

CRACK 'N CAB

Gem & Mineral Society of Syracuse, Inc.
P.O. Box 801 Syracuse, NY 13201

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April 2003

Special points of interest:

Good news! The field trip season is starting early this year. See page 2 for some NEFTA field trips this month on April 16, 17, and 19.



Our annual **Mineral & Fossil Contest** is (April 21st, 2003) The rules were printed in the March Crack 'N Cab. Dust off those great specimens you collected and stashed for safe keeping. The competition will be intense. Everyone should participate in the Mineral Contest. Don't hesitate! Participate!

April 21st at 7:30 PM. Bob Livingston & The Mineral & Fossil Contest!

In addition to the annual Mineral Contest, our own Bob Livingston will be on hand for a special presentation. With this program we will "Kick it up a Notch" as Emeril says. According to Bob this program will be the best of all worlds. Perfect for young and young at heart. Mineral, fossil or lapidary persons equally. Bob volunteered it after seeing and being part of the program presented at Wildacres last fall, plus he heard it went over like gangbusters when it was offered at the Southern Tier club's program as well.



Like most of us, if we admit it, Bob has amassed more than an ample supply of leaverites, so he will be supplying a choice bunch of it for us for

this April 21st program. It's a group effort that brings out the best in each one of us. Bob promises lots of FUN, no heavy lifting, easy on your brain, great for swapping stories, plus the price is right, FREE. Just do not wear your best bib and tucker this night (there still might be a little dust on them).

Let's have a great turnout for this plus the Mineral Contest and most of all let's have a truly enjoyable time. Lots of laughs and best of all leaverites you will marvel at and want to show off. Lastly, for the bashful types, NO, you do not have to get up and talk about anything. And NO, we won't throw anything at you. Awesome!

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Refreshments

David Arcaro, one of our newer members, will be providing refreshments for the April 21st meet.

Sunshine News

There are a few cataract surgeries/recoveries for at least 3 different members (no names) and we continue to wish Irene Perkins still in Florida a speedy recovery from her broken sternum and hope she will be able to travel back north again this spring and get back in the swing of shows with hubby Harry. After a short visit this past Sunday with the Smith's, Kay & Don, I must report that Don is having a very rough time with osteo-arthritis giving him severe back pain with no relief in sight. Please send your get well wishes to all of the persons above to aid in their recovery. For current addresses contact the treasurer (Lou Budell) or the Editor, myself.

If you have sunshine news concerning any club member, please notify the Editor so that it can be included in the next issue of the "Crack 'N Cab".

President's Message

Well, spring is here on the calendar, but the snow is still on the ground. It's almost collecting season. I did manage to go collecting on one of those nice days we had. But let me tell you about this past winter.

For my birthday this year (it was back in January), my daughter did not get me a rock or a fossil, or even a book on them. She got me a Monopoly game. At first I thought she had just reused the box, but no – it sounded like a Monopoly game when I shook it. She told me to go ahead and open it up, because everyone would want to play.

It was a new Monopoly game that she had modified. It was now a "Fossilopoly" game. With her computer, she had printed up new properties and spaces for the game board. Then she had created all new property and playing cards. She found little dinosaurs to be used as playing pieces. It must have taken hours to create – and each new card was a glimpse of the life I put her through when she was growing up.

Here are some examples:

"GO... collect \$200" has changed to "Fossils finally payoff... collect \$200"

"Jail" has changed to "Home" and the "Just visiting" part of Jail is now "Just Passing By".

"Free Parking" is now "Lunch Time"

"Go to Jail" has changed to "No Trespassing – go directly Home"

All the Rail Roads are now Museums.

The "Water Works" is "Mountain Dew Stock" and the "Electric Company" is "Band Aide Stock"

All the properties are real collecting sites starting with the cheapest nearest to home, and rent is replaced by digging fees.

The Houses became Rock Shops and the Hotels are now Museums.

