

THE CAPITAL ROCKHOUNDER



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MARCH 2004

March Meeting

The March meeting of the Capital District Mineral Club will be held on Thursday March 4, 2004. The doors will be open 7:00-7:15 pm and the meeting will begin in the Student Center on the first floor of the New York State Museum, Madison Avenue, Albany, New York at 7:30 pm. Please be on time as we have special museum personnel to open the doors.

March Program

Dr. John Delano will present a program entitled "Exploration of Mars" at 7:30pm on March 4, 2004. He will bring a Nathla meteorite for viewing on a petrographic microscope. It is a 1.24 billion year old igneous rock and landed on earth in 1911.

Dr. Delano has his Ph.D. in geochemistry; Distinguished Professor in the Department of Earth and Atmospheric Science and in the Department of Chemistry at the University at Albany (SUNY); author of fifty-five (55) research papers in professional scientific journals; Associate Director of New York Center for Studies on the Origin of Life (a NASA funded center with RPI and the University at Albany); and Principle Investigator in the NASA Exobiology Program.

Dr. Delano has made an annual presentation to our club and we invite the public to attend. We deeply appreciate his efforts to relay his exciting analysis of our space program and putting it in terms we can understand.

February Program

Mike Hawkins, collection manager of the Geological Survey at the NYS museum in Albany led members to a preview showing of the new and updated mineral displays in the main area of the museum. Minerals are on loan from collectors in New York state and others recent purchases from other collectors of New York state minerals. These purchases are a direct result of the annual gem, mineral and fossil show held on the concourse level of the museum in February of each year. The Capital District Mineral Club, Inc. has acted as co-host of this event in handling the distribution of posters announcing the show throughout the entire area, contacting the various media outlets to publicize the show and provide its members as volunteers to cover all areas of the show (e.g.) assisting the dealers as they arrive

on Friday evening to transport their minerals and display cases to the concourse level; collecting fees as both entrances to the concourse; the club table to hand out literature and pamphlets regarding the club and its field trips, displays of minerals collected in recent years; as well as our "mineral meals" display which features specimens that look good enough to eat; a demonstration on "cabochon" making and our feature "sand box mineral dig" where children of all ages can dig for specimens that interest them and with a charge of twenty five cents can have each bagged and identified by members.

During the "Business section" of the meeting Barbara Gearhardt (club librarian) distributed a listing of all books, magazines, and videos in our library, with the advice to look them over and take them out for a month until the next meeting.

Paul Van Schaick set a meeting for the field trip committee to meet and establish the tentative field trips for the coming seasons.

President, Mark Kilmer requested a volunteer to act as "Hospitality" chairman. If there are no volunteers he will appoint someone to this necessary task.

Program chairman, George Gearhardt outlined the proposed speakers and topics for the balance of the year are as follows:

March 4. Dr. John Delano, Dept. of Earth & Atmospheric Sciences at the University at Albany. Topic is "Exploration of Mars".

April 1. Member Bob Ballard will talk about collecting in caves of southern Missouri and our field trip coordinator, Paul Van Schaick will present the proposed field trips for the coming seasons.

May 6. Member Bruce Murray will repeat his presentation on "Mineral Identification" and member, Richard Stein will do the annual Safety in collecting program.

June 3. Silent auction (50% to member and 50% to treasury) and semi annual dinner.

-- Summer recess--

September 2. "Show and Tell" by all members willing to bring their new prime specimens (whether field collected, traded, or purchased as the various summer shows.

October 7. Open

November 4. Open

December 2. Live auction (50-50) and semi annual dinner.

Mineral Show a Success

There were over 2000 paid visitors and the show grossed almost \$10000. Our own table results have twenty-two new members signed up and over 200 pamphlets distributed. All new members should have received a packet of information regarding the club: constitution, by laws, safety manual, tentative field trips for 2004 and mailing list of current members. If somehow you did not get the packet call (518) 355-0670.

Sale of "old" magazines, patches, and decals brought in \$70; the 653 minerals and fossils provided \$163.35; the memberships represent \$332, making the total \$565.35.

