



# MWF News

NOVEMBER 2013 - ISSUE No. 526

WEB SITE - [www.amfed.org/mwf](http://www.amfed.org/mwf)

Member of the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies



**President**

Tony Kapta  
1483 E. Wood St.  
Decatur, IL 62521  
217.233.1164  
[tkapta@comcast.net](mailto:tkapta@comcast.net)

**1st Vice President**

James Marburger  
P.O. Box 64  
Hickman, NE 68372  
402.792.2348  
[jm24122@windstream.net](mailto:jm24122@windstream.net)

**2nd Vice President**

David Rich  
1166 Broadview  
Tallmadge, OH 44278  
330.630.9625  
[birdman035@hotmail.com](mailto:birdman035@hotmail.com)

**Secretary**

Donna Moore  
25235 North State Route 97  
Cuba, IL 61427  
309.789.6501  
[MWFSecretary@gmail.com](mailto:MWFSecretary@gmail.com)

**Treasurer**

Sandy Fuller  
8445 Grange Blvd.  
Cottage Grove, MN 55016  
651.459.0343  
[MWFtreas@Rock-Biz.biz](mailto:MWFtreas@Rock-Biz.biz)

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Tony Kapta

Hello, Tony Kapta here. If you read my bio in last month's newsletter, you have an idea of who I am. This year (2014), I will be serving as MWF President. Anyone can contact me at [cigmc@comcast.net](mailto:cigmc@comcast.net) for any reason. If you have an e-mail version of your club's newsletter, please put me on your e-mail distribution list. Clubs who do not have an electronic version, and if you can afford it, mail your newsletter to me. My address is 1483 E. Wood St., Decatur, IL 62521. I want to know what is going on with the member clubs of the MWF.

The only reason that the MWF and, in turn, the AFMS, are in existence, is to serve the clubs that are members of these organizations. This is what we are striving to do at our meetings, conventions, and all year.

It is up to you, the people who are interested in our hobby, to contact us for help and also to volunteer to serve on the many committees we have set up in the MWF. If you do not know what these are, someone in your club has a copy of the MWF Directory



which has a wealth of information about the MWF and other things of interest to our hobby. If you would like your own copy of the Directory, please contact Zoma Olson at [SZSRocks@charter.net](mailto:SZSRocks@charter.net). On the internet, you can access the MWF website at <http://www.amfed.org/mwf/index.html> and click on "About Us," then on "Supplies" to find information on ordering supplies such as the Directory, and a list of other supplies available.

Current information is published in the *MWF News*. Any MWF affiliated club member can receive an electronic copy of the newsletter by e-mailing Sharon Marburger at [mwf.editor@windstream.net](mailto:mwf.editor@windstream.net) and requesting that your e-mail address be put on the distribution list. Please remember that Sharon goes through a lot of work to maintain this list, so if you change your e-mail address, let her know as soon as possible by e-mailing her from your new e-mail address. Tell her what your old address was so that she can remove it and send the newsletter to your new address.

## CONTENTS

2014 Convention .....	3
Calendar Form.....	7
Donations .....	9,12
Dues & Event Forms Now Available.....	4
Dues Form.....	6
E-Bear has a New Mom!.....	3
Meet James Marburger.....	4,5
Mineral Study Groups.....	2,3
Passing of a Friend.....	9
President's Message.....	1,2
Rockhound in Morocco.....	10,11
Safety .....	5
Scholarship Honoree .....	8
Submission of Articles .....	8
Upcoming Events.....	2
Youth Poster Contest.....	8

(Continued on page 2)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### NOVEMBER

- 1-3: CLEVELAND, OH.** Micromineral Society of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History's Micromineral Symposium; Cleveland Museum of Natural History, 1 Wade Oval Dr.; Fri. 7:30-9:30, Sat. 9-5, Sun. 9-3:30; Contact: Dick Green, 330.929.2395, [jgreen2@neo.rr.com](mailto:jgreen2@neo.rr.com).
- 2-3: MIDLAND, MI.** Mid-Michigan Rock Club's Annual Show; Midland Resort and Convention Center, 1500 W. Wackerly St.; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-4; Contact: Deb Acord, 989.689.4840, [jackdanred1@aol.com](mailto:jackdanred1@aol.com).
- 2-3: STURTEVANT, WI.** Racine Geological Society's Gem & Mineral Show; Fountain Banquet Hall, 8505 Durand Ave.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-4; Contact: John Lowman, 262.554.5370.
- 23-24: MADISON, WI.** Madison Gem & Mineral Club's Gem, Mineral, & Jewelry Show; Alliant Energy Center, 1919 Alliant Energy Center Way; Sat. 9:30-5, Sun. 10-5; Contact: Nevin Frank, 608.251.2601, [burniesrockshop@gmail.com](mailto:burniesrockshop@gmail.com), [www.madisonrockclub.org](http://www.madisonrockclub.org).

