



THE JASPILITE

FALL 2015 ISSUE

ISHPEMING JASPILITE GOES TO MICHIGAN STATE

Our Purpose:

*To enjoy, to learn, to
teach and conserve*

*The rocks, the gems, the
fossils and ores,*

*To collect, to admire, to
brag and to show*

*The material we've
found, we'll trade for
yours.*

*-Bob & Marian Markert
(founding members)*

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A specimen of jaspilite from Ishpeming was collected this summer by Michigan State University and is on display at its new home. Don't look for it in a display cabinet or on a shelf, though. The 29-ton boulder sits outside the Natural Sciences Building on the MSU campus.

This mineral collecting project was the brainchild of Warren Wood, an MSU alumnus and visiting professor. Wood wanted to display an example of Northern Michigan's great contributions to the state's economy, as well as to enhance the beauty of the campus.

Jaspilite is a type of banded iron formation, consisting of alternating bands of fine-grained red quartz (jasper) and metallic gray specular hematite. The metamorphosed sedimentary rock was formed about 2 billion years, although the exact mechanism of its formation is the subject of continuing debate among geologists. Some of the most attractive varieties of jaspilite are found in the Ishpeming and Negaunee area. Ironically, jaspilite was considered by the miners to be waste rock rather than ore - the beautiful red

jasper was a detriment to the iron-smelting process.

Professor Wood approached Thomas Waggoner of Negaunee for help in locating a suitable specimen of Jaspilite. Waggoner, a retired geologist with over 40 years of experience on the iron range, led Wood to one of the area's earliest iron mines, the Little Mountain Mine. This small surface mine, just a couple hundred yards off the Iron Ore Heritage Trail, was only mined for a short time before operations shifted to the adjacent Cleveland Mine.

Once a suitable specimen of jaspilite had been located, a crew from A. Lindberg & Sons Inc. used heavy equipment to haul the boulder out to Davis Street, where it was loaded onto a semi trailer. It was then transported to East Lansing by Oberstar Inc. and unloaded at its new home outside the MSU Department of Geological Sciences.

Some years ago, another boulder of jaspilite was taken from the base of Jasper Knob, a few hundred yards from Little Mountain, and put on display at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.

WHERE'S MY SUMMER JASPILITE?

No, you didn't miss receiving your Summer 2015 edition of THE JASPILITE. It never got published.

Your editor is dependent on you, the club members, for material for the newsletter. If I don't get contributions, I either have to find interesting articles in other publications or on the WWWeb and get permission to publish them, or I've got to write them myself. I had some small articles (thanks, Joyce!), but not enough to make an issue. Between working out of town, flying in to make the field trips and the show, then flying back to work, along with the usual summer activities, I simply didn't have time or energy to concoct an entire newsletter. I hope this issue makes up for it.

Take a look at Kevin Ponzio's fascinating article, "Last Gasp at the X". Kevin's not a professional writer - he's a rockhound and mineral dealer - but he wrote what he felt, it's a good story, and I was happy to publish it. I'm sure some of you could write about some fun time you had rock collecting. If you don't think it's good enough for public consumption, submit it anyway - we can whip it into shape. Perhaps you could explain how to clean specimens, how to trim them, how to mount them, how to polish rocks, or tumble them, or wire-wrap them. Maybe you could tell us about other areas where you've collected, or memorable rockhounds you've known. Your contributions can help to make THE JASPILITE as unique as each and every one of you is.

What do you want to see in the newsletter? Your suggestions are encouraged. Ask, and we'll do what we can to see that you receive!

-Your Editor,
Dan Fountain



UPCOMING EVENTS

JANUARY 17, 2016

Program Meeting

Topic and presenter to be announced

FEBRUARY 13, 2016

Kaleidoscope

Volunteers needed!

FEBRUARY 21, 2016

Program Meeting

Topic and presenter to be announced

MARCH 20, 2016

Program Meeting

Topic and presenter to be announced

APRIL 17, 2016

Annual Club Silent Auction

A variety of specimens donated by members and de-accessioned from the Club's collection will be sold at silent auction. Don't miss this chance to build your collection.

MAY 15, 2016

Program Meeting

Topic and presenter to be announced

SUMMER 2016

Field trips!

We're working on locations.

JULY 31, 2016

Gem & Mineral Show Field Trip

AUGUST 1, 2016

42nd Annual Gem & Mineral Show

AUGUST 2 & 3, 2016

Gem & Mineral Show Field Trips

LAST GASP AT THE X

I gave a silent gasp because my brain was unable to tell my lungs to inhale, while looking down at the boulder that I had just split in two.

