

# Wayne County Gem and Mineral Club News

November, 2020

Always Looking for Places to Dig!



October 24 workshop (see page 5)



<http://www.wcgmc.org>  
**FACEBOOK link**



Photo from Herkimer dig (see page 6)

## Upcoming WCGMC Workshops

November 7<sup>th</sup> and December 5<sup>th</sup>

**We are holding two workshops between now and the end of the year but are planning to divide the group to limit attendance and ensure proper social distancing. Please read the President's Message on page 2 for details.**

When: 10:00 AM until mid-afternoon  
Where: The Weiler's Barn /Club Workshop  
6676 E. Port Bay Rd, Wolcott, NY  
Rules: Bring your own rocks.

**A mask must be worn when inside the shop.**

Training on equipment is available.  
Eye protection is required.  
\$5/adult to offset maintenance costs.

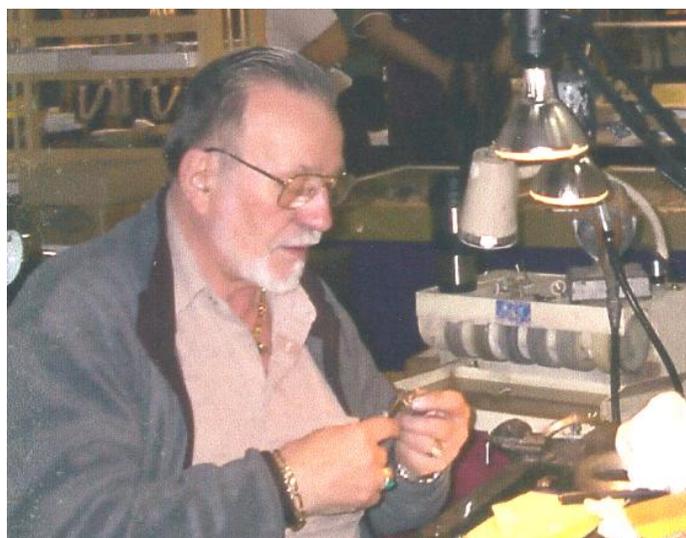
## Marshall "Jim" James Fowler

November 8, 1934 – October 4, 2020

The gem and mineral world lost a talented lapidary artist and WCGMC lost one of its longest-term and most valued GemFest dealers when Jim Fowler passed away on October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020. If you have visited GemFest at any time in the past couple of decades you likely stopped in front of Fowler's Wire Wrap and watched Jim create his art.

But Jim was more than a local artist from New Hampshire who attended mineral shows in the northeast and pleased patrons with his artistry. Jim was nationally known for his creative wire wrapping and gem work. In fact, Jim was inducted into the Metalcraft Section of the National Rockhound and Lapidary Hall of Fame back in 1993. At the time Jim was just the 5<sup>th</sup> inductee

We will all miss Jim at the next GemFest and we offer our condolences to his wife Selina, their six children, seven grandchildren and eight great grandchildren.



**Jim Fowler at work at WCGMC GemFest in 2006 in Newark, NY.** This picture was taken by Marion Wheaton, co-founder of WCGMC, who passed away this past August ([see WCGMC September issue](#))



## President's Message Linda Schmidtgal

It was sure great to visit with folks and collect Herkimers in October. You will find more about this day trip elsewhere in this newsletter. The day made me realize how much I have missed our club trips this year. I only wish we could have done more.

Our workshop has reopened, although with limited occupancy that requires that folks sign up with me. We are also only allowing members to return if slots have not been taken by others who have not attended yet this fall. We have two dates remaining in 2020, November 7<sup>th</sup> and December 5<sup>th</sup>. We practice social distancing and wear masks in the building while we slice and polish our stones. Fred was busy taking pictures in October for all to see.

We have come to the conclusion that we cannot, and should not, meet in the church for the remainder of 2020. Unfortunately, this means canceling our popular Christmas and Holiday celebration banquet/party in December. Perhaps we can have a post-Covid celebration in its place when the time is right in 2021.

In September, I enjoyed beach combing in southern New England while Fred collected sand, but it was a stop at a road cut in central Connecticut that kept me

busy in October. I sorted through the material I had recovered and hand picked out all the small garnets.



