

THE ROCKFINDER

Newsletter of the Michiana Gem and Mineral Society

Volume 48, Number 10

December, 2008

Next meeting: in January, not December

Visitors are always welcome.

Doors open at 1:30. Meeting starts at 2.

Place: Our Redeemer Lutheran Church 805 S. 29th Street (29th & Wall) in South Bend, River Park area.

Program:

Refreshments:

Inside is more information about:

- The cookbook we're putting together.
- Laws against fossil collecting.
- Club meetings during bad weather.



UP AND COMING:

January 24: Lincoln, NE. Lincoln Gem and Mineral Club Annual Indoor Swap, 65th and Vine Streets. Sat. 1:00-5:00.

The 2009 Federation Show and Conference Schedule:

California Federation, April 17-19 in San Jose, CA.

Eastern Federation, Oct. 17-18 in Bristol, CT.

Midwest Federation, May 16-17 in Parma, OH.

Northwest Federation & AFMS Combined, July 30 - Aug. 2 in Billings, MT.

South Central Federation, Oct. 10-11, Temple, TX.



THE OFFICERS and BOARD

WISH ALL the MEMBERS

a MOST BLESSED HOLIDAY

and CHRISTMAS SEASON

and a WONDERFUL NEW YEAR!



WEATHER UPDATES

During the winter months, if there is any inclement weather on meeting day, members can call any board member on Sunday to check for cancellation of the meeting.

EQUIPMENT FOR SALE

Tom Noe has equipment to sell: a tumbler, a 16-inch slab saw in a homemade case, a like new Diamond Pacific Titan grinding and polishing machine, some trim saws. Contact him at 574-289-2028.

BLACK HILLS INFO

Since the October program, several members have asked Tom Noe for more information about collecting in the Black Hills and the Badlands. If you're interested, he can have a group over to his house to look at specimens and talk about collecting possibilities, maybe sometime in January or February. Contact: tomnoe2@gmail.com or 574-289-2028

MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER MEETING

President Kathy Miller called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. on December 7. There were 37 members, 10 junior members and 2 guests present. The slate of nominations for the 2009 officers was as follows:

- President: Kathy Miller
- Vice-President: David Peltz
- Secretary: Marty Perry
- Treasurer: Lana Wright
- Liaison: Sue Brown

Vice-President David Peltz opened the floor for nominations. There were no new nominations. Bob Miller made a motion to accept the slate as presented. The motion was seconded and carried. Kathy Miller announced that during the winter months, if there is inclement weather on meeting day, members can call any board member to check for cancellation of the meeting.

Diane Gram is collecting recipes for the club cookbook. Please e-mail or mail your recipes to her.

Sue Brown is taking orders for Midwest Federation logo T-shirts. If the club orders a total of 30 shirts, we can get them for \$3.00 apiece less. Please let her know at the January meeting.

David Peltz announced that the program for the next meeting would be a wire-wrapping demonstration.

Stan Jacobs made a motion that the club write a petition for everyone to sign for the American Lands Access Association and send copies to our local and state government. The motion was seconded and carried. Tom Noe volunteered to write the petition.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting. It was seconded and carried.

The Christmas committee once again did a fantastic job. Everyone enjoyed the potluck Christmas dinner. As usual, there was plenty of good food and many desserts to enjoy. While

our dinner settled we all played Rocko and won some very nice prizes. Everyone enjoyed visiting and relaxing for the afternoon.

Marty Perry, Secretary

**ROCK & GEM MAGAZINE
IS NOW OFFICIAL**

Shirley Leeson, AFMS Past President

I'm delighted to share some exciting news with all of you. The AFMS officers and directors have selected *Rock & Gem* magazine as the official magazine of the American Federation! *Rock & Gem* is published by Miller Magazines, and our own International Relations Chair, Bob Jones, is its senior editor. He and his "boss" Lynne Varon, managing editor of the magazine, have been actively promoting the AFMS and several of its activities for the past year and plan to continue doing so in years to come.

Rock & Gem has become the last of the true rockhound magazines, now that *Lapidary Journal* has morphed into *Jewelry Arts/Lapidary Journal*. *Mineralogical Record* and *Rocks & Minerals*, of course, continue as outstanding publications, but their focus is on minerals, not on rockhounds. Each issue of *R & G* contains articles on field trips, minerals, projects and a series of kids' activities. The November issue includes an editorial by Lynne Varon entitled "Find Your Voice," touting the AFMS Conservation & Legislation Program, plus information about our efforts to get the U.S. Postal Service to produce a series of commemorative stamps featuring birthstones, and an early plug for the AFMS 2009 Convention in Billings, MT, by Bob Jones.

If you're not already a subscriber, and thus a supporter of the magazine, you can easily get information by visiting www.rockngem.com or by calling them at 760-291-1549.

Our association with *Rock & Gem* can truly be a symbiotic relationship--we subscribe and the magazine supports the efforts of the American Federation and our local clubs.

