

CRACK 'N CAB

Gem & Mineral Society of Syracuse, PO Box 2801, Syracuse, NY
Volume 45 Issue 8 September 2015



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Photos by Shannon Phillips

Picnic Was Super in Food and Fun Things for ALL by Bob Livingston

Sunday Aug. 16 was a hot, sunny, breezy, great day at the Canal Park in Camillus. John Sweeney brought two saws for folks to have at it cutting geodes. This was popular as they whined away a good share of the day. The Livingston's base-painted rocks, as well as those natural toned ones supplemented by the Sweeneys, went over quite well. At least a dozen folks let their creativity bloom as they painted designs on rocks. We got to see some interesting geometrics, paisley designs, birds, trees, a sleeping cat and even a python snake (hope Ruth Burgess, who is frightened of snakes, did not see it). Our President will have them at the meeting this month for all to see and comment on. Ronna Schindler pinch hit for Dave Millis in leading folks to do pendants with stones and wire. (We did miss you and your games, Dave.) And of course, the main reason to go was for Keith Gilmore and Kurt Schindler's dogs, burgers and sausage. All of the sumptuous food set up and table set up would not have happened without the plan and hard work of Dorothy Gilmore and her many assistants. Thanks all -- it was great from A to Z. And chocoholics were rewarded with at least 10 choices from cookies to pudding to cakes. Yes, there was watermelon, too. Last but not least, were at least two boat ride opportunities on the old Erie Canal which most took advantage of. If you did not make it you missed a great picnic. Thanks for making it happen everybody. And thanks to those who brought and sold some of their stash to interested parties. They in turn, thank those of you who went home with some of their stuff.

It's membership renewal time again!

Single adult \$10.00
Junior \$5.00
Family \$15.00
Life \$5.00

Pay a any meeting or Mail to:GMSS PO Box 2801 Sy NY 13220

Contact our Editor at

editorgmss@gmail.com
to submit questions, corrections, subject matter requests, individual newsletter copies

September 21 GMSS General Meeting Show & Tell!

This meeting is just for fun. We would like to hear about what you have done so far this summer! Where have you been? Did you find some amazing rocks, minerals or fossils? Bring 'em on in! Did you visit any great collecting sites, museums or shows? What was the most fun? Show us & Tell us what you liked best!

But wait, there's more! Bring in the rock you painted at the Picnic. "Best of Picnic" rocks will be selected. You are invited to bring in and show us other rocks/fossils painted or unpainted!

President's Message



John Sweeney - President

September 2015

Part of me is asking where the summer went, but with temperatures in the nineties while I was our digging for Herkimers on Labor Day the thought of fall's cool days and even the thought of snow were welcome. We had a great picnic in August thanks to all those members who showed up at the park in Camillus. The side dishes were excellent. We have a lot of good cooks in this club! Special thanks to Keith and Dorothy who did a lot of shopping and cooking. The tail gating was a success and I saw a lot of smiling faces getting off the boat tours and on the faces of the gem tree artists Rhona was coaching. Bob Livingston went above and beyond by coming with painting supplies for novel rock project, rock painting. Those of you who painted rocks at the picnic and took them home with you, bring them in to this month's meeting to be judged with the rest that are currently at the club. There will be prizes.

With September's arrival, our regular meetings start up and the first order of business for many will be paying their club dues. The September meeting will include the swearing in of this year's slate of officers, introductions of new members and "show and tell" centered on our summer collecting.

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With the arrival of fall, our classes in the skill center will be starting October 7th. Sign-up sheets will be available at the regular club meeting in September for an eight week silver-smithing and lapidary course. Anyone interested can sign up at the meeting or email me at pres@gmss.us. On that same note, any members who would like to teach a class or suggest a class should contact me as well.

See you at the meeting on September 21; in the meantime keep collecting. The snow will be here soon.

Secretary's Report



Cheryl Brown - Secretary Meeting Minutes

Executive Board Minutes September 1, 2015

The meeting opened with a Gem World Show review by Stew Koenig who had provided the advertising. He stated that the more integrated the advertising campaign, the more people will respond. They provided advertising in newspapers, on television, on Facebook and online. They also redesigned our flyers and posters to give them a more cohesive appearance. They will be sending us a proposal for next year's ad campaign for our 50th anniversary show.

A suggestion was made and discussed to publish articles about vendors who will be at our show as contracts come in instead of waiting until just before the show to advertise who will be there. Since it will be our show's 50th anniversary, there was discussion about featuring gold as an inducement for people to attend.

