

THE AGATEER

The Newsletter of the Madison Gem and Mineral Club

April 24 Meeting Double Header:

Program Chairman Burnie Franke has put together an outstanding program for April. Both of our guest speakers will be talking about Diamonds, April's birthstone. Either talk by itself would be delightful – to hear both the same night is exceptional. So if diamonds set your heart racing, you won't want to miss our April meeting

Bob Wehle, Ripon, Finder of 5.4-Carat Gem

On October 14 of 2006 Bob Wehle unearthed a 5.47 carat yellow diamond at Crater of Diamonds State Park in Arkansas (which is near Murfreesboro and the Texas-Arkansas state line). The park is the only public place in the world where one can dig for diamonds and keep anything one finds. Of course finding a diamond requires not only skill in knowing what to look for, but a great deal of luck. Come hear Bob share his story of adventure and discovery - then start packing the car for Arkansas. See related story on page 3.

Diamonds in Wisconsin???? You bet – at least a couple dozen have been found, including the famous 16.25-carat Eagle diamond discovered while digging a well in 1876 near Eagle, Wisconsin. The stone, originally believed to be a topaz, was sold to Samuel Boynton of Milwaukee for \$1. This discovery led to the fraudulent salting of the area in an attempt to sell mining stock. The great Wisconsin diamond rush was on. The Eagle diamond was stolen from the American Museum of Natural History in 1964 by the notorious thief Murph the Surf. The stone was never recovered and its present location is unknown.

Most Wisconsin diamonds have been discovered in glacial drift and in alluvial gravels. But a few diamond pipes have also been identified, although apparently not rich enough to merit commercial production.

So next time you are out raking through the gravel piles looking for Lake Superior agates, keep an eye out for the immensely more valuable diamond.

Be sure to come hear Dr. Mudrey relate tales of diamonds in Wisconsin. This is going to a very special program – hope to see you there.

Next Meeting:

Tuesday, April 24, 7:00 PM

AB20 Weeks Hall

UW Department of Geology and Geophysics

1215 West Dayton Street

Madison, Wisconsin

DUES

Please send your 2007 dues to the club at the newsletter's return address, or pay at the February meeting. Adult: \$12; Family: \$16; Junior (ages 6 to 17) \$5. If the date on your address label is earlier than 2007, your dues are in arrears. Thank you for your continued support

2007 Member Competition

All members are urged to bring specimens for the monthly competition.

April.....Any Wisconsin-found material, including crystals, minerals, artifacts, cut stones, fossils.

May.....Lake Superior Agates IN THE ROUGH; to be followed by a plan for a club-sponsored agate hunt within the next month or so.

June.....Self-collected crystals.

Questions may be directed to Metje Butler, Education Chairperson, at 244-3659.

You Might Be a Rock Hound, If ...

- When someone mentions “Franklin” you think of New Jersey rather than Ben
- You can pronounce “molybdenite” correctly on the first try.
- The polished slab on your bola tie is six inches in diameter.
- You examine individual rocks in your driveway.
- You shouted “Obsidian!” to a theater full of movie-goers while watching *The Shawshank Redemption*”.
- Your children have names like Rocky, Jewel, and Beryl.
- The bookshelves in your home hold more rocks than books; and the books that are there are about rocks.
- On a trip to Europe, you’re the only member of the group who spends time looking at the cathedral walls through a pocket magnifier.

Thanks to Richard Busch, Fallbrook Gem and Mineral Society, Fallbrook, CA the original source; and Nancy and Bob Smith for submitting this to the editor.

Future MG&MC Programs:

Our **May 22** program will be a repeat of one that has worked very well in the past. Everyone is urged to bring a specimen –fossil, slab, agate, jewelry, etc. anything lapidary related – and to discuss it in five or ten minutes. We have had some very interesting pieces show up at these in the past.

Our **June 26** program will be a presentation by Richard Slaughter, Curator of the UW Geology Museum, about new acquisitions to the Museum, as well as a report on the Museum’s 2007 field dig in Wyoming. Those who have visited other geology museums know how good the UW Museum is, thanks in large part to Richard; former Curator Klaus Westphal; Friends of the Geology Museum; and Faculty and Museum Staff. The Madison Gem and Mineral Club is fortunate to have Klaus and Richard as active, contributing members of the club.

