THE BADGER DIGGIN'S

The Badger Lapidary and Geological Society, Inc.
Monroe, Wisconsin

Devoted to the Earth Sciences

Vol. 44, No. 8 October 2009

President's Message

Dear Badgers,

It has been a great year for the Club and it is not over yet. We still have one last fieldtrip to look forward to before the snow flies, there is talk of a member's auction being organized, and I'm especially looking forward to gearing up for the next Badger Club show in the spring. While the Badger Club is known for its educational activities, collecting fieldtrips, and splendid show, the club's real treasure lies in the camaraderie of its intelligent, creative, and fun-loving membership. In that spirit, I hope that all Badger Club members can please accept our invitation to attend a **Lapidary Day** party at the Dan and Laurie Trocke family farm on **Saturday, October 10th** starting at **11:00 a.m.** till the coyotes howl (late).

Please **RSVP** to dtrocke@acscm.com with how many in your party will be coming, so that we can be prepared for the turnout.

If anyone would like to bring a side-dish or dessert to pass and a folding chair, we would appreciate it.

If you have one of the Club's lapidary machines and plan to attend, please bring the machine with you. If you have a club machine but cannot attend, please contact me or another club member to arrange for some kind of pick-up. Thanks!

The Day's Events:

- **Hands on Lapidary Workshop** – cutting, grinding, polishing, cracking, trimming, tumbling, etc. Please bring some rocks or geodes if you have them and your ideas.
- **Lunch provided:** Grilled chicken, hamburgers, brats and potluck. Please bring a side-dish or dessert to pass and a folding chair (if you have one).
- **Drinks provided:** juice, milk, Long Island Iced Teas, and beer.
- **Itinerant Petting Zoo:** on site. (Watch your step.)
- **Collecting Trip**: Immediately after lunch we'll take a quick trip to a local quarry for fossils, including the famous "petrified snakes" of Iowa County (actually, cephalopods) found there. Please bring hard rock tools, gloves and safety glasses.
- **Dinner provided:** Jambalaya stew and leftovers.
- **Campfire:** For those able to stay late and weather permitting, we're planning to hang out around the campfire once it gets dark and enjoy the great company. Please plan to drink responsibly, car pool, or designate a driver.
- **Camping:** For those willing to brave the unpredictable October weather, feel free to set up a tent and camp to eliminate the worry about a drive home.

[President's Message – cont. on next page]

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Lapidary Machines available for you to use:

- 24” diamond saw (Bring a big stone / boulder you’ve always wanted to cut.)
- 16” diamond saw (Bring a fist-sized stone you’ve always wanted to cut.)
- Belt sander on bench arbor
- Club 10” diamond saw
- 6” combination trim saw, grinding bench and polisher (old school bench set up)
- Club “Genie”, 6 wheel, 6” grinder / polisher
- A rented “Genie”, 6 wheel, 6” grinder / polisher
- 14-lb capacity vibratory tumbler (Do you have some quartz-hardness agates or other stones to be tumbled? Bring them along.)
- Club geode cracker
- Club flat lap or vibratory lap
- I also have a box of geodes and agates for kids to pick one to cut and polish. (Kids must be assisted and supervised when learning to use the machines.)
- If you have a lapidary machine, tool, rock, or project you would like to show or share, please bring it.

Directions: It takes about one hour and 10 minutes to drive from Monroe to our house, but it is a beautiful drive this time of year. The address is: **4771 County Road II, Highland, WI 53543.** From Madison, take Hwy. 18 / 151 to Dodgeville. Take the Hwy. 18 Dodgeville Exit #44. Stay on 18 through town. After going through Dodgeville, take your first right on County Hwy. Q. Follow Q for about 6 miles, then turn right on County Hwy. II, just before crossing the Otter Creek Bridge. Our farm is the first house you will see on your right.

We hope you will be able to join us.

Your friends,
Dan and Laurie Trocke
Home Phone: 608-935-0597
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Won’t you hang out with us?

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Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order on September 12th at the Monroe Public Library after the Show and Tell. In attendance were: Dan & Laurie Trocke and family; Daisy & John Peterson; Neal & Linda Trickel; Tyrel & Danielle Rouse; Chunk Kiesling; Jordan & Teri Marché; Clay Schroll; Cathy Romeis; Kim Hoxie; Brian & Cindy Green; and Dave & Donna Reese.