Mark Grasmeyer reported on the bus trip to the West Springfield show. The bus was not full. He suggested we extend an invitation to other clubs to join us on future trips. There was also discussion that we alternate providing a bus to Albany one year and to West Springfield the next. Mark said there were two rockhounding opportunities coming up. The first is over Labor Day weekend in Herkimer. The second is over Columbus Day weekend at the Walworth Quarry.

Cheryl Brown reported that 29 people renewed their membership or joined the club for the first time at the Gem World show. Your membership can be renewed at the September meeting.

The September meeting will feature the "What Did You Do Over the Summer" display and competition. Bring items representative of what you did this summer. Did you decorate a rock at our picnic? If you took it home, please bring it to the meeting. They will be part of the display.

John Sweeney reported he wants to repair the floor in the clubhouse since we will be staying in the Shoppingtown location for the next year.

John Sweeney reported that he will be starting classes in the Skill Center on October 7th. He will combine the lapidary and silversmithing classes into one session. There will be a sign-up sheet at the meeting.

Cheryl Brown will open the Skill Center to anyone interested in using the equipment on Mondays or Tuesdays in the afternoon. You must have taken John's lapidary class in order to use the equipment. There will be a sheet at the September meeting asking what day and time would work best for those interested in attending.

Rick Moore will be holding a sale in late October or early November of lapidary equipment and rock specimens. More details will follow as the date approaches.

On a sad note, we learned that Robert Connell, Janice Carr's husband, passed away. We send our condolences to the family for their loss.

Respectfully Submitted,
Cheryl Brown

Club Events and Trips

For specific information and travel arrangements, time to meet and car pool location, contact Mark Grasmeyer (317-1350) email vp@gmss.us or ask for details at a Club Meeting before a trip. Dates are subject to change.

Trips can be arranged anytime.

Send suggestions to Mark Grasmeyer or tell him at a monthly meeting. **Cancellation Info** will be sent by direct email, on the web, facebook and on TV.

Rock-Mineral-Fossil-Lapidary Events

→Lapidary and Metalsmithing!

Lapidary & Silversmithing - Beginner & Intermediate Level Class

Oct 7, 2015 to Dec 2, 2015 6PM - 8PM

If you are interested, **contact John Sweeney at pres@gmss.us or 668-8470.**

October 11-12 (Sat.-Sun.) - **Walworth Quarry Open House** - Sat 7:00AM-2:00PM, Sunday 7:00AM-noon. Arrive early for safety talk. Wear long pants and boots. Bring safety glasses and hard hats. See more info:

<http://www.mindat.org/loc-18146.html>

October 11 -17 Earth Science Week

<http://www.earthsciweek.org/> & **October 14 National Fossil Day** (October 14 - 9 AM-5PM, Penn Dixie open to the public for National Fossil Day)

See More Events at EFMLS site

<http://www.amfed.org/efmls/calendar.htm>

and

Rock and Gem Magazine Show List

<http://www.rockngem.com/ShowDatesFiles/ShowDatesDisplayAll.php?ShowState=ALL>

Send Us Your Feedback

If you would like to be **added** to the Crack 'N Cab email list, or if you have any other general questions send email to editorgmss@gmail.com

If you have **membership questions**, send email to secretary@gmss.us

If you have any Web **Page Questions** or **web requests/suggestions**, please contact Rick Moore at webmaster@gmss.us

GMSS on facebook

In addition to our web site our club has a facebook page. To learn more, go to: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Gem-Mineral-Society-of-Syracuse/175695675873901>



WE NEED YOU!

Let us know about what you have been doing, making, finding, seeing, and collecting. Send articles, photos, pictures, critiques, prose and poetry to editorgmss@gmail.com

REPRINTING OUR ARTICLES

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•GMSS Newsletter is Online•

Color Copies of the Crack 'N Cab are available on our web page: <http://gmss.us/resources/newsletter>

From Mark Grasmeyer:

New book

Author: Walter, Michael R.

Title: **Collector's Guide to Herkimer Diamonds.**

Copyright: 2015

Book summary from the Onondaga County Public Library (OCPL) Catalog - 3 copies of the book are available at OCPL.

