

RockKester News

Summer 2007

Paul Dudley, Editor
Nancy McCann, Assistant Editor

Newsletter of the Rochester Academy of Science Mineral Section



Upcoming Events and Meetings

June Meeting: Tuesday June 19 from 8:00 to 9:00 p.m. in the **Stage Conference Room** at the Brighton Town Hall, 2300 Elmwood Ave. The program will be a RockSwap, where you can sell, trade, or give-away extra specimens. Bring your surplus specimens that are in need of a new home – or come prepared to adopt. This will also be an opportunity for new members to start their collections. Check the Mineral Section page on the RAS Web site (<http://www.rasny.org/>) for possible updates.

(The Board of Directors will meet from 7:00 to 8:00 prior to the RockSwap.)

Saturday June 09 – 10th Annual ADK Outdoor Expo. 9a.m. – 4 p.m., Mendon Ponds Park Beach Area. The RAS and Mineral Section will have displays at the 2007 Outdoor Expo sponsored by Genesee Valley Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club. Volunteers are needed to help, or stop by and support the Mineral Section and the Academy. Visit the event Web site for more details: <http://www.gvc-adk.org/events/expo/expo2007.php>

Sunday, June 10, 2007 – Lapidary Club Annual Picnic/Silent Auction. The time is from Noon until 4:00 or 5:00. The picnic is sponsored by the Lapidary Society and, as usual, the Mineral Section is invited. The location is in the Roberts Cabin at the Henrietta Town Park, which is located west of the Fair Grounds on Calkins Rd. The park is on the south side of the road. Just after you enter the park, turn right over the small bridge. Roberts Cabin is the first cabin on the left. The Lapidary Society provides meat and drinks, paper goods etc. **Each attendee is asked to bring a “dish to pass.”**

The silent auction provides the donor with the opportunity to dispose of excess lapidary related items, mineral specimens, and whatever else you think is appropriate. The donor will receive 80% of the final price and the Lapidary Society 20%.

This event has been a great success for the past several years and we look forward to a big turnout in 2007. This is a great opportunity to share some good times with the members of both the Mineral Section and Lapidary Society.

Saturday and Sunday July 14 & 15 – Syracuse Show: Gem, Mineral & Fossil Show sponsored by the Gem & Mineral Society of Syracuse, NY. In the Verizon Center of Progress Building, New York State Fairgrounds, Syracuse, NY.

Officers

President – Charles Hiler
Vice President – Robert Hiler
Secretary – Betty Fetter
Treasurer – Robert Morgan

Curator – William Pinch
Directors – Al Mura,
Paul Dudley
Nancy McCann



Collecting at Meckley's Quarry in Pennsylvania



Collecting Wavellite at the National Limestone Quarry in Pennsylvania



Calcite Specimen from the National Limestone Quarry – Pennsylvania



Celestine on Sulfur – Poland

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President's Message

by *Chuck Hiler*

Status on the Rochester Academy of Science Mineral Section Building project proposal (Workshop) and Bylaws.

In May of 2007 (53) ballots were sent out to the current membership to vote on the building proposal at Ionia and updated bylaws. A questionnaire (Willing Worker Form) was also included to survey the level of participation of the Mineral Section membership.

Building proposal and Bylaws had 34 responses. Willing Worker Form had 16 responses.

Results: Building proposition passed – 24 YES votes and 10 NO votes.

Comments received:

1. Person would support use of building as workshop and other activities, in the future would help in building but is out of state at this time.
2. Four people building too far away, high cost, gas prices
3. No justification for the few people interested in using building
4. Building will not be used?
5. Too much work for the few people who will use it
6. Build is a giant leap & I hope the Club can jump that high. Need permanent place for described uses, need a place where older members could donate minerals, books etc.

Results: Bylaws revision passed – 32 YES votes and 2 NO votes.

