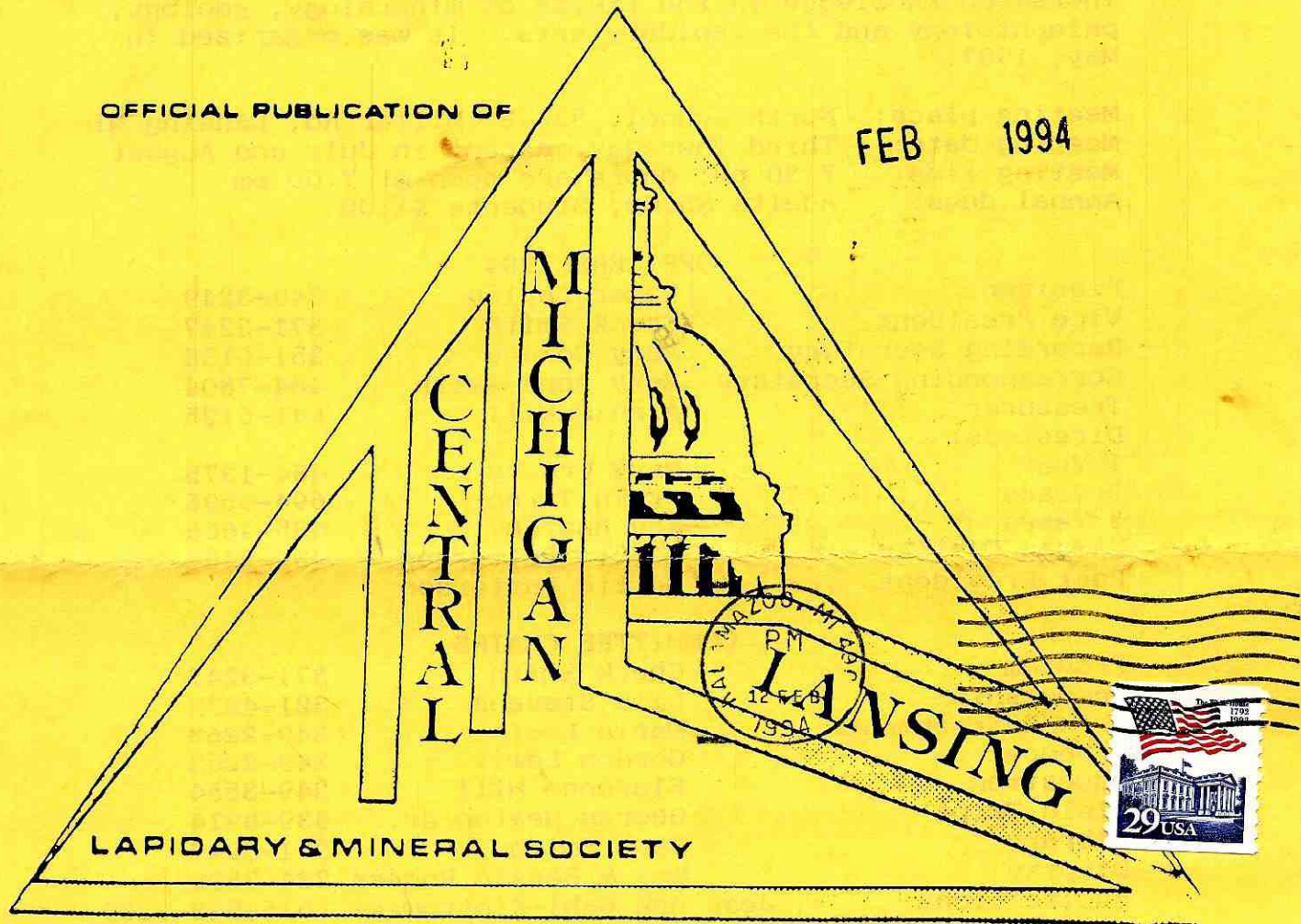


ROCKHOUND NEWS

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF

FEB 1994



LAPIDARY & MINERAL SOCIETY

MEMBER OF MWF & AFMS

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Lansing, Michigan 48906

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TIME VALUE



ROCKHOUND NEWS

This bulletin is the official publication of the Central Michigan Lapidary and Mineral Society of Greater Lansing, Michigan. It is published the second week of each month except July and August.

The Central Michigan Lapidary and Mineral Society is a non-profit organization, meeting to promote interest and increased knowledge in the fields of mineralogy, geology, paleontology and the lapidary arts. It was organized in May, 1957.

