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Vol. 36 #3 **DIGGIN'S FROM DAKOTA** 3rd Quarter - 2024

This quarterly publication of the CDG&MS serves Bis/Man and the surrounding areas of North Dakota

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**A message from Tim Wiser, President of Central Dakota Gem & Mineral Society:**

I hope that all of you are having a good summer. September and October will be busy months.

\* September 8th, we will have our monthly meeting. The main topic will be the planning of our upcoming 50th Anniversary Gem and Mineral Show.

\* September 15, our proposed Annual Pine Cone hunt will begin at the Legion Park in Mandan beginning at 9:00 AM Sharp.

\* September 29, I am inviting everybody who would like to stuff bags to my home at 2940 Shamrock Dr./ Bismarck, ND / A map will be available.

\* October 13, finalizing the planning for our 50th Anniversary Show & appointing a committee for nomination of a CDG&MS Treasurer and Vice President for 2025.

\* October 24th, 1:00 PM - 8 PM. Members set up for 50th Anniversary Show.

\* October 25th \* Show hours for Friday, (10:00 AM to 6:00 PM)

\* October 26th \* Show hours Saturday, (10:00 AM to 5:00 PM) Members help clean up.

There will be lots of activities for children, demonstrations for the adults, free prizes on Saturday.

**I know that everyone will do their part to make this the best show Ever.**

**The Officers of the CDG&MS:**

Tim Weiser .....President  
Brenda Morgan ..... Vice President  
Skye Fasching ..... Treasurer  
Joe Martinetti. .... Secretary  
Steve Fasching ..... Representative to the  
Rocky Mountain Federation of Mineralogical  
Societies

**Membership:**

Individual memberships \$20.00 per year.

Family memberships \$25.00 per year.

Visitors are welcome to attend.

Executive Board meetings 1:00 P.M.

Regular meetings 2:00 P.M.

We meet the first Sunday of each month at the  
Bismarck Public Library down stairs Room B

# **Working Catlinite Pipestone**

By Michael Simonson

Catlinite is the sacred red pipestone of Native Americans. It is a soft stone made from compressed kaolinite clay that laid for millions of years under the sea. When cut and polished it has a buttery smooth texture and a beautiful dark red color. Native American tribes used it primarily for tobacco pipes. In this article we will look how Catlinite has been worked over time and at how I work it.

Prior to white contact, Native Americans cut Catlinite into the rough shape of the finished item (usually pipes) with flint blades. Details were made with fine flint blade and other sharp stone points. It was smoothed and polished with abrasive rocks, sand and powder. The finished pieces were often treated with bee's wax to add an attractive luster and feel.

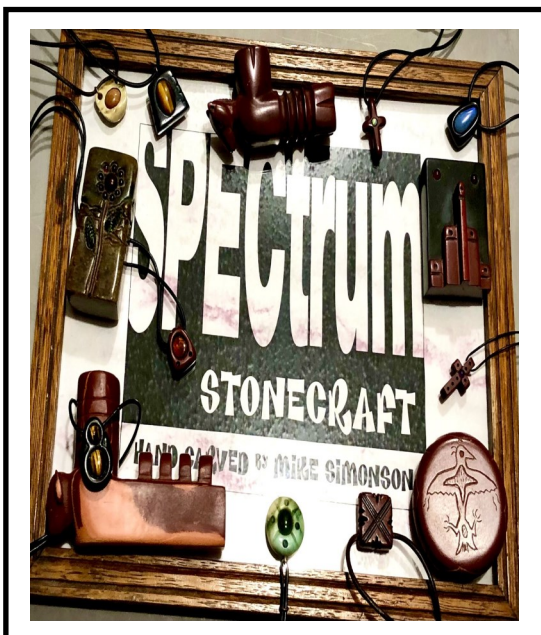
Following white contact, a wide variety of trade goods became available for working Catlinite. Metal tools such as files, saws, drills, and knives allowed for easy carving and fine detailing. This helped in the traditional uses of Catlinite, and for a new souvenir market for white customers. These tools are still used today.

Most modern carvers use power tools such as grinders, sanders, drills, and Dremels to create pipestone carvings. The author personally refrains from using power tools. It helps me to observe the subtle characteristics of the Catlinite to bring out its true potential.

To cut the raw Catlinite into a rough shape, hacksaw blades are very helpful. It is important to ensure that the blade does not curve off the desired path. Files help get the piece closer to its finished shape. Fine grit sandpapers will bring the Catlinite to the desired surface texture. I use diamond files and a variety of sharp metal tools to carve the fine design elements.

I make pendants from small Catlinite pieces and frequently add gemstones to the final pieces. I carefully mark and remove the area for snugly setting the gems with superglue. I then give the piece a final polishing using powered pipestone. Lastly, I heat the piece and treat it with wax. This provides a glossy surface with a buttery smooth feel. It further helps seal any gemstones or other inlaid materials in place.