Calendar

April 24: Madison Gem and Mineral Club monthly meeting – Diamonds

April 21-22: Chippewa Valley Gem & Mineral Society Annual Show, Eau Claire Expo Ctr, Lorch Av off Hwy 93, Eau Claire, WI Contact: Roger Goss, 922 Dover St, Chippewa Falls, WI 54729, (715) 723-0196,

April 21-22: Black Hawk Gem & Mineral Club Spring Show, Putnam Museum IMAX Theatre Lecture Hall, 1717 W 12th St, Sat 10:00-5:00, Sun 11:00-4:00, Contact: Delores Bates, (309) 796-0616 or Kellie Moore, (563) 445-3034, kaisinean1@aol.com

April 21-22: Rock River Valley Gem & Mineral Society Show, Midway Village & Museum Ctr, 6799 Guilford Rd, Rockford, IL Sat-Sun 12:00-5:00, Contact, Frank & Connie Lavin, 303 Sherman Ln, Poplar Grove, IL 61065, (815) 765-0604, nival42@hotmail.com

April 20-22: Central Illinois Gem & Mineral Club Show, Lutheran High School, 2001 E Mound St., Decatur, IL Contact Tony Kapta, 1483 E Wood St, Decatur, IL 62521, (309) 830-6516, cigmc@insightbb.com

May 4-6: Kalamazoo Geological & Mineral Society Annual Show, Kalamazoo Co Fairgrounds, 2900 Lake St, Kalamazoo, MI Fri 4:00-8:00, Sat 10:00-6:00, Sun 10:00-5:00, Contact Kitty Starbuck, 7636 East V Ave, Vicksburg, MI 49097-9307, (269) 649-1991; Kathie Resh, 2613 Ashton Av, Kalamazoo, MI 49004, (269) 343-8131; Eric Peterson, 18114 L Dr S, Marshall, MI 49068-9200, (269) 781-7062

Bob Wehle of Ripon, Wisconsin had previously visited **Crater of Diamonds State Park** six or seven times since 2003 and found four relatively small diamonds. He decided to visit Arkansas's diamond site again during his vacation this month. His decision to pay the park another visit paid off. A trench was dug by park staff in mid-September in the West Drain area of park's 37 ½-acre diamond search area to open up new levels of dirt for park prospectors to search. As Wehle was digging in the trench, he unearthed a flawless, 5.47-carat, canary yellow diamond, the second largest diamond found so far this year at the park, according to Park Superintendent Tom Stolarz.

Stolarz noted that although Wehle found the gem last Saturday, October 14, he waited until today, at the end of his vacation, to bring the diamond to the park visitor center to be weighed and certified. Wehle was wet screening dirt from the trench using a combination of screens that featured various sizes of mesh, with the largest mesh on the top. When he saw the bright yellow diamond appear in the top screen—the ¼-inch mesh screen—Wehle immediately knew that he had a significant find. He exclaimed to himself, "Now that's a diamond!" And, then he realized that he was shaking from the excitement of his large diamond find.

Stolarz said, "Mr. Wehle's canary-colored gem weighed in at 5.47 carats. It's an absolutely gorgeous gem. At first glance, it makes you think of a lemon drop candy." He continued, "It has a compact, rounded double pyramid shape and no visible flaws." Stolarz noted that as other park visitors got to the opportunity to look at Wehle's diamond, too, the word heard most often was "wow!"

According to Stolarz, Wehle said that he might sell his big diamond at some point, but has not decided for certain at this time. Bob Wehle described the experience of finding his gem as "an amazing thing, a lifetime memory." When asked by the park staff if he had named the gem, Wehle said he wasn't sure what he wanted to call it, but was considering naming it the "Sunshine Diamond," although he's still undecided.

Stolarz said, "I've worked at the Crater of Diamonds State Park for 24 years now, and I've served as its park superintendent since 2003. The most exciting moments in this job are times exactly like this. It's the opportunity to watch good things like this happen to our park visitors." He noted that the park staff has worked to enhance visitors' chances at finding diamonds. "Last August we dug a trench in the East Drain and this September we dug another trench in the West Drain area to open up new material for visitors to search."

Stolarz emphasized, "And some real gem dandy gems have been unearthed from both sites including Marvin Culver's 4.21-carat yellow Okie Dokie Diamond found on March 12, Mike Ellison's 2.18-carat white Moonshine Diamond from July 25, Mr. and Mrs. Roden's 6.35-carat brown diamond on

September 23, and now Bob Wehle's 5.47-carat yellow diamond from October 14." He continued, "So that work is working on behalf of our park visitors just as we had hoped and expected it would."

Stolarz joked, "In fact, Mr. Wehle said that his wife had heard about the Okie Dokie Diamond and that news had made her more supportive of her husband's latest trip to the Crater of Diamonds." He continued, "He said that she said something along the line of, 'Why don't you find something like that?'" Stolarz noted, "And now, sure enough, they own a stunning, flawless canary diamond from the Crater of Diamonds, too."

Wehle's diamond was the largest find at the park since Donald and Brenda Roden of Point, Texas, found their 6.35-carat brown diamond on September 23. The Roden Diamond was also the eighth largest diamond discovered since the Crater of Diamonds became an Arkansas state park in 1972.

