

CRACK 'N CAB



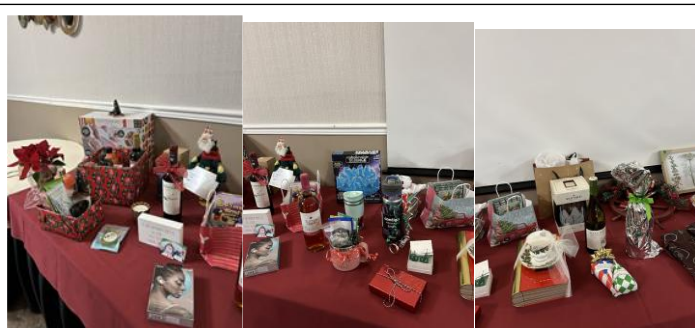
Gem & Mineral Society of Syracuse, PO Box 2801, Syracuse, NY
web: <https://www.gmss.club> Volume 55 Issue 12, Dec. 2025
209 Oswego St (Ponderosa Plaza), Unit 15, Liverpool, NY

Merry Christmas! Happy Holidays!



Photos by Judy Cook

(from 2024)



By Amcyrus2012 - Own work, CC BY 4.0,
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=37728056>



“Coal for Christmas”

By Amanda Lytle – Pages 3-5

Cheryl's Bead Embroidery Class – Pages 7-8

November's Fall Auction

Photo review – Pages 8-10

And important information about a
certain item at the Auction – Pages 10-11



And Happy New Year!

President's Message

Matt Klinger



Welcome to the crazy days of December guys. Is your shopping done? Do you have your menu set? Well, I don't either lol. If you saw our esteemed editor's email you would know that our **75th anniversary** is coming up fast. Do you have any suggestions for the celebration? If you do,

mention it to one of the Board members; we'll add it to our list.

Our **Christmas Party is this Sunday**. Be sure to bring an unwrapped toy for Toys for Tots, food for the food bank and a gift for the exchange.

If anyone would volunteer to bring a **snack for the January meeting**, please let me know. Linda Adams will be providing the drink.

Once again, I would like to put a bug in your ear about becoming an Officer in the club. If you would like to talk about it or if you have questions, give me a shout and I would love to chat about it with you.

Have a wonderful Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Matt

Secretary's Report

Marie Mastracco

GMSS Board Meeting – Dec. 2, 2025

President Matt Klinger called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM

President, Matt Klinger:

Board position openings:

-John Sweeney stated that Jeff Huard is interested in filling the Vice President position for the remainder of the term.

-After discussion, John Sweeney made the Motion, and Marie Mastracco gave a second to the motion for Jeff to take the position. All were in favor.

Christmas party, Sunday, December 7, 2025.

All arrangements have all been taken care of.

The Decorating Committee has been meeting and has purchased items previously agreed upon. They will arrive around 9:30 am on Sunday to decorate.

Kip stated she will arrive about 45 minutes early to distribute candy and gift bags to the tables.

Vice President: Not present.

Sgt. At Arms, Kristin White (not present)

Treasurer, Linda Clark:

Update on finances.

Provided income and expenditure figures for October and November. Vendor fees for next year's Gem and Jewelry Show are due in January 2026.

Provided profit from auction held in November. \$504.

Secretary, Marie Mastracco: No concerns

Newsletter, Larry Petry:

Information for Crack and Cab is due Wed., December 3, 2025, by 11:00 PM.

Webmaster and interim Librarian, Amanda Lytle:

Fees

-Web and Marketing application that is billed bi-annually is due December 3, 2025.

Bag-O-Books

Planning a fundraiser (December – February) to raise money for a game that has a club-related theme for future club use. Books are extras from our library.

Facebook Administrator, Judy Cook:

-Posted information and pictures from our auction in November. Post received a lot of views.

Gemworld Show Chair, Budget Committee: Cheryl Brown

Vendor expectations:

-Cheryl and John Sweeney will call the vendor previously discussed and review expectations.