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - CONT'D

*(Continued from page 1)*

At the time that I am writing this, my wife, Regina, and I have just returned from the AFMS Convention held in Jacksonville, Florida. Because I was the MWF 1st Vice-President in 2013, I was automatically a director of the AFMS. Regina is the Chairman for the All American Awards, which is an AFMS committee. The meeting on Thursday was good and we took care of all the business that was needed to be done. As 1st Vice-President, I was also a Director of the AFMS Scholarship committee and there was a meeting for that following the general meeting.

These conventions are always held at one of the member club's shows, as is the MWF Convention each year. This year it was the Jacksonville Gem & Mineral Society's 25th annual show. The show was fantastic and we spent several days looking at all the different dealers' materials, as well as learning from the demonstrators.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - CONT'D

Being in Jacksonville was great, too. We lucked out and found two excellent seafood restaurants, so we visited them more than once. Actually, the restaurants were in Atlantic Beach which, I believe, would be considered a suburb. We also hit the beaches several times during the three days we were there.

We attended the awards dinner on Saturday night and then had to start for home Sunday morning, not really wanting to leave.

This letter will be published after our Fall Meeting in Fort Wayne, Indiana, so I hope that I will have seen many of you there. Our spring meeting will be in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin at the Wisconsin Geological Society's show May 17 and 18. I have been to the show many times and it is always a great show. Make plans to attend, and leave some time to attend the meeting at 9:00 a.m. Guests are always welcome and you can meet some of the people in your MWF.

## MINERAL STUDY GROUPS

by Kevin Ponzio, Mineralogy Chairman

Preamble: I would like to thank everyone for their prayers, thoughts and kind words while my wife, Judi, has been fighting cancer. We are hopeful that it is gone and she will have a complete recovery. Thank You All again!

As always, I encourage each club to develop and have regular mineral study groups. Some clubs already do. If you need direction or have questions, I am available to help.

Sometimes there are specimens available that have been donated. One of the flourishing mineral study groups is the West Michigan group. They have opened up to several area clubs to include more people. Kreigh Tomaszewski has led them through some very interesting sessions. I have had some of the participants talk to me about the meetings and they speak with eager enthusiasm. They have not only learned from the meetings but are thirsty for more information. I love to see people that excited about our hobby. Kreigh has asked me to share his monthly report of the meetings and asks that other groups share with him. This will help everyone build on an enjoyable experience.

*(Continued on page 3)*

## MINERAL STUDY GROUPS

(Continued from page 2)

Kriegh's e-mail address is [Kriegh@Tomaszewski.net](mailto:Kriegh@Tomaszewski.net). My e-mail is [Earthprospect@frontier.com](mailto:Earthprospect@frontier.com). Please use both e-mails to enhance your mineral experience.

Color is not generally a reliable key for mineral identification, but it is useful enough that some field guides use it as their primary key. We decided to run with it this past year and go through the colors of the rainbow. We ended the study with a 'fade to black' before going on summer break.

Our Mineral Study Group likes to learn about the science and practical uses of the minerals we study, but we really want to learn to hand identify them. Hand identification is a skill you learn from holding and studying many different specimens of a given mineral (and doing some homework on its physical properties). We do our homework on the science and come prepared to discuss the mineral of the month, but we also dig through our collections and come with one or more specimens for everyone to handle. We really do learn from each other (and you have to share your specimens with others before they can be appreciated).