Garnets weathered from schist in Tolland, CT.

I counted out 100 of these coarse sand-sized almandine garnets and they weighed 2.4 grams. That means they average about 0.12 carat each. Together, all the small garnets weighed 365 grams. A little high school algebra tells me that there are approximately 15,000 garnets on that plate! The larger garnet in the middle is just a bit smaller than a ping pong ball and is from River Valley, Ontario. It weighs 98 grams or the same as about 4000 of the CT garnets. I wish we could have returned to River Valley again this summer.

I hope each of you has found some way to enjoy our shared hobby while we cannot do it together.

*Linda*

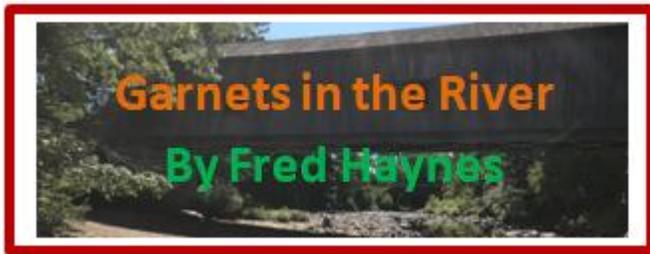


My family lives in central Connecticut. When I saw that Fred and Linda had visited two garnet sites not far from my parent's home I asked for directions. Then, on my next visit I took my family "mineral collecting". In October, we went to both the Tolland and Salmon River sites. It was such fun, particularly for my two year old niece who took her toy trucks

with her for the "mining" adventure. We did find garnets, but more than anything it was fun to share my passion for rocks with my parents and family. I need to do this more often.



My two year old niece and I are collecting tiny garnets in Tolland, CT.



While Linda liked the garnets weathering from the schist roadcut in Tolland, I believe I have had more fun playing with the garnet-bearing sand recovered from below the Comstock Covered Bridge in East Hampton, CT. Both make great sand samples and both sourced their garnets from the Devonian Littleton schist, a mica- and garnet-rich metamorphic rock formed during the Acadian orogeny (mountain-building event) ~375-325 million years ago. The Acadian event was the third of four orogenies along eastern North America that collectively created the Appalachian Mountains and surrounding terrains.

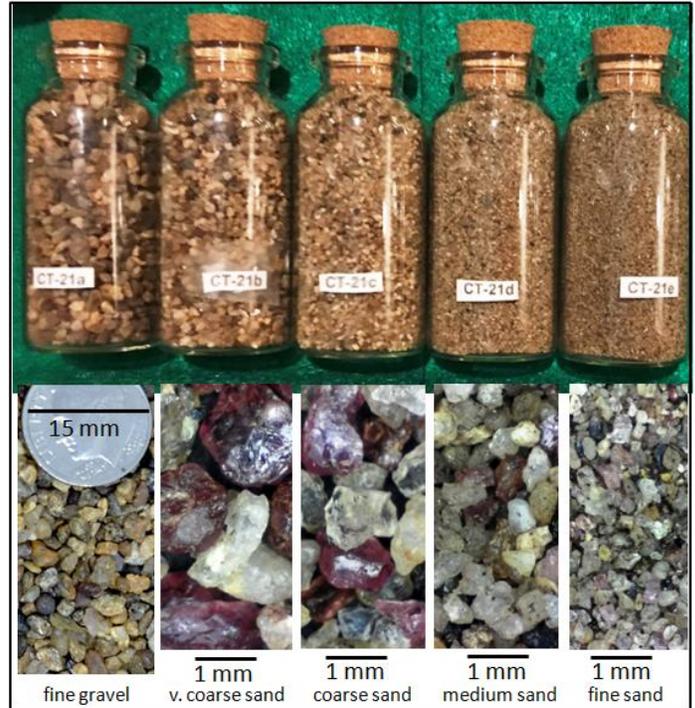
But now the schist is being subjected to the relentless force of erosion. Hard minerals like garnet and quartz will weather from the rocks and be transported downstream. Mica and other softer minerals in the schist will not survive the rough treatment and the natural tumbling action of the river and will be reduced to clay. Garnet and staurolite are denser than quartz and will tend to fall into crevices and be trapped behind larger rocks along streams such as the Salmon River in East Hampton, Connecticut.



