

THE ROCKFINDER

Newsletter of the Michiana Gem and Mineral Society

Volume 48, Number 9

November, 2008

Next meeting:

Sunday December 7, 2008

The Christmas Party!

Place: Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
805 S. 29th Street (29th & Wall)
South Bend, River Park area.

RSVP to Kathy Miller so she knows how many people are coming.



CHRISTMAS

PARTY

CHRISTMAS PARTY Preparations
Sunday, December 7, 2008

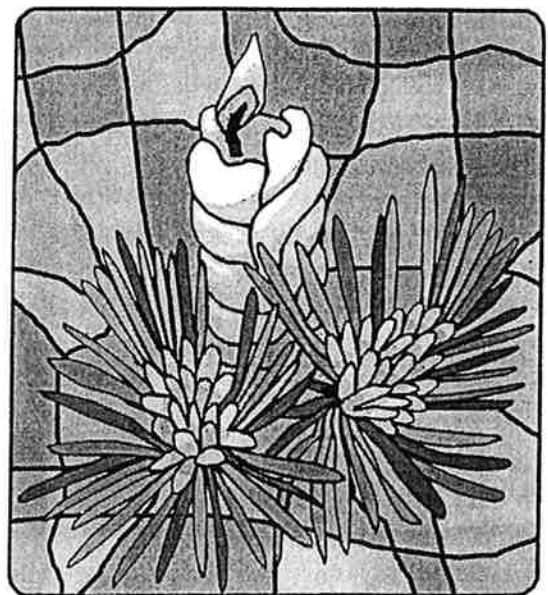
The doors open at 12:30 p.m., with dinner at 1:00 p.m. There will be a short business meeting after dinner for the election of 2008 officers.

This will be followed by "Rocko! (not quite the same as Bingo!)"

This is a potluck, so folks should bring their own table service (plates, utensils) and a vegetable, salad or dessert dish to pass. The meat, beverage, napkins and cups will be provided by the club. Members should also bring a nonperishable food item for donation to the needy, since there will not be a gift exchange.

MIDWEST FEDERATION T-SHIRTS FOR SALE

Sue Brown, MWF Indiana state director, will be taking money and orders at the Christmas party for MWF T-shirts. They are athletic heather gray, with a 3-color screen print of the MWF logo on the front and "Rock On" in red on the back. If we can get an order for 30, the price would be \$3 cheaper per shirt. Adult sizes available are S, M, L, XL, 2XL, 3XL and 4XL at \$12 each. Shirts for youngsters are small (6-8), medium (10-12) and large (14-16) at \$9 each. If you write a check, make it payable to MWF Endowment Fund. Wouldn't it be great to wear this as a group when we have a club function, showing that we belong to a larger organization, similar to the Audubon Society and similar groups.



KATHY'S COLUMN



After the October meeting it took me a few days to get over a high--not just a warm fuzzy feeling but an exhilarating whoopee! Our attendance and enthusiasm at the meetings are great. Have you noticed how our guests eventually become members, thanks to the welcoming they get from you?

Our junior members are fast equaling our adult members under the direction of Cordelia Tomasino and it's neat to see how, like the adults, they all get along so well. They really had a good time making paperweights out of paint and rocks. Thank you, Oregon club member Maggie Hawkins and daughter Beth, for sending those neat stones for the juniors to work with and thanks to Cordelia for providing the paints.

Tom Noe gave an excellent program on his field trip collecting, and everyone had some commentary to add to it. Thank you, Tom. Also thanks to all who brought in displays to add to Tom's. We have had some really good display items on the tables.

As always, the snacks were fantastic. Pat and Tom McLaughlin work tirelessly in the kitchen at every club meeting with the monthly hosts to see that all goes smoothly. We are good cooks and good eaters! Thank you, Pat and Tom, and our monthly providers!

The Christmas party will be fun, and information on it is found in this month's newsletter, along with info on some Midwest Federation apparel, a club cookbook and the field trip for 2009.

Marie and Bill Crull will have left for Florida, so they won't be at the Christmas party. We wish them lots of warm weather and look forward to seeing them in the spring. Marie indicated they will be able to communicate with us through e-mail and phone.

