

Charlie's Chatter

by Charlie Baumann

I did not get a head count, but I would say approximately 30 members were in attendance. We had two guests, Dick Davies and Larry Ealy. Welcome gents. Do you think we should call new members "pebbles" for their first meeting? HA!

Tom Fordyce remarked that we are in need of more slabs for making "cabs". If any club members have any extra slabs, bring them in.

Cynthia Vaughn won the door prize: a quartz slab with wild horses painted on it. Very attractive. Thanks to Jane Matz for donating the door prize. Thanks to Tracey Anderson and Tom and Cindee Atkinson for the snacks.

Lauren Vaughn presented both the 5 minute and 30 minute programs. Lauren brought in about a dozen samples of Smithsonite (zinc carbonate). Smithsonite was named after the benefactor of the Smithsonian Institute, James Smithson. Smithsonite is generally found with Zinc. In the US it is found mainly in the Western states along with PA and NJ. It can also be found in about a dozen countries. There is a great variety of colors including yellow, green, blue, and purple. Lauren also brought in a large chunk of Leland Foundry glass. After being buried for about 120 years the foundry glass still has some charcoal embedded. A most unique item.

The 30 minute program was an episode of the TV series *Dirty Jobs*. This episode dealt with salt mining in Kansas. The featured mine has been in operation since 1922. The rock salt from this mine is used on roads to melt ice in the winter months. They pull out 1000 tons of salt a day out of this mine.

The mine is 600 feet deep and the vein is 325 feet thick. It runs 2 miles in one direction and a mile in the other. Big bore machines drill a series of 26 holes in a section of the salt wall. Explosives are then pumped in the holes, followed by blasting caps. The fuse is lit and you have about 4 1/2 minutes to take cover.

After the blast, large front loaders remove the salt to a con-

(cont. on reverse)

Upcoming Events



March 16th

5-Minute Program
"Crinoid Fossils"
by Deb Bull

Main Program
"The Morefield Mine (VA)"
by Lauren Vaughn

April 20th

5-Minute Program
"Quartz, Tourmaline, and Polyhedroid Agates"
by Sis Leake & Jim Lutfy

Main Program
"Are You Smarter Than a Fifth Grade Rockhound?"
trivia game

April 30th – May 2nd

"Fantastical Fossil Gem & Mineral Show"
Kalamazoo County Expo Center
contact: Kitty Starbuck
269-649-1991



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veyor belt where the salt runs through crushers to break the salt into baseball size chunks. These chunks then travel 3 miles on conveyors to another crusher that breaks them into the size we are familiar with. The salt is then raised out of the mine on elevators. There are only 4 individuals operating the mine. It appeared that safety was an after thought. I will have a greater appreciation of the salt I see on the roads from now on. It was a very informative and entertaining film. Thanks Lauren.



The Grand Traverse Area Rock and Mineral Club (GTARMC) is open to the public. Promoting our hobby is our goal.

All regular meetings & classes are held at the Heritage Center (the old library) on Sixth Street in Traverse City on the Third Tuesday of each month, at 7pm, unless posted otherwise in the newsletter.

If you have received a complementary newsletter, we welcome you to attend our next meeting. You do not have to be a member to attend the meetings of the GTARMC.

The Grand Traverse Area Rock and Mineral Club is affiliated with the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies and the Midwest Federation of Mineralogical and Geological Societies.

CLUB OFFICERS 2010

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Photo credits: Alice Hauser

Annual Membership

Adult \$15.00 / Jr. (8-17) \$5.00
 Couple \$20.00
 (children \$3 ea.)

Dues are payable to:

GTARMC
 c/o Karen Thomas, Treasurer
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