

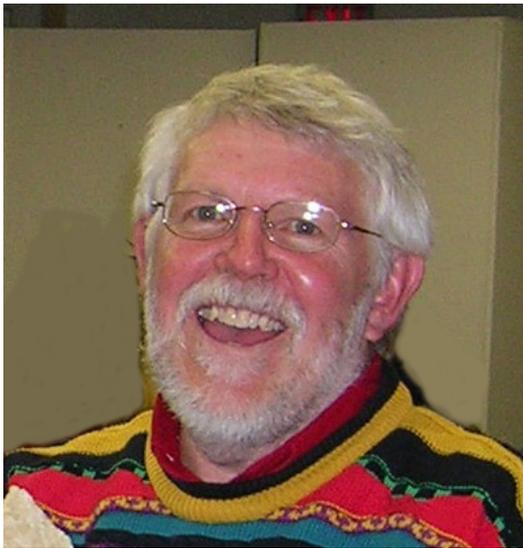


The Rockblast

The Kitchener-Waterloo Gem and Mineral Newsletter

February 2008

President's Message



I forgot to mention in last month's message that we had a number of excellent donations to the auction from generous club members and dealers. Club members **Peter Russell** and **Stephanie Martin** donated some very nice specimens, as did local dealers **Cambrian Gemcraft**, **Gneiss Guy**, **Hollyoak** and **Weather**. We are very grateful to all of them for supporting our club.

February's meeting will feature a talk by club member and former club president **Frank Ruelicke**, on pyrite. Although this is a common mineral, the wide variety of forms it takes give it great mineralogical interest. Please bring your best pyrite specimens to show off.

We are looking for a volunteer to help promote the club's show this coming May. Duties involve sending out e-mail, making up ads, posting on websites, and contacting the local newspapers and radio and TV stations. If you're interested, please contact me.

We would have a more appealing and interesting show if we could have more demonstrations and activities: fossils, displays, fluorescent material, panning for gold or fish fossil cleaning, free samples, etc. Any volunteers?

-- Gary Partlow

January Meeting

Club members celebrated the new year with a raffle and a talk by Katherine LaHay of the University of Waterloo. She spoke on “The History of the Hudson’s Bay Post in Naughton, Ontario”. Not the usual topic for our club, but there *was* a mineral connection: the post served for four years as the headquarters of a rock shop, Cambrian Gemcraft.

Photo credit: André Mongeon



Cassiterite

by André Mongeon

At left: Cassiterite with Topaz, Old Beam Mine, N. Goonbarrow, Stenalees, Cornwall.

Cassiterite (SnO_2) has long been a source of tin. It has been collected for thousands of years near Cornwall, England. Generally, it occurs in pegmatites and hydrothermal veins, where it is associated with topaz,

tourmaline and bismuthinite. It can also be found in areas of contact metamorphism. Cassiterite weathers relatively well and therefore ends up in alluvial deposits near the parent rock, where it often collected. In the past, tin was in demand as it was alloyed

with copper to make bronze since pre-Roman times. Tin played a part in many technological advancements since, not the least of which are its former use in canning. Today it remains in high demand for use in lead-free solder, among other uses. While the English deposits are mainly worked out, Malaysia, Indonesia and China are major industrial sources.

At right: Cassiterite, Habarovskiy, Kray Merck, Russia.

Cassiterite can form nice crystals



that are typically dark brown to nearly black in colour. Nice crystals can still be found in Cornwall, England but Russia and China are also sources of nice specimens. Very rarely, lighter coloured crystals are faceted for collectors. When cut, it has a diamond-like lustre with a high refractive index but a hardness of only 6 to 7. Cut stones are small because facet grade material of substantial size is very rare. Crystal specimens on matrix usually display well and are likely to have associated minerals as well.

Above: Faceted Cassiterite, 0.45 ct, Huyan, China.