Every year in August, dozens of people make their way to the copper mines in the U. P. Michigan. Rockhounds come from all continents to take part in the Keweenaw Mineral Days (KMD) collecting experience. Most of the rockhounds who go there are from the Midwest, however.

It had been a few years since I had participated in the KMD and the excitement was building with each day as it grew near.

The Seaman Museum was coordinating the event this year without the Copper Country Rock & Mineral Club. The CCRMC had coordinated the enjoyable event for many years prior. There were some glitches in the event this year but none were insurmountable. The Keweenaw event would go on as planned.

I had signed up for the Central Exploration mine on Thursday 8/6/15 of the KMD. There was Prehnite, Copper, Silver and the highly prized Michigan gemstone Chlorastrolite/'Greenstone'. Silver had eluded me in the past but I have found specimens of all the rest.

Many rumors that all the tailings had been removed and crushed some years before and were circulating among the rockhounds. I was a little apprehensive of the meaning of 'prepared surface' listed for the Central Exploration mine. I pulled up to the mine to see that 6 to 8 feet of the tailings, below the road level, had been removed. The back third of the original mine tailings still remained. There would be plenty of material to look through. It began at 1:00pm and was to last until 4:00pm. Three hours seemed a short time to prospect but we had a little help. The remaining mine tailings were being turned over while we waited to enter.

The cars began arriving one by one, at the mine dump, until there was a line of cars out of sight along the road. Everyone had their names checked off and anxiously waited with metal detectors, rock hammers and buckets in hand.

1:00pm arrived and everyone swarmed the piles. The sound of metal detectors filled the air. At times, the different beeping sounds became a chorus that would have made a good soundtrack for a science fiction movie. The beeps were followed by the sound of hammers splitting basalt.

I had a slow start finding only a few broken specimens when I was chased off by yellow jackets. I was breaking a rock too close to their nest in the ground. I took the less than friendly warning and moved away.

Small specimens of Prehnite, Datolite and Copper were slowly filling my bag. I walked over every inch, turning rocks over and breaking open some hopefuls. The pile was not yielding much to me as in the past so I decided to take a water and food break. I dropped off what I had found while on my break. The time to collect was running out with only an hour left. Replenished, I returned to the rock piles.

There were a couple of large boulders with some smaller debris that had been pushed next to the road. They had been there for a while because they had been under water and were covered in dried mud. Water was still standing in some low spots around the boulders.

I noticed a lump that appeared to be a 'Greenstone' sticking out the side of one of the boulders. With sledge hammer in hand, I took a swing at the basalt to break a section off. A piece cracked off the edge and there was a Chlorastrolite/'Greenstone' the size of a quarter. My eyes widened with amazement. It had a broken edge and I could see the 'turtleback' pattern. With heart pounding, I stopped to examine the specimen.

Meanwhile, another rockhound was walking by and saw the flake I had removed from the boulder. He was impressed with the find. As we stood there admiring the specimen I had found, we noticed that the little pile of rock we were standing on had 'Greenstones' in them too. His son and my friend joined us as we began filling buckets with the smaller pieces of basalt.

With buckets filled, they cleared the space so I could take another swing at the big boulder. The first two whacks didn't budge the rock. The third

strike hit true and broke off a larger chunk. Wow! This piece had a 'Greenstone', with the face broke off, that was a half dollar in size and extended two inches beyond the broken face! Plus, there were numerous unbroken 'Greenstones' up to half dollar size still in the basalt.

It was hard to imagine how dozens of rockhounds could have walked by this boulder for years without looking closer at it. The excitement had risen to a whelming level. If those large specimens were in the smaller chunks of the boulder, what could still be left in the rest of it? We were about to find out.

I positioned myself with firm footing and gave the remaining chunk a hearty strike with the sledge hammer. The boulder fell open. I gave a silent gasp because my brain was unable to tell my lungs to inhale while I looked down at the two halves. My eyes couldn't have bulged out any further as I looked at a Greenstone measuring 3 1/2 inches across!

The specimen had split in half showing dark green velvety center with laumanite filling part of the void. Both halves of the rock had near equal parts of the gigantic 'Greenstone'. There were abundant 'Greenstones' up to over 2 inches across in each rock surrounding the big 'Greenstones'.

My hands, and body, were trembling with excitement. I decided to stop there and take the large pieces home to work on. With only minutes left to collect, I didn't want to rush preparing these superb specimens in the field. I spent the rest of the day seeing 'Greenstones' every time I blinked.

