

The Lake George Gem and Mineral Club -

Club News, November, 2008



Meeting Time 10:00 AM!

Program for the Month:

Election of new officers for 2009. Please be prepared to nominate candidates for President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary

Silent Auction: Bring specimens, books, etc. that you can spare to help the Club's treasury and a few dollars to take home some treasures!

Field Trip for the Month: [Weather permitting](#), John Rakowski will lead a trip to a promising pegmatite locality very close to Lake George. It is accessible by normal passenger automobile. Bring pegmatite digging tools, which include: small pick, small shovel, gad bar, old screwdriver, and bamboo skewers. Some members will have bigger shovels, picks, and pry bars, so not everyone needs to worry about that. The digging site is about 200 yds. from a parking area. This area may be the locality where Bob Madole's brother found an 8.5-inch smoky quartz crystal, now in the PPHS Museum in Florissant. The find was made about 50 years ago, and relatively little digging has taken place since then.

Coming Events

New Mexico Mineral Symposium

Macey Center, New Mexico Inst. Of Mining and Technology, Socorro; more info-contact Dr. Virgil Lueth, 505-835-5140 or vlueth@nmt.edu

... November
8-9

Colorado Chapter, Friends of Mineralogy

"Geology and Mineralogy of the Cripple Creek District", by Dr. Bob Carnein, Denver Museum of Nature

... November
13, 7:30PM

"Rush and Bust! Aspen's Silver Mining Legacy" by Dr. Malcolm Rohrbough

Western Museum of Mining & Industry; no charge. RSVP by Nov. 7 to 719-488-0880 or info@wmimi.org

... November
14, 7PM

Littleton Gem & Mineral Club Silent Auction

Columbine Hills Church, 9700 Old Coal Mine Ave., Littleton; contact Jim Hooten, 303-770-7177 or jhooten@msnl.com

... November
17

Colorado Springs Mineralogical Society

"The Amazing Story of Guffey", by Steven Wade Veatch, Colorado Springs Senior Center, 1514 N. Hancock Blvd.

... November
20, 7:30PM

Denver Area Mineral Dealers Gem, Mineral, & Jewelry Show

Exhibit halls, Jefferson Co. Fairgrounds, just west of Indiana on the 6th Ave. service

... November
21-23

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road.

Flatirons Mineral Club

Annual Gem and Mineral Show, Boulder County Fairgrounds exhibit building, 9595 Nelson Rd., Longmont, Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-5:30, Sun. 10-4; contact Ray Gilbert at hoss1@cs.com

**December
12-14**

Tucson Electric Park RV Gem Show

Kino Sports Comple, 2500 E. Ajo Way, Tucson; teprv.gemshow@yahoo.com

**January 31-
February 15,
daily 9:30-
5:30**

LGGMClub Presents to Guffey Community at Potluck Dinner

Report & photos by Dan Alfrey

A very large turnout enjoyed lots of home cooking (potluck and buffet), a little history, many interesting tidbits, and fascinating local geological findings of the Guffey area. It was the **1st official Lake George Gem & Mineral Club CLUB PROJECT**, compiled by local rockhounds, geologists, hobbyists, scientists, professors, historians, and folks like you.

The presentation was delivered by member **Steven Veatch**. Many project participants from the LGGMC were also present, including President **Maury Hammond**, Secretary **Becky Blair**, and contributor **Wayne Johnston**. **Jo Beckwith** is a relatively new member who instigated the project and introduced the speaker. **Chris Peterson**, another Guffey resident, representing his cloudbait (meteorite tracking) observatory, was present and contributed greatly to the article. Field-trip Chair **Dan Alfrey** utilized VP **John Rakowski's** portable display case and specimens from local miner/member Richard Fretterd as well as several pieces belonging to **Jo Beckwith**. We missed the others who helped with the project but couldn't make it. What a great effort by all involved!! The blue agate was a big hit!

Steve informed the group that we had just gotten through "practicing" on the nice folks at the Denver Gem & Mineral Show (2nd largest in the U.S.) on September 13, so we could do our best in front of the "home crowd"! A wide range of individuals had a lot of fun participating, and the final paper should be interesting. It was a learning experience for all, and the food was awesome!

Please note: Steve Veatch will present this topic, "From Mineral Strike to Meteor Strike" at the New Mexico Mineral Symposium, at Socorro, NM, on Nov. 8-9. (He will also share with the CSMS in November and with the LGGMC later this winter when we can't get out for field trips).



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Out on a Rock -

The Editor's Thoughts
for Today

Bob Carnein, Editor

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719-687-2739



Dear LGGM Member,

As some of you know, **Richard Parsons** has stepped down after 5 years as Editor of this Newsletter. When I joined the Club last year, I must have checked off a box labeled "Newsletter" on the membership form, because, this summer, Richard asked me to take over. That came as a shock, but, as a frustrated writer, I agreed to give it a try.

For those of you who don't know me, let me introduce myself. I'm a geologist with degrees from Ohio State. Early in my career, I taught undergraduate geology courses at Waynesburg College, in southwestern Pennsylvania. As some of you know, Waynesburg College's President, Paul R. Stewart, spent many summers in Florissant, where, in the early 1960s, he and his friends built a small, concrete-block museum to house Colorado minerals and fossils that they collected over the years. That building eventually became the Waynesburg College Rocky Mountain Field Station. Among my other duties, I was privileged to teach Waynesburg's summer field-geology course, which was housed there, from 1972-1988. I met my wife Nell in Florissant, where she and her first husband, Walt Ibach, operated a gift shop in the Fossil Inn. Our daughter and her husband have a home in Indian Creek, near where John Rakowski lives. When I retired from teaching in 2007, it made sense for us to return to Florissant.

