November 2021

OCMS SHALE MAIL

ORANGE COUNTY MINERAL SOCIETY
NEW YORK

Join us for our monthly meeting, Friday November 12th, 2021 at 6:30 pm!

At 81 Laroe Rd Chester, NY (Town of Chester Recreation Senior Center) (From KINGS HWY,Turn left on Laroe Rd by UPS office building).

What's Inside?

Mailing Address:

254 Rt. 17K, Suite 204, Newburgh, NY 12550-8300

President's Message!

By: Mike Tedford

Mark your calendars for our meetings November 12 and December 10, 2021!

November 12, 2021. Geologist Alex Kerstanski is the featured speaker. Yes, this is our own member, Alex, and his report of his several weeks' college geology field trips experience from summer 2021. Enjoy these field trips in the comfort of the Chester Senior Center. Zoom will probably be available, too.

December 10,2021. Pot -luck dinner meeting with election of 2022 officers, large raffle, auction. Please consider taking on an officer role. We could use assistants and backup staff for all our existing officers. This is your club to grow and adapt.

October 2021 Meeting summary

Our October meeting was well-attended, approved the August meeting minutes, Treasurer and Show Chairman reports. Eric Orlowski gave a nice presentation on fluorescent minerals in person and on zoom. If anyone has a speaker, microphone or portable PA capability to share, it could enhance the acoustics in the senior center, especially when the air handler is running.

More discussions for field trips, museum trips and the like also took place. You know it only takes two or several to enhance the experience of any trip. and had a raffle as well. Thanks for the business discussions with a lot of members contributing views regarding our annual mineral show and sale and replenishment of club merchandise:

1. We need to confirm our June 4 & 5, 2022 dates at the Museum Village, with the successor to director Mike Sosler. Site set up on June 3, plus whatever preps need be accomplished soon after the spring opening.

2. Preliminary show flyers have been handed out with caveats regarding admissions ticket pricing. We also discussed vendor fee structure. A budget for raffle items has not been established.

3. Club merchandise includes patches, both loose and for incorporation on jerseys and hats. Also pins, pens, coasters, raffle items can be considered.

Come join Alex for a riviting recount of this awesome geology adventure Friday, November 12th, 2021.

The Geology Field Camp Experience Plus Iceland!

By: Alex Kerstanski

Over this past summer as an undergraduate geology student, I traveled to Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming, to take a course known as field camp. Field camp is more or less the rite of passage for geology students where we learn how to produce geologic maps and tie together keyconcepts we have learned in previous years of our studies. I'll take you through my six week experience and share all of the amazing views and rock formations I saw along my journey.

Some of the highlights of my trip were visiting Yellowstone National Park, Grand Teton National Park, Glacier National Park, and Craters of the Moon National Monument. As an added bonus, I traveled to Iceland for a week-long vacation where I also saw some amazing geologic features which I will share with you. I'm looking forward to sharing my experiences and hope you enjoy the many pictures I captured!

Source: Image by Donna B. McNicol from Pixabay

Minutes of the meeting

By: Mark Kucera

The October 8th meeting was held as a hybrid meeting with twenty-one members at the Senior Center in Chester, NY and three more on Zoom remotely. The sign-in roster is attached. Mike Tedford welcomed everyone. Mike talked about the September picnic. Nineteen attended. A special thanks goes out to the Nelsons for all the coordination and logistic support. He also talked about wanting to get more field trips going and getting ideas for program lectures. He related that John Pacut had offered to run a field trip to the Akin Library in Pawling.

Mike also mentioned that Mark had brought in a collection of minerals received as a trade with the Copper County Rock and Mineral Club (CCRMC) in Michigan. As mentioned back around May, that club offered to trade local minerals with us. CCRMC was sent a box of some of our local area finds.

Minutes: There were no minutes for the September picnic. The minutes for the August 13th meeting were accepted.

Treasurer's Report: The treasurer's report was read by Ron Nelson and accepted.

Minutes of the meeting - cont.

By: Mark Kucera

Committee Reports:

Show: Ron did not give a show update. It is too early. We don't know Mike Sosler's replacement at Museum Village yet to confirm the normal coordination. Gary Kerstanski offered a draft show flyer for the show next year. Gate and table fees were briefly discussed.

Webmaster: No report.

Newsletter: Mike asked if everyone was receiving the Shale Mail. Walter Sorocka is having email issues. He was asked to make sure his email is on the sign-in roster.

Field trips/digs/misc: No field trips planned near term.

Upcoming shows: **N**othing recorded.

Old Business: Nothing offered in addition to the above.

New Business: Nothing offered in addition to the above.

Program: Eric Orlowski gave us his Fluorescent Mineral Lecture. Eric gave a good background on the history of fluorescent minerals going back to the 1800s. He also covered the physics by talking about the bandwidths of light and the trace concentrations of minerals that can lead to or inhibit the fluorescent effect. Eric also talked about fluorescent lights and safety. Ultraviolet (UV) light, the same light that make minerals show their fluorescence, can cause sunburn and cause eye damage.

