

## **Amethyst Collecting Field Trip - Bart Township**

by Orion Jurkowski

Like the previous trips we have gone on, we got up early and left the house before the sun was up (which is quite a task when you are bringing two teenagers). We knew that this trip would be a little different as we were headed to an Amish farm as the other trips we went on with the club were at quarries. We were told that we would not need the safety equipment and hammers and chisels, but we took along just in case we needed it (we did not) because we really did not know what to expect.

As we got closer to our destination, we saw many horse drawn buggies on the road. We were truly in Amish country. As I was driving, I had to slow down and keep an eye out for the slow moving horses. Even though we were on a schedule to get to our destination, I did not rush.

We were told to meet at the volunteer fire station, and when we arrived at the front of the station, it was locked up tight and no one was to be seen. We wondered if we were in the right place as we drove around to the back where we found a dozen cars that arrived before us.

Being the only SMRMC members on this trip we did not have the luxury of being able to get the lay of the land from experienced club members such as Dave Lines who we relied heavily on in the past. We walked around the parking lot to chat with the other participants and find out what to expect and get some tips for collecting. The first several people we talked to were newbies like us, and although we had interesting conversations, they could not tell us what to expect latter in the day. As we walked around, we saw familiar faces that we recognized from our two previous trips. These were seasoned hands who gave us tips, and even showed us samples from previous trips.

Finally, Tom Pankratz gathered us around and described the route to the field and where to park. We would caravan to the farm and park and collect on harvested corn fields. It was good that he warned of the conditions of the parking area as it was rough going for our car, but we handled it OK.

As we arrived at the collecting site, we saw rows and rows of harvested corn. The root and about a foot of the stalk were left in the ground and the rest of the plant was cut off and taken away.

Tom told us to look around carefully, and when you see that glint from the sun you just might find a piece of amethyst lying right there. And that is exactly what we did. There was plenty to be found just lying on the surface. There were a couple of people who brought screens by we found plenty on the surface.

This was truly a family trip as all ages physical abilities could find some nice stones.