Catlinite carvers should consider the difficulty of obtaining genuine Catlinite and the deeply held traditions and beliefs associated with it. It is important not to waste Catlinite. I began making pendants, beads and small art items to utilize the pieces left over from carving pipes and other items. The tradition of carving Catlinite began thousands of years ago and continues to this day. Carvers are again treating Catlinite with the care and respect it deserves. We will have a demonstration on carving Catlinite at an upcoming meeting. Anyone interested in carving Catlinite is welcome to contact me with any questions at [SpectrumGC@msn.com](mailto:SpectrumGC@msn.com).



Carving Examples

Catlinite solar System & Jewel planets





## **Central Dakota Gem & Mineral Society Participates in the USDA “Friends and Neighbors Day Event”** By Darrel Spencer

One of our Members, Sarah Martin who is also employed by the USDA-ARS Mandan Research Facility had previously provided the CDG&MS with an advertisement announcing ‘friends & neighbors day,’ which was scheduled for July 18, 2024 from 2:00 PM through 6:00 PM.

This event would also feature: areas for kids, field tours, antique farm equipment, program information resources, free food and ice cream.

Our organization thought that this would be a wonderful way of meeting and educating parents and their school age children as well as enrolling new Club members.

Our booth was just one of 50 booths that were set up exhibiting programs benefiting North Dakota agriculture or activities for children extending their knowledge of natural resources.

Susan Gerenz, Kim Reuer, and Mike Simonson; our speakers did a wonderful job of explaining our booth to the public. Our booth was intended to facilitate and further the knowledge about the natural mineral & fossil resources of North Dakota. We displayed examples of identified minerals & fossils; originally from our areas prehistory along with posters showing artistic renditions of what the environment would have been like.

There were always families at our booth with children or teenagers and they were always asking questions about our Society. Each of the participating children were encouraged to pick out a free rock, and brochure /business card.

The CDG&MS would like to extend a thank you to the all the USDA—ARS Northern Great Plains Research Laboratory staff who made this event possible.



**Susan Gerenz & Mike Simonson explaining fossils, and minerals.**



**Northern Great Plains Research Laboratory Center  
\* established August 8, 1912 \***



**Kimberly Reuer explains that the rock club is a good organization to join.**

### **The Rocky Mountain Federation of Mineralogical Societies 2024 Convention & Show**

The Rocky Mountain Federation of Mineralogical Societies 2024 Convention will be hosted by the Oklahoma Mineral and Gem Society. The Convention and the OM&GS show will be held October 25th to the 27th, 2024. Located at the State Fairgrounds Modern Living Building in Oklahoma City, the Show will have 40 vendors, door prizes, competitive and non-competitive display cases, educational programs and activities, demonstrations, and a fluorescent room.

LaRoy Baird, (August 11, 1948 - May 21, 2024) was a long time member of the Central Dakota Gem & Mineral Society. He and Dina enjoyed collecting rocks, and going on dinosaur fossil digs all over North Dakota. He will be missed.



# ROCK AND FOSSIL COLLECTING IN NEW YORK STATE

by Joseph Martinetti, Club Secretary

When people think of New York, they immediately visualize a concrete jungle and New York City. New York, on the other hand, is mostly woodlands and mountains. About one-third of New York State is contained in the Adirondack State Park, which is a National Landmark, not a park.

My wife and I met my brother and his wife in Niagara Falls, then spent time with them as we vacationed in New York for a week in early June of this year. We spent two days rockhounding in Upstate New York at three sites.

The first site we visited was the Crystal Grove Diamond Mine near Saint Johnsville, NY. This Mine is in an area of New York famous for its perfectly clear, double-terminated quartz crystals called Herkimer Diamonds (named after Herkimer County, NY). There are several mines to visit in this area, but this mine was relatively inexpensive (\$12/person) and easy to access. They are open from 9-5, but you can stay until it gets dark. We collected a lot of nice samples from there.



The host rock for the quartz crystals is dolostone. Dolostone formed during the Cambrian Period, roughly 500 million years ago (Mya), but the quartz crystals filled vugs formed from acids around the Carboniferous Period, about 350-300 Mya.

The next day, we drove to the Governour Mine, Valentine Deposit near Harrisville, NY. This is an active wollastonite ( $\text{CaSiO}_3$ ) mine. What we were looking for was the blue calcite found at this location. Calcite, along with other minerals such as graphite, are not considered ore, so they are discarded. They pile some of the waste rock by the front gate where rockhounds can collect all they want of the blue, pink, and green calcite!



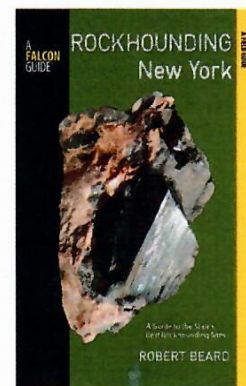
One of the employees even asked if we wanted more rock to sift through, so he drove a large payloador into the mine working and hauled out a big bucket of new material for us to look through.



