

**MARCH REFRESHMENTS: IF YOUR LAST NAME BEGINS WITH A-I, PLEASE BRING SOME GOODIES.**

**A NOTE FROM: EL PRESIDENTE**

Greetings from Arkansas - today is March 13, 1997 and our vacation is just starting. Didn't want to miss the silent auction, but our daughter's vacation is that week so what could we do? Lila Stevens has graciously stepped in to chair the meeting and Melissa Tuchowski, with the help of Darren and Rebekah, agreed to bring the specimens we intended to sell. We will be forever grateful.

It is interesting to note that we can still (if just barely) drive as much as twelve and a half hours in one day without dying. Our goal on the return trip is to stop at the diamond mine in Murfreesboro and then up to Mount Ida and Ocus Stanley's for more crystals. See you in April.

Royal

**MARCH PROGRAM: ANNUAL SILENT AUCTION** (jawp)

This is your annual chance to clean the workshop and part with some of your excess rocks, minerals, findings, tools, etc. Anything hobby related is acceptable. The auction involves heated bidding wars and light footed leaps around the table, hoping to add something new to your own collection. It's sort of the annual migration of materials from one rock house to another. Gordon Lewis will be in charge of this event.

**IF YOU HAVE THINGS TO SELL:** Bid slips including a brief description of the item, your name, and the minimum bid need to be attached to each item you wish to put up for auction. **BE SURE TO FILL OUT THE TOP & BOTTOM PORTION OF YOUR TAG!** Failure to do so makes it nearly impossible to get the money in the proper hands. Gordon will have plenty of tags available at the meeting. **All** money goes to the person who sells the item, not to the club.

**HOW TO BUY:** Bring lots of small denomination bills and change, a few bigger bills might come in handy as well. Hard core bidders may want their own pencil. No bids may be placed before the auction begins. You must begin with the stated minimum, and increases must be at least 10 cents. At the sound of the horn, all bidding must stop. **THE ITEM GOES TO THE LAST COMPLETED BID.**

**SILENT AUCTION COMMANDMENTS**

via Montana Council Reporter 5/96 & Tulip City Conglomerate 8/96

1. Thou shall not test the strength of crystals by biting or squeezing.
2. Thou shall not drop any specimens.
3. Thou shall not place any specimens in thine own pocket.
4. Thou shall not climb over thy neighbor to write thy name on the auction slip.
5. Thou shall not criticize the chairman nor his committee on the way the auction is run, lest thou be appointed chairman at the next auction.

**CLUB BANQUET NEWS**-- Lee Olson:

A note about our banquet on May 15th at the Masonic Lodge in Okemos -- Ticket Prices will remain the same as last year, \$7.00 for adults, \$3.50 for children

The speaker will be June Culp Zeitner, author of the familiar Gem Trails books and a longtime editor for the Lapidary Journal. Tickets will be on sale at March and April Club meetings and there is an absolute deadline, for purchase and payment, before May 1st.

**GRAND RAPIDS FIELD TRIP, FEBRUARY MARCH 22**-- Melissa Tuchowski

One more time! Due to the poor road/weather conditions the field trip to Michigan Natural Storage Co. Gypsum Mine in Grand Rapids has been re-scheduled: March 22, same time, same directions, hopefully not the same weather... Hope to see you there, Melissa. Questions? 339-0459

The March field trip will be to the Michigan Natural Storage Co. Gypsum Mine in Grand Rapids, Michigan. We will meet on Saturday, March 22nd at the Michigan Natural Storage Co. office at 10:00 am. 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. Another useful tool is a 4" paintbrush for dusting off potential specimens. Remember that you will be carrying all your gear into & around the mine, so pack sensibly! If you collect selenite crystals, you will also need tissue paper to wrap them.

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. Boots, and a hard hat, and of course, eye protection are required. Do not forget to bring a lunch and something to drink. We stay down in the tunnels until about 3:00 pm. Note that there are no bathrooms available underground so budget your timing (and liquid consumption) accordingly.

This trip will give us the excellent opportunity of gathering "pencil ore" for the children's table. If everyone would be so kind as to gather a few extra pieces to contribute, we will end up with an ample amount without one poor soul (George) having to carry out a full and heavy bucket load himself. Types of materials to be collected on this trip will include massive gypsum in the form of "pencil ore," alabaster and gypsum crystals (selenite). Good luck to all!

Directions: Take I-96 to the 28th Street-West exit in Grand Rapids (this will be the 2nd 28th St. Exit). Go west on 28th St. to 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 ½ hours driving time from Lansing. Hope to see you there...