Some of the cards read:

"Buy a new chisel to replace the one you broke: Pay \$15"

"Take the Family to the nearest museum"

"Received a big boo-boo. You don't have enough Band Aides. Go directly Home!! Do not collect \$200"

"Have a run-in with the Pry Bar. You cry... pay \$50 to each player to make them stop laughing"

"Fossil collecting on Private property gets you shot in the butt by a redneck. Go directly Home"

"Find some Quality Fossils! Advance to Pay Off and collect \$200"

"You missed the chisel with your hammer. OUCH! Pay hospital \$100"

"Win a bet for finding the biggest Herkimer of the day. Collect \$50 from every player."

And my favorite...

"Lose your rock hammer. *schniffle* Lose 1 turn to go look for it."

The only thing I wish she had done differently, is let me win the first time we played... or even the second time. Actually – I haven't won yet. But it sure did brighten my dark cold January.

Jay Tinker
Club President

Upcoming NEFTA Field Trips

Submitted by Tim Hart

Here are some dates of trips the **Syracuse** club will be sponsoring this year.

1. Alden, NY - Spring Creek, (20 miles east of Buffalo) - Wednesday, **April 16th**, 2p.m. - fossils, pyritized fossils - soft rock (shale) - crack hammer & chisels - free
2. Crystal Grove Diamond Mine, St. Johnsville, NY - Saturday, **April 19th**, 9:30a.m, meet at the mine - Herkimer diamonds, hard rock digging and sifting through piles of dirt and rock. Bug spray and sunscreen are often needed. - Digging fee about \$6.00
3. Tully, NY - fossils - Thursday, **April 17th** - 10:00 a.m. - soft rock (shale) - crack hammer & chisels – free



From The Boondocker 586/92
via T-Town Rockhound 6/98

Coming Events

April

12-13: 20th Annual Rock and Mineral Show, sponsored by the Maine Mineralogical and Geological Society. Finley Gym, University of New England, 716 Stevens Ave., Portland, ME (I-95, exit 8).

12-13: 34th Annual Gem, Mineral & Fossil Show, sponsored by the **New York Southern Tier Geology Club**. Senior Citizen Center, Johnson City, N.Y.

12-13: 20th Annual Rock and Mineral Show, sponsored by the Maine Mineralogical and Geological Society. Finley Gym, University of New England, 716 Stevens Ave., Portland, ME (I 95, exit 8).

26-27: 31st Annual NJ Earth Science Association Show, sponsored by the Franklin-Ogdensburg Mineralogical Society, the New Jersey Earth Science Assoc., & the Sterling Hill Mining Museum, near intersection of Rts. 23 & 517, Franklin, NJ

May

18: Annual Chesapeake Gem & Mineral Show at Goucher. NOTE: THIS IS A SUNDAY. Goucher College, Kraushaar Auditorium Pavilion, Dulaney Valley Rd just off I-695; Towson, MD

June

7: Spring Mineralfest, sponsored by the Pennsylvania Earth Sciences Association, Inc. Macungie Memorial Park, Macungie, PA

July

12-13: **Syracuse Jewelry, Mineral & Fossil Show** Sponsored by the **Gem & Mineral Society of Syracuse**. NY State Fairgrounds, Center of Progress Bldg., Syracuse, NY

26-27: Annual Champlain Valley Gem and Mineral Show, sponsored by Greater Burlington Gem & Mineral Club. Tuttle Middle School, Dorset St. & Kennedy Dr., South Burlington, VT.

August

2 - 3: 33rd Annual Mid-State Gem & Mineral Show, sponsored by the Water-Oak Gem and Mineral Society. Mount Merici School, 152 Western Avenue, Waterville, ME.

23-24: 37th Annual Rock, Mineral & Gem Show sponsored by the **St. Lawrence Co. Rock & Mineral Club**. Canton Sportsman's Club, Canton, NY.

September

6-7: Annual Gem & Mineral Show, sponsored by the Northern Berkshire Mineral Club. VFW Hall, Route 2 (base of the Mohawk Trail), North Adams, MA.

