



# The PRESQUE ISLE PROSPECTOR



Official Publication of the Gem City Rock and Mineral Society of Erie, PA  
Monthly Meetings, First Saturday at 9:30 AM

**November 2008**



## Last Month's Meeting:

Last month we decided what to make as our fall project, and put together a list of things to order so that we can work on them this month.

## This Month's Meeting:

This month our meeting will be the Saturday, November 1<sup>st</sup>, at 9:30 AM, at the club room at the **Renaissance Centre building at 1001 State Street in downtown Erie** (southeast corner of 10<sup>th</sup> and State Streets). To find the club rooms, go in the front revolving door of the building on State Street (just south of the nut shop, which is on the corner), and look for a stairway to the basement on the right-hand side of the lobby right before the small hallway containing the elevators. If you can't take the stairs, the third elevator goes down to the basement level. At the bottom of the stairs or the elevator, you will see the entrance to our space – a door heading into what looks like, well, a restaurant, with a small mirrored lobby.

There is also a parking ramp on the south side of E. 10<sup>th</sup> Street just east of the Renaissance Centre building (toward French Street), and it is free to park there on Saturdays!

Our program will be assembling our Fall Project, which turns out to be some cute Christmas Tree Earrings (see article below). Even if you didn't place an order for parts, we'll have enough for some extras, so look to see if you might be interested in joining us to learn a few basic jewelry assembly skills.

## Gem City Pebble Pups:

The Pebble Pups will be making the same Christmas Tree Earrings as the adults. Please note that this month there will not be the regular \$3.00 activity fee, instead you will be buying the kit parts for the earrings, which are described below under the Fall Project article.

## Federation News:

The American Federation Newsletter at [http://www.amfed.org/news/n2008\\_11.pdf](http://www.amfed.org/news/n2008_11.pdf) would have had a report on the AFMS Convention, but as it was scheduled to be held in Houston just two weeks after Hurricane Ike struck, and since some hotels were damaged and most other hotels (including the convention hotel) were being told to hold themselves ready for use by FEMA, the convention was cancelled. There is another article on the Paleo bill, which has cleared committee, but with the recent focus on economic legislation and the election, it is unclear when or if it will be scheduled for a vote. The Safety Article is on knowing what you have just collected – whether in the field or from a vendor at a show. He relates getting a very pretty specimen, labeled Orpiment and Realgar, at a show when he was fairly new to collecting; since the dealer was pretty busy at the time, he didn't ask much about it, but luckily looked it up as soon as he got home, and found that these are two arsenic sulfides, and quite poisonous. As a chemist, he looked up the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) for safe handling instructions, and he notes that while these are intended for use by industrial

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users of the chemicals, they apply equally to the handling of many minerals – so know what you have, and look up how to treat it safely. The Junior Activity article has suggestions for making our shows more kid-friendly – and how to take advantage of that for further PR.

The Eastern Federation Newsletter is online at <http://www.amfed.org/efmls/efnov08.pdf> and has an article on the upcoming Wildacres spring session, Friday, April 17 – Thursday, April 23. The class schedule is not complete yet, but the speaker in residence for the session will be Dr. Michael Wise, a research mineralogist/ curator with the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, where he has worked since 1988. He is one of the world's leading authorities on the mineralogy of pegmatites (that's the type of formation that the majority of gem crystals is found in). Class listings and the dates for the Fall session should be in the December newsletter. The Safety article is a timely reminder of the dangers of Carbon Monoxide, an especially tricky hazard in that the gas cannot be detected by smell or taste, and by the time you notice its effects (if you ever do) significant damage may have been done; you should have a CO detector on each level of your home, and have furnaces checked as the home heating season starts up. The article lists many common sources of CO to check for. The Junior Activity article is on adapting card games, such as "Go Fish" or Memory, to use cards you can create with rock-and-mineral pictures – you can make up a set of cards with mineral pictures and names on them, and have them copied on cardstock and/or laminated at many local copy places.

### Fall Club Project:

Last month we planned our fall projects, and put together a list of stuff we'd need to put them together. Three people were interested in this bracelet, though we don't have the drilled Herkimers, so we'll have to settle for some other chunky beads.