Upcoming Meetings

All meetings start at 7:00 PM for trading specimens at the Waterloo Community Arts Centre, 25 Regina St. South, Waterloo. Typical schedule:

7:00 - 7:30 PM: trading and socializing

7:30 - 7:45 PM: a "mini-talk" about some aspect of the hobby

7:45 - 8:00 PM: announcements

8:00 - 8:15 PM: monthly raffle

8:15 - 9:00 PM: featured talk

February 6 2008: **Frank Ruehlicke** will speak about pyrite. Bring your pyrite specimens to show! **Reiner Mielke** and **Chris Vandonkelaar** will give a mini-talk on pigments.

March 5 2008: Erin O'Hara, a graduate student in geology at the U of W, will speak about "Petrography: Minerals and Microscopes".

April 2 2008: Tony Steede from the Walker Mineralogical Club in Toronto will speak about "The Magic Mountain -- Mont Saint-Hilaire, Québec". Bring your specimens from this location!

May 7 2008: **John** and **Tim Elliott** will speak about "The Dundas Quarry - its geology, history, and minerals". Bring your best Dundas specimens to show to everyone!

June 4 2008: Howard Plotkin from the University of Western Ontario will speak about "The Dresden Meteorite". Bring your meteorite specimens!

Upcoming Events

On **March 1-2 2008**, the Kawartha Rock & Fossil Club presents the 15th Annual **Peterborough Gem, Mineral, and Fossil Show** at the Evinrude Centre, 911 Monaghan Road, Peterborough, Ontario. Saturday, Sunday, 10-5. \$3 admission for adults, children free. For more information, contact [Mark Stanley](#), (705) 639-2406.

On **March 29-30 2008**, the Brantford Lapidary & Mineral Society the 36th Annual Lapidary and Mineral Society show (the Paris show) at the Paris fairgrounds, 139 Silver Street, Paris, Ontario. Adults \$3, Children \$1. For more information, contact Jenny Maracle-Jones at turtlefeathers@brant.net.

On **April 10-13 2008**, the 35th Annual Rochester Mineralogical Symposium takes place in Rochester, New York. For more information, visit <http://www.rasny.org/MinSymp.htm>.

On **April 18-20 2008**, the Club de Minéralogie de Montréal presents their 23rd Annual Gem, Mineral, and Fossil Show at the Centre Pierre_Charbonneau, 3000 Viau Street, Montréal. (Viau Métro) Friday, 3 PM - 10 PM; Saturday 10 AM - 7 PM; Sunday, 10 AM - 5 PM. Adults \$8, Children 6-12, \$4, Parking \$10. For more info, visit <http://www.salonminerauxmtl.com>. or call (450) 964-8472 or (514) 353-0101.

On **April 25-27 2008**, the 16th Annual Toronto Gem and Mineral Spring Show and Sale takes place at the Oriole Community Centre, 2975 Don Mills Road, West, North York, Ontario. Friday 4 PM - 9 M, Saturday 10 AM - 7 PM, Sunday 10 AM - 5 PM. Adults \$8, Seniors \$7, Kids 12-18, \$6, under 12 free with adult. For more information, contact Ohannes Bedrossian at (514) 989-9800 or e-mail torontogemshow@canada.com.

On Saturday **May 3 2008** our club hosts the Kitchener-Waterloo Gem and Mineral Show at the Waterloo Community Arts Centre (aka the "button factory"), 25 Regina St. S., Waterloo, 10 AM - 4 PM. Rocks, minerals, gemstones, jewelry, fossils, meteorites. Free admission. Free rocks for kids.

On **July 25-27 2008**, the 3rd Annual Toronto Gem and Mineral Summer Show and Sale takes place at the Leaside Gardens Arena, 1073 Millwood Road, East York. Adults \$8, Seniors \$7, Kids 12-18, \$6, under 12 free with adult. For more information, contact Ohannes Bedrossian at (514) 989-9800 or e-mail torontogemshow@canada.com.

On **July 31-August 3 2008**, the [45th Annual Bancroft Gemboree](#) will take place in Bancroft. For more information, call (877) 410-1513.

On **September 13-14 2008** the Scarborough Gem and Mineral Club presents their 40th Annual Show, 2467 Eglinton Ave. E., Scarborough, Ontario. Saturday 10-6, Sunday 11-5. Adults \$3, Children \$1. For more information, contact scarbgemclub@lycos.com.

