



"God Bless  
America"



## THE STREAKPLATE

NORTHERN BERKSHIRE MINERAL CLUB  
North Adams, Massachusetts

VOLUME 53 NUMBER 1  
January 2011

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

### Meeting Place and Time

**DATE:** *Thursday, February 17, 2011*      **TIME :**      *6:30PM*

**LOCATION:**    North Adams Public Library  
74 Church Street, North Adams

**PROGRAM:**    **Local collecting sites by Rob LaPorte**  
Club member Robert LaPorte will give a talk on local places to collect minerals. Rob will have samples of the material that can be collected and we will start to make plans for 2011 field trips.



388-ct Shield-cut Fluorite  
Wise Mine, New Hampshire

### *Western Mass Mineral, Jewelry and Fossil Show*

The Connecticut Valley Mineral Club is holding their annual show at the Holiday Inn Ingleside off exit 15 in Holyoke, MA. The date is Saturday and Sunday, March 26-27 from 10-5 Sat & 10-4 Sun. Admission is \$4 and scouts and children 12 and under are free. For more information visit the club's website at [www.dvmineralclub.org](http://www.dvmineralclub.org) If there is sufficient interest the club will form a car pool to attend. This will be discussed at the next meeting.

### *Election results*

At our December Christmas party meeting at the Coyote Flaco restaurant elections of officers was held. The new slate of officers for 2011 is Larry Michon, President, Doreen Bruzzi, Treasurer and Philip Yerke as Secretary. The office of vice president remains unfilled.

### *Talk on Healing Power of Crystals enjoyed by all.*

At our January meeting at the North Adams Public Library Darlene Bruzzi gave a talk on the healing power of crystals. She covered a lot of material on this fascinating aspect of mineral collecting. Darlene brought samples of the various crystals she uses for healing and described what ailment or condition each was used for. She covered the 7 Chakras and which crystals work best at each location on the body. If you missed this talk but would like more information you can reach Darlene at 413-665-2193 or by email at [darbruzzi@gmail.com](mailto:darbruzzi@gmail.com).

### *Club Christmas Party a hit!*

The club held a Christmas party at Coyote Flaco in Williamstown in lieu of our December meeting. The party was well attended by 16 of our members. The consensus was that the food was tasty and abundant and the atmosphere cozy. In fact many members commented they were full from the appetizers before the main course was served. Based on this success I believe this will become an annual event.

### *Dues*

Club dues were due by December 31<sup>st</sup>. The annual cost is \$12 for a family membership and \$10 for an individual. Attached to the newsletter is a form to fill out and send in with your dues. If you have not paid your dues for 2011 please do so right away. You can either bring it with you to the next meeting or mail it to Larry Michon, P.O. Box 297, North Adams, MA 01247.

#### **President:**

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#### **COMMITTEES**

##### **Programs:**

**Annual Show Committee:**  
*Cheryl Gasperetti and Larry Michon*

##### **Field Trips:**

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##### **Streakplate Editor:**

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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

## Field Trip Reports

### A Tour of the American Museum of Natural History.

On Saturday, January 15, 2011 forty-six people attended the club sponsored trip to New York city and the American Museum of Natural History. The weather cooperated and we made the journey without incident. The museum has a broad array of offerings but the highlight of the trip for many was the Museum's Harry Frank Guggenheim Hall of Minerals. The large display is housed in a darkened room with black appointments. The collection is housed in well-lit glass cases and are at various heights and alcoves around the room.

I don't know about others but I was barely able to view a quarter of the museum's different halls as I wanted to take my time to look and learn. I'll let these photos do the talking.



The Star of India.



Spectacular green fluorite octahedral discovered in the William Wise mine in Westmoreland, New Hampshire.



Tyler Ethier inspects a giant iridescent ammonite.



Phil Yerke examines one of the many mineral displays.

### *Snowshoeing the old Pownal Marble Quarry*

A small group of hearty souls including Bruce Henderson, Rob LaPorte and Larry Michon met on Route 346 at the base of the old Pownal Marble Quarry for a winter snowshoe trek on Sunday, January 16th. It was a bracing 5 degrees and the snow was deep and powdery, just perfect for an impromptu winter adventure. The quarry sits high above the Hoosac River and to the right of the impressive cliffs to the north of the road. We made our way up the old quarry road under alternating blue and grey skies. The climb was not overly taxing and in about a half hour or so we entered the quarry area. We had heard that there were pyrite cubes in the quarry wall but after a careful search we came up empty. What we did see were signs of attractive banded marble though most of the material had been removed by the time the quarry ceased operations.

A large icefall reached from top to bottom of the quarry at one spot, about 100 feet high. We could also see signs of climbing protection left in the quarry walls. After tramping around inside the quarry we worked our way up to the edge and were rewarded with a gorgeous view of the Pownal valley and the frozen Hoosac River.

Here are a few interesting facts about Pownal. The community was named for brothers Thomas Pownall, lieutenant governor of Massachusetts Bay Colony, and John Pownall, lieutenant governor of New Jersey and Massachusetts. Pownal was the site of one of the state's oldest white settlements when Dutch settlers lived here for a short time after 1724. Up this valley came the pioneers from Connecticut, including Ethan Allen, who led the dauntless Green Mountain Boys, and Thomas Chittenden, the first Governor of Vermont. Here two Presidents taught school at the beginning of their careers. Chester A. Arthur, a graduate of Union College, educated Pownal youth in 1851. Later while an undergraduate at Williams College, James A. Garfield did likewise. When Garfield was assassinated in 1881, Arthur succeeded him as President.



Valley view from the top.



Entering the quarry.

### *Letters to the Editor*

Lisa St.Cyr's suggestion of a brochure is a good one and will go perfect with Larry Michon's suggestion of members bringing in duplicate samples of minerals to donate to libraries, schools and such. I submitted a sample 3-fold brochure at the January meeting and we will check into this further. This can be very useful wherever we display minerals and could bring in many more members.

Now if we were to use the same thing every year to advertise our yearly show, people may get the wrong impression that these are left-overs from the previous year with only a new date added and we are not sincerely dedicated to promoting our own show.

At our November meeting we thoroughly discussed a competition for advertising our show. All members including children will be eligible to submit designs for an original 4x7 rack card or 8x10 poster. As I understand it the rack card is an actual card for display on racks at information booths and such whereas the poster is on paper and can be pinned to bulletin boards. We should have some of both to better advertise our yearly show. If so, they should both have the same design.

Designs can be made on computer or by hand. Cheryl Gasperetti has graciously volunteered to computerize hand made designs so everyone has an equal chance. Cheryl will select the six best designs and all members present at the following meeting will vote on the design to be used for our yearly show. The winner's reward will be seeing your design at many places and at many shows.

It is too late to have the contest this year because they have to be printed and sent out in March. Although we did not have an opportunity to vote on the 2010 rack card let us iron out all the wrinkles for this contest and vote to have a yearly contest to advertise our show so every member can participate.

Betty Kelley