Meeting place: North School, 333 E. Miller Rd, Lansing MI
Meeting date: Third Thursday, except in July and August
Meeting time: 7:30 pm; doors are open at 7:00 pm
Annual dues: Adults \$5.00, Students \$1.00

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MEMBER OF:

Midwest Federation of Mineralogical and Geological Societies
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ROGER'S RAMBLINGS

Once again Nature saw fit to cancel our Board meeting, now 0 for 2. If there is anything of prime importance please bring it up at the regular meeting.

During this lousy weather some of us have undoubtedly cleaned and straightened in the hobby area. I hope you remembered to save out excess materials for the children's table or the silent auctions—both club and show.

Those of us attending the January "field trip" to Alaiedon Township Hall were again treated to good food and a great trip report. Many thanks to Barb, Chuck and George. See George's report for details.

FEBRUARY PROGRAM...Our program this month is a Midwest Federation slide program, "Let's Make a Cabochon." This will give the beginners a chance to ask questions and old hands an opportunity to compare methods. Bring your slab, preform, dopped stone or finished cab to show off or discuss. Hands on equipment will be available, I will bring my Genie. Can one or two of our other members with portable equipment bring it for use?

AND COMING IN MARCH...our annual club silent auction. Our March program will be the annual silent auction. This is a chance for members to pare down their collections; and, give other club members a chance to purchase your duplicates and extras. The proceeds from the sale are yours to keep, though you may choose to donate them to the club. Full details will appear in the March newsletter. However, we should have some auction slips available at the February meeting so that you can begin to prepare your specimens for sale.

LOOKING BEYOND that we will have a Federation slide show on Silversmithing for April. Our banquet speaker in May will be Stan Dyle, curator of the Seaman Mineralogical Museum at Michigan Technological University (Houghton MI.) In June we will explore the "Many Faces of Calcite."

REPORT ON THE JANUARY POTLUCK— George Heaton

Our potluck at the Alaiedon Township Hall on Sunday January 23 attracted about two dozen of our members, which is about average for our January potlucks. This was sufficient to produce a good quantity and variety of good food to eat. Especially notable were the red simmered chicken wings and an apple-cranberry pie that someone brought. All the other food was good too, and George Heaton ate just the right amount again to feel pleasantly stuffed.

Chuck and Barb Smith entertained us with a very good program about their trip to Hawaii which included many of their photographs, self collected samples of the various types of volcanic rock and black sand, and a video of recent volcanic eruptions. All of you who stayed home missed a fun social event.

ARE YOU MISSING A PLATTER USED FOR COOKIES AT THE DECEMBER MEETING? IF SO, SEE MARY CROSBY. SHE TOOK IT HOME FOR SAFE KEEPING!

GRAND RAPIDS FIELD TRIP, FEBRUARY 19, 1994—George Heaton

The February field trip will be to the Michigan Natural Storage Co. gypsum mine in Grand Rapids, Michigan. We will meet on Saturday, February 19th at the Michigan Natural Storage Co. office at 10:00am. The storage company charges \$2.50 per person. Bring flashlights, lanterns, and spare batteries since the mine tunnels are dark. You will need hammers, sharp chisels, and buckets or boxes to carry tools and rocks. If you collect selenite crystals, you will also need tissue paper to wrap them.

Be sure to pack efficiently as it is quite a long walk from the elevator to our club's favorite collecting spot! We also traverse muddy spots and climb piles of rock, so boots and a hard hat are recommended. The mine is around 54 degrees, so you will probably find it most comfortable to dress in a few layers which you can adjust to your level of activity. Do not forget to bring a lunch and something to drink. We stay down in the tunnels until about 3:00pm.

Material to be collected includes massive gypsum in the form of "pencil ore" and alabaster, and gypsum crystals called selenite. I would like everyone to collect and carry out a couple of good pieces of pencil ore and/or alabaster for the children's table. If everyone does this it will add up to a good quantity of material and I won't have the back breaking job of hauling out one huge and heavy bucketful by myself. I would appreciate this very much.

To get there take I-96 to the 28th Street-West exit at Grand Rapids. (This will be the 2nd 28th St. exit.) Go west on 28th St. to Clyde Park Ave, turn right (North) on Clyde Park. Take Clyde Park to Grandville Ave. and turn left (West). Grandville Ave. becomes Chicago Drive just west of Clyde Park. Take Chicago Dr. to Judd Ave. and turn right (North). Take Judd to Michigan Natural Storage which is on the right just before the railroad tracks. Allow about 1 1/2 hours driving time from Lansing. Look for a map on the last page of the newsletter.

