

"God Bless  
America"



## THE STREAKPLATE

NORTHERN BERKSHIRE MINERAL CLUB  
North Adams, Massachusetts

VOLUME 53 NUMBER 5  
December 2011

Visit us on the web at <http://nbmclub.webs.com>

### Meeting Place and Time

DATE: *Thursday, December 15, 2011* TIME : 6:30PM

LOCATION: Coyote Flaco Restaurant  
Rte 7, Williamstown, MA

PROGRAM: Annual Christmas party and elections. Cocktails at 6:00.



### 2012 Dues Notice

Attached to the December Streakplate is the 2012 member dues form. Please fill it out and return it with your payment payable to the Northern Berkshire Mineral Club to Larry Michon, P.O. Box 297, North Adams, MA 01247 or just bring it to the next meeting. Dues are \$10 for a single membership and \$12 for a family.

### Herkimer Diamond Field Trip Report

**By: Janet Michaels**



Cheryl inspects a find.

On November 5<sup>th</sup> Larry, Rob, Cheryl my sister Doris & I went to dig for Herkimer Diamonds. I thought we were going to go to a commercial site like my son did but it wasn't. It was a claim that Larry's friend and long time club member Tom Kustra has in Fonda NY. I brought a little pick and tiny shovel with me. When we got there we walked up a mountain to the claim. Larry & Rob had a gasoline water pump in a wheelbarrow. We girls tagged along with what we could carry. The guys drained the site while my sister and I bought some Herkimer diamonds from another prospector. **Lesson one:** Learn exactly what you are looking for before you buy it. **Lesson #2** Be sure that you have a lot of sunshine or light on the stones. I got some really nice rocks

though. I bought two for my rock garden that were quite big. The guy that we bought the diamonds from let us dig through his tailings. We did find some nice ones there. Then we went up to our claim. My little pick & shovel did not work. Larry and Bob had brought a "big" sledge hammer, hammers, wedges, chisels & pry bars with them.

**Lesson number3** Always wear safety glasses when prospecting. Doris got some sand in her eyes and we went to Stewarts store in Fonda to pick up some eyewash. It also doesn't hurt to have good pair of water proof boots, heavy pants and long sleeve shirts & gloves. We were dressed for the season with lots of layers of clothing. Then Larry and Rob started pounding. I felt kind of helpless because I could hardly pick up the sledge hammer. Every time the guys would find a cavity we would all get so excited.

Herkimer Diamond is the name given to the doubly terminated quartz crystals found in Herkimer County, NY and surrounding areas. Note that these crystals have the typical hexagonal habit of quartz, however instead of having a termination on one end they are doubly terminated. This is a result of the crystals growing with little or no contact with their host rock. There are a few other places in the world that the doubly terminated quartz crystal is found mainly in Arizona, Afghanistan, Norway, Ukraine and China. They have the same appearance but cannot rightfully be called Herkimer's. There appears to be a size maximum for a very clear crystal – about 4 cm point to point and more commonly 3 cm. But the real common ones are under 2 cm. This again is probably related to solution impurities and fluctuations having more time/volume to cause a “not clear” effect when the crystal is larger. Any crystal that is exposed to water that freezes in winter can develop fractures. The very large fractured diamonds are called “goonies”. A Herkimer diamond is not hard like a real diamond but brittle and will fracture easily.



Cheryl, Rob and Janet working hard in the claim.

The Herkimer diamonds are not on the outside of the rock waiting to be plucked but they occur in cavities of the Dolostone called Vugs. The size of the claim we were in was about 6 ft deep and about 20 feet long. The host rock for Herkimer Diamonds is the Cambrian-age Little Falls Dolostone. (dolomite sandstone). The little Falls dolostone was deposited about 500 million years ago and the Herkimer diamonds formed in cavities within the dolostone. These cavities are frequently lined with druse quartz crystals that are often coated with a tarry hydrocarbon. These cavities can be smaller than a pea or several feet across.

Druze quartz is quartz that occurs as coatings of crystals over rock (sometimes over other minerals) these



A nice sized pair of Herk's in matrix.

crystals are usually touching each other. A layer of encrustation, much like the inside of a geode. It will not grow into a Herkimer Diamond. Herkimer diamonds will also grow on top of a host rock that is lined with druse. It will also grow on a very angular host rock different than the rounded pockets with smooth rock.

When we were cleaning up to go home Larry decided lay down on his side on the ground and to reach his arm up to his armpit in a cavity that was already open. He pulled out one really large Herkimer diamond that was about 4 or 5 inches long. He was so excited. Then he reached in and pulled out another one. He ended up with 4 of them.