Here I am in my official club uniform digging out garnet-rich sand with a soup spoon from behind the larger rocks along the Salmon River.

Photo by L. Schmidtgall

The material trapped between, behind, and under the larger rocks in the preceding picture is a very poorly sorted sand-gravel mixture with little to no silt or clay fraction. The red garnets are easily visible in just about every spoonful of coarse sand scooped from these sediment traps.



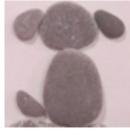
**Five size samples from sand collected in the Salmon River in East Hampton, CT.** The upper vials contain 20ml of each size fraction. The fine gravel is a macro photograph. The other four sand fractions are digital microphotographs presented at the same scale.

Once home I decided to separate the poorly sorted sediment into five size fractions. I wanted to see which fraction might have the most garnet. Turns out the very coarse and coarse sand fractions were the winners. There was only an occasional grain in the gravel component. Interestingly, the garnet grains become progressively pinker as the grain size decreases. Can you see the pink, almost transparent grains, in the fine sand to the far right? I suspect this is merely an optical property. From everything I can read the garnets in the Littleton schist are all almandine (Fe-Al) with less than 20% pyrope (Mg) component.

By the way there are also staurolite grains (some with crystal faces) in both the Tolland and East Hampton sands. They are not as common and harder to spot and identify, but they are there. Perhaps that can be the focus of another newsletter article.



## Rock your Art by Jim Rienhardt



You have probably seen some of the art made with beach stones. I had seen quite a lot of them in a local store I had visited. I always look at things with the thought of “how can I do that?” So I tried my hand at it and it turns out that it is not difficult.

You can create your own rock art easily and there is certainly an abundance of resources with Lake Ontario so close by. We all have our favorite “go to” places for rocks along the Lake Ontario shoreline in Wayne County. Each and every season, or in fact each and every storm, brings new rocks to the beaches.



One of several stone beaches on Lake Ontario in Wayne County

With a project in mind you can search out just the right stones, or you can just grab a bucket full and figure it out later. I used what I had on hand, but I recommend having a project in mind and *then* finding stones. Look for stones with a variety of shapes and colors. The colors are generally limited, mostly sandstone red, gray, and black, but there are many shades and combinations. I’ve found that smaller and flatter stones are easier to work with.

When planning your project consider using standard frame sizes unless you are going to make your own, which I did. When framing, you will not want to use the glass unless you have obtained a deep frame or a shadow box. I made my frame deep to allow for glass which eliminates the problem of dusting the art. The backboard can be thin plywood or Masonite. I went with the Masonite with a few coats of flat white paint.

Lay out your stones to make your design before attempting to glue anything. That was a challenge in my case since my cat likes to help and had different ideas of how it should look. To be able to lay out your stones and rearrange gives you a lot of freedom to perfect your design. The best adhesive I found for this is two-part epoxy.

I made a picture for my daughter and family for their anniversary. Holidays are coming up and a handmade gift is always the best. So, get to work!

*Here are a couple I particularly like. The first was a gift to me. The second is my first personal creation:*



I call this one “Cat and Dog”. Stone art does not have to be complex. Sometimes, simple works well.

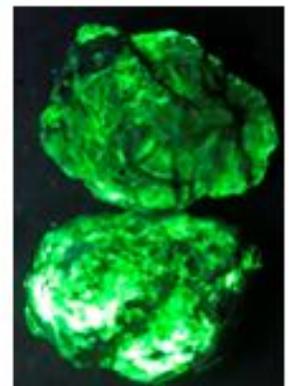


My first effort at Stone Art

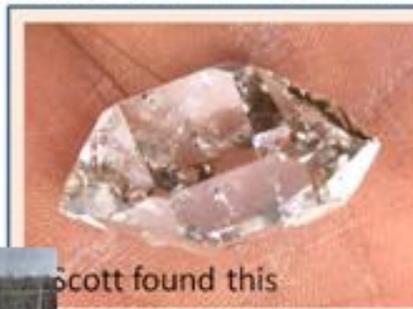
Our first Saturday workshop in seven months was a bit different than our past open workshops. For starters we felt we needed to limit attendance to 10 members plus "staff" (Glenn and Linda). And then all wore masks at all times inside the building. Despite the masks, I think I could identify everyone working, and even a couple who were not!