With PowerPoint slides, Eric showed some common fluorescent minerals from well known collecting sites. He talked about and showed minerals from Franklin, NJ; Long Lake Zinc Mine in Ontario, Canada; tugtupite from Greenland and Terlingua calcite from Mexico. He used the Terlingua calcite as an example of a mineral

showing phosphorescence, the continued afterglow even after the UV light is removed. Eric went on with the slides to show selenite from the Red River Floodway in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada; Agrellite from the Kipawa Complex, Ontario; calcite from Wasson's Bluff, Nova Scotia; scheelite from Africa and China; and calcite from Ruck's Pit, Fort Drum, Florida. He also showed a septarian nodule from Utah and fluorite from Weardale, England.

After his presentation, Eric took questions and then showed a few fluorescent minerals.

We appreciate Eric sharing his knowledge and photos during the presentation. We also appreciate him bringing some minerals to demonstrate the fluorescence. We also look forward to seeing his fluorite presentation at some point.

Raffle: A mineral raffle was held after the lecture.

For the good of the Club: As always, we enjoyed refreshments brought in by the Nelsons.

Next Meeting: The speaker next month will be Alex Kerstanski talking about his Geology Summer Camp experiences and a side trip to Iceland.

Collect World Class Flourite at the Wolworth Quarry Open House in New York

From: Where to Find Rocks

The Walworth Quarry, in Walworth, NY is a world famous locality for exceptionally clear, perfect fluorites. Once a year, the quarry owner-Dolomite Products has an open house where they give collectors the unique privilege to dig in their quarry for world class mineral specimens. This quarry dig is my personal favorite out of the two offered. Although the dolostone rock is extremely hard to break, fluorite and other highly collectable minerals are very abundant in this quarry. I would say it would be difficult to not find any fluorite. Sometimes it is so incredibly clear, that it can be hard to spot. Your eyes have to get used to searching for it, but once they do you will spot them all over the place. There are definitely enough to go around. This is an amazing trip I highly recommend to anyone in the Northeast who wants to find crystals.

An amazing fluorite found by the writer's collecting partner Alexander Kim at a previous Walworth open house.

Many other beautiful minerals are found at this quarry, the most notable being gorgeous golden sphalerites. Sometimes there will be droplets of tar like petroleum coating specimens. The petroleum can be removed with a organic solvent, but I think sometimes it really is aesthetically complimentary.

Geology and Collecting: The Walworth Quarry works a stromatolite bearing Silurian dolostone. The mineralization occurs in a layer close to the surface of the bedrock in the high bench of the quarry. Like with the formation of Herkimer diamonds, the stromatolites provided space and protection for crystals to form in vugs. The mineralogy of the locality is fairly simple with the only collectible minerals present in abundance being fluorite, dolomite, calcite, sphalerite, celestine, and gypsum var. selenite.

A specimen found by the author: A peculiar fluorite with an elongated hair like pyrite inclusion, complimented by a big shiny droplet of petroleum coating the dolostone.

Before you Visit – The Quarry does not have an official page for the open house, but usually it takes place on the second weekend of October. Arrive at the quarry early- 6:45 AM to register for the dig. Hard Hat and protective gear required for this location. Check local Northeast mineral club pages for more info.

Show up to the quarry to register for the dig at 6:45AM. Once registered, the rules will be explained and you will be lead to the site. The dig ends at noon. This rock works similarly to the dolostone to the east in which Herkimer diamonds are mined, meaning it is extremely hard. Bring a crack hammer, chisels, wedges, and a sledgehammer. Use flat chisels or wedges to work the cracks in rocks. Power tools are welcome at this quarry. The best technique for splitting large boulders is feathering and wedging using a hammer drill to drill holes for wedges. A gas rock saw is also an extremely useful tool for extracting difficult specimens by slicing them out of the rock. PPE is required on this dig. Bring a hard hat, steel toed boots, safety goggles, and gloves. The former three are a requirement. Remember also to bring plenty of water as well as snacks. There are restrooms on site but it is far away, near the entrance.

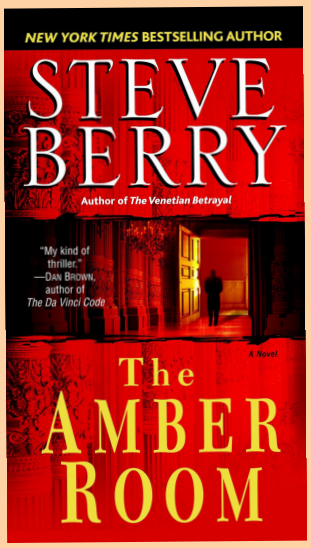
Special thanks to The Dolomite Group for allowing the special privilege of mineral collecting in their quarries.

