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For applications and/or more information contact Jutta Dudley, 140 Railroad Mills Road, Pittsford, NY 14534; by telephone 385-2368; or by e-mail <JuttaSD@aol.com>.

The *Academy* Internet web page is <http://www.rasny.org>

The *Astronomy Section* Information phone number is (585) 987-5330. The *Astronomy Section* Internet web page is <http://rochesterastronomy.org>

This “**BULLETIN**” is produced monthly, *except July and September*, by the *Astronomy Section, Rochester Academy of Science*. The editor is Bob Crumrine, 3 Timway Court, Fairport, NY 14450 Phone (585) 265-5292 (days) and (585) 425-7448 (evenings), e-mail <editor@rasny.org>

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Rochester Academy of Science
BULLETIN

“An organization of people in the Natural Sciences”

January, 2011 - Vol. 65, #1



President’s Message

Happy New Year!

I send you greetings from Tasmania. Here, the incoming year is celebrated with a barbie (no, not the doll, the outdoor grill) under southern hemisphere stars. Wallabies, wild parrots, gymnosperm forests, mountains,

Tasmanian Devils, and Gondwanaland geology will keep me entranced as I explore the geography of this fascinating part of Australia. Hopefully I will have some interesting tales to tell you when I return later in January.

The Academy BOD looks forward to another year supporting your section activities and sponsoring Academy events. The first all-Academy activity will be the Spring Lecture, featuring an archeological topic. Save the date, Monday, April 18th, and watch for more information

in future Bulletins.

Jutta S. Dudley
President, RAS

* * *

A Journey to the Middle-Upper Devonian Boundary

Starting last fall, Fossil Section member Larry Sformo took it upon himself to dig into the geology of southern Genesee and northern Wyoming counties. The time spent checking out exposures and networking with land owners and public officials resulted in the Section gaining access to a site that spanned the transition from the Middle to Upper Devonian.

The strata exposed at the site ranges from the top of the Middle Devonian Hamilton Group Windom Shale through the Genesee, Penn Yan and West River Formations of the Upper Devonian Genesee Group.

While collecting proved spotty, the site was fascinating from a geological/stratigraphic perspective. In the later part of the Middle Devonian the typical Hamilton fauna which existed largely unchanged for 4 to 5 million years was replaced by an immigrant fauna. This replacement and the world-wide sea level rise (transgression) which accompanied it, has been termed the Taghanic Event.



Cayuga Creek site looking south. The grotesque concretion layer is in the distance and a styliolinid, fine grained limestone bed forms the low falls in the foreground. Photo by Larry Sformo.

The strata that were laid down in during this event comprise the Tully Formation in central New York. In western New York the Tully or its correlative strata has been removed due to erosion and corrosion forming the Taghanic Unconformity. The insoluble material left by this process was incorporated into lenses on the seafloor during the onlap of the Genesee Shale and is now known as the Leicester Pyrite. The Genesee Shale here is a very dark to black shale that indicates a high level of organic material and deposition in an oxygen poor environment. The oxygen poor (anoxic) environment was largely due to the depth at which it was deposited. While subject to debate, the depositional depth of the Genesee Shale is thought to have been as much as 200 meters with the depth being caused by the continuing Taghanic transgression and down-warpage of the crust caused by renewed activity in the Acadian highlands to the east.



L-R: Bill Schlein, Tom Yehl, Bob Easterly #2, Tom Kohler, Greg and Bill Hugh, Mark Minarich, and Hank Baronsky. Photo: Bill Schlein

This site also displayed an excellent exposure of what has been called the “Grotesque Concretion Layer “. This layer of 8” to 12” misshapen, nearly contiguous, concretions occur at the top of the Penn Yan Shale just below two other well known beds, the North Evan’s Limestone and the Genundewa Formation. All in all this was a fascinating trip and provided a glimpse into one of many pivotal moments in earth’s history.

Dan Krisher, RAS Fossil Section

* * *

Black Forest Star Party 2010

This year’s Black Forest Star Party at Pennsylvania’s Cherry Springs State Park was attended by an enthusiastic contingent of ASRAS members. Perhaps aided by the smaller than usual group, we were able to set up all of the tents and telescopes in one area. The weather forecast leading up to the event proved accurate—Friday was very clear all night,

but with lots of dew.

