MWF News

Midwest Federation of Mineralogical and Geological Societies

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Website – www.mwfed.org

Member of the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies

President's Message

Tom Barnhizer, MWF President

Winter is upon us. For some of us, that will mean it's time to head south or at least someplace where we can find more mild temperatures. We may even be able to do a bit of rockhounding or visit some of the premiere rock shows like Tucson.

For the rest of us, it will result in sitting out the cold until the weather begins to warm again. However, that doesn't mean we have to shut down completely if we are open to dusting off some old skills or learning new ones that we may have not considered.

For many rockhounders, it is the season for putting away the rock hammer and getting creative with some of our finds. A simple set of tumblers can provide weeks of activity that can turn many rough stones into fine polished gems in your own home.

For those fortunate enough to have built their own shop or joined a local rock and gem club, it may be

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Collection Advice for the New Year

By Eric Fritzsch
Lincoln Gem & Mineral Club (NE)
From the December, 2025 Pick & Shovel

I happened to see this quote the other day: "Don't chase perfection — chase progress. Perfection will slow you down" (Michelle Meyer-Shipp in Forbes Magazine). I think this quote applies well to collecting.

As I've mentioned before, collecting is a verb, it requires action. If you are a rock or mineral collector, it means you are actively engaging in acquisition, learning, and development. Too many collectors have fear when it comes to acquiring specimens. They hold back, hoping they'll come across that perfect specimen and their collection will somehow just grow on its own. Collections don't grow on their own, they require attention and acquisition.

Perfection is a dream and, as the late Rock Currier used to say, "The best to be found are still in the ground. The best that has been found have been ground." This means that the best azurite ever found is likely part of the copper wiring running through your house and there are likely better specimens still under

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possible to power up some of the tools that are the mainstays of any lapidary or gem crafter's shop. Slabbing, trimming, cabbing, and setting polished stones and gems in jewelry or display mounts for sale (or just for your own pleasure) is a great way to beat the winter chill.

If you're new to lapidary, a club is the best way to start. Visiting rock and gem shows, which are usually hosted by a local club, is easy and will give you insights into the hobby and allow you to speak directly to club members. They can help you to identify what tools you may need and where to find them, and they often provide leads to used equipment at a significant savings.

A rock show is also a great way to find material to begin work on right away. Many vendors offer rough rock, cut slabs and pre-formed cabochons that can be crafted in a variety of ways. We soon learn that nature produces some of the most amazing natural specimens, but turning many rocks and minerals into fine gems or works of art is a skill that has been practiced for millennia.

Once we begin to craft our own treasures, it is only natural that we should want to record our creations, and the winter months provide us with a convenient time to do this documentation. It has never been easier to record our collections with the advent of automatic cameras, smartphones and related applications.

Specialized microscopes come with software linked to computers allow collectors to photograph micro-mounts of their specimens in surprising clarity. These photographs, accompanied by articles, produced by amateur rockhounds, often grace the pages of books, magazines and newsletters, adding to the interest of our hobby and education of the public.

So, as you can see, the winter season is a time to recharge our enthusiasm, look for new opportunities, and learn new skills that will enrich our lives. As the saying goes, "A rolling stone gathers no moss." Let's get rolling.

Best to all of you this season and throughout the year.

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New Year's Collection Advice, cont.

(Continued from page 1)

the earth. Mining companies blast through rock without any attention to mineral specimens, and only a very small percentage of the earth's crust has been exploited for minerals. There are likely many great finds still waiting.

Progress is a much better goal. As this article will come out at the end of the year, it's time to start thinking about the past year and looking forward to the next year. What did you accomplish with your collection this year and what do you hope to accomplish with it next year?

Progress doesn't have to be forward; it can also be backward. If you're in your golden years, it can be selling your collection or specimens from your collection. It's a pathway that is designed by the collection owner. If you didn't add or remove any specimens this year, did you at least interact with the collection? Did you research anything about it? This is all chasing progress. Verb your collection!

I've written before about applying the Deming Cycle to collecting. In a Deming Cycle, one is always seeking continual improvement. That fits in line with the concept of chasing progress.

No seed flowers without progression, no child grows without progression, and we can't stop the progression of time. I recommend you engage your collection and progress it.

Illinois and Ohio Clubs Choose Their Rockhounds of the Year

The **Rock River Valley Gem and Mineral Society** of Rockford, Illinois proudly honors their wonderful Secretary **Debbie Marner** as Rockhound of the Year for 2025. Debbie has been a member of RRVGMS for a number of years and served as Secretary for several of those years. Her meeting minutes are accurate and she has a good knowledge of Robert's Rules of Order.

Debbie, however, is not a "rock nut" like the rest of us. She appreciates the club, the exhibits and the presentations, but does not actually collect rocks. Well, maybe a few special ones.