October

4: AUTUMN MINERALFEST, sponsored by the Pennsylvania Earth Sciences Association, Inc., Macungie Memorial Park, Macungie, PA.

17-19: EFMLS Convention & Show hosted by the **Mid-Hudson Valley Gem & Mineral Society**. Poughkeepsie, NY. EFMLS Business meeting on October 17. Show October 18 and 19.

November

1-2: 34th Annual "Gemarama", sponsored by the Tuscarora Lapidary Society. CFS, School at Church Farm, Business Route 30 & Route 202, Exton, PA.

EFMLS News

GOOD STUFF!

by Bruce Gaber

Only YOU can make the Wildacres and EFMLS convention auctions a success. Fun donations make a fun auction, and as many of you know, our auctions are like no other! These are no dry affairs like the ones you see on TV where everyone is carefully guarding their paddles and looking so serious. Our auctioneers are guaranteed to be entertaining and the audience members often take part as well. The atmosphere of these voice auctions is part show, part business and part lively competition.



Only the boldest bidders get the good stuff! Now where does this good stuff come from? You know, from you! Think out of the box and make the kind of interesting gem, mineral and fossil related donations that you would want to bid on yourself. Did you pick up some unusual souvenirs on a trip? Did you create a masterpiece that you can part with? Can you find a book, video or supplies that pertain to our hobby that you no longer use? If all else fails, can you go out and buy something to donate to the auctions? Watch for sales, get a bargain and pass it along. If everyone who attends Wildacres and the convention could contribute even one intriguing item, we would be sure to have successful auctions. The more interesting the good stuff, the more interesting and fun the auctions will be.

The Wildacres sessions in Little Switzerland, NC, are May 16-22 and September 2-8, 2003 and the EFMLS convention is in Poughkeepsie, NY, October 17-19, 2003.

If you cannot attend Wildacres or the EFMLS auction, donations can be mailed in advance to Bruce Gaber, 5707 Northfield Rd., Bethesda, MD 20817-6737. Thanks!

-from EFMLS News 04/03

Please Note: Wildacres forms will be available at the April 21st meeting at the sign-in table.

Executive Meeting Minutes – March 10th

The Executive Committee in its March meeting at Carousel Center continued to focus on the upcoming Gem and Mineral shows at the State Fairgrounds. **Lou Budell** and **Gene Ridall** said dealers are lined up for this year's show. Including a dealer who specializes in opal and one who features materials from Pakistan. Mystery stones will be the main prizes at the show. Also, the train club will again have a layout during the show. **Jay Tinker** said his daughter is teaching Potsdam kids to do casting of whale fossils, and they will demonstrate this at the 2003 show.

The committee agreed on ticket prices for 2004, with the cost for one day to be \$5 and for three days, \$10. There will also be a savings of \$1 for seniors and those who have a coupon. The Chamber of Commerce has been contacted about the show and the contract has been signed with the Fairgrounds. Field trips to Herkimer diamond mines and a fossil field trip will be arranged for delegates from Eastern Federation and American Federation.

It was suggested that there be a system of notifying club members when a meeting has to be canceled because of storms. This will be set up before next year's winter season.

Regular Meeting Minutes – March 17th

Could it have been the luck of the Irish at our March club meeting? A month after our February meeting was called off because of a fierce winter storm; we had temperatures in the 70s for the March gathering. And those who attended the St. Patrick's Day gathering were treated to delicious cookies (frosted green) provided by **Ruth Burgess** and **Virginia Adcook**.

Also enjoyable was the slide presentation by club member **Dr. Steven Chamberlain** on Cataloging Your Mineral Collection. Some of his slides showed minerals with several numbers, indicating that they were found or owned by more than one person. Dr. Chamberlain explained why it is important to catalog a collection and he showed us how to number them. The catalog should tell when and where a mineral was found and who found it. A mineral specimen has more value, for instance, if someone famous collected it or if it was exhibited in a magazine.

