

THE CAPITAL ROCKHOUNDER



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MAY 2003

May Meeting

Our next meeting will be held on Thursday, May 1, 2003, at the NY State Museum on Madison Avenue, Albany, NY. The meeting will begin at 7:30 PM in the Student Center on the first floor. The doors will be open at 7:00 PM to 7:15 PM. Please be on time as we have special museum staff there to open the doors for us.

May Program

The May program will be divided into three parts: 1) Member J. Richard Hartnett will speak on Fluorites and Related Minerals found in New Hampshire; 2) Member Richard Stein will present our annual "Safety" program for collecting minerals and fossils in quarries as well as other locations. A copy of the Safety Manual will be available at the meeting and will be given to field trip leaders. 3) Paul Van Schaick, our vice president and chairman of the field trip committee will outline our policies and have each field trip leader outline their proposed trip. Location, meeting time and place, minerals/fossils expected to be found, equipment suggested, restrictions on age of children under the age of 18, facilities or lack thereof and things to bring - food, water, bug spray.

April Program

Dave Millis displayed minerals he recently collected in New Mexico - some responded to ultraviolet light and some did not. Dave give

samples to all in attendance and told about the collecting sites available to everyone. This is the second year Dave has met with us. Last year's talk was about minerals found near Bancroft, Ontario. Dave is a very knowledgeable speaker and a busy one - he is doing eight presentations this month alone. Thanks again, Dave.

June Program

Our usual June meeting is a dinner meeting with a silent auction. Details regarding the menu and location will be found at the end of the newsletter. However, regarding the auction - the trustees have decided that this year all proceeds of the auction will go to the club's treasury and not a sharing between the seller and the club. Paul Van Schaick reminded me that members should bring no more than three items to be auctioned off and to have the name of the specimen and the location where it was found available for the committee (usually of one) to fill out the paper work. Normally the items are on display with a sign up sheet for members to place their name and bid for a limited time. A ten minutes warning will sound and bid sheets will be collected and the committee (Paul alone or with a volunteer) will determine the winner and the winning bid. Cash and checks are acceptable, but no credit cards. Puzzles usually occupy the group during that determination.

A Treasure for the Auction

Betty Phillips

Several years ago the club held a field trip to the

Walworth Quarry near Rochester, NY. On a huge boulder I saw some nice Selenite and Len started taking it out for me when he discovered a Fluorite crystal behind it. To make a long story short it ended up with all of the club members gathered around, either working on it, offering suggestions or just watching. After what seemed like hours it popped out and was handed to me. Len and I never felt it belonged to us but to the club as they did all of the work. So in Len's memory I will put it in the auction at the Club's June dinner and all of the money will go into the club's treasury.

For those who have never seen it, it is a clear light purplish-blue one-inch crystal sitting on a bed of Dolomite crystals. I have been offered \$30 for it.

Field Trip Reports

Mohawk River Quest

Once again Jim Palmer led a group hunting for "river rocks". The group included Art Collins, Anne Woods, Rich Stein and Bob Ballard. The site was near Amsterdam, NY and the day went from sunny to rain. Specimens collected included quartz, fossils, coral and labradorite. The team later took a side trip to Scotia in search of Aragonite and was able to collect some minerals there. That's the way it was on the 29th of March along the "mighty muddy Mohawk".

Roxbury, CT

The trip scheduled to go to Roxbury, CT on April 12 was cancelled because there had been snow just a few days before the scheduled trip. It was feared the conditions would be too muddy at that time. There is another trip scheduled for July 26, 2003. More details in the June newsletter.

Collecting Rocks

Submitted by Betty Phillips

I think that there shall never be

An ignoramus just like me,
Who roams the hills throughout the day
To pick up rocks that do not pay;
For there's one thing I've been told
I take the rocks and leave the gold.

O'er deserts wild or mountains blue
I search for rocks of varied hue.
A hundred pounds or more I pack
With blistered feet and aching back,
And after this is said and done
I cannot name a single one.

I pick up rocks where e'er I go
The reason why I do not know,
For rocks are found by fools like me
Where God intended them to be.

