

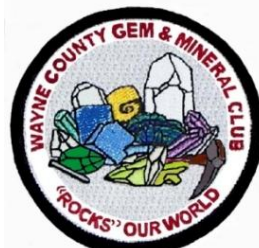
Wayne County Gem and Mineral Club News

March, 2022

Always Looking for Places to Dig!



Kathleen Cappon in Florida (page 4)



<http://www.wcgmc.org>
FACEBOOK link



Ice balls along Lake Ontario (p. 6)

Next Club Meeting

Friday **March 11th**, 7:00 PM.

Park Presbyterian Church,
Maple Court, Newark, NY

Program: **Make Your Own
Mineral Test Kit**

Do you know how to go about identifying a mineral: how to test for hardness, identify streak, look for cleavages, use weak acid, measure specific gravity, etc.? We will review mineral properties and how to test them. Each of you will go home with a small test kit.

We encourage you to bring:

- unknown minerals in your collection
- perhaps some can be identified
- your favorite mineral identification book

Saturday Club Workshop

March 12th

(10:00 AM until mid-afternoon)

Where: 6676 E. Port Bay Rd, Wolcott, NY

Eye protection is required.

Training on equipment is available.

\$5/adult to offset maintenance costs.

Wayne County Gem & Mineral Club

**We're
back!**

Gem Fest 2022



Sat. June 4 10-5

Sun. June 5 10-4

Greater Canandaigua Civic Center
250 N. Bloomfield Rd, Canandaigua, NY

\$4 Admission, Kids 12 & under FREE

Soapstone Carving, Wire Wrapping, Sluice,
Vendors, Exhibits, Free Prizes, Scavenger
Hunt, Rock painting, Jerry's Dinosaur, our
famous Rock Grab bags, and much more

Gems, Minerals, Fossils, Beads & Jewelry

visit <http://www.wcgmc.org/> for details



Spring is right around the corner, so I hope everyone is cleaning the dust off their rock hammers, stocking up on tick repellent, and patching the holes in their collecting bags! We will be kicking off the rockhounding season on opening day at Ace of Diamonds on April 1st, so make sure you've got the date saved and your hammer arms ready to wrestle out some pretty crystals from that unforgiving dolomitic limestone. Neither snow, nor sleet, nor rain, nor cold can dampen a day with diamonds.

I thought that since a lot of us collect things in the field that look interesting but aren't always readily identifiable that it would be a neat idea for us to get together and build our own mineral testing kits before the season starts. Come out to the meeting this month for a short presentation on properties of minerals that can be identified in the field (or at home) and join in the fun as we put together kits and try to identify mystery rocks that members have always wondered about. By getting some good practice in now, hopefully everyone will have that much more experience and less mystery in their collections by the end of digging season.

We have two gem shows of note coming up in the near future - the Buffalo Geological Society's Gem Mineral & Fossil Show on March 19th & 20th at the Hamburg Fairgrounds; and the return of our own GemFest on June 4th & 5th. Since we missed out on holding GemFest in 2020 & 2021, let's all try to reserve some time to volunteer that weekend so we can make the show better than ever! We'll be holding our full suite of family friendly activities, and will need lots of volunteers to help make that a success.

I'm looking forward to seeing everyone at the upcoming meeting & workshop, and at Ace of Diamonds for some much-missed time playing in the dirt together!

James



Nancy Guilfoyle checked in from Arizona, Quartzite to be more precise, where she is enjoying the sun and the warmth with a whole lot of other rockhounds. She says she has been working in the lapidary shop, wire wrapping and looking for more rocks at places like Kofa and Crystal Hill. She's sold a few too, but will probably have lots to bring home in late March.



This is Nancy's vendor set-up in the desert - looks like lots to choose from.

A Reminder For 2022
The Buffalo Geological Society, Inc.
Presents Our 52nd Annual
GEM MINERAL FOSSIL SHOW

