

THE BADGER DIGGIN'S

The Badger Lapidary and Geological Society, Inc.

Monroe, Wisconsin

Devoted to the Earth Sciences

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President's Message

Dear Badgers:

Summer is unofficially here and it's time once again for the Wil Ward Annual (Memorial) Picnic. However, at the May meeting, it was voted to move the location of the picnic to the residence of Tom and Dar Gitchel, 1851 W. Winneshiek Road, Freeport, Illinois, in order to have our picnic in conjunction with the Freeport club's. Because of the extra travel time from Monroe and vicinity, I'm assuming that the picnic will start around 10:30 or 11 a.m. Please bring a folding chair for yourself. You should find a map and/or directions to the Gitchel's elsewhere in this newsletter.

As in the past, the club will furnish the necessary charcoal, buns, hamburgers, hot dogs, brats, and marinated chicken for the grill, as well as paper plates, utensils, napkins, and condiments. **Everyone is asked to bring their own drinks, plus a dish to pass (such as a salad, fruit, casserole, or dessert).** Please let Teri or I know by phone (608-835-2653) or e-mail (jdmarcheii@gmail.com) before Friday, June 7th, of how many in your family will be coming, so that we can provide enough meat and buns for everyone.

Teri has again agreed to do silkscreen printing of the Badger logo on to T-shirts or other dark-colored clothing items at the picnic. Feel free to bring such an item for silkscreening, if desired.

Of course, everyone is also welcome to display any recent finds from our club field trips (e.g., to Cave-in-Rock, Illinois) or shows that you have attended.

This will be our last formal gathering before the summer collecting season begins. Dan Trocke may have additional information and/or sign-up sheets at the picnic regarding upcoming field trips in June, July, and August. You'll also be informed about them by e-mail as those dates draw near.

We hope to see everyone at the picnic and wish you enjoyable, safe, and productive collecting in the months ahead. You can tell us about your many adventures at the September show-and-tell meeting. Good luck!

Jordan Marché

BLGS president



Officer Roster:

President

Jordan Marche'
5415 Lost Woods Ct
Oregon, WI 53575
608-835-2653
jdmarcheii@gmail.com

Vice-President, Field Trip Chair

Dan Trocke
4771 County II
Highland, WI 53543
608-935-0597
dtrocke@acscm.com

Secretary

Laurie Trocke
4771 CTH II
Highland, WI 53543
608-935-0597
lor3@netscape.com

Treasurer

Daisy Peterson
W4647 County Rd FF
Monroe, WI 53566
608-328-1523
daisyjovilu@gmail.com

Editor

Laurie Trocke
4771 CTH II
Highland, WI 53543
608-935-0597
lor3@netscape.com

Show Chairperson

Teri Marche'
5415 Lost Woods Court
Oregon, WI 53575
608-835-2653
tmarche@usnetizen.com

Officer at Large

Marv Hanner
PO Box 201
Juda, WI 53550
608-934-2001
tnmins@tds.net

BLGS 2013 Calendar of Events

June 8th: Meeting - BLGS Picnic

June 22nd: Field Trip – Ripon, WI

July 13th: Field Trip – Upper Michigan

July 27th: Field Trip – Plum Creek

August 10th: Field Trip – Fennimore & Prairie du
Chien

August 24th: Field Trip – Beloit, WI

September 14th: Meeting – Show & Tell

September 28th: Field Trip – Savannah, IL

October 12th: Meeting – Chain mail/Jewelry making

October 26th: Field Trip – Lapidary Day

November 9th: Meeting – Presentation (tbd)

December 14th: Meeting - Holiday Party

What's Rockin'

With having an after meeting field trip to Rufers Quarry the What's Rockin table was not the foremost thing on people's minds, so we just had a few but very nice specimens on the table.

Teri Marche' brought a piece of English Fluorite from Weardale England, a pink Fluorite from Mt. Blanc France and an Azurite from Australia. Clay Schroll brought an Agate from South East South Dakota.
The Green's

May Meeting Minutes

The May meeting was called to order at 10:30. It was hosted by Dan Trocke with help from Teri Marche'. We welcomed any new guests and started with announcements. Dan announced that the program for this meeting would be a trip to a local quarry. Dan suggested that the club purchase a \$25 gift card from Brennans as a thank you gift for the quarry owner. Teri made a motion to purchase the gift card, Jack Hoxie 2nd the motion and it passed unanimously. Dan asked if there was any discussion on the minutes from the April meeting, there was not. Brian Green made a motion to accept the minutes as printed, the motion was 2nd by our May meeting seconder, Jack Hoxie and this also passed.

Daisy Peterson, our treasurer, could not attend the meeting, so Brian Green summed up the treasurer's report with "Yes, we do have money."