Author Unknown

Future Field Trips

Below are listed the latest news on upcoming field trips as of this newsletter mailing.

Diamond Acres #34, Fonda, NY
May 3rd
Jim Palmer 399-9090

Lafarge Quarry, Ravena, NY
Sunday, May 18
Richard Stein 355-4423
See more info regarding this trip later in newsletter.

Hooper Mine, North River, NY
July 19
Bob Ballard 377-8656

Green Farm, Roxbury, CT
July 26
Gerald Boileau 482-0511

Treasure Mountain
August 16
Gerald Boileau 482-0511

Minerva, NY
September 28
Mark Kilmer 725-7629

Winfield, PA Area
September 13-14
Richard Stein 355-4423

Spar Bed Hill Quarry, NY
September 20
Bob Ballad 377-8656

Diamond Acres Claim #24 Fonda, NY
October 4
Jim Palmer 399-9090

Anyone wishing to go on a field trip must call the field trip leader to sign up and get the information regarding meeting place, time, tools needed, etc. Be sure also to call and let the leader know if you must cancel.

Richard Hartnett is tentatively planning a trip for fossils in the Clarksville area. If this trip comes about, car-pooling will be mandatory with a maximum of three (3) cars. Other trips being considered include: Vermont gold panning, Blanford, MA, Howes Cave Quarry, Westmoreland, NH, Callanan Quarries, and Palamero Mine, NH.

Anyone wishing to be a leader for any other field trips, please contact Paul Van Schaick, 399-5810.

Amendment

An amendment to the bylaws was approved by the Board of Trustees and placed in the February newsletter to be voted on at the March 6th meeting by the members in attendance. At that meeting a discussion brought about a change in the wording of the amendment intending to say that one can serve two consecutive terms. A one-year duration was considered too short a time before vice president and president roles are learned and finished.

The actual wording is as follows:

Article II

Section 1 - The term of office for the President is amended to read: "he or she may be eligible for two consecutive one year terms."

Section 2 - The term of office for the Vice President amended to read: "he or she may be eligible for two consecutive one year terms."

Section 3 - "The term of office for the Secretary shall be one (1) year; there is no limit to the terms of office for the secretary."

Section 4 - "The term of office for the treasurer shall be one (1) year; there is no limit to the terms of office for the treasurer."

A vote by the general membership of the club will take place in thirty days after publication in the newsletter. That means the June 5th meeting.

Dendrites and Moss Agate

By Anthony J. Moorchoad
The Shin-Skinner News Feb. 2003

While splitting rocks left from an old lead mine in Phoenixville, PA, I came across some fernlike structures on what seemed to be chalcedony. Later I found that these were called dendrites. I then went on to search for more information, but my resources quickly became limited. Through my search, this is what I found.

Dendrites usually form on/in chalcedony, agate, limestone and soapstone. Moss agate is similar to dendrites but forms in, rather than on top of the rock. This "moss" has yet to be proven to contain any organic material. Moss agate is usually used for jewelry.

Dendrites are composed mainly of manganese or iron oxides - iron or other silicates. Often on the surface of limestone sheets, these dendrites form amazing "branch-like" structures. Just as with the moss-type dendrites, they can form the same branch structures inside and throughout soapstone.

Snowflakes are called dendrites and the frost crystals that form on windowpanes are also called dendrites. Any time the word “dendrite” appears, it usually refers to something with a branchy structure that looks like a tree or fern.

The best dendrites usually occur in translucent chalcedony, which is basically high grade agate (banded or unbanded). In the case of a dendrite, which is on the surface of a mineral such as chalcedony, the chalcedony would have formed first. In the case of “dendritic” or commonly “moss” agate (agate with a treelike pattern), the dendrites form as the agate grows. The dendrite “grows on one layer and is then covered by another, entombing the dendrite.

Dendritic chalcedony and moss agates are basically very similar, if not the same. Often one type of dendrite is called both names. Some scientists though, are trying to distinguish the two - based on timing - whether the dendrite or mineral formed first and structure and composition. The “dendrites” that form on the surface are two-dimensional and “moss” structures form while the chalcedony is still “gel-like” and are three-dimensional.