That's about it for this month. Bob and I are looking forward to seeing all of you at the Christmas party, when the most beautiful holidays of the year are celebrated.

MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER MEETING

Vice-President David Peltz called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. on October 26. In attendance were 32 members, 13 junior members and 3 guests. Jim Winters lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

David welcomed the guests, new members and 2 past presidents. Marie Crull made a motion to accept the minutes of the last meeting as printed in the *Rockfinder*. Don Church seconded the motion. Motion carried. Lana Wright gave the treasurer's report for the show and club. It will be filed for audit.

American Federation Report: Bob Miller-- Bob is the new vice-president of the AMF.

Midwest Federation Report: Sue Brown-- The MFW has a great newsletter for October. You can read it on line (amfed/midwest.htm).

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Historian: Ed Miller--Ed brought the scrapbook he is making of the club's history for everyone to see.

Hospitality: Pat & Tom McLaughlin--The refreshments were furnished by Marsha Miller, Florence Schuler and Pat McLaughlin.

Juniors: Cordelia Tomasino-- Junior members were painting stones to use for paperweights.

Webmaster: Jim Daley-- The October *Rockfinder* is now on the web site.

OLD BUSINESS:

Bill Crull has purchased a new sound system for the club.

Sue Brown: The MFW has apparel with the MFW logo for sale. There are T-shirts, polo shirts and caps. If the club places an order for 30 items you can save \$3.00 per item. The proceeds will go to the MFW Endowment Fund from our club. Let Sue know at the next meeting if you are interested and you can place your order then.

NEW BUSINESS:

The annual 2009 club picnic will be July 19 at Potawatomi Park in South Bend.

Marie Crull has appointed Marty Perry to chair the club table at the show next August. There will be a sign-up sheet for two-hour sessions at the table. Let Marty know what session you would like.

The combined Christmas party and November/December meeting is December 7. Please sign

HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

Kathy

the sign-up sheet so Kathy knows how many people to plan for. If you did not sign up at the meeting, let Kathy Miller know if you are coming. Please bring a dish to pass and a nonperishable food item.

Next year's field trip, in September, will be to Keokuk, Iowa, to hunt for geodes. There is also a Geodefest the same weekend that we will be able to attend. A suggestion for a trip in 2010 is to Turkey Run in Indiana. If anyone has any suggestions for a field trip let Kathy Miller know.

Diane Gram has an idea for a club cookbook to sell at the show to raise money for the scholarship fund. Mail, e-mail or bring your recipes to Diane. She is going to put the cookbook together.

OPEN DISCUSSION:

Dues are due. Please fill out the green membership form on the back of the *Rockfinder* cover page and send your dues to Lana Wright or bring them to the December party. The election of officers for 2008 will also be at that time. The current nomination slate for officers is as follows:

- President: Kathy Miller
- Vice-President: David Peltz
- Secretary: Marty Perry
- Treasurer: Lana Wright
- Liaison: Sally Peltz

Nominations for our elected officers are still open, and anyone wishing to run for office can sign up for the nomination slate. It's a great way to learn how the club is run.

Tom Noe is the guest speaker and will enlighten us about some of the rockhounding trips he has gone on. Don Church made a motion that the meeting be adjourned. Sister Jeanne seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Marty Perry, Secretary

FIELD TRIP TO KEOKUK, IOWA, 2009

By Kathy Miller

The field trip to Keokuk is being finalized. I have a confirmed block of 20 rooms at the Fairfield Inn under the Michiana Gem and Mineral Society. All have two queen-sized beds and they are no-smoke. The inn has a heated indoor pool and full complimentary continental breakfast. For the block room rate, you must tell them you are booking

