

# Rockhound News

**NEXT MEETING: MARCH 20TH**

**PROGRAM: SILENT AUCTION**

**REFRESHMENTS. A THROUGH J, Please bring goodies.**

## CLUB CALENDAR

March 20th                      Regular club meeting at North School 7:30  
April 3th                         Board Meeting-7:00 at the Okemos Library  
April 17th                        Regular club meeting at North School 7:30

+++++

## **March Program**

The March Program will be our annual Silent Auction. Please bring any of your excess rock hobby items to find a new owner for them. There will also be some books and magazines weeded from our library. (Bid Form Enclosed)

---

## **A Quarterly Note From Your President~**

As your 2007 Vice President, I would like to thank all who were involved in the general meeting programs for the year. A special thank-you to Bessie Rogers who made the January '08 program & shared stories about a good span of our 50 years as a club, which leads me to the next 50, well at least the next year. Let's make 2008 great in many ways. I am happy to be your president & I will do my best to go beyond fulfilling my duties.

So to keep this club going strong, we need your help as a club member-please get involved! What I am asking of you during this, still cold month of March, is your input. Let us know what you want for programs, field trips, demonstrations, community involvement, etc. Let us know about your hobbies so that others with like interests can meet you & trade knowledge, ideas, etc. We welcome ideas for involvement to draw more members & involve current members.

I would love to meet all of you-please try to make it to a meeting, especially if it's been a long time since you have. If traveling is an issue, let us know, we may be able to arrange a ride or carpool. And please, bring a friend.

We just celebrated our 50 years of existence as a club-we can only continue to exist if we

are involved & bring in new members. My hope is that our club can celebrate a 75th anniversary.

Peace~Kris

+++++

### **Club needs and news**

1. We need more stones for Ele's Place. They need polished stones about the size of marbles (1/2 to 3/4 inch) and of many different colors. Get those tumblers going and plan on bring some stones to the April meeting.
2. Any one have suggestions for banquet speaker
3. April meeting. Will feature Larry Molloy, Copper Country history enthusiast will present a exciting history of the copper country.
4. May will be the annual club Banquet
5. We need a place to meet in June as the school will be closed.
6. Any one desireing to join Friends of Mineralogy/ an Ohio Club see George Heaton.
- 7 Note from the librarian. Please bring back any books that you have from the club library. You have this month and next to remember them as we will not be meeting at the school in May or June.

**Welcome to NEW MEMBER #1474** Karen Mooney-Burgess 7313 Tecumseh

Lansing Mi 48906 Phone 517 3271299 E-Mail [mooneyburgess@earthlink.net](mailto:mooneyburgess@earthlink.net)

### **Places to go and things to do**

March 14-16 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Show Michigan Gem & Mineral Society "Rockin the State in 2008"

Location: Michigan Center Masonic Lodge. 355 Napoleon Road, Michigan Center, Michigan. Hours: March 14<sup>th</sup> 11-7, March 15<sup>th</sup> 10-7, March 16<sup>th</sup> 10-5.

March 29<sup>th</sup> 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Metro Rock Swap

Midwest Mineralogical & Lapidary Society of Dearborn

Democratic Club of Taylor , 23400 Wick Rd, Taylor MI , 10 AM-5PM

April 10-12 Grand Rapids, MI. 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Show. Indian Mounds Rock & Mineral Club.

April 18-20 Rogers Plaza Town Center Mall 28<sup>th</sup> St. Wyoming, MI. Thur.-Sun 9-9.  
Mt. Clemens Show "Rockhound 101" Roseville Rec. Cntr. 18185 Sycamore, Roseville, MI. Hours Fri. 9-7, Sat. 10-7 and Sun. 11-5.

April 26 SWAP n SELL Hosted by Blossomland Gem  
 & Mineral Society, St. Joseph/Lincoln  
 Senior Center 3271 Lincoln Ave. St. Joseph,  
 Michigan 10:00a.m.-4:00 p.m.

May 2-4 "Michigan Magic" Kalamazoo Geological and Mineral Society. Kalamazoo  
 County Expo Center, 2900 Lake Street. Fri 4-8, Sat.10-6, Sun.10-5

May 24 "Petoskey Stone Festival",, Antrim County's Barnes Park, Eastport Mi. 10-4

May 31-June 1 Huge Rock & Mineral Sale. Marve & Kitty Starbuck 7636 East V Avenue,  
 Vicksburg, Michigan 9 til dark

Field Trip April 12 LaFarge Quarry Reminder from prior newsletter

I wanted to let you know should there be any interest in your club members joining us, I have  
 scheduled a field trip into the Lafarge Paulding quarry, which as you know is noted for its trilobites  
 especially. The date is Saturday, April 12 (the last Saturday of Spring Break in the public schools  
 around here). We will meet in the office parking lot area at 8:30 a.m. We can collect until 2:00  
 p.m. The usual safety equipment required.

Some of our club members will stay Fri. night at the Plaza Motel in Bryan, OH, 25 miles north of the  
 quarry (419) 636-3159. No minimum age limit on this one!

From : BOB SHERWOOD, Tulip

City Gem& Mineral Club

Let me know if you plan to go. We have found out that a flame orange hunting type vest is a  
 required item.