When we were in the parking lot to go home we met up with a young man in his mid 20s. He has been working his claim all summer and this is the first time he found something. He had a lot of big diamonds with really

nice facets. They were all between 4 & 6 inches long. They were all covered with mud but you should have seen the sparkle in his eyes. **Lesson #4** If at first you do not succeed try , try again.

**Lesson #5** Always take a man with you on a dig. God supposedly made men & woman equal. It would have been nice if He gave us women more muscles though.

## ***Sterling Hill New Jersey Field Trip Report***

**By: Larry Michon**



On the Sunday after Thanksgiving a group of us from the club met at the Sterling Hill Mining Museum in Ogdensburg, New Jersey to collect fluorescent minerals. This world-famous mineral deposit is the former home of the Sterling Hill Zinc Mine. On the last Sunday of each month the quarry is open for collectors at a cost of \$5/person and \$1.50 for each pound of stone collected.

The weather could not have been better with sunny skies and near 70 degree temperatures. Our group began collecting at the mine run material located beside the museum. The nearby darkroom is equipped with a short wave ultraviolet light allowing an inspection of the rocks to be purchased. After a bit of collecting here we all worked our way up into the quarry where we hunted for more specimens as well as Franklinite crystals. After several hours of exploring and collecting we headed back to the museum for a traditional miners lunch of Cornish pasty's before our museum and mine tour.

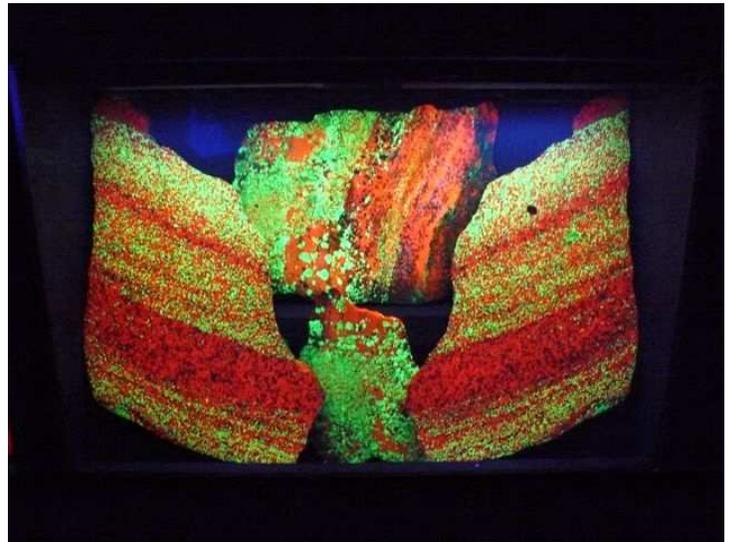
The 15 minutes we were allowed in the museum was barely sufficient to see all that was on display there. One of the key components of the museum is the donated mineral collection of the Oreck family (of vacuum cleaner fame). The tour of the mine was interesting and included a chance to see the equipment used to mine the zinc ore as well as a description of the dangers the miners faced on a daily basis. An impressive simulation of a wall being removed with explosives was featured before we entered the Rainbow room. The Rainbow room is loaded with ore under UV lights. According to our guide this room has been recreated in the Smithsonian Institute.



For more information or to plan your own trip visit the Museum's website at <http://sterlinghillminingmuseum.org/>



Fluorescent minerals on display in the museum.



Large polished slabs of local specimens from the mine.

### *Larry gives talk on minerals to third grade class*

**By: Larry Michon**

On Thursday, December 8, 2011 I traveled to Manchester, Connecticut to give a talk on minerals to the two third grade classes at the Martin Elementary School. I was greeted by about 24 enthusiastic future rockhounds in each class. We talked about the three basic types of rocks. I then proceeded to talk to them about minerals and fossils as I showed them some of the pieces in my collection. They were especially excited to see the fluorescent minerals I brought as I told them they were part of my Christmas rock collection seeing as how they glow red and green. At the end each child got to pick two mineral samples so that they could start their own collections. They were given tags to fill out identifying the mineral species and the collecting locality.

This was easy to do and very rewarding. I would encourage each of our members to give a talk at their local school. I found the third graders to still be very sweet and innocent and a pleasure to talk to about one of my favorite hobbies.



## **Tom Kustra acquires historic quartz specimen**

**By: Larry Michon**

I received a call from Tom Kustra last month about a mineral specimen he had recently acquired. One of Tom's projects has been working the mine at Hatch Ledge at Mt. Apatite in Auburn, Maine. The area is well known for its tourmaline and smokey quartz. Exploratory mining of the Mt. Apatite area began in 1868 and the first large pocket that was opened up contained this very large quartz specimen. The piece ended up on display next to a fireplace in a historic hotel in Winthrop, Maine for many years until it closed. Tom just happened to be in the right place at the right time to pick up this attractive historic piece.