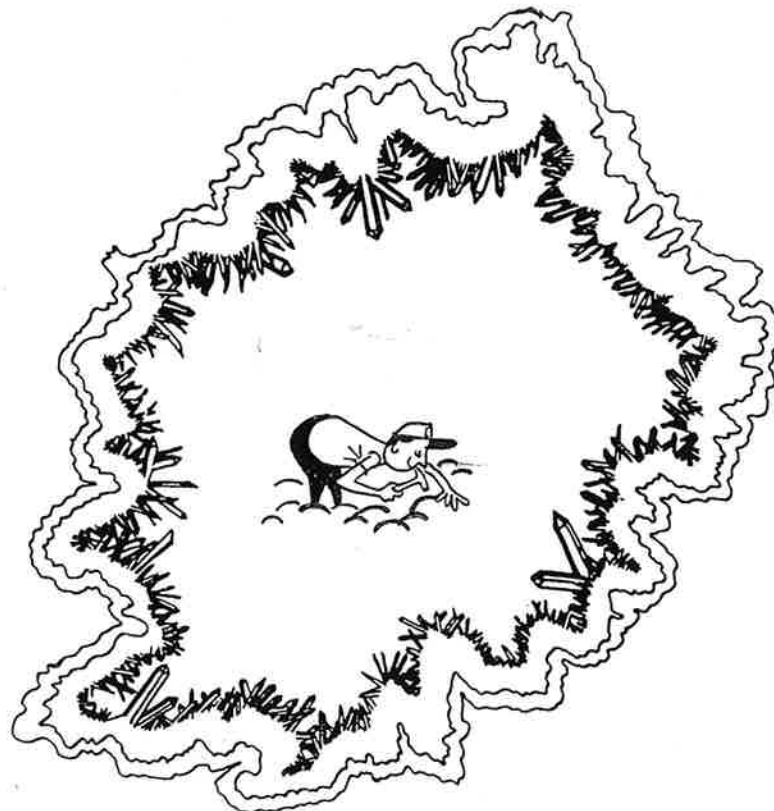
under the Michiana Gem and Mineral Society for the nights of September 25 and 26, leaving the 27. The rate of the room (including tax) is \$77.28 per night. If you have any questions regarding what features are in your motel room, ask them when you call to make your reservation. The Fairfield Inn's telephone number is 319-524-9000. (I spoke to a woman called Sharon.)

This field trip will be rain or shine. I have spoken with the chairman of the Geodefest and he promises good collecting. Later, after I confer with him, I will have the times of arrival and departure for the field trips there. Be prepared, it could be early morning and we will be on a different time.

I will have spoken with the manager of the Hawkeye Restaurant by the time of the Christmas party and should have an idea of the type of meal and the price by then. As usual, I request a private dining room for us.

For the field trips, a gratuity to the guides taking us to the private lands will have to be paid. The chairman will let us know later that amount and the amount paid to the land owners per bucket of geodes. Be picky, hollow geodes are your aim.

Also, you may wish to take some extra money for the Geodefest, since there will be vendors selling their wares and other festival activities. Sounds similar to the Falls of the Ohio festival.



GOOD COOKS AROUND

By Diane Gram

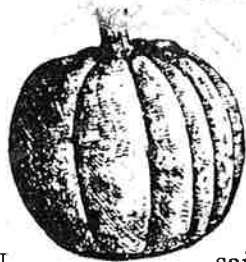
The Michiana Gem and Mineral Society has the best cooks around! Let's pool our talents and come up with a cookbook that the club can sell to benefit the Midwest Federation Scholarship Fund. Help make a fun and profitable project to promote future geologists.

Club members, please get your favorite and best recipes to me. Either bring them to the club's party and meeting on December 7, or you can e-mail them to gram.diane@sbcglobal.net.

If you would like to make up fun names for your recipes dealing with rocks and gems, do so and we can list them with the titles. For example, the cream cheese mints that I made in the shape of rocks---I call them "Mintites." Marshmallow fudge can be called "Rocky Road." This will tie the recipes in with our lapidary interests.

I'm not sure what the end product will look like in terms of pages, categories or size. That will depend on you.

Let's see what we can come up with. I'm looking forward to seeing lots and lots of recipes.



105-FOOT DINOSAUR UNEARTHED IN PATAGONIA

By Michael Astor, Associated Press Writer

The skeleton of what is believed to be a new dinosaur species—a 105-foot-long plant-eater that is among the largest dinosaurs ever found—has been uncovered in Argentina, scientists said Monday. Scientists from Argentina and Brazil said the Patagonian dinosaur appears to represent a previously unknown species of Titanosaurus because of the unique structure of its neck. They named it *Futalognkosaurus dukei* after the Mapuche Indian words for "giant" and "chief," and for Duke Energy Argentina; which helped fund the skeleton's excavation.