This is the first published guide to Herkimer diamonds, striking quartz crystals, that includes all important aspects of interest to anyone curious about this unique form of the mineral quartz. Over 210 vivid color images of important specimens, associated minerals, and field shots illustrate the informative text and enhance the reader's experience. The text includes the most recent scientific information regarding Herkimer diamonds' geological and mineralogical history, where they can currently be found, descriptions of important historic locations, and the inclusion of noteworthy peripheral localities. The specific methods used to effectively field collect Herkimer diamonds are detailed, including photos of mining methods and a discussion of collecting strategy. Additionally, the mines are enumerated, the gear readers need is detailed, specimen preparation, mineral collections, and associated minerals recounted. This is the essential guide for every collector of these well known and much sought minerals, a guide only a seasoned field collector can provide. Available from the Onondaga County Public Library

Top 10 caves in NY

http://www.newyorkupstate.com/outdoors/2015/08/caves_caverns_spelunking_upstate_ny_howes_natural_bridge.html

GemWorld 2016 will be the Best ever!

Next year will be the show's 50th year. Celebrate **GemWorld's Golden Anniversary** with us on the weekend of July 9 and 10, 2016 at SRC Arena. Watch for announcements here, on our web page and on facebook.

Other Info Sources

AFMS (American Federation of Mineralogical Societies)
September Newsletter



http://www.amfed.org/news/n2015_09.pdf

EFMLS (Eastern Federation of Mineralogical And Lapidary Societies)
September Newsletter



<http://www.amfed.org/efmls/efsept15web.pdf>

AFF (American Fossil Federation)
Some Great Fossil Photos

<http://americanfossilfederation.org/>

Devonian Fossil Sites in NY
from SUNY Binghamton

<http://bingweb.binghamton.edu/~kwilson/Devonian/DevSites/SitesGeographic.htm>

Robert M. Linsley Geology Museum -
Colgate University

<http://www.colgate.edu/academics/departments-and-programs/geology/facilities/linsley-geology-museum>

Lessons Learned After a Summer Of Collecting By Shannon Phillips

Although many of us have had enough of the heat, summer never really seems long enough to us as collectors. Our season began in April with a trip to Herkimer, May took us to Penfield Quarry, and the Penn Dixie Site. In June, we visited Lord's

Hill and July found us in St Lawrence County, Pierrepont specifically, at the Powers Farm and the Selleck Road site. We also visited a newer locality, the Owen Property, in Pierrepont. In August, we visited Alden, NY and returned to Herkimer and Pierrepont.

This is our second summer as committed collectors. So far, we have been quite successful using resources that Michael has found online, including books that we have then borrowed from the library. We have learned, however, that not all guides are created equal and that conditions can change so dramatically over time as to leave sites nearly unrecognizable.

Our visit to Penfield Quarry would not have been nearly as successful as it was without the online research we did beforehand and the benefit of experts at the site. From reading online, we were familiar with the types of minerals that might be found at the location and with the fact that, occasionally, crystallized fossils had been found there, too. The presence of skilled miners and other collectors made it easy to know the parameters of our search. Although we did not rely on the more experienced collectors to identify our finds, knowing that we could have was helpful. We were able to find calcite points, selenite, sphalerite, and even some crystallized orthocone fossils.

We had a similar experience at Penn Dixie. While the site is so productive that I'm sure we would have been satisfied without them, the guides there on "Dig with the Experts" day made our searching especially fruitful. Before we arrived, we agreed that Michael would enter the area with the experts and I would remain with the kids to explore the rest of the site. Upon arrival, we were directed to a pile of what looked like dirt. On closer inspection, it was a freshly turned mound of earth from the flat plain of the Penn Dixie site. Once we adjusted our eyes to discerning between clumps of mud and brachiopods, we were able to easily collect many shells, crinoids, tiny horn corals, and some trilobites. Being given direction on where to search definitely made the trip more enjoyable for the children, who are so easily frustrated when they don't find what they are looking for.

I'm almost embarrassed to say that we had a similar experience at Lord's Hill. After getting directions from Mark at a meeting, I took Ben and Jakob to the site to search for horn coral. Not realizing that we needed to cross the road from

the recommended parking area, we trekked down a steep hill with no path to the creek bed. Although we did find many coral, we also found sucking mud, many brambles, and a very steep ascent, made more difficult by carrying a bucket of rocks. The trip a few weeks later with the experienced club members who accompanied the Junior Rockhounds was a million times more fun. Not only did we enjoy their company, but also, with their expertise, we were able to avoid the difficulty we had on our first trip when I went to the wrong place.