Her fellow members of RRVGMS appreciate Debbie's dedication, knowledge and kind words of encouragement. The club wishes there were more people like her.

Congratulations, Debbie, on this well-earned honor, and thank you for your service!

Debbie Marner always has a smile for her fellow club members. Photo courtesy of Liz Nishitateno.

The **Dayton Gem and Mineral Society** of Ohio (DGMS) proudly proclaims **Angi Bushbaum** Rockhound of the Year 2025, thanks to someone asking Angi a simple question — "Do you like rocks?" — at just the right time.

Angi's love for rocks and minerals started in elementary school. On her walk home, she'd stop to collect glittering bits of mica — biotite — from someone's driveway. She was especially proud of the "dinosaur teeth" her dad gave her, which she later learned were horn coral. Still they were cool, and sparked an interest in her.

In high school, Angi took geology courses, which deepened her interest. But as life moved on, her rock collecting faded into the background. Then came 2019.

After losing her husband, and during the early days of COVID, someone suggested finding a hobby or joining a social group to help with grief. Then fate stepped in, disguised as Tom McGovern, the then-president of DGMS. At the Dayton Gem and Jewelry Show, Tom approached Angi and asked, "Do you like rocks?" Angi said yes, and became a member of DGMS just like that.

Angi Bushbaum enjoys the big rocks on Jay Mountain, Vermont. Photo courtesy of Angi Bushbaum.

DGMS became a source of healing and joy. In Angi's words, "It brought me back to myself, helped me heal, grow, and sparkle again." She found a community, went on incredible field trips, and even started a crystal shop, which gave her something meaningful to do on weekends. (She's now closing the shop, it having served its purpose.)

Angi strives to give back however she can – volunteering, live-streaming, running the DGMS Facebook page, working on a historical archive, and now serving as DGMS secretary. Angi says that she will always be grateful for that one moment, that one question, and the community that welcomed her with open arms (and a whole lot of rocks).

And Angi, we are very grateful to have you, too.

MWF Clubs That Renew on Time Get Two Great Benefits

The 2026 Midwest Federation forms for renewing club memberships are on the following two pages of this issue of MWF News. Please alert club officers to collect information for the forms.

One important piece of information needed on the DUES AND INSURANCE form is the total number of individual adult and youth members during the year completed during 2025. These figures are used for dues and insurance calculations. The rationale is that your total membership, by the end of the year, is usually about the same, so you always pay the current year dues based on your past experience. The treasurer needs this information **before January 15th** so our insurance can be activated on time.

The Midwest Federation will only publish each club's public contact information. Please make sure that the mailing address is checked at least weekly and the phone number connects to a real person who can answer questions about your club. We still need direct contact information that will be distributed on a need-to-know basis to Federation leaders.

Clubs are encouraged to provide name, position and email address for additional officers or board members who would like to receive the *MWF News*. This information will only be distributed to our editor and secretary. This is a great way to make sure that all of your officers are "in the know."

Clubs who renew on time will receive an email subscription to the juniors publication Mini Miners Monthly, distributed only via email to the club's juniors coordinator. If you wish to have the Mini Miners Monthly subscription sent to someone other than your junior program coordinator or your editor, please provide a name, position and email address for that person and indicate that he or she is to receive the Mini Miners materials.

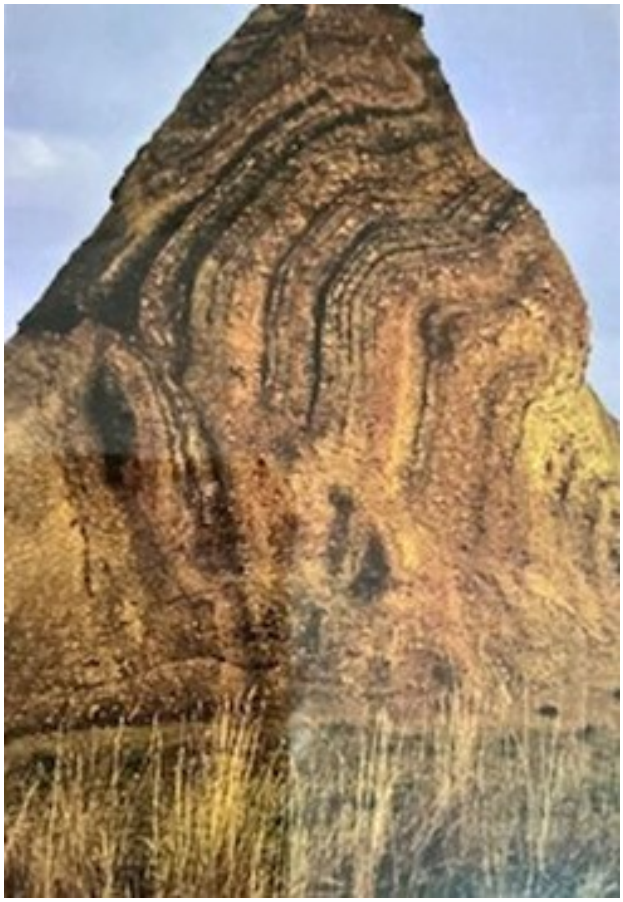
Use the EVENTS form to submit details of shows and events during the coming year and the first four months of 2027. If the Events form is submitted with the dues, we will make sure it gets to the website, newsletter and directory coordinators. If it is submitted later, or separately, it is more likely to get overlooked.