We welcomed back Chunk Kiesling and them moved on to the *Treasurer's Report*. Daisy said that we have about $1300 in checking and about $100 in savings. She said that she had gone back to school over the summer and would try to continue as treasurer, but that she would really appreciate it if everyone could help her out, especially during the show, by getting any receipts to her early. She also wondered if someone else could pursue the task of getting the club signed up as a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. Kim Hoxie volunteered to do this! Thanks Kim!!

Then we moved onto *Announcements* and reminders. The next field trip will be on September 26th to the Cedar Rapids area and south. There are two quarries in eastern Iowa that we are planning to visit for fossils and minerals. Teri Marché is finalizing this trip and will send out information soon. The lapidary meeting at the Trocke's farm will be on October 10th. There was a sign up on the What's Rockin' table. Please bring any equipment if you have it; also, this will be a potluck, so please bring a dish to pass. We will also be going to a local limestone quarry to hunt for fossils that day, so bring safety and hunting gear with you. The October 24th field trip will be to the 'Batcave' near Beetown. That sign up was also on the table.

The first door prize was won by Chunk Kiesling. He won a very nice polished *Orthroceras* cephalopod.

Next on the agenda was *Old Business*. We once again brought up the matter of the elusive web site. Dave Zimmerman contacted Dan to let him know that the domain name **www.monroerockclub.com** was available. We could pick it back up, but are still in need of someone to build and run a website. That domain name would be purchased through www.1and1.com for a onetime fee of $9.00 and can set up a basic website through them for free as well. We could also get a Norton anti-virus package for $4.99 a month and that would be the only continuing payment unless we opt for one of their more advanced website building packages. Dave Cress also suggested that we could build a basic site through www.freewebs.com and Jack Hoxie suggested just setting up a page on a social networking site such as Facebook or MySpace. Jordan suggested talking to the Monroe High School about the possibility of a student taking this on as a project. Daisy Peterson said that she would look into this option.

Teri said that she and Dan and the kids had started the task of sorting through the Bud Higgins collection and suggested that we hold a club auction sometime this winter and that anything that wasn't purchased by club members could be sold at the Club sales table at the March show. She wondered if there were any volunteers to help go through this collection. Also, Dave Zimmerman donated quite a lot of material to the club and this needs to be sorted as well. The majority of Dave's stuff will go to the fishpond or the spinner game.

The second door prize was won by Cindy Greene. She won a beautiful pair of earrings that had been made by Charles Ramsayer.

Moving on to *New Business*, Jack Hoxie had suggested that we have a flyer or business card that we could hand out with information about the Club. Dan brought a copy of the Madison club flyer as an example. Teri asked if bookmarks might be a possibility, but after some discussion, it was decided that business cards might be the best idea as they are cheap and easy to make. Dan Trocke said that he would pursue this.

Dan then asked if anyone had any objections to renting a Genie from Bernie's Rock Shop for the lapidary party again this year. Everyone thought this was a good idea, so Dan will pick it up before the party so that we will have two Genies available. If anyone has any suggestions or ideas to make the party better, please let us know!

Teri Marché then gave the *Show Business* report. She said that there are six dealers that have already paid at least half. There are 10 dealers for next

year's show, we lost one but picked up another. She has also sent the contract to the Green County Homemakers for the meals during the show. She needs to meet with Dan to talk about advertising and then recruit people to help. The advertising includes on-line contacts, publications, flyers, etc. **The show dates are March 27th and 28th and the theme is, "Colors of the Earth."** Teri also suggested that we send $40 to Dave Zimmerman for the use of his program that he designed for running the show. She made a motion to this effect and Tyrel seconded it. The motion carried. Daisy will send the check to Dave, along with a wedding card. Teri suggested that we reserve one of the big display tables at the show for material from Rufer Quarry and then invite Mr. Rufer and thank him in person. Dan thought that we should OK it with him first and will send him a letter along with a thank you gift and ask.

The third door prize went to Tyrel Rouse. He won a nice polished septarian ball.

Many thanks to Neal & Linda Trickel for the wonderful food! The next meeting will be the potluck at the Trocke's, so bring a dish to share.

