March 20th meeting, SPECIAL TIME 6:00 p.m. IN PERSON at BOAL HALL:

GEODE NIGHT!

With a NEW program on The Peculiar Geodes from the Trancas Station Deposit, Chihuahua, Mexico by Jeff Smith

Our March meeting will be held Wednesday the 20th in Boal Hall (Boalsburg Fire Hall), 113 East Pine St., Boalsburg, PA 16827. Maps can be found on our web site.
- 6:00 to 7:10 p.m.: Purchasing & opening geodes
- about 7:15 p.m.: featured program on Mexican geodes

The event has free admission and free parking (lot just east of Fire Hall along East Pine St.), and is open to all; parents/guardians must provide supervision of minors. Bring your friends and their kids and share an interesting evening.

NMS is very happy to welcome back Jeff Smith, “the Geode Guy,” to present Geode Night to our club. Starting at 6:00 p.m., various sizes of whole geodes will be available for purchase at $5 and up. After you buy, Jeff will crack them open for you and you’ll be the first person ever to see the crystals inside. If yours turns out to be solid, you can pick another at no charge.

At about 7:15 p.m., after the geode cracking has been completed, Jeff Smith will present a program on these geodes. Most of Jeff’s presentations in past years were about the Las Choyas geodes. This year he has a new program on the Trancas Station geodes. The event is family friendly and very interesting; no purchase is necessary, you can come just for the program.

See the complete article on Trancas Station Geodes on pages 4-5.

Download printable flyers for Junior Ed Day and Geode Night at www.nittanymineral.org

Minerals Junior Ed. Day March 23
Register kids NOW at http://www.nittanymineral.org/juniored.htm
Volunteers Needed

Minerals Junior Education Day Set for March 23, 2024

Registration is underway for our big annual event for kids and families. See page 3 for the details - we’ll have ten stations for the kids to visit, a booklet and specimens to take home, and a sales table. Advance donations of specimens for the sales table are also invited. We’ll continue to discuss the plans at the March 20th meeting, or contact Frank Kowalczyk: 814-404-9854 or frankj.kowalczyk@gmail.com
Please tell your friends and relatives and their kids!

2024 EFMLS Wildacres Workshop from https://efmls.org/wildacres/

The EFMLS Wildacres Workshop will be held May 13-19 at its cool mountain-top setting near Little Switzerland in North Carolina. Offered at the sessions are classes in various facets of the earth sciences. Indulge your passion for minerals, gems, jewelry, and craft.

From EFMLS News, v.71 no.1, January 2024:
We are very fortunate to have a fabulous new Speaker-in-Residence for the Spring 2024 session of the EFMLS Wildacres Workshop, Michael J. Colella, a multi-faceted artist, who will share his passion of photography, rocks and minerals, world sands, suiseki stones, and woodturning art.

The registration form is on the EFMLS web site. -Editor
Symposium for mineral collecting enthusiasts - tentative plans include:

Friday evening Nov. 8: Meet & Greet - Talk about minerals and more!

Saturday Nov. 9: Hybrid Symposium - ONLINE or IN PERSON
  8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at University of Pittsburgh - Johnstown
  Talks by knowledgeable SPEAKERS on Pennsylvania Mineralogy and Geology

2nd Annual Mineral Show - Silent Auction - Give-away Table - Conversation

Professional Geologists: Professional Development Hour credits available for full lecture attendance

Sunday Nov. 10: Field Trip. Open only to symposium registrants.

Watch for details, registration form, changes and UPDATES on our web site:
www.rasloto.com/FM or Friends of Mineralogy Pennsylvania on Facebook

FEDERATION NEWS

Nittany Mineralogical Society, Inc., is a member of EFMLS, the Eastern Federation of Mineralogical and Lapidary Societies, and therefore an affiliate of AFMS, the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies. We encourage our readers to read their monthly newsletters, which are linked from our web site, <http://www.nittanymineral.org>.

In the Eastern Federation’s March Newsletter, President Bill Stephens discusses his trip to the Tucson Mineral Symposium, progress in EFMLS, and the Young Mineral Collectors (under age 40) online group. Safety aspects of the AFMS Code of Ethics for collectors are reviewed, and nominations for EFMLS offices are invited. The Eastern Federation honorees of the AFMS Scholarship Program for the last 50 years are listed.

The AFMS March Newsletter continues providing information on the May 24-26 convention in Ventura, CA; see below and updates at <www.2024cfms-afms.com>. President Roger Burford discusses his recent trip to Arizona to visit Quartzsite and the Tucson shows, finding lots to fill the truck and take home. There’s much more!