**GYPSUM NOTES**-- Ed Drown

Two articles in the club library's state envelope for Michigan give further details on the state's gypsum industry. The first<sup>1</sup> was written when Michigan was the nation's leader in gypsum production, having held the title from 1945 to 1953. In 1953 two mines in Grand Rapids and two quarries in Iosco County produced 1.5 million tons of gypsum with a value of \$4,100,000. The mines produced 300,000 tons of gypsum in 1953.

By a stroke of luck, the Grand Rapids Press<sup>2</sup> ran an article on March 2, 1997 reporting on the current status of gypsum mining in Grand Rapids. As it turns out there is a long and tortuous path in the ownership and operating status of the mines in the area. It suffices to say that Georgia-Pacific Gypsum Corporation now operates the two active mines in the area. These mines have operated every day for the past 5 years supplying the wallboard plants in Grand Rapids. The mines and wallboard plants currently employ 170, producing enough wallboard daily to finish 150 homes.

In 1995 the U.S. led the world in production of gypsum<sup>3</sup> with 17 million tons mined. The next four countries with their production in millions of tons were: China 11, Canada 8.5, Iran 8.5 and Thailand 8. The leaders in U.S. production (in descending order) were: Oklahoma, Iowa, Texas, Michigan, California and Indiana. These 6 states accounted for 75% of the U.S. total, overall 58 mines operated in 19 states. The average price for the crude ore was \$6.80/ton.

The fact that we eat refined gypsum in everyday life usually gets a mention in the classroom or science fair - but how much do we eat? The answer can be found at the United States Gypsum Corporation web site: <http://www.usgcorp.com/usg/whoweare/28pounds.htm>. Their answer is that the average person will eat 28 pounds of gypsum in the course of their life. At the price quoted above this works out to about a dime's worth. Some of the things gypsum can be found in or is used to make are: beer, hamburger rolls, medicine tablets/pills and pasta.

The second article<sup>4</sup> is about the Michigan Natural Storage Company, the site for the March field trip. The Alabastine Company operated a mine at the site from 1907 to 1943. The company was bought by the Kragt family in 1946 and reincarnated as the Michigan Natural Storage Company in 1957. The depth of the mine is 85 feet. According to the geological section given by Kelly<sup>1</sup> for the area, the first 60 feet is glacial drift, followed by a layer of shale 20 to 60 feet thick, beneath this layer of shale lies the first bed of the "triple-gyp". On average this bed of the triple-gyp is 23 feet thick and is parted by a 3-foot thick layer of shale. The top layer of the bed was mined, leaving ceilings about 7 feet high, where it seems the best specimens are to be found.

There are things other than gypsum to be found in the mine. Rarely found are the remains of an extinct shark, Ctenacanth, the "comb-spined" shark. Dorsal spine fragments and coprolites<sup>5</sup> have been found in the shale layer. The dorsal spine fragment pictured is about 7" long and 2" wide at its base, tapering to a point. The surface of the spine looks like a comb was dragged across it, leaving grooves along the length of the spine. Celestite is also reported<sup>5</sup> as coming from the mine, no description of the color or form of the crystals was given.

1. Kelly R.W., The Story of Gypsum in Michigan, Geological Survey Division of Michigan (October 1955): 1.
2. Longcore K., Riding the Boom, The Grand Rapids Press (March 2, 1997): Section F, page 1.
3. U.S.G.S., Minerals Information, <http://minerals.er.usgs.gov/minerals/pub/commodity/gypsum>
4. Schulze N.E., Rock Collecting in a Storage Cooler, Gems and Minerals (February 1972): 18.
5. Dorr J.A. Jr., and Eschman D.F., Geology of Michigan (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1970a, b), 397, 255.

**EDUCATION QUICK NOTES** -- Margaret Green

(Margaret's full report didn't make it through the mail in time for printing. Many thank yous are due, and will be printed next month. Jean Ann)

-- Mark your calendars for an open house at the home of Bettie Patterson on April 28, from 1:00-5:00 p.m.. Please note that we would like to extend a special invitation to **NEWER MEMBERS**. This is a great chance to get a glimpse at the many aspects of our hobby, look at some really wonderful collections, and get some hints from the "old timers."

