

The Lake George Gem and Mineral Club -

***Club News,
April, 2008***



Meeting Time 10:00 AM April 12!

Program for the month:

Roll up your sleeves and go for the gold! Loren Lowe, long-time Lake George club member and expert gold bug will demonstrate the fine art of extracting gold from a stream bed. Limber up your wrists and get ready to learn the fine art of panning for gold.

Silent Auction:

For the silent auction, please bring items you are willing to contribute to the club, and a few dollars to buy things with.

Programs and Field Trips

Field trip season is fast approaching! Field Trip Chairman Dan Alfrey has submitted the following starter list for field trips this summer.

June 14th - 15th Wigwam Creek with the Denver Gem and Mineral Guild. The Guild has generously agreed to let us collect on their claim(s). The setting is similar to the Crystal Creek area north of Lake George. Microcline (including amazonite), smoky quartz, fluorite, topaz, Zinnwaldite (a type of mica), and zircon have been found.

July 12-th Petra Placer (Digging for topaz, courtesy of Rich Fretterd)

July 19-th Spruce Grove (Another, somewhat easier topaz locality)

August 14-th Rich Fretterd has invited dealers registered for the Lake George Show to come dig on his Godsend claim.

Oct. 11-th Godsend Claim. Club members invited.

Additionally, we will have *several* Trips for **The Guffey Exploration** club-project. We are also looking for other trips to different types of localities. We especially need one for our May meeting. Let Dan Alfrey know if you are willing to lead a trip, or have a suggestion.

Coming Events

Several members had expressed interest in having Denver-area events included in the Lake George newsletter. There are several listed below. Of these, a number are silent auctions. These events are similar to the small scale auctions our club holds as part of each meeting, but (a.) are much larger, and (b.) allow participants to bring in items to sell, with only a portion (generally 20 – 25%) going to the sponsoring club. These events are a great way to build a collection for modest prices.

Silent Auction held by the North Jeffco Gem & Mineral Club.

... **April 11**

"Public invited!!!! Buyers and Sellers welcome!!! There will be lots of rocks, minerals, fossils, jewelry, crafts and more. Arvada Senior Center, 6842 Wadsworth Blvd., Arvada, CO.

Lake George Gem and Mineral Club

... **April 12**

The meeting will start at 10:00 AM (winter hours). Loren will do a "hands on" demonstration of gold panning.

Traveling exhibit on Gold

... **Now through – June 8**

Opens Feb. 12 at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science. Organized by the American Museum of Natural History (NYC), the exhibit will be quite spectacular. This dazzling exhibition contains more than 2,000 pounds of the "shiny stuff," Admission will be \$15 for adults, \$11 for seniors, \$6 for juniors. General admission to the museum is included.

Free USGS GPS, Map, and Compass Classes.

Now through November

April 11 and the second Friday of every month through November, Building 810, Federal Center, Lakewood; 9-11 a.m. Map & Compass, 12-4 p.m., GPS class. Call 303-202-4689 or email gpsworkshops@usgs.gov for reservations, or see www.cr.usgs.gov/gpsworkshops/index.html for more information.

Mining And Minerals: Foundations Of Society

... **April 12, 2008**

Special class sponsored by the Western Museum of Mining and Industry. The instructor is Steven Veatch, adjunct professor of Earth science at Emporia State University, where he received an MS in Earth science. Saturday, 8:30 am to 5:30 pm. To register or for more information, contact Brad Poulson, Phone: 719/488-0880

Ray & Eloise Berry' famous annual MINERAL SALE

... **May 3rd & 4th**

Saturday & Sunday 9 AM - 4 PM in our barn at 7513 Tudor Rd, CS. CO, off 1-25 exit 149. Specimens selected from the Berry's collection and trade stock - hundreds of crystals to choose from! - Most are \$1 to \$50 For more info, call or e-mail: 719 598-7877, rayber@q.com

Denver Gem & Mineral Guild Silent Auction

... **May 9**

7:30 PM, Colorado School of Mines campus, Berthoud Hall, at 1516 Illinois Street in Golden. All welcome!

Silent Auction, sponsored by the Colorado Chapter, Friends of Mineralogy.

... **May 17**

Public welcome and all invited. Clements Community Center, 1580 Yarrow St., Lakewood, 1:00-4:00 p.m. For more info contact me Bruce Geller or Pete Modreski

New Lake George Member Orientation:

... **May 17, 2008**

May 17 at the Museum of Mining and Industry north of Colorado Springs will be a full day **at no cost to LGGMC members** to get hands-on experience with reading maps, GPS, gold panning, collection procedures, etc. Call to get on their list ASAP!