The concept behind our color study theme is to have as many different minerals of a given color, to examine together, so we can learn to distinguish between them. Our group came up with an interesting collection of black minerals, of various shades, and a few of them were quite outstanding specimens (especially under magnification). I know the names are not all going to be spelled correctly, and I know I missed writing down at least a dozen specimens, but we got to hand examine specimens of Ferberite, Gandefruyite, native iron, graphite, smoky quartz, pargasite, basalt, aegerine, obsidion, arfvedsonite, neptunite, deerite, hypersthene, babingtonite, lorenzite, hornblende, richterite, howieite, augite, romonechite, biotite, cassiterite, black opal, tantalite, alexandrite, melanite, and ilvite. Several of the specimens were type locality specimens (they came from where the mineral was first discovered).

It is one thing to look at pictures in the field books, but you get a much deeper appreciation when you can hold a specimen, look at it thru a lens (feel the heft, shine a bright light on it, etc.), then look at another specimen of the same mineral (and maybe another), and then look at something else that is close

but different. Some homework was done, and we learned a bit about the tungstates, borates, elements, silicates, inosilicates, oxides, nesosilicates, and sorosilicates we studied.

## 2014 CONVENTION IN DES MOINES, IOWA

### IOWA ROCKS!

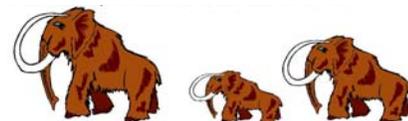
The Iowa State Fairground rocks with all kinds of music in August. The MWF will rock at the fairgrounds in October!

Iowa professionals who focus on mineralogy, geology, archeology, and paleontology all participate in this event that showcases Iowa earth science.

Jewelry professionals, other artists, and hobbyists join in and offer for sale stunning and interesting examples of Earth's work. Tools for everyone interested in rock-related activities are available, too.

A field trip for the MWF is scheduled for Friday, October 17. The October 18-19 show will feature a presentation on recent paleontological digs in Iowa; another program will focus on Iowa geodes and Keokuk Agate. Many interesting fossils have been found in Iowa and a major display is in-the-works. Artists will construct a glacier that demonstrates the size of the last glacier in relation to modern day Des Moines. Children can dig in the Pebble Pit. And many more activities and displays for all age groups and interest levels to enjoy.

Come Rock Des Moines!



## E-BEAR HAS A NEW MOM!

The MWF has a new Endowment Chair! Please welcome:



Barbara Sironen  
135 N. Baird Ave  
Rhineland, WI 54501

Telephone: 715.362.1572  
E-mail: [bsironen@gmail.com](mailto:bsironen@gmail.com)

Thanks for volunteering, Barbara!

## 2014 DUES AND EVENT FORMS NOW AVAILABLE

by Sandy Fuller, MWF Treasurer

The 2014 Midwest Federation forms for renewing club memberships are now available on our website ([www.amfed.org/mwf](http://www.amfed.org/mwf)) and in this issue of the *MWF News*. Look for them! Meanwhile, please alert club officers to collect information for the forms.

One important piece of information needed is the total number of individual adult and youth members **during your most recently completed year**. You will need these figures for dues and insurance calculations. The rationale is that your total membership is usually very similar from year to year, so you always pay the current year's dues based on your most recent experience. The treasurer needs this information before January 15 so dues can be submitted on time.

The secretary provides a roster of current officers, including preferred mailing addresses, phone numbers and e-mail address. If an individual does not want this information published, there is a place to indicate this on the form. However, please provide all contact information so we can reach you.

Show and event chairs will provide details on their upcoming activities. If this information is

submitted with the dues, we will make sure it gets to our website, newsletter, and directory. If it is submitted later, or separately, it is more likely to get overlooked.

In recent years, we have offered an electronic subscription to Diamond Dan publications to clubs with youth members (you must pay dues for the youth) if your renewal is received on time. Please use the "Youth Director" section to indicate the individual who will handle the subscription. An email address is required!

Finally, and probably most important to many, the rates for 2014 will be the same as the 2013 rates. Dues will be \$2.00 per adult and \$.50 per youth. Insurance will again be \$3.75 per individual to be covered by the policy. Please include all active members (attended/participated in an activity during the past year) when computing your insurance premium.

Questions? Call Sandy or Martha at 651.459.0343 or e-mail Sandy at [MWFtreas@rock-biz.biz](mailto:MWFtreas@rock-biz.biz).