PETITION WILL CIRCULATE

The petition below will be available at the January meeting for those who wish to sign it. More information was in the last issue. You should also contact your US Representative individually! The easiest way to do this is via email. All you have to say is, "I urge you to vote against HR 554," adding a sentence or two of explanation. It only takes a minute and can have a big impact.

The representative for local Indiana members is:

Joe Donnelly
1530 Longworth House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515
(or) 207 W. Colfax Avenue
South Bend, IN 46601
Phone: 574-288-2780
Fax: 574-288-2825

The representative for local Michigan members is:

Fred Upton
2183 Rayburn House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515
www.house.gov/upton

PETITION:

We, as members of the Michiana Gem and Mineral Society, affiliated with the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies, express our strong opposition to HR 554, the so-called *Paleontological Resources Preservation Act*. This bill proposes that the federal government prohibit the collection of vertebrate fossils on public lands managed by agencies such as the BLM, USFS and others. This bill would make it a crime to collect vertebrate fossils, even for children doing science projects!

Amateur and academic collectors have always collected fossils on public lands and they should continue to do so. Amateurs, not scientists, have discovered and preserved nearly all the T. rex skeletons, along with many of the greatest fossil finds of our time. Amateurs have made numerous discoveries in vertebrate paleontology, and many fossils are named after them.

The fossil resources of the US are truly vast, and only a few vertebrate fossils can be considered rare or scientifically useful. To prohibit all collecting will do more harm than good. This bill guarantees that uncollected fossils will be destroyed by erosion, because no one will be able to collect them. Very few professional or academic paleontologists are in the field collecting today. Most scientific institutions in the US recommend that fossil collecting actually be encouraged, and certainly not made a criminal offense.

Fossil collecting by amateurs should be protected, not discouraged. For children, the hands-on experience of finding fossils is a great way to encourage them as future scientists.

We urge you to vote against HR 554.

Sincerely, Members of Michiana Gem & Mineral Society:

OHIO OUTDOOR NOTEBOOK— FOSSIL HUNTING SITES

By Laura Jones, Ohio Department of Natural Resources (2005)

Travel back in time on a fossiling trek!

It's hard to imagine that the Buckeye State's climate was once more like that of the Caribbean, with tropical winds and muddy seafloors full of corals, snails and clams. As difficult as that is to picture, the proof is in the fossils—thousands of which are in southwest Ohio just waiting to be discovered!

It seems to be a buried secret that Ohio is home to some of the best fossil-collecting fields in the world. Many of these fossil-rich fields are located within several Ohio state parks, including Hueston Woods, Cowan Lake, Stonelick, East Fork and Caesar Creek. Best of all, hunting and collecting fossils at these locations is open to the public at no charge.

“The parks in southwest Ohio offer excellent fossil finds that give testimony to the life of this long-vanished body of water,” said Dennis Hull, a geologist with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. “It doesn't take long to find a fossil at these parks because of the great geology of the area.”

For many of these intriguing fossils, we can look to a geological formation known as the Cincinnati Arch. This large expanse of bedrock emerged over the course of millions of years, beginning with the Appalachian Mountain-building process. Today, layers of Ordovician Age limestone and shale are exposed in stream cuts throughout the region, revealing the fossilized remains of marine life such as brachiopods (shelly invertebrates), clams, corals and trilobites (the state fossil)—all inhabitants of a sea that existed in Ohio's ancient past.

While collecting these small fossilized treasures is easy and free, some parks ask that you first stop by their visitor center to pick up a permit and learn more about the rules of the hunt.

Perhaps the best place to go hunting is near the spillway of the Caesar Creek State Park dam in Clinton and Warren counties, where you can find fossils ranging from 450 to 500 million years old. Pick up your permit at the U.S. Army Corps of

Engineers Visitor Center, and while you are there check out the center's display of fossils found at the park. The center is accessible from Clarksville Road and is open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. For more information about fossil hunting at Caesar Creek, call 513-897-1050.

Nearby Cowan Lake State Park in Clinton County also boasts a rich fossil history. Here, fossil-laden limestone is revealed by the ongoing erosion of the bedrock along the eastern edge of the Cincinnati Arch. Special permission to collect fossils here must be obtained from Ohio State Parks. For more information call 937-382-1096.

Fossils also are plentiful at Hueston Woods State Park in Preble and Butler counties, according to park naturalist Chad Smith. Every Sunday at 11 a.m., Smith leads visitors on a fossil expedition to the park's dam spillway area. Hueston Woods offers fossil collecting year-round and no permit is necessary. The dam area is accessible from the park's main loop road. The Rock Quarry picnic area also features great fossil finds. For more information call 513-523-6347.

Farther south in Clermont County, fossil hunters who visit the spillways at both Stonelick and East Fork state parks will not be disappointed. A great sampling of Ohio fossils that once were entombed now await discovery. Stonelick's spillway is accessible from State Route 727, while East Fork's spillway is located off of Slade Road. Permits are available at the visitor center. To learn more about fossiling at either state park, call 513-734-4323.

Other places to go fossiling include Fossil Park in Lucas County. Travel back some 375 million years ago to the Devonian Age as you dig for these buried treasures. Specific details about fossil hunting at this park, including hours of operation, can be obtained by calling 419-882-8313.