The meeting adjourned at about 1:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laurie Trocke

What's Rockin'

The 'What's Rockin' table was turned into the main tables for the September Show & Tell and the tables were practically groaning under the weight of all of the treasures from this summer. We set up all around the tables and then started on one end and gave everyone a chance to tell their stories and show off their finds.

Dan Trocke started with pictures from the summer club trips and from the Trocke Canada trip. He had a number of nice mica, hornblende, apatite and titanite crystals from Bear Lake Diggings and told about the Princess Sodalite Mine and showed a couple of pieces from there. He then moved on to his treasures from the Wheaton College sale. These included a fossilized turtle shell, a *Baculites* piece, and the treasure of the day, a jawbone that the college thought was from a Titanothere (it turned out that they were wrong – see the article that Dan submitted about this). Dan also had a couple of pieces from club trips earlier this summer. These included his nearly one pound Lake Superior agate; the *Ceraurus* trilobite from the Rufer Quarry; a nice piece of blue fluorite and some massive fluorite from Cave-in-Rock, Illinois and Connor's cephalopod (which Connor has called 'My Precious') which is also from Rufer Quarry. Dan then moved back to the minerals from Canada, including a couple of specimens of radioactive minerals from the Faraday Uranium Mine (these held us up at the border for nearly two hours!). The next item was a neat little zircon from the CN Dump in Bancroft, Ontario. This one has a three-color fluorescence. The next piece was a highly fluorescent hackmanite and a piece of minoite that Dan purchased from 'The Most Interesting Man in the World'. Dan also had a very pretty piece of dioptase; a silver metallic rutile crystal from Grey's Mountain, Georgia; a beautiful piece of phantom calcite from Mexico that fluoresces red, and a really nice piece of galena and calcite from the Sweet Home Mine in Colorado.

John & Daisy Peterson went next. They were out in Oregon and Washington State to take Vincent to college. While they were there, they visited the Mt. Olympia Rain Forest and Mt. Saint Helens. Collecting is not allowed on the volcano, but they found a couple of very neat pieces of volcanic rock in the riverbed below the mountain where collecting is allowed.

Neal and Linda Trickel then showed a very interesting ax head that was part of a collection of Indian artifacts that Neal had inherited. They also brought some 'nuclear plates' (i.e., Fiestaware) that they planned to give to Tyrel. It was suggested that now Tyrel could cook his food without a microwave! The other item that Neal and Linda brought was some very pretty jewelry that Daisy Peterson had made for them out of some opal chips.

Next at the table were Tyrel & Danielle Rouse. Their first trip of the summer was back to Thunder Bay, Ontario for amethyst. They found some very nice clusters and plates and a number of them had really neat phantoms. They also found pyrite &

chalcopyrite in some road cuts in the area. There was also some red jasper that they found in the hills around Mirror Lake. Tyrel highly recommended this area as a great place for collecting and camping. Later in the summer, they headed west. They stopped in Colorado and New Mexico for uranium minerals. They also collected Apache Creek and Sand Canyon agates south of Gallup. A lot of the agate was fluorescent. Then they went to Deming, where there was a Gem Show that led field trips. They visited Rock Hound State Park and found thunder eggs and agate and they met the Geode Kid at the Geo/Lapidary Museum. The big find from that area was Baker thunder eggs with Laguna and shadow banding. Tyrel's next stop was in Idaho for thunder eggs and bogwood which is agatized petrified wood. Both of these glow bright green. He also had some geodes from Jackpot, Nevada and almandine garnet from Salida, Colorado.

After Tyrel, our returning member, Chunk Kiesling, showed us a couple of gold nuggets that he had found while gold panning near his winter home of Arizona. He is a member of the Lake Havasu Gold Seekers Club. The club has about 20 claims and also runs a campground at which that he spends the winters. He explained that they use the method of dry washing to look for gold. One of the nuggets that he brought was ½ pennyweight and valued around $80. He invited everyone to come down and visit and try their hands at gold hunting.

Jordan Marché was up next. He had a very interesting flat cephalopod (*Gonioceras sp.*) that he had collected from the Rufer Quarry in Monroe. He said that it was only the second one that he and Teri had ever found in Wisconsin.