Linda worked on a piece of tiffany stone with opal and opalized fluorite from Spor Mountain, Utah. And then subjected it to short wave UV.



Finally, a field trip. It wasn't until October 24<sup>th</sup> that we were able to hold our first field trip of the season. It was our traditional end of season outing to Ace of Diamonds. I guess you could say we had a one-day collecting season. But for the 15 or so members who made the trip it was a fine fall day and there were diamonds to be had. Everyone went home with something to be proud of.



## Wayne County Gem and Mineral Club 2020 Schedule *last update Sept. 30*

There are no meetings or field trips scheduled for the remainder of 2020, but the workshop will be open twice. We will limit the number of folks each time so sign-up is required. That worked in October and we hope it can work in November and December also. Those who attended in October can only attend in November if space is available. Contact Linda Schmidtgal to reserve a spot at one of the upcoming workshops.

**November 7<sup>th</sup>** – Saturday Workshop (SIGN-UP is required, read page 2 and contact Linda)

**December 5<sup>th</sup>** – Saturday Workshop (SIGN-UP is required, read page 2 and contact Linda)

*It is with much regret that we have decided to cancel the year-end party and banquet. Perhaps we can celebrate accordingly when the COVID crisis becomes history. In the meantime, keep your head down and your eyes open when you are walking among rocks.*

### Revisiting the Wolcott Iron Furnace

By Fred Haynes

Photos by Jason Dobbs

After the workshop on Saturday October 24<sup>th</sup>, Jason Dobbs and his sons Eli and Ethan arrived to visit the Wolcott slag dump adjacent to the Weiler farm. Jason collects slag and does research on the associated mining and furnaces. He was not aware of the Wolcott iron furnace until Glenn's story in the [October club newsletter](#). When he arrived several of us ventured to the site which is less than 1000 yards from Glenn's farm and the club workshop. We were not disappointed. The hillslope on the north side of Furnace Rd. is almost completely glass slag from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century iron furnace.



Fred and Glenn search for slag below while Eli fights with thorns above.

Jason had learned that the actual furnace was located some 300' south where the old Furnace Rd. intersected Wolcott Creek. We could see the old

bridge abutments through the woods, but did not attempt to visit. Perhaps that will be easier to do in the spring when there is less underbrush and fewer pricker bushes to navigate.



**But we did find slag!** As noted last month, it is not a colorful or particularly handsome slag, but with a little scrounging around we did find some banded pieces and even a few that were green.

## Wayne County Gem & Mineral Contacts

### ELECTED OFFICERS

President - Linda Schmidtgal  
[lees\(at\)tds.net](mailto:lees(at)tds.net) 315-365-2448  
 Vice-President - Fred Haynes  
[fredmhaynes55\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:fredmhaynes55(at)gmail.com) 585-203-1733  
 Secretary - Debbie Breeze  
 Treasurer - Bill Lesniak

### Board of Directors

Gary Thomas  
 Bob Linderbery  
 Heidi Morgenstern  
 James Keeler

Past President - Glenn Weiler

Visit us on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1675855046010058/>

### APPOINTED POSITIONS

Bill Chapman – Field Trip Chair

Fred Haynes – Newsletter Editor  
[fredmhaynes55\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:fredmhaynes55(at)gmail.com)

Bill Lesniak – Website Coordinator  
 Glenn Weiler – Workshop Coordinator

Linda Schmidtgal – Collection Curator  
 Eric Elias: GEMFEST Show Chair

Fred Haynes – Facebook Administrator  
 Jim Rienhardt – Sand Chapter

Club meets 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday of each month starting in Sept.  
 Social meeting at 6:30 PM Regular meeting at 7:00 PM  
 Park Presbyterian Church, Maple Court, Newark, NY

**Website** – <http://www.wcgmc.org/>

Dues are only \$15 individual or \$20 family for a full season of fun. Renewal is in October. Send to:

**WCGMC, P.O. Box 4, Newark, NY 14513**

