COMMUNICATION - AN IMPORTANT FACET OF KEEPING INFORMED
from Steve Weinberger, AFMS Central Office

I know that I sound like a broken record, repeating the same phrase over and over again. Unfortunately, like that broken record, I’m stuck in a rut and need your help to get out of it.

Here’s the phrase that I’ve been repeating. “Send me the listing of your officers for 2006. Send me the listing of your officers for 2006...”

In order for the AFMS to send the newsletter to the officers of your club who should be getting it, I need you to send the list of your newly elected officers to me. Our communication is a 2-way street... You send me the info on your new officers and I see that the AFMS Newsletter is sent to them.

Why is this important? I know, most of you and your club members really aren’t that interested in the American Federation. “Why should you be?” you ask.

The American Federation (AFMS) provides your club and therefore your club members with a variety of services that makes our hobby easier and more enjoyable. For example...

The AFMS program competition is the source of many of the slide and now video programs that are available to your club for use at meeting programs through your regional federation. Many programs each year are given to your regional federation at no charge so you can borrow and use them at meetings or shows.

Our goal again this year is to have two items from each of the seven regional federations, and we’d like to invite anyone who is interested in contributing a special prize this year to contact us as soon as possible. We would be especially pleased if you could supply a special cabochon, faceted stone or other lapidary specialty item to add to the prize collection. If you, or your club, would be interested in sending a special prize for this worthy effort to help build the AFMS Endowment Fund, please get in touch now. We thank you all for your help.

Your regional committee chairman will shortly begin selling tickets so that you, too, can participate in this drawing for these great prizes offered in this one and only annual fund-raiser to benefit the AFMS Endowment Fund. For the updated listing of who your regional chairman is, and color pictures and descriptions of all prizes being offered, Carolyn Weinberger will be publishing updates and pictures in the AFMS Newsletter each month, and Marty Hart, AFMS webmaster, assures us he will have the latest updates posted on the AFMS website at: http://www.amfed.org. Please contact me for current information or to add your name to the list of prize donors.

Joy Bourne, AFMS Endowment Fund Chair
976 Lake Road, Towanda, PA 18848
(570) 265-6454
caprings@epix.net

THE VALUE
PLEASE DO NOT DELAY

February, 2006

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF MINERALOGICAL SOCIETIES SERVING SEVEN REGIONAL FEDERATIONS

A.F.M.S. Newsletter

Volume 59, Number 3

Here We Go Again!
by Joy Bourne

The AFMS Endowment Fund Committee has taken advantage of the post-holiday season to get started planning another super AFMS Endowment Fund raffle for you with the drawing to be held in Nashville, TN during the 59th Annual AFMS/SFMS convention which will be held August 15 - 20. Lewis Elrod assures us it will be a spectacular convention, and we are all looking forward to returning to “Music City” with lots of spectacular prizes to offer for the lucky winners.

We are still in the process of lining up the list of prizes, but I can tell you that to date we have a nice assortment of valuable items to offer, including a most spectacular cabinet specimen of Herkimers diamonds in matrix from the collection of Thomas Kapalewski and his sons of Syracuse, NY. (See photo). You may have seen their spectacular cases of self-collected Herkimers exhibited at the Syracuse AFMS/EPMLS convention show in 2004, or at the Carnegie Museum show in 2004. This preview photo is just a teaser for you - more prize descriptions and pictures will follow as we receive the prizes, or pictures of them.

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Joy Bourne, AFMS Endowment Fund Chair
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Visit the AFMS Website (www.amfed.org)
THE PRESIDENT SAYS
by Jim Robinson, AFMS President

As I write this at the end of December, the holidays are over and a new year lies ahead of us. We hope everyone had a wonderful Christmas and Hanukah and that 2006 will turn out to be a happy and healthy one for us all.

The weather is still too cold and bad for many of us to do any rock hounding, however, it is a very good time to get caught up on some of those things we have been putting off doing before we hit the road again. It is an excellent time for some of you committee chairperson to write an article for the newsletter and let us know what you have planned for the coming months, besides Carolyn is always in need of material for the newsletter. It’s also a time for many of you to write articles for your local club newsletters! Your editor will be eternally grateful and your members will be delighted to learn what you’ve been up to.