Teri Marché then told about her travels for this summer. She said that she did Wisconsin from coast to coast. On the east coast of Wisconsin, she went along Lake Michigan in the Milwaukee area. She found grey, red, and pink agate, some with green epidote in it. A lot of these pieces were pre-shaped by the lake and ready to saw in half and make into cabs. She also found fossils, chain corals (*Halysites*), and shells. While in that area, she stopped at Cedarburg which has a fantastic gem and mineral shop. For the west coast, she went to the Prairie du Chien area along the Mississippi River. She found Lake Superior agates, banded iron, feldspar, and jasper. She also found some fortification agate on our trip to Bellevue. Teri's other big trip for this summer was with Cathy Romeis to North Carolina. They did a lot of research and found the NC Rocks website and the NC Rockhounding Guide to be particularly helpful. They found that the pay-to-dig gem mines were pretty well played out or else were seeded. They had better luck with outcrops and tailings piles. They found mica, colored feldspar, aquamarine, apatite, tourmaline, emerald, ruby, almandine garnet, rhodolite garnet, Nantahala marble, and smoky quartz on this trip. She said that the best place that they went to was the Ray Mine, which is on forest land and had fantastic aquamarine, beryl, blue apatite and feldspar that was so blue it was nearly amazonite. The only problem that they had with this place is that they kept getting rained out every time they tried to go!

Jayden Trocke went next. He had a nice polished cephalopod, a polished ammonite, a nice piece of dolomite, a trilobite that he bought in Canada, a nice piece of fluorite from Cave in Rock, Illinois and a very cute tiny apatite crystal from Bear Lake Diggings, Ontario.

Last, but far from least, Clay Schroll displayed his treasures from the summer trips. He showed us a cephalopod and some gastropods from Graf, Iowa, along with some nice pieces of *Lepidodendron* root and rootlets from Utica, Illinois. He also had some iron pyrite and some petrified wood from Utica.

Thanks to everyone. We really had some amazing finds for out Show and Tell this year!

Laurie Trocke

Tentative Calendar of Club Events – 2009

Oct. 10	**Lapidary Day – at Trockes**
Oct. 24	**Field Trip: Bat Cave near Beetown**
	Trip leader: open
Nov. 14	**Regular meeting – program open**
Dec. 12	**Christmas Party; Officer elections**

MWF Club Events

Oct. 3-4: Jefferson, WI. Rock River Valley Geological Society's Annual Show. Jefferson County Fair Park, 503 N. Jackson, Sat. 9-5, Sun. 10-4. Contact: Robert Schweitzer, W. 4240 Hwy. 18, Jefferson, WI 53549, rwses@ide.net.

Nov. 14-15: Freeport, IL. Northwest Illinois Rock Club's Annual Show. Student Conference Center, Highland Community College, Sat. 9-5; Sun. 10-4. Contact: Brian Green, (815) 745-2228, or e-mail: bgreen57@hotmail.com.

Nov. 21-22: Madison, WI. Madison Gem and Mineral Club's 46th Annual Show. Alliant Energy Center, 1919 Alliant Energy Center Way. Contact: Nevin Franke, (608) 251-2601.

Dec. 12-13: Sheboygan Falls, WI. Glacial Drifters Geologic Society's 5th Annual Show, Sheboygan Falls Municipal Building, 375 Buffalo Street, Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-4. Contact: Kevin Ponzio, (920) 980-6413.

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"Titanothere Jaw"

by Dan Trocke

I recently introduced myself to Richard Slaughter, director of the UW-Madison Geology Museum. He was in the process of receiving a donated mineral collection that came with a card catalogue and specimen number system. This would have been a great example of collection documentation, except that about half of the card system was missing. He grinned and said that this was still better than the typical boxes of "unknowns wrapped in whatever" that were usually donated and that many of us are probably guilty of. We chatted about the Badger Club and he mentioned that he was happy to be a guest speaker at the Badger's past shows and we should feel free to check with him to see if he is available in the future. All around a classy guy.

I asked Richard to help me identify the heavy fossil jaw bone fragment that I had bought at the Wheaton College sale a couple weeks ago. It was labeled a "Titanothere jaw," which was a huge extinct rhino-like creature from the badlands. While in many ways my fossil is deceptively similar to the upper jaw of smaller, early titanotheres, it did not seem to match pictures that I could find of those animals on the Internet. Richard identified my specimen as actually the *lower* jaw fragment from an extinct entelodont, probably *Archeotherium mortoni*, from the Oligocene Epoch, roughly 33.7 to 23.8 million years ago (Mya). Richard graciously described it as being in fact "much higher on the coolness factor scale" than a titanothere and showed me a much more complete but smaller-scale specimen on display at the museum.

