Wayne County Gem and Mineral Club News

August, 2021 — **Always Looking for Places to Dig!**

Maine for pegmatites: see page 7)

http://www.wcgmc.org

FACEBOOK link

What's with these mushrooms? (see page 5).

Annual WCGMC Picnic

August 28th , 10:00 AM

The Weiler's Barn /Club Workshop
6676 E. Port Bay Rd, Wolcott, NY

It is time to register for the WCGMC picnic. You can do so by sending a note to fredmhaynes55@gmail.com with the number in your family that will attend.

We plan a pot-luck style event as in past years. Bring a dish to pass and the club will provide chicken, salt potatoes and drinks.

This year we plan to hold our annual set of auctions at the picnic. We usually do this in February, but needless to say that did not happen this year. We have acquired some great specimens, some good pieces, and some ordinary stuff since our last auction that will be divided into various formatted auctions including a silent auction and a called auction.

NEW WCGMC OFFICERS ARE NEEDED

It is election time for us this fall. Although we do have some folks returning to positions and some new folks expressing interest to help us recover our momentum from the pandemic, ***there are positions lacking nominations at this time***. Of course, all positions are open for nomination, but we can report that as late July, no one has expressed interest in running for the Secretary or Vice-President positions. We do have four accepted nominations for the Board of Directors positions, but given the lack of an election last year, all four board positions are open. We normally stagger the board spots, two per year.

Linda Schmidtgall, who will become the Past President, and Theresa Ferris are serving as the nominating committee. Contact either of them if you think you would like to help lead the club over the next two years. The current plan is to close nominations at our September 10th meeting, announce the slate at that time, and hold an election at our October meeting.

Pay your 2021-2022 dues at the picnic and save $5. Dues are $15 for family and $10 individual until mid-September.

President's Message

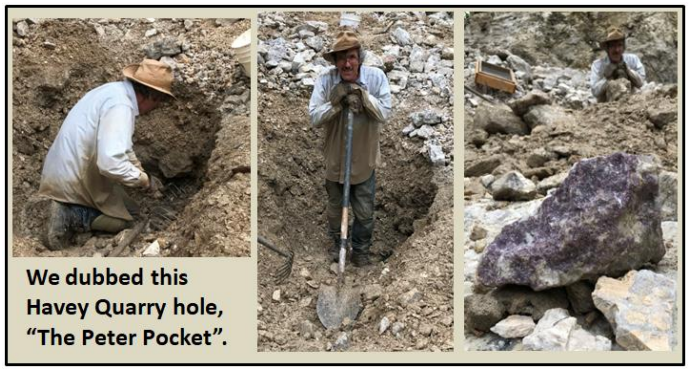
Linda Schmidtgall

First and foremost, I want to thank James Keeler for planning and leading our field trip to Maine in July. We collected pegmatite minerals in 4 famous quarries and visited the wonderful Maine Mineral and Gem Museum in Bethel. I made it up the hill to the Harvard Quarry, but enjoyed the more easily accessible sites of Havey Quarry, Hayes Ledge and Tamminen Quarry a bit more.

At this point, James and I were simply happy to have made it up and over the hill to the Harvard Quarry. I don't know about James, but I was more worried about getting back down safely than collecting schorl, garnet, vesuvianite, etc. from the famous Maine quarry.

Dinner for six on the patio of our "ski" lodge.

James was also responsible for locating a wonderful ski lodge in Bethel that could accommodate all 11 of us. We cooked there each of the five nights we were there. Ed Smith was our barbeque chef on two evenings and Rob and Sarah Bancroft went down the hill twice and supplied everyone with freshly picked blueberries. Such a setting is so much better than a bunch of motel rooms.



We dubbed this Havey Quarry hole, "The Peter Pocket".

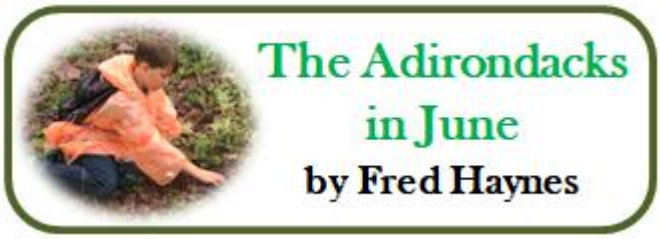
I did not dig the deepest or largest hole on this trip. Peter Kisselburgh took those honors during our final day of digging at the Havey Quarry. I know he found one nice elbaite point that the owner believes must have come from the April 13th pocket of a few years ago. And, he uncovered some garden rock boulders of lepidolite as well (upper right photo).