After observing and exchanging looks through our scopes for a few hours, we broke away to have a burger or sausage sandwich, and then walked the field to have some time with the big dobs. The views through a 32” scope under clear, dark skies, driven by a friendly, knowledgeable host is something you never forget.

Saturday provided plenty of sun to dry the equipment, and since an overcast overnight was forecasted, many attendees packed up to be ready to leave after the talks and door prizes.

BFSP is a well run gathering of 500 or so astronomy enthusiasts in a wonderful dark sky location, with nice facilities, vendors, a mobile restaurant, on-site electricity and support services not too far away.

Accommodations for ASRAS members ranged from tent camping with sleeping bags on the ground to living the high life at a local motel with a hot shower and other modern conveniences. If you have never done so, you should consider attending, maybe next year. Ask a member who has gone for advice. We’d love to see more ASRAS members take advantage of this premier regional event.

Bill Schlein, Editor, ASRAS Newsletter

EVENTS for January, 2011

(For updates to events, check the Academy web site, <http://www.rasny.org>, or appropriate Section web site.)

JANUARY EVENTS

Fri 07 ASTRONOMY GENERAL MEETING

7:30 PM, RIT Gosnell Hall A-300 Lecture Hall. For more information contact Lori Englund at 334-5744 or visit www.rocheasterastronomy.org.

Mon 10 RAS BULLETIN DEADLINE

Deadline for February, 2011 issue. Please mail input to editor@rasny.org

Wed 12 HERBARIUM

1:00 PM – 4:00 PM Life Sciences Section will hold a workshop at the RAS Herbarium, located in the basement of the Rochester Museum and Science Center (RMSC). No experience needed! Plan to come and help with this valuable collection – and see some interesting plants! If you plan to attend, please send an RSVP to Elizabeth Pixley. Then, at RMSC, go to the front desk and ask staff person there to call ext. 368, the phone in the Herbarium. For more information, contact Elizabeth Pixley, herbarium curator (334-0977 or epixley@rochester.rr.com).

Sun 16 LIFE SCIENCE & ANTHROPOLOGY OPEN HOUSE

3:00 PM Karen Wolf’s home – Conversation and snacks starting at 3:00 PM., dish to pass dinner at 5:30. Come with your family, friends, ideas, and suggestions for field trips and meeting topics

please. If you can carpool that would be great, parking is limited in winter. See www.rasny.org or contact Karen Wolf at 670-9709 for more information.



One of many cabinets in the herbarium safely housing preserved specimens

Tues 18 MINERAL GENERAL MEETING

7:30 PM Downstairs Meeting Room, Brighton Town Hall, 2300 Elmwood Ave. The program and speaker are to be announced. Door prizes and refreshments. Visitors welcome. For more information please contact Stephen Busschaert at mineralvp@rasny.org or 585-288-5683, or check www.rasny.org/mineral for updates.

Wed 19 RAS BOARD MEETING

7:00 PM Brighton Town Hall, Stage Conference Meeting Room.

FOSSIL No January Meeting.

JANUARY NON-RAS EVENTS

Mon 31 RMSC SHULTZ LECTURE

7:30 PM Eisenhart Auditorium. When Will We Discover ET? For more information please visit <http://www.rmssc.org/Experiences/FamilyPrograms/ScienceOnTheEdge/>.

Sun 16 MENDON PONDS WINTERFEST

11:00 AM – 4:00 PM Mendon Ponds Park. Astronomy Section and Mineral Section will have booths in the East Lodge (heated). A Monroe County Parks Dept. annual event. For more info, <http://www.mendonpondswinterfest.org/>

FEBRUARY EVENTS

Fri 04 ASTRONOMY GENERAL MEETING

7:30 PM, RIT Gosnell Hall A-300 Lecture Hall. For more information contact Lori Englund at 334-5744 or visit www.rocheasterastronomy.org.

FEBRUARY NON-RAS EVENTS

Wed 09 RMSC SHULTZ LECTURE

7:30 PM Eisenhart Auditorium. Birds, People, and Science: Engaging the Public, Understanding the Natural World For more information please visit <http://www.rmssc.org/Experiences/FamilyPrograms/ScienceOnTheEdge/>.