-Show Committee will have first meeting on Tues., Jan. 27, 2026.

Bead and Embroidery group:

-Participants who attended the Bead and Embroidery class recently held would like to meet as a group once a month, preferably Saturdays for a few hours. They will bring their own craft/items to work on.

-After discussion of logistics and cost, John Sweeney Motioned to approve the group on Saturdays for a fee of \$5 each. Marie Mastracco seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Lapidary Committee: Steve Shorey

-Classes are booked and running as planned.

-Extra hours at the clubhouse - still in process of arranging.

Lapidary Equipment

Wheels have not been purchased yet. Will need at least three. Also discussed the possibility of purchasing a new 6-inch machine. Prices to be researched.

-Linda Adam suggested a Wish List for the club. This idea will be relayed to the Grants and Gifts Committee.

Tracy Criscione, Jr. Rockhound Committee: (not present).

Jill Hillard, Education Committee: (not present).

Motion made to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 pm, motion seconded by Larry Petry. Meeting adjourned by Matt Klinger at 8:10pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Marie Mastracco, Secretary

If I Get Coal for Christmas, I'd Add it to My Collection

By Amanda Lytle



Original artwork by Amanda Lytle

Some might think consequences for a rockhound who made it on Santa's Naughty List will be received the same way as would a normal person, when they peek into their stocking on Christmas morning.

During this magical time of year Santa's reindeer will be in their harnesses of silver and gold and hitched to that big red sleigh after its final inspection from the North Pole Garage. Once cleared for takeoff, Santa's elf-force will have it loaded with a towering cargo of gifts.

For sure NORAD will be locked on his flight path during their third shift.

At the stroke of midnight on Christmas, jolly old Saint Nick embarks on his one-night journey to bring his magical deliveries across the world to all who were good this year, including you and me.

But just one question still remains...

Does Santa know that if he delivers a lump of coal to a rock and fossil enthusiast on his Naughty List, there's a high chance it could wind up a happily-received stocking stuffer?

So grab your hot cocoa with a marshmallow on top, and get yourself comfy with a story I'll drop about a little adventure; one which shows that even a lump of coal in one's stocking might have a reason to become a beloved gift for the season:

It was a weekend before the clubhouse auction, throughout the room specimens were stacked.

I saw a lump of coal in one of the flats.



Its colors were flashing like a peacock's tail and I thought, I don't think I have any of that!

[Peacock Coal image / source: mindat.org/UOT-046 photo credit: John Krygier]

I have a few lumps of my own, the kind New York Central once hauled in its trains.

But none with this colorful fancy stuff, they're all just plain.

If I had room for one more specimen; If I could've made it to the auction. And if on a whim it went up for sale - I'd totally bid without fail.

Coal as we see it an industrial tool.

Controversial to some, but could it have us all fooled?

Yet a fossil fuel it is, there's a reason for its name. Which belongs to a most ancient forest, that only time can explain.

Santa surely must be a time lord and the Tardis his sleigh, alright.

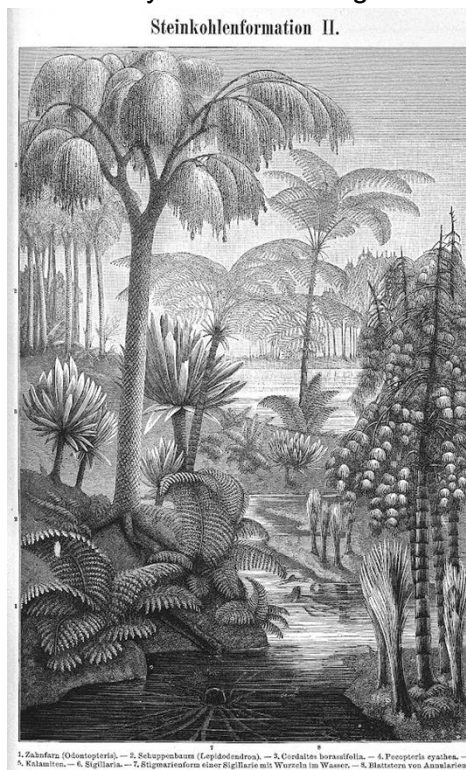
How else can he deliver gifts to everyone, in one single night?