This orientation program is advertised by the Museum as the **Colorado Prospecting & Mineral Collecting Seminar**, and will run from **10 a.m.-7:00 p.m.**

Catch the fever and discover the secrets of mineral collecting and gold prospecting in Colorado's world famous geology! With the assistance of the Gold Prospector's Club of Colorado, the Colorado Mineralogical Society, the Lake George Gem & Mineral Club, and the Friends of the Florissant Fossil Beds, experts in Colorado geology will teach an introduction to mineral collecting and gold prospecting. The course will include a practical hands-on session in the morning, a classroom session in the afternoon, and a keynote speaker in the early evening. This is a fundraiser for the Museum. For an additional \$10 per person, a box lunch can be reserved or attendees can bring their own picnic lunch to be enjoyed on the Museum grounds. **Space is limited so please RSVP to the Museum at 719-488-0880.**

Mineral Sale

May 17 - 18, 2008

The mineral collection of Dick Holmes will go on sale Sat., 8:00 - 4:00 and Sunday noon to 4:00. Dick was a miner and a mine inspector, with a collection spanning 1925 to 1986. There will be over 1,500 specimens, mostly Colorado minerals, many from the San Juan and Leadville areas. Cash only; Rain or Shine; no pre-sales. 2980 S. Vine Street, Denver, 80210 (south of Denver University). There will be many specimens under \$100, Perky boxes in various sizes, and hand-size minerals up to large crystal plates. A complete collection of "The Mineralogical Record" from the first issue to 1989 is for sale - inquire day of sale for a viewing appointment.

Inter-club trip to Wigwam Creek

**June 14th and 15th
2008**

The Denver Gem & Mineral Guild has invited the Lake George Club to join them on a field trip to their claim(s) in the Wigwam Creek area. Smoky quartz, microcline (both pink and the blue-green amazonite variety), fluorite, topaz, zinnwaldite and zircon have been found in this area. Leader: Bill Piety, Contact Number: (303) 420-4311.

44th annual Gem, Mineral, Jewelry and Fossil Show

... **Jun 21-22, 2008**

Colorado Springs Mineralogical Society, *Colorado Springs, CO*. Held at Phil Long Expo Center - 1515 Auto Mall Loop.

Lake George Gem and Mineral Show

**August 15 - 17,
2004**

Micro Note From Richard Parsons

In last month's issue, I included a piece on the joys of collecting and enjoying mineral specimens whose crystals require magnification to be seen clearly. Serious addicts of this aspect of mineral collecting (known as micromounters) carefully trim and mount these specimens in small boxes for viewing under a microscope.

This has been the catch for many otherwise-intersted collectors – the cost of a good microscope. A top-end, name-brand stereo zoom scope can cost well over a thousand dollars.

There are several ways to reduce this cost. Used scopes are sometimes available at a good price, and there are many "no-name" scopes on the market for much less than a Nikon or Meiji. E-bay is loaded with them!

Such a scope should be bought with care, for many are junk. I bought one from a reputable dealer that put their name on the scope and is good about supporting them. This 10 – 40X stereo zoom scope (which I have found to be quite satisfactory), costs a bit over \$400.

This dealer has a website (<http://www.absoluteclarity.com/>) which includes a page for mineral collectors that is very helpful to collectors wanting to know what kind of scope they should buy, what to look for in a used scope, etc.

If your budget is tight, you aren't sure how deeply you want to get into the micro end of the hobby, or you (as I did) want a light, inexpensive scope to take in the field, to shows, club meetings etc., here is a deal!



Sargent –Welch, a large supplier of scientific instruments and supplies. Currently has this Boreal Basic Stereo microscope on closeout for \$75 plus around \$9 shipping. It is a stereo, single-focal length scope (20X) that comes with an ingeniously-mounted penlight. The 20X magnification is right in the middle of the range of a typical zoom scope suited for viewing minerals, and for another \$20 you can get an interchangeable set of objective (lower) lenses that will give 40X magnification.

