



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 2009



Last Month's Meeting:

Last month we started on our Tree of Life Pendants – I hope you all went home and worked some more on them!

This Month's Meeting:

This month our meeting will be **Saturday, November 7th, at 9:30 AM**, in the **Renaissance Centre building at 1001 State Street in downtown Erie** (southeast corner of 10th 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. 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. 10th Street just east of the Renaissance Centre building (toward French Street), and it should be free to park there on Saturdays.

Our meeting program will be talking about Field Trips we'd like to take next year – and anyone who wants to go on field trips should figure out where they'd like to go! Sure, there are some people in the club who are familiar with some places to go, but for the most part, if we want to go somewhere new, *someone* has to research where we might go and what we might collect there; that someone might as well be you! Only you know what sorts of trips would appeal to you – how far you want to go, what to collect that would inspire you to go that far – so if you want us to take more field trips, help us find a good destination!

We are also looking for ideas for future meeting topics – so think about what you'd like to talk about, or learn about, see.

We will also probably want to work some more on our Tree of Life Pendants – see the notes below.

Federation News:

The American Federation Newsletter, online at http://www.amfed.org/news/n2009_10.pdf, has a Junior Activities article on supporting rockhounding clubs in local schools – I know we've had sporadic success in organizing a junior's club within our club, lacking a coordinator; but we do have quite a few junior members now – do any of you have a teacher that might be interested in forming a club at your school? The Federation has lots of support materials available to help, not to mention the local talent we in the club could share!

The Safety article is on being prepared – for anything! – if a rockhounding opportunity happens your way. The author says he thought he was prepared – he always has a rock hammer, bucket, etc. in his trunk, just in case – and was glad he did when on the way home from picking up his daughter from summer camp, they came across a fresh and likely-looking road cut. He and his daughter hopped out, and found some nice fossils, and were looking for more when she screamed! She'd disturbed a baby diamond-back rattler! Luckily they scared each other, and it scooted under another rock, but he was brought up short in his "always prepared" thinking; sure he had his rock hammer, but since he hadn't been planning a collecting trip, he didn't have a first-aid kit, and his daughter was wearing shorts and flip-flops – fine driving-home-from-camp clothes, but inappropriate for collecting. So now his "always prepared" kit is a little more

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extensive, and he'll be giving a little more thought to whether he (and especially his kids!) are *really* prepared for any impromptu collecting stop.

The Eastern Federation Newsletter, online at <http://www.amfed.org/efmls/efnov09.pdf>, has an article by the newly-installed AFMS Vice President from the EFMLS, on what the AFMS is, what it does, and what it does *for us* (members); he mentions that there are currently over 260 pages on the AFMS web site, with more being added or updated all the time – have you ever really checked out this resource? There is also a memorial article on June Culp Zeitner, the “First Lady of Rockhounding”, who died in October at the age of 93; she authored 10 books and countless articles in *Lapidary Journal* and *Rock & Gem* magazines – if you haven't come across any, look them up, she was a great educator in our hobby. The Safety article is several quick tips, things we all know but could bear to be reminded of (yes, constantly!) like to wear eye protection and a dust mask while working any lapidary equipment, and hard hats in any area where things might fall on your head (like quarries or most other rockhounding locals) and the one that made me say “Oh, yeah... “ Umm, *do* we have a fire extinguisher since our move?

Fall Club Project:

If you're having any trouble with your Tree of Life Pendants, or just haven't finished yet, bring them along – I'll have a couple more I'm working on to show you various stages, and try to help you through your rough spots. I've also discovered that the size of your chips will really make a big difference to the number of branches you want – so bring along your chips, too, and we can compare them with the ones I've done, and estimate how many branches you'll want for each type of chip.

I have the jump rings to finish them now (SS are 15¢ each, GF are 44¢ each); and while using the half-hard wire is certainly possible, it is a little more challenging, so if you're really having trouble, I did score some 24-gauge round sterling dead-soft wire at one of last month's gem shows (though a small quantity, and of course not nearly as good a price) and would sell you some (\$3.00 for 4 feet) if you want to try that for your first pendant before going back to the half-hard. Also, a few years ago the club bought a case of small gift boxes for just such projects as this – so if you want a nice gift box to wrap up your pendants, they are available for 40¢ each.

If you are having trouble, bring your own pliers with you – this is one project where the pliers can make a real difference, so bring the ones you've been using and we'll see if they might be part of your problem. You will want chain-nose, and nippers to clip the branch wires after wrapping. With a little help, you should be able to finish your pendants in good time for the holidays!

We also “rounded up” quite a bit on the wire order, so if you didn't order any or decide it was easier than you thought and you'd like to make more, we have extra wire, and chips, too.

Club Holiday Dinner:

The Club's December meeting is our annual Holiday Dinner and Election of Officers; we picked our date – **Sunday, December 13th, at 1:00PM** – and decided to go back to **Hoss's Steak and Sea House** since they've done well by us the past few years. There will be more specific info on this in next month's newsletter, but put the date on your calendar now!

Upcoming Shows in the area:

November 13-15--Hamburg (Buffalo), NY: Show; GemStreet USA; Fairgrounds at Hamburg, The Grange Bldg., 5600 McKinley Pkwy.; 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.