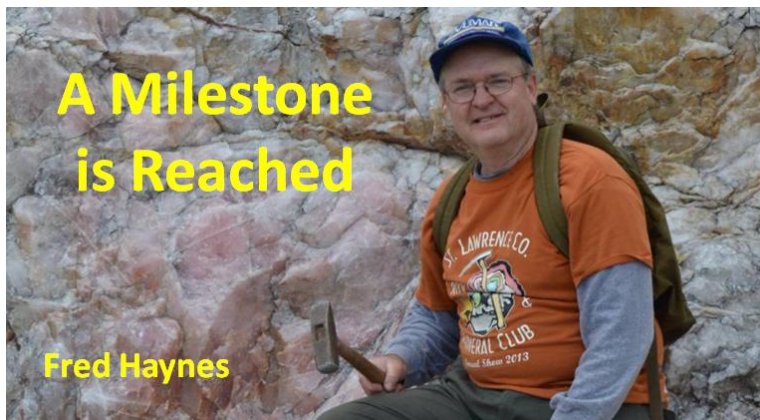
FOSSILS OF NEW YORK

Sat., March 19, 2022 · 10am-6pm
Sun., March 20, 2022 · 10am-5pm

Erie County Fairgrounds, 5820 South Park Ave.
Hamburg, New York (use South Park Ave. entrance)

Admission \$6 • 2 Days \$9
CHILDREN 12 YRS & UNDER FREE
Demonstrations • Jewelry • Mini-Mine for Children
Exhibits • Dealers with Minerals and Fossils

<https://bgsny.org/annual-show/>



On a rainy, October Friday evening in 2013, I pointed my Honda Accord east and headed out to my first WCGMC club meeting. I had heard that the club held lots of field trips and I was eager to learn of these and perhaps attend a few. I cannot remember what the program was that evening, but I do remember the portion of the business meeting when Pat Chapman spoke. ***“Folks, we need a newsletter editor. It has been 10 months since our last newsletter. And this is not good”***, she said.

The room fell quiet as I scanned the room for a moment. When no one spoke up, I decided to fill the silence. ***“Well,”*** I said, ***“perhaps that is something I could offer once I know enough about the club to do a decent job.”***

“That would be great,” Pat said. ***“Can you start next month?”***

I’m not sure how the rest of the discussion went, but I drove home with some trepidation wondering how I might write/edit a newsletter for a group of people I hardly knew. But I did, with the first one published in December, 2013.

Fast forward a bit over eight years, and this March, 2022 issue of WCGMC News is now the 100th of my tenure as editor, a consecutive run over 8 years and 4 months. I am sure I did not imagine this would be the case on that fateful October evening. Neither did I realize how important WCGMC would become in my life or how much I would enjoy the challenge of coming up with ideas for the newsletter and then constructing the darn thing each and every month.

Bill Lesniak (treasurer then, treasurer now, and perhaps treasurer forever) sent me the membership list so I could send out the first issue. There were 23 names, all avid field collectors and close friends. We are now a club with over 100 members. We have added a workshop since that meeting, tripled the size of our annual show (albeit with a hiatus due to Covid), and created an active

Facebook Group. But the closeness among the members has not dissipated as we grew, nor has my interest in generating what I hope is an interesting newsletter each month.

I have served under the consecutive four-year terms of two outstanding Presidents (Glenn Weiler and Linda Schmidtgal). I anticipate continuing my service in the newly anointed Keeler administration. Who wouldn’t want to edit a newsletter for a club with a President with the self-proclaimed name “Lord of Labradorite”?

It really helps me to know there are so many in the club who are willing to write articles or offer ideas/pictures. In this issue it is Kathleen Cappon reporting in from Florida and Nancy Guilfoyle from Arizona and two non-members who saw last month’s issue and then found ice balls along the lake. Who will it be next month, for issue #101?

In less than two years there can be a ten-year anniversary as editor. Will there be a 200th issue? I guess we will have to wait 8 years to find out.

All 100 newsletters can be found here:
<http://www.wcgmc.org/2.html>

WCGMC News
December, 2013

DECEMBER 13, Christmas Party and Dinner
Park Presbyterian Church in Newark
Social at 6:00, Dinner at 6:30

- The Club will provide a ham, drinks and place settings.
- Bring a dish to pass (appetizers, vegetables, desserts, holiday breads).
- Please RSVP to Eva Jane at gwexterior@gmail.com
- We will exchange club/hobby related gifts in the \$7-\$10 range
- Fred Haynes will present a program entitled “Minerals on Stamps”.

Minerals USA 29
1.00
Namibia 20c

The front page of the first WCGMC Newsletter that I edited back in December, 2013.



**Fossil Finds
from Florida
Kathleen Cappon**

Spending time in Florida this year was much different from my stay last winter. Weather wise, it was much like late October in New York. From my arrival January 19th early February, the nights were in the 30's and the days were in the 50 to low 60s. Having to wear heavy jackets and long pants was not conducive to comfortably wading in the rivers or diving in the springs. Flea marketing and estate sales were fun during the cool days but yielded very little rock or mineral treasures.