-Editor

130 Years ago in The Mineral Collector

March 1894 saw the publication of the first issue of The Mineral Collector magazine in New York City. The first page explains how it was initiated because The Mineralogist’s Monthly and Minerals magazines had ceased publication. One ad offered for sale a large New York collection which “cannot be duplicated, because the places which afforded the specimens are now built upon.” A full page ad by John Wiley & Sons, Publishers, included the 15th edition of Dana’s A Text Book of Mineralogy for $3.50.

-Editor
Minerals Junior Education Day
March 23

Minerals Junior Education Day is coming up fast - Saturday, March 23, 2024! At this event, students in grades 1-8, accompanied by their parents, visit a series of stations to learn about various aspects of minerals, earth sciences or lapidary, and get specimens to take home. Volunteer station leaders and Coordinator Frank Kowalczyk have made great progress, with ten stations planned – see the list at left.

It’s time to register kids to attend! See the flyer at left, and tell your friends. Download flyers, and register attendees, at http://www.nittanymineral.org/juniored.htm

Please volunteer to help at this rewarding event. Donations of minerals, books, etc., for the sales table are also welcomed - make arrangements in advance (with Dave Glick; see page 8), so that we can get them organized and priced. To volunteer, contact Frank Kowalczyk: frank.j.kowalczyk@gmail.com or 814-404-9854.
The Peculiar Geodes from the Trancas Station Deposit, Chihuahua Mexico

By Jeff Smith

Google Trancas Station geodes and you will quickly discover numerous individuals and mineral dealers offering the geodes for sale. Attend a mineral show and you will likely see vendors offering Trancas Station geodes for cracking. In fact, the Google search will reveal that Trancas Station geodes are being offered by dealers overseas. Even though these geodes have been on the market for over 50 years, there is very little site-specific information regarding their origin.

As I prepared for this presentation, I performed a literature search from various sources, and found general information that the geodes occurred in rhyolite, are mined at the surface, have unusual quartz crystals and contain fluorescent chalcedony. In conjunction with my 19 trips to the Las Choyas geode mine over the past 24 years, I have had the opportunity to investigate and field collect at the Trancas Station geode deposit three times - in 2002, 2013 and 2014. In the past 6 months I have also photographed over 900 Trancas specimens. The geode deposit appears to be far more complex in its origin and mineralization than what was found in my literature search.

In the early 1970’s a rancher found pieces of sparkling rock on the ground while herding his cattle. As he investigated the area he realized he had discovered a new geode deposit. The Trancas Station geode deposit is located approximately 15 miles northeast of the town of Aldama. The Trancas Station geode deposit is so named because it is adjacent to an old railway line and train stop (Trancas Station) along the route from Chihuahua City to Ojinada. Before it was known as Trancas Station, the area was called Piedras Negras (Black Rock), and was originally settled as a “colonia” or colony in the early 1900’s, when a group of Mexican citizens purchased approximately 80,000 acres of land from the government to establish a community with it’s own leaders and governing body. The geode deposit was discovered on a portion of the original colonia.

Geologically, the geodes occur in rocks within the Chihuahua Tectonic Belt. This belt is a northwest-trending fold-and-thrust fault zone that extends through eastern Chihuahua, Mexico. From the Paleozoic through the Cenozoic, thousands of feet of marine limestone were deposited. During the Tertiary, volcanic activity occurred at the site, depositing rhyolite with void spaces unconformably on top of the limestone. Meteoric water with dissolved minerals percolated through the preserved voids to form the geodes.

Since the geode-bearing rock is flat-lying and exposed at the surface, a variety of mining equipment and techniques have been employed. Surface mining has been the primary mining method, with a few shallow underground tunnels.

Quartz is the primary mineral in the geodes, occurring in crystals with fascinating shapes and designs. The geochemical conditions are not completely understood; however, conditions must have been changing rapidly during crystallization to create these complex forms.
Typical hexagonal quartz crystals are rare in Trancas geodes. Chalcedony is fairly common in botryoidal form and fluoresces green under short-wave UV light. A high percentage of individual clear quartz crystals contain white cylindrical cores of white chalcedony. Calcite is the main secondary mineral and occurs in a variety of morphologies. Microminerals occur and SEM analysis was performed on several of my geodes in 2003. The analysis suggests the presence of hollandite, romanecite, and psilomelane. In specimens I’ve collected since then, I’ve observed what appear to be cryptomelane micros, and further examination may identify other microminerals as well. As a side note, around the edge of the deposit where the underlying limestone is exposed, various marine fossils can be found. As mining continues at the deposit, additional specimens will be available for continued study.

This presentation seeks to contribute to the ongoing scientific research on the geodes from Trancas Station in an effort to begin developing a model for origin of their unique crystallization.
EFMLS
President’s Message

TUCSON !!
WOW !!