People of all ages and skill levels can enjoy the hobby of fossil hunting. To make your fossil trek more enjoyable, consider the following tips:

- * To help identify the various fossils, bring a field guide, such as *Fossils of Ohio*, published by the ODNR Division of Geological Survey.

- * Take along a bag to carry your fossil discoveries. Pack paper and pencil to record from

where, when and by whom the fossil was collected.

* Consider a mason's hammer for splitting rocks (some parks do not permit tools, so be sure to call ahead).

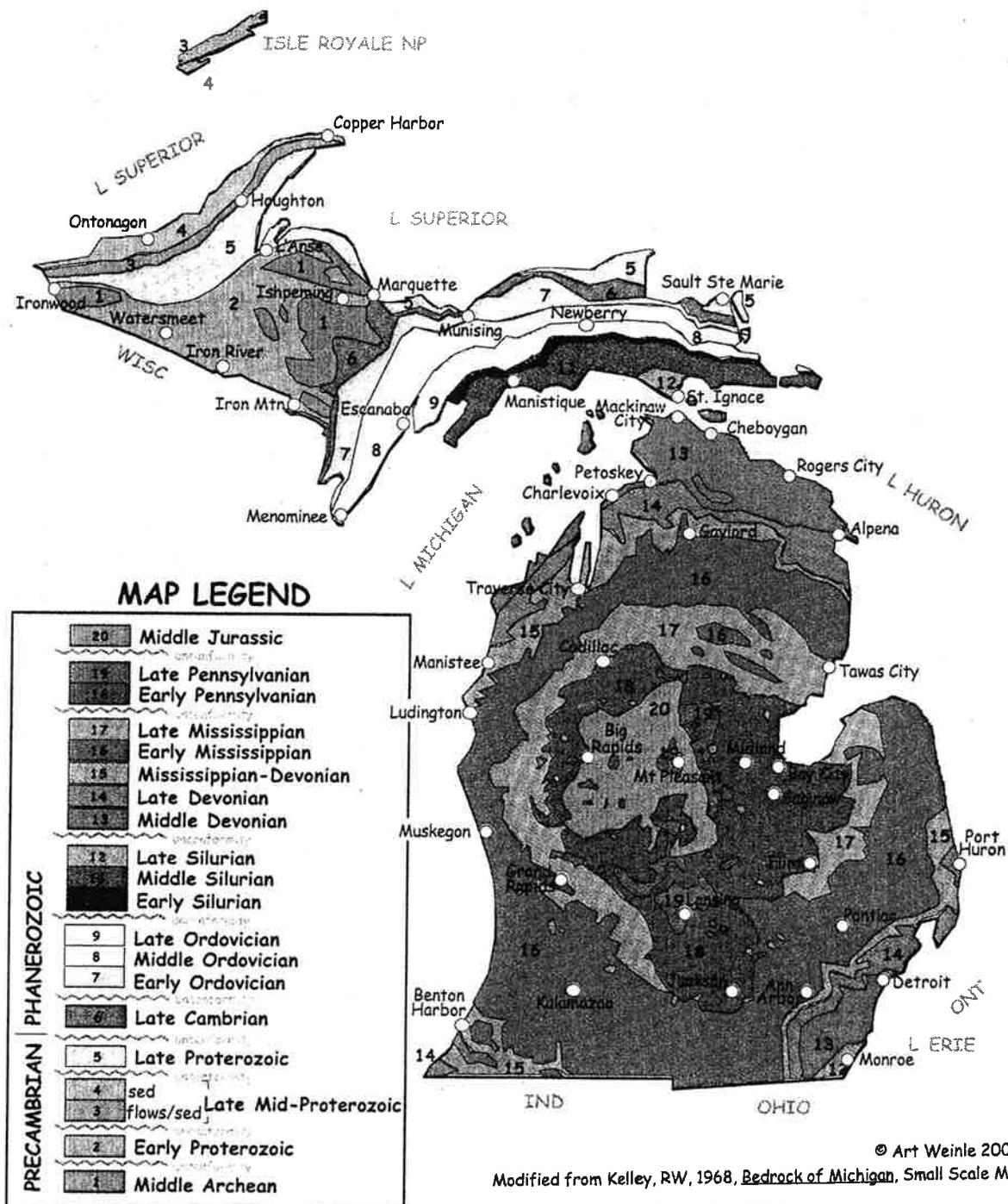
* If using a mason's hammer, protect your eyes with appropriate eyewear.

* Protect your skin with sunscreen and insect repellent.

* Practice good etiquette—treat property as though it were your own. Don't litter.

“Fossil hunting can be a great daylong adventure with family and friends, or even solo,” Hull said. “Either way, it is certain to be an amazing trip back in time.”

MICHIGAN BEDROCK GEOLOGIC MAP



© Art Weinle 2008.

Modified from Kelley, RW, 1968, *Bedrock of Michigan*, Small Scale Map No 2,

State of Michigan, DNR, Division of Geology.