



Nassau Mineral Club

LONG ISLAND, NEW YORK

The Nugget

Winter 2018



Margaret Hastings Herkimer Diamond Claim in Fonda NY - A Memorable Trip

By June Miller

One late summer weekend in September, a dozen individuals in the Nassau Mineral Club embarked on an adventure that turned into a highlight of the year for us. In vehicles packed with clothing, equipment and snacks, we headed 200 miles north to Fonda, NY in search of gemstones formed over 300 million years ago. LI mineral organizations lease land in an area known as Diamond Acres Farm. Association members are permitted access throughout the year after agreeing to abide by practices that promote safety and environmental conservation which include the AFMS Code of Ethics.

The term “farm” is somewhat misleading. The dig site is located in a densely wooded forest devoid of paved trails so visitors could, and did, easily get lost trying to get to the right claim. Luckily, Diane, our *de facto* organizer-leader scouted out the area before we arrived, saving us hours of back-peddling and loss of precious daylight mining time. The lesson we learned was to always bring a good topographical map of the mining area marked with the exact location of dig site (e.g. its map coordinates) and clear instructions on navigating the terrain to reach it. Also, having charged mobile phones help us keep in touch, even when “lost!”

Our first day was spent learning about where to look for the mineral crystals, a harder skill than some of us

anticipated. Although enthusiasm bound us together, a few were clearly more experienced and shared stories on how to examine the landscape and follow clues left by the last storm or other diggers in the vicinity. We also noted that searches depended on the equipment brought, so in our case we would not be able to carve into hardened rock deposits. Despite these limitations, surface finds were common and serendipitous. Half centimeter crystals gleamed in plain sight after an afternoon downpour on day two.

Single, perfect, tiny, double terminated crystals, although rare, can be found in the walls of the LI dig. Randomly embedded translucent clusters of quartz were also observed in piles of dolomite stone discarded at the edge of other claim sites. As our group became more acclimated, we wandered the property to investigate a mining area reserved for all visitors to the Farm. Deposits of minerals like calcite and druzy were occasionally unearthed sitting next to small chunks of rock material left behind from earlier excavations in the huge pit. Herkimers were hard to find, however. Professional miners we met in the area throughout our stay were extremely courteous and helpful. Many stopped along the trail to share tips and samples from their day's haul with lucky NMC members, an unexpected, generous bonus!

Tayya Sheraz, who went on the excursion, had this to say: "The Herkimer Fonda trip was a very exciting and unique experience. I appreciate all the help and guidance that was provided to all of us during our trip. Mining was always my passion and this trip [is] one that I will never forget! Beside mining and roaming in a small hilly area, I noticed we all were looking for something in the walkways. That was really cool! I found a few unique pieces. During mining I couldn't believe my eyes how nature has kept these jewels in the dirt for us to find! I wish we had more time to explore. I am looking forward to going again with everyone!"



MINING TRIP NECESSITIES

(A list of useful items to take was compiled for NMC by 12 year old Katie W. after her experience at Herkimer. - Thank you Katie!)

1. Tweezers (to pick up small diamonds)
2. Sledgehammer and chisel (to break up bigger stones) -bring a wedge chisel and a ball chisel
3. Light cloth bag/bin to hold diamonds
4. Skinny crowbar for prying rocks apart
5. Wire cutters for cutting exposed roots
6. Hand spade for shoveling dirt
7. Bucket to carry tools in and sit on
8. Tarp and bungee cords in case it rains
9. Waterproof hiking boots, good socks
10. Safety goggles
11. Bottled water and snacks
12. Bug spray
13. First aid kit
14. Sunscreen
15. Garbage bags
16. Colorful items to mark the way to the mine
17. Sunglasses
18. Toilet paper for outhouses or the great outdoors
19. Trail map of area
20. WiFi phone in waterproof cases
21. Weather and bug appropriate clothes - sweatshirt w hood, windbreaker, waterproof pants, tight fitting gloves



Facts about the Herkimer Diamond

Herkimers have a hexagonal crystal system and have a rating of 7 on the Mohs scale. It is part of the silicate class of minerals. High quality specimens are water-clear and occasionally double terminated. Acid water carved out rock cavities over 300 million years ago as quartz formed, allowing the beautiful double configurations to form.

Pockets have been found in exposed outcrops of dolostone or dolomite rock in the Mohawk River Valley and Adirondack Mountains interface in New York State. Some believe it has mystical attributes that help release physical stress and tension, discharge toxicity from the system, and stimulates clairvoyance. It is New York State's official gemstone.



Photos by Sue Goldman. Group shot by Kerri Cohn.

Have something interesting to add to The Nugget? Please send your articles, or article ideas to: NassauMineralClub@gmail.com.

**In Memoriam
George J. Allgaier (1941-2017)**

George Allgaier was Curator of the Garvies Point Museum and a long-standing honorary member of the Nassau Mineral Club. As Museum Curator, he designed many exhibits and was its resident geologist. His educational lectures on geological topics, including the formation of Long Island during the Great Ice Age, illuminated his deep knowledge and interests, which he generously shared with the public and NMC members during his tenure. He will be greatly missed. Contributions may be made in his name to Garvies Point Museum & Preserve.

Announcements

It's membership renewal time! If you haven't yet paid your 2018 dues, please print out a new [application form](#) for your renewal and follow the instructions to renew your membership.

Cris Martins will be the new editor of *The Nugget*, beginning with the next edition. Welcome Cris! This edition of *The Nugget* is piloting a new format that will allow readers to scan contents more easily. Feedback is welcome.

Upcoming Events

2018 AFMS/EFMLS Convention in Raleigh, NC on April 5-9 at The Embassy Suites (Hilton) – Group rates available. Contact June Miller, NMC Liason for information.

Reminder: 2018 EFMLS Wildacres Programs for Spring (May 21-27) and Fall (Sept. 3-18). For information and registration form, go to: www.efmls-wildacres.org

NMC Officers (2016-2017)

PRESIDENT: Dennis Kirchner

VP OF EVENTS: Elise Gad

VICE PRESIDENT of LAPIDARY: Jim Sisti

SECRETARY: Barbara Kruger

TREASURER: Elaine Grayson

MEMBERSHIP CHAIR: Diane Angus

WEBMISTRESS: Sue Goldman

EDITOR & NMC LIASON: June Miller

PHOTOGRAPHER: Rose Marie White

The Nassau Mineral Club meets every Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the lapidary

section at Garvies Point Museum in Glen Cove, excluding holidays. 2018 workshops are being planned.

PURPOSE OF THE NASSAU MINERAL CLUB: From By-laws: "The purpose of this Corporation shall be to further and promote the study of mineralogy by means of meetings, lectures, exhibitions and field trips; to stimulate interest in all phases of geology, mineralogy, gemology, paleontology and the lapidary arts, and to do any other act or thing incidental to or connected with any of the foregoing or in the advancement thereof, but not for the pecuniary profit or financial gain of its members, directors or officers." (Article II, Section 2.01, 3/13/2000)

Go to www.nassaumineralclub.org for more information.