From EFMLS News, v.71 no.3, March 2024

This year was perhaps the most eventful and lengthy trek for me personally, and so much happened it’s just not possible to cover it all, but I can try 😊. I’d like to direct everyone to the Friends of Mineralogy National website to review my full report under the President’s Message for the forthcoming issue due out end of March. That’s right! I was elected President of the Friends of Mineralogy National organization.

The Friends of Mineralogy National has 8 regional chapters including the NJ and PA, and the recently revamped VA Chapters, all of which are members of EFMLS, and is closely affiliated with the Tucson Gem and Mineral Show, the Mineralogical Record, Rocks and Minerals Magazine, Mineral News, the Mineralogical Society of America, and others. FM-National conducts a major symposium at the Tucson Show every year. This year both the TGMS Show theme and our Symposium theme “Pegmatites: Crystals Big and Small” focused on pegmatite gems and minerals, and Mark Jacobson, immediate past President and Symposium Chair, had assembled a fantastic line-up of pegmatite experts including three of the experts who participated in a Pegmatite related event back in the 1980’s. Mike Menzies, Dave London and Peter Lyckberg all gave fantastic talks while I struggled to run the live streaming for our remote viewers. Please visit the FM National website to check out both my full Tucson Report and the abstracts for the speakers this year. Extremely impressive line-up.

Fluorite from the “Ice Cream Igloo” pocket mined by Mike and Bradley of “Two Guys One Hole”. The “Beast” featured in the photo in the upper center of the case weighs in at about 1300 lbs and is currently on display at the Museum in Socorro, NM. 

For me, a lot of advance planning went into this year’s travel plans, beginning with me renting a house in Star Valley, southwest Tucson, for February 1-11 and securing some roommates to share the rent. Tommy Greene (NJMC) and I left my house in Rising Sun, Maryland, January 24th in the early evening and headed for Albuquerque NM (driving our separate trucks) where we planned to hook up with our other roommates, Mike and Bradley, of the now famous “Two Guys One Hole” digging team. These guys spent six weeks last spring excavating a huge collapsed breccia pocket lined floor to ceiling with light green, purple tipped stepped cubic and eroded fluorite that looked like snow cones. They named the pocket the Ice Cream Igloo pocket and both it and they have become quite famous. The boys took us up to the Blanchard Mine, Southeast of Socorro near the Trinity nuclear bomb test site to dig fluorite for a few days. Man, what an experience! Tommy and I killed it. Lots of blue and some purple fluorite.

I really enjoyed connecting with people and talking about collecting. Hung out with Wayne Schrimp of Capistrano Mining and Tara Haymore quite a bit including sushi at Ginza’s. Lee Levesque (Syracuse club, finder of the largest known skeletal Herkimers), Wendy, and I had lunch with Brian Busse of “Prospectors” fame, and he invited us to dig aqua at Mount Antero any time. I had lots of invites to dig all over the US and Australia. Maybe, someday… I always find it amazing how you can just bump into people you know at a colossal series of events that span weeks with 45-50 independent shows at facilities all over the city. Almost like it’s meant to be.

So, I bought some stuff, mainly supplies like flats, boxes, two thumbnail cases (Graham Sutton has the best thumbnail cases) and books like the 3-volume set on the minerals of Franklin and Sterling Hill, Pegmatites, and the new book on mineral prep and cleaning. I didn’t sell any of my books on the Herkimer crystals Lee Levesque found, but did give a few away to various folks, signed, including Gail Spann. I did buy some wulfenite and vanadinite from Roger at Red Cloud, a few pieces of gem bicolored topaz and one nice heliodor from the Volyn Pegmatite in the Ukraine, and a bunch more ammolite in see-through boxes. Love that stuff.

I do want to put in a plug for the Young Mineral Collectors (YMC), a relatively new organization that consists of mostly serious miners and collectors under the age of 40. It’s a new 501(c)(3) and its open to anyone to
join who is under 40 and serious about minerals. John Rakovan of the NM Bureau and museum gave a great talk at their event, to which I was invited, at the Fine Mineral Museum/gallery in downtown Tucson.

The EFMLS Board met in November and met again February 25 to discuss upcoming agenda items for this year. We had a quorum both times. The next meeting will be March 24, and we will continue to discuss the particulars of the upcoming convention to be held June 8 at the Sterling Hill Museum in New Jersey. Cheryl Neary, Secretary and Convention chair will be reporting more details.

The EFMLS is in sound financial condition. Kudos to new treasurer Sylvia Eppig for saving us nearly $3,000 by filing the 990EZ tax form electronically for $80! Club dues and insurance renewals are coming in nearly every day, but we are still upside down on what we paid this year, and we overpaid last year a small amount. We recognize that we will never get a quote from the insurance company in advance of needing to get the forms on the website and out via email to the clubs. We have made the decision not to wait, and use the statistics from this and past years to forecast what the costs will likely be next year. We also incurred over $800 in taxes, something we have not seen in the past.