NEW MEMBERS: Adamczyk, Erica (Saugerties, NY); Baez, Val (Middle Granville, NY); Birn, Sarah & Family (Delmar, NY); Cellery, Kathleen & Korey (Delmar, NY); Connelly, Marilyn & Ed (Clifton Park, NY); Eley, Inge (Cohoes, NY); Fuierer, Alana (Niskayuna, NY); Gardianoa, George (Westtown, NY); Getman, Myron (Albany, NY); Givney, Pat (Troy, NY); Halleran, Cheryl & Tom (Claverack, NY); Hughes, John (Scotia, NY); Klein, Jeff (Slingerlands, NY); Kuzma, John (Schenectady, NY); Lehtonen, Laura (Niskayuna, NY); Meers, David (Gilbertsville, NY); O'Brien, Erroll (Connelly, NY); Purcell, Dr. David & Family (Schenectady, NY); Talley, June (Queensbury, NY); Thomas, Ben (Queensbury, NY); Turnbull, Robert (Poughkeepsie, NY); Waldman, Zachary (Loudonville, NY).

Thanks to Volunteers

There were twenty nine supporting members that covered sixty nine duty stations over a very busy weekend. They were: Bob Ballard, Gerald Boileau, Kathleen & Korey Cellery, Art & Dawn Collins, Fred Dobert, Mary Dushek, Max Fischer, Barbara & George Gearhardt, Bob & Pam Hartig, Richard Hartnett, Al & John Huzar, Bruce & Charyl Murray, Andy and Mark Nelsen, Jim Palmer, Ruth Schmidt, Richard & Clare Stein, Bob & Shawn & Teke Stitham, Paul Van Schaick, and Anne Woods.

Special thanks to Richard Stein for this "mineral meals" table and to Bruce Murray for his cabochon making demonstrations. And to those members who donated additional minerals and fossils for the "sand box" dig: Sam Cozine, George Gearhardt, Bob Hartig, Bill Rocco, and Richard Stein.

Julia Hunziker

Julia Hunziker, a charter member of the Capital District Mineral Club, passed away in Fort Meyers, Florida on February 6th, 2004 at the age of 102. She will be buried in Schuylerville, NY. Julia was very active in the club activities for many years, and served for a long period as club historian. She kept her club dues current to the end. It is believed that Gladys Swigert is now the only living charter mem-

ber of the club.

AFMS Land Use Policy

1. Adherence to the AFMS Code of Ethics assures compliance with most statutes and regulations governing collecting on public lands and encourages respect for private property rights and the environment. Clubs are urged to read the AFMS Code of Ethics in at least one meeting every year, to publish the Code frequently in the club newsletter, and to compel compliance on club field trips.
2. Individuals and clubs are urged to write their elected representatives and land sue management agency supervisors regarding issues of rule making, legislation and enforcement affecting field collecting of minerals and fossils.
3. Individuals and clubs are urged to join and support activities of the American Lands Access Association (ALAA), a sister organization with responsibility for advancing the interests of earth science amateurs with legislatures and land use management agencies.
4. The AFMS will receive a report from ALAA at its annual meeting.
5. The AFMS endorses the principle of multiple use of public lands as a guarantee of continuing recreational opportunities.
6. Wilderness and monument designations are inconsistent with the principle of multiple use. In view of the vast amount of public land already designated as wilderness and monuments, future such designations should be minimal, taking into account the increased demand for recreational opportunities, including rockhounding, created by a growing population.
7. In furtherance of the principle of multiple use, the AFMS believes that laws, regulations and rules established by relevant governmental authorities should be designated to allow freest possible access to all public lands, coupled with minimal restrictions on the recreational collection of minerals, fossils, gemstone materials, and other naturally occurring materials.
8. A right to collect minerals and fossils on public lands should be protected by statute.
9. The AFMS urges its members to work with any or all government authorities to achieve a good working relationship in order to improve the "Public Image" of recreational collectors.