Looking at the attached pictures of this brute's skull and reconstructed appearance, I'm sure you'll agree that it was a walking nightmare by anyone's definition. *Archeotherium* was an ancestor of the modern boar and is sometimes called, "The Hog from Hell." *Archaeotherium* was the biggest of the Eocene/Oligocene fanged entelodonts and reached the size of a large cow. *Archeotherium* is further described as an aggressive, small brained, apex predator at the top of the food chain. Rhino jaws and other mammal bones have been found with bite marks on them that match the large canines of *Arcaeotherium*. Resembling a wild boar only in general appearance, *Arcaeotherium* was much larger, with fangs instead of tusks, and possessed a decidedly nasty disposition. Entelodont tooth marks have also been found on other members of this species, indicating that they even fought with each other.

Archaeotherium was likely a scavenger as well as a predator and in leaner times, it is hypothesized, *Archaeotherium* may have dug for roots and tubers, as with other omnivore pig-like mammals. The largest of the entelodonts lasted into the Miocene. It was called "*Dinohyus*" but is now known as "*Daeodon*" and is estimated to have stood almost seven feet tall (at the shoulder), was twelve feet long, had a three-foot long skull, and weighed up to 2200 pounds! That was a big pig…

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Sphalerite

by Cindy Green

Sphalerite, which is also known as zinc blende, is composed of zinc sulphide and is the principal ore of zinc. It is found in many places across the world, with the leading localities being sited in the United States, Australia, Italy, Spain, Myanmar, Peru, Morocco, Germany, and England. It occurs in a number of different forms, including massive, granular, botryoidal, fibrous, earthy, and as concretions. It has a complicated series of crystal habits, and is often associated with the minerals calcite, chalcopyrite, fluorite, galena, magnetite, pyrite, pyrrhotite, and quartz, as well as many others. Specimens with a high luster (which is adamantine, resinous, sub-metallic, or earthy) and good crystal structures are popular with collectors.

Silver

by Cindy Green

Silver crystals are rare. They form as cubes and octahedra, sometimes in parallel bands. The usual habits are wires, scales, dendrites, and massive. Silver is silver-white in color, though it tarnishes on exposure to the atmosphere. It produces a silvery-white streak. Silver is opaque, and the luster is metallic. It forms in hydrothermal veins, and in the oxidized regions of ore deposits, with gold, and other silver minerals, and metallic sulfides. Silver forms 20 to 25 percent of the gold and silver alloy, called electrum.
Silver is soluble in nitric acid, and is fusible. It tarnishes if exposed to the fumes of hydrogen sulfide. It is the best conductor of electricity and heat.

Greetings From the Resident Canuck!

by Dave Zimmerman

“Hey der ay!” Or should I say, “Bonjour, ca va bien?” I guess it depends on which part of Canada one is in. Since I could not make it to the September meeting for show-and-tell, I figured that I should give a report from the Canadian branch of the BLGS, since we are four members and growing, you know!

Collecting this summer has been phenomenal. I could never have imagined such an area so rich in mineral wealth. While I complain about the peach-colored garnet finds, Teri reminds me that even the peach ones are pretty exceptional! Lower Quebec is mostly flat, which presumably is from the eroding effects of the St. Lawrence Seaway. Amongst the flatness in this area are located the isolated uplift mountains that Johanne spoke about at this year’s show. Many of them have an alkali intrusion, and when present, will typically tip their mineral diversity to over 300 kinds! Most of the quarries I have seen here are in metamorphic rock, which is something that is rarely seen in southern WI. It can easily be seen in the Baraboo Hills, though.

Here, black to gray shale is the predominant quarried rock. One quarry has black shale bedded with white quartz where the walls look like a giant 200-foot zebra! The geology is truly amazing, and the rock on one side of the quarry can be totally different from that on the other side. There is no such thing as a level bedding plane here, as it is usually on a 10 degree angle, but can be undulating, bulged, vertical, and even horizontal sometimes!