## MEET JAMES MARBURGER - MWF 1ST VICE-PRESIDENT

by Jim Marburger, 1st Vice-President

Hi, I am James Marburger, your 1st Vice-President for 2014. I started in the hobby when I was about 10 years old. My family is from a southeast Nebraska town called Humboldt. In 1867, the first flour mill was established by the O.A. Cooper family, and a shoe store was started by the Marburger family.

My parents had three boys, and I was the youngest. We all were, what you might say, into everything. Dad and we boys went to a Father and Son Banquet where Mr. Guy Cooper, Jr. gave a presentation on rock collecting. WOW! You can find some cool things.

Each of us boys were told that we needed a hobby to keep us busy since, at that time, there were no computers, Gameboys, or I-pads, and we were barely out of the radio age and into a black and white TV. We could get only three channels, we had to get up from

our seat to change channels, and we were not allowed to watch all the time.

My oldest brother was into ham radios and photography, and the middle brother was into engines. With all the good things taken, well, I did not know what kind of hobby I could do. Then I remembered the banquet and the talk by Mr. Cooper. I knew I could find rocks, SO IT STARTED.

I walked the gravel roads and alleys in town, and began to find neat, small pieces of petrified wood, honey agate, jaspers, limestone, and Lake Superior agates. My first piece of equipment was a tumbler. Well, you need small stones to tumble, so out came the hammer and there went some of the large Lakers I had collected. I still can find some of them in the tumbled stones of my collection. I mowed yards to make money in the summer to buy more equipment. I

(Continued on page 5)

## MEET JAMES MARBURGER - CONT'D

*(Continued from page 4)*

bought a used 6-inch grinder polisher from an exterminator man who was working in town. He brought the machine to me on his next trip to town. He said that a lesson on cutting would be given when he had time. I'm still waiting for my training! After reading a lot of books, and trial-and-error, I mastered polishing stones.

Throughout my high school years, I had a small rock shop that supplied other rockhounds in town with grit and mountings. There were no rock clubs in the area, but a group of us did quite a bit of collecting in Nebraska and out to Wyoming. When I moved to Lincoln in 1970 to attend the University, I had the opportunity to join the Lincoln Gem and Mineral Club. I have served on many committees, given educational programs, served on the Board of Directors up to President of the club, and promoted the hobby to all who would listen.

Thirty-seven years ago, John Harrison, Larry Bigley, and I were three friends in the rock hobby who each had a specialty. One was into minerals and faceted stones, one into select cutting rough and supplies for the hobby, and one into findings and jewelry. The three of us combined our specialties and created a gem and mineral business, J.J. & L. Rocks and Minerals, and took it on the show circuit in the Midwest. After a slow start of doing one show in Nebraska the first year, and three shows the second year, the business was off and running. The shop has been doing 16 to 23 shows each year ever since, with occasional weekends having two shows in different towns. The shop has traveled to Idaho, Colorado, Wyoming, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, Missouri, Illinois, Minnesota, South Dakota, Wisconsin, and Nebraska.

Larry left the partnership after about 10 years, but remained friends with John and me until his untimely death. In 2013, John passed. John's wife, Lee; his youngest son, Eric; and I are keeping the shop going.

I have supported the Midwest Federation by serving as Membership Chair, 2nd Vice-President, and now as 1st Vice-President.

In 1999, before the "end of the world" (Y2k), I was blessed with a marriage to my wife, Sharon. She came from California to Nebraska to work at the State

of Nebraska Department of Water Resources, where I was employed. She had a rockhound background with her family, so we combined knowledge and passion for the hobby with many collecting trips, gem shows, club memberships, and sharing through the newsletters of which she is Editor (Lincoln Gem and Mineral Club, Inc. and the Midwest Federation of Mineralogical Societies).

I enjoy all facets of the hobby, but my focus has been in cutting and polishing of specimens, cabinet specimens, and cabochons. I have a few minerals, fossils, carvings, and artifacts, but rocks are my love. Field trips to collect, photographing nature, traveling to new places, sharing information about the hobby, and admiring steam trains are all great passions.