Comments received:

- 1 ARTICLE XIV: LIMITATIONS – three comments upon dissolution of Mineral Section should all monies and property go to the RAS or to similar non-profit organizations. Wording change required.
- 2 ARTICLE IV: OFFICERS – Not specific on term limits and how many terms in a row officers may serve; set to two terms in the past

Results: 12 Willing Worker Forms

Worker	Time	Frequency	*Skill Level	Comments
1	weekends	1-2	2	
2	any time	frequently	4	electric, concrete
3	weekends	1-2	1	electrical plumbing
4	anytime	frequently	4	
5	anytime	occasionally	3	
6	evenings, weekends	frequently occasionally	3	roofing, electrical, siding, plumbing, framing
7	anytime	1-2	0	lives far away
8	anytime	occasionally	2	welding
9	anytime	occasionally	1	
10	weekends	1-2	2	
11	anytime	occasionally	1	late July/early Aug can't work
12	anytime	frequently	2	

* Skill level (0 to 5) – Little to No Experience to Highly Skilled

More preliminary work and agreements are required before we can start building a structure. They are:

1. Negotiations and agreements with the Astronomy Board need to be finalized.
2. West Bloomfield Planning and Permitting is required.
3. A new Tape map showing current structures and proposed Mineral Section building is required by the town.

Field Trip Committee Report

To All RAS Mineral Collectors:

By the time you read this, our club will have sponsored five field trips so far this year (Lockport, Penfield, two Pennsylvania quarries, and Herkimer quartz). Since field trips help bring in new members who love to be outdoors and collect minerals with us, we hope to add to the following list as the season progresses, as well as plan some great trips for next year. Be sure to let us know what you think.

Saturday, July 21st – Cayuga Salt Mine – Arrive at 10:45 a.m. for 11:00 a.m. talk. – Cargill De-Icing Technology, 191 Portland Point Road, Lansing, NY. Mine Supervisor will explain the geology, history, and workings of the mine, and will have specimens of materials from the mine for us to take. Afterward we can explore the "trilobite pit" that is open to the public outside of the mine and/or visit the Museum of the Earth near the hospital in Ithaca. <http://www.museumoftheearth.org/> (Rescheduled from date in the RAS *Bulletin*.)

Thursday, July 26th - Sunday, July 29th – We've been invited on the following Rochester Lapidary Society field trip: Bancroft, Ontario & Marmora Quarry (week before the Bancroft Gemboree show). Please e-mail us for more details.

Saturday, August 11th - Alden, NY area for pyritized fossils and other minerals from septarian nodules 10 a.m.– 'till. More information to follow.

Saturday, August 18th – Barton Garnet Mine at Gore Mountain. (this is a re-schedule) 10 a.m. –Barton Mines Rd. off Rte. 28 near North River, NY. <http://garnetminetours.com/> \$5/person. We'll have access to Pit #8 in the old abandoned mine where the public doesn't have access, as well as Pit #1 (no tools allowed) where the public is allowed. Tools are allowed at in Pit #8, where specimens of garnet in the hornblende rock may be collected. Hard hats, safety glasses and steel-toed shoes are recommended. Charge for all rock removed is \$1/pound. Gift Shop/Facilities. Please let us know if you're going - headcount is required ahead of time.

Labor Day Weekend – We've been invited by RLS to join them in collecting travertine in the Herkimer/Illion Gorge. Ask us for further details.

Saturday, September 22nd – National Limestone Quarry, Inc. 9:00 a.m. – 217 Quarry Road, Mt. Pleasant Mills (Snyder County), PA. This quarry is 34 miles from Meckley's Limestone Quarry where you may collect on Sunday the 23rd. It contains limestones of the Upper Silurian age, Tonoloway Formation. You may have seen the Wavellite display at the Mineralogical Symposium this past spring that was collected from this quarry. Also found there are clear Calcite, Strontianite and not as common, colorless and blue Celestine & Fluorite. The Quarry President says the phosphate minerals, Cacozenite, Strengite, Turquoise, as well as large Gastropods that fill your fist have also been found in the Sandstone there. The usual Personal Protective Equipment is required – hard hat, steel-toed shoes & safety glasses. Supervised children with bicycle helmets are allowed. Power tools are also allowed.

Sunday, September 23rd – Meckley's Limestone Quarry 12 noon to 5 p.m. –, Mandata, PA (Northumberland Co.) This quarry is noted for Celestine, Calcite, Strontionite, and purple Fluorite in white Calcite veins. \$1 donation/person. You must sign a registration & release of liability form before entering. To get in/out of quarry you may have to walk 1/4 - 1/3rd of a mile, although handicapped parking may be made available – then only a short hill to get in/out of quarry. Supervised children with bicycle helmets are allowed. Hard hats and eye protection required sturdy shoes and gloves strongly recommended. Driving time from Rochester ~ 4 – 4.5 hrs. If you are interested in this field trip, please let one of us know - certificate of insurance is required. Vendors are allowed. In the past they've had port-a-pottys and a drink/hot dog stand.