Dan Sine

Central Michigan Lapidary  
 & Mineral Society  
 Silent Auction

Central Michigan Lapidary  
 & Mineral Society  
 Silent Auction

ITEM\_\_\_\_\_

ITEM\_\_\_\_\_

FROM\_\_\_\_\_

FROM\_\_\_\_\_

MINIUM BID\_\_\_\_\_

MINIUM BID \_\_\_\_\_

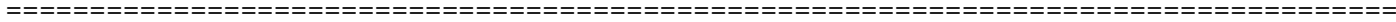
=====

NAME BID  
 \_\_\_\_\_

NAME BID  
 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



CML&MS SILENT AUCTION

ITEM\_\_\_\_\_

MIN.BID\_\_\_\_\_

FINAL BID\_\_\_\_\_

BIDDER

SELLER

CML&MS SILENT AUCTION

ITEM\_\_\_\_\_

MIN.BID\_\_\_\_\_

FINAL BID\_\_\_\_\_

BIDDER

SELLER

## MINERAL PRICES: WHY SO HIGH?

## MINERAL PRICES: WHY SO HIGH?

By John Betts

I am a part-time mineral dealer. I get many questions about flue prices of collectable mineral specimens. Novices are the most confused because they have yet to understand the many factors that affect mineral values. The following is a chronology of prices and events of a typical mineral specimen. **The Beginning**

All minerals start in the ground. A specimen is not worthless (because collectors may still lust after the undiscovered

specimen) but it does not yet have a price tag. It will lie there undisturbed until one of two things happen. Either it will erode from the solid rock, work its way into a sedimentary deposit and start another cycle or man will interfere and do something with it. It could become an industrial resource, or it could become a collectable mineral specimen. I am going to focus solely on the latter path. **Price Evolution**

A collector digs it up and stores it wrapped in newspaper in his basement. Typically it will remain in this state for two or three years until his wife threatens to toss out all of the "junk" in the basement. **Price = \$0**

The collector washes it off for the first time and decides it is still worth keeping even though most of the other material he collected should have been left in the ground. He trades it at a swap along with ten other pieces to a collector that can see through the iron staining and dried pocket clay. He gets an amethyst from Brazil in exchange. **Price \$0.50**

The experienced new owner dissolves the pocket clay and iron staining to reveal the beauty of the crystals. It is now clean and lustrous. **Price \$5.00**

The specimen is donated to the local mineral club for their fundraising auction. It sells for **\$12**.

The new owner trades it away at a local swap to a savvy collector who knows the location has just been closed and no more specimens will be found. He values it at **\$25**.

Years later the Mineralogical Record runs an article on the lost location. The author identifies a rare left-handed twin crystal form as unique to the location. The owner revalues to **\$50**.

The owner dies leaving most of his collection unlabelled. His heirs have no idea what to do. A local mineral dealer calls the widow and offers \$1,800 for the lot and will take it all away. Price paid for each specimen about 50 cents. Now the mineral, unlabelled, is misidentified by the dealer as originating in Austria and a **\$50** price is assigned along with the "classic" locality.

The specimen does not sell for two years. The dealer discovers there is no money in selling minerals and decides to sell wire wrapped amethyst pyramids instead. Sells his whole stock for 20% the labeled prices. Specimen goes for **\$10**.

The new owner recognizes the true origin of the specimen. He researches the location and makes a Xerox copy of the article in the Mineralogical Record as a sales prop and prices it at **\$100**.

An “instant” collector, who has just started collecting minerals again now that he makes enough money at age 35 (after giving up in high school) buys the specimen for **\$90**, happy at the cut.

Meanwhile there is so much demand for minerals from the old location that prices climb. Brian Wayne Lees-Thompson reopens the mine, attracting attention to the location again. Because of savvy marketing and the perceived shortage of specimens, prices are set at numbers that look like long distance telephone numbers (though the small specimens are only priced at numbers that resemble zip codes).

After two years the market is saturated. Mr. Lees-Thompson can't give them away. The minerals from the mine become a commodity worth about as much as Uruguayan amethyst. Our specimen is sold to a new owner for **\$150**.

He shows the specimen to an experienced collector who owns a microscope. They spot rare inclusions of baloneyium. They write an abstract that is accepted for presentation at the Rochester Mineralogical Symposium. They give a 15 minute presentation. The specimen is sold for **\$500**.

It is bought by a locality collector that specializes in only that location. It is placed in a position of honor in his collection. The abstract is published in *Rocks and Minerals* magazine. The collector refuses an offer of **\$1,000**. As the owner's age goes up, so does the mineral's value in the owner's mind. But he also knows that he can't take it with him when he passes on. He offers it to a local museum for **\$5,000**. The museum has an annual acquisition budget of \$1,000. They try to find someone to purchase the mineral and donate it to the museum.

In the meantime the owner dies. The heirs know nothing about the collection- they just want to move into the house. So everything is hauled away by the trash hauler. The mineral specimen ends up in the local landfill and starts the rock forming cycle again. So what is a mineral really worth?

This silly chronology illustrates that price is determined in varying parts by aesthetics, rarity, location, associations, uniqueness, marketing and scholarly study. As in art, the value increases with knowledge of the subject. There is no absolute value. As a result there are no hard and fast rules.

If there were not mishaps along the way the greater fool theory would prevail. Each owner would buy a specimen and sell it to a greater fool that will pay more. Eventually it works its way up the price ladder until it reaches a practical limit. As a collector, all that matters is whether there is a bigger fool out there to pay more than we did. And there is.

Taken from *MicroScope*, Newsletter for the micro-mineral collectors of New Zealand. Editor Jocelyn Thornton of Wellington. November 1998