Winners in the lapidary contest were **Franko** for his best of show wire wrapping, **Lou Budell** for cabochon and jewelry and **Ruth Burgess** for novelty and carving.

First prize in the drawing was a beautiful specimen of quartz from the North Star Crystal Mine in Mt. Ida, Ark. The winner, **Jacqueline Belfort**, will give a short talk about her prize at the April meeting. Other winners were **Gene Ridall**, **Leda Gibbs**, **John Davis**, **Dick Ackerman** and **Bill Royer**.

Roland Allen
Secretary

Shop Tips

Safe method for cleaning pyrite: To clean pyrite and make it look nice and brassy, first wash it carefully in water. Then put it in a bowl or shallow dish and pour vinegar over the specimens, making sure all pyrite is covered. Turn the specimens over several times. When they look clean and shiny, rinse with water. Put them on a paper towel to dry. Children can use this method.

-from Rock City News 05/00, via Rock Buster News 04/03

Agates can be cut and polished on diamond, but we prefer to use carborundum-grinding wheels and polish with cerium oxide on hard felt. You can also use leather or poly-pads. Try a little red rouge when polishing. It seems to give a more glassy finish. One thing to remember is to get rid of all scratches from the grinding stage with a 600 grit sanding disk or belt before proceeding to the polishing step.

-from Backbender's Gazette 04/00, via Rock Buster News 04/03

Silversmithing: When fine steel wool is used on silver, rinse the silver thoroughly in water before continuing to solder. Even the heat of the torch will not eliminate the steel wool dust that accumulates on your piece, and if you drop it not cleaned into the pickle pot, you will get a fine case of copper plating covering the silver entirely.

-from Breccia 04/99, via Rock Buster News 04/03

Cabochon Cutting: Contact paper makes excellent templates for cabochon cutting. Simply trace the design on paper, cut out, remove the backing, and affix the template to the stone. Although the glue is water soluble, it will usually hold up enough to effect cutting.

-from Glacier Drifter circa 1989, via The Dopstick 03/89

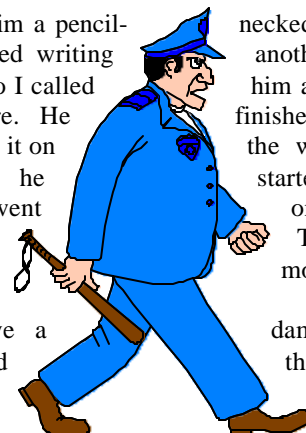
Joke of the Month

I stopped in the local rock shop the other day for only a short time and when I came out there was a policeman writing a parking ticket. So I walked over to him and said, "Come on buddy, how about giving a guy a break?" He ignored me and continued writing the ticket.

So I called him a pencil-me and started writing necked Nazi. He glared at me and started writing another ticket for having worn tires. So I called him a low-life excuse for horse manure. He finished writing the second ticket and put it on the windshield with the first. Then he started writing a third ticket! This went on for about 20 minutes. The more I abused him, the more tickets he wrote.

I didn't give a damn; my car was parked around the corner. I try to have a little fun every day. It helps me to relax.

-from Rock Pickens 12/02

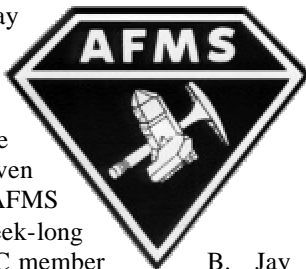


AFMS News

Join The Fun at Wildacres

from Esther Dunn, EFMLS Wildacres Chairman

The Eastern Federation will play host to the AFMS Uniform Rules Committee Judges Workshop during the fall session of the EFMLS Wildacres Workshop. One representative from each of the seven member federations plus the AFMS URC chair will take part in a week-long Judges Seminar conducted by URC member



B. Jay Bowman. A similar seminar will be conducted in 2004 and 2005 in order to give additional representatives from the federations an opportunity to compare notes, talk about the existing rules and learn how to interpret them in a more uniform manner.