And more to come...

Walworth Quarry sometime in Sept/Oct -- Not yet scheduled.

LaFarge Quarry, Lockport, NY - Open house usually scheduled late October.

We're also interested in possibly scheduling something in **St. Lawrence County, NY**. If you have any suggestions for places you'd like to go, or questions about any of the above, please e-mail us at:

Ken Madigan squid@rochester.rr.com

Nancy McCann workndream48@aol.com

The Renison Bell Mine, North Dundas, Zeehan District, Tasmania, Australia – by Al Mura

I have been collecting pyrite for many years, yet it is still fun to find a specimen from a new location. A consequence of this collecting has been a new found appreciation for geography. To be honest, as a student eons ago when they still taught geography, I could have cared less about the gross national product of Botswana or the difference between a steppe and a plateau. After all, I wanted to be a scientist and everyone knows they are not grounded in everyday reality. However, to look in a mineral dealer's case and see a bright, shiny pyrite from Tasmania was a geographical revelation. When you mention Tasmania to mineral collectors the first images that jump into their minds are dazzling orange crystals of crocoite, not pyrite, definitely not pyrite. Yet, there it was a very nice specimen from a mine called the Renison Bell somewhere on the island of Tasmania. As it turns out, Tasmania has a rich mineral history beyond crocoite.

Crocoite; Dundas, Tasmania

Tasmania, a state of Australia, is located 125 miles off the southeastern coast of the Australian continent. Its population is around 485,000 (2005) and the Island has a land area of 26,383 sq. miles, about the size of West Virginia (24,119 sq. miles).

In 1890, a prospector by the name of George Renison Bell (1840-1915) explored the Northwest coast of Tasmania near the town of Zeehan. He discovered a mineralized zone that later became the Renison Bell tin-field. Since its discovery, the mining of tin has been continuous yet marginal. A development program in the late 1950s generated one of the largest underground tin mines in the world producing over 270,000 tons of tin metal from 20 million tons of ore. Even though the mine still sits on a large reserve of high-grade ore, the Renison Bell closed in 2003 due to the low price of tin.

A confirmed list of minerals from the Renison Bell includes: aragonite, arsenopyrite, calcite, cassiterite (the main ore of tin), chalcopyrite, dolomite, fluorite, galena, pyrite, pyrrhotite, quartz, rhodochrosite, siderite, tourmaline and vivianite. Green fluorite specimens were found in the 1970s and pyrite/calcite specimens appear to have been common. In 1999, a walk-in size pocket of bright galena crystals was discovered. The specimens contained galena crystals over 1 inch across associated with fine quartz crystals often coated by calcite.

Tin is a chemical element, atomic number 50 (symbol Sn; from the Latin stannum). It is a malleable, silvery metal that is not easily oxidized in air and resists corrosion.

Tin has a highly crystalline structure; when a bar of tin is bent, the breaking of these crystals causes a noise called the "tin cry". The element has two allotropic forms (different crystal forms). The gray alpha-tin has a cubic crystal structure which changes into the white beta-tin form at 13.2 degrees C. The white form of tin has a tetragonal structure. When tin cools below 13.2 degrees C, it changes slowly from white to gray. This change was first observed as growths on organ pipes in European

cathedrals, where it was believed to be the work of the devil. Later it was believed to be caused by microorganisms and called “tin plague” or “tin disease”.

Hopefully, as the price of tin improves, the Renison Bell will be reopened and further specimens will be found. At its hay day, the mine employed over 200 people, a large employment given the population of Tasmania.

Rochester Academy of Science
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«Year_Paid»

«First_Name» «Last_Name»
«CO»
«Street»
«City», «State» «Zip»-«Zip4»

First Class Mail

Upcoming Event Summary – See inside for details

Annual Lapidary Club Picnic – Sunday June 10
June Meeting and RockSwap – Tuesday June 19
Field Trips in June, July, and August

Notice: The Cayuga salt mine field trip date mentioned in the RAS *Bulletin* had to be rescheduled by the mine. The new date is Saturday **July 21**, at 11:00 a.m.

Comments, submissions of articles, specimen photos, and even ideas of what you would like to see in these pages are welcome. Send them to the editor at the return address shown above, or preferably, via e-mail at: mineral@rasny.org.

Schedule changes and last-minute updates will be posted on the Mineral Section page of the RAS Web site: <http://www.rasny.org> . Click the Mineral link on the home page.