"This is one of the biggest in the world and one of the most complete of these giants that exist,"

TIME TO PAY DUES!



Michiana Gem & Mineral Society membership dues for 2009 are due! You can 1) mail them to Lana Wright or 2) turn them in to her at the December 7 Christmas party. Please use the green form inside the front cover of the *Rockfinder*.

Please let **Kathy Miller** know well ahead of time whether you are coming to the **Christmas party**, so she can plan for junior member gifts and the meat, beverage and cheese/punch table.

said Jorge Calvo, Director of Paleontology Center of National University of Comahue, Argentina, lead author of a study on the dinosaur published in the peer-reviewed *Annals of the Brazilian Academy of Sciences*. Scientists said the giant herbivore walked the Earth some 88 million years ago, during the late Cretaceous Period.

Since the first bones were found on the banks of Lake Barreales in the Argentine province of Neuquen in 2000, paleontologists have dug up the dinosaur's neck, back region, hips and the first vertebra of its tail. "I'm pretty certain it's a new species," agreed Peter Mackovicky, Associate Curator for Dinosaurs at Chicago's Field Museum, who was not involved with the discovery. "I've seen some of the remains of *Futalognkosaurus* and it is truly gigantic." Calvo said the neck alone must have been

56 feet long, and by studying the vertebra, they figured the tail probably measured 49 feet. The dinosaur reached over 43 feet tall, and the excavated spinal column alone weighed about nine tons when excavated.

Patagonia also was home another two large dinosaur skeletons—Argentinosaurus, at around 115 feet long and Puertasaurus reuili, 115 feet to 131 feet long. Comparison between the three herbivores, however, is difficult because scientists have only found a few vertebrae of Puertasaurus and while the skeleton of Futalognkosaurus (FOO-ta-long-koh-SOHR-us) is fairly complete, scientists have not uncovered any bones from its limbs.

North America's dinosaurs don't even compare," Mackovicky added in a phone interview: "Dinosaurs do get big here, but nothing near the proportions we see in South America."

The site where Futalognkosaurus was found has been a bonanza for paleontologists, yielding more than 1,000 specimens; including 240 fossil plants, 300 teeth and the remains of several other dinosaurs. "As far as I know, there is no other place in the world where there is such a large and diverse quantity of fossils in such small area. That is truly unique," said Alexander Kellner, a researcher with the Brazilian National Museum and coauthor of the dinosaur's scientific description.

Chicago Rocks and Minerals Society Newsletter,
(Nov., 2007)

HOW DO WE KNOW THE AGE OF THE EARTH?

The Earth is a constantly changing planet. Its crust is continually being created, modified, and destroyed. As a result, rocks that record its earliest history have not been found and probably no longer exist. Nevertheless, there is substantial evidence that the Earth and the other bodies of the Solar System are 4.5 to 4.6 billion years old, and the Milky Way Galaxy and the Universe are older still. The principal evidence for the antiquity of Earth and its cosmic surroundings is:

The oldest rocks on Earth, found in western

Greenland, have been dated by four independent radiometric dating methods at 3.7 to 3.8 billion years. Rocks 3.4 to 3.6 billions years in age have been found in southern Africa, western Australia, and the Great Lakes region of North America. These oldest rocks are metamorphic rocks, but they originated as lava flows and sedimentary rocks. The debris from which the sedimentary rocks formed must have come from even older crustal rocks. The oldest dated materials (4.0 to 4.2 billion years) are zircon crystals found in sedimentary rocks in western Australia.

The oldest Moon rocks are from the lunar highlands and were formed when the early lunar crust was partially or entirely molten. These rocks, of which only a few were returned by Apollo missions, have been dated by two methods at between 4.4 to 4.5 billion years in age.

The majority of the 70 wen-dated meteorites have ages of 4.4 to 4.6 billion years. These meteorites, which are fragments of asteroids and represent some of the most primitive material in the Solar System, have been dated by five independent radiometric dating methods.

