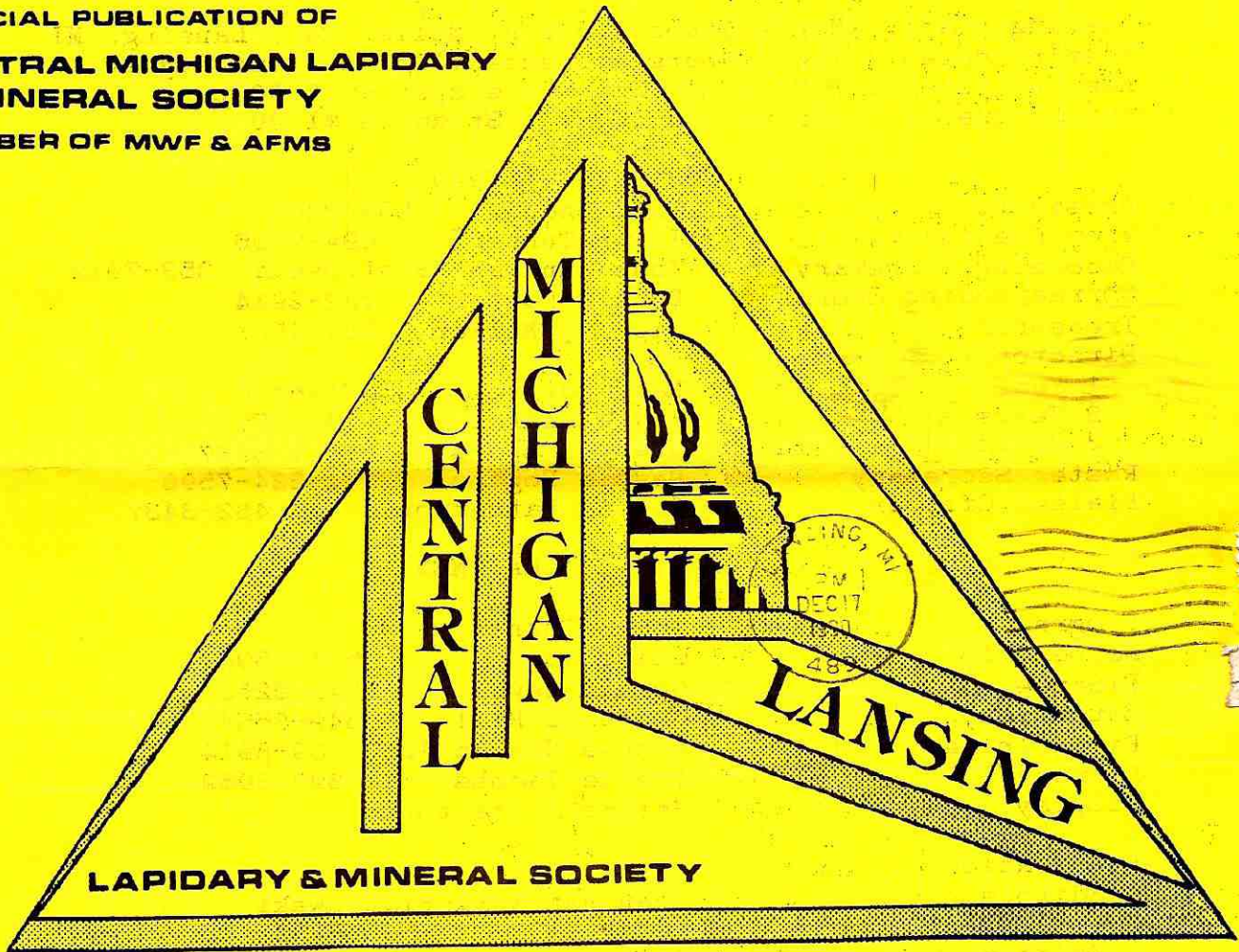


ROCKHOUND NEWS

DEC 1990

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF
CENTRAL MICHIGAN LAPIDARY
& MINERAL SOCIETY
MEMBER OF MWF & AFMS



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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 p.m. Doors are open at 7:00 p.m.
Annual dues: Adults \$3.00 Students \$1.00