When we visited Powers Farm in July, I was pleasantly surprised by the ease with which the site was reached and by the abundance of material to be collected. At the original site on the top of the hill, sifting through tailings of others' toils with a garden claw and a sharp eye yielded satisfying specimens of dravite, quartz points, and plenty of mica. I thought that the kids would enjoy the site - good collecting and the opportunity of exploring the stream and forest. When we returned at the end of August, however, much had changed. Some serious digging had occurred and the places that we had so easily found small treasures were just dirt. Large sections of rock had been removed and denuded of any minerals worth prying out. At a well known public site, dramatic change is likely to occur and should be expected - a lesson learned much to the dismay of the four youngsters we had with us.

The Owen Property is a site where having more than a mention in an online article would have been very helpful. In the article "Fee Localities in St. Lawrence County, New York" by Michael Walter, the property is mentioned as a relatively new collecting area, discovered in 2011, that had been opened to the public for a \$10 per person fee. We found the address without much trouble, and, while paying the collecting fee, I had a nice conversation with Mr. Owen about rock collecting, public radio, and the state of education in New York. Michael and I then headed off to the parking area and attempted to find the "diggings." We never did find any. What we found was a forest, with a floor littered with damp leaves; a tangle of raspberry bushes, with ripe berries; and a few gigantic boulders with showings of very weathered quartz (I think) on the surface. We wandered farther, following what we thought was a path, which took us into a clearing that was more or less a wetland. Tired and frustrated, we followed the "path" out of the woods and back to the car. The most interesting thing we found at

the site was Mr. Owen himself. The experience at this site was the opposite of what we had learned at Powers Farm - if a site is too fresh, novice seekers are unlikely to know where to look. I'm sure that many exciting discoveries are yet to be made in that forest, but until I have a guide, a map, or a much better idea of how to search unbroken ground for minerals, I will not be making them.

Perhaps the most frustrating trip of all was that we made to Alden. Every source I found online said that the point of departure for the site is the parking lot of a Dollar General store. From that parking lot, we searched every part of the woods that looked remotely like a path and walked some way down the road looking for any path we might have missed. We even parked on another street and attempted to walk up the creek to the site that we had been lead to believe was easily accessible and still consistently producing pyritized specimens. Having brought my dog, Sandy, who is quite possibly the laziest creature on the earth and is also afraid of walking in water, we were unable to venture far. It is a site I am eager to visit, but not without an experienced guide.

Overall, we had a good summer of collecting. We found better specimens of fossils and minerals we already had and new specimens of beautiful and interesting minerals. Of course, the pleasure of traveling around our beautiful state in good company is a reward all its own, but it's great to be able to return home with natural treasures. We will continue to learn, to revisit familiar sites and visit new ones.

**Club Display Case Photos
From Judy Cook**





Criteria for Identifying Minerals for Newbies

1. Color(s) of a rock - probably the easiest to see
2. Streak - is the color of the powder of a mineral
To test, you scrape the mineral across an unglazed porcelain plate, check color
4. Density - describes how much matter is in a certain amount of space
5. Hardness - is a mineral's ability to resist being scratched. (Mohs Scale)
6. Cleavage is smooth/flat - fracture is not
6. Fluorescence - glows
7. Magnetism - iron is just about everywhere
8. Radioactivity - yikes!
9. Smell/Taste - be prepared to spit!

For more info/details see:

http://www.minsocam.org/msa/collectors_corner/id/mineral_id_key1.htm

and for good online mineralogy search tools see:
<http://www.mindat.org/>



Gem & Mineral Society of Syracuse

P.O. Box 2801

Syracuse, New York 13220

First Class Mail

September 2015

Time Dated Material



Crack 'N Cab
Newsletter of Gem & Mineral Society
Syracuse, NY

www.amfed.org

www.amfed.org/efms

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Eight people organized the Gem and Mineral Society of Syracuse in 1951. Since that time it has grown in membership to include adults, families, and young folk. The Society was incorporated in 1969 under the same name.

The objectives of the Society are to stimulate interest in mineralogy, paleontology, and the lapidary arts. Member interests include collecting, identification, and display of minerals, gems, fossils. Members share and develop their artistic skills in jewelry design and creation.

Our monthly meetings provide social and educational experiences. Field trips give collectors chances to find specimens and enjoy the of outdoors, exercise and time with old and new friends.

We meet on the third Monday of the month (NOT in July, August, December) at 7:30 PM in the Clubhouse (Shoppingtown Mall on the 2nd floor near Sears).

Visitors are ALWAYS welcome

Annua member dues:

Adult \$10 • Family/Couple \$15 • Junior \$5 • Life \$5

If you would like to join or renew your membership, download the application form (PDF) [click here](#) or get a form at a meeting or send to the address at the top of this page and we will mail a membership form/card to you.

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Meeting Refreshments (looking for volunteers!)