Dendrites are usually earthy - black, brown, reddish, or distinct red (brick colors). Moss can be a variety of colors - green, orange, yellow, tan and white. The background colors - when the dendrite is formed on the surface - is usually earthy dull and often with rust splotches. The “agate” is often very brilliant in contrast, but still mild. Dendrites have been known about for centuries and fakes have been created for about just as long; usually to keep up with market demands. Things such as copper, tin and silver chloride have been used to make fakes. Dendrites particularly those formed on limestone are sometimes reproduced using a marker or fine-point pen.

Dendrites occur in many places around the world. They are often found on the rocks that water rich in oxide flows over. Solutions sometimes seep in

transparent quartz to produce dendrites occurring in Brazil where tectonic forces have fractured the quartz.

Few books, it seems, have been written specifically on dendrites - how they form and how to artificially create them. The books and articles that do cover this are not very extensive and are often blunt. If anyone has further information on the subject, it is always greatly appreciated.

Bibliography

Frazier, Si and Ann, “Dendrites - Nature’s Line Drawings”
Lapidary Journal, Premedia, Inc., Devon, PA.
February 2002 issue. Vol. 55, No. 11, P. 24-30.

“What are Manganese Dendrites?” Internet source,
<http://minerals.gps.caltech.edu/FILES/DENDRITE/Index.htm>

Writers and Forwarders

Thanks to my appeal in last month’s newsletter for articles and related items by/and/for our members, I have received new material. Bill Rocco sent an article on “Treasures of the Earth” by Christine Reed - an excerpt from a reprinted article from NYS Conservationist, August 1997. Rich Stein sent nine articles by Bert Ellison (The Brampton Rockpile newsletter) with written permission to include in our newsletter. Jim Palmer forwarded an email on “Pilot Sense of Humor”. Thank you one and all - keep it coming. Today’s mail brought another article on Colorado’s Diamond Mine from Bill Rocco and the poem entitled “Collecting Rocks” by an unknown author submitted by Betty Phillips (in this issue).

Gotta good rock?

The New York State Museum in Albany seeks to add to the world’s oldest and largest collection of New York State geologic materials. More than

20,000 specimens include every mineral species and variety known to exist in the state, many from old locations depleted more than a century ago. If you would like to make a donation or learn more about New York history, DO NOT send a box rocks. But DO write to: Curator of geology, New York State Museum, 3140 Cultural Education Center, Albany, NY 12230. The State Museum has a permanent exhibit on “The Minerals of New York.”

A Mineral Quiz

by Christine Reed

Geologist with DEC, Division of Mineral Resources in Albany

What does Albany’s Empire State Plaza have in common with the moon? Both feature anorthosite, a metamorphic rock composed mainly of feldspar and some pyroxene and garnet that forms a hard durable stone commonly used in high traffic areas, such as the Plaza. It is one of the primary rocks of the highlands of the moon. It’s only found in a few places on Earth, including the High Peaks region of the Adirondacks. Mt. Marcy (New York’s highest peak) and Whiteface (the Olympic) Mountain are both made mostly of anorthosite.

Upcoming Shows

April 26-27: 31st Annual NJ Earth Science Association Gem & Mineral Show & Outdoor Swap & Sell. Two locations, directly across the road from each other: Robert E. Little Community Center and Hardyston Township School, both near intersection of routes 23 & 517, Franklin, NJ. Hours: Sat. 9-5:30; Sun. 10-5.

May 2/3/4: Montreal Gem and Mineral Show, Arena Mont St. Antoine, 8200 Chenier, Montreal, Quebec. Hours: Friday, 3-10; Sat. 10-7; Sun. 10-5.

May 3-4: North Shore Rock and Mineral Club, 40th Annual New England Gem & Mineral show, Topsfield Fairgrounds, Route 1 North, Topsfield, MA. Hours: Sat. 9-5; Sun. 10-4.

