



"God Bless
America"



THE STREAKPLATE

NORTHERN BERKSHIRE MINERAL CLUB
North Adams, Massachusetts

VOLUME 52 NUMBER 6
November 2010

Meeting Place and Time

DATE: *Thursday, November 18, 2010* **TIME :** *6:00PM*

LOCATION: **The North Adams Public Library**
74 Church St., North Adams

PROGRAM: **Minerals & Fossils using the Jim Groves Stamp Collection**
Presented by Ken Carlson

Last May Ken acquired an extensive World Geological stamp collection from the estate of the club's former president Jim Groves. Ken has matched up actual minerals & fossils with some of the stamps that are good representations of what the stamps are attempting to honor. Ken taught Earth Science & Geology for 38 years at Mount Anthony High School and he established and ran a lapidary program at the high school. In addition he is one of the Authors of American Mineral Treasures and has written articles for Rock & Mineral magazine. You won't want to miss this talk.



Welcome New Member!

Nancy Jenkins

48th Annual Gem Show Committee Meeting

It's time to start working on the Gem show for next year. There will be an organizational meeting at 5pm on Thursday, November 18th at the office of Larry Michon. This is just before the general meeting at the library at 6pm. The office is located on the second floor of the Holiday Inn on Main Street, North Adams. Please consider becoming part of the planning for this important club event.

New meeting place is well received

On October 21st the club met for the first time at our new meeting place, the North Adams Public Library. The meeting was well attended and everyone I spoke with really liked the space. The room is nicely appointed and is equipped with audio/visual equipment allowing for slide shows and videos to be viewed on a large screen. Be sure to join us on November 18th for our next meeting.

Rock and Gem donations requested

All members are being asked to bring in rocks, gems and minerals to donate to the club. We will use these donated items to give to children that attend the meetings. Also they will be given away at presentations given by our members to schools and clubs.

Christmas Party

The public library does not allow food on the premises. In the past the club has always had a Christmas party with a pot luck dinner. This year we will try something different and will meet for dinner at a local restaurant on Thursday evening, December 16th. I have spoken with Galo Lopez the owner of Coyote Flaco Restaurant on Cold Spring Road in Williamstown about having our dinner there. The food is excellent and the atmosphere cozy with a full service bar. I asked if he could do a buffet for us at a fixed price. The buffet will include chicken, beef and fish with vegetables and potatoes. There will also be a salad and appetizers. I asked Galo if he could do this for around \$20/head and he said he thought that would work. I'll have that firmed up by our next meeting. Please email me at lmichon@rcn.com if you are planning to attend so I can get a tentative count for the restaurant.

Elections

Election of officers was discussed at our last meeting. A few members have stepped forward to offer their time as president and treasurer but we still need a vice president and secretary. Larry Michon is running for president and new member Darlene Bruzzi for treasurer. There was a discussion about the treasurer also filling the role of secretary but it would be best if we could get more volunteers from the club. Please plan on attending the next meeting as we will be voting at that time.

Brag Night this February

We will be trying something new this year during our February meeting...Brag night. Members are asked at that time to bring in rocks, gems or minerals they have personally collected during 2010. These specimens will be voted on by the members and the winner will hold onto the club's Brag Trophy until the following year. Andy Brodeur the president of the Connecticut Valley Mineral Club says their club has been doing it for years and it's always a lot of fun. I'll be asking Andy for more details on how they organize their brag night and will report to the club in the coming months.

Dues

Club dues are due by December 31st. 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. 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.

Field Trips- Field Trips – Field Trips

American Museum of Natural History-Saturday, January 15, 2011

The club has committed to renting a bus for an all day field trip to New York City. Admission is \$13/adult and \$7.50/child under 12 for basic admission. The bus fare will be \$21 per person round trip. So the total cost is \$34 for adults and \$28.50 per child under 12. The CT Valley Mineral Club and Bristol CT Mineral clubs have been invited but their level of participation has not been determined. It may be that the club will have to fill all 60 seats on our own. It was suggested that many people in the area may be interested in spending the day in New York but not in visiting the museum. This is one way to fill the seats up and to cover our costs. In order to be sure that all members wishing to attend get a seat we are requiring members to have their money in at the next meeting with a deadline of December 1st. After that time we will open the bus up to non-members.