I have collected minerals since I was a kid, starting out in the famous Connecticut pegmatites and other localities in New York and New Jersey. My duties at the Waynesburg College field camp kept me so busy that I didn't have much time for collecting in Colorado, but I hope to remedy that situation as a retiree. My interests include crystallography and conservation and preservation of mineral collections.

As a new Editor who has limited experience with the LGGMC, I need your help. Stories about members, collecting trips, local geology, and **your** interests are what made the Newsletter, under Richard's leadership, fun to read. Although articles that have been published elsewhere can be useful, I'd prefer to see as much local content as possible. I don't want my input to dominate the Newsletter (as you can see, I'm pretty long-winded, and my article on quartz "handedness" in the October Newsletter received mixed reviews).

Please send anything that you want to share with the membership to me at ccarnein@lhup.edu, or send it by snail mail. Also, please don't hesitate to send me your feedback and suggestions. My ego is relatively tough after 37 years of teaching.

Remember, just because my main interest is mineralogy, that doesn't mean I don't like to read articles about fossils, gemology, or mining history.

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KUDOS

Speaking of conservation of collections, we all owe our thanks to Richard Parsons, John Rakowski, and Andy Weinzapfel, who recently spent a day numbering and cataloging the specimens on display at the Pikes Peak Historical Society Museum, in Florissant. Thanks to them, that excellent collection, most of which was donated by LGGMC members, is now properly documented. If somebody mixes up the labels, it will now be very easy to get them back in order. This is the kind of “behind the scenes” work that adds scientific, historical and monetary value to a collection (see my article later in this Newsletter). Thanks to Richard, John, and Andy!

C.R. (Bob) Carnein
Newsletter Editor

Collection Management By Bob Carnein

Over my 54 years collecting minerals, I have seen several good collections that were ruined by careless documentation. Most recently, I attended two mineral auctions in Manitou Springs in which 20 to 40 percent of the specimens were mis-identified or attributed to incorrect localities. A fine South American rhodonite was labeled as rhodochrosite from the Sweet Home mine; a nice Chinese cinnabar was called rubellite. I paid \$5 for a beautiful 1.5-inch bow-tie azurite-crystal group that was labeled as Brazilian kyanite. After I confronted him at the first sale, the auctioneer was forced to spend several minutes explaining to potential buyers that nothing was guaranteed to be what the labels said. However, when I offered to help with the second sale, I was politely turned down and told that the owner of the specimens might be offended.

Both the scientific and the monetary value of a collection of minerals, fossils, or archaeological items depend on proper documentation. Although the owner or collector may think he or she will remember the important information forever, memory loss eventually overtakes most of us, and death may inconvenience our plans to get our collections in order. After we go off to our ultimate destinations, family members or well meaning friends may shuffle through our collections, mixing up labels (if there are any) and confusing what we thought was a perfectly logical system of organization. If somebody can't get things back into order, the resulting mess has no scientific value, and serious dealers and buyers will steeply discount the “collection's” value.

There is only one way to prevent the kind of mess that I'm talking about, and it's easy if you start early (and, I might add, **it's never too late**). There are several important steps:

1. Decide on a catalog system of some kind. Some people simply number specimens in the order acquired; others use *Fleischer's Glossary of Mineral Species* or some other print reference as a basis. Because new minerals are described continuously, print references are not very satisfactory, but many of us started collecting before computers came along, and it's a real challenge to switch to one of the excellent, instantly updatable computerized catalog

schemes now available. I regret that I did not start out using the Dana system (available even in 1954 and now available on the internet), which attempts to number minerals in orderly groups based on their relationships. When I was young, this seemed needlessly complex, but I have grown to appreciate its usefulness.

2. Assign a number to each new acquisition, based on the system you chose. Combinations of numbers and letters can be used for multiple specimens of the same mineral.
3. Make a label, and place the number both on your label and on the specimen. If you bought or traded the specimen, keep whatever labels came with it. Old labels allow one to trace the specimen's history, and their preservation may multiply its monetary and historical value. Thanks to the Mineralogical Record's label database (available on the internet), old labels can be used to estimate when the specimen was found. If you already have your own personal collection label, I urge you to send a copy to the Min. Rec. for inclusion in that database.
4. Maintain a catalog, in which you record the number and pertinent information about the specimen. The catalog should include, at a minimum, the mineral's name, the locality from which it came (**this is most important**), and where and when you obtained it. Computerized cataloging systems may allow you to insert photos. If you do, a scale helps the viewer to get an idea of the item's size. Some collectors include chemical formulas, dimensions (terms such as *cabinet*, *miniature*, *thumbnail*, or *micromount* may be useful; definitions can be found on the internet), and, if appropriate, information on fluorescent response, provenance, old collectors' labels, prices, or what they traded for the specimen. Anything that makes the item rare, unusual, or distinctive (e.g. twinning, association, odd colors, etc.) should be noted. I generally try to cross-reference catalog items in which more than one significant mineral is present.
5. Don't be embarrassed to ask for help. Some experienced collectors, whether amateurs or experts, enjoy helping to sort out problem collections. Speaking for myself, such tasks challenge my identification skills and satisfy my desire to organize the disorganized. I see this as both fun and important.

All of this takes time, patience, and discipline. However, without it, your collection, on which you spent countless hours and/or dollars, may suffer the fate of several I have seen. Some excellent items may lose whatever value they had because even an expert could not reconstruct their source. I have even heard of collections being thrown away because no one recognized their significance. None of us wants to see that happen.

With a good catalog system, you can help to assure that at least parts of your collection will be passed down to future collectors or incorporated into scientific databases. Who knows? With luck, your name might enter the annals of the history of mineralogy. There are worse things than that!

Please visit the Club website for more information:

www.LGGMclub.org