Winter Survival Guide for Mineral Collectors

(Boston Mineral Club - Jan 2004)

The Great White Gloom of winter has descended upon the landscape

from which we draw our collecting sustenance. The frozen ground seems harder than the rock we're used to busting up. Snow hides treasures that we know are just inches away from discovery. Ice makes footing so treacherous that we must risk our friends' lives so they can blaze trails ahead of us. Bone dry air, chilled to deep space temperatures, numbs and kills exposed skin before we know what hits us. Add a little water that has seeped into our gloves or boots and soon we become one with the slush. Any sensible person would stay huddled in a warm dry place, sorting their specimens, counting the days until spring.

Alas, some of us are not afflicted with such common sense. Like musk oxen, wintertime collectors can sometimes be seen as dark, sluggish, silhouettes in bleak ice barrens, covered in icicles, clutching some pathetic "crystal". Some people may be moved to pity these lost souls, these feral strays from the realm of sensibility, haunting the fringes of humanity. Others might be tempted to reach out to these shadowy wraiths, hoping to rekindle some waning human spirit. Don't do it. Don't risk exposure to whatever it is that we have. We're okay. Reduced to primitive, hunter-gatherer brutes, but okay.

How do we survive such an epoch? Some don't, and they are ruthlessly left on location to be covered with snow and reclaimed by the earth. This herd culling is important, as it reduces competition. Some of us evolve (or de-evolve?) matted coats of hair, heavy layers of fat, wide webbed feet. Others were obviously born that way. You won't see any of us on *Baywatch*. A lucky few are inspired to take care of themselves by preparing.

Here's what I would suggest if you want to outfit yourself for collecting this time of ice and darkness: If you're spending money on anything, spend it on **footwear**. Good hiking boots will keep your feet warm, dry and well supported on uneven terrain, and they will be usable year round. Wet, cold, or numb feet are likely to end the trip early. My boots are made by ASolo (I swear I'm not making that name up) and cost under \$200. This sounds like a lot of money, but they are well worth the investment. When shopping for boots, wear two pairs of socks (heavy wool outer and thin cotton liners) for a good fitting.

Work **gloves** bought in hardware stores are not warm enough for the ridiculously cold weather that seems to draw us. I picked up a pair of cheap but thick ski gloves with 100g weight Thinsulate® and vinyl reinforced palms and fingers. They're stiff, and my hands sweat in them in ordinary cold, but they felt great in 15-20 degree weather that leaves my partners in pain, which makes for a humerous outing and less competition. These gloves will shred soon I guess, but better them than my fingers. An interesting observation is that if you are lucky enough to break into a pocket, you can work gloveless since the confines of this space retain some heat from your exertions.

Layer clothing, like you always hear from experts. I don't know how **silk underwear** insulates so well, but it does. It has minimal bult, allowing better flexibility at your joints. Guys, get the *crew neck* silk underwear shirt cause the *turtleneck* will catch on your whiskers all day long and eventually fray. I wear loose jeans or cargo pants, and sometimes cheap snowboard pants on top (20 bucks at Ames). Over my silk top I usually wear a **long sleeve T-shirt**, then a hooded sweatshirt, then usually a down vest, again to allow greatest flexibility around my arms. It's a drag to be so laden with thick layers that

you can't bend.

My neck is best warmed by the sweatshirt hood, but I give up some hearing acuity. For my ears, I wear a **dorky fleeced hat with Velcro straps** fastening under my chin. For my face I have a mask that exposes only my eyes, but even with slits for my mouth and nose, my glasses always steam up if I wear it, so I don't. I stuff tissues up my sleeves for easy access since my nose always runs in the cold. Perhaps that's more information than you wanted to hear.

The good thing about this ensemble is that, except for the boots, it's all pretty cheap. My down parka would be too valuable to expose to barbed wire or guard dogs, so I never wear that. Get serious about **flashlights or headlamps** since there's a good chance you'll be hiking in or out in the dark to maximize collecting time. Found this out the hard way with Jim Cahoon. Carry a **cellphone** in case a slip leaves one of you disabled. You'd better not collect alone in the winter.

