

THE CAPITAL ROCKHOUNDER



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NOVEMBER 2003

November Meeting

The November meeting will be held on Thursday, November 6 at the New York State Museum, Madison Avenue, Albany, New York. The doors of the museum will be open from 7:00 to 7:15 PM. Please be on time as we have special museum personnel there to man the doors for that time.

November Program

Collecting - Now What?

The actual collection of minerals, gems, fossils or just plain rocks should be enjoyable, educational and satisfying as a hobby. This is the first of a series of presentations looking at it as a hobby, a part-time business or an obsession. "Learning About Minerals" (properties i.e. hardness, streak, and color) will be a future presentation as will "Identification of Minerals". We will begin the series with collecting minerals and how to store, display, and keep track of what you have and where you have it. Our presenter is George Gearhardt, a humble man who is clearly obsessed with the whole process.

October Program

Our October speaker, Jeff Fast, President of the Lapidary and Mineral Society of Central Connecticut and dealer, gave a very interesting presentation. Each specimen shown was identified and its location noted as it was passed from member to member. Most of the locations have been closed at this time because of urban development, or unfortunately, by collectors ignoring property

owners' rights. He also brought some great specimens collected in Mexico and Russia, which were available for sale to members.

It was a very good "hands on" presentation.

December Dinner and Auction

Join in the fun at our Holiday Dinner meeting as you bid up the other club members during our winter auction! Watch our treasury grow as members raise their hands to go higher! Members may bring up to three items each. Items can be mineral specimens, jewelry, rockhounds' tools, rockhounds' guides/books or anything else related to rockhounding. Remember that 100% of the bid is going to the club. We had some nice items presented at our spring auction for silent bids, which brought in our largest total to date. So bring any of your treasures and we'll shoot for the moon! Gerald Boileau will be our "live" auctioneer.

The dinner will be held at the Gateway Diner on Central Avenue, Albany. Come as early as possible to register your donations and to view the auction items. Dinner will be served at 7:00pm. See menu and information at the end of the newsletter.

Marketing Committee

This new committee had their first meeting on October 22 in Ballston Spa to begin its deliberations on how to expand the club's options on getting more members, and satisfying more current members by going back to basic things that are interesting, educating, and expanding our knowl-

edge on the fossils and minerals we collect. The next meeting will be on November 10. If interested, contact Mark Kilmer at (518)725-7629.

Past Field Trips

Oct. 4 - Our claim at the Margaret Hastings Mine brought Jim Palmer, Bob Ballard, Anne Woods, Bob Kaufman and George Gearhardt together for the day. Breaking rocks (also watching Jim Palmer with a water-cooled saw) and carting to one side finally opened one vug but not much to show for the effort. Next day I heard Chuck Vedder removed 2" to the left and found a vug with two crystals joined together, each with clear terminations about 4" long. This was reported to me by Bob Ballard.

Also on Oct. 4, Richard Hartnett had offered another members' field trip to the Stoddard Mine dump in Westmoreland, NH. No word yet from Richard on this trip.

Field Trips

Nov. 8 - The St. Lawrence Cement Plant will open its doors (to the quarry) on November 8 for tours that will allow collecting. The plant is located on Route 9J, Hudson, NY and the phone number is 518-828-9478. Mike Hawkins has been in contact with them and will have up-to-date information at our November meeting.

NEFTA Field Trips

Nov. 8 at 2 PM. Mineral and Lapidary Society of Raritan Valley. Serpentine, tremolite, zircon, titanite, lizardite, antigorite, molybdenite, "eastonite". No fees. Easton, Pennsylvania. We meet at the Water Station, yellow brick building along Route 611 North, about 1.2 miles north of the intersection of US Highway 22 with Route 611 in Easton, PA. Contact Bob Hartig at <rockbob@nycap.rr.com> if interested.