Insurance will stay the same for 2026. Our current rate is $4.50 per club member, and all members must be covered. Clubs that submit their dues on time (postmarked no later than January 15, 2026), may take a discount of 25¢ per member.

Remember: The Federation insurance policy will cover groups of clubs jointly sponsoring shows or events **only if all** of the sponsoring clubs are current federation members and **all** of the sponsoring clubs purchase federation insurance. Requests for insurance for these jointly sponsored events must include a list of all sponsoring clubs.

Questions about your MWF forms or dues? Contact Stephen Shimatzki at 567-868-8794 or woodvillerocks@gmail.com. Direct insurance questions to Sue Goedert at 616-337-1162 or sonbeams2000@yahoo.com.

Sorry, Too Big for the Exhibit Case



An island on the Limfjord inlet in Denmark. Photo by Sylvia Crilly, a member of Show-Me Rockhounds of Kansas City (MO).

Midwest Federation of Mineralogical and Geological Societies
2026 Annual Club Dues, Insurance and Club Contact Information

DUES AND INSURANCE FORM, AND EVENTS FORM, ARE DUE BY JANUARY 15, 2026
Use black INK. Mail to: MWF c/o Steve Shimatzki, 4295 County Road 16, Woodville, OH 43469

CLUB NAME: _____ STATE: _____

2026 Annual Club Dues Use membership figures from year completed December 31, 2025

Number of Adult Club Members: _____ X $2.00 = $_____.____

Number of Youth Club Members: _____ X $0.50 = $_____.____

Do You wish MWF Membership Cards: YES / NO

2026 Club Insurance (Optional, but if chosen, must pay for all members)

Total number of members from above: _____ X $4.50* = $_____.____

(*Renewals postmarked by January 15, 2026 receive a discounted insurance rate of $4.25 PER MEMBER)

(Make check payable to Midwest Federation) TOTAL DUES AND INSURANCE REMITTED: $_____.____

Club Public Information for Directory & Website

Club mailing address: _____City: _____State: _____Zip: _____

Info phone number: _____ Website: _____

Email: _____ Facebook Name: _____

Email Address of Person to Receive Mini Miners Monthly (if applicable) _____

Meetings Location: _____

Date & Time: _____

Check following that apply to your club: ___Kid friendly ___FRA Club ___Lapidary workshop ___Field trips ___Rock Show ___Educational outreach

Direct Contact Information for Mailings (THIS WILL NOT BE PUBLISHED)

Individual (**other than Treasurer**) designated to receive official Federation materials:

Name: _____ Position: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____ Alternate phone: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Treasurer_____ Email: _____ Phone: _____

Address_____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

CLUB BULLETIN NAME:_____

Editor: _____ Email: _____ Phone: _____

Address_____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Please use separate sheet to list additional officers and members (name, position, email) who would like to receive the Federation newsletter and/or juniors materials via email.

Calendar Of Events Listing Information
For Publication In MWF Directory, Website & Newsletter

Use black INK. Print, type, or complete form online, then print out and mail, with dues, to:
MWF, c/o Stephen Shimatzki, 4295 County Road 16, Woodville, OH 43469

DEADLINE FOR DIRECTORY INFORMATION IS JANUARY 15, 2026

*** * Please include event listings for January, February, March and April 2027. * ***

CLUB NAME: _____ STATE: _____

Show Chair: _____ Email: _____

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Event Type: ____Annual Show ____Rock Swap ____Other:_____

Dates: _____ Days/Times: _____

Facility/Location Name: _____

Street:_____ City:_____ State:_____

EVENT CONTACT INFORMATION (This will be published!)

Contact Person's Name:_____ Phone:_____

Email:_____ Club Website:_____

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ADDITIONAL EVENT

Event Type: ____Annual Show ____Rock Swap ____Other:_____

Dates: _____ Days/Times: _____

Facility/Location Name: _____

Street:_____ City:_____ State:_____

EVENT CONTACT INFORMATION (This will be published!)