OFFICERS -- 1990

President	✓ Neil Snapp	339-2862
Vice President	✓ Irwin Turner	694-9596
Recording Secretary	✓ Jean Ann Wahl-Piatrowski	353-7912
Corresponding Secretary	✓ Donald Lohrer	482-2914
Treasurer	✓ Richard Miller	882-1565
Directors:		
1 Year	✓ Mary Gowans	351-6136
2 Years	○ Joyce Kahres	694-0771
3 Years	○ Cheryl Powers	321-8987
Roster Secretary	✓ Bessie Rogers	1-224-7596
Liaison Officer	○ Bettie Patterson	482-3437

COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

Program	Irwin Turner	
Membership	✓ Alice Turner	694-9596
Finance	✓ Gordon Lewis	349-2263
Education	○ Florence Hill	349-3554
Field Trips	✓ George Heaton Jr.	339-8914
Library	✓ Vickie Jacobs	323-3962
Display	Bettie Patterson	

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MEMBER OF

Midwest Federation of Mineralogical and Geological Societies
American Federation of Mineralogical Societies

NEIL'S NOTES

In a few weeks my term as President of this club will end and I will join the ranks of "Past" or "Has Beens". While I plan to still be involved in club activities, I won't be writing this column on a regular basis. You may see an idea expressed intermittently.

I want to publicly thank all of the officers and directors for their efforts, cooperation and hard work. For a club to be successful, it must have unity and cooperation. This has been exhibited in the year's activities. A sincere thank you is hereby given to all of the members who assisted with the 1990 events— field trips, programs, picnics, demonstration nite, banquet, show, education thru sharing and other happenings. I hope you will continue to provide the same level of assistance to the new slate of officers during 1991. Thank you for allowing me to serve as your President.

December will be our annual meeting with reports from various committees. New officers will be installed by Wm. (Red) Rogers. A part of the program will be a gift exchange. See details in other bulletin items. I know that plans are underway for 1991. So, I share with you my prayer for peace on earth, along with a wish that the joy and peace that passeth all understanding be with you and yours throughout the coming year. Until later— Neil

INCOMING PRESIDENT IRWIN "GRIT" TURNER ANNOUNCES NEW CABINET MEMBERS:

While most of the club chairpersons will continue to hold their positions, the following people are taking on new responsibilities:

- Programs: Mary Gowans
- Display: Wm. "Red" and Bessie Rogers
- Library: Jean Ann Wahl-Piotrowski
- Show: Neil Snapp

CHRISTMAS IS SHARING -- COOKIES AND GIFTS

Your participation is needed to make our December meeting a success!

First of all, the hospitality lady, Marie Lewis, asks that every family bring a dozen cookies or other holiday goodies to share for our refreshments. This goodie potluck is quickly becoming a tasty club tradition!

In addition to some caroling, we will also have a "grab bag" type gift exchange. Each person is asked to bring a wrapped, hobby related gift of up to \$5.00 in value. If your gift is specifically suited to a male or female (such as pieces of jewelry) please label it accordingly.

Thanks for your help in making our December meeting a festive occasion!

Important!

EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY SERVICE — Florence Hill

The mineral for this month's study is psilomelane, a basic oxide of barium with two valences of manganese. David Piotrowski will present the talk.

Community Service: Joseph Manina took a display case to the Livingston County Show at Hartland. And, Jean Ann Wahl-Piotrowski spent an hour with a fourth grade class at North Godwin Elementary School, sharing specimens which illustrate the characteristics of sedimentary, metamorphic and igneous rocks.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBER: JEREMY MEYERS

At the December Board meeting, nine year old Jeremy Meyers was accepted as a member. Jeremy is single and the son of member George Weber. Please add his name and address to your directory: Lyons Rd., Portland, MI 48875 647-7764

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY'S REPORT — Don Lohrer

It's my sad duty to report that Mr. Elmer Eckhardt recently passed away. Elmer was a charter member of our society and will be sorely missed by all who knew him. Also, Jean Ann Wahl-Piotrowski had an uncle pass away this last month. We send our sympathy to these families as we too share their grief at this time.

Get well wishes went to Russell Rowe who had heart surgery; to Margaret Randolph who had the flu and pneumonia; and to Annie Passenau who was hospitalized recently. All are at home now and we wish them all the very best. We also extend our thoughts and prayers to Ruth Hillis who is in the hospital for tests.

The holiday season is now here. Please, sometime during the excitement and confusion, take a few moments to get a cup of coffee and sit back and reflect on the REASON for the SEASON. I wish you all a very merry Christmas and a healthy and prosperous New Year.

PLAN AHEAD FOR THE JANUARY POT-LUCK

For January's "field trip", we will be having a pot-luck at the Alaiedon Township Hall on Sunday, January 20 at 1:30 pm. Please bring a dish to pass and your own plates, cups and other eating tools.