The third largest Crater diamond of 2006 was the 4.21-carat, flawless canary yellow Okie Dokie Diamond found on March 12 by Oklahoma State Highway Patrol Trooper Marvin Culver of Nowata, Oklahoma.

Crater of Diamonds State Park is one of the 52 state parks administered by the State Parks Division of the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism. Located in southwest Arkansas two miles southeast of Murfreesboro on Ark. 301, the park is the world's only publicly-operated diamond site where the public is allowed to search and keep any gems found, regardless of value. Park visitors search for diamonds in a 37 ½-acre plowed field that is the eroded surface of the eighth largest diamond-bearing deposit in surface area in the world. Other semi-precious gems and minerals found here include amethyst, garnet, jasper, agate, calcite, barite and quartz. Over 40 different rocks and minerals are unearthed at the Crater making it a rock hound's delight.

Over 75,000 diamonds have been unearthed at the Crater since those first found in 1906 by John Huddleston, the farmer who at that time owned the land. The largest diamond ever discovered in the United States was unearthed here in 1924. Named the Uncle Sam, this white diamond weighed 40.23 carats.

The largest of the 25,000 diamonds discovered since the Crater became an Arkansas state park in 1972 is the 16.37-carat Amarillo Starlight. A visitor from Texas found this white diamond in 1975.

The 3.03-carat Strawn-Wagner Diamond was unearthed at the park in 1990 and later cut to a 1.09-carat gem in New York by Lazare Kaplan International in 1997. The American Gem Society graded the diamond a D-Flawless, O/O/O (for cut/color/clarity) in April 1998 and noted it

was the most perfect diamond their laboratory had ever certified. Another gem from the Crater, the flawless 4.25-carat Kahn Canary diamond, discovered at the park in 1977, has been on exhibit at many cities around the U.S. and overseas. The uncut, triangular-shape canary diamond was featured in an illustrious jewelry exhibition in Antwerp, Belgium in 1997 that included precious stones from throughout the world including the Kremlin collection, the Vatican, Cartier, and Christies. And, in late 1997, the Kahn Canary was featured in another prestigious exhibition at the American Museum of Natural History in New York entitled, "The Nature of Diamonds." Former First Lady Hillary Clinton borrowed the Kahn Canary from its owner, Stan Kahn of Pine Bluff, and wore it in a special, Arkansas-inspired ring setting designed by Henry Dunay of New York as a special way to represent Arkansas's diamond site at the galas celebrating both of Bill Clinton's presidential inaugurations.

Crater of Diamonds State Park is open daily. Admission to the diamond search area is: Adult—\$6 each; Child (age 6-12)—\$3 each. With advance notice, organized groups of 15 persons or more can receive a group discount.

The park offers 59 campsites with water and electric hookups, picnic sites, picnic pavilion, a café (open seasonally), visitor center with exhibits, gift shop, the Diamond Discovery Center, Diamond Springs aquatic playground (open seasonally), laundry, hiking trails and interpretive programs. The park staff provides free identification and certification of diamonds. Park interpretive programs, the exhibit gallery in the park visitor center, and the Diamond Discovery Center explain the site's geology and history and offer tips on recognizing diamonds in the rough.

For more information about the park, contact: Rachel Engebrecht, Park Interpreter, Crater of Diamonds State Park, 209 State Park Road, Murfreesboro, AR 71958. Phone: (870) 285-3113. E-mail: rachel.engebrecht@arkansas.gov. Web site: craterofdiamondsstatepark.com.

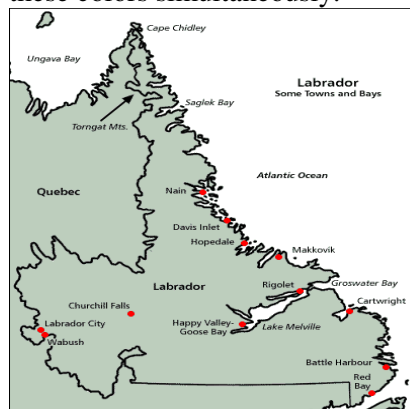
Words 101 - Labradorite

The geological type area for labradorite is Paul's Island near the town of Nain in Labrador, Canada. It occurs in large crystal masses in anorthosite and shows an iridescence or *play of colors*. The iridescence is the result of light refracting within perthitic lamellar intergrowths resulting from phase exsolution on cooling. Gemstone varieties of labradorite exhibiting a high degree of iridescence are called spectrolite, moonstone and sunstone are also commonly used terms, and high-quality samples with good iridescent qualities are desired for jewelry.

Labradorite ((Ca,Na)(Al,Si)₄O₈), is a feldspar mineral, is an intermediate to calcic member of the plagioclase series. It is usually defined as having "%An" (anorthite) between 50 and 70. The specific gravity ranges from 2.71 to 2.74. The refractive index ranges from 1.555 to 1.575. Twinning is common. As with all plagioclase members the crystal system is triclinic and three directions of cleavage are present two of which form nearly right angle prisms. It occurs as clear, white to gray, blocky to lath shaped grains in common mafic igneous rocks such as basalt and gabbro, as well as in anorthosites.