## SAFETY

by David Rich, Safety and Field Trip Chairman

I would like to take this time to remind everyone that safety is a very important part of the MWF. Every club should have a safety committee person who is an active club member. When I think of how many ways the safety position in a club helps the Federation image, the list is long. Safety rules go a long way to ensure our continued entry to active mines. A club with a strong safety program will go more places and into more "closed areas." The club's first impression to the important meeting with a quarry owner could make or break the permit to collect. Being able to demonstrate to the mine owner that your club has an active safety program will go a long way to get your safety-toed foot in the door. The last thing a mine or quarry owner wants is a group of people on the property with a high potential of being hurt.

Having an active safety program helps your club's image when new members are thinking of joining your club. This is a strong selling point to many potential new members. The club's image of a safe group having fun digging rocks, looking for fossils, or going on collecting trips is definitely a way to get new members while retaining old members.

Safety is an attitude - get safe or get hurt.



# Midwest Federation of Mineralogical and Geological Societies

## Annual Dues, Insurance and Club Contact Information

(Use INK! Please print, type or complete form on-line. Submit original.)

CLUB NAME \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_

### **2014 Club Dues**

(Use membership figures from most recently completed year)

Number of Adult Club Members \_\_\_\_\_ X \$2.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

Number of Youth Club Members \_\_\_\_\_ X \$0.50 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

Do you want MWF Membership Cards?  Yes  No

Do you qualify and want electronic Diamond Dan's *Mini Miners Monthly*?  Yes  No

### **2014 Club Insurance**

Total Adults and Youth to be insured \_\_\_\_\_ X \$3.75 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

Total Dues and Insurance Remitted: \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

(Make check payable to Midwest Federation)

**FORM, DUES, INSURANCE & EVENTS are DUE by JANUARY 15, 2014**  
 Mail to: MWF, %Sandy Fuller, 8445 Grange Blvd, Cottage Grove, MN 55016

### **Club Contact Information for Mailings, Directory & Website**

Circle the **E** in front of each position to receive the MWF News electronically. Circle the **P** for print copy (limit one, in addition to pre-designated copies for the Treasurer and Bulletin Editor). You may place an asterisk (\*) in front of each email, phone and address that should not be listed on the MWF website.

**E P - President** \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**E P - Secretary** \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**E P - Treasurer** \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**E P - Youth Director** \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**CLUB BULLETIN NAME** \_\_\_\_\_

**E P - Editor** \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**CLUB MEETING PLACE** \_\_\_\_\_

**DAY & TIME** \_\_\_\_\_

**Club Website** \_\_\_\_\_ **Club Email** \_\_\_\_\_

Please send the MWF Directory and Official Federation Mail to:

Chose **one** only >  President  Secretary  Treasurer  Liaison

## Calendar Of Events Listing Information

**For Publication In MWF Directory, Website & Newsletter**

(Use INK! Please print, type or complete form on-line. Submit original.)

**CLUB NAME** \_\_\_\_\_ **STATE** \_\_\_\_\_

**Show Chair** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email** \_\_\_\_\_  
 -----

**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:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Street:** \_\_\_\_\_ **City:** \_\_\_\_\_ **State:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Club** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Website:** \_\_\_\_\_

**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:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Street:** \_\_\_\_\_ **City:** \_\_\_\_\_ **State:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Club** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Website:** \_\_\_\_\_

\* \* Please include event listings for January, February and March 2015. \* \*

Mail completed form with your dues. Questions? Call 651-459-0343

***DEADLINE FOR DIRECTORY INFORMATION IS JANUARY 15, 2014***

**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 HONOREE - 2014 NOMINATIONS

by James Marburger, MWF 1st Vice President

Is there someone that you or your club would like to honor for their contributions to the hobby? This is your chance. The Midwest Federation needs to present its selection of an honoree(s) to the American Federation which will then choose the recipients of the scholarship grants for 2014. This means:

- \* An individual or club needs to submit a nomination for a person to be considered as an honoree.
- \* Permission must be secured from the nominee, as it will take work on his/her part to select the scholarship grant recipients.
- \* The following information must be included with the nomination:
  1. Include services to rock clubs, students, and the community;
  2. Note accomplishments and/or contributions made to the earth sciences (geology, mineralogy, paleontology, archaeology, oceanography, etc., whichever may be his/ her specialty);
  3. List universities or colleges attended, degrees received, papers, pamphlets, or books written alone or in conjunction with someone else;
  4. List honorary and professional organizations, present or past positions held, and honors which have been received;
  5. Include personal information such as date and place of birth, marital status, number of children, home address, etc.; and
  6. If possible, include a black and white, wallet sized photo of the candidate.

