



# THE MINERAL VEIN

Official Newsletter of

**THE MINERAL SOCIETY OF MANITOBA**

**NOVEMBER 2017**

## OCTOBER PRESENTATION SUMMARY

By Jacques Bourgeois

October is our Annual General Meeting and election month as well as our Show and Tell from members who have gone on mineral collecting field trips during the summer and want to share their finds with the rest of the members.

The election brought a whole new group of people to fill in the vacancies on the board. You can find their names on the second page of the newsletter. A big **THANK YOU** to all the former board members who have invested countless hours and spent lots of time and energy to fulfill their duties and a warm welcome to the new executive!

The Show and Tell component of the evening was quite entertaining as we learned about the travels and excursions of several members and saw the fruit of their labours. Several members went to the Floodway dig and brought beautiful specimens but since the Floodway dig will be the topic of our guest speaker at our next meeting, I will focus on those in the next newsletter.



Marion Foster showing a fossil imprint collected for her

Some of the specimens were found during field trips organised by the Mineral Society such as several fossils specimen and some selenite crystals while others were collected on personal field trips.

One group of avid travelers and collectors are TJ, Leanne and Justyn who took a 17 days trip and traveled across the Great Lakes area. Here is their story:

“Our summer 2017 rockhounding trip was out around the Great Lakes on the north side and back on the south side. We stopped at each lake and at a number of rock collecting stops on the way. The trip took 17 days.

The first day we drove to Thunder Bay and went to the Diamond Willow Amethyst Mine. We found some nice dark pieces, some were even nearly black. A sifting screen would have been useful as there were many small pieces.



Some fossils specimens presented at the Show and Tell

**(Continued on page 3)**

## THE MINERAL SOCIETY OF MANITOBA

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### *The 2016-2017 Executive:*

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*The Mineral Vein* is published monthly from September to June.

**Meetings** are held on the first Wednesday of each month from September to May inclusive at the Manitoba Museum in room P47 on the Planetarium level. They begin at 7:30 PM and feature announcements, an invited speaker and a raffle. Members are encouraged to bring along any new, interesting specimens, or specimens appropriate to the speaker's topic.

**Field Trips** take place from May to September to interesting sites in Manitoba or neighbouring provinces and states.

**Membership:** A single membership is \$15 while a family membership is \$20. Memberships run from October to October.

## Table of Contents

OCTOBER PRESENTATION SUMMARY.....	1
UPCOMING EVENTS.....	2
INTERESTING CAVES AROUND THE WORLD.....	4

### UPCOMING EVENTS

**November 1, 2017:** MSM regular monthly meeting begins at 7:30 p.m. at the Manitoba Museum. Our guest speaker this month will be Jack Bauer who has spent a lot of time and energy organizing the signature field trip of the year in the Winnipeg Floodway. His work paid off as many participants found some beautiful selenite specimens. Jack will share his experience planning and organizing this trip.

**December 3, 2017:** MSM annual Christmas Party. This year, our Christmas party will be held at the Aaltos restaurant at the Canad Inn Polo Park. Our annual Mineral auction will take place during this event. Clean up the garage, attic or basement and to bring some nice mineral specimens or other items you no longer want for the auction. Contact Michael Dickman at (204) 231- 544 to reserve your seat and confirm your attendance.

**January 3, 2018:** MSM regular monthly meeting begins at 7:30 p.m. at the Manitoba Museum.



Founded in 1971, the Mineral Society of Manitoba is dedicated to promoting the study of minerals, rocks and fossils for their scientific and recreational value.

The Mineral Society of Manitoba hosts monthly meetings covering a variety of mineral related topics. In addition, the Mineral Society organizes summer field trips to collecting localities, and hosts educational exhibits about minerals and fossils.

## OCTOBER PRESENTATION (CONT.)

We spent the last 2 hours of the day at Blue Point. We were hoping to find some small clusters like on our first trip with the Mineral Society but we did not have much luck here this time, only finding some small pieces. I would recommend bringing a hammer and small digging tools but no equipment is needed.

On the road out from the Diamond Willow and Blue Point we saw an Amethyst Souvenirs for sale sign in a farm yard. The local family has amethyst on their property and was selling some nice pieces at very reasonable prices.

