
THE BADGER DIGGIN'S

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

Devoted to the Earth Sciences

Vol. 45, No. 10

December 2010

President's Message

Happy holidays, Badgers!

I hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving and has had a chance to get out, do a little more rock hounding, and enjoy the late fall weather. The Badger Christmas party will be held at the World Buffet in Monroe and I hope everyone can join us for the festivities. We will be playing the Gold Brick Game again, so please bring your gifts and your good luck charms. The Gold Brick gifts are excellent this year! We will also be electing officers at the December meeting and are still looking for volunteers for the Secretary and Newsletter Editor positions. If you are interested, please let me know. I hope to see you at the Christmas Party. Until then, happy holidays and happy hunting!

Dan Trocke



Merry Christmas to all our members!

Meeting/Holiday Party

Our annual holiday party will be held at 6 p.m. on Saturday, December 11, at the **World Buffet**, 145 7 ½ Street, Monroe, Wisconsin. To reach the Buffet, proceed west on 8th street from Hwy. 69. It is set back from the road, on the right hand side, a little ways beyond Farm & Fleet.

Nominally, dinners are about \$11.50 per adult; prices for children are based upon age. But the Club will subsidize *half* of the adults' and *all* of the children's meal costs.

If you have not already done so, please let Daisy Peterson know how many in your family will attend, so that we may submit a count. Phone: 608-328-1523 or e-mail: daisyjovilu@gmail.com.

We will again be playing the **Gold Brick Game**. Everyone should bring **two** inexpensive wrapped gifts that are **VERY WELL CUSHIONED**.

We look forward to seeing you there for a night of great food and fun.



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Tentative Calendar of Club Events – Dec. 2010

Dec. 11 Annual Christmas party

Hillbilly Christmas

by Dave Zimmerman

Instead of wishing for some new front teeth, why don't you just get out of the cold this winter and dig some Arkansas quartz crystals with me and my wife, Jane Lagacé? We plan on digging primarily at the Arrowhead Mine, in Mt. Ida, AR, from Dec. 19th to the 24th, but will certainly visit other locations, including the Coleman Mine in Jesseyville. The last time we were down there, we did very well in digging and also found a real treat for accommodations with the luck of renting a house for \$75 per night, which we split four ways.

For digging down there, it is hard to plan too far ahead of time, as many of the mines are using machines that are on their ninth and tenth lives. When the machines are broken down, not much new material has been exposed. Car-pooling opportunities might be available for individuals that don't want to make the trek alone. The average daily price for mining is \$20 per day per person, with kids usually getting a discount, depending on the policies of that particular mine. When we were down there two years ago in December, the weather was a balmy 55 degrees and we were digging with only our T-shirts on; picture that one, folks! Oh, my sides hurt! Anyone wanting to attend should contact me at david@showchair.com or 450-446-7945 (an international call).

Also, you are invited to a dinner date with us in Monona, WI on the 29th. It will be at the World Buffet, located at 2451 West Broadway, starting at 6:00 p.m. and ending when they kick us out. The rates are good and the Buffet is owned by the same outfit that operates the one in Monroe. This will be a casual event just to see everyone again during our brief few days in Wisconsin. Hopefully you can make one or both of the events. I look forward to hearing from or seeing you again soon. Have fun!



MWF (& related) Club Events

December 11-12: Sheboygan Falls, WI. Glacial Drifters Geologic Society's Sixth Annual Rock, Gem, Mineral, and Fossil Show. Sheboygan Falls Municipal Building, 375 Buffalo Street. Sat. 10-5; Sun. 10-4. Contact: Kevin Ponzio, (920) 980-6413.

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Meeting Minutes

The November meeting was called to order at 10:20 a.m. on the 13th in the Monroe Public Library. The following people attended: Neal & Linda Trickel; Marv Hanner; Bob Gilbert; Daisy Peterson; Teri & Jordan Marché; Clay Schroll; Harold Carter; Will Ward; Barb Woodriff; Dan & Laurie Trocke & kids; Ralph Burgener; and Mary, Dennis, Jimmy & Jill Westby.

We were very privileged to have Martha Miss from Rock Biz, Inc., as our guest speaker. She had created an excellent presentation on safety, starring a pair of very handsome pups named Rocky & Nika. It covered the important aspects of how to rockhound safely. She won a Midwest Federation award for this wonderful presentation. We really appreciate Martha taking the time to come to Monroe and sharing her program with us.

