



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



June 2009



Last Month's Meeting:

Last month we worked on Discovery Blocks, and the Library Display, and on what to do for the WQLN auction – what we might donate, and we decided to offer to work the phones for a shift. This is definitely a win-win crossover effort, since we get publicity, and they get help staying on the air to continue to bring us cool rock-related shows like Nova & Nature & travel shows to national parks etc.

This Month's Meeting:

This month our meeting will be Saturday, **June 6th at 9:30 AM**, at the club room at the **Renaissance Centre building at 1001 State Street in downtown Erie** (southeast corner of 10th and State Streets).

Only two more meetings before the Gem Show, and the next meeting will be July 11th since the first Saturday is July 4th, so that's only one week before the show and will be mostly getting materials together to prepare for transport. So this is our last real planning session, to work out ideas on publicity, on what we need to work out ahead of time with the facilities people, on various activities and what priority to give them, etc. We have new members to give us fresh ideas, especially the families with kids! What did you like best, and what might we add?

We have a good start working on the Discovery Blocks for the show – we need to pick a couple more dates for work sessions.

We also need to do a little more specific planning for the Library display, since we just got word **we can go in now!** The June display was pulled out early! (See article below).

Federation News:

The American Federation Newsletter, available at http://www.amfed.org/news/n2009_06.pdf, has a very good article on safely cleaning those specimens you've collected in the field, and one on preparing educational collections for junior members. It also has an account of a rather disturbing episode where a doctor and his fiancée, collecting Staurolites in a well-known and often-used site in a Georgia National Forest, not only had their equipment and finds confiscated, but were also later charged with 2 misdemeanor offenses that are distressingly vague (“ (a) Damaging any natural feature or other property of the United States; (b) Removing any natural feature or other property of the United States.”). Apparently each National Forest or other federal land can make their own rules about what is and is not allowed in their jurisdiction, and the rules as enforced often may not be the same as those that may be listed on the web sites of said Forest /Land. And like the IRS, you are presumed guilty – “Unfortunately, Forest Service officials and Federal Judges invariably side with the law enforcement officers no matter how inconsistent or corrupt the circumstances may be.” On a happier note, one more reason to want to go to the AFMS Convention in Billings: W. Walt Wright, Botanist, Ecologist and Paleobotanist, will give two seminars on petrified wood identification and formation.

The Eastern Federation Newsletter, online at <http://www.amfed.org/efmls/efjune09.pdf>, has an article on the 2009 EFMLS Convention in Bristol, CT, October 16-18, and one on Wildacres, for which there are still openings for the Fall Session September 7-13. The Safety article is on

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the various types of hammers that rockhounds may be expected to use, and the appropriate (and inappropriate!) uses of each.

Federation Raffles:

The Eastern Federation Foundation Fund has an annual Raffle, with prizes donated by members of the Federation. The interest from the Foundation Fund helps offset the costs of special projects of the Federation, mostly adding to the Federation Library, from which we have borrowed programs. The drawing is held at the EFMLS Convention, this year in Bristol, CT in mid-October. Prizes typically have estimated retail values in the \$50-\$200 range, and pictures and descriptions of the items have been appearing a few each month in the last several EFMLS newsletters, all available online if you want to check them out. Tickets are \$1 each, or 5 for \$4. While the Federation newsletters have always said that tickets were available by request, this year they also took the initiative and mailed tickets out to the clubs, hoping they'd sell. In years like this when belts are tightening all over and the value and return on the Fund are quite a bit less than last year, it might be a good time to pitch a buck or two – or four – the way of the Federation, and in the process, give yourself a chance at winning a pretty darn nice prize! About half of the tickets they sent us sold at the last meeting, but there's still time to get more, as I haven't sent the envelope back yet. Hint: if you don't want to write your name, address, & phone number over and over, bring along some pre-printed return address labels to stick on them. Also, that way if we sell more tickets than we were sent, we can just send back the address labels with the money and they'll stick them on the tickets for you.

