

Smoke Signals



Blackhawk Gem &
Mineral Club, Inc.

December 2009

2009 Officers and Directors

| | | |
|-------------------|----------------|----------------|
| President | Vicki Pearson | (309) 762-7605 |
| Vice President | Bret Henderson | (309) 626-0107 |
| Treasurer | Connie Huber | (563) 355-7131 |
| Secretary | Deb Totemeier | (563) 359-3345 |
| Director (3-year) | Linda Maro | (309) 797-3275 |
| Director (2-year) | Craig Moore | (563) 445-3034 |
| Director (1-year) | Delores Bates | (309) 796-0616 |
| Director (1-year) | Kellie Moore | (563) 445-3034 |

Committee Chairpersons

| | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Membership | Vacant | (563) 445-3034 |
| Publicity | Craig Moore | (563) 445-3034 |
| Youth Group | Joelle Henderson | (309) 626-0107 |
| Field Trips | Bret Henderson | (309) 626-0107 |
| Displays | Bret Henderson | (309) 626-0107 |
| Rock Show | Kellie Moore | (563) 445-3034 |
| Scholarship | Board of Directors | (563) 445-3034 |
| Bulletin Editor | Deb Totemeier | (536) 359-3345 |
| Property | Board of Directors | (563) 445-3034 |
| Ways and Means | Board of Directors | (563) 445-3034 |
| Historian | Delores Bates | (309) 796-0616 |
| MWF Liaison | Shirley Coven | (309) 743-2653 |

Club Information. The purpose of this non-profit organization is to promote interest in collecting, studying and working with gems and minerals and fossils. Organized in 1955, the Black Hawk Club joined the Midwest Federation of Mineralogical & Geological Societies in 1959. It is also a member of the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies. Formal meetings are held on the third Thursday of every month, September through May at 6:00 p.m. in the Hauberg Civic Center, 1300 24th Street, Rock Island, IL. Annual Dues: Individual Membership: \$15.00, Senior Couples: \$12.00, Senior Individual: \$10.00, Family: \$20.00.

Affiliations. Midwest Federation of Mineralogical & Geological Societies www.amfed.org/mwf/ and American Federation of Mineralogical Societies <http://www.gamineral.org/afms.htm>



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December Meetings --

The next member meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 17th, 6 p.m. at the Hauberg Center in Rock Island. The Blackhawk Gem & Mineral Club is having its annual holiday potluck so bring a dish to share!

The next board meeting is scheduled for Sunday, December 6th, 4 p.m. at Debbie & John Totemeier's home. Phone 563-359-3345 for directions.

Board Meeting Highlights from November 1st --

- ❖ Discussions on the purchase of a Geode cracker and beading tools for member use.
- ❖ Plans to complete the club library.
- ❖ Plans to complete changes to club by-laws.
- ❖ Plans to conduct a beading class at the Hauberg.

Member Meeting Highlights from November 19th --

During meeting on Thursday, November 19th, members made rock themed ornaments for the Christmas tree that will be displayed at the Hauberg during the holidays. Not only did we have great fun, but also discovered that the club has a lot of talented and imaginative members!!!

There was no regular business meeting at this session.

Dues are Due --

Membership dues for 2010 are due January 1st. Any Dues paid from this point forward will count towards next year's membership. Those who joined in September are already paid through next year.

If mailing your payment, please send to:
Connie Huber, Treasurer,
2903 Woodland Ct., Davenport, IA
52803-2142



Individuals - \$15.00
Senior Individual - \$10.00
Senior Couple - \$12.00
Family - \$20.00

Mark Your Calendar --

Jan 3, Board Meeting, 4 p.m.

21, Club Meeting at the Hauberg Center, 6 p.m.

31, Annual Indoor Rock Swap

Lincoln Gem & Mineral Club, Lincoln, NE

Bethany Park Shelter House 23 Cotner & Vine Sts,
Lincoln, NE. Sat 1:00-5:00, Contact Club email
jna@inetnebr.com

Feb 7, Board Meeting, 4 p.m.

12, Silent Auction

South Suburban Earth Science Club, Park Forest, IL.

Freedom Hall, 410 Lakewood Blvd, Sun 1:00-4:00,
Contact Helen Funk, PO Box 235, Park Forest, IL
60466, ssescus@yahoo.com

18, Club Meeting at the Hauberg Center, 6 p.m.