Show Committee to be Formed

Volunteers will be needed for the upcoming Min-

eral, Gem and Fossil Show. Michael Hawkins, Collections Manager for the Geological Survey Section of the NYS Museum in Albany, has announced the dates for the annual show coming in February 2004. A committee meeting for anyone wishing to volunteer will be announced after the first of the year. See related information details at end of newsletter.

New Web Site

Mama's Minerals has launched a new website <mamasminerals.com>. The newsletter has the expanded selections and new features included:

- Fabulous new one-of-kind items
- Free gift with every order
- New collection of over 60 types of bead strands
- More books
- Free shipping
- Shop by phone
- More fossils
- New resource called "Learn More"

Articles on "fools gold"; stony meteorites; making beach glass with your tumbler; and geology work puzzles.

I started using my mineral screen saver several years ago that is free from this site. Check it out!

Dues are Due!

August 31 was the end of our fiscal year and about half of our members have renewed to date. Check the mailing label on this newsletter and, if 8/03 shows, you are late in your renewal.

Upcoming Shows

Nov. 1-2 - The Stamford (CT) Mineralogical Society's 15th Annual Gem, Mineral & Fossil Show, Rippowan Center, 381 High Ridge, Road, Stamford, CT. Time: Sat 9:30-5; Sun 10-4:30.

Nov. 1-2 - Rochester Gem, Mineral & Fossil Show, sponsored by the Rochester Lapidary Society and Mineral Section, Rochester Academy of Science,

Monroe County Fairgrounds, 2685 Calkins Road, Henrietta, NY.

Nov. 1-2 - Tuscarora Lapidary Society presents 34th Gemarama 2003 to be held at CFS, The School at Church Farm, north side of business route 30, 1/2 mile west of Frazer- Rte 30 exit off Rte. 202. Hours: Sat. 10-6; Sun. 10-5. For information, <www.lapidary.org>.

Gem, Mineral & Fossil Show

Museum

The 11th Annual James Campbell Memorial Gem, Mineral, and Fossil Show and Sale will be held on February 21 and 22, 2004 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily on the Concourse Level at the south end of the Empire State Plaza, Albany, New York.

The Show will be co-hosted by the Capital District Mineral Club and the New York State Academy of Mineralogy (Geological Survey section of the NYS Museum in Albany, NY). Proceeds will fund new acquisitions for the Museum's gem and mineral collection.

More than 22 vendors will display and sell gems, jewelry, minerals, fossils, lapidary equipment, and much more. Publications produced by the Museum's Research and Collections staff will be available for sale. At the museum, staff will conduct tours of the mineral and fossil galleries, and will also identify visitor's own minerals and fossils. Lectures will be held in various rooms.

Admission will be \$3 per person, children 12 and under are free if accompanied by an adult. A \$5 combination ticket is available that includes admission to the Gem, Mineral, & Fossil Show and the New York in Bloom event which is scheduled for the same weekend at the museum.

Duties of the CDMC at the Mineral, Gem & Fossil Show

The club has the responsibility of spreading the

word regarding the Gem, Mineral, & Fossil Show. Contacting the monthly magazines that feature minerals, fossils, and lapidary articles; newspapers; radio and television media. We distribute posters and flyers to schools (elementary, middle, and high), colleges, libraries, and stores. Our volunteers usually cover their own neighborhoods and selected schools and colleges in an effort to get maximum awareness of the show.

A half dozen or more members will assist the dealers/vendors as they arrive on Friday evening to set-up and at the end of the afternoon on Sunday. We will have a rotating schedule to collect admissions at all entrances to the museum throughout both days of the show.

This rotating schedule will also include our own informational table for club pamphlets, newsletters, field trip schedules from previous years, and membership application forms. We will have a display case of minerals and fossils collected at our field trips for the past several years.

Richard Stein will prepare the table for the Mineral Meal specimens. These look good enough to eat, but are not for sale.

For the children and young at heart, we provide two "Sandbox Digs" which allow them to dig their own minerals. The charge is twenty-five cents for each specimen they want to keep - we provide a plastic envelope with the name of the mineral and the location (if known).

