

ROCK TRAILS



Newsletter of the StateLine Gem and Mineral Society

VOLUME 55
ISSUE XI
NOVEMBER 2015

2015 Officers and Directors

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Meetings are held the first Sunday of each month
at 2:00 PM
at 201 W. Main St., Morenci, MI 49256



President's Tidings



This month we have nominations for office, so I guess we should think about that. Also, this: we have our silent auction at this month's meeting, so bring in something to put on the table.

Boy, what a summer! Most of us were busy all summer with shows. Hope everyone had a lot of fun. I wish I could have done more than the last three shows but was not able to due to the surgery. Thanks to all of you that took up the slack.

The last couple of weeks I have gone to a few other shows: Warren, Fort Wayne and Mason. Warren was a huge show and we saw some of our dealers. We also met some new friends Fort Wayne was a small show but was a very good show. Brought back a nice piece of birds eye jasper (10 pounds). It has great matrix.

The 10" saw blade has been changed, so that saw is in good working order.

Have not had a chance to work on the 16" saw yet but should be able to soon. It will be nice to get that one working again. We have everything we need to get it working again. Also have another grinder almost ready to go back to the club house. Richard has repaired the 6" flat lap and it is working good. There is also an 8" flat lap and a vibrating flat in the equipment room that works.

Meeting will be Nov. 1

Treasurer's Statement

Congratulations! Not only have we survived the last flurry of fund raisers, but have flourished, thanks to the hard work of our members. Thank you. Your hard work is greatly appreciated. We have sufficient funds to pay club expenses until revenue for our spring show starts coming in.

Hopefully we can use this time to organize the clubhouse so we have easier access to items as they are needed. Also there is a wealth of material in the basement that can be used to generate income, either in the form of finished jewelry or specimens for the silent auction table. A number of years ago S & S Lapidary donated 2, 000 pounds of rock to State Line because we were a 501(c)3 organization and we have received donations from the family of former members and other generous rock hounds. We have new members who seem very willing to help, but are unsure what they could do. I think "work parties" are a wonderful way for us to get to know one another better and to have fun discovering what lost treasures are waiting to be discovered in the basement.

We can discuss this at the meeting so please bring your ideas.

Traditionally we have a Silent Auction at the November Meeting. This consists of items donated to the club by its members and can represent lapidary items as well as other treasures that they feel might entice bidding. Hopefully there will be some nice slabs available from the wonderful collection of rocks we have in our club house basement.



Please add Sandy & Rita Cline as honorary members to your membership list.

Sandy & Rita Cline 580 Coon Lake Road North Kawartha, Ontario LOL 240
sandy@sandycline.com

Secretary's Scoop

The State Line Gem and Mineral Society meeting was brought to order by president Sherm Kardatzki with Richard B. giving the invocation. The pledge of allegiance followed.

Richard B. made a motion to accept the secretary's report as printed in the newsletter and Linda S. seconded. The motion passed with all in favor.

Richard B. gave the treasurer's report since Doris was unable to attend. He said there was good news and bad news: The rent and utilities have been paid up to date and we have a healthy bank balance at this time. However, we still have to repay Doris the \$1500.00 plus shipping for the geodes the club ordered on her charge card. The club also ordered grab bag trinkets from Oriental Trading and will need to pay for the club's website which Doris will have to use her charge card to pay. Once the exact amounts are determined, she can be paid back. We also have rent, utilities and Ohio taxes coming due before our show next year. We are still ok for the time being. We also expect to get some income from the show in Tecumseh and Sherm noted that we should have funds coming in from dealers within a few months. Linda S. asked if the Oriental Trading order was new or the one placed a little while back. Richard said the club ordered some new additional items.



Phyllis made a motion to accept the treasurer's report, Judy seconded and the motion passed with all in favor.

Richard B. reported that he refurbished a flat lap machine and brought it back to the club so that more members could work on polishing rocks at the same time.

Sherm reminded us that any Humane Society donations could still be made by the 17th of October. Contact Linda H. or take them directly to the shelter. He also mentioned that two diamond saw blades have been ordered from Frank's Rock Shop.

New Business: Judy suggested that we make Sandy Cline and his wife Rita honorary club members because of all their help and promotion for the club. That idea was well received because everyone knew all the things Sandy has done for the club and continues to do for our club. Richard B. noted that Sandy volunteered to demonstrate at the Clinton festival at a moment's notice. Judy referred a teacher to Sandy and he ended up agreeing to teach soapstone carving to a grade school class in Lansing. (*Thank you Sandy!*). Richard B. made a motion to have Sandy and Rita become honorary members, seconded by Bill and passed with all in favor.