After the safety presentation, Donna gave the *Treasurer's Report*. She said that club dues are due in January and she can collect them anytime. The recent club expenses were the cost of the newsletter; payment to Dennis Westby for moving the trailer; blades for the club saw, and expenses for lapidary day. We then moved on to announcements.

Teri Marché won a first-place award from the Midwest Federation for an article she had written in the *Diggin's* on the hypostomes of trilobites; our newsletter itself received a 6th place award in the annual bulletin editor's contest. Dan Trocke announced that after the meeting, many club members were going to the Freeport rock show and anyone interested was encouraged to join us. Dan also said that he had brought the club Genie to the meeting and that Ted Tinker was taking it next. Ted would bring it to the Christmas party, so that anyone who would like to use it after that should

talk to Ted. We were also invited by the Coulee Rock Club of La Crosse to join them and visit a private collection at Prairie du Chien on Sunday the 14th at 1:00 p.m. Dan also welcomed returning member Barb Woodriff. Barb said that she was thrilled to be back and that she really appreciated the amount of enthusiasm in the club and how active it is.

Daisy announced that we could not hold the Christmas party at the American Legion this year, but that we could have it at World Buffet in Monroe instead. We will have a private room for the party on Saturday, December 11th at 6:00 p.m. Dennis Westby made a motion to have the party at the World Buffet, Ted seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously. A sign up sheet for the party was passed around.

Dan continued the safety theme by passing around a handout on how to safely operate the chapsaw.

Teri announced that she has been talking via e-mail with Dave Zimmerman and that he would be in the states over Christmas. He and Jane are planning a trip to Arkansas from December 18th through December 25th. He has invited club members to get together with them at the World Buffet in Monona at 6:00 p.m. on December 29th. They might also go to some of the museums in the area, such as the Milwaukee Public Museum or the one at Jewelers Mutual. Anyone interested in joining Dave for any of these adventures should contact him.

The first door prize was won by Linda Trickel. She won a very pretty rhodocrosite crystal from China.

Teri then shared a presentation on the Tucson, Arizona Gem and Mineral Show. She passed around a number of brochures, guides and maps. She also had some wonderful pictures of the different venues, minerals and treasures. She explained that the main show was held at the Convention Center; it filled two main halls and several smaller sections. The theme this year was "Gems & Gem Minerals" and the pieces that she saw were spectacular. There were amazing examples of petrified wood, gems, dinosaurs, and a huge piece of carved turquoise, to name just a few. There were also hotel shows. At the hotel shows, the rooms would be emptied of furniture, the dealers would set up shops within the

room, and items would extend out into the courtyard. There were Brazilian amethyst cathedrals that were taller than Mike Riesch; an entire room of fluorite from the Rogerly Mine in England; an entire room of fossils with full skeletons, huge ammonites, crinoids, trilobites, etc. The other show that Teri really liked was the Electric Park Tailgate Show. This was the place to go for rough material, rockhound booths, bulk material, lots of agates, fossils, etc. This was the most affordable show. Teri said that she and Jordan had a really good time, but that it was nearly impossible to decide what to buy, because there was so much. She said that every rockhound should try to go to the Tucson show at least once because it is so amazing!

Mary Westby won the second door prize. She won a shark's tooth from Morocco.

The next item was *New Business*. Dan announced that officers would be elected at the Christmas party in December. So far we have nominated Tyrel Rouse for Officer at Large; Dan Trocke for President; Mary Westby for Vice President; and Donna Reese for Treasurer. Teri Marché will continue as Show Chair. The positions that need to be filled are Secretary and Newsletter Editor. Anyone interested in these or any other position, please contact Dan Trocke before the December meeting. Donna mentioned that the Gold Brick prizes are fantastic this year, so I hope everyone can join us!

We will have another club auction on the fourth Saturday in January at Dan & Laurie Trocke's house. This will be additional material from the donation that Bud Higgins made to the club. There will be more details on this at the January meeting.