On the way to and from Maine, Fred Haynes and I stopped to pan for gold at different sites in Vermont and New Hampshire. Neither of us saw a fleck of gold. Fred got sand for his collection. All I got was wet.

You should all see Maine pegmatites and their wonderful tourmalines and garnets at the August picnic. We also hope to have Dave Millis lead a program on pegmatites at a fall meeting. This assumes we are able to return to the church in Newark in the fall.. We are still working on that,but it does look good..

Please, please, please, send Fred an e-mail with the number of folks in your family that plan to attend the pot-luck picnic and club auction on August 28th outside our workshop in Newark. We need to know how large a tent to order and how much chicken to purchase. Remember, without GemFest these past two years, the auction we plan to hold at the picnic will be our first chance to hold a bit of a fund raiser in almost two years.

Linda



Our June field trip to the Adirondacks set records in terms of attendence. With over 30 WCGMC members present and an additional ten from the St. Lawrence County Club the event was the largest overnight field trip in recent WCGMC memory. Perhaps it was the urge to get back to collecting after more than a year without such a trip, or perhaps it was the chance to visit a new site for us (Sterling Mine in Antwerp), but for whatever reason the rock hammers were busy up north during the final weekend of June.

Saturday June 26th – Sterling Mine (Antwerp, NY)

It had been more than 20 years since anyone had collected on the Sterling Mine dumps and the region was overgown. But the dumps were still there with lots of rocks to break in search of an elusive vug with millerite. Everyone got very red doing so, and probably found out why hematite is a good paint additive when they tried to wash their hands and later their clothes. Folks in search of brightly colored rocks for their garden certainly left with a few.

A lot of the rocks on the Sterling Mine dumps were red with hematite, but iron oxide comes in many colors. There was bright white calcite mixed with the red hematite also. These made it to my garden.

I understand a few specimens containing millerite were found, but the only one I can document was collected by 11 year old Lily Whitton. Her dad sent me the photograph in the upper right once he got home. He also tells me this specimen is much greener than it appears in the photograph and he believes the needles have been at least partially altered, or coated, by pecoraite, a nickel silicate mineral that is a member of the sepentine group. Robinson and Chamberlian (Mineralogical. Record, 1984) suggest that this may be a surface alteration of millerite.

Millerite (perhaps partially altered to pecoraite) collected by Lily Whitton. Photo by M. Whitton

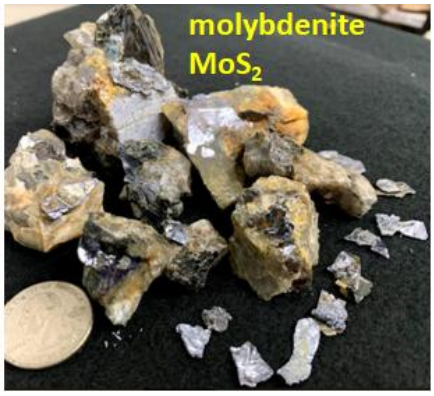
I thought I had a small spray of millerite hidden in a quartz-lined vug: until I got home. It is still a very interesting micromount, but instead of millerite, I believe I have a golden spray of accicular goethite. The bow tie spray is about 2mm across and I captured it with a zOrb digital microscope. The background quartz is not purple. I was actually able to backlight the spray through a very tiny porthole in the vug to the backside of the piece which left the purple hue.

Sunday June 27th – Benson Mines, Star Lake, NY

We followed up the Saturday visit to the Sterling Mine by returning to two favorite collecting locations on Sunday. First, we visited Benson Mines in Star Lake where everyone could fill up on muscovite, magnetite and sillimanite while enjoying the Adirondack views from atop the massive mine dumps.

But there is more there than that. Hidden behind the small poplar trees that are springing up to reclaim the dumps are some pegmatite boulders with allanite and molybedenite. After Glenn Weiler had

sawed a few creases into two of these boulders Linda Schmidtgall and EvaJane Weiler went to work splitting them open. And lo and behold, they found significant amounts of molybdenite. The picture below shows Linda's spoils from a couple hours of pounding and chiseling. EvaJane has an equal amount of the lustrous molybdenum sulfide mineral.