Sources: https://www.mindat.org/loc-18146.html
http://fredmhaynes.com/2016/10/14/walworth-quarry-open-house/

The Amber Room

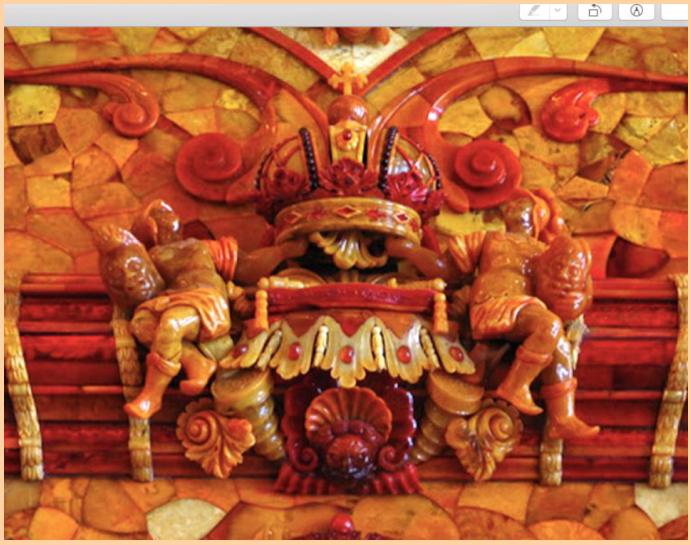
By: Keith Allen

Dubbed the “Eighth Wonder of the World,” the room that once symbolized peace was stolen by Nazis then disappeared for good.



While many Americans associate amber with the casing for dinosaur DNA in 1993's Jurassic Park, the stone has enthralled Europeans, and especially Russians, for centuries because of the golden, jewel-encrusted Amber Room, which was made of several tons of the gemstone. A gift to Peter the Great in 1716 celebrating peace between Russia and Prussia, the room's fate became anything but peaceful: Nazis looted it during World War II, and in the final months of the war, the amber panels, which had been packed away in crates, disappeared. A replica was completed in 2003, but the contents of the original, dubbed "the Eighth Wonder of the World," have remained missing for decades.

Construction of the Amber Room began in 1701. It was originally installed at Charlottenburg Palace, home of Friedrich I, the first King of Prussia. Truly an international collaboration, the room was designed by German baroque sculptor Andreas Schlüter and constructed by the Danish amber craftsman Gottfried Wolfram. Peter the Great admired the room on a visit, and in 1716 the King of Prussia—then Frederick William I—presented it to the Peter as a gift, cementing a Prussian-Russian alliance against Sweden.



The Amber Room was shipped to Russia in 18 large boxes and installed in the Winter House in St. Petersburg as a part of a European art collection. In 1755, Czarina Elizabeth ordered the room to be moved to the Catherine Palace in Pushkin, named Tsarskoye Selo, or "Czar's Village." Italian designer Bartolomeo Francesco Rastrelli redesigned the room to fit into its new, larger space using additional amber shipped from Berlin.

After other 18th-century renovations, the room covered about 180 square feet and glowed with six tons of amber and other semi-precious stones. The amber panels were backed with gold leaf, and historians estimate that, at the time, the room was worth $142 million in today's dollars. Over time, the Amber Room was used as a private meditation chamber for Czarina Elizabeth, a gathering room for Catherine the Great and a trophy space for amber connoisseur Alexander II.

The Amber Room - Cont.

On June 22, 1941, Adolf Hitler initiated Operation Barbarossa, which launched three million German soldiers into the Soviet Union. The invasion led to the looting of tens of thousands of art treasures, including the illustrious Amber Room, which the Nazis believed was made by Germans and, most certainly, made for Germans.

As the forces moved into Pushkin, officials and curators of the Catherine Palace attempted to disassemble and hide the Amber Room. When the dry amber began to crumble, the officials instead tried hiding the room behind thin wallpaper. But the ruse didn't fool the German soldiers, who tore down the Amber Room within 36 hours, packed it up in 27 crates and shipped it to Königsberg, Germany (present-day Kaliningrad). The room was reinstalled in Königsberg's castle museum on the Baltic Coast.

The museum's director, Alfred Rohde, was an amber aficionado and studied the room's panel history while it was on display for the next two years. In late 1943, with the end of the war in sight, Rohde was advised to dismantle the Amber Room and crate it away. In August of the following year, allied bombing raids destroyed the city and turned the castle museum into ruins. And with that, the trail of the Amber Room was lost.

It seems hard to believe that crates of several tons of amber could go missing, and many historians have tried to solve the mystery. The most basic theory is that the crates were destroyed by the bombings of 1944. Others believe that the amber is still in Kaliningrad, while some say it was loaded onto a ship and can be found somewhere at the bottom of the Baltic Sea. In 1997, a group of German art detectives got a tip that someone was trying to hawk a piece of the Amber Room. They raided the office of the seller's lawyer and found one of the room's mosaic panels in Bremen, but the seller was the son of a deceased soldier and had no idea as to the panel's origin.

The history of the new Amber Room, at least, is known for sure. The reconstruction began in 1979 at Tsarskoye Selo and was completed 25 years—and $11 million—later. Dedicated by Russian President Vladimir Putin and then-German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, the new room marked the 300-year anniversary of St. Petersburg in a unifying ceremony that echoed the peaceful sentiment behind the original. The room remains on display to the public at the Tsarskoye Selo State Museum Reserve outside of St. Petersburg.

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