Some other tips:

- Watch out for unstable rock faces, cracked and shifted by ground water freeze-thaw cycles. If the weather has been variable recently, send your collecting partner ahead to see how hazardous things are.
- On the other hand, be ready to take advantage of unexpected fair(er) weather as may occur in New England. Visit *weather.com* and keep your gear in the car.
- It's true what they say about yellow snow.
- No jokes about collecting the mineral known as ice (it actually is a mineral). Those who josh about such a desperate act should be fed to the quarry wolves so abundant at this time of year.
- If your collecting partner hasn't moved for several hours, he's probably not deep in thought. Quickly divide his tools, remove personal ID's and put a bird watching book in his backpack.
- Let the biggest wimp do the driving so he or she can call it a day for everyone before all hope of survival is lost.
- Keep a meticulous activity log for prompt newsletter trip reports.

Good luck, and see you out on the tundra.

EFMLS Workshop Dates

Our regional organization is the Eastern Federation of Mineralogical and Lapidary Societies and they organize two five day workshops each year. For the past twenty-five years or more these workshops have been held at the Wildacres Retreat in western North Carolina near the towns of Spruce Pine and Little Switzerland.

This year the dates are: June 26-July 2 and September 20-26 and include room and board, workshops, lectures, field trips, and auction. The cost for the entire package is \$280 per person plus any materials used in the workshops. Details are on the EFMLS website www.amfed.org/efmls or you can phone Barbara Gearhardt at (518)355-0670; ggear@atecone.net.

Upcoming Shows

March 6-7: The 2004 New York City Gem & Mineral Show; Holiday Inn Manhattan, 440 West 57th Street (between 9th & 10th Avenues), New York City. Hours: Saturday 10:00 AM - 6:00 PM; Sunday 11:00 AM - 6:00 PM.

March 13, 14, 15: 4th Annual Inventory Sale - All Estate Minerals and Used Equipment Discounted. Friday 10% off! Saturday 20% off! Sunday 30% off! Hours: Friday and Saturday 10 AM to 5 PM; Sunday 11 AM to 5 PM. American Hobby Shop, 3713 Main Street, Walworth, NY.

April 15, 16, 17, 18: Rochester Mineralogical Symposium, Park Plaza Rochester Airport, 175 Jefferson Road, Rochester, NY. <Steve_Chamberlain@isr.syr.edu> for more information.

May 1-2: Fulton County Mineral Club Gem, Mineral, Fossil Show & Sale; The Johnstown Moose Lodge, Route 30A, Johnstown, New York. Hours: Saturday 10-5; Sunday 10-4.

May 15-16: 1st Annual Event sponsored by N.E.F.T.A, The North East Field Trip Alliance & The Connecticut Museum of Mining and Mineral Sciences to be held on the grounds of the Connecticut Antique Machinery Association, Inc. Route #7, Kent, Connecticut. Hours: Saturday 8 AM to 5 PM; Sunday 8 AM to 5 PM.

GEOTALES: A COLLECTION OF STORIES ABOUT EARTH SCIENTISTS

Stuart E. Jenness and Jean M. Spencer Jenness

CHAPTER SIX: ORE HUNTERS (continued)

Dinosaur Story

About 1939, when **Glen Louis Evans** was assistant director of the Texas Memorial Museum in Austin, and the Sinclair Oil Company was using a green brontosaurus on its gas-station signs (as it does to this day), the Museum heard of a very large tooth being found on a farm west of Fort Worth. Evans located the farm, and the owner dug into a barrel in his barn and brought from it an elephant's tooth. The farmer asked Evans what kind of an animal he thought had a tooth like that and was told it was an elephant's tooth. The farmer sort of scoffed at this and told Evans it was a dinosaur's tooth. Evans thereupon asked him who had told him that, and the farmer replied:

"The boys at the Sinclair filling station, and them boys knows!"

(Bronaugh, R., 1992, personal communication.)