Milk and cookies on a plate with carrots for his reindeer set by the door.

When Santa popped in, I asked: "Would you take me on a tour?"

"Get into the sleigh!" He said, "To the Carboniferous Lands... for the biggest dragonflies galore!"

We did a flyover of towering horsetails. We saw club



mosses as magnificent trees. With all the crawling things in swamps as far as the eye can see.

I do hope we skip those giant millipedes... thank goodness I heard they only like rotting leaves!

[Etching depicting Carboniferous Era Forest / source: Wikipedia]

In a speed-run through time, a rising and falling and regrowth of forest we observed.

Layering in the swamps, the dead forests preserved.

Some forests went on to lithify, but the fate of others took a different turn.

Bogs of peat had formed plenty and vast, But not all of this peat would completely last.

It piled in height, then buried deep and with no end in sight.

"Mother Nature is the greatest cook and baker," said Geologist Santa with mirth.

"Her oven has a combination pressure cooker, and it's all in the Earth."

"Instead of those cookies of flour, butter and sugar - coal's ingredients are peat under temperature, baking times, and pressure."

Peatification is how forests partially decay and make peat. Just like those jiffy pellets you'd start with your seeds. But peat can go onto an even further role, so to speak.

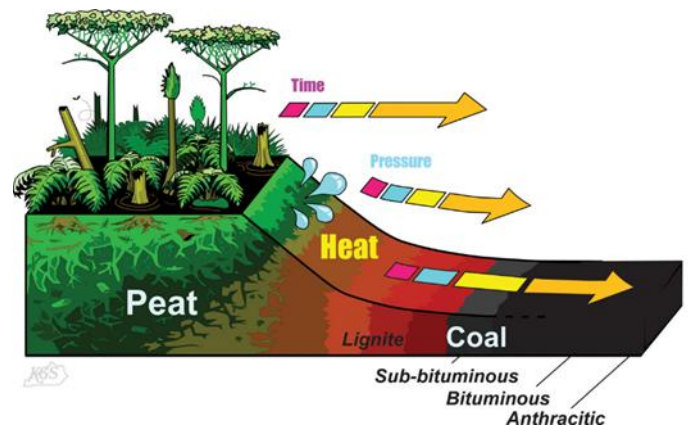
And there it all begins back in Mother Nature's oven of old.

Where ancient peat bakes up into today's ranks of coal.

"Different coals are like a variety of treats on a Christmas cookie platter."

Confused, I looked at Geologist Santa and said: "How does this matter?"

And jolly ole St. Nick let out a "Ho Ho Ho!" since he found himself flattered:

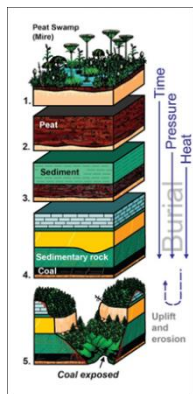


[Diagram of Peatification / Coalification. source: Kentucky Geological Survey. uky.edu/KGS/coal/]

"How about a recipe collection in the simplest way? Cookies ranked Lignite, Sub-Bituminous, Bituminous, and Anthracitic..."

not to mention your favorite: Iridescent Anthracite on the holiday tray!

From earthy Lignite towards the surface to Anthracite in the deep,
Shows different ranks of coal formed through depths of buried peat."



Geologist Santa drew in a big breath,
then finished his story with what he liked best:

"Coalification begins after peat's formed by these forests, From the plants to the mighty club moss trees which once stood before us."