The AFMS also has a raffle benefiting the AFMS Endowment Fund, with prizes donated by members of the various regional Federations. The Endowment Fund also funds projects like Library programming, and the Future Rockhounds of America program. The drawing is held at the AFMS Convention, this year in Billings, MT at the end of July. Prizes typically have estimated retail values in the \$100-\$300 range, and pictures and descriptions of the items have been appearing a few each month in the last several AFMS newsletters, all available online. Tickets for that raffle are \$5, or 5 for \$20. Info on where to send for those tickets is in the AFMS newsletter, but those requests must be in by July 10th for the drawing on August 1st.

Library Window Display:

We've been waiting on the specific date to put our display in the Library Display Window for July, and I just got the call – apparently the June display was pulled out early, so **we can go in any time now!** This means we will not have another couple of weeks to pull this together, we'll need to do it at the meeting this month, so please check your stuff and **bring anything you might contribute to the June meeting.** Also, **please label it somewhere with your name, or at least initials** – I usually scotch-tape tiny tags to the underside of things, or you can write on masking tape, or put a return-address label on large items.

Our theme this year is **“From Rocks to Gems”** showing the lapidary processes involved in taking a chunk of rock and cutting it into cabs, or faceted material, or other decorative objects.

We probably have enough lapidary equipment to put in the window, but what we still need are projects in various stages of completion and/or sets of rough/finished for lapidary processes.

I have a display set up of a couple of rocks half-slabbed, with the slabs lined up. I have *plenty* of slabs! ☺

I have some **cabs in partial states**, but we could use more; we could use **finished cabs**. It would be really neat to have **slabs with the cabs made from them**, if anyone has that.

We can put the Graves faceter in, with the nice display Ed made of stages of faceting. I'd also like to put in as many **sets of “rough/faceted”** as possible, maybe even with **some in matrix**, so if you have anything that qualifies, could you **bring it to the June meeting?** That way we can see what sets we can assemble. For instance, I have a nice emerald in matrix, and some small rough emeralds (though not what I'd call facet rough), but no faceted emeralds. I have amethyst geode chunks, and facet rough, and some cut amethyst, but not citrine (not my color!). I have ruby crystals, not facet grade, but no cut rubies, nothing in matrix, and I don't have any sapphire. I have cut blue topaz, but no rough or specimens. If you have any faceted gems

(especially in the “more visible” sizes!) or any rough or mineral specimens of gem species, and you’d be willing to put them in the window for the month, please bring them along to the meeting.

We could also use **tumbled stones in various stages** – it’d be nice to have similar batches of stuff, at each stage – before any tumbling, and after each stage up to finished, but we’ll take what we can get. I have some of this, but I never seemed to get beyond the rough grind!

Any other ideas of what might go into this display? Any other “lapidary items” that can show what you can make with rocks? I’ll have a few candle holders / clocks / pyramids / spheres – **anything else in the gift-type area?** Anyone have any **gemstone boxes**?

We will also want a **section on minerals** and **one on fossils**, but smaller in area. Please keep this in mind, and look through your stuff to **bring a few special things along to the June meeting.**

Then the next big challenge is, how much of this can we set up for demos at the Gem Show?

Fall Club Project – and WQLN Auction:

I reported last month that we were contacted by WQLN, the local PBS affiliate, about donating some items to their annual fundraising auction. Despite having only about 3 weeks to work in, we got three Tree of Life Pendants made for them, and Val cut a lace agate cab and set it in Sterling, and she put together a really cool Children’s Kit with mineral & fossil specimens, a book, some volcano ash and a Party Pack of Discovery Blocks! We also donated a large fossil coral head from a Batavia collecting trip. This turned out to be just one item short of qualifying us to be given a special “Thank You” as a Super Seven donor – just think what we might do if we start planning earlier for next year!



We also got several of us together to man the phones for a shift during the online auction, to give the club a little more exposure. From what I hear, they had a pretty good time! Thanks to all who helped!

If you like the pendants, be on the lookout for appropriate gem chips, both at our show and elsewhere. These were 1½” in diameter, and used relatively small chips, so keep that in mind as you shop – both the size of the chips and the size pendant you want. Also, think about how many

you might want to make (Christmas presents?) so that we can plan how much wire we'll need to order. The more we order at one time, the cheaper it gets per pendant (roughly), so think ahead!