Flying Model T

During the summer of 1928, **Morris F. Skinner** and **James Quinn** were on the high plains of Nebraska collecting vertebrate fossils for the American Museum of Natural History in New York. Skinner had an old Model T Ford that he had purchased for about \$15, which had only a seat and a big box in back of it for holding supplies. Some exciting rides were had in that old car, but none was quite the trip experienced by another paleontologist, Harold Cook.

Morris was taking Harold to see their mastodont quarry at the bottom of a canyon cut into the high tableland of Nebraska. They were rolling merrily along with Harold talking a blue streak, when suddenly off they went over the edge of the canyon, sailing through the air to land on a talus slope, from which place they slid and drove down to the quarry. It was Morris's usual way to get to the quarry, but he hadn't told Harold that. Harold was speechless for about five minutes, and it took him about an hour to regain his composure.

(Colbert, E.H., 1989, p. 130.)

Costly Revelation

In the early days of his career, crinoid authority **Harrell L Strimple** worked as an oil company accountant in Bartlesville, Oklahoma, before becoming curator of the University of Iowa fossil collection. On weekends he would drive to Iowa to collect fossils at Gilmore City and Le Grand. On his return trip, he would often stop in Lawrence, Kansas, to see Professors R.C. Moore and Lowell Laudon and to gloat over his collections from the weekend.

One Sunday, Moore and Laudon cautiously questioned Strimple about the exact site he had collected at Gilmore City. They had uncovered a large crinoid colony and were relieved to know that Strimple had not found it. Knowing that Strimple was due back at work the next morning in Bartlesville, they told him of their find. Strimple promptly thanked them, and after leaving, went to a telephone and called in sick at work, then raced back to Gilmore City and collected the colony Moore and Laudon had just described to him.

(Broadhead, T.W. and Frest, T.J., 1987, p. 2.)

African Tea Party

In the spring of 1962, Dr. **Edwin H. Colbert** went to South Africa to look for reptile and amphibian fossils in the Upper Triassic Karroo Formation as well as the Upper Permian and Lower Triassic beds of the Beaufort Series. Towards the end of June, he and a paleontologist from Witwatersrand University, James Kitching, drove from Middleburg to a large farm belonging to S.H. Rubidge, who for many years had been so interested in the fossils on his land that he had built a little museum and stocked it with Karroo fossils he had collected. While here, Colbert heard the following story of Rubidge's first encounter with the noted South African paleontologist, **Dr. Robert Broom**.

Some years earlier, Rubidge had found a strange-looking skull on his land, which so aroused his curiosity he had sent it off to the museum in Pretoria, where it was given to Broom to evaluate. Rubidge had expected he might someday receive a written response giving him details on his fossil discovery, but was startled one day to find the esteemed Dr. Broom in person on his doorstep. Broom had found the skull of sufficient interest that he decided to investigate the locality further.

Mr. Rubidge in turn was flabbergasted, flattered, and honored by this visit from the great Dr. Broom, so he immediately put all of the facilities of Wellwood [his farm] at Dr. Broom's disposal. The result was that Broom took off into the velds, accompanied by one of Rubidge's farm hands, who in turn was leading a little horse hitched up to a two-wheeled cart.

As usual Broom was dressed in his formal city attire — a dark suit complete with vest, a white shirt, a stiff collar with turned-down wings framing the knot of a black necktie, and shiny shoes. (Broom never wore anything else in the field; khaki field clothes were not in his lexicon of paleontological procedures.) Shortly this oddly-assorted little field party disappeared from the Rubidge view, so the lord of Wellwood turned his attention to other matters....

In the meantime Broom was finding fossils, which he deposited in the little two-wheeled cart. His supposition as to the abundance of fossils on the Rubidge farm proved to be correct. Even though he was thoroughly engrossed in the discoveries that he was making, he was soon aware that the midday sun is very hot in the Karroo, so off came his coat, to be tossed into the cart among the fossils. More fossils, more heat, more clothes to be discarded — not only his vest but eventually his shirt and tie and finally everything including his underwear. Only his shoes remained to protect him against the stony ground across which he and the farm hand and the horse with the cart were wandering.