Many of you may recall the fun times we had there in the past enjoying the fellowship of members and their families, playing "ROCKO", watching movies or slide shows and eating lots of food. This year Bettie Patterson will be showing slides of her recent trip to England. I hope to see many of you there.

Alaiedon Township Hall is located at 2021 W. Holt Road, 1/2 mile east of Okemos Road. So mark your calendars for January 20, bring the whole family, and enjoy a Sunday afternoon of fun and good food.

IDENTIFYING GOLD -- Read A. Myers via The Glacial Drifter

Gold is the earliest known precious metal. Gold was also a gift to the Christ Child at the time of his birth.

How did the people of ancient times know when they found gold? No mention refers to fool's gold folly, as does our history of gold miners. Certain specific gravity, sulphuric acid, and the aids of the recent century were not known in ancient times. When next you pick up a specimen of pyrite, try the simple gold identification system used by the earlier settlers of our eastern states. Hold the specimen in the sunlight, then shade it. If it still glitters and shines, it is worth testing for gold.

The two minerals most commonly mistaken for gold are pyrite and yellow mica. Gold itself is soft and yellow and is never pure. It is malleable, and it is essentially the combination of gold's softness, weight, malleability and its sectility, capable of being cut with a knife without breaking off in pieces, which makes it easy to identify. Conversely, quick tests on something like fool's gold or yellow mica will immediately show it is not gold.

If the specimen is large enough, one very simple field test will usually suffice to determine whether a particular piece of "gold" is actually gold or some form of fool's gold or mica. Pyrite is hard and brittle, while chalcopyrite is soft and brittle. Mica is also soft, and it breaks up very easily due to its cleavage characteristics. Gold is soft, but it is malleable and sectile. Thus, if the point of a knife blade of normal hardness is applied with some force to a specimen, pyrite will not even scratch. Both pyrite will not even scratch. Both chalcopyrite and mica, however, are easily cut, and the resulting loose particles can be crushed into many more particles by applying pressure with the flat of the blade. Gold is easily cut, too, but it will flatten under pressure and will not break up as chalcopyrite and mica. Try this over a piece of white paper.

STREAM GOLD: The type of mica most often mistaken for stream gold, strangely enough, is mica which originally was much darker in color, but which weathers to a yellowish color, the yellow being much more pronounced when the mica is wet. When dry, the mica is almost white. This, incidentally, is the glittering yellow material which is constantly being scooped out of streams and brought home as gold. It usually turns out that it mysteriously loses its gold color somewhere on the way back. This mica can be identified as such, even without a knife and magnifying glass, by merely allowing it to dry.

Another point to remember is that sulphuric acid will not destroy or corrode gold.

ROADSIDE GEOLOGY OF ALASKA -- New in the club library

If you are planning a trip to Alaska or enjoy armchair travel you may want to check out our club library's most recent acquisition: Roadside Geology of Alaska by Cathy Connor & Danial O'Haire. This book was purchased as a memorial for Wesley Manley.

The book is enjoyable to read and takes you mile by mile down Alaska's highways and ferryways. Intermixed with the detailed geologic descriptions are interesting anecdotes from Alaska's history. Also, there are plenty of pictures and maps to reinforce the text.

The timing is great for those who had a chance to view Grit & Alice Turner's video of their Alaska trip at our November meeting!

MORE GOOD READING MATERIAL-- Jean Ann Wahl-Piotrowski

Being a professional librarian, I look forward to giving up my responsibilities as Recording Secretary and taking on those of Library Chair! Many thanks should be given to Vickie Jacobs for putting our library in order; her efforts will make the job a pleasant one. As you may have realized, I also take over the job of editor while Betty Tack winters in Florida.

Every month we receive exchange bulletins from other clubs. A part of the Rockhound editor's job is to select items from these bulletins for inclusion in our newsletter. Many times there is more material available than I have the patience to type! (Like this month.) So, these exchange bulletins will be available at the library tables for you to borrow or browse through. I particularly recommend The Rockpile which is the publication of the Dearborn club.

Several articles have been appearing on the "Superior Nugget" of copper recovered by Brian Schulze. Copies of these will be in a special folder for those of you who are interested.

If you have any suggestions for the library, please let me know.