I can think of no better way to keep everyone informed then through the newsletter which is distributed throughout the nation to all clubs in the seven Federations. I see many of the articles picked up by editors of club bulletins and this is as it should be.

Many of our chairpersons do an excellent job of keeping us informed about their committee functions. Jim Bruce-Thompson with his Jr. Activities program is an excellent example, he always has informative articles on that program, and Joy Bourne is another home run hitter with her Endowment Fund Committee. We can always depend on Joy. Jon Spunagle AFMS Conservation/Legislation Chair is another who is doing a great job of keeping us informed with his committee.

The president of the AFMS appoints all the committee chairs, but the Federations appoint the members of these committees and it is these members who make the committee a success. If you have been appointed to a committee of the AFMS, give your chairperson a call or email and ask what you can do to help. I am sure there is not one who would not welcome an article for the newsletter or assistance with the program they are in charge of.

In my 4 years as an officer of the AFMS the one complaint I have heard the most often is we never hear anything from the AFMS. Let this be the year we get the word out - encourage your own newsletter editor to reprint some of the more important reports for all to read (safety for example). Encourage your local club newsletters! Your editor will be eternally grateful and your members will be delighted to learn what you’ve been up to.

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Jim

NEW TAX INFORMATION FOR CLUBS
by Mike Kokinos, CFMS Tax Advisor

I’ve recently received notification from the IRS that the fee for application for new or change of tax exemption status is increasing as of July 1, 2006. Those applying with gross receipts less than $10,000 annually will pay a $300.00 fee instead of $150.00. Those with gross receipts of $10,000 or more will pay a $900.00 fee rather than $500.00.

If you are contemplating filing for a new or change in tax exemption for your club, I highly recommend you start the process as soon as possible. Prior to filing the application you may need to update articles of incorporation and bylaws to ensure they meet current IRS requirements.

On another note, a group called the “Corporate Compliance Center” continues to offer to prepare non-profit organizations annual meeting minutes for a fee of $150.00. There is no doubt that there should be minutes of the meeting and that they become part of the permanent records of a society. However, there is no logical reason to pay anyone $150.00 to prepare minutes that your Secretary completes as a part of her/his duties.

My recommendation is to put their notice in the nearest circular file (wastebasket).

UPCOMING REGIONAL FEDERATION CONVENTIONS
from Mary Trammell, AFMS Show Chair

California Federation
June 9-11
Angel’s Camp, California

Eastern Federation
November 17-19
West Palm Beach, Florida

Midwest Federation
May 19-21
Southgate, MI

Northwest Federation
July 14-16
Kelsey, Washington

Rocky Mountain Federation
June 9-11,
Stillwater, Oklahoma

South Central Federation
August 18-20
Bossier City, LA

Southeast Federation / AFMS
August 15-20
Nashville, TN

THE OFFICERS:

PROUDLY SERVING SEVEN REGIONAL FEDERATIONS

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President-Elect
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1st Vice President
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3rd Vice President
George Browne
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4th Vice President
Robert Miller
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5th Vice President
Rocky McCall
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Secretary
Anne Cook
<secretary@amfed.org>

Treasurer
Toby Cozens
<tobycozi1@earthlink.net>
**Communication, the Lifeblood of the AFMS**

by Bob Carlson, AFMS President-elect

Why do we need an AFMS? Is it to bind together the seven regional societies to exchange ideas, look for solutions to mutual problems, push for legislation with strength in numbers, and make nationwide friends? How does all this happen across the wide expanse of the United States? It happens by means of communication - or it should!

The forms of communication are many, depending on the urgency of the message, the length of the presentation and/or the level of officialdom involved. For quick dissemination we have e-mail for those that avail themselves of at least the 20th Century version, if not the bells and whistles afforded by the 21st Century. Also quick but limited in number of persons accessible at once, there is always the telephone. But for large scale dissemination of information there are bulletins and newsletters. And there's the rub!

Newsletters and bulletins require dedicated people in each club to extract from their compatriots articles of merit; burn the midnight oil to write articles themselves after digging out the facts by e-mail, phone, or research; compile the miscellaneous information into an attractive format; laboriously keep address lists; copy the final result, fold, put the addresses and stamps on, and, finally send them off. All that takes time. In the meantime, if there was something of immediate import, it may no longer be immediate. If action was required, it may be too late.