At last it was time to return to the farmhouse, so Broom climbed up on top of the cart, to sit on a mixed-up load of fossils and clothes, and thus he rode triumphantly back with his spoils beneath him. With his disheveled hair and his rather dark skin abundantly exposed to view he must have looked something like a Neanderthal man returning from a successful hunt.

What Broom didn't know was that Mr. Rubidge had quickly spread the word about his distinguished visitor, with the result that various men and ladies from nearby had assembled on the Wellwood lawn and had spread a festive tea on tables set beneath the trees. Around the corner of the barn and in full view of the properly dressed guests appeared this quite naked man, sitting on top of a jumble of fossils and clothes, looking like a figure out of the distant past. The surprise was complete on both sides. There were shrieks of astonishment and hurried words (what Broom said has not been recorded) and during the flurried excitement the distinguished paleontologist disappeared at high speed toward the barn. Within a few moments he reappeared, properly clothed, and the tea party proceeded in a most decorous manner: One thing can be said without fear of contradiction; however the ladies may have felt, Broom was not in the least embarrassed or disconcerted.

(Colbert, E.H., 1989, p. 342-344.)

Modest Opinion

In 1983, Professor **Sankar Chatterjee**, a vertebrate paleontologist at Texas Tech University, found some bone fragments in ancient floodplain deposits in west Texas that he initially interpreted as dinosaur remains. Two years passed before he got around to examining them carefully, at which time, following intensive study, he reached the conclusion that the bone fragments were from a primitive bird. As he was working on a National Geographic Society grant, he was obligated to submit a report to that society detailing his find. In that report, he postulated that he had found the first bird. The Society immediately contemplated calling a press conference to announce this exciting bit of news, but before doing so they sought the opinion of a respected paleontologist on the matter, Professor John Ostrom at Yale. Ostrom flew to Lubbock and made a hasty examination of the specimens, but came away extremely doubtful about Chatterjee's interpretation. The National Geographic Society, therefore, decided to switch from a press conference about the discovery to a press release, which they issued in August 1986.

The press release resulted in a series of articles and comments in U.S. newspapers and journals, and as Chatterjee had as yet not published anything on the material, various paleontologists went to Lubbock to check out the exciting fossils. Most came away dissatisfied with Chatterjee's interpretation. A strong controversy followed, but most involved scientists awaited Chatterjee's publication before wading in.

Finally, in 1991, Chatterjee published a 66-page paper entitled "Cranial Anatomy and Relationships of a New Triassic Bird from Texas" in the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London*. It included photographs and drawings, but dealt only with the skull of the controversial collection. Many of Chatterjee's peers, vertebrate paleontologists in particular, promptly took issue with his interpretation; some attacked him personally. Others, largely bird specialists, were delighted with his contribution and defended him. By 1992 the controversy was in full swing, though some waited for Chatterjee's second paper dealing with the non-cranial bones.

One researcher who defended Chatterjee's position, ornithologist Larry Martin of the University of Kansas, has commented:

“You can’t imagine how intense the attacks are from the dinosaur people. I had one grad student who gave up and became an oil geologist instead because of it.”

Martin summed up the situation: “He’d be better off if he’d never found the damn thing.”

(Zimmer, C., 1992, p. 44-54.)

Fitting Behavior

On a visit to the American Museum of Natural History in New York, the famed Harvard vertebrate paleontologist, Professor **Alfred S. Romer**, was taken by Edwin Colbert down the corridor to see Dr. George Gaylord Simpson. Simpson had just been installed in a new office of sophisticated elegance (for a museum curator), with a deep carpet on the floor, a shining big desk, curtains on the windows, and so on. The sight dazzled Romer so much that he went down on his knees and salaamed before Simpson, who was a little taken aback by such behavior. When Colbert chided Romer for not behaving as a Harvard professor should, Romer replied that his behavior was right in the groove so far as Harvard professors were concerned!

(Colbert, E.H., 1989, p. 257.)

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