Picture on the left by M. Whitton
Picture on the right by L. Schmidtgall

Heidi Morgenstern walked out into the expansive dump area and came back with a wonderful garden rock laced with sillimanite. Well, the metamorphic mineral may have been mostly replaced by sericite and chlorite, but the crystal form remains and the light green color is pleasing.

Sunday, June 27th Rose Road, Pitcairn, NY

A trip to Rose Road in Pitcairn is never disappointing whether you go there during the day for the wide variety of minerals in the two calc-silcate collecting locations or whether you go at night to hunt fluorescent minerals. Not everyone was still with us Sunday afternoon, but those who were found that apatite seemed to be the mineral of the day.

I photographed a 1" sky blue apatite on tan calcite, but I cannot recall who found it.

Herbert Petschelt spent a lot of time and much effort working on an even larger apatite hiding in the rock wall. I know he collected some smaller ones while working to free the larger more buried crystal, but I do not know if he recovered the larger one that he had his eye on. Herbert and his wife Andrea get the award for travelling the farthest for our trip. They live in Lynn, MA, and have been WCGMC members for three years since meeting us at Walworth Quarry.

Even in daylight, however, I was able to find and collect a fluorescent sand. Lots of calcite, a bit of diopside and mica, but about 10% of these grains are scapolite and fluoresce canary yellow under long wave UV light.

Two size separates from the talus below the "purple diopside" location at Rose Road. I need to learn how to photograph this under long wave light!

Fun with Fungi

by Fred Haynes

Minerals are not the only colorful natural objects one can enjoy while out and about in western New York or on field trips to other regions. While some seek out birds and others enjoy identifying wild flowers, I have taken an interest in the various forms of fungi that frequent the wetter woodland areas. Much like minerals they offer a challenge to be found and then another challenge to identify. Unlike minerals, they are not generally collectible, but they can certainly be photographed.

One of the best and truly unique areas for fungi in western New York is right in our backyard. I have written about Zurich Bog in Arcadia (August 2020 WCGMC newsletter). Caught between two drumlins, the wet lowland environment and diverse woodlands provide an ideal location for mushrooms and other fungi. I have visited them numerous times with Paul Brach, a local expert who has identified and documented more than 600 species in the 650 acres within the Zurich Bog Preserve. I have not seen all 600, but I bet I have seen over 100 and photographed most of them in the past two years.

Here are a couple of the more colorful species Paul and I saw on a July 21st visit to Zurich Bog.

On the left: orange pinwheel (*Marasmius siccus*)
On the right: painted suillus (*Suillus spraguie*)

The orange pinwheel mushroom is only about ½" across with narrow plications on the cap and a very thin black stem. The mushroom of the day was the painted suillus with its bring red cap standing out on the lush green carpet of the forest floor. We must have seen two dozen of these colorful red fungi. Unlike many of the mushrooms, suillus do not have gills on the base of the cap, but rather hold and release their spores from a finely pored and flat yellow underside.

And isn't this line of orange mycena (*Mycena leaiana*) growing out of a split decaying tree branch at Zurich Bog rather cute and photogenic? The Republic of Togo considered *Mycena leaiana* worthy of a postage stamp in 1995.

On our recent mineral collecting trip to Maine, Linda Schmidtgall and I stopped in the Green Mountain National Forest for a sand sample and to pan for gold in Big Branch Creek. We found sand, but no gold, but the trail along the creek's edge was littered with colorful and diversely shaped mushrooms. In less than an hour, I had "collected" pictures of over 20 different species, and wonderful examples of most.

I even caught Linda taking pictures including this one of two lilac-brown boletes. In keeping with the club purpose, you will note there is a rock in the picture also!

There were actually several species of boletes, another group of mushrooms that have pores and lack gills. As for gilled species, the yellow fly agaric is a common somewhat toxic mushroom found in

northeast conifer forests. It is hallucinogenic, containing toxins that can affect the brain and turn off human emotions of fear. Some claim that the Vikings ingested agaric mushrooms prior to invading villages.

Some Vermont mushrooms: A) yellow fly agaric (*Amanita muscaria,* v. *guessowii*), B) chanterelle (*Cantharellus cibarius)*, C) emetic russula (*Russula emetic*), D) lilac-brown bolete (*Tylopilus eximus*).

On the more favorable side, we encountered bright yellow chanterelles (B), which are considered a delicacy among mushroom hunters. Some were certainly large enough to collect and eat. The one in the photo here was about 2" across. I suppose we could have harvested some and taken them to share at dinner one evening in Maine, but while I will pick berries, I have yet to attempt wild mushrooms. The red emetic russula is one of my favorites to photograph and doesn't that lilac-brown bolete sure look sharp.