The "best" age for Earth is based on the time required for lead isotopes in four very old lead ores (galena) to have evolved from the composition of lead at the time the Solar System formed, as recorded in the Canyon Diablo iron meteorite. This "model lead age" is 4.54 billion years.

The evidence for the antiquity of the Earth and Solar System is consistent with evidence for an even greater age for the Universe and Milky Way Galaxy: (a) the age of the Universe can be estimated from the velocity and distance of galaxies as the universe expands, 7 to 20 billion years; and (b) the age of the Galaxy is estimated to be 14 to 18 billion years from the rate of evolution of stars in globular clusters.

wrgis.wr.usgs.gov/docs/parks/gtime/ageofearth.html



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Don't
Miss the
Michiana Gem
& Mineral Society's
Splendid Christmas Party!
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church.
December 7, 2008. 12:30 social time.
1:00 potluck meal. Bring a dish to pass.
The meat, table service & beverage are club-
provided. No gift exchange this year, but bring a
canned or boxed food item to share with the needy.
We will hold a short meeting to elect 2008 officers.
Join club members to eat, drink and be merry!!!
Friends!
Food!
Fun!

DIAMONDS NEARLY AS OLD AS EARTH

by Jeanna Bryner, LiveScience Staff Writer

Diamonds are indeed forever, or at least as old as the Earth, a new study shows.

Scientists have unearthed diamonds more than 4 billion years old and trapped inside crystals of zircon in the Jack Hills region in Western Australia. Nearly as old as Earth itself and considered the oldest terrestrial diamonds ever discovered, the gems could give insights into the early evolution of our planet's crust.

"Jack Hills is the only place on Earth that can give us this kind of information about the formation of the Earth," said study team member Alexander Nemchin, a geochemist at Curtin University of Technology, Western Australia. "We're dealing with the oldest material on the planet."

About 4.3 billion years ago Earth developed from a cloud of dust around a proto-sun. During its youth Earth smashed into a planet-size body and its surface temperatures likely soared above 10,830 degrees Fahrenheit (6,000 degrees Celsius). When the molten Earth cooled, the liquid lava gelled into rocks. Details about the rocks and when they began to

form a subject of intense debate, have been limited by sparse data.

One such debate centers on whether early Earth was covered by oceans of hot lava or if the planet's surface had cooled enough for rock formation and was covered instead by oceans of water.

Zircon crystals could hold the answer. These crystals are tough and relatively resistant to melting. As a result, they retain their chemical nature and can provide vital clues about past events that occurred in the Earth's crust and mantle.

Recent studies of zircons have suggested the Earth might have cooled much more rapidly than previously thought, with the continental crust and oceans forming as early as 4.4 billion years ago.

The diamond find supports this quick cooling idea, said study team member Thorsten Geisler of the Institute of Mineralogy at the University of Munster in Germany.

The scientists, led by Martina Menneken of the Institute of Mineralogy, ran chemical analyses of the zircons, finding the ancient crystals (and the enclosed diamonds) were more than 4 billion years old. That's nearly a billion years older than previous oldest-known terrestrial diamonds.

The Calumet Gem (Feb., 2008)

CONTACT CONGRESS NOW

By Tom Noe

In my program last month I mentioned a few of the many collecting opportunities we have always enjoyed on our public lands, which are managed by various government agencies. Please read the next two articles and CONTACT Congress with your thinking on the proposed bill that would severely restrict collecting on public lands. All you need to do is let Congress know if you are for or against this bill, and explain your position in a few words. Since Indiana and Michigan are states with no public lands and this bill is not a burning issue here (like it is out West), our representatives may base their vote entirely on what they hear from us voters! Please let them know quickly what you think about this bill! (*Hint: Google "contact congress" and go from there.*)

THIS MAY BE OUR LAST CHANCE!

from Shirley Leeson, AFMS President

The e-mail below comes from a professional geologist and fellow rockhound. I believe it really tells it like it is and should give you some ideas about what you can say when you call or write your senators and representatives. This bill isn't going away and it looks like it will be called to a vote by the House of Representatives almost certainly before they adjourn at the end of the year (when this session ends and all not-passed bills die.) If you have not yet contacted your representatives, I urge you to do so now--before it's too late for us to make a difference!