Mail Bag:

Another mailing of possible interest to the membership came from the Earth Wonders Geological Museum (www.earthwonders.org), of Bunnell, FL. Opened last fall, and "Located in the office suite of the Flagler County Superintendent of Schools," this is not (yet) a very large museum, but they've got a good start. They sent a brochure, and a letter saying that "Knowing that most states have selected a state rock or mineral, our next dream is to acquire and display a collection of state rocks or minerals from all 50 states." They asked if we might have a member willing to send a specimen from our state, and they'd trade something. Since PA doesn't have a state rock or mineral, they suggested perhaps coal.

If anyone has a nice specimen of coal, or anything else that might be considered typically Pennsylvanian, and would be interested in donating or swapping, contact me for further info. I'll have the mailing at the meeting.

Upcoming Shows in the area:

June 5-7—Wauseon (Toledo), OH: Show, "Rocks: Their Myths and Legends"; State Line Gem & Mineral Society; Fulton County Fairgrounds, Junior Fair Bldg., 8514 SR 108; Fri. 12-7, Sat. 10-7, Sun. 11-4; free admission; dealers, displays, demonstrations, silent auctions, children's activities, classes in mine safety, soapstone carving, beaded jewelry; contact Doris Brzezicki, 419 N. Broad St., Adrian, MI 49221, (517) 263-1669; e-mail: rychard@tc3net.com; Web site: www.angelfire.com/mac/rock-club/

July 11-12 -- Syracuse, NY: 43rd annual show; The Gem & Mineral Society of Syracuse; Verizon Center of Progress Bldg., State Fairgrounds, I-690; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-4; adults \$6, kids under 12 free, coupon on Web site; more than 50 retail and wholesale dealers, rough, minerals, gems, beads, beading supplies, jewelry, lapidary supplies, fossils, exhibits, demonstrations, hourly door prizes, grand prizes, kids' activities; contact Carlotta Brown, (315) 458-4636; Web site: www.gmss.us

July 18-19—Erie, PA: 40th Annual Gem and Mineral Show; JMC Ice Arena, 423 W. 38th St, Erie, PA; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; adults \$3, seniors \$2, children under 12 free; dealers, displays, children's activities; contact Bob Gallivan, Erie, PA 16505, 427 Colleen Dr., Erie, PA 16505; (814) 454-6770; e-mail: gallivan@lycos.com; Web site: <http://www.gemcityrockclub.org/show.htm> .

July 22-26--Mansfield, OH: 49th annual show, "Fossils: A Walk Through Geologic Time"; Richland Lithic & Lapidary Society; Kingwood Center, 900 Park Ave. W; Wed. 10-5, Thu. 10-5, Fri. 10-5, Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; free admission; exhibits, demonstrations, club mineral and jewelry sales, no dealers, silent auction Sat.; contact Jay Medici, P.O. Box 56, Sparta, OH 43350, (419) 768-9128; e-mail: jmedici@bright.net

August 14-16--Lebanon, PA: 12th annual show and sale, "Gem Miner's Jubilee"; Mid-Atlantic Gem & Mineral Association; Lebanon Expo Center, Rte. 72 and Rocherty Rd.; Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-4; admission \$6, children under 12 free; gems, jewelry, minerals, fossils, beads; contact MAGMA, (301) 565-0487; Web site: www.gem-show.com

September 25-27--Cleveland, OH: Show; GemStreet USA; Cuyahoga County Fairgrounds, Bagley Rd. entrance, 0.5 mile west of I-71 and Bagley Rd.; Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 11-5; adults \$7, seniors (60+) and students (12-17) \$5, under 12 free, ticket good all weekend; fine gems, jewelry, mineral specimens, fossils, beads, findings, display items, Scout badges, discount coupon on Web site; contact Jane Strieter Smith, (216) 521-GEMS (4367); e-mail: spi@stratos.net; Web site: www.gemstreetusa.com

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>). There are lots more shows outside daytrip range!

We will have Work Sessions on some Saturdays, depending on interest. 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, or to let us know you're interested.