Mark Your Calendar (cont) --**Mar 14 - 15 The 29th Annual Show**

Geodeland Earth Science Clubs, Inc., Macomb, IL
Gem Mineral & Fossil Show; Meteorites & Metals; Western Illinois University, Student Union Ballroom on Murray St. Free Admission & Free Parking, Saturday 10 am to 6 pm, Sunday 10 am to 5 pm. Dealers in Minerals, Fossils, Jewelry & Equipment; Silent Auction; Rock, Mineral, Fossil & Artifact Identification. Activities for Kids, Spin & Win Game. Door Prizes, Live and Recorded Programs, Lapidary Demonstrations, Earth Science Displays, Fluorescent Display, Geode Cracking. Grand Door Prize, Food Available in the Building, For more information contact: Show Chair – Dennis Bomke (217) 546-4096 dbomke@comcast.net, or Dealer Chair – Jim Travis (309) 645-3609 boatnick@ao

20 - 21, Annual Show

Cedar Valley Rocks & Minerals Society, Cedar Rapids, IA Teamsters Union Hall, 500 J St SW, Sat 8:30-6:00, Sun 9:30-5:00, Contact: Marv Houg, 1820 30th St Dr SE, Cedar Rapids, IA 52403, (319) 364-2868,

26 - 28, The Mid-American Paleontology Society's National Fossil Exposition XXXII

Western Illinois University, Macomb, IL. The topic for this expo is "The Ordovician Period of Geologic Time". Hours are 8am - 5pm Friday & Saturday, 8am - 12pm Sunday. Live Auction Saturday, March 27th at 7:30pm. For additional information, visit their web site at:

<http://www.midamericapaleo.org/content/expo32.php>

Oregon caves yield evidence of continent's first inhabitants

A field school from the University of Oregon has been examining the Paisley Caves site since 2002 and analyzing its pre-Clovis artifacts. In the summer of 2007, they identified the oldest human DNA discovered in the American continents. This assertion is based on several samples of coprolite (fossilized excrement) found in the cave complex,



between Lakeview and Bend, Oregon, on the eastern side of the Cascade mountain range. Since then, other authors have questioned the authenticity of these findings by arguing about the relevance of the evidence gathered from ancient DNA.

The fossils were found in Paisley Five Mile Point Cave at the same level as a small rock-lined hearth some 7 feet below the modern surface. At that level was also discovered a large number of bones from waterfowl, fish, and large mammals including extinct camel and horse. Radiocarbon dating places these coprolites between 12,750 and 14,290 calendar years before the present, probably representing a pre-Clovis occupation. DNA analysis provides apparent genetic ties to Siberia or Asia.

Evidence at other archaeological sites—as well as 1930s work at Paisley Caves—had also been thought to provide such evidence, but questionable excavation techniques clouded the issue. Knowing this, the U of O team worked carefully to avoid the mistakes of the past. The theory that Pre-Clovis immigrants traveled to North America down the Pacific Coast suggests that the travelers would have passed through the hinterlands of what is Oregon today. The Paisley Caves, up-river from the Pacific Ocean along the Klamath River, are therefore an ideal spot to search for the evidence of such people. The fossils provide evidence of the groups possibly having lived there. DNA from coyote, fox, and dog/wolf were also found.

Illinois State Fossil - The Tully Monster

The state fossil of Illinois is an enigmatic, wormlike creature called the Tully Monster (*Tullimonstrum gregarium*). It was a predatory creature that inhabited the lowland swamps that covered the state during the Pennsylvanian Period, around 300 million years ago. This member of the world-famous Mazon Creek fauna still presents science with a mystery regarding its relationships to any modern creatures.

Mountains to the east of Illinois at the time created abundant rainfall, allowing the formation of a delta and swamp system across the state, which at the time lay nearly on the equator. Lush forests ("coal swamps") were dissected by sluggish rivers. Decay of organic matter created conditions of low oxygen that resulted in the many fossil-bearing concretions ("coal balls") of the Mazon Creek Formation and coal deposits in central Illinois. Ferns, horsetails, insects, soft-bodied invertebrates, and of course, the Tully Monster are all known from these concretions.

The first Tully Monster was discovered by amateur collector Francis Tully in 1958. He took the strange creature to the Field Museum, where none of the staff could identify it. Curator Eugene Richardson gave it a proper scientific name in 1966, dubbing it *Tullimonstrum gregarium*, meaning "Tully's common monster." A committee of paleontologists from the Illinois State Geological Survey lobbied the State Legislature for designation of the Tully Monster as the state fossil 1989.



Fossilized Rain Forest in Illinois

In 2007, news surfaced about the discovery of a large fossilized forest dating from 300 million years ago in a coal mine located near Danville, IL. Now, five more prehistoric forests have been identified in the same region.