May 9-11: Maine Geological Survey, 14th Annual Main Mineral Symposium, Senator Inn, Western Avenue, Augusta, ME.

June 14-15: Fulton County Mineral Club, Gem-Mineral-Fossil show and Sale, Fulton-Montgomery Community College, Johnstown, NY.

June 28-29: Gilsum Recreation Committee, 39th Annual Rock Swap and Mineral Show, Gilsum Elementary School and Town Recreation Fields, Route 10, Gilsum, NH.

Metal Detector Needed

Bruce Murray would like to borrow a metal detector to “find” his property markers or surveyor stakes. Recent storms have damaged trees and property lines are not clear. Please call 518-355-2146.

NYS Museum Lecture Series

Earthquakes in New York: Could “The Big One” Happen in Albany?

New York State Museum, Madison Ave., Albany NY - Museum Theater at 7:00 PM

Modern earthquakes in New York seem to occur in the Adirondacks, in western New York or in the New York City area. Or is the perception just a result of a short historical record? Dr. Robert Fakundiny, New York state Geologist and advisor to state department on earthquakes hazards, will discuss how earthquakes may be the result of modern mountain building and why people in the Capital District should prepare for a possible damaging earthquake.

A Few Words About NEFTA.

It stands for North East Field Trip Alliance. It is a group of mineral clubs that schedule three field trips each that are open to all other NEFTA clubs. At present time there are 27 participating clubs. that equals 81 field trips that are available through out the year. Plus several special trips. If you are a field collector, it is a great benefit to belong to a club participating with NEFTA. Most weekends you can have your choice of places to go, from Maine to Virginia. We have been a participating club for many years. We should give a big THANK YOU to our original coordinator Bruce Murray for working hard for us since the start. The idea behind NEFTA is to allow members of all clubs to collect in areas that they normally would not have access to. We need to provide a minimum of three trips every year that we can offer to members of other clubs in order to remain an active member. The earlier we get our trips in, the sooner we can participate in others field trips. (An updated list will be available in the June newsletter.) There has been a request to not use commercial (fee) locations, such as the Herkimer Diamond areas. I know we all like to keep "our sites" to ourselves, but usually there are only a couple members from other clubs at most that join any one trip. And we can limit the number of participants on any trip. Most clubs do provide at least one pretty good local location. And it is give and take. We are able to go to their sites if we chose to. Please contact me if you have a site you could offer. We will provide a list of available trips in the newsletter. They will have general information only. If you would like to go another club's trip you need to contact our trip coordinator soon enough that he can then contact the host club at least 2 weeks in advance. This year that will be me, Bob Hartig. You can best reach me by e-mail at <rockbob@nycap.rr.com> and please note Capital District Mineral Club in the "subject" area. I do not always get to my mail every day, so get your request in as early as possible. I will then send you a confirmation and more specific trip info. We

expect all members participating in NEFTA trips to observe the same safety rules & collecting courtesy that they would on our own trips. Membership cards are required at every dig. No guests, not even family. Need hard hats & boots in a working quarry. Safety glasses and gloves also a must. **You** are responsible for **your** children, when children are allowed. Good luck and have fun.

Field Trip to Lafarge Quarry

Date: SUNDAY, May 18

Meeting Place: Parking lot - Dollar Store on Rt. 9W, Ravena, NY

Meeting Time: 9:00 AM sharp

Destination: Lafarge Quarry nearby

Minerals: Calcite/quartz combinations, and fossils

Tools: Standard for quarry - Hard hat, safety glass/goggles, safety shoes, gloves, crack hammer, chisels, pry bar, sledge

Lunch: Snack if you like

Time Available: 9:00 to 12:45. We must be OUT of the quarry by 1:00.

Trip Leader: Rich Stein 518-355-4423 PLEASE call if you plan to attend. There will be last minute information regarding collecting potential.

Cell Phone: 518-330-1966. Turned on only when expecting calls.

The engineer will try to arrange a new blast or enlargement of the existing pit before we get there. Hence, the need to have last minute info before heading out for the trip. Other information we need is in regard to allowing children on the site as we have in the past.