There is no photoshopping or color enhancement done with these scarlet waxcaps (*Hygrocybe coccineus*). They are truly that colorful. You can see the creek in the background in the upper right..

Finally, the father and son blushers (*Amanita rubescens*) depicted in the title box were found growing right outside the ski lodge in Bethel where we were all staying.

Just like fossils or humans (*Homo sapiens*), fungi have scientific names that include a genus and a species. The genus is capitalized and both are set in italics or underlined when written. I've included all that for completeness, but only the common names will be required on the test in the fall.

The photos were taken with a simple iPhone7 with the subjects all in the shade. So the next time you are out and about in fungi country, take your phone along and do some "collecting".

Another site Paul and I visited in search of fungi in July was Mt. Hope Cemetery in Rochester. Henry Augustus Ward is buried there beneath a large granite monument capped by a rather unique stone. Henry founded Ward's Science in Rochester in 1862. Since then Ward's has supplied most of the rock and mineral kits used in schools to teach the difference between olivine and epidote and between rhyolite and basalt. Not to mention all the frogs that most of us old timers dissected in biology class. Henry apparently collected the large puddingstone atop his grave on a trip to Georgian Bay in Ontario. Heaven knows how he ever got it to Rochester in the 19th century. The border must have been easier to cross back then.

Maine means Pegmatites

by Fred Haynes

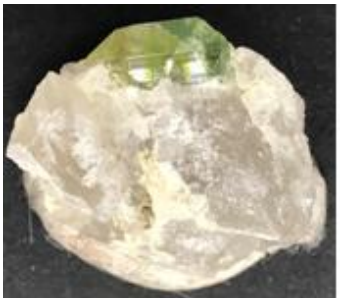
Four days, four quarries, four stories to tell. But for now mostly pictures. Later, in subsequent newsletters or at a monthly program, each site clearly deserves more attention. James Keeler planned one whale of a trip for 11 of us this July.

Tamminen Quarry – Day 1: Left: Noah and James decided there just might be good stuff under this big rock. Five minutes later Asher came over to help. Five more minutes and it was clear that whatever was under that big rock was going to stay under that big rock.

Hayes Ledge - Day 2: Left: Sarah, Ed and James hunt for garnets. The small yellow box behind James' left foot is a geiger counter. Some garnets were coated with a black somewhat radioactive mineral. The garnets in the upper picture below are almandine-spessartine and are not very radioactive. The larger ones are a bit larger than a half inch in diameter. Many show wonderful lustrous faces. There is garnet in the lower photograph also, but the black mineral and the alteration yellow and green coatings are quite radioactive and garnets beneath tend to crumble. There was quartz to hunt here also, and a whole lot of black tourmaline (schorl). No one was ready to leave.

Harvard Quarry – Day 3: After a visit to the Maine Mineral and Gem Museum in Bethel in the morning, we set out to conquer Noyes Mountain and the Harvard Quarry. The hike in (and out with minerals) nearly conquered us, but what a location. When I go back I will be prepared for the 75-minute trek, not the 20 minute stroll that we had been told. Great variety of minerals, but by the time we got there we lacked energy and had limited time to do the site justice. The view from the top is spectacular, the long walk out, not so much. How is Heidi smiling?

Havey Quarry – Day 4: It rained a lot overnight, but that only let us see all those green and red gem elbaite tourmalines all the better. We dug and sifted all day and went home wet and happy. That's my half inch tourmaline on quartz in the lower left and Heidi's purple fluorapatite to the lower right.



Wayne County Gem & Mineral Contacts

ELECTED OFFICERS

President - Linda Schmidtgall
lees(at)tds.net 315-365-2448
Vice-President - Fred Haynes
fredmhaynes55(at)gmail.com 585-203-1733
Secretary - Debbie Breeze
Treasurer - Bill Lesniak

Board of Directors
Gary Thomas
Bob Linderbery
Heidi Morgenstern
James Keeler

Past President - Glenn Weiler

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

APPOINTED POSITIONS

Bill Chapman – Field Trip Chair

Fred Haynes – Newsletter Editor
fredmhaynes55(at)gmail.com

Bill Lesniak – Website Coordinator
Glenn Weiler – Workshop Coordinator

Linda Schmidtgall – Collection Curator
Eric Elias: GEMFEST Show Chair

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