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY'S REPORT

Since the January meeting, a get well card was sent to Howard Randolph who is on the mend after a fall. Marie Lewis and Mary Kay Bean were also sent "get well" greetings.

If you know of any member who could use a note of cheer, please give me a call at 484-7804.

Respectfully submitted, Mary Anne Smith

EDUCATION & COMMUNITY SERVICE -- Florence Hill

The February birthstone, amethyst, will be the subject of this month's five minute talk. Quite the opposite of January's garnet, which is a stone of many varieties and colors, amethyst is just one of many varieties and colors of quartz. David will have more interesting information for you.

Are you working away at your specialty in rock handiwork? You have a wide range of crafts from which to choose-- and now is the time for doing so. How about one of these? Flintknapping. (It looked easy!) Wire-wrapping

Rock tumbling	Critters	Cabochon making
Bead stringing	Faceting	Gem Trees
Sphere making	Gem pictures	Flat lapping
Fossil cleaning	Silversmithing	Casting
Micromount minerals	Rock carving	

The gypsum mine yields not only crystals, but also carving materials. Years ago Lloyd Conklin started everyone carving gypsum. He began with only a hacksaw, a Boy Scout knife, and files from his tool kit. Who will take it up again?

Perhaps you use rocks in still another way. Be ready to show us your finished object.

Grit Turner gave a rock talk to Mrs. Collar's fifth grade at the Elliott School in Holt, using the Kreps cases as a starting point.

The Kreps cases were borrowed by Vaughn Snook to be used January 29 at the Okemos Schools "Science is Fun" Day.

On February 8 Mary Anne Smith talked to three groups of 4th and 5th graders under the direction of Janet Smith at the Wilcox School in Holt. Her emphasis was on rockhounding.

NEWS FROM MARGARET RANDOLPH

Howard and I displayed our Indian artifacts on October 8 & 10 from 9 to 5 daily at the annual Grand Ledge Color Cruise and Festival on the second island. We couldn't ask for a more appropriate setting than that old Indian "haunt," especially being tucked in beside the voyageurs and Civil War exhibits-- with a young Indian "guide" as a mentor! Our exhibit was viewed by easily 1,200-1,500 "children of all ages" during those two days. Tiring, but oh, so rewarding!

Children of all ages were allowed to try grinding corn in our two small lava three-legged mortars with pestles and/or on the huge (and heavy) lava three-legged metale with long lava mano. It is always interesting and revealing to see and hear reactions to the challenge of "creating/preparing" your own food-- and also to have so many tell us that they, or relatives, have used and/or still use the small mortars and pestles to grind or crush hot peppers! Makes sense--that keeps that terrible heat oil confined. We've also learned that lava/stone grinding bowls are used in countries like Korea and in Southwest Asia.

And another note: Years ago a gem of a little lava grinding bowl (with no legs) was found in a farmer's field near the corner of West Saginaw Highway and Broadbent Rd. (west of Lansing and Horrock's) by an ancestor of friends of ours. This is in Delta Township--about 1/2 mile west of I96. Just think of the stories that little bowl could tell: origin-- our southwest or Mexico?; traded or captured?; how long was its journey to this area?; why was it abandoned or lost?; and, why was it prized enough to bring it this far from its homeland? Intriguing, isn't it?

BABY DINOSAURS FOUND KILLED BY SANDSTORM Rock Rattler via RokTok via Border Gem Chatter 12/93

In August of 1990, scientists from China announced they had unearthed a mass grave of sheep-sized baby dinosaurs which apparently were buried during a sandstorm 75 million years ago.

The joint team excavated the skulls of five baby Pinacosaurus in the waste lands of southern Inner Mongolia. A sixth baby was found on the last day of their summer expedition, and it appeared likely that there are other specimens to be found.

One adult, which in life was about the size of an extremely heavy bull, also was discovered nearby. The scientists felt that the babies were congregated together behind a sand dune in a sandstorm and were killed by snad or the collapsing of the dune.

GETTING THE BEST MINERALS FOR THE LEAST MONEY by Edward P. Pedersen, Lincoln Gem & Mineral Club. via Mineral Matter & Cedar Valley Gems, edited to fit from Glacial Drifter 12/93

It is possible to have both the enjoyment of collecting minerals and to end up with a collection that will increase in value, or at least retain a value somewhere near what you paid for it. To do this you need to buy the right specimens. You will have to step back and consider the specimen for something other than its natural beauty. To do this you have to learn what combinations of factors result in the value of a mineral specimen. These factors are quality, rarity and attractiveness.