- \* Consider the following individuals as possible nominees:

1. Someone in a local club who stands out as worthy of such an honor due to his/her dedication and service;
2. A Federation officer or committee chair who has served the organization faithfully and well over the years;
3. An individual in the professional world, such as a professor at a university or college who has contributed to the hobby by helping a club with projects, or serving as a speaker for meetings and shows when called upon; or
4. A museum curator or the staff of a geological survey who has likewise served the hobby.

- \* Send the nomination to: James Marburger, Box 64, Hickman, Nebraska 68372, by November 15, 2013. James may be reached at 402.430.6703 to answer any questions.

- \* Remember, if a person was nominated last year but was not selected, he/she may be considered again this year. Simply send a letter of nomination to James. He will have last year's files. Check with the nominee to be sure he/she is willing to be considered for next year.

- \* The Board of Selectors must rely on the information sent in, so include everything possible to support your nominee.

**Would your club like to sponsor the  
2014 Youth Poster Contest?  
Watch for information in the  
December issue!**

THE PASSING OF A FRIEND

by Sharon Marburger

Thanks to Elaine Angstman, President of the Central Michigan Lapidary and Mineral Society in Lansing, Michigan, for alerting us to this sad news. The following, in part, was published in the Lansing State Journal obituaries:



Dr. Neil O. Snapp, age 86, passed from this earth in the company of his family October 11, 2013 following a year-long battle with cancer. He was born December 26, 1926 in New Paris, Ohio to Virgil and Virginia (Steadman) Snapp.

He received his Bachelors, Masters, and Ph.D. degrees from Ohio State University and was an avid lifelong Buckeye fan. He held many different professional positions at Michigan State University including Assistant Professor of Agriculture Education, Counselor for Veteran Affairs, and Personnel Specialist, retiring in 1989.

Dr. Snapp was also a veteran, honorably serving in WWII and Korea. He retired from the U.S. Marine Corps as a Colonel in 1981 after serving for over 40 years.

Neil was an Elder Emeritus of University Christian Church in East Lansing, Michigan where he was a member for 46 years.

After retirement, Neil became an avid rock and fossil collector. Education was his passion and he shared his geologic knowledge, volunteering in various local school classrooms as well as Boy Scout badge programs. Among his many community involvements were membership in the Central Michigan Lapidary and Mineral Society, of which he was Past President; and membership in the Midwest Federation of Mineralogical and Geological Societies, of which he was a Past President and a past Show and Convention Advisory Chairman. Neil was also selected as the 2010 Scholarship Honoree, and both of his students were able to attend the MWF Banquet with him.

Neil lived a full and active life. He was preceded in death by his first wife of over 50 years, Connie J. Snapp, in 2007. In 2009, God sent him an angel in the form of Norma Kremke, who he married July 24, 2010. She was a loving and fun-loving companion, cared for him throughout his illness, and survives him. Neil was a man of integrity, faith and strength. His love of life and sense of humor will be greatly missed by all whose lives crossed his path.

Interment with military honors was held at Glendale Cemetery in Okemos, Michigan.

MWF ENDOWMENT FUND AND AFMS SCHOLARSHIP FUND DONATION FORM

See the article on page 12 of this newsletter.

Both Funds have non-profit 501(c)(3) status. Contributions are tax-exempt. You receive an acknowledgment and next of kin are notified of your donation. Send form or letter to the Fund of your choice.

-----

Donor(s) name: \_\_\_\_\_ Donation: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
(street) (city) (state) (zip code)

Donation is Memorial to: \_\_\_\_\_ Next of Kin: \_\_\_\_\_  
(name) relationship

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
(street) (city) (state) (zip code)

## A ROCKHOUND IN MOROCCO - PART 1

By Dennis Westman

The Atlantic Ocean! I am standing on a beach in Morocco looking in the direction of home. Two weeks, 2600 Km, and one of my biggest adventures is ending. I'd like to share a few of the rock high-points. Our group consists of three 4WD SUV's filled with multi-lingual drivers, two organizers, and eight want-a-be adventurers.