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"The Club" was founded in 1959. The purpose of the club is to develop and educate students, the community, and our members in the field of mineralogy, including the formation of rocks and minerals, the collection of minerals, their identification and display, and in the lapidary art of cutting, polishing and faceting; and to serve the educational needs of the communities in which club members live.

...from the Constitution of The Northern Berkshire Mineral Club

**Crystal Healing Corner**

*By Darlene Bruzzi*

**NOVEMBER--JASPER**

Jasper is an important gemstone for Aries as it symbolizes willpower, encouraging them to follow thru with their plans and to have the energy to do it. Red Jasper promotes sexual desire and fertility as well as inner peace and harmony, and strengthens the sense of self and creative expression. Red Jasper also tempers negative feelings such as anger, jealousy and hatred and helps those who are easily distracted.

Jasper is also a main gemstone for Virgo as it fosters modesty and self-restraint, keeping it real, and enhancing one's connection to the earth. Yellow Jasper provides mental acuity, whereas Red Jasper promotes inner harmony. Jasper gives Virgo physical and psychological strength.

Red Jasper is a very important stone for sexuality. The Egyptians wore Jasper scarabs as amulets because they believed it increased sexual energy. Massages with polished Jasper was said to have an aphrodisiac effect. The ancient Assyrians called it Gug, and in the Bible Jasper was referred to as a direct gift from God and would be the first foundation stone of the New Jerusalem. Both Indians in Asia and Native Americans see Jasper as a magical rainstone { the Native Americans called it "rainbringer" } as well as a powerful healing stone for the kidneys, liver and gall bladder. In the Middle Ages Jasper was a warrior's stone and according to legend, it adorned Siegfried's sword. It was also carved into arrowheads because of it's warrior energy and because it was easily carved or knapped.

Jasper actually comes in many different forms and colors, each with it's own name and special properties. Here is a brief description:

**RED JASPER**--warrior stone, sexual energy enhancer, fertility, combats exhaustion when worn as a necklace, aids weight -loss, when carved into lions head or an archer it was said to protect the warrior against poison and to cure fevers, negativity protection by sending the negativity back to original sender, young women wear it to promote beauty and grace, promotes healing.

**GREEN JASPER**---a carved image of a dragon surrounded by rays in Green Jasper was worn by Egyptian King Nechepsus to strengthen his digestive tract. Worn as an amulet it is a healing and health talisman, placed in a ring around candles it promotes the body's healing or wards off ill health. It is used to halt hallucinations, promotes restful sleep, promotes compassion and sympathy to others who have emotional/mental issues.

**BROWN JASPER**---Wear Brown Jasper for centering and grounding especially after heavy magical rituals, psychic or spiritual work. Brown Jasper is particularly useful to those persons who tend to live with their heads in the clouds, often to the point of endangering their lives. Red-Brown Jasper is very useful in treating the liver, spleen and pancreas.

**MOTTLED JASPER**---is used as protection against drowning especially when carved into the image of an equal-armed cross representing the powers of the four elements of foundation and of control. Other forms of Jasper which are an opaque form of chalcedony are Mookaite which combines the properties of red and yellow Jasper; Rainforest Jasper; Fancy Jasper; Picture Jasper and Unakite Jasper which is red and green Jasper .

For chakra work, generally the color of the stone determines what chakra is involved. Red Jasper is used with the Root { 1st } and Abdominal { 2nd } chakras. Rainforest Jasper works with all chakras. Mookaite or Mook Jasper works with Root { 1st }, Solar Plexus { 3rd } and Brow /Third eye { 6th } chakras. Fancy Jasper works with all chakras. Picture Jasper works with Root { 1st } and Brow/Third Eye { 6th } chakras. Unakite works with all chakras but is best with the Heart { 4th } chakra.

Jasper need to be in direct contact with the skin, so a tumbled stone works best. With a hardness of 7 this is easily accomplished. Jasper also need to be cleansed after each use by running under lukewarm water a few minutes , then recharge by placing in a bowl of tumbled Hematite stones.

SOURCES: Healing Crystals and Gemstones, by Dr. Flora Peschek-Bohmer and Gisela Schreiber, p. 174-175  
Cunningham's Encyclopedia of Crystal, Gem and Metal Magic, by Scott Cunningham, p. 122 & 123.  
by Robert Simmons & Naisha Ahsian, p. 215-220

The Book of Stones,

## **DECEMBER--TOPAZ**

Topaz comes in several colors each with it's own special properties and star signs. Pink Topaz is the lucky stone for Leo's, bringing out honesty, sincerety and fairness when working towards personal or business success. It also helps Leo's to calm down and think things thru to avoid becoming frazzled and blowing things way out of proportion. Gold Topaz is the stone for Virgo's in that it provides wisdom and protection. It gives Virgo's the courage and perseverance to follow thru with their life plans, assuring they work honestly and fairly at achieving their goals. It is also the stone of self-realization. Blue Topaz is a main gemstone for Aquarius as it leads them to self-realization; fostering creativity and the ability to make ideas and projects a reality; all Topaz provides their possessors { or guardians } with enhanced receptivity and a richer fantasy life. Other colors of Topaz are; white { aka colorless }, yellowish and orange, all are translucent.