The most important factor is quality, and the most important aspect of quality is freedom from damage. Mineral specimens in general are relatively fragile items. Damage to a specimen may be conspicuous (such as bruises on velvet malachite) or hidden (broken crystals in a group of small quartz crystals). Usually the beauty of the specimen tends to overshadow any damage. The tips of quartz crystals usually have been damaged, but most rockhounds do not even notice. To examine a specimen for damage, you must actually look at each crystal on the specimen and you have to know what a complete crystal of that mineral looks like. The point to remember is that the price of an undamaged specimen

should be several times that of a similar specimen with damage. Damaged specimens do not gain in value except the yearly decrease in what a dollar will buy. When examining a number of nearly identical specimens in a dealer's booth, you can often find that one or two will be free of damage or have a minimum of damage. If the other factors such as attractiveness are the same, you would be able to figure out which one to buy.

Another aspect of quality is crystal size and crystal habit. A good rule of thumb is that the larger the crystals the better the specimen, provided that the crystals are clean and well formed. In the real world, the most perfect crystals are of microscopic size. Any interference during growth will produce a distorted crystal. Several crystals growing in close proximity will restrict the space that each crystal has to grow. There, many of the larger crystals are not very well developed.

Along with the size of crystals and the freedom from damage, quality may depend on the amount of matrix that is visible when you look at the specimen. The most valuable specimens are those that have the largest amount of the mineral of interest. A specimen with a small (half-inch) emerald crystal imbedded in a basketball-sized boulder is not as valuable as one with the same size crystal in a one-inch specimen.

Rarity is one of the points that is often used by well meaning dealers to sell specimens. The dealers are honest when they make statements such as "this mineral is rare from this locality," or "this is a rare mineral." What do these statements actually mean to the prospective purchaser? Rarity, as used by the judges in AFMS competition means the number of occurrences on a world-wide basis. Unless you are collecting minerals from a restricted area, getting the only specimen of quartz ever found from that area means nothing to you. Also, getting a mineral that is rare but ugly or ultra microscopic in size does not help your collection. Buying a mineral that is rare, but is damaged or has deformed crystals represents a bad purchase. Some minerals rarely come in crystals, so specimens with crystals may qualify as rare.

The last factor to consider is attractiveness of the specimen. Some mineral specimens look better than others of the same mineral from the same locality. One exceptionally large azurite crystal was displayed by a friend of mine. It was nice, but always lacked something. Another friend bought it and displayed it with the long axis sitting upright rather than on its side. The difference was almost unbelievable! Angle of lighting on the crystal faces, slight differences in color, and many other factors add up to make one specimen much more valuable than another, although at first glance they may look similar.

How do you apply this to building a collection? First, always get the highest quality you can afford. Second, look for "sleepers" which are underpriced due to being mixed in

with similar specimens of lesser quality. Once I found a quartz crystal group that was dirty and negotiated down the price. Upon leaving the shop, I blew off the dust and increased the value. Finding specimens that can be trimmed to remove matrix (rock) material is also a way to gain value if you are willing to risk the trimming.

CLUB CALENDAR

- February 17 Regular meeting, North School, 7:30pm
Program: "Let's Make a Cabochon"
- February 19 Field Trip, MI Natural Storage, Grand Rapids
BE AT THE MINE BY 10:00am--that's when we go down!
- February 24 Board meeting, Meridian Service Ctr, 7:30pm
- March 17 St. Patty's Day; Regular Mtg & Silent Auction

THINK SPRING! THINK SHOWS!!!!

- March 12-13 Roamin Club Annual Auction, Schoolcraft College, Livonia
- March 26 Metro Rock Swap(Dearborn Club); 10am-5pm, free; Democratic Club of Taylor, 23400 Wick Rd., just east of Telegraph. This is a fun event, pick up a flier at the meeting.
- April 9-10 Fossil, Gem & Jewelry Show- Columbus OH
- April 15-17 South Bend (IN) Gem & Jewelry Show & Sale
- April 30-May 1 Gem & Jewelry Show- Kalamazoo
- May 20-22 Dearborn Show- Dearborn Civic Center, Fri. 5-10pm; Sat. 10am-8pm; Sun. 11am-5:30pm
- June 17-19 Swap, Lawrence Co. Rock Club; Monroe Co. 4-H Fairgrounds, Bloomington Indiana
- June 25-26 MGAGS Rockhound Seminar