Our second and final stop of the trip was to the Hubbardsville Cole Road Fossil Site. It is a black shale that has brachiopods, crinoids, and trilobites. We collected lots of brachiopods and crinoid molds, but no trilobites. This site was Middle Devonian in age.



The image above is of a brachiopod we collected from the site. Below you can see the very fissile black shale.



I purchased the *ROCKHOUDING New York* book by Robert Beard as a guide to the sites. It was very valuable in locating sites. The only regret I have is that we did not have enough time to collect more!



## The Badlands Dinosaur Museum by Darrel Spencer

Our adventure began on Saturday morning July 27, 2024. At 10:AM, Five of us: Susan Gerenz, Sarah Martin, Henry Jorde, Darrel Spencer and Tim Weiser, the CDG&MS president met at the North Dakota Heritage Center parking lot. Within 15 minutes we were on our way. Even though the Dinosaur Museum is about 100 miles from Bismarck, the time went by very quickly.

The Badlands Dinosaur Museum which is part of the Dickinson Museum Center was very easy to locate. From the Interstate you take the off ramp at highway 22 going right, then cross back over the overpass taking the first left at the lights. Just around the corner from McDonalds was our destination of 188 Museum Drive E.

The Badlands Dinosaur Museum, which was established in 1992, is very nicely laid out. An upper viewing area has lots of individual cases filled with mineral specimens and fossils of sea life. A short ramp will lead the viewer to a lower

central exhibit area that has a display of skeletons of *Stegosaurus*, *Allosaurus*, *Edmontosaurus*, *Albertosaurus*, and *Thescelosaurus*, and *Triceratops*.

The exhibit also features dinosaur skull casts such as *Pachycephalosaurus*, *Diplodocus*, *Oviraptor*, *Stegosaurus*, and *Corythosaurus* with bones and teeth of many dinosaur species, primarily from the 4-state region of North and South Dakota, Montana, & Wyoming.

The Museum staff have been busy designing and installing new exhibits, featuring fossils discovered by the field crew and prepared in their public-viewing laboratory.

Each of the members of our group that participated in this trip would highly recommend visiting the Badlands Dinosaur Museum at Dickinson, North Dakota. It was fun and each of us discovered more in depth information on Dinosaurs, fossils, & Minerals.



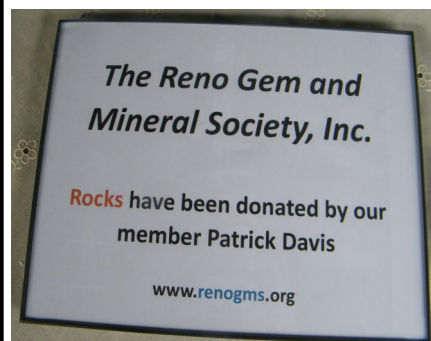
*Coelophysis* was a small, bipedal carnivore that could grow up to 3 m (9.8 ft) long. It is one of the earliest known dinosaurs from the late Triassic Period (208—215) million years ago.



Quartz "Aurora Crystals" Coated with Titanium dioxide from Arkansas



Cretaceous Period Iridescent shell of a fossilized ammonite



This donation from Patrick Davis has been gifted to us through Robyn Howard & Steve Boyle, our friends and representatives from the Reno Gem and Mineral Society rock club chapter. This labeled set of Nevada rocks will be displayed at this years CDG&MS 50th annual show and for years to come.



## Hi Hopes! by Tom Tupa

Three weeks ago, Mary and I along with a few other family members left Bismarck for the Big Horn Mountains in Wyoming. I had high hopes of the “Once in a lifetime” find of a huge gold nugget, a long-time buried treasure, or that “ten pound” Dry Head Agate. Well to make a long story short, the nugget, the buried treasure, and the agate are still someplace up in the Big Horns. The mountain terrain was more than my old legs could handle. So, I couldn’t get to the creeks to pan for the nugget. The buried treasure wasn’t even attempted after the grandchildren spotted a big rattlesnake where we wanted to detect (an 1880’s homestead). That critter brought the treasure hunt to an abrupt end. And the Dry Head is still someplace in a rock formation on the mountains. But I did manage to find a Spanish Point agate, which I also had on my mountain bucket list; much easier than the elusive nugget, the treasure or the Dry Head. I found a nice specimen of Spanish agate the size of a slice of rye bread, in an antique store in Greybull, Wy. And for \$2.50 I felt like I struck it rich. . . Maybe next time I will do better!



Spanish Point Agate



By Kimberly Reuer



Fellow rock club members, at our picnic we received a generous donation to continue to build up our kids table for the 50th anniversary show in October! Of course activities are for kids but also for kids at heart! Thanks to all that participated in rock painting to promote our club/show!



Each of us are  
good will  
ambassadors.