The next topic of discussion was a couple of events for the following weekend. The Wisconsin Geological Society will be holding their annual show at Hart Park in Wauwautosa. It is an excellent show with a good number of vendors. Also, Lloyd Brown, is a member of the WI Geological Society and will be at the show. He was nominated to the Rock Collector's Hall of Fame. Also next weekend is the Starlight Gem & Mineral sale. They are retiring and are selling their stock. They will be selling by the flat from 4-7 on Friday and also on Sunday.

Teri said that she had talked to Mike Reisch about a new collecting site. The field trip for July 27th has been changed. We will be going to Plum Creek near River Falls, WI. There is a park there that is open to the public and you can pan for gold in the creek. You can find gold, garnets and even diamonds. More information will follow closer to the trip.

Thanks to the Greens for the meeting treats.

The first door prize was won by Clay Schroll. He won a fossil seal bone.

Dan also thanked Harold for bringing his boat to the Mazon Creek field trip. He rescued pretty much everyone when the other boat we were using lost the prop! We had half the club members still on shore, half out on an island and one boat load of people stranded in the middle of the lake!

We then moved on to old business. Dan reminded everyone that the Wil Ward Memorial Picnic will be held

in June for the next meeting. Brian Green announced that Tom & Dar Gitchel had generously offered to host a joint picnic between the Monroe & the Freeport club. They have 17 acres and 2 ponds just outside of Freeport. Brian made a motion to change the location for the picnic from the park in Monroe to the Gitchel's house near Freeport. Jack 2nd the motion and it carried. The club will provide meat, buns, charcoal and condiments. Please bring your own drinks, a dish to pass and folding chairs. Brian said that in the past, members of the Freeport club have brought rocks to swap or sell if anyone is interested.

The second door prize was won by Cindy Green. She won a piece of Dinosaur egg shell.

Next up was new business. Dan said that the next field trip would be to Cave-in-Rock, IL. You can camp at the Cave-in-Rock State Park or there are several motels in the area. He can try and set up a trip thru the Ben E Clements museum if anyone is interested. They would take us to pay to dig sites. The other option would be to go to the tailings piles as we have in the past. Dan will get more information out before the trip.

Teri said that the trip to Michigan would be the weekend of July 13th. It would be a long weekend. Mike Reisch is working with some connections that he has in the area to set up new places to go. The current plan is to meet on Saturday at the Siemen's Museum and then go to the piles to hunt for copper on Saturday & Sunday. If you can stay until Monday, the plan is to stop at the S&G mine, which is a salvage yard. They sell copper by the pound and sometimes have some great pieces.

There was not a show report.

The third door prize was won by Erin Trocke. She won a beautiful piece of Apophyllite & Stilbite.

Jayden Trocke then shared the story and passed around the 6 3/8" Megladon tooth that he received for his birthday. He said that the person that found it dives off the coast of North Carolina and follows underwater river beds to search for fossils.

Deb made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Jack 2nd it, of course. The meeting adjourned and many members proceeded to the nearby quarry to hunt for fossils.