From Wikipedia

Labradorite is truly a fascinatingly beautiful mineral. Its a mineral whose charm is not fully noticed and may be overlooked if not viewed from the proper position. Generally a dull, dark looking mineral with no special virtue until the colorful shimmer is observed glowing on the surface. Labradorite can produce a colorful play of light across cleavage planes and in sliced sections called labradorescence. The usually intense colors range from the typical blues and violets through greens, yellows and oranges. Some rare specimens display all these colors simultaneously.



History of Crater of Diamonds

Howard Millar, a former operator of a tourist operation at the **Crater of Diamonds** and an expert on the crater's history, wrote in his book, "It Was Finders-Keepers at America's Only Diamond Mine," that two geologists had studied the crater site several years before Huddleston **found diamonds** here. However, they didn't find any diamonds.

In 1906, Huddleston bought a farm on the site that the geologists had studied and on Aug. 8 of that year, he found two diamonds. According to Millar, Huddleston discovered the **Arkansas diamonds** while he was spreading rock salt on his hog farm. He saw some shiny specks in the dirt that he thought might be gold. But instead of gold, he found two stones.

Huddleston declined an offer from the local bank cashier, who said he would pay Huddleston 50 cents for the stones. Eventually, the stones were sent to a gem expert in New York City and it was determined that the stones were indeed **Arkansas diamonds**. One was a 3-carat white diamond and the other was a 1.5-carat yellow diamond.

Word soon got out about the diamonds and "Diamond John" Huddleston became famous. Thousands of people flocked to the little town of Murfreesboro, sparking a boomtown atmosphere. In one year, over 10,000 people were turned away from the Conway Hotel in Murfreesboro. Soon after his find, Huddleston sold his farm for \$36,000 and this portion of the crater was closed to the public.

"Crater of Diamonds" is Born

M. M. Mauney owned another portion of the **diamond mine**, and he originated the idea of letting visitors pay to hunt for diamonds. Some diamond mining operations also began in the years after the discovery, but for many reasons, shrouded in mystery, lawsuits, fines, bankruptcy and other reasons, they were unsuccessful. Then, in 1952, Millar opened a tourist operation at the mine. He dubbed the site, the "Crater of Diamonds."

Millar promoted the site aggressively and received lots of national publicity. A museum, gift shop and restaurant were built and Millar, who was a geologist, gave lectures about the diamonds and also identified the visitors' finds. He received a 20 percent royalty on the value of any stone over 5 carats.

During those years, thousands of **diamonds were found**. The most famous find was made in 1956 by Mrs. A. L. Parker of Dallas. Millar wrote that Parker found the diamond after heavy rains had fallen on the freshly plowed field. The white diamond was 15.33 carats. It fueled "diamond fever" here again as the crater was "almost overrun with diamond hunters," Millar wrote.

In 1969, the crater was sold to a mining company and in 1972, and the state of Arkansas purchased it. The site was developed into an 888-acre park nestled in a mixed pine and hardwood forest along the banks of the Little Missouri River. There is a visitor's center, gift shop, picnic area, restaurant (summer only), a 1.3-mile trail and 60 campsites with water and electricity.

The Agateer is the official publication of the Madison Gem and Mineral Club. It is published monthly, and mailed as a benefit of membership to all Madison Gem and Mineral Club members.

All items printed in the Agateer may be reproduced without permission if proper credit is given.

Madison Gem and Mineral Club Officers and Board Members

| | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|----------|
| President | Steve Harsy | 831-6562 |
| Vice-President | Nevin Franke | 251-2601 |
| Secretary | OPEN | |
| Treasurer | Gerry Gunderson | 836-1389 |
| Newsletter Editor | Karl Bethke | 246-6173 |
| Field Trip Chairperson | Ken and Megan Woodford | 277-1580 |
| Education Chairperson | Metje Butler | 244-3659 |
| Sales | Jack Heabler | 712-2697 |
| Membership Chairperson | OPEN | 833-2774 |
| Show Chairperson | Nevin Franke | 251-2601 |
| Publicity Co-chairs | Karl Jensen | 242-5513 |
| Program Chairperson | Burnie Franke | 837-9550 |

Membership is open to all individuals, and applications for membership will be accepted upon payment of annual dues, which are \$12.00 for adults (18 and older), \$5.00 for junior members (ages 6-17), and \$16.00 for families.

Visit the official website of the Madison Gem and Mineral Club at www.madison.com/communities/madisonrockclub/contact.php for more information

Madison Gem and Mineral Club
P.O. Box 55024
Madison, Wisconsin 53705