Jane and I went to Nova Scotia this summer, which is an amazing area, and one that should be a pilgrimage for all rockhounds. The country rock is either Jurassic-aged red sandstone, or volcanic trap rock. What a combination! It has been reported that there is trap rock sandwiched between the Triassic and Jurassic, thus accurately dating the trap rock and possibly even contributing to a mass extinction at that time (ca. 201 Mya). [Editor’s note – “trap rock” can be either extrusive (basalt) or intrusive (diabase).] When walking the shores around the Bay of Fundy, the Jurassic tends to bleed into the ocean, making for, at times, a very red sea. The Bay of Fundy has the highest tides in the world, which on average are 40 feet! It is a truly strange experience to climb to the top of a 20-foot shoreline cleft and find seaweed growing on it! It is equally strange to see the ocean expose a quarter-mile of beach every 6 hours. In fact, the Fundy Straight has another interesting fact. The volume of water that passes through that 2-mile wide straight every 6 hours, is equal to the entire 24-hour output of the world’s rivers . . . combined! This violent tide is responsible for the Western Hemisphere’s largest whirlpool (250 feet wide), as well as tidal bores in the ocean

that reach 2 feet tall at full strength and river bores that reach 6 feet tall! When the ocean floods the Bay, it rushes through the straights at about 23 miles per hour! There are islands that you can walk to during the morning, and in the afternoon, your trail is covered by 30 feet of ocean water! Also, there are bridges over sections of the Bay are nearly dry underneath at low tide!

The zeolite collecting in the trap rock is world class, and was considered to be the best in the world until the India deposits were located recently. The tidal action, along with the sheer cliff faces, and the severe temperature swings, allow for fresh trap rock to appear every season for collecting. Besides the zeolites, amethyst, agates, jaspers, and fossil wood are abundant. At one place, we found a petrified log that was about fourteen inches in diameter, and that exposed four feet of a trunk of unknown length in the beach! The wood is typically *Lepidodendron*, which is what is also found at Utica, IL. During one day of collecting, we found some large stilbite pockets, as well as some apophyllite, all the while passing wild lupine flowers and native yellow birch trees in the woods, and even the sounds of whales blowing air in the ocean!

Despite all of those beautiful finds, I still say that the best find was Jane. She and I are getting married on Oct. 25th, 2009! We are having a very small wedding in a hotel and we expect less than 15 people will be present. It would be similar to a courthouse wedding, except that it will be at the hotel. You are all welcome to attend, but due to the short notice and distance, it will certainly be understandable if you do not make it. If you do come, the dress will be informal and food will be provided. We're not too crazy on gifts, so none are needed. If any of you do decide to fly in, I can certainly shuttle you from the airport and we can provide a place to sleep. At this point, we do not plan on a honeymoon, and everything will be pretty much low key on our part. So much so, in fact, that even her wedding ring has not been finalized at this point. You know me, I'm picky with my stones, and it will be anything BUT a diamond! Right now, it is looking like it might be a pre-made ring with a fantastic Paraiba tourmaline, but Tsavorite, Tanzanite, and Padparadsche are all strong candidate stones as well. The possibility even exists of having a custom ring done and presented to her at Christmas. It is an amazing thing when two like-minded people meet. It can also be a challenge when two independent, Type A personalities have differing opinions, too! That said, though, I am adjusting well and I even have my first 10 gallons of blueberry wine fermenting as I write!

Oh, I almost forgot to mention – we bought a Herkimer diamond mine too! Well, sort of. Actually, it is a well-producing claim (about 40'x40') near Fonda, NY. We will be down there from Oct. 7th to 10th and you are also welcome to come. We are both excited to crack our first rock on the claim! I think many good crystals will come out of this adventure and we both cannot wait. I invite all of you to come out and dig for $2/ day for anyone over 13 years old, while kids younger than that pay $1 per day. If you make a big find, an appropriate donation would be appreciated to help cover the claim expenses. Also, if you would like to go, you need a written permission slip from us, as well as a sheet of rules from the property owner, and directions on how to get there. If you come, I would suggest a holiday weekend like Memorial Day, the 4th of July, or Labor Day. The district holds many special events for the holidays, but our claim is open year round. We bought a smoky Herkimer diamond from another miner on this property that is a cluster about 10" across and has single crystals to 6"! It is by far the best looking material in the district.