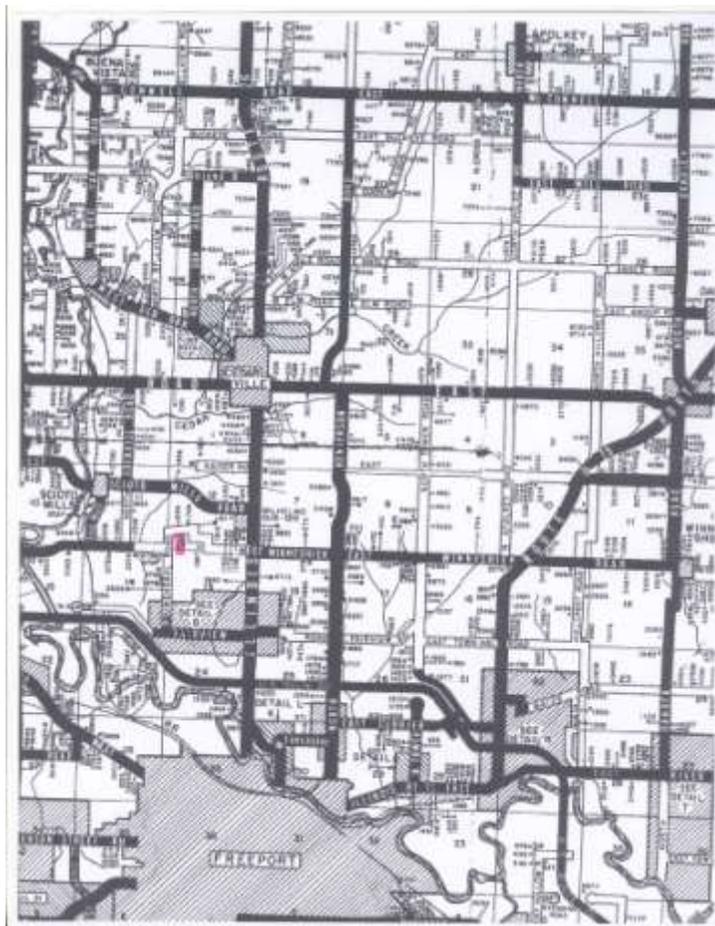


The June picnic will be held on Saturday, June 8th. It will start around 11:00, with food served at 1:00. The picnic will be held at Tom & Dar Gitchel's House, 1851 W Winneshiek Rd, Freeport, IL.

Driving directions (from Monroe, WI): Follow State Hwy. 69 south into Illinois, where it becomes Illinois Route 26. Proceed towards Freeport. About 2.5 miles south of Cedarville, turn right (west) onto Winneshiek Road. Proceed almost exactly one mile, and look for the black mailbox on the left hand side (1851). You've arrived!

Bring rocks for show & tell or swap & sell. Bring a dish to share, beverages and lawn chairs. Stick around into the evening for a bonfire!! Please, no fireworks. Hope to see you there!!!!

Map to Tom & Dar Gitchel's House



**Cave in
Rock, IL
(From
inside
the cave
looking
out.**



Mineral Events

June 8-SKOKIE, ILLINOIS

2nd Annual Rock Swap; Chicago Rocks & Minerals Society; St. Peter's United Church of Christ gymnasium; 8013 Laramie, across from the public library on Oakton; Sat. 1-5; free admission; contact Jeanine N. Mielecki, (773) 774-2054; e-mail: jaynine9@aol.com; Web site: www.chicagorocks.org

June 8-9-KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN

Rockhouse Seminar; Michigan Geology & Gemcraft Society; Rood Hall, Western Michigan University; W. Michigan Ave. and Rankin Ave., east of Howard St.; Sat. 9-5, Sun. 9-4; adults \$15 per day, students \$5 per day; contact Don Brown, 32832 Illinois, Livonia, MI 48150, (734) 421-8159; e-mail: info@mgags.org; Web site: www.mgags.org

June 8-9-MANSFIELD, OHIO

Richland Lithic & Lapidary Society; Richland County Fairgrounds, Arts and Crafts Bldg. ; 750 N. Home Rd.; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 11-5; adults \$4, seniors and ages 6 to 16 \$3, Scouts in uniform and children under 6 free; "Dinosaurs: They Ruled the Mesozoic": displays, T-Rex skull, dinosaur bones, eggs, dinosaur-related objects, 11 dealers, gems, minerals, jewelry, fossils; contact Michael McCullough, 9317 Cheshire Rd., Sunbury, OH 43074, (740) 965-1078; e-mail: mikemcc18@embarqmail.com; Web site: http://rlls.webs.com/

June 8-9-PLYMOUTH, WISCONSIN

Glacial Drifters Geologic Society; Sheboygan County Fairgrounds; 229 Fairview Dr.; Sat. 10-4, Sun. 10-4; free admission; swapping, rocks, minerals, fossils, jewelry; contact Kevin Ponzio, PO Box 44, Plymouth, WI 53073, (920) 980-6413; e-mail: Earthprospect@frontier.com

June 14-16-PARK HILLS, MISSOURI

16th Annual Missouri Mines Rock Swap; Mineral Area Gem Mineral Society; Missouri Mines Historic Site at St. Joe State Park; Hwy. 32, 1.5 miles west of US Hwy. 67; Fri. 9-6, Sat. 9-6, Sun. 9-4; free admission; contact Boneta Hensley, Missouri Mines Historic Site, Park Hills, MO 63601, (573) 760-0488; e-mail: mojellybean63@yahoo.com; Web site: www.facebook.com/events/451012824958811/

June 29-30-ROSEVILLE, MINNESOTA

Anoka County Gem & Mineral Club; Har Mar Mall; 2100 Snelling Ave. N; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 12-5; free admission; agates, fossils, gems, jewelry, minerals; contact Martha Miss, (651) 459-0343; e-mail: martha@rock-biz.biz

Wisconsin Events

8 St. Germain - 6th Annual Walk in the Woods Art Fair. Held in the park behind the St. Germain Chamber of Commerce from 9AM to 3PM, join artists from around the Midwest presenting pottery, paintings, photography, handmade jewelry, woodcarvings and furniture. Wine tasting and sales, fine artisan cheeses and live music. Park behind Chamber, 473 Hwy. 70 E. For more information call (715) 477-2205.