Pebble Beach in Marathon, Ontario was an interesting stop. The whole beach was covered with 6" or smaller polished stones.

Bruce Mine, On was the next stop. We went to the Simpson Copper Mine Museum, we did not collect there but it was interesting to see what an 1800s copper mine looked like. Bones and tools left on the site were covered in green copper oxide.

North of town is Jerry's Live Bait and Rock Shop, it was worth the stop with a varied selection and we bought a number of fairy stones that were collected from the local area.

Following directions from the rock shop we did some prospecting in the local area but did not find any pudding stone in the time we had.

Petoskey, Michigan still has many places you can collect petoskey stones. We stopped here on the way to Sarnia and only went to 3 easily accessible beaches where we found only a few decent petoskey stones but we found many other small fossils mainly around Little Traverse Bay.



Petoskey stones (fossilized rugose coral)



TJ McCrea showing off one of his finds

In Sarnia we visited some of Leanne's family and the local butterfly garden. We found the Stones n Bones museum which was a worthwhile stop for their fossils and other displays.

Next stop was Bancroft, Ontario, which claims to be home to 80% of the minerals found on earth. Any stop in the area would have dozens of different minerals available. The mineral museum in town was our first stop to see what was available in the area and to get directions to local digging sites. The museum was worth the stop, having some impressive specimens.

Our first stop was the Princess Sodalite Mine. They collect tailing from around the area and worldwide. Some highlights of our stop were smoky quartz, sodalite, amethyst, and garnet though the available minerals change based on what they get in. The gift shop also had a nice mineral specimens, jewelry, and other rockhounding related items. I recommend a hammer and chisel for breaking specimens and water for cleaning. There was no entry fee but they charge \$1.50 per pound on what you collect.

(Continued on page 4)

## OCTOBER PRESENTATION (CONT.)

Our next stop was the grocery store in Quadeville to get a pass (\$5 per person) for the Beryl Pit. This is a historical mine where beryl was mined to make the beryllium shields for the first atomic bomb so collecting is for personal use only. You can still see part of the historical pit and the tailings are periodically turned over for collecting. Focus most of your collecting on the tailings and bring some digging tools. We came across a couple of hikers looking for an Al Capone hideout in the area.

We plan on another longer trip to this area another year as there are many different dig sites both active and historical.

Herkimer, New York, was our next rock stop. We stayed at the Ace of Diamonds mine and camped there for a night. We had 1 ½ days of digging time. A herkimer diamond is a double terminated quartz point created through volcanic activity in the Cambrian-age, Little Falls Dolostone. Ace of Diamonds is connected to a commercial mine and lets you dig the tailings. You can stake a claim in a selected area and try to open a pocket but that takes 3+ days to do so. We found many smaller stones using the sluice, some mid sized surface fines, and spent a few hours breaking some of the large rocks in the tailings for herkimers.



Herkimer “diamonds” - double pointed quartz

Breaking rock was the hardest rockhounding I have done, I would recommend taking sections of rock

with visible herkimers rather than trying to completely free herkimers as it is easy to break or lose the stones. Make sure to ask where the most recent tailings dump is each day. That is the best area by far. Another rockhound beat us out by half an hour and found two 4 inch points in the fresh tailings. There is a per person per day digging fee and you can rent all of the needed equipment on site cheaply.

There is also the option to go into the commercial mine and have them open up a pocket for you but that costs \$1,500!!!

We stopped at Niagara falls on the way back to see the Falls and Bird Kingdom.

Heading home south of the Great Lakes we stopped at Evangola State Park. The beach there was made of slate and had many slat slabs in the hillsides and along the water’s edge.

We stopped at Millennium Park in Chicago and had Chicago-style pizza on the way through, would recommend.

The last rockhounding part of the trip was a stop at Moose Lake for Lake Superior agates. We found a large number of small pieces maxing out at under 1” in size. I would recommend stopping by the local gift shop to see some stones to have an idea of what to look for. Public collecting is limited to 4 public pits and I would recommend the Hatchery Pit as the one we had the most luck at and go during or after the Moose Lake Agate Days held on the 3rd weekend of July as that is when the public agate pits are turned over.”



Moose Lake Agates—Minnesota