After new business, we moved on to Show Business. Teri said that she is working on securing a second speaker. She is also working on getting in contact with the Monroe Homemakers to verify that they will be selling food during the show again this year. If anyone has any ideas for speakers, she would really appreciate them. She is looking for two more speakers. Teri said that she has the dealers all lined up and is sending half size posters to the dealers so that they can start distributing them. She will have posters for club members to take at the January meeting. Jack Hoxie had suggested to her

that the club record a radio spot, as many local stations will play it for free. Daisy said that she knew someone in Monroe that had a recording studio and would call him to find out the cost of making a recording. Dan Trocke said that he will be sending the show information to magazines and to websites. The children's activity this year will be gemstone panning and Neal Trickel said that he has a source for low cost cubic zirconias. We also have an abundant supply of small garnets. If anyone else has small items for the children's activity, please bring the donations to the Christmas party.

The 3rd door prize was won by Dan Trocke. It was a very neat piece of mohawkite. The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 and many club members traveled down to the show in Freeport.

Respectfully submitted,

Laurie Trocke

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What's Rockin'

We had a nice variety of rocks, minerals & fossils for the What's Rockin' table this time around.

There were a couple of nice pieces from China, one of which was a neat combination of sphalerite, quartz, calcite, dolomite and chalcopryrite; the other was a carbonate-cyanotrichite. I'm not sure who brought these in, but thanks for sharing them!

Harold Carter displayed Teepee Canyon agate from South Dakota.

Clay Schroll brought in a very nice *Megalodon* shark's tooth from North Carolina.

Connor Trocke also brought in a *Megalodon* tooth that he had acquired in some wicked trading at the Moose Lake Agate Days show. He also brought in a piece of meteorite that he found on display at a blacksmith shop at the Bristol Renaissance Faire and bargained for.

Erin Trocke brought in a nice Lake Superior agate and an amethyst necklace that she had won as a door prize at the Racine rock show.

Barb Woodriff brought in a really neat nodule encasing a Miocene shell fossil from the Oregon coast.

Jordan and Teri Marché brought a large slab of two colonial corals - honeycomb coral (*Favosites*) and chain coral (*Halysites*) from Door County, WI. They also shared a large slab of branching corals (*Coenites*) from the same locality. The last thing that the Marchés displayed was a sawn slab of Ordovician dolomite with hematite-colored drusy quartz and malachite from Green Lake, WI.

Jayden Trocke shared his 'Frog-lobite' – a really neat trilobite fossil that he has decided looks like a frog peeking out of the water.

Laurie Trocke

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Something New in the Ordovician

by Jordan Marché

Several years ago, a remarkable new Middle-Ordovician-age fossil horizon and fauna was discovered in the vicinity of Decorah, Winneshiek County, Iowa. What makes it so unusual are that (a) it contains rare fossils of animals, including soft-bodied organisms, that are seldom preserved; and (b) they are contained within a previously-unrecognized stratigraphic unit that occurs in the middle of the St. Peter Formation. The types of fossils preserved include conodonts, several kinds of arthropods such as eurypterids and phyllocarid crustaceans, jawless fish (*Astraspis* sp.), linguloid (inarticulate) brachiopods, and various worm-like creatures. The exceptional preservation of these rare, soft-bodied fossils has led geologists and paleontologists to designate this new fossil horizon as a Lagerstätte. Only one or two other

cases like this from the Ordovician period are known in the world.

The stratigraphic unit, which consists of a greenish-brown to dark gray sandy shale, was first recognized from drill logs over an area some 13 square kilometers in northeastern Iowa. It reaches a maximum thickness of 38 meters. But thus far, only a single 3-meter thick outcrop of the unit has been found exposed at the surface, where all of the fossil material was collected. The unit lies between the (lower) Readstown Member, and the (upper) Tonti member, of the St. Peter Formation. From the very different composition of the unit, in relation to the sandstone members that lie above and below it, geologists have inferred that the unit was probably deposited in a restricted, shallow brackish-to-marine environment, such as an embayment on the edge of the Ordovician sea. Lack of free oxygen in the stagnant water likely prohibited the decay of soft tissues and led to their unusual preservation. Although conodonts are the most abundant elements of the fauna, well-preserved head shields of jawless fish, along with some of the earliest known eurypterids, make this an exceptional fossil locality. It is being studied by members of the Iowa Geological Survey. Much more about the paleobiology and paleoenvironment of the Lagerstätte are sure to be learned in coming years.

References:

Huaibao P. Liu, et al. "A New Lagerstätte from the Middle Ordovician St. Peter Formation in Northeast Iowa, USA." *Geology* 34, no. 11 (Nov. 2006): 969-972.

<http://www.igsb.uiowa.edu/Browse/Lagerstatten/Lagerstatten.htm>

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