Judy stated that the honey vendors across from the club booth at the Clinton festival may have a resource for us to make a geode trip to Kentucky next spring.

Bill brought up that he and everyone else is getting older and that it is becoming more difficult to haul buckets of geodes for the various shows. He asked if there was any help or other options for the club to deal with geodes. Linda S. suggested having the club get a small trailer to store the geodes to avoid loading and unloading them so often. Richard B. thought it would be a great idea but it would be difficult to find a safe storage place for a trailer. The topic was discussed but no solution was found.

Richard B. made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Frank, which passed with all in favor and the meeting was adjourned.

Soapstone

People have quarried soapstone for thousands of years. Native Americans in eastern North America used the soft rock to make bowls, cooking slabs, smoking pipes and ornaments as early as the Late Archaic Period (3000 to 5000 years ago). Native Americans on the west coast traveled in canoes from the mainland to San Clemente Island (60 miles offshore!) to obtain soapstone for cooking bowls and effigy carving as early as 8000 years ago. The people of Scandinavia began using soapstone during the Stone Age and it helped them enter the Bronze Age when they discovered that it could be easily carved into molds for casting metal objects such as knife blades and spearheads. They were among the first to discover the ability of soapstone to absorb heat and radiate it slowly. That discovery inspired them to make soapstone cooking pots, bowls, cooking slabs and hearth liners. Throughout the world, in locations where the soapstone is exposed at the surface, it was one of the first rocks to be quarried. Soapstone's special properties continue to make it the "material of choice" for a wide variety of uses.



What is Soapstone?

Soapstone is a metamorphic rock that is composed primarily of talc, with varying amounts of chlorite, micas, amphiboles, carbonates and other minerals. Because it is composed primarily of talc it is usually very soft. Soapstone is typically gray, bluish, green or brown in color, often variegated. Its name is derived from its "soapy" feel and softness. The name "soapstone" is often used in other ways. Miners and drillers use the name for any soft rock that is soapy or slippery to the touch. In the craft marketplace, sculptures and ornamental objects made from soft rocks such as alabaster or serpentine are often said to be made from "soapstone." Be careful when purchasing if the type of rock used in making the object is important to you. Many people use the name "steatite" interchangeably with "soapstone." However, some people reserve the name "steatite" for a fine-grained unfoliated soapstone that is nearly 100% talc and highly suited for carving.

How Does Soapstone Form?

Soapstone most often forms at convergent plate boundaries where broad areas of Earth's crust are subjected to heat and directed pressure. Peridotites, dunites and serpentinites in this environment can be metamorphosed into soapstone. On a smaller scale soapstone can form where siliceous dolostones are altered by hot, chemically-active fluids in a process known as metasomatism.

Physical Properties of Soapstone

Soapstone is composed primarily of talc and shares many physical properties with that mineral. These physical properties make soapstone valuable for many different uses. These useful physical properties include:

- soft and very easy to carve
- nonporous

Soapstone, continued from page 4

- nonabsorbent
- low electrical conductivity
- heat resistant
- high specific heat capacity
- resistant to acids and alkalis

Soapstone is a rock and its mineral composition can vary. Its composition depends upon the parent rock material and the temperature/pressure conditions of its metamorphic environment. As a result, the physical properties of the soapstone can vary from quarry to quarry and even within a single rock unit. The level of metamorphism sometimes determines its grain size. Soapstone with a fine grain size works best for highly detailed carvings. The presence of minerals other than talc and the level of metamorphism can influence its hardness. Some of the harder varieties of soapstone are preferred for countertops because they are more durable than a pure talc soapstone.

How is Soapstone Used?

The special properties of soapstone make it suitable, or the material of choice, for a wide variety of uses.

- Countertops in kitchens and laboratories
- Sinks
- Cooking pots, cooking slabs, boiling stones
- Bowls and plates
- Cemetery markers
- Electrical panels
- Ornamental carvings and sculptures
- Fireplace liners and hearths
- Woodstoves
- Wall tiles and floor tiles
- Facing stone
- Bed warmers
- Marking pencils
- Molds for metal casting
- Cold stones

Soapstone is often used as an alternative natural stone countertop instead of granite or marble. In laboratories it is unaffected by acids and alkalis. In kitchens it is not stained or altered by tomatoes, wine, vinegar, grape juice and other common food items. Soapstone is unaffected by heat. Hot pots can be placed directly on it without fear of melting, burning or other damage. Soapstone is a soft rock and it is easily scratched in countertop use. However, a gentle sanding and treatment with mineral oil

Soapstone, continued from page 5

will easily remove shallow scratches. Soapstone is not suitable for use as a workbench top where it will receive rough treatment and where sharp or abrasive objects will be placed upon it.