We have also provided demonstrations for cutting and polishing mineral specimens. These are called "cabs" or cabochons. This is one of the lapidary skills in this hobby.

We have also provided a black box to view special minerals that fluoresce.

GEOTALES: A COLLECTION OF STORIES ABOUT EARTH SCIENTISTS

Stuart E. Jenness and Jean M. Spencer Jenness

CHAPTER SIX: ORE HUNTERS

Every scientific man who discourages a favorite mining scheme must make up his mind to be as ill-received as the physician who gives an honest opinion that his patient's disorder is incurable. Sir Charles Lyell

(Clarke, J.M., 1921, p. 112-113.)

Many professional geologists toil in the mining world, but few become widely known to the general geological profession or public, because there is little incentive or encouragement for such geologists to publish the results of their endeavors. Nevertheless, a few mining men attain wide recognition, although it may be for other activities. Herbert Hoover, for example, was a mining geologist before he became President of the United States. And Richard A.F. Penrose, Jr., made a goodly fortune from copper mining in the early 1900s, cleverly saved it by selling his stocks just before the 1929 stock-market crash, and became a long-remembered philanthropist when he willed it to the Geological Society of America on his death. But for hundreds of others, the daily routines of checking ore grades, drift and stope locations, and the numerous other geological tasks required in the mining world, whether it be for gold or other metallic minerals, or coal, or other non-metallic minerals, leave little time for more theoretical considerations or geological writings. Such tasks do not, however, dampen the lively spirits of such geologists, as the following stories attest.

Unexpected Confrontation

In 1946, Canadian prospector-geologist Franc R. Joubin was offered the opportunity to evaluate some gold deposits in the interior jungle of French Guiana by a prestigious firm of consulting geologists, and he accepted the challenge.

French Guiana had recently released roughly 20,000 prisoners from prison farms, and Joubin was warned by government officials about these liberated prisoners as well as other dangers he might encounter.

Travelling by jeep, he left the capital city of Cayenne for the mouth of the Sinnamary River, and started upstream with his field party in four canoes, passing an occasional crocodile. At last they reached a place where they had to leave the canoes and proceed by trail on foot through the jungle.

We walked in single file with two bearers and scouts in front of me and the rest following. It was hot and terribly humid, and my group stripped to loin cloths. I wore only canvas and rubber 'gym' shoes and undershorts, which were soon drenched with perspiration. On my head was my conical reed hat, and in my hand I had a staff cut from a bamboo stalk about five feet long....

Suddenly, a majestic figure emerged silently from the bush beside the trail and confronted us, arms akimbo in a posture of friendship and query. The figure was a statuesque and beautiful woman — light brown in colour. Later I learned she was the daughter of a mixed French-African mother and a giant Chinese father, a bush trader who probably exchanged cloth, tobacco, and trinkets for animal hides, bird plumage, butterfly wings, and possibly some gold. These first three items were used for feminine adornment in continental France.

This handsome, magnificently proportioned woman was perhaps six feet tall in sandals, with long straight black hair arranged in a large coil on her head. Perched on top of her head was a tuber root of some type which she had retrieved from the jungle. She wore a one-piece garment, resembling a large plain white sack with the corners removed for her arms with a generous V cut between her breasts. The garment dropped from shoulder to midway between hip and knee, not unlike the upper one-half of a Hawaiian muumuu.

She apparently knew and was known to all the others in my party, as evidenced by a short burst of humorous pidgin banter all around. Then, arms still akimbo and head and bosom upright, and with a majestic demeanour, she eyed me searchingly, starting at my feet and slowly progressing upward to the top of my head. Finally, in perfect French, she remarked aloud and with evident appreciation to the party assembled, "Pas mal pour un blanc" [Not bad for a white man]. I was momentarily embarrassed by the compliment but dared not indicate that I understood French. She probably sensed my unspoken appreciation of her.

(Joubin, F.R. and Smyth, D.McC., 1986, p. 141-146.)

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