protect Davis from himself. I would have to discreetly 'de-salt' his samples. To do this, I simply added pieces of barren rock to the material he had selected. This was the only occasion in my entire career when I have ever tampered with another person's samples. The irony of this 'reverse-twist' greatly amused Davis when I confessed it to him several

years afterwards.

(Joubin, F.R. and Smyth, D.McC., 1986, p. 72-73.)

Miner's View

In one of his first mine examinations back in 1931, Professor **John Eliot Allen** of the Department of Geology at Portland State University visited a small gold property northwest of Homestead, Oregon. A drift about 300 feet long followed a narrow quartz vein in which there was free gold. The vein cut a complex of serpentinite, gabbro, porphyritic andesite, and a large granodiorite dike. A lone miner worked the deposit, digging with pick and shovel, and moving out the ore and waste with a wheelbarrow. He had a small stamp mill at the end of the dump, which was driven by a small gas engine. The fines from the stamp mill flowed out over an amalgamated copper plate, and the miner recovered nearly an ounce of gold each day for his efforts.

Allen mapped the mine, collecting a number of specimens as he progressed. He then sat on the dump with the miner to examine his specimens, and as he recognized the different rock types he would tell the miner what they were. As time went by, he noticed that the miner was getting more and more restless. Finally the miner burst out: "Damn it! There's only two kinds of rock in my mine — bin rock and dump rock!"

(Allen, J.E., 1990, p. 50.)

Unusual Mapping Technique

One of Canada's foremost mineral hunters, Dr. **Neil Campbell**, was one of the early geological mappers in the gold-mining region of Yellowknife, on the north side of Great Slave Lake in Canada's Northwest Territories. His precise mapping of the rocks on both sides of the West Bay Fault at Yellowknife was greatly aided in the late 1930s and early 1940s by the abundance of fire-swept, rain-washed outcrops. On these rocks he painstakingly traced geologic contacts, often on his hands and knees, flagging the contacts with pieces of toilet paper strung from tree branches (a trick he had learned from another geologist, A.W. Joliffe), until the data could be transferred to detailed maps.

Campbell's extravagant use of toilet paper prompted an indignant query from the distant Cominco (Consolidated Mining and Smelting Company) commissariat at the company's headquarters at Trail, British Columbia. That toilet paper, however, paid off a million fold in the weight of gold recovered from the shear zone which lay blind 2000 feet below the surface and within a few feet of Campbell's predicted ore-body location. The shear zone is now known as the Campbell shear zone, and for many years has been a valuable gold horizon.

(Folinsbee, R.E., 1980, p. 1.)

On Saving a Fortune

Richard A.F. Penrose, Jr., was involved financially and as a director early in this century in what was known later as the Utah Copper Company. In 1929, he became embroiled in a heated difference of opinion with the other directors, and he stated bluntly that if the Board took a certain step he would resign and sell out his stock in the company. The directors took the step, anyway, so Penrose resigned and sold his stock, from which he realized about \$10,000,000. By mid-1929, he had invested this money in a gilt-edged list of municipal and Federal bonds, and when the stock-market panic of 1929-1930 developed, he did not lose a cent.

After his death in 1931, the sum of \$4,500,000 was presented to the Geological Society of America from his estate.

(Hewett, D.F., 1966, p. 76.)

(Reprinted with permission by the author. This was originally published in *Northeastern Geology and Environmental Sciences* in volume 25, no. 3, 2003, September, p. 232-246. To be continued in future issues.)