Much of Morocco used to be under water. When the land was forced up, the marine-life's remains produced rich phosphate deposits near the city of Khouribga. The area's mines make up 75% of the world's phosphate reserves. World class fossils like giant Mosasaur, 3 inch shark teeth, and much more are routinely found in the phosphate beds. Expecting a desert country, to my surprise red poppies, wild flowers, and fields of wheat blanket the countryside. Our first stop is one of the mined-out phosphate pits. Within minutes, everyone is finding shark teeth and other fossils. Kelly pointed to a wall where geodes had been found last trip (Kelly and John of ZRS Fossils in Minneapolis are the organizers of this trip). John suggested everyone bring a rock hammer and chisel. Obeying this mandate, I started whacking away the wall and hit a nest of double-fist size quartz geodes. The curved edges of more are within reach but it is time to visit a couple local collectors to see what they had found.

We drove to a little farm. The collector met us carrying a tray with glasses of tea, brewed using a gunpowder green tea and mint. It is a Moroccan sign of hospitality and friendship. Most of the farmers collect fossils to supplement their family's income. The floor of one room was covered with flats of Mosasaur teeth; some even had the roots attached. Boxes were filled with shark teeth, both large and small. Plaster casts encapsulate the bones of whole Mosasaur. I purchased 1,000 small shark teeth ( $\frac{3}{4}$ "") for \$20 to give to the kids at our show. All of these fossils came from a community phosphate pit. A quarter mile away (sorry, a half kilometer), we visit another farmer! The yard is covered with plaster casts. One Mosasaur is in three pieces with a total length of 20 feet. The world is fortunate to have these local collectors. How many millions of fossils are made into fertilizer by the mining companies each year?

Agates! This is the subject of the next adventure. In the foothills of the Atlas Mountains is an agate and

amethyst geode mine worked by Mohamed (common name in Morocco). He invited us to collect the agate mine. The agate nodules are found in basalt. Dynamite is not available, so hammer, chisel and pry bar are the tools of the well-equipped miner. Limited by our rock hammers and chisels, we spent most of our effort working the basalt the miners threw away. They were collecting the big agates, so there were plenty of showy smaller agates. Even the dry creek below his house had agates. I pried a 2-inch red/pink eye agate out of the wall. Mohamed invited everyone into his home for a noon meal starting with beef and veggies cooked in a tagine. What a memorable gracious gesture. Next we visit his amethyst geode mine. The hole was at least 25 feet deep and into the water table, so a pail on a rope is another tool. It is hard to believe that this mine was dug out of solid basalt using hand tools. We were allowed to pick up agates above the mine. Finally we wandered back to his shed. It was filled with flats of agate and lilac colored amethyst geodes. Having an opportunity to buy directly from the miner is almost as much fun as collecting. The miner supplements his income and we get an outstanding deal. Everyone left happy.

Let me make a comment about agates. Morocco's fossils and minerals are so outstanding that agates aren't worth a big yawn by the locals. Okay, here goes! We stopped at an agate site in the Atlas Mountains. Room being a premium, I had packed four collecting bags purchased at the dollar store. I grabbed one of the bags and hiked up the hill. Some vibrant green jasper caught my eye and a mental note was made to pick it up on the way down. After an aerobic hike, here was the plateau, hopefully with agate. Agates! There are thousands of agates. 1-pound, 2-pound, 5-pound, and bigger agates litter the ground (the word litter isn't a term usually associated with agates). The bigger agates were split open because of geode cavities. Goethite crystals were locked inside the quartz crystals. Collectors were looking for the goethite inclusions more than the agates. Some agates were a fortification pattern and others blended blues, grays, and white with crystal lined centers. In a half hour, everyone had all the agate they could carry. There was a reason that my clothite bag only cost a buck. First, the handles rip off. Next, a sharp agate tears a hole in the side. The agates fall to the ground.