I bought one of these little gems, and am delighted with it! It is well finished, focuses smoothly, and provides a sharp image. It weighs about 2#, is very compact and self-contained. It will probably show up at future club meetings, or trips to localities where “micros” are likely. If interested, you can learn more about this scope (or buy one) at the website below.

http://sargentwelch.com/product.asp?Q=penE&WLS48249%2D03%5FEA&A=Boreal+Basic+Stereomicroscopes_E

MURDER AND DINOSAURS: HISTORICAL RECORDS TELL THEIR STORY

Good Records Provide Valuable and Irreplaceable Information

By

Steven Wade Veatch, El Paso County Information Technologies

Justin Walker, El Paso County Records Center

Recently, historical records from the El Paso County Assessor's office provided information about a 100-year-old murder confession, and the Assessor's and Treasurer's records helped return a lost set of El Paso County dinosaur tracks to the annals of science. These are two of the records-based discoveries Steven Veatch, who has oversight of the El Paso County Records Center, presented to the Board of County Commissioners on March 10, 2008.

Veatch gave these examples to demonstrate how an efficient record-keeping system can provide information in the most unlikely situations, and emphasize the importance of cost-effective digitization of significant County records. More than a century ago in El Paso County, John Spicer wrote a murder confession in pencil on the unfinished back of a piece of window molding. Spicer, who was building this home in 1899 in Fountain, Colorado, nailed the molding

to the wall. The confession remained there, unseen for almost a century. In his confession, Spicer described the murder of John Sebastian in March 1893. Spicer revealed that he clubbed John J. Sebastian "four miles north of this city and two miles east of the foot of Cheyenne Mountain," for \$5,000 in cash and jewelry. The body was never found, but the 19th century murder confession, hidden in the Fountain house, was found in 1986 when the home was remodeled by the current owner. The 4th Judicial District Attorney's Office investigated the confession and could not establish its exact date, but they were able to use the El Paso County Assessor's historical records to determine that the house was built in 1899, six years after the murder.

Last spring, Veatch, who is also a part-time paleontologist, was investigating dinosaur tracks near the El Paso and Pueblo County line. During a search of archival records at the *Colorado Springs Gazette*, he learned that dinosaur tracks had been recovered in 1904 at the Merit ranch by a famous Colorado geologist, Arthur Lakes. Lakes enlisted the help of Winfield Scott Stratton, the Cripple Creek Gold King, to excavate the tracks. The archival record from the newspaper showed that the tracks were placed in the natural history museum at Colorado College. The museum was closed in the 1970s, and its collections scattered to museums around the state.

Veatch brought a microfilm copy of the 1904 *Gazette* article to Paul Myrow, a geology professor at Colorado College. After reading the article, Myrow remembered the lost dinosaur tracks. He led Veatch to the exact site where they are now located at Colorado College. Myrow was pleased to learn the provenance of the tracks.



El Paso County government records were instrumental in revealing the significance of these dinosaur tracks. Photo by S. W. Veatch.

Veatch's next step was to confirm the location of the historic Merit ranch so the exact discovery site would be known. A search of historical records from the El Paso County Assessor and Treasurer revealed this information.

These rediscovered tracks generated great interest in the paleontological community. Martin Lockley, a dinosaur track expert at the University of Colorado at Denver, organized a field party to visit this track site at Colorado College last summer. The tracks were mapped and a fiberglass mold was made in order to make several casts of the dinosaur tracks. Veatch, Lockley, and a professor from Metropolitan State College wrote a paper on these tracks that was presented in October of last year at the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology's Annual Meeting in Austin, Texas.

It was through historical records that these lost dinosaur tracks were discovered again and are now a part of the scientific literature and will never be lost again. Preserving historical records is a crucial mission. You never know what stories they hold or what light they may shed

on unsolved mysteries of the past.

The Treacherous Mineral

Bill Cordua, U. of Wisconsin @ River Falls

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Mineral names are often given to commemorate a famous scientist or locality. Sphalerite (ZnS) however, has a name based on the Greek word for “treacherous”. Blende, a German synonym for sphalerite, means “blind” or “deceiving”. What is it about this common mineral (which forms very attractive collector specimens) which led its namers to be so negative about it?

The name comes from the tendency of people to misidentify it. It was often mistaken for galena, which was mined for its lead, and sometimes silver, content. Sphalerite yielded neither at the smelter, and, until the nineteenth century, there were few if any uses for the zinc that was present. So, to the old-time miners, the mistaken identity was a costly error. Things changed for sphalerite in the 1850's with the advent of galvanizing. In Wisconsin, many deposits worked for lead suddenly became zinc mines as well, with hundreds of thousands of tons of metal produced. This was also true for deposits elsewhere, notably in the Tri-state district and other mid-western deposits, now prized for the beautiful sphalerite crystals found during mining.