This e-mail is in regard to Bill HR 554.

Bill HR 554 would make it a crime for individuals to collect fossils on public lands. I am a registered professional geologist with a half century of experience working as a geologist, which includes the collecting of fossils. I believe bill HR 554 is ill-advised and unnecessary. I have been involved in voluntary teaching of geology, including fossils, to school children and adults. This is a pastime that millions of Americans practice and enjoy. I do not

understand the purpose of restricting and criminalizing their free exercise of their right to use THEIR public lands.

There are trillions of fossils in the rocks within the United States. The collecting of a few thousand or even tens of thousands of fossils each year will not deplete this resource in 1,000 centuries nor does it contribute any significant environmental impact. To appoint bureaucrats and law enforcement individuals, who are untrained in paleontology, to enforce this dumb law is ludicrous and another waste of taxes. I find it incredible that with all the problems facing this country you folks in Washington are wasting your time and our money on such absurdly silly legislation.

A few paleontologists want to restrict their fellow Americans so that they alone can pursue this hobby. It is a hobby for them too, because people cannot make a living as paleontologists unless we taxpayers support them with grants of our money. No one should have his access to knowledge restricted so that only a few anointed experts can pursue fossil collection and study. Many of the finds and much research in paleontology occurs as a result of amateur and semiprofessional research and collecting. What is next? Will only librarians be allowed to use the libraries or only biologists be allowed to go fishing?

If this bill is passed, a family on a weekend outing can be jailed and fined for picking up a fossil even if they do not recognize it as a fossil. How do we restrict children from picking up a fossil any more than restricting them from picking a wildflower or catching a butterfly? Children need to explore nature to be children. Our scientists, including the very paleontologists promoting this law, come from a childhood curiosity that includes pastimes like fossil collecting. I became a geologist because of a childhood pastime of collecting fossils, which began at the age of 8 years. In my professional career, I have added billions of dollars in resources to our nation's benefit. Many other geologists share the same background and have made similar contributions. You have to decide if the passage of this stupid Bill HR 554 is worth the price of further diminishing our nation's available energy and min-

eral resources and our future supply of scientists. Or perhaps in the future we can also import our scientists from China too?

I urge you to vote against bill HR 554.
Sincerely, Eugene V. Ciancanelli
California Professional Geologist #357

*From: American Federation of
Mineralogical Societies Newsletter (Oct., 2008)*

Below is a link to the web site where full information on the status of the bill can be obtained.

H.R. 554: *Paleontological Resources Preservation Act* Introduced by James McGovern (D-MA)
www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=h110-554

smartin@antelecom.net

From: Midwest Federation of Mineralogical Societies Newsletter (Oct., 2008)

NEW ENDANGERED SPECIES--THE ROCK- HOUND

by John Martin, California Federation of Mineralogical Societies, Public Lands Action Committee So.


Currently before Congress is a bill that will make some fossil collecting and ownership a federal crime.

The *Paleontological Resources Preservation Act*, when passed by Congress, will make the collecting and ownership of vertebrate fossils found on public land (BLM, USFS and state land) a federal crime, punishable by fines and/or imprisonment.

There need to be allowances for the collecting, ownership and public display of these vertebrate fossils by the amateur collector without the fear of criminal prosecution or civil legal action. We all understand that significant finds, like the *T. rex* Sue, need to be preserved for all to enjoy, but the collection, ownership and public display of smaller finds of nonsignificant, nondescript vertebrate fossils should be allowed in the legislation.

If we do not get involved and take a proactive approach, the above legislation will become law, and the rockhound and pebble pup will become extinct. . . .

Write letters to your elected officials and present your case and points. We can make our voices heard in Washington by supporting and joining the American Lands Access Association (ALAA) as clubs or as individuals. (*Editor's note, our Michiana club belongs to this organization.*) Go to www.amfed.org/ALAA.htm for more information.

 <p>Associated with the American Federation of Mineral Societies</p>	<p>AMERICAN LANDS ACCESS ASSOCIATION</p>
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