HISTORICAL GEMSTONE TRIVIA -- CURIOUS, ENLIGHTENING by Kathryn M. Allen MMLSD via The Rockpile

Colorful stones have always fascinated mankind. The brightly colored agates, turquoise, lapis lazuli and emeralds that have been found in the tombs and graves of ancient peoples bear silent testimony to the venerable attraction of gemstones.

Even in prehistoric times it is believed that magical powers were assigned to certain stones that were worn as amulets and charms. Folklore and superstition grew around these stones, and accumulated legends filtered down through the ages. These legends persisted through the Middle Ages (A.D. 500-1300) and the Renaissance (A.D. 1300-1500), two periods which are extremely interesting because gemstones were then used in fascinating ways.

Their common use in the healing practices of those times has been documented. It must be remembered, however, that physicians then were not the plentiful, highly organized and formalized group they are today. Physicians were largely considered to be ineffective and were consulted only after home remedies had failed. Some of the recorded medical treatments prescribed by doctors seem utterly grotesque, so that the low esteem in which doctors were held appears to have been well deserved.

Some physicians used an array of gemstones to "heal." A favorite gemstone therapy was a liquid potion made of powdered gemstones. One such elixer contained 34 pulverized gemstones (in which case the cure may have been more deadly than the disease.) Another standby therapy of the medieval physician was the bloodstone, in which this red-spotted green stone (heliotrope) was held to the patient's nose to stop nosebleeds.

Another common remedy was the application of agates, which were reported to quench insatiable thirst and aid failing eyesight. Various, agates were recommended to be put in the cooking water of ailing persons or to insure marital fidelity. Another expressed belief was that an unfaithful wife would fall out of bed if touched with magnetite.

Popular beliefs in the healing powers of gemstones included: green gems help eyesight; red gems abate bleeding (red hematite was especially favored with blood disorders); jade relieves pains originating in the side of the body. "Soldier's stone" is mentioned in historical accounts, and this obscure stone may have been associated with protection during battle. One aged nobleman and renowned soldier attributed his longevity to an unnamed stone imbedded in his upper arm.

In the Middle Ages, opals were professed by some to bring about invisibility, the wearing of coral was supposed to help overweight people lose weight, sapphires were believed to frighten away spiders and onyx was thought to arouse evil feelings.

A list of birthstones conceived in the Renaissance is quite close to the present list. It was commonly held that the wearer of the assigned birthstone would receive certain powers from that stone. Although the tradition of birthstones continues in present-day culture, they are no longer associated with magical powers. The lore of birthstones is a classic instance of how past traditions become an integral part of our culture long after the origins of the practice have been forgotten.

Another intriguing use of gems in the Renaissance was as pigment in paint. Leonardo da Vinci used ground lapis lazuli in his paintings. In an effort to economize, later makers of paint pigments used azurite instead of lapis lazuli. However, over time a chemical change in the "azurite" pigmented paint resulted in many paintings of the


Renaissance having green sky and water scenes instead of blue.

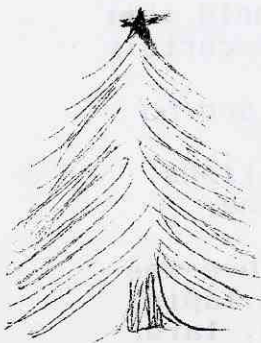
The changing use of gemstones through the ages, as revealed through the above types of historical trivia, provides historians with fruitful sources of pertinent cultural material about the practices, customs, fears and anxieties of earlier peoples, and also makes for fascinating reading.

SELECTED SOURCES:

- Dinwiddie, Donal and Russell P. MacFall. Popular Mechanics Complete Book of Rocks, Minerals, Gems, Fossils. New York: Popular Mechanics Books, 1978.
- Pough, Frederick. The Story of Gems and Semiprecious Stones. New York: Irvington-on-Hudson, 1967.
- Wyckoff, Jerome. The Story of Geology. New York: Golden Press, 1976.

CALENDAR

- December 20 Regular Meeting, North School
Bring a dozen cookies and exchange gift 
- January 3 Board Meeting
- January 12 Cranbrook Institute Mineral Sale
10:00am to 1:00 pm in the auditorium
Includes selection of calcites, fluorites and gypsum as well as miniatures and slabs suitable for lapidary work: agate, jasper, rhodonite & sodalite.
- March 9-10 Roamin Club Auction; Schoolcraft College;
Waterman Campus Center Bldg., 18600 Haggerty Rd., Livonia Sat. 11am-6pm Sun. 12-6pm



MERRY CHRISTMAS