When it finally warmed up, I was able to visit two boat launches at parks along the Peace River; one was the Brownsville Park boat access and the other was the Gardner boat access. I must thank Ed Smith for supplying me with a home-made floating sieve (see picture on page 1). With that fine tool, I was able to collect some nice specimens !

The Peace River was low during the winter months and many gravel areas were visible. Sifting produced some decent bone and rib fragments from Pleistocene marine mammals, fish and reptiles. A shark vertebrae and a glyptodon armor plate were among the better finds.

A week later it was warm enough to visit several springs and dive down near the swift currents that exposed the gravel bottom. There, I was able to retrieve marine mammal rib bones and turtle shell fragments. Rock Springs produced a nice collection of fossils as shown in the pictures below.

I was hoping to find a piece of mammoth bone or tooth similar to the ones found last year, no luck... The only member of the Proboscidean (or elephant) family I came close to was a ride at a tourist "Pick your own Oranges" farm. Remember the horse and saddle ride you begged your mother for a dime to ride on? Well, this was my "Mammoth" find! "Hi Ho Jumbo". I could barely fit on it. Glad there were no kids waiting in line!



I was watchful for alligators and only saw one sunning itself on the bank of the Peace River. Fortunately, he ignored me and even posed for our newsletter.

You can expect to see many of my newest acquisitions at an upcoming WCGMC meeting, all except the alligator. I left him alone.



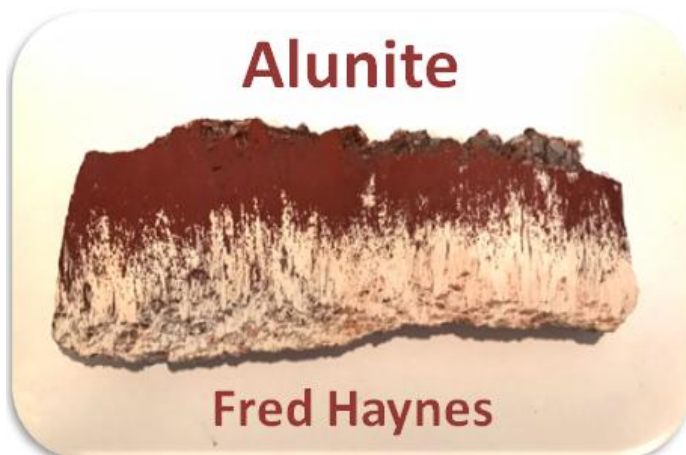
Bones are marine mammal fossils from the Peace River



Turtle shell fossils from Rock Springs



Marine mammal fossils from Rock Springs. Lots of rib bones!



The raffle rocks at the February workshop were semi-polished slabs of alunite that Linda Schmidtgall had selected from the club collection. They were simply labeled alunite from Arizona, but we suspect it might be from [Sugarloaf Butte, near Quartzite \(Mindat\)](#). Much of the alunite was cream colored with a touch of yellow or lemon, but what prevented the pieces from reaching the “leaverite” pile in back of the shop was the red dendritic coloration (iron staining?) that ran through portions of the slabs. Soon after they were “won” by club members, the polish wheels went into action.



Let the raffle begin: Red-stained alunite from Arizona! My selection is pictured in the title box.

As alunite is not a garden variety mineral in the collecting world (either lapidary or crystalline), it seemed appropriate to include a few words in the newsletter about the mineral. For many present this was their first encounter with the mineral.

Alunite is a potassium aluminum sulfate ($KAl_3(SO_4)_2(OH)_6$) that typically forms as veins and replacement masses within potassium-rich volcanic rocks like rhyolite or dacite. The sulfur is typically sourced from oxidizing metal sulfides. Sulfuric acid

from the leached sulfides (pyrite and others) reacts with the feldspars in the volcanic host rock to form the sulfate mineral. It is also found near volcanic fumaroles where sulfur is present.

Alunite is quite soft (Mohs hardness of 3.5-4) so it polished quickly and well. I imagine we will see some cabochons from this material in future months.

Alunite crystals are rare, but have been known to form in cavities within altered rhyolite. The best known may be tabular crystals from the Chinkuashih gold-copper deposit in New Taipei City, Taiwan. The mine closed in the 1970s, but alunite from the district made it onto a Taiwan (Republic of China) stamp in 1997. The enargite stamp from the same four-stamp set may also have come from this location. Enargite (Cu_3AsS_4) is an ore mineral of copper, but one that is not often seen in mineral shops.



