

Rockhound News

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, February 19, 2009

PROGRAM: Video on Carlsbad Caverns

REFRESHMENTS: Members with last names M-Z bring goodies!

Program: Carlsbad Caverns Video -- "The Spirit of Exploration"

Location & Time: The CMLMS February 19 meeting will be held at 7:30 pm at the North School, 333 E. Miller Rd, Lansing, MI. Please get there a little early to help set up.

CMLMS	Calendar	for	March	2009
Thursday,	March 5,	2009	Board Meeting-7:00 pm	at the Okemos Library
Thursday,	March 19,	2009	Membership Meeting	at North School

Roster Secretary Ernie Aughenbaugh says: "Thanks to all who have paid their dues!
"If you haven't paid your dues, NOW IS THE TIME!!!"

Club

News

Display and Field Trip Chair Dan Sine is organizing a group to bring displays and give-away rock-specimens to the annual Okemos "Science is Fun" Day on February 21 from 11 AM to 3 PM at the Chippewa Middle School, Kinawa & Okemos Roads. If you are interested in participating, contact Dan at 517-381-0805.

If you have fossil or mineral specimens (preferably bagged and tagged) for distribution at the Okemos "Science is Fun" Day exhibit, please bring them to Dan Sine at the CMLMS membership meeting.

If your address or email address has changed, please let Ernie Aughenbaugh and Elaine Beane know about it in time for the change to get into the membership Directory update!

The Lansing State Journal People News column had a good piece about the CMLMS and its

new officers in the February 10, 2009, issue. Thanks to Corresponding Secretary Mary Anne Hanlon-Smith!

Please send any newsletter items to Editor Elaine Beane at (gebeane@comcast.net). The deadline for each issue is five days after the monthly Board meeting.

Check the MWF News for more shows to attend this winter & spring.

www.amfed.org/mwf.

February 28 - March 1, Roamin Club Auction, Schoolcraft College, Visatech Center Bldg., 18600 Haggerty Rd, Livonia, MI. Sat. 11 AM to 6 PM; Sun. noon to 6 PM. Free admission & park. Info: 248-969-2196.

March 6 - 8, Eastern Indiana Geol. Soc. Annual Show, Wayne Co. Fairgrounds, N. Salisbury Rd. Wayne County, Indiana. Info: 765-935-5574.

March 13 - 15, Michigan Gem & Mineral Society Annual Gem & Rock Show, Jackson Cty Fairgrounds, 200 W. Ganson, Jackson, MI. Info: 877-872-8471.

March 29, Metro Rock Swap, Democratic Club of Taylor, 23400 Wick Rd., Taylor, MI. 10 AM - 5 PM. Free. Info: 734-525-1684.

My Education, by Marvin Oesterle

Recently, the Red Metal Retreat in the U.P. at Houghton/Hancock was mentioned and it took me back to the pilgrimage I made there several years back. I've always considered rock-hounding and club membership to be an educational experience. So after I convinced my non-rock-hounding wife that a week poking around mines was just what was missing in her life, I dove into researching the history of the region. Nevertheless, my real education didn't begin until vacation time. Then I learned several lessons that have served me well.

My first lesson came the evening of the first day, after a day of classes on mineral identification and other fascinating stuff. A silent auction was held for our group with a live auction afterwards. There I picked up a find of a lifetime. A half dollar sized Michigan greenstone was mine for a song. It seems that the more serious collectors were saving their capital for the showpieces in the live auction. Lesson number one was that you can find great stuff at a silent auction without having to get dirty in a mine.

The next day we went down in a nearby mine. With helmet, lights and tools, I was prepared to do battle with the mine to steal away her treasures. The mine guide had us gather around while he pointed out obvious datolites. At least they seemed to be obvious to him. They looked like small ugly rocks to me. However, I did find some rocks to take home and, at the end of our tour, began trudging out of the mine. Nearing the end of the tunnel, the mouth

was blazing sunlight and everything else was pitch black. Suddenly, WHAM, I was sitting on my butt on the ground after having run smack into an overhead rock beam. Mr. Grit Turner, who was walking out behind me, said “And that’s why we wear hard hats.” That was lesson number two.

The next day, my wife and I decided to explore on our own. It was a perfect day to be underground with temperatures in the mid 90’s and 100% humidity. Unfortunately, we weren’t. We drove by the town of Phoenix, about which I had read. Currently, it consists of a cluster of run-down Sears and Roebuck houses and an abandoned general store. But the mine’s tailing were obvious in a nearby field. I grabbed my gear and attacked the mound. My wife, the more intelligent one of the family, stated that she would be waiting at the bottom under the shade of a huge tree.

I sweated and dug in the hot sun and after an hour or so decided that mining probably wasn’t my calling. As I went to join my wife under the tree, she called out “Hey Honey, look what I found!” It appears that other people had been digging in the tailings and had rested under the tree to high grade their treasures. Without saying a word, I dumped my pitiful specimens on the ground and picked up her stuff and left. I even gave my wife a ride back to the motel. Lesson number three.

All good things must come to an end and upon leaving the U.P., we spent the night at the Best Western motel in Alpena. Getting up early the next morning, I grabbed my tools and hiked out behind the motel to an area that I had spied with some old ground works that had been abandoned. I was wearing comfortable traveling gear: shorts and a T-shirt. There were sparse ankle high weeds but I could easily see several Petoskey stones that made it into my collecting bag. Then, I came upon a boulder that was filled with corals and plants and small animal fossils. I started working on a gorgeous cephalopod (I think). Twenty minutes later it popped out of the boulder. At the same time, my ankles started itching and I noticed that those ankle high weeds all had three leaves. Lesson four tortured me for a week and a half. All in all, it was a memorable and educational vacation that I won’t soon forget. My wife no longer allows me to pick the vacation. She says the garage is too full anyway.

We thank Mr. Oesterle for his educational recollections, and remind everyone that spring is coming (at least we hope it is) and so is field trip season. Here are some useful websites:

Websites on Field Trip Preparation

From the Rockpick Legend Co in Utah: <http://www.rocks4u.com/rockhounding.htm>. This site has very practical information on what to take with you to make rockhounding a rewarding and survivable experience. Their list of what to take includes:

First Aid Kit, Spare Tire & Tools to Change a Flat, Gas, Water, Toilet Paper, Garbage Bags,

Hand Lens, Identification Guide, Maps & Guide Books, Notebook & Pencil, Rock Hammer & Sheath, Chisels, Safety Goggles, Garden Trowel, Round Point Shovel & Hoe, Specimen Containers, A Buddy, Food, Medications, Hat & Sunscreen, Camping Gear, and Patience & Common Sense.

You can't get much more practical than that.

Excerpts from Introduction to Fossil Collection © 1994, by Glen J. Kuban: <http://paleo.cc/kpaleo/equip.htm>. This site prepares you for rockhounding in temperate climates, and has some advice for serious collectors.

From Rockhounding Arkansas: <http://www.rockhoundingar.com>: This site has lots of information, including a List of links to other sites (add to the address above: /linklist.html)

Collecting Tools and how to use them (add to the address above: /pebblepups/tools.html)

Managing a Collection (add to the address above: /collection.html)

No meeting minutes this month, but we'll catch up next month.

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