-- The mineral of the month will be our state gem: Pumpellyite var. Chlorastrolite! If you have a specimen or two to wear or display at the meeting, please do so. (Oh, some of you may be more familiar with the term "Isle Royale Greenstone?" :)

**DUES ARE DUE**-- Bessie Rogers

The following members have not yet paid dues for 1997. If you wish to remain a club member, please send your dues: \$5.00 for adults, \$1.00 for students 18 years of age or younger, to Bessie Rogers: 2222 W. Marshall Rd, St. Johns MI 48879 or pay at the meeting.

E. Angstman	P. Eppelheimer	Krupps	C. Smith family
A. Baughn	J. Esch	Kemps	J. Slayton
M. Bucklin	Ferrin	Lewis	D. Slayton
P. Booncharoen	D. Gibbs	R. Lassin	T. Shooltz
J. Crocket	Gere family	L. Mouton	L. Scofield
A. Cooley	W. & A. Gardiner	S. Moore	Takis
S. Casler	Hutny family	R. Miller	R. Wilson
S. Cheyne	P. Harris	L. Parks	L. Volk
F. & I. Dunn	J. Hansen	V. Snook	J. Vestula
W. Davis	S. Kauma	M.A. Smith family	

**CALLING SHARP-EYED CHENEY QUARRY COLLECTORS**-- Ed Drown

While researching collecting sites I found reference<sup>1</sup> to an occurrence of micro vivianite {Fe<sub>3</sub>(PO<sub>4</sub>)<sub>2</sub>\*8H<sub>2</sub>O} from the Cheney Quarry. The crystals are described as being 1 to 2 mm in size and royal blue in color. If anyone has an example of this material and could bring it to a meeting as an example of what to look for at the quarry, it would be appreciated. With the resumption of activity at the quarry and hopefully the same access rules as before, perhaps this material will be available again.

1. Robinson G.W. and King V.T., What's New in Minerals?, The Mineralogical Record 19, no.5 (September-October 1988): 332.

**INTERNET UPDATE**-- Ed Drown

There is a mailing list dedicated to the lapidary arts (If you are unfamiliar with e-mail listservers please see me for a guide to Internet rockhounding). The list is called "Orchid" and the participants range from the dabbler to the professional. On one particular day the message topics (with the number of messages on that topic in parenthesis) were: kiln controllers (3), tourmaline (2), gold solder (5), crucibles (3), granulation (3) and gem enhancement (2). To subscribe to this mailing list:

Send e-mail to: Orchid-request@ganoksin.com  
 subject = leave blank  
 body/message = subscribe

There is also a web page for this list at: <http://www.ganoksin.com/orchid/orchid.htm>

**WANT TO "E" A FRIEND FROM THE CLUB?** -- jawp

Slowly, but surely, we're getting more club members with e-mail addresses! I thought a little directory listing here in the newsletter might be helpful.

Caldwell	caldwel7@pilot.msu.edu
Ed Drowned	drownedw@pilot.msu.edu
Freridge	x95.freridge@wmich.edu
Roger & Lee Laylin	laylin.leora@acd.net
Albert Lowhim	Jamko@Concentric.net
Jude Miller	millier@math.msu.edu
Marvin & Alexis Oesterle	moesterle@voyager.net
Dave Piotrowski	jawp2@im4u.net
Boyd & Klye Shumaker	kyle_shumaker@www.hotmail.com
Melissa Tuchowski	MIDOT.MICHTRANS5.tuchowskim@state.mi.us
Jean Ann Wahl-Piotrowski	jawp2@im4u.net

**LAPIDARY EQUIPMENT FOR SALE**

Wm. "Red" Rogers has the following lapidary equipment for sale. You can give Red & Bessie a call at 517-224-7596, or see them at the meeting.

-- Flat lap 10"	--Spartan saw 14"
--Crown- 30"	--trim saw
2 EXP wheels 8", 3" wide	--arbor with 2 polishing wheels & motor
2 grinding wheels 8"	--8" polishing wheel & motor
1 polishing wheel 8"	--2 tumblers
--2 Lorton pans with motor & 6" diamond wheels	--large star ruby machine
--2 pans with motor & 2" EXP wheels	--small star ruby machine
--1 pan with 2 6" wheels EXP	--slabs
	--tumbling rock

**HAVE YOU CONSIDERED DISPLAYING AT A NEIGHBORING SHOW?** jawp

As you can tell from the lengthy show calendar below, spring show season is coming into full swing. One of the pleasant features that distinguishes "club" shows from commercial enterprises are the beautiful displays of collections from rockhounds just like yourself. Please, if it is at all possible with your work schedule, think about taking your display to a neighboring club show and help them out! Most clubs have a few cases available for loan if that is a problem.