On **October 10-12 2008** the Michigan Mineralogical Society hosts the 64th Annual Detroit Gem, Mineral, Fossil, and Jewelry Show, South Macomb Community College Expo Center, Building P, 12 Mile Road and Hayes Road, Warren, Michigan. Friday 9 a.m. - 7 p.m, Saturday 10 a.m. - 7 p.m., Sunday 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. Adults \$7, Seniors \$4, Children \$3. For more information visit <http://www.michmin.org/show/>. This is the largest show within a 4-hour drive of Kitchener-Waterloo, well worth a visit.

On **October 25-26 2008** the University of Waterloo Earth Sciences Department hosts the Annual Gem and Mineral Show, University of Waterloo Earth Sciences Museum, Waterloo, Ontario. For more information contact Peter Russell at (519) 888-4567, extension 32469.

Detroit Show Photos

Native Silver, near Houghton, Keweenaw Peninsula, Michigan

Photos © Welsey Elsberry 2007. Used by permission.



Kids' Club Corner

By **Robert Maric**

First off, I would like everyone to know that our Kids' Club meeting will **not** be meeting the first Saturday of February. It will take place the following Saturday (February 9, 2008).

The Kids' club meeting is being postponed because I'm traveling for work. I hope this is ok with everyone. So, please remember that we are going to have the Kids' Club meeting on **Saturday February 9, 2008**, from 2 PM to 4 PM at the Waterloo Community Arts Centre.

In our January meeting, I presented the different methods of mineral identification that geologists use to identify the minerals they find in the field. The kids had fun going through each of the different stations that looked at the identification process. There was a mini quiz at the end to identify the unknown minerals. The kids (and parents!) all did great! Good job, everyone! We also had some time to identify the kids' specimens from their personal collection.

The kids took home a Special Rock and Mineral Report to fill in and have some fun with. These activities will be collected and put into a duo-tang (the activities are optional - it's there for fun!).

In our February meeting (February 9, 2008) we will have fun doing crossword puzzles, playing ROCKO, and doing an experiment to learn about crystals and to see how they form. Please let me know if you plan on attending. See you Saturday February 9, 2008!

The Mineral: Corundum!

Corundum is a very interesting mineral. We looked at it at our last meeting. Does anyone remember where it sits on the Mohs Scale of Hardness? Corundum is an exceptionally hard aluminum oxide that forms in igneous and metamorphic rocks. It is primarily used as an abrasive (abrasive means that this mineral can be used to shape or polish other materials easily).

Corundum is also one of the most popular minerals - rubies and sapphires are colored corundums. Read more at <http://geology.com/minerals/corundum.shtml> .

KW Gem and Mineral Club Membership

If the whole family signs up for a club membership (\$20 for a year) you have full access to our KW adult club, plus access to our exciting field trips and club events. The Kids' Club will bring in speakers to talk about various geosciences topics and will host other events to get the kids excited about earth sciences.

Giant Iron Ore Deposit Found in China

According to a [January 24](#) article on the China news website, geologists have found an immense iron ore deposit estimated at 1 billion tons.

The deposit is located about 1300 meters below the surface in the Pingshan district, Liaoning province, in northeast China. The deposit apparently consists of hematite and magnetite and will be mined over a 30-year period.

Asteroid Will Make Close Pass to Earth

According to a [January 22 press release](#) from NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, asteroid 2007 TU24 will make a close pass to the Earth at 08:33 UT on January 29. The asteroid is estimated to be between 150 and 600 meters in diameter and will come within 500,000 kilometers of the Earth. It should be visible in small telescopes.

Diamond Fluorescence May Aid Identification

Many diamonds fluoresce and phosphoresce, but now mineralogists have found that natural diamonds emit a unique pattern that may help distinguish them from synthetic and treated stones, according to a [January 21 article](#) in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. The natural diamonds phosphoresced at 660 nm, which was lacking in the other stones.

Kitchener-Waterloo Gem and Mineral Club

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