At home I carefully began dissecting the larger boulder pieces. Even more 'Greenstone' amygdules had been hiding just beneath the surface. Almost all of them had the beautiful 'turtleback' pattern showing. I gathered well over a pound of loose amygdules for tumbling. Traditionally most Greenstones are free of the matrix and are polished for use in jewelry. Should I break it all up for gems or keep it as a specimen? I finally decided to leave the largest chunk of the boulder unaltered. It is a wonderful museum specimen, on the surface, in spite of what gems may be waiting inside.

After prepping and cleaning the specimens, I looked at them in complete amazement. They are all numbered now for my collection and will make a superb display for shows. At last, I think of how little material is left at the Central Exploration mine and that this may be my last gasp at the X.

-Kevin Ponzio

(Kevin is along-time friend of the IRMC and is a perennial exhibitor & dealer at our annual Gem and Mineral Show.)

41st ANNUAL UPPER PENINSULA Gem & Mineral Show

**Saturday, August 6, 2016 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
(All times Eastern Daylight Savings Time)**

**Ishpeming Elks Club Hall
597 Lakeshore Drive, Ishpeming, Michigan**

Dealers

Silent Auction

Crackerbarrel

Displays

Kids Area

Working Demonstrations throughout the day

• **FREE Admission • Door Prizes •**

Field trips Friday, Sunday and Monday

Space may still be available to sell or swap:
outside \$30, inside \$55 per 8 lineal feet.

For information, contact:

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EARTH SCIENCE AWARDS PRESENTED

The Club's annual Earth Science Awards were presented at the October and November meetings.

At the October meeting, two Michigan Technological University students accepted the awards. Ordinarily, the honor is given to one deserving student, but this year our nominating faculty member, Dr. Ted Bornhorst, had two equally qualified candidates, so we decided to split the award between them.

Carolyn Lucca is a junior from Duluth, Minnesota who is majoring in Geological Engineering. Says Dr. Bornhorst of her qualifications, "Carolyn was the top student in my course in mineralogy in both lecture mineralogy concepts and lab involving hand specimen identification of minerals. Carolyn is also an overall excellent student based on her grade point average."

Carly Siko from Portage, Michigan is a senior majoring in Geological Engineering. Dr. Bornhorst noted that "I have had Carly in several courses which I have taught, including field geology. Carly was consistently among the top students in the courses. She is highly motivated to learn, has an excellent work ethic and strives to be a quality performer."

Congratulations to Carolyn and Carly!



We were pleased to welcome Northern Michigan University's award winner at our November meeting.

Emily Morgan is a junior from Marquette who was nominated by Dr. Robert Regis, Professor in NMU's Department of Earth, Environmental, and Geographical Sciences. To quote Dr. Regis, "I'd like to nominate Emily Morgan. She's completed many Earth Science courses, including Physical Geology with a grade of A, and has an outstanding GPA."

Emily accepted her award and said, in part, "I am honored to be able to represent Earth Science students and I am so appreciative."

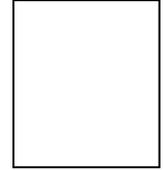
Congratulations, Emily!



2016 DUES ARE DUE!

Membership dues run for the calendar year, and entitles you to receive THE JASPILITE, get a member discount on monthly field trips (half price for members!), and gives you free entrance to the Cliffs Shaft Mine Museum (must show membership card). Only \$10 per year! Payable at any meeting or by mail - membership form online at: <http://www.ishpemingrocks.org/join.htm>

Ishpeming Rock and Mineral Club
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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

The Ishpeming Rock and Mineral Club

www.ishpemingrocks.org

President	Dan Fountain
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	John Crady
	Beverly Trynoski

The club meets at the Cliffs Shaft Mine Museum in Ishpeming at 1:30 p.m. on the third Sunday of the month, September through November and January through May. During the summer business meetings are held at 7:00 p.m. on the third Monday of the month.

KEWEENAW MINERAL DAYS MOVED TO JULY

In a unilateral move, officials at the A.E. Seaman Mineral Museum have decided to move the annual Keweenaw Mineral Days into July. Traditionally, this event had been anchored by the Ishpeming club's field trips and show on the first weekend of August and the Copper Country club's show on the second weekend. The clubs' show dates will remain unchanged.

In order to provide more mineral-related opportunities for rockhounds attending the two shows, the two clubs are planning to sponsor additional field trips and other special activities between the shows. Watch future newsletters and announcements on the club websites for details as plans are finalized.

www.ishpemingrocks.org

www.ccrmc.info