[Diagram of Peatification / Coalification. source: Kentucky Geological Survey. uky.edu/KGS/coal/]

In one hand I held the root of a club moss tree, and the other was a lump of coal.

Somehow, each of these pieces makes it all feel whole.

It reminded me of the Ghost of Christmas Past:

All that remains of this once-living tree is but a sandstone cast.



[Fossil of Carboniferous Era Club Moss Tree Root, *Stigmaria*.]

Along with the tree is the lump of coal.
And an extinct forest's tale meant to be told.

"I'll speak of your memories," I promised both fossil and fossil fuel in my hands.
"So you won't be forgotten for as long as we stand."

Santa called to the reindeer and away we flew along, back to the timeline where I belong.

It was all a dream, but I recalled Geologist Santa say, "Coalification is as important today.

Coal may seem purely Anthropogenic matters next to a fossil tree, but it's also a big part of Earth's life history."

For some rock & fossil collectors, a lump of coal would be fun,
Even if it's not a collector's choice for everyone.

Christmas Morning was here! I woke up from my dream. Under the tree were toys for my cats and a shiny new Estwing.

Suddenly by the fireplace I noticed there was something....

At a glimpse I saw a little flash of Iridescent Anthracite, poking up from my stocking.

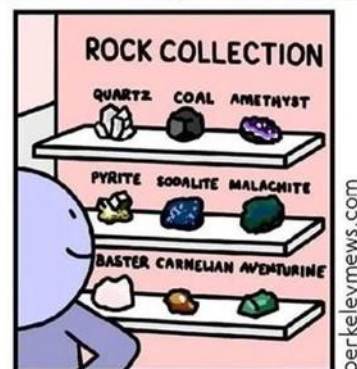


image8.jpeg

Geo Lexis (Puzzle) By Anne Fitzgerald

"If Rocks Could Talk"



pngtree.com

For our October issue, I gave you all the dirt about what soil does in winter. But what about rocks? We might think they just sit there, doing nothing, like some of us in February. If I could interview a few rocks, I imagine they would have complaints. Some would be a little stressed out or under a lot of pressure. These complaints would be legit, but life for a rock is even harder than

imagined. There is no "Silent Night" for rocks, even in winter.

In winter, rocks undergo freezing and thawing which can weaken their structure. When water gets in, tiny cracks grow, and large slabs of rocks can fall away in a process called exfoliation. It would take a lot of loafahs to do what rocks do in winter. Even granite isn't safe as quartz and feldspar contract at different rates and can cause a tug-of-war within the usually peaceful granite. If I were a rock whisperer (a girl can only dream...) I would tell them it's not their fault.

But since we can't really talk to rocks like we would like to, our only option is to admire them, take care of them, and continue to be puzzled by their ways. See if you can decode what rocks might say to water if they could talk to water. Fill in the blanks with the scrambled letters below.

Here's a hint: Some of our club members do the same thing.

Puzzle: Fill in the blanks with these scrambled letters (answer on Page 7):

pucorckaemuY

_____!

Lapidary Classes Begin February

14, 21, 28

For great information
about the class

EMAIL
Bill Vergé
at

weverge@gmail.com

Lapidary Lab

NOTE: The Lapidary Lab is looking for a volunteer to help on a weekday evenings. Need lapidary knowledge, experience and working knowledge of the lab, equipment and procedure. Need to have previously taken the classes. Contact Bill Verge' @ weverge@gmail.com

Upcoming Events

Sun., December 7 – Annual Club Holiday Party – at Island Escape, **Noon – 4 pm.**

Photo review in January.

Jan 6, 2026! – GMSS Board meeting – 7 pm at the Clubhouse. All are invited.

Jan 19 – GMSS meeting – 7 pm at the Clubhouse. From Dave Millis: There are those people who say that if the saber tooth tiger was discovered today it would be named the saber tooth bear. An omnivore and not a predator.