Several other people were interested in these earrings, but when I went to order the parts, some were out of stock, and the total cost was going to be around \$35, so generally folks weren't so disappointed as they might have been. We may try this again some time later, if metal prices continue to fall – the wrap-tite settings alone were well over half the cost.

Another club member wanted to make these Christmas Tree Earrings as well, and since a few others said, "Oh, me, too!" and they have the advantages being 1) cheap; 2) quick & fairly simple while still teaching the basic wire-wrapped loop; 3) cute & seasonal & a quick gift; and 4) cheap – well, I decided that this would be our primary project and got a bunch of the things to make them with, including a couple of variations for the top and the base.



Depending on which variations you choose, these will cost **between \$2.50 and \$5.25 per pair to make**. We're using gold-plated findings, so if you need hypo-allergenic, you might want to pick up a pair of surgical stainless earwires at craft store.

You should also **bring along any jewelry-making pliers you have**, especially **round-nose, flat or chain nose, and**

**side cutters.** The club has some pliers, but not enough for everyone, so if you have your own, bring 'em; if not, we'll share around.

### **Possible Class with Mel Ward:**

Mel Ward, who has come to our Show and our Picnic several times and has presented a club program once (with less than perfect results), has offered to teach a class at **his** place, in his workshop, with his tools, so he knows everything should work properly. He has also said this would be for no more than 4 people at a time (so that there's enough equipment to go around and he can give more individual attention), and be more of a day-long session than a few hours (so we're really likely to finish it!). We would also learn his method of cutting cabs, which is not the standard way – then we can have a choice of whatever method we like.

Val and Sarah coordinated their calendars and made arrangements with Mel, and they went and had a great time. I hope one or both of you will bring along what you made, and tell us about it. We still have a couple of weeks to try to arrange another small group before he heads to Florida for the winter, so if you're interested, contact me (Harriet) at 868-8422, and I'll help you coordinate.

### **Holiday Dinner:**

We have chosen the date for our Holiday Dinner, which is the December meeting and our annual election of officers – we will again be having dinner at Hoss's Steak and Sea House, 3302 W. 26<sup>th</sup> Street (Rt. 20), on Sunday, December 14<sup>th</sup>, at 1:00 PM. There will be more info, and the proposed slate of officers, in the December newsletter, but save the date now as you begin to fill your holiday calendars.

### **Trip Report:**

I didn't exactly get a report on the trip to Herkimer, but those of us at the Picnic heard that lots of fun was had and saw the stuff people brought for show-and-tell, and Ed gave me copies of a few photos, so here's our vicarious field trip:



Rich and Tommy crackin' rock for Herkimers



Bryanna found something



Jake sifting & searching



Melanie & Bryanna scrambling for garnets



Providing Sustenance for Hungry Miners



A well-earned rest

### **Upcoming Shows in the area:**

The fall show season is winding down, but there one left within daytrip range if you want to shop for more stuff to make Christmas presents once you've had some experience putting a couple of things together:

**Nov. 14-16--Hamburg, New York: Show and sale, "Gemstreet USA";** Strieter Productions Inc.; Erie County Fairgrounds, 5600 McKinley Pkwy.; Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 11-5; adults \$7 (three days), seniors and students \$5 (three days), children under 12 free; minerals, fossils, hourly door prizes; contact Jane Strieter Smith, P.O. Box 770680, Lakewood, OH 44107, (216) 521-4367; e-mail: [janestrietersmith@ohiocoxmail.com](mailto:janestrietersmith@ohiocoxmail.com) ; Web site: [www.gemstreetusa.com](http://www.gemstreetusa.com) (coupon).

If you're planning to travel, check out the complete online listings at the Lapidary Journal Calendar (<http://www.lapidaryjournal.com/cal1.cfm> ), and especially the Rock and Gem Magazine Calendar (<http://www.rockngem.com/showdates/showdates.shtml> ).

Our Work Sessions on Saturdays will mostly be finding and setting up stuff in the new clubroom. Check the club web site or call me (Harriet) at 868-8422 or Bob Gallivan at 454-6770 to find out about any specific Saturday.