For more information regarding any specific show, get in touch with our Display Chairman, Irwin "Grit" Turner at 694-9596

**CLUB CALENDAR**

March 20	Regular meeting & Silent Auction. North School, 7:30 p.m. A - I please bring refreshments.
March 22	Field trip to Michigan Natural Storage. Be ready to go underground at 10:00 a.m.
April 3	Board meeting. Meridian Twp. Service Center, 7:30 p.m.

May 15 Club Banquet. Speaker: June Culp Zeitner. Get your tickets NOW!  
 Oct. 24-26 OUR SHOW: "Ruby Anniversary"

**SHOW CALENDAR**

- March 22 Metro Rock Swap (Dearborn Club). Democratic Club of Taylor,  
 23400 Wick Rd., Taylor (just East of Telegraph). 10am-5pm. Free.
- April 9-12 Indian Mounds Show. Eastbrook Mall, Corner of 28th St.& East Beltline (M-37),  
 Grand Rapids. 10am-9pm Free
- April 11-13 Mount Clemens Show. Mt. Clemens Community Center, 300 N. Groesbeck.  
 Fri. & Sat. 10-7, Sun 11-6. Adults \$1.00, Kids 13-17 .75
- April 26-27 Blackhawk Rock Club Show. Discovery Center Museum, 711 North Main St.,  
 Rockford IL. Sat 10-5, Sun. 12-5. Admission \$1.00
- May 2-4 Kalamazoo Show. Fairgrounds County Center Bldg., 2900 Lake St.  
 Fri. 4-8, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5. Admission \$2.00, under 12 free with Adult.
- May 9-11 Flint Show. IMA Sports Arena, 3501 Laper Rd (Center Rd. exit off I-69 to  
 Lapeer Rd.). Fri. 9-7, Sat. 10-7, Sun. 12-5. Adults \$4.00, 12-17 \$1.00.
- May 16-18 Dearborn Show. Dearborn Civic Center, Michigan & Greenfield.  
 Fri. 5-9, Sat. 10-8, Sun. 11-5:30
- May 17 AE Seaman Mineral Museum Benefit Auction in conjunction with the Dearborn Show.  
 8:15-9:30 pm. All sale items from the Seaman Museum Collection. Everyone is invited.
- June 27-29 Lawrence County IN show/swap. Monroe Co. 4-H Fairgrounds, Bloomington  
 Indiana. Fri. 10-7, Sat. 8-7, Sun. 8-4. Camping \$6.00 per night. Free admission.
- June 28-29 MGAGS Rockhound Seminar. Washtenaw Community College, 4800 E. Huron  
 River Dr., Ann Arbor MI. \$10.00 per day, advance \$8.00 per day. See Grit & Alice  
 Turner for more information.
- July 19 Mt. Clemens swap & sale. Mt. Clemens Community Center, 300 N. Groesbeck.  
 9 am - 5 pm. Free.

**THAT'S OUR HOUSE** by Marie Ziegler, via Strata Data 12/95 & Rock Trails 1/96

Drop by if you get to our end of town,  
 and head straight to our street.  
 That's our house where half the landscaping  
 holds piles of rocks so neat.

We invite you to stop in for a visit,  
 we'll greet you at the door.  
 You can easily tell we're rockhounds,  
 there's rocks everywhere galore.

There are rocks on with window sills,  
 some of them are very rough.  
 They've put scratches where they shouldn't  
 but there's lots of pretty stuff.

We found some rocks to be so handsome,  
 that we hung them on the wall.  
 You may think they're hard to dust  
 but we do not mind at all.

There are gemstones on one dresser,  
 rocks underneath some beds.  
 There's pretty ones in many corners,  
 thoughts of geodes rule our heads.

There's some out in the porch to gaze on,  
 each we consider quite a gem.  
 But please don't look into the basement  
 as it's quite a mess with them.

We do have a skeleton in our closet,  
 bones of an extinct dinosaur.  
 We hope to spend the next big vacation  
 just picking up some more.

In the back yard we built a new barn,  
 now it's not big enough.  
 For we filled it up with rocksaws,  
 and all kinds of rockhound stuff.

We can't get the car in the garage,  
 rock boxes fill up the floor.  
 In fact there are so many things,  
 we can barely shut the door.

Out side of rocks there's not much here  
 yet we can tell you life's been fun.  
 With friends we crisscrossed the USA,  
 picking rocks up by the ton!