The Eastern Federation would like to invite you to join us at this fall session, or at our spring session for a week of fun and learning in a wonderful mountain setting just off the Blue Ridge Parkway in North Carolina. You don't have to participate in the URC workshop to attend - there are several other classes for your enjoyment.

The Wildacres facility is owned and operated by a non-profit organization dedicated towards the betterment of mankind. About 50 groups use Wildacres each year including both the Eastern and Southeast Federations, the Florida Goldsmiths, as well as music, literary, youth training and religious organizations.

Wildacres consists of several modern buildings. Lodging is in two modern motel style buildings each with private bath. A canteen, dining hall, auditorium, and numerous classrooms make up the campus. It's peaceful too - no blaring TV's or radio's disturb the serenity of the mountains.

Each EFMLS session features an invited speaker, several classes to select from, an auction, free day and "fun night". The cost for the week is very, very reasonable - \$270 for room and board. There is a slight additional fee for class materials, but that varies and depends on the class(s) you take.

Our spring session is May 16 - 22 and will feature guest speaker Gordon Austin. He's retired from the USGS and is very knowledgeable about gemstone deposits in the United States.

The fall session is September 2 - 8 and will feature a return engagement by Fred Ward, well known author, lecturer and gemologist. He has written articles for National Geographic and has published a series of books on topics including diamonds, pearls, sapphires and rubies. He's a charming and terrific speaker.

Interested in coming? You can download an application form from the EFMLS Website <www.amfed.org/efmls> with a quick click of a mouse along with a list of classes we plan to offer during both sessions as well as more information about Wildacres. If you don't have access to the Internet, snail mail the AFMS Editor and information will be sent to you.

Having Fun - Junior Activities: Building a Collection

by Jim Brace-Thompson, Junior Activities Chair

As you know from my previous two columns, I'm proposing we initiate a merit badge sort of system for junior members enrolled in the AFMS Future Rockhounds of America program. As part of that proposal, each month I'll describe a different badge we might consider and activities that might be done to earn that particular badge.

Last month, I talked about a Mineral Identification Badge. This month, I'd like to turn to one of the things that kids of all ages love to do: collect! Most of us rockhounds are pack rats at heart. We like nothing better than to assemble an assortment of rocks we've found on our journeys, traded with fellow collectors, or purchased at gem shows and rock shops. A proper collection, however, is more than a bunch of rocks tossed haphazardly into a box. The value of a collection lies in its "curation," or in the information included with the specimen: what it is, where it came from, and other unique info. The collection also should be organized and stored so individual specimens can be cared for and retrieved easily. Helping kids curate their treasures provides an educational opportunity to teach them about the specimens they've collected while improving both the scientific and economic value of their collection. Here are some activities toward this goal:

Activity 1:

Build a rock, mineral, and/or fossil collection. Take care to curate your collection. For each specimen, include a label and keep a logbook with key information. For rocks and minerals, this includes what it is and where it came from. For fossils, you should include both those facts as well as info about the age of the fossil. (A Junior Activities leader could turn this into a group activity by having kids bring parts of their collections to a meeting and working with them to identify, label, and store specimens.)

Activity 2:

Store your collection. Each specimen should be in its own small box or baggie. The small boxes might then be kept in trays, shoeboxes, cigar boxes, shallow shelves, soda flats, or whatever works best for each child.

Activity 3:

Display your collection. Prepare a small display to exhibit to your fellow pebble pups at a club meeting. In this display, you should include not just your specimens but also their labels to tell your viewers what it is they're seeing.

I welcome your comments about this idea and ideas I'll be describing in future columns (e-mail me at <jjbraceth@juno.com>). Plus, I welcome thoughts of your own about other activities to consider as I work to put together a formal proposal for a merit badge system that encourages and rewards kids for learning while-as always-having fun

-from AFMS News 03/03