It is not entirely clear where the name Topaz originated. Some believe it is from the Arabic word 'topazos' which means 'found or seek'. Others believe it is from the Sanskrit word 'tapaz' which means fire, but regardless, it is an ancient healing stone used pretty much throughout the world. In antiquity Topaz was linked to Jupiter therefore symbolized power to the wearer as well as wisdom. It comes as no surprise then to find the Royal Crown of England has nearly 500 Topaz's that were mined in the Erzgebirge {" Ore Mountains" }. The Bible says that Topaz is one of the protective stones of the New Jerusalem, and in ancient Mexico the stone was used to determine truth. Sort of a lie detector, it would darken in color if the truth was told.

In ancient times what we now call Peridot and Olivine was called Topaz and at one time was used to cause the wearer to become invisible. Some of the properties of Topaz are protection, guarding against envy, intrigue, disease, injury, sudden death, sorcery and negative magic, and lunacy. Setting the stone in Gold and binding to the left arm was considered most effective. When wearing Topaz it relieves depression, anger, fear, greed, frenzies and many other disturbing emotions. When placed in the home it protects against fire and accidents. When put under your pillow or worn to sleep, it fends off nightmares and ends sleepwalking.

Topaz is also used to relieve the pain of arthritis and rheumatism, regulate digestion, and helps with weight loss. Wearing Topaz also attracts love. Topaz is known as the "lover of gold" by attracting wealth and money. Combine equal amounts of Topaz with Tigers-Eye, empower and place these stones around a green candle. Burn the candle and visualize.

Topaz works on the chakras as well according to color mostly. The following is a brief summary, for more in depth see "Book of Stones" { see Sources }.

**WHITE TOPAZ aka COLORLESS TOPAZ**---works on the Crown { 7th } and Etheric { 8th-14th above the head } chakras. It clarifies intention, however one must hold the highest intention in order to receive the most positive results. White Topaz speeds up vibrational energy shortening the time interval between initial focus and actual fulfillment of one's vision, which in turn also helps one to learn the 'gift of faith' more easily. Also White Topaz can hone psychic/intuitive gifts; discern truth, assist in manifesting highest spiritual path, strengthen hair and fingernails and helps those who are afraid to tell the truth or who wish to manipulate others.

**GOLDEN/IMPERIAL TOPAZ**---Works with the Solar Plexus { 3rd } chakra. Enhances creativity, personal will and manifesting one's desires. More grounding than White Topaz, Golden Topaz therefore creates the proper amount of abundance for one's highest path; helps one to see that what one wants may not be in line with one's highest path with Divine Will. It is a carrier of the Gold/Pink Ray of Christ Consciousness and aids in connecting with that frequency during meditation. Also it counteracts bad moods and irritability brought on from lack of sleep.

**BLUE TOPAZ**-----Works with Throat { 5th } & Brow/Third Eye { 6th } chakras. Blue Topaz enhances mental processing and verbal skills, improves attention span and the ability to concentrate on mental tasks. An excellent stone for anyone with ADD/ADHD, teachers, scientists, mathematicians etc. Blue Topaz helps one to be clear about what they want and don't want in their lives. It clears and activates the throat chakra making it easier to articulate ideas and thoughts. It also magnifies psychic abilities; attunes to inner guidance; aids those who do readings, spiritual healing work etc.. Topaz is a very valuable stone to use in gemstone healing layouts because they resonate with the perfected pattern of the human body and energy system. The naturally occurring Blue Topaz is especially suited and desired for this kind of work, if you can find it.

All Topaz should be cleansed under running water after each use and recharged by placing in sunlight for a few hours.

SOURCES: Healing Crystals and Gemstones by Dr. Flora Peschek-Bohmer and Gisela Schreiber, p. 280-281

Cunningham's Encyclopedia of Crystal, Gem and Metal Magic, by Scott Cunningham, p. 168-169

The Book of Stones { Who They Are and What They Teach Us }, by Robert Simmons and Naisha Ahsian, p. 403-405

This completes one year of " Crystal Healing " articles. If anyone has a particular gem or mineral they would like me to do an article on please let me know { darbruzzi @gmail.com }, I will do my best. Have a very Happy Holidays and a VERY prosperous New Year.