The museums website is <http://www.amnh.org/>

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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

The last month has been a busy rockhounding time. The oppressive heat of summer has lifted and winter is just around the corner so the rush to visit the sites on the todo list was on.

Trip 1

No club members showed interest in the field trip to the Manhan mine in Southampton. Nonetheless on a brisk and cloudy Saturday morning I drove down to Southampton to meet with the president of the CT Valley Mineral Club, Andy Brodeur. Andy and his son Kyle brought me to the site and showed me the ropes.

Andy walked me around the site and down to the river. The Manhan Mine was over 4000 feet in length and the largest and the most productive of the numerous lead mines and prospects in the area. The mine has been known for its wonderful mineral specimens which have been written about by many of America's most noted mineralogists and geologists including Benjamin Silliman, Amos Eaton, Edward Hitchcock, and Charles Shephard. In 1999 the best pyromorphite specimen ever found at the property was unearthed by collectors from the Keene, Mineral Club from New Hampshire. The specimen now resides at Harvard.

After a couple of hours of wandering around and working thru the dumps I came away with some interesting mineral specimens. I was lucky to have Andy with me as he is undoubtedly an expert on what is to be found at this site. The specimens from the site for the most part are small (micromounts) but nicely formed and it took Andy's trained eye to help me identify what I was holding in my hands. If you'd like to collect at this site contact me for directions.



Andy & Kyle discuss a find.

Trip 2

On the following day, Sunday, Cheryl LeClaire and her son Tyler Ethier joined me and my son Ben Michon on a field trip to the Green's Farm Locality Garnet mine in Roxbury, CT. It was a gorgeous sunny day with mild temperatures. This is a wonderful site to bring children as everyone leaves with handful's of garnets. The almandine garnets range in size from ¼ inch to the size of a quarter and are nicely formed. Garnets have a hardness of about 7 on the Mohs scale of mineral hardness and in times past were used to make sandpaper. It's also the birthstone for January. Ancient people thought that when a wise man dreamed about almandine garnets, he would soon reach a solution to the mysteries of life.

The collecting area is just a short walk into the woods. As you approach the main quarry a sandy slope angles down to the quarry bottom about 50 feet below. You can sift through the sand to find garnets or you can remove the garnets from the host rock rather easily with a hammer and chisel or even just a screwdriver. I found several just lying on the surface. Many families were out garnet hunting all around us and I heard exclamations of "I found a beauty" and saw many smiles, indicating a successful hunt.



Families collecting garnets.

While it takes about 2 ½ to 3 hours to get there it is well worth the trip. Contact me at lmichon@rcn.com if you'd like more information and directions to this rewarding site.



Popping out Garnets.



Tyler cleaning up a treasure.

Trip 3

On Saturday, October 23rd Cheryl LeClaire and I were led to a collecting site in Vermont by Rob LaPorte, one of our newest members and an avid rockhound. The site is located near an old nickel quarry not too far from Mount Snow. Today we are hunting garnierite, a general name for a green nickel ore which is found in pockets and veins within weathered and serpentinized ultramafic rocks. The most desirable material is a lovely green, blue, yellow and brown serpentine layer covering the rock with a layer of druze quartz on top of that making the whole specimen sparkle in direct light.

After a pleasant stroll alongside a briskly moving stream the collecting area came into view. We climbed down into a small ravine at the base of a waterfall and navigated the stream crossing. The area near the stream was filled with material to look over and lots of sparkling was in evidence. The slope then turned steep and it was a good 100 feet to the top of the ravine from where we stood. We spread out and began to investigate more carefully. Rob showed me a deposit of pure greenish blue garnierite that was softer than the other material we had seen. I was able to remove a little to bring home for closer inspection. After a couple of hours we had amassed a rather large pile of potential keepers. However the rocks are rather heavy and we had to whittle it down to what was manageable. We did find a rather large garden rock that I manhandled out of the ravine but left beside a tree until we could return the following weekend to retrieve it as it was just too heavy to carry out. I did return though with a canoe portage cart and brought it home. Thank you Rob for sharing this productive site with lots more potential.



Druze on serpentine.



A closeup shot...see how it sparkles!



Tyler & Larry inspect a find.



No rocks for this rockhounder but treasure all the same.