Also, the walrus has no trouble stalking and attacking clams. These are two examples of animals without opposing teeth. There is a third - Lystrosaurs from the Triassic who, in addition, had a birdlike beak. It was the first of many reptiles in the Triassic and it ate and digested plants, walked on all fours and inherited these from the Permian extinction.

In my program in January, hear other rarely told stories about dinosaurs, including how dinosaurs evolved with bird hips and birds evolved from lizard hips.

Jan 27 – 1st Gemworld 2026 Show

Committee meeting – 7 pm at the Clubhouse. Be in the know from the beginning! All are invited.

Feb 3 – GMSS Board meeting – 7 pm at the Clubhouse. All are invited.

Feb 16 – GMSS meeting – 7 pm at the Clubhouse.

**Feb 24 – Gemworld 2026 Show
Committee meeting – 7 pm** at the Clubhouse.

Upcoming Winter Shows:

**None in our area.
Better luck next month!**

Junior Rockhounds

No December meeting due to the holiday party. I
If you know any youngsters who are interested in
Junior Rockhounds please reach out to Tracey
(thalanaya@gmail.com). In **January** I plan on
holding the meeting before the regular club meeting,
meeting at 6:30 **Topic will be dinosaurs.**

Answers to Geo Lexis

Message from rocks to water:
You crack me up!

Sources and Further Reading:

www.geolsoc.org.uk/ks3/gsl/education/resources/rockcycle/page3561.html

www.engineerfix.com/what-happens-to-rock-when-it-gets-cold/ 11/2/25 Liam Cope

Cheryl's Bead Embroidery Class Saturday, October 18th



Creating glass seed bead embroidery around cabochons.
Pictured with Cheryl Brown are Jen Hilliard and Crystal Brown.



Pictured are Laura Coleman getting some tips from Kristen Rounds with Jen Hilliard working on her piece. Kristen brought in a few of the necklaces she created to show us the diversity of bead embroidery.





They're even more beautiful in real life!



Michael Bienvenue worked on one of his chainmaille bracelet creations.



Are you interested in learning how to create jewelry using seed beads and stones?

Stay tuned – we are bringing back the **beading group** to the club. Meetings will **start in January** (weather permitting) on **one Saturday a month**.

Please let Cheryl Brown know if you are interested through her email:
gmsrocks@gmail.com

November 17 Fall Auction meeting

Auction Time with John Sweeney!

Photos by Judy Cook

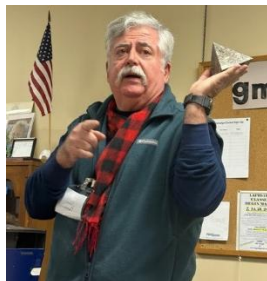


How Geodes Are Formed:

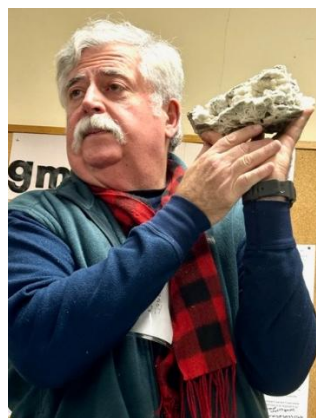
https://join1440.com/c/science-technology?pinned-resource=all-about-geodes-and-how-they-are-formed&utm_source=1440-share&utm_medium=web&utm_placement=email



Before...



and after!