Soapstone tiles and panels are an excellent choice where heat and moisture are present. Soapstone is dense, without pores, does not stain and repels water. Those properties make soapstone tiles and wall panels a good choice for showers, tub surrounds and backsplashes. Soapstone is heat resistant and does not burn. That makes it an excellent wall covering behind wood burning stoves and ovens. Fireplaces are also lined with soapstone to create a hearth that quickly absorbs heat and radiates it long after the fire is out. This property of soapstone was recognized in Europe over 1000 years ago and many early hearths there were lined with soapstone.

Soapstone does not burn or melt at wood burning temperatures and it has the ability to absorb heat, hold heat and radiate heat. These properties make it an excellent material for making wood-burning stoves. The stove becomes hot and radiates that heat into the room. It also holds heat, keeping the coals hot and often allowing the owner to add more wood without the need for kindling.

Soapstone cooking pots absorb heat readily from the stove and radiate it into the soup or stew. Because their walls are thick they take a little longer to heat than a thin metal pot. However, they heat their contents evenly and retain their heat when removed from the stove - the contents of the pot keep cooking until the pot itself begins to cool. Soapstone pots are highly prized by people who learn how to use them. Stone Age people made the first cooking pots from soapstone without the aid of metal tools. The soft rock could be worked with sharp stones, antlers or bone. Skilled craftsmen carved the pots directly from the outcrop. Small soapstone pots were highly prized and traded widely. Large soapstone pots were very heavy and difficult to move. Archaeologists believe that large soapstone pots were used at sites where the residents had intentions of living for a long time.

<http://geology.com/rocks/soapstone.shtml>

Editor's note: Many of you may have taken the soapstone carving class given by Sandy Cline during our Gem and Mineral Show. I took it several years ago and still have my duck!



Photos from Tecumseh AppleUmpkin Festival



Bench Tips

by Brad Smith

HOMEMADE WAX TOOLS

Save your used X-Acto or scalpel blades for utility work on the bench. They're wonderful for delicate wax work. Use a cutoff wheel or other type of grinding wheel to shape the blades to what you need. For instance, you can carve away excess metal on the spine to make yourself some narrow carving knives that do a great job of detailing small pierced areas of your waxes.



REMOVING A STONE FROM BEZEL SETTING

If you've forgotten to use dental floss and got your stone caught in a bezel, there's one thing you can try before starting to pry.

Find some sticky wax or beeswax. Roll it into a pencil-sized cylinder and stick the end onto the top of the stone. Mold it on well and yank.

But if the stone is really stuck, there are two other tricks - but each with risks and consequences. The first is to pry open the bezel with a sharp knife blade being very careful not to wrinkle or tear the bezel. If you try this, make sure to pry gently in several passes around the stone.

The last solution is to drill a small hole into the bezel setting from the back side so that you can push the stone out. Note that this does leave a hole, but in some cases you can use it to saw out a design under the stone.

More Bench Tips by Brad Smith are at [facebook.com/BenchTips/](https://www.facebook.com/BenchTips/)
or see the book "Bench Tips for Jewelry Making" on Amazon

Get all 101 of Brad's bench tips in "Bench Tips for Jewelry Making" on Amazon
www.amazon.com/dp/0988285800/

Upcoming Events

Sunday, Nov. 1, 2015

State Line Gem & Mineral Society

monthly meeting

2:00 p.m.

201 W. Main St.

Morenci, MI 49256

November 1 - 2, 2015

Midland, MI

Mid-Michigan Rock Club Annual Show

Midland Resort & Convention Center

1500 W. Wackerly St.

Midland, MI

March 18 - 20, 2016

Jackson, MI

Michigan Gem & Mineral Society

Annual Show

"May the Quartz Be With You"

Jackson County Fairgrounds

American One Event Center

200 W. Ganson

Jackson, MI

April 29, 30, May 1, 2016

Kalamazoo, MI

Kalamazoo Geological & Mineral Society

57th Annual

Rock, Gem, Fossil and Mineral Show

"Dinosaurs Will Rule"

Kalamazoo Expo Center

2900 Lake St.

Kalamazoo, MI



Happy Thanksgiving

Rock Trails

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Meetings are held the
first Sunday of each month
at 2:00 PM
at 201 W. Main St.,
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