

## WHAT IS A 'SPECIAL' PUBLICATION?

By Diane Dare

Having been a bulletin contest judge since 1978, I've had an opportunity to judge in every class the contests offer. I appreciate the work club bulletin editors do, it is encouraging to see Junior Members writing original articles, and anyone who can write a poem has my admiration. The Adult Articles - Advanced are my favorite category to judge, because I always learn as I read them, especially when I must use my resources to verify accuracy!

Recently a question arose as to just what constitutes a "Special Publication." The following is just my opinion, the guidelines I use.

A Special Publication should be something "special," a one-time publication designed or created for a particular occasion or purpose. Some examples are:

- A guide for a specific field trip, including a map, geologic information on the area, what material may be found, and specific collecting guidelines or rules. It might also have tips for cleaning, preserving or working with the material, a brief history of the mine or operation, the AFMS Code of Ethics, etc.
- A club history prepared for a 25<sup>th</sup> or 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.
- A show program - not a one-page show flyer or a packet of exhibitor registration forms, but a souvenir program with exhibitor and display list, dealers and where from, who is demonstrating what, schedule of programs, auctions, or other activities, show committee members and club contact information. Information on how to join the club and when and where the club meets is a good addition.
- A manual for working with Junior members or youth groups.
- A guide for using the club workshop equipment.
- A "Welcome To The Club" packet given to new members, with meeting information, details on club activities and annual events, list of other members, and perhaps a brief history of the club. A club we recently joined included information on federation workshops and the cancelled stamp program, awards and honors members can earn, and the club class/workshop schedules.

One club collected hundreds of short hints and tips and categorized them in a *How-To* manual. Another club used members' experiences to compile a *Guide to Tumbling*. Several clubs have prepared detailed identification guides to fossils in their area, with sketches, measurements and distinguishing characteristics. My own club (Southern Illinois Earth Science Club) gathered all the short monthly features I had written about 'state stones,' added state outline maps pinpointing the capitol and the stone(s) locale, a list of other state symbols, and a cross-referenced index to create a booklet.

About the last: please note that AFMS contest rules state "Articles and poems published over a period of time should not be bunched and submitted as a Special Publication *unless there has been additional work involved*, such as additional information added, illustrations, credits listed, etc." [Italics mine]

Special Publications receive points based on the following:

- Is it of value to a specific club, class or committee - or - does it have general educational value?
- Physical appearance - is it attractive? Legible?
- Are spelling and grammar correct or appropriate? Is author(s) identified? How much club involvement/participation was there?
- Are credits given? No apparent copyright violations?
- Does it accomplish its purpose? Is the subject adequately covered? Is it accurate and up-to-date?

In other words, how "special" is it??