I hope all is well with all of you. Life has been good for Jane and I up here, too. We've got a glass of chilled blueberry wine and a warm bed waiting for you, in case you decide to join us for some collecting.

Have fun!

Iowa Field Trip Report

by Teri Marché

The September BLGS field trip to Iowa turned out to be more than we expected, in several ways. First was the weather. A record-setting dry September had turned fantastically wet and more rain was expected. Even without additional rain, the forecast was cloudy with gobs of mud. We came prepared, and while there was indeed some great

mud, it wasn't nearly the hip-deep situation we feared. Other than a few sprinkles here and there, we had no real rain, either. We actually saw the sun!

We met up as a group at the Moscow Quarry: Jordan and I, Brian and Cindy Green, Dave and Donna Reese, Harold Carter, Gary Emerson and Kathleen, and the entire Trocke family along with 14 collectors from central Iowa that included local fossil expert, Bill Hickerson, John Oos and our host, John Tuthill of Wendling Quarries, Inc.

I must note here that John Tuthill has facilitated numerous other Wendling Quarry trips for us over the years, sometimes as leader, and sometimes gaining us permission to go in by ourselves. MSHA has finally intimidated the quarry owners, his employers, and the new rule is that nobody may enter any quarry without a Wendling employee present. That means that John will have to give up weekends and take responsibility for what happens if a group is to collect. His generosity is such that he is willing to take this on from time to time, rather than close down the opportunity for others to partake of what the geology has to offer. Endless blessings upon you, John! Hopefully, our group conducted themselves well enough to be invited back again.

Moscow Quarry is noted for the pockets, or vugs, containing water-clear quartz crystals, some with a lovely sprinkle of blue marcasite. These are to be found in the lower strata of the quarry, in limestone rock laced with quartz veins. Sometimes the vugs were in those veins; sometimes a plain-looking rock would be broken to reveal an unexpected pocket. Brian Green discovered that early on and I don't think he ever left that spot, but just kept breaking rock!

The upper layers of Devonian-age rock were fossiliferous, and Bill Hickerson showed us his collection of gorgeous trilobites collected from near there. It was easy to see how he could have done a thesis on the subject. We eagerly searched the piles, but unfortunately none of the material was from the uppermost layers. I found one rock with some typical brachiopods, and that was about it.

Upon leaving the quarry after a couple of hours, John had a surprise for us, an extra stop at the company's home base near Dewitt, IA, at the Behr Quarry. There, we climbed the stockpiled mounds of river gravel for agates. The sun came out and it was wonderful! After about an hour of this, some of us went down into the quarry for fossils. The rock was a porous yellow dolostone containing echinoid fossils in varying qualities of preservation. The major finds here were crinoid and cystoid heads. The latter created the most exquisite geometric imprints in the rock. My thanks go to Dave Reese for pointing out one of those.

We tore ourselves away and left for Shaffton Quarry at about 2:00 o'clock. The big news there is the trilobites on the pavement layer of the upper quarry stope. Jordan got a real workout, trying without success, to get one out. Dan came over to help as well. Several cephalopods were found as well as many "garden rocks" of banded sandstone. I also found a vug filled with small, lacy, calcite "roses." I'll have to try them under the black light and see if they fluoresce.

By 4:15 or so we were headed toward the Mississippi River and the Gateway Sandpit at Camanche, IA. This was a typical agate area with piles of unsorted river gravels with agates and fossil corals. After an hour and a half of climbing and collecting, we finally had to give it up and bring a fantastically fun day to a close. Four quarries in one day – and a great variety of collecting opportunities! Many thanks to you, John.

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Support the Birthstone Stamps Campaign

(from the October 2009 AFMS *Newsletter*)

The AFMS is supporting a campaign to lobby the U.S. Postal Service to create a set of postage stamps around the theme of the twelve birthstones. Those stones are: ruby, topaz, peridot, garnet, pearl, amethyst, aquamarine, emerald, sapphire, turquoise, diamond, and opal.

If you wish to help in this venture, you can write to:

Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee
Stamp Development
U.S. Postal Service
1735 N. Lynn Street, Room 5013
Arlington, VA 22209-6432

For more information, see the AFMS website:
http://www.amfed.org/stamps.htm

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