Instructions on how to download the Mini-Miners Monthly will go out shortly [see article at right - Editor]. We have received some inquiries from clubs having difficulty with the download, so if you are having trouble, email the webmaster and get some help.

I presume registration for Wildacres is going well but have not heard in time for this issue. Last year the registration filled up early with a big waiting list.

If your club is having difficulties staying afloat or is considering leaving EFMLS, please contact me directly and let’s discuss how the EFMLS can help your organization out. I continue to hear comments from some folks who are completely unaware of all the improvements and benefits we provide, and are hung up on the problems of that rogue administration during the COVID years. Call me, email me, but reach out before it’s too late. Even healthy thriving clubs should ask me to give a message at a meeting so your executives and loyal members can hear what we have to offer other than just insurance. It’s a lot!

All for now. Get your dues & insurance renewals in (thanks to those who have already completed the renewal process). Stay tuned and happy hunting!

Sincerely,
Bill Stephens, PG, EFMLS President

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New Benefit for EFMLS Clubs!!!

Diamond Dan’s
Mini Miners Monthly
from EFMLS News Vol. 71, No. 3, March 2024

The EFMLS has added a new benefit for clubs. Darryl Powell, also known as Diamond Dan, is providing Eastern Federation members with his Mini Miners issues. This is a monthly PDF designed with your junior members in mind.

You may download the PDF from the EFMLS website: https://efmls.org/news/ You may print copies to hand out at shows and other events, such as someone giving a presentation to a school earth sciences class. You may also e-mail it to members. Please, do not print copies for sale.

Geo-Sudoku
by David Glick

The puzzle below contains the letters EHLIORSTY. One row or column spells the rocks containing Trancas Station geodes. If you’ve read this issue, you’ve seen it. Each block of 9 squares, each row, and each column must contain each of the nine letters exactly once. The solution is on page 8.

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T H O
O R T I S E
L I H O Y T
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T Y L
H R L
O E I
E S Y R
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CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENT
FOR SALE - 71 flats of various minerals - Pennsylvania, Western states (Oregon, Colorado, Utah), Fossils, German minerals, Quartz xls (various localities), Tennessee, New England, and more, at very reasonable prices! I've completed a 5-year re-organization of the collection and it's time to let the excess go: thumbnails to medium size specimens, all labeled as to location (I am a stickler to exact location!). The majority are $5 and under with prices topping out at $20, or mix and match for $40 per flat. Gold specimens are all thumbnails - $5 to $40. Mineral List can be provided. The minerals are currently at my residence located 20 or so miles east of Pittsburgh. Contact Frank Lotito: (724) 840-2179 or flotito1@verizon.net.
UPCOMING EVENTS

Confirm details of events before attending.
https://efmls.org/events/

See other show calendar links on our web site.

Lulu Temple, 5140 Butler Pike, Plymouth Meeting, PA
Sat 10-5, Sun 109-4. www.phillyrocks.org


June 1, 2024: Spring Mineralfest, by Penna. Earth Sciences Assoc. Macungie, PA. Sat. only, 8:30 -3:00. https://www.mineralfest.com/


August 16-18, 2024: Gem Miner’s Jubilee Gem & Jewelry show. Lebanon Valley Fairgrounds and Expo,
80 Rocherty Road in Lebanon PA. Fri & Sat 10-6, Sun. 10-4. https://www.gem-show.com/summer-show

October 5, 2024: Fall Mineralfest, by Penna. Earth Sciences Assoc. Macungie, PA. Sat. only, 8:30 -3:00. https://www.mineralfest.com/

Nov. 2-3, 2024: Gemarama Annual Show, by Tuscarora Lapidary Society. Greater Philadelphia Expo Center,
100 Station Avenue, Oaks, PA. Saturday 10-6 / Sunday 10-5. https://www.lapidary.org/gemarama/

INVITE A FRIEND TO JOIN THE SOCIETY

The Nittany Mineralogical Society prides itself on having among the finest line-up of speakers of any earth sciences club in the nation. Everyone is welcome at our meetings. If you’d like to be part of our Society, dues are $25 (regular member), $10 (student rate), $18 (seniors), $35 (family of two or more members, names listed). Those joining in March or later may request pro-rated dues. Your dues are used for programs and speakers, refreshments, educational activities, Bulletins, and mailing expenses. Please fill out a membership form (available at www.nittanymineral.org), make checks payable to “Nittany Mineralogical Society, Inc.” and send them in as directed, or bring your dues to the next meeting.

We want to welcome you!

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