Republic of China (Taiwan) stamps featuring alunite (left) and enargite (right)

Crystalline alunite is also found in the southwest United States. The piece below is actually from a town in Utah named Alunite. The specimen resides in the mineral collection of the Dept. of Geology, Brigham Young University (USGS Mineral Specimens 015.jpg).



Alunite from Utah: (Wikipedia Commons)

Somewhere in my stash of boxed minerals, I have self-collected alunite with enargite and covellite from Summittville, Colorado, but I'll be darned if I could find it for this article. It will show up when I am looking for something else.

Splendid Sands Calendar

March, 2022

Quarry Pond, Sarstedt,
Lower Saxony, Germany



Photo by Leo Kenney

by Leo Kenney, Kate Clover & Carol Hopper Brill

Amber is actually an organic compound, not a mineral. This fossilized resin oozed from trees 35-47 million years ago (Lower Eocene) in what is now northern Europe's Baltic region: Eastern Germany, Lithuania, Poland, and Russia.

The Eocene forest included amber-rich pines (likely the umbrella pine tree, *Sciadopityaceae*) that produced resin in large quantities as protection against insects and other damage. Rivers running from the slopes washed the amber from the forest soil and buried it in the sediments of the Baltic-Scandinavian marine basin. Honey-gold to light brown amber was likely first found on the shore of the Baltic Sea; today it is mostly recovered from quarries.

Because millions of insects became entrapped in the tree resin, scientists seek it out for study. Baltic amber has yielded the most diverse assemblage of preserved fossil insects found worldwide. It has cultural and economic significance, and became the basis for the amber trade in Roman and Medieval times. Amber continues to be a luxury item.



Well, how about that? In [last month's newsletter](#) I reported about ice balls on Lake Michigan and elsewhere and wondered if they ever occurred in Wayne County on Lake Ontario. I should have known better. Just three weeks later, James Edwards and Elise Ann Skalwold ventured from their home near Ithaca to Fair Haven State Park. Elise wrote on her Facebook page: "They were everywhere, mile after mile of great mounds of ice balls in a 100' wide swath down to the water where they were continuing to build and roll in – a fantastic ice formation phenomena to witness!"

When Elise posted the picture on page 1 she added, "It's hard to convey the magnitude and scale here, but many were basketball-sized with the larger ones down near or in the water. Just an incredible other-worldly transformation of a wild place we know well and love to wander in."

Later she provided this unique view, with Sitts Bluff in the background.



Did anyone else see these unique orbs along our wonderful shoreline?

WCGMC Artisans at work on February 12th at the Club Workshop



Did you ever wonder how trace fossils were created?



This photo was taken by a friend of your editor on a cloudy day last month. Did you know that the sun was always looking at you? Can you see the sun's eyes?

Wayne County Gem & Mineral Contacts

ELECTED OFFICERS

President – James Keeler
[jamesrocks\(at\)jkeeler.com](mailto:jamesrocks(at)jkeeler.com)
 Vice-President – Holly Woodworth
[autum14513\(at\)yahoo.com](mailto:autum14513(at)yahoo.com)
 Secretary – Beth Webster
 Treasurer - Bill Lesniak

Board of Directors

Bob Linderbery
 Heidi Morgenstern
 Karen Wilkins
 Ed Smith

Past President – Linda Schmidtgall

Visit us on Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1675855046010058/>

APPOINTED POSITIONS

Bill Chapman – Field Trip Chair
 Stephen Mayer - Fossil Field Trip Leader

Fred Haynes – Newsletter Editor
[fredmhaynes55\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:fredmhaynes55(at)gmail.com)

Bill Lesniak – Website Coordinator
 Glenn Weiler – Workshop Coordinator

Linda Schmidtgall – Collection Curator

Fred Haynes – Facebook Administrator
 Jim Rienhardt – Sand Chapter

Club meets 2nd Friday of each month starting in Sept.
 Social meeting at 6:30 PM Regular meeting at 7:00 PM
 Park Presbyterian Church, Maple Court, Newark, NY

Website – <http://www.wcgmc.org/>

Dues are only \$15 individual or \$20 family for a full season of fun. Renewal is in October. Send to:
WCGMC, P.O. Box 4, Newark, NY 14513