So this is a bum rap for poor sphalerite. It is actually a relatively easy mineral to identify, and has a number of very distinctive properties that can be tested with little equipment. Yet, true to form, I find many students misidentifying it with depressing regularity.

First, when well crystallized, its form is distinctive. Sphalerite forms complex crystals that have a generally tetrahedral habit, although many modifying forms commonly occur. A tetrahedron has 4 faces, each one an equilateral triangle. Even with the complex modifications frequently present on sphalerite crystals, the generally triangular outline is usually visible. Few minerals have this crystal habit.

The color of sphalerite is extremely variable, and this is probably part of the identification problem. Though usually some shade of brown to nearly black, red, yellow, green, blue and clear sphalerite is known. The colors represent the effects of chemical impurities, generally iron. The percentage of iron controls how dark the brownish hue is. Chemically pure sphalerite is clear (a variety called cleiophane). Translucent red sphalerite is sometimes called ruby jack.

The streak plate helps even out the color problems. Sphalerite will generally give a pale yellow streak. The hardness of 3-4 on the Mohs' scale, distinguishes sphalerite from quartz or feldspar. You can scratch sphalerite with a steel nail, but not with a copper penny.

Sphalerite breaks readily along a number of regular cleavage planes. Ideally, there are 6 preferred directions of break (the so-called dodecahedral cleavage). While it is not usually possible to count all 6 directions on any particular specimen, an observer will clearly see this is a mineral with at least 4 cleavages. Few minerals have more than three.

A chemical test is also helpful. When powdered and moistened with weak HCL (muriatic or brick-cleaning acid), sphalerite emits a potent rotten egg odor of sulfur compounds. Kids generally love to do this test. So sphalerite gives many cues to its identity, yet is still viewed as “treacherous”. Many minerals for which sphalerite is mistaken, such as calcite, fluorite, siderite or goethite, will never emit sulfurous fumes. Among the sulfur-bearing minerals, few have the color, luster, streak and cleavage of sphalerite. Galena, for which it is most frequently mistaken, is always metallic; always some shade of gray, breaks along 3 sets of cleavages as cubes, and never crystallizes as tetrahedrons. Who could honestly mistake it for sphalerite? Poor sphalerite. Sometimes life ain't fair.

Lake George Gem and Mineral Club
P.O. Box 171
Lake George, CO 80827

The Lake George Gem and Mineral Club is a group of people interested in rocks and minerals, fossils, geography and history of the Pikes Peak/South Park area, Indian artifacts and the great outdoors. The club's informational programs and field trips provide an opportunity to learn about earth sciences, rocks and minerals, lapidary work and jewelry making, and to share information and experiences with other members. Guests are welcome to attend, to see what we are about!

The club is geared primarily to amateur collectors and artisans, with programs of interest both to beginners and serious amateurs. The club meets the second Saturday of each month at the Lake George Community Center, located on the north side of US Highway 24 on the east edge of town, sharing a building with the county highway shops. **In the winter we meet at 10:00 AM. From April through September, we meet at 9:00 AM, to allow more time for our field trips.**

Our organization is incorporated under Colorado law as a nonprofit educational organization, and is a member of the Colorado, Rocky Mountain and American Federations of Mineralogical Societies. We also sponsor an annual Gem and Mineral show at Lake George, where collectors and others may purchase or sell rocks, minerals, fossils, gems or jewelry. Annual membership dues (Jan. 1 through Dec. 31) are \$15.00 for an individual (18 and over), and \$25.00 for a family (Parents plus dependents under age 18).

Our Officers for 2008 are:

Maury Hammond, President
PO Box 549
Woodland Park, CO 80866
719-687-2702
mauriac@mywdo.com

John Rakowski, Vice President
PO Box 608
Florissant, CO 80816
719-748-3861
rak873john@centurytel.net

Mary O'Donnell, Treasurer
P.O. Box 31
Cripple Creek, CO 80813
719-689-7209

Rebecca Blair, Secretary
117 Yucca Creek Rd.
Divide, CO 80814
blairra@hotmail.com



Richard Parsons, Editor, 13249 Taza Lane, Pine, CO 80470
303-838-8859 or e-mail at richard.parsons@att.net