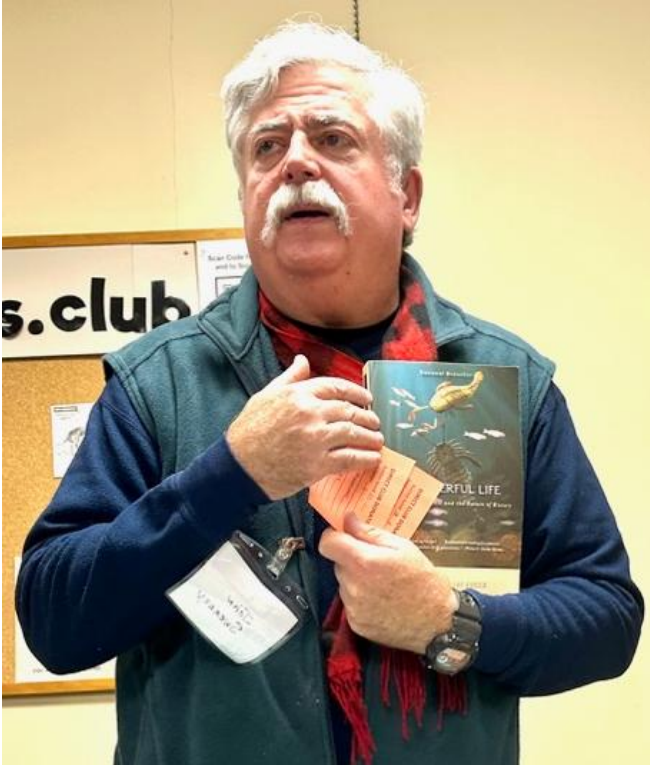
John is
hidden
behind the
curtain of
invisibility!



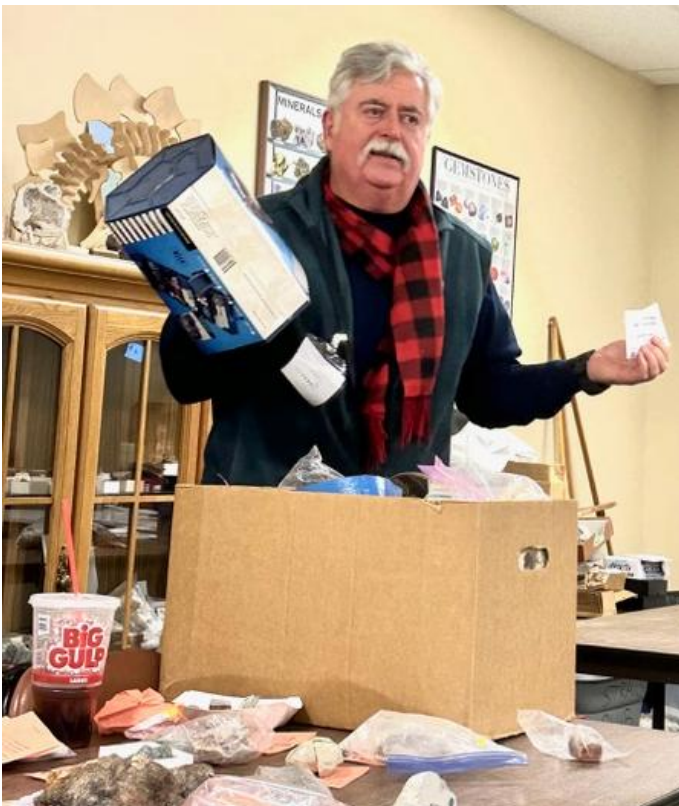
Making sure to check out all the drawers...



and secret side
displays, too!



There are *some* readers in the Club.



It looks like a piece from the space station - oops!



And, yes, there were real people there bidding on items. These are ones who waited for the Black Friday sales.

And, In Other News

What Are Labubu Dolls? All About the Bag Charms Taking Over the Internet (and Hanging Off Celeb Purses!)

By Caroline Blair People.com Published on July 5, 2025, 09:00AM EDT

Labubu Dolls became all the rage in 2024 and 2025. The viral plush toys and keychains often sell out within seconds after retailer Pop Mart releases them in limited drops. Several celebrities — including Lisa, Kim Kardashian and Rihanna — have sported the dolls as accessories.

<https://people.com/what-are-labubu-dolls-11764785>

What is Labubu? Why is she so popular? We have answers.