*(Continued on page 11)*

**A ROCKHOUND IN MOROCCO - CONT'D**

*(Continued from page 10)*

Oh great, I am not in North Africa to just give up. It is a long way to the SUV and back. I debated taking my jeans and tying a knot in the legs and using the belt as shoulder straps. Not a rational idea! Desperate times evolve a sane mind into desperate thoughts. Gathering the bag into a hammock shape, filling it with agates and using my body as the missing side of a bag, I headed out. The path has steep inclines on the way back to the SUV. The routine is 100 feet, rest, 100 feet, rest, and so on. Forget the jasper; I can't bend over without losing the whole mess. Stumbling down the final hill, Adam our driver meets me with a rice bag, dumps in my 50 pounds of agate, and carries it to the SUV. You are probably wondering if I plan on trashing all my clothes and filling the suitcase with agate for the flight home. Not necessary! Adam brings Moroccan material to a couple U.S. shows. He rents a container on a ship. Anything we would-be-adventurers find is shipped in his container. 100 pounds is free! The treasures arrived in September.

Agate #3: Not far from an old French lead mining area at Aouli is another agate site. Each noon we stop for a picnic lunch. Today, we stop and picnic in a dry river bed a few miles short of the agate site. It is an opportunity to stretch our legs. Guess what's in the riverbed? Agates! The spring snow melt from the mountains gets pretty wild and rolls agates this far down river. We arrive at the agate hill. The top of a hill is again littered with agates. They are lying free on top of the ground just like the Atlas Mountain agates. Attention, Agate theorist, here is the question. How did agates end up on these hills? They are shaped like the geodes from Mohamed's mine, which are in basalt. They have a large flat base. The sides taper in like a pyramid terminating not to a point, but a smaller flat top. The Aouli-#1 (I believe there is another Aouli agate site) agates are more colorful with more fortification than the Atlas. There aren't as many huge agates. John supplied me with real collecting bag so 40 more pounds of agate made it flawlessly to the vehicle. Colors ranged from rust red to blue to brown to white to clear. I cut one in half and it was varying shades of blue and white.

Summary: Oh my word! I did not tell you about the agate sites we did not collect. I also did not mention the vast variety of trilobite sites we visited. I omitted mineral mines, dinosaur tracks, petroglyphs, historic movie sets, historic buildings and much more.

To be continued.....



**Agate geode**



**Morrocan wildlife**



**mosasaur jaw**



**Fossil turtle**

**Sharon Marburger, Editor**  
**Midwest Federation of Mineralogical and Geological Societies**  
**[mwf.editor@windstream.net](mailto:mwf.editor@windstream.net)**  
**402.792.2348**  
**P.O. Box 64**  
**Hickman, NE 68372**

Non Profit Org  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Fiatt, IL  
Permit No. 1

#### SCHOLARSHIP FUND

by Marge Collins

Consider a donation to support Earth Sciences and/or to honor or memorialize a friend or club member(s). Donations can be sent to either the Midwest Federation Endowment Fund or the American Federation Scholarship Foundation.

Send MWF Endowment Fund donations to Alan Hukill, Treasurer, 15785 Park Lake Rd., East Lansing MI 48823. Send AFMS Scholarship donations to Marge Collins, MWF Chairman, 3017 Niles-Buchanan Rd., Buchanan, MI 49107.

MWF Endowment Fund was established in 1989 to insure that monies would be available in addition to dues income. Only interest generated by the Fund is used and any expenditure must be approved at an Executive Committee meeting. A list of special projects and other information is in the MWF Directory.

AFMS Scholarship Foundation was established in 1964 to finance scholarships from a perpetual fund. Participating Regional Federations currently award two one-time grants of \$4,000 each. Our MWF Honoree chooses two students working on advanced degrees in the Earth Sciences at a college or university in our Region. More detailed information is published in the Green Pages of the MWF Directory.

See form on page 9 of this newsletter.

#### SUBMISSION OF ARTICLES

Material may be e-mailed to Sharon Marburger at [mwf.editor@windstream.net](mailto:mwf.editor@windstream.net), or submitted via the U.S. Mail (see address on page 1). Acceptable e-mail formats include MS Word (.DOC & DOCX), Adobe (.PDF), rich text format (.RTF), or plain text (.TXT). Pictures must be in png, jpg, tiff, or gif format. If e-mailing an article, it may be included within the body of the e-mail message or sent as an attachment. Thank you for your submissions!

DUE DATE	FOR
December 1	January Issue
January 1	February Issue
February 1	March Issue
March 1	April Issue
April 1	May Issue
May 1	June Issue
August 1	September Issue
September 1	October Issue
October 1	November Issue
November 1	December Issue