The prehistoric landscapes fossilized in this area existed within only a few million years of each other – a short span geologically speaking – and are found stacked one upon the other. Segments of the forest fossilized in their original vertical position. At places, scientists can trace the original ground cover in well-preserved fossils. In some cases toppled trees – complete with crowns – and over 100 feet long were measured lying stretched out in the shale across the ceiling. For paleobotanists it presents a remarkable opportunity to actually stroll through a 300 million year-old ecological system as if taking a walk in the local woods today.

The reason for this unusual preservation is thought to be due to the prehistoric rain forest growing in an estuary near the Royal Center fault in Indiana, which caused the terrain to subside below sea level making it vulnerable to incidents of flooding and abrupt drowning. Geologists suspect earthquakes along the fault are the reason for the subsidence. The soil that once supported these rainforests was later transformed into coal. Once this coal seam was mined from underground, the base of the fossilized forest was revealed encased in a shale matrix.

If you want to see some of the real thing, visit the coal-mining exhibit at the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago where an actual slab of the gray roof shale is on display.

December Birthstone - Turquoise

The name turquoise is apparently related to the fact that the stone was brought to Europe from the Eastern Mediterranean by Levantine traders, more commonly known as Turks. It's been used as a valuable ornament for ages and was used by the Egyptians thousands of years ago. The color is, of course, turquoise, but its range of color varies from green and greenish blue to sky blue shades.



For centuries, the most valuable turquoise came from Iran (Persia) but today some specimens mined in the southwestern United States compete with it. The name "Persian Turquoise" is now generally used to refer to any turquoise stone that does not have the black or brown veining commonly found in turquoise mined in the United States and used in a style of jewelry created by the American Indians. The Aztecs mined turquoise in an area now known as New Mexico and a significant amount of turquoise comes from Arizona, California and Nevada in the United States.

Other minerals like chrysocolla have been used to imitate turquoise. Turquoise is often dyed and stabilized with resins to produce a harder stone which retains its color and polish. Reconstituted turquoise is made from small chips and "chalk" to which dyes and plastic resin is added. Pure turquoise is a relatively soft stone ranging between 5 and 6 on the Mohs scale of hardness.

Today, Turquoise is sacred to many Native American's and is carved into ceremonial shapes. In ancient times, these carvings were placed in the Indians tombs to attract beneficial spirits and to guard the dead. Turquoise was also used by medicine men for healing and by warriors who fixed turquoise to the end of their bows to insure accurate shot.

Holiday Travel Tips

Winter in the Midwest...gotta love it. With the holidays approaching, many of us will be on the road to visit family and friends. Here are some basic tips...courtesy of the DOT.

Ice and Snow -- Take It Slow!

- ❖ Use slower acceleration and slower speeds. Avoid heavy steering and braking. Allow extra time to reach your destination during inclement weather. It is not worth putting your own life or the lives of others in danger to save time.
- ❖ Drive with your headlights on.
- ❖ Don't get overconfident with four-wheel drive. It won't help you stop any faster.
- ❖ Winter road conditions often result in longer stopping distances. Give yourself room. If you have anti-lock brakes, press the pedal down firmly and hold it. If you don't have anti-lock brakes, gently pump the pedal.
- ❖ Slow down when approaching intersections, off-ramps, bridges or shady spots. These all have potential to develop black ice.
- ❖ Avoid abrupt actions while steering, braking or accelerating to lessen your chance of losing control.
- ❖ Look farther ahead in traffic. Actions by other drivers will alert you to problems and give you extra reaction time.
- ❖ Trucks take longer to stop. Don't cut in front of them.
- ❖ Avoid using cruise control or overdrive. Don't let your car make a bad decision for you.

Newsletter Contributions. Submissions (announcements, photographs, notes, letters, articles, etc.) are actively solicited from BHGMC members and friends.

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- Deadline for submission of articles is the 20th of each month. Late or unused entries may be published in later issues. Submit articles or information to the Editor via email to -- DLTotemeier@gmail.com
- The conclusions and opinions expressed in Smoke Signals are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the Officers, Editor, or members of the Club.
- Free reciprocal exchanges for the bulletins of other gem and mineral clubs are welcomed. Please send all exchange bulletins to the Editor.
- Smoke Signals is published monthly and is sent to all members of the Black Hawk Gem & Mineral Club, Inc. as part of their membership.

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Black Hawk Gem & Mineral Club, Inc.

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