Jun 13 - Jul 14 Fort Atkinson - Little Shop of Horrors.

The nerdy clerk at a down-on-its-luck flower shop is growing the world's most unusual plant. Hilarity ensues when he discovers the plant needs more than just water and sun to thrive. You'll love the tuneful musical score and quirky off-beat romance. The Fireside Dinner Theatre. For more information call (800) 477-9505.

15 - 16 Monona - Family Fishing Fun. Celebrate Father's Day With Fishing-Themed Fun at the Aldo Leopold Nature Center! 330 Femrite Drive, Monona, 53716. For more information call (608) 216-9371.

15 - 16 Oregon - Hayloft Gallery Art Fair. 10AM-5PM. Admission free. Annual on-the-farm, fine arts and fine crafts fair at the Hayloft Gallery in partnership with neighboring "Art in the Barn" music festival. 1239 South Fish Hatchery Road. For more information call (608) 835-8462.

21 - 23 Custer - The 24th Annual Energy Fair. Each year the MREA Energy Fair transforms rural Central Wisconsin into the global hot spot for renewable energy education. The Energy Fair brings over 20,000 people from nearly every state in the U.S. and several countries around the world to learn, connect with others and ready them for action at home. The Energy Fair is the nation's longest running energy education event of its kind. 7558 Deer Rd. For more information call (715) 592-6595.

22 Sun Prairie - 26th Annual Strawberry Fest. 8AM-3PM. Admission free. Family friendly festival featuring craft fair, run/walk, strawberry wine tasting, breakfast/lunch, garage sale, raffles, entertainment and lots of delicious food options. Colonial Club Senior Activity Center, 301 Blankenheim Lane. For more information call (608) 837-4611 ext 120.

29 - 30 Spring Green - Crafts in the Country. Peck's Farm Market East 21st Annual Additional Site Fair. "Crafts in the Country". Craftpersons, free wagon rides, food stands and baked goodies. 6445 Hwy 14. For more information call (608) 588-7177.

Three generations of Griffith men carry on spar mining tradition

- ELIZABETHTOWN -- All the big fluorspar mining companies left Hardin County years ago, but there are three miners still looking for strips of the translucent gem in the Rosiclare sandstone.



Gary Griffith, left, shapes fluorspar into a diamond shape. He, his father Guy, right, and son, Walter, are the last of the professional Hardin County fluorspar miners.

All the big fluorspar mining companies left Hardin County years ago, but there are three miners still looking for strips of the translucent gem in the Rosiclare sandstone.

Guy Griffith, his son Gary and grandson Walter are still hoping to find the mother load.

"You get started digging and it gets in your blood," Gary said.

The three began their three-man mining operation in 1991. When they began they sold commercial grade fluorite by the ton to 52 companies east of the Mississippi River.

The demand for fluorite is still strong, the Griffiths say, but the large mining companies found it hard to compete with cheaper fluorite being sold in China. For three men with an excavator, bulldozer, a skid steer loader and a cattle operation, the Griffiths make ends meet.

The three live in two neighboring houses on their farm in rural Elizabethtown. During these hottest days of the summer, the mining is on hold.

"It's dirty, hot, nasty work," Gary said.

Finding the mineral is a challenge. Most minerals grow at faults. But some faults are filled only with mud.

"You look for rock formations, faults, different types of rock," Gary said.

"And mostly, luck," Guy said.

The fluorspar may be in gravel form of 2 to 3 inches and there may be single piece with no other chunks around it. Sometimes the spar is covered with a glittering layer of quartz.

Sometimes there will be a pocket of the glittering stone intact, ready for the excavator bucket to extract.

"Jackpot," Gary said.

"It's kind of like the old boy who plays the lottery and goes walking down the street and there lays a \$5 bill," Guy said.

While the vast majority of the Griffith spar goes to companies in the steel, aluminum, glass and gas business, the family sells some to individuals who simply want a chunk of spar. Some people will pick out a chunk and one of the men will chisel it into the traditional diamond shape.

During World Wars I and II, fluorite was in high demand with U.S. Steel, Alcoa Aluminum, Ozark Mahoning, Penwalt and Minerva Oil all mining in Hardin County at one time or another. Now, besides the Griffiths, the only miners are the Hastie Quarry who sell any fluorspar they happen to find in the rock.

To visit the Griffith's & purchase fluorite at their farm near Elizabethtown, IL, call ahead at Phone: 618-0287-8808 or 618-287-3962



Quarry Trip 5/11/13





Cave in Rock



Badger Lapidary & Geological Society, Inc.

Laurie Trocke, Editor

4771 CTH II

Highland, WI 53543