Contact Person's Name:_____ Phone:_____

Email:_____ Club Website:_____

Questions? Call 616-498-4698

REMEMBER, this information, including contact information, will be published in the *MWF Directory*, posted on the MWF Website, and listed in the *MWF News*.

Scholarship Fund Contributions Report from Feb. 15 to Sept. 30, 2025

There wasn't space in last month's MWF News for three of the Permanent Committee reports presented at the October Executive Meeting in Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio. The contributions report for the scholarship fund is on this page; written reports are on page 8.

Club Donations	Participation	Cumulative	Donation
Lincoln Orbit Earth Science Society (Illinois) Memorial honoring Sue Hogge	3000%	$7,981	$ 50.00
Northwest Illinois Rock Club Memorial honoring Darrell Ransom	1400%	609	250.00
Southern Illinois Earth Science Club	3300%	2,090	79.70
Minnesota Mineral Club - Memorial honoring Lois May Allen and Memorial honoring Bernard Sporre	5100%	19,362	200.00
Credit to West Central Illinois Rock & Mineral Club Memorial honoring Sue Hogge	7000%	2,346	50.00
Credit to Midwest Mineralogical & Lapidary Society (Michigan)	7400%	7,976	200.00
Credit to Tulip City Gem & Mineral Club (Michigan) (Cedar Bluff Park friends) Memorial Honoring Julia Sherwood	4100%	5,538	50.00
Credit to Tulip City Gem & Mineral Club (Michigan) (C. & B. Rice) Memorial Honoring Julia Sherwood	4200%	5,563	25.00
Credit to Tulip City Gem & Mineral Club (Michigan) Memorial Honoring Julia Sherwood	4200%	5,588	25.00
Credit to Minnesota Mineral Club Honoring the marriage of J. & M. Hoxie	5100%	19,162	50.00
Credit to Tulip City Gem & Mineral Club (Michigan) (Robert Sherwood) Memorial Honoring Julia Sherwood	4200%	5,688	100.00
Individual Contributions			
J.C. & Donna Moore Memorial Honoring Lauren Williams (AFMS Past President & Past Scholarship Fund President)			50.00
Cash contributions given at Executive Committee Meeting (4/6/25)			350.00
TOTAL			**$1,479.70**

- *What is the Participation %??* This represents a club's "generosity," based on membership. A club with 100% Participation has contributed (as of this date) $1.00 per current member. 200% indicates $2.00, contributed over time, for current number of members. So a small club that donates significant amounts can increase their percentage quickly.

- *Cumulative* is the total contributed since the club's first gift. Each cumulative amount reaching a new $1,000 Level earns a Certificate presented at the next Awards Banquet.

Make checks payable to AFMS Scholarship. Send to 126 Lexington Point Drive, Niles, MI 49120.

February Issue Submission Deadline Is January 7th!

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Permanent Committee Reports from the MWF Executive Meeting

SCHOLARSHIP
MARGE COLLINS, CHAIR

Memorial contributions and the spontaneous donations at the Executive Meeting brought up the total for this report. A special "Thank You!" to all the clubs who chose the Scholarship Fund for their memorials. But why wait? You can honor special members with a *Living Memorial Contribution* and celebrate their involvement while they are still with you. All contributions are important and appreciated!

UNIFORM RULES
J.C. MOORE, CHAIR

At the AFMS annual meeting in March, it was proposed that there be a two categories for flint knapping – a "traditional knapping" division and a "modern knapping" division in which modern tools are used. This change will be included in the upcoming Uniform Rules publication.

WEBSITE COMPETITION
BRAD ZYMAN, CHAIR

MWF entries to the Website Competition came from the Lincoln Gem & Mineral Club (Nebraska), the Wisconsin Geological Society, and Show-Me Rockhounds of Kansas City (Missouri). Once the AFMS judging is completed, I will be able to report more at that time. A big THANK YOU to those who participated this year.

Deadline Calendar

The **MWF Bulletin Editors Contest** deadline is **Jan. 22nd**. Bulletin issues, articles, and other categories can be entered; top winners go to the AFMS contest. Only hard copies may be submitted; after January 1st, contact Bulletin Editors Chair Mary Ann Ferguson-Rich, mafr43@hotmail.com, for the address.

The deadline for club yearbooks to be entered in the **All American Club Awards Contest** is **Feb. 1st**. Contest rules are at amfed.org/contests/all-American-club; entries should be sent to Mary Ann Ferguson-Rich, mafergusonrich@gmail.com.

Lincoln Gem & Mineral Club will hold a **rock swap Jan. 18**, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., at Lincoln Firefighters Reception Hall, 241 Victory Lane, Lincoln, Nebraska. Please bring canned foods for the Food Bank of Lincoln.