



# THE MINERAL VEIN

Official Newsletter of

## THE MINERAL SOCIETY OF MANITOBA NOVEMBER 2019

### NOVEMBER MEETING

Back by popular demand the ever so knowledgeable with a good sampling of humor, Dr. Eva Pip.



Her presentation is what every new mineral collector needs to know. Even seasoned collectors can benefit, from her up to date talk. Learn how to recognize mineral frauds and fakes. Learn about the extent that some people will go, to dupe unsuspecting collectors. If you have a mineral that could possibly be a fake, bring it along, so we can all learn and benefit from it.

### OCTOBER MEETING SUMMARY

No new executive was elected, due to no nominations or volunteers for executive positions from the membership. The old executive has graciously volunteered to continue to support the Mineral Society until Oct of 2021 in their current role. Thank you Marty Lewadny for being our rock doctor.



**HOLIDAY PARTY** Sunday December 01, 2019 at Canad Inns, Polo Park in Ambassador rm. K (4-8pm), dinner will be from the buffet at Alto's at a cost of \$19.99, senior discount does apply (just ask). Our Annual action will be lead by Tony the exceptional auctioneer, he will be auctioning off the donations provided by the members.

Contact Jack Bauer.

We encourage all members to check their collection and garage for an amazing item/ specimen to donate to the auction.

### VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Remember that the MSM is a non profit group, which is managed by members/volunteers just like you. This group has many important connections and a huge potential for networking and meeting like minded people.

**SILVER COVE; WE COULD USE ONE MORE VOLUNTEER FOR NOVEMBER THE 16TH, 10 AM TO 8 PM. RED RIVER EXIBITION PARK.**

**CENTRAL CANADIAN MINING EXPLORATION CONVENTION; NOVEMBER 18TH & 19TH, 8 AM TO 4.30 PM. WE COULD USE TWO MORE VOLUNTEERS @ VICTORIA INN.**

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## THE MINERAL SOCIETY OF MANITOBA

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### The 2018-2019 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.

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

**NOVEMBER MEETING:** Will be held on November 6th starting at 7pm at the Manitoba Museum. Our guest speaker, back by popular demand will be Dr. Eva Pip and she will be speaking about "fake minerals".

**NOVEMBER: 16th–** *Silver Cove Mineral and Gem show.* Location and times on pg. 1

**NOVEMBER 18 AND 19th–** CCMEC. Location and times on pg.1

**DECEMBER MEETING:** In lieu of our meeting we are having a holiday celebration on Sunday December 01, 2019 at Canad Inns Polo Park from 4-8pm in Ambassador K. Dinner will be buffet from Alto's, buffet cost is \$19.99.

**JANUARY MEETING:** Will be moved to the second Wednesday January 08, 2020 due to the first Wednesday being new years day.

**FEBRUARY MEETING:** Speaker to be announced.



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, hosts educational exhibits about minerals and fossils and local trade events.

# SELENITE CLEANING GUIDE

By Jack Bauer

Since we have done the dig this year I have received many questions regarding the cleaning of our fragile Selenite's.

I will address the issues and concerns that we will come across while cleaning our gypsum crystals. I have also talked to many of our experienced Selenite collectors over the years, to see how they solved their cleaning challenges.

It is with high hopes to save members the pain of the trial and error method of learning how to do it, by those that have done it before.



Above: Amber crystal with clay still attached prior to starting the cleaning process.

**Our objective;** is to remove the clay from the crystal, without causing damage to the crystal. We should only start the cleaning process until after they have been dried completely, for one or more weeks.

Some collectors; will spread their crystals on the lawn or a plastic table and use a garden hose to remove the clay. This way is quicker but, the damage rate may be higher, if you try to clean them all at the same time. I recommend cleaning them in smaller batches and in phases, allowing for drying time in between washings.

What I call, the golden bladed and Blocky clear crystals are very sensitive to this type of cleaning and could literally fall apart, with an over aggressive spray or not totally dried from within.

The one thing; that all of the collectors agreed on was to not use a toothbrush on the blades, to remove the last bits of stubborn clay.

I also believe that temperature and PH balance of the water used are important factors to keep in mind. Distilled or demineralized (PH 4) and hot water should never be used, as we all know, that is how to speed up mineral absorption and could potentially effect/dull the luster and flash of a crystal, similar to the dulling effect of a brush.

We only want the water to be absorbed by the clay to soften it, without effecting the crystal. Using colder water also gives you more time to pick the clay from the crystal. Winnipeg tap water has a PH of 9, which is Alkaline and suitable for rinsing .

**Set-up a work station:** Clean them in a place where you have access to water, good lighting and an area that you don't mind getting messy and is easy to clean. Laying down cardboard and setting up your station on that, can help to keep the mess contained.

A Pail of water to dip the crystal into

A pail to catch the clay when picking it off



A soft area/box for crystals being processed to rinse

I use a short pail filled with cold water. It is Ok to reuse the water, as the clay will settle to the bottom. The objective is to make sure the water is saturated with alkaline minerals. Keep in mind, that we want to keep the exposure to water to a minimum, preferably less than ten minutes.

## SELENITE CLEANING GUIDE, *cont.*

I use a heavy duty rubber glove on my left hand; to minimize cuts and a nitrile on my right to keep my hands clean and dry. Some people do not like gloves and find them awkward to use. If you have tougher skin, you may not need a glove.



*Demonstrating the rinse set up in the pail*

Initially, I will start with groups of 3 or 4 minerals. The objective now is to soften up the clay, by dipping it into the water, allowing the water to be absorbed into the cracks in the clay.

Then put it down on a soft tray allowing the water to be absorbed by the clay. Then repeat with the next crystal and so on. Now back to the first. Pick up crystal dipping it into the water and picking off the clay, as needed.



The objective now is to probe and pick at the clay gently, to remove it in chunks or pieces. Note; some of the clay may soften faster than other parts. When the loose pieces have been picked off, move on to the next crystal, and so on.

Back to the first crystal to check for any missed clumps of clay, dipping as needed into the pail of water. After each crystal is processed 3 times, we are now ready for a rinse.

When the clay has become soft and mushy, it is time to rinse. I have found that my sink sprayer works well for this purpose. However, I would not recommend that you flush the clay down your kitchen drain as the accumulation of clay in the sink trap could plug the drain.

I solve this problem by using a short pail in the sink. Hold the crystal in the pail and with the sprayer rinse the crystal and on a soft drying tray. Later, take the pail outside to dump it.

Inspect each crystal for clumps of clay that can be picked off of the crystal and re-rinse. If you come across a stubborn piece of clay stuck to a blade, it may be best to leave it, let it dry and do another final cleaning at a later date (phase 3). That last piece may be an inclusion, which does occasionally happen.



*Completely clean Selenite with lots of shine*

After drying for a few days, the crystals can be wet again now the focus is on picking off the stubborn pieces of clay. Keep in mind that stubborn piece could be an inclusion into the crystal blades. It is best to clean the crystals in multiple stages, in order to minimize potential damage.

My understanding is that most of the damage is caused by aggressive cleaning technics, too much water or not enough water. Amber lenticular bladed balls can tolerate being sprayed a little longer than the golden bladed and clear bladed crystals. These crystals can suddenly, without warning completely fall apart if, they are kept wet too long. Some blades begin to show cleavage lines, as a sign of being wet too long.