This viral sensation has people lining up overnight to get their hands on one.

nbcnews.com Updated Aug. 20, 2025, 9:36 AM EDT

Rebecca Rodriguez Editorial Projects Manager

First things first: Labubu is a girl. People often assume she's a boy (I did too, at first), but the fanbase is quick to correct that. Labubu also isn't a standalone character — she's part of a larger group called "The Monsters", created by Hong Kong artist and author Kasing Lung. The Monsters debuted in a Nordic mythology-inspired picture book trilogy in 2015, and by 2019, toy giant Pop Mart had turned them into the viral vinyl collectibles we know today.

<https://www.nbcnews.com/select/shopping/what-is-a-labubu-rcna210622>

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia –

Labubu (/lɑːˈbuːbu/ *lah-BOO-boo*; Chinese: 拉布布; pinyin: *Lābùbù*) is a line of collectible [plush toys](#) created by [Hong Kong](#) illustrator [Kasing Lung](#). The series features [zoomorphic elves](#) with exaggerated facial expressions, of which the central figure is Labubu, a monster with sharp teeth, large ears and a scruffy appearance.

The toys are produced and sold exclusively by the China-based retailer [Pop Mart](#), which primarily releases Labubu figures in sealed "[blind box](#)" [packaging](#) that conceals the specific character inside. Over time, the series expanded to include different versions of Labubu and other related figures, often released in limited runs or as part of themed sets.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Labubu>

Labubu and KPop Demon Hunters Join Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade

Crowds in New York City bundled up to take in the latest version of a tradition that has run for nearly a century. (New York Times)



Chelseanewsny.com



Youtube.com

They have their own float, too!



It's definitely an invasion

And now you know.

Welcome New Members

Melanie Arnold
Rena Burkhart
Robert Glahn
Autumn Hilliard
Ann Menzies
Christopher Rudzitis
Kelly Zoniga



Gem & Mineral Society of Syracuse
PO Box 2801
Syracuse, NY 13220
First Class Mail
 Time-Dated Material



www.amfed.org www.amfed.org/efmls [Future Rockhounds](#)

Eight people organized the Gem and Mineral Society of Syracuse in 1951. Since that time it has grown in membership to include adults, families, and young folk. The Society was incorporated in 1969 under the same name.

The objectives of the Society are to stimulate interest in mineralogy, paleontology, and the lapidary arts. Member interests include collecting, identification, and display of minerals, gems, fossils. Members share and develop their artistic skills in jewelry design and creation.

Our monthly meetings provide social and educational experiences. Field trips give collectors chances to find specimens and enjoy the out of doors, exercise and time with old and new friends.

Meetings – 3rd Monday of the month
General Meeting @ 7:00 pm
(NO meetings July, August, December)
209 Oswego St (Ponderosa Plaza) Unit 14 & 15, Liverpool, NY
Visitors are ALWAYS welcome!

See online Newsletter <https://gmss.club/crack-n-cab-newsletter>

You can also visit our Facebook Page

Annual Member Dues:

Adult \$15 – Family/Couple \$20 – Junior \$10 – Life \$5

If you would like to join or renew membership, download the application form (PDF) see <https://gmss.club/membership-info>

You can get a form at a meeting or send requests to: GMSS, PO Box 2801, Syracuse, NY 13220. We will mail an application/renewal form to you.

2025 – 2026 GMSS Officers/Contacts

-President: Matt Klinger pres@gmss.club

-Vice-President: Dave Arcaro vp@gmss.club

-Treasurer: Linda Clark treasurer@gmss.club

-Secretary: Marie Mastracco
secretary@gmss.club

-Jr Rockhounds: Tracey Criscione
kidsrock@gmss.club

-Membership Chair: members@gmss.club

-Sgt at Arms: Kristin White
sqtatarms@gmss.club

-GemWorld Show Chair: Cheryl Brown
 315-708-9122 show@gmss.club

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-Lapidary Committee Contact: Steve Shorey
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-Hospitality Committee Chair: Doria McIntosh
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