If there isn't a bulletin or newsletter within a given club, that club relies on the Federation or AFMS bulletin, which comes down through the process with longer delay, as some of what is included relies on information from the various clubs' laborious process. Or the AFMS information is read at a club meeting, but only to those who attend.

Then, there are the web sites. The AFMS and each Federation has one. A web site requires a dedicated and knowledgeable web-master and members with computer know-how and patience to find it. Unfortunately, web sites are not suited for dissemination of time-sensitive information.

There is always word of mouth among those who know each other well enough to call or e-mail one-on-one. But the information has to reach one of them first.

So - two problems: one is that of delay and lack of timeliness; and two, not everyone gets the information in spite of the possible channels of communication.

Thus, the glue that is supposed to hold the AFMS - and the individual federations, and the American Lands Access Association - together, isn't very sticky at present. What's to be done? One can't hustle the poor editors; they're already trying to hustle their contributors - easier said than done. One can't put everyone on computers and e-mail; many will be durned if they'll put up with the computer problems they hear of every day. Everyone is migratory.

So, we're looking for ideas for how to communicate among ourselves more quickly and effectively. Any ideas, anyone??

---

**AFMS Scholarship Foundation News**

by Dee Holland, President

As reported earlier our drive for the unrestricted goal was successful. We have contacted all Honorees to let them know they have a second scholarship to award, and all have done so.

We are still receiving donations marked "unrestricted" and these are being put in the restricted fund. If you plan to contribute to the Fund this year all the contributions will once again be placed in the restricted fund so that they can help generate the interest we use for the scholarships each year.

Your continued support has been gratifying. I can't thank all of you enough for your efforts on behalf of the students.

We have been receiving money from the court for restitution on a quarterly basis from our former Treasurer.

The final certificates from South Central for club donations were given out at their Federation Convention and Show in December, 2005. That completes the first year of giving certificates to each club who has donated since their last federation show.

Thanks again for your support in 2005. Please help us build the fund for the future.
MSDS - What is it?

MSDS is an acronym standing for Material Safety Data Sheet which can be very important to us and involves, in some cases, our personal safety. There are laws, rules and regulations governing MSDS and few, if any of us, have much real knowledge about all of the requirements. We do know that many products we come in contact with such as our medications, our chemicals and the equipment and materials we use in our lapidary work have data sheets that we need to take the time to read and try to understand.

Our experienced students seem to take things for granted but many of the new students ask some very good questions. They often want to know which soldering fluxes are the safest and what smoke or fumes can cause health problems. I always answer these questions to the best of my knowledge but often wonder if my knowledge is as complete as it should be. There is cadmium in some solders and cadmium can be quite deadly so some of the fumes from these solders should be avoided. There is definitely a difference in some of the most commonly used fluxes and we need to know more about them.

I do not have all of the answers and that both frustrates and excites me. I do, however, have a New Year's Resolution that I intend to follow in my workshop and in the various classes I will be teaching and it involves the following points:

1. I will read and distribute to my students all of the brochures that are included with tools, equipment and products that we are using.
2. I will copy and distribute to the students all of the articles and advertisements dealing with potential hazards.
3. When I have doubt about a product, process or tool, I will contact the manufacturer and request a MSDS or other safety information.
4. Although I always cover safety issues at the beginning of each class session, I will go much further with my coverage of these issues.
5. At the risk of irritating some of my fellow instructors, I will judiciously meddle in their business and at least share any of my findings regarding MSDS, hazards and better, safer ways to do the work that we enjoy.

We all need to realize that each of us functions in our work at the risk to the public and private lands for educational and recreational purposes; and to carry the voice of all amateur collectors and hobbyists to our elected officials, government regulators and public land managers. Contributions to the ALAA are not deductible as charitable contributions for Federal Tax Purposes.

In my childhood neighborhood, there was a familiar chant: Two, Four, Six, Eight, who do we appreciate? (if it was the girls doing the chanting, then of course the girls' names were called out. If it was the boys, then they called out the boys' names.) The second part was: Two, Four, Six, Eight, who do we "astinkiate"? (Naturally, the girls listed boys and vice versa.) Now that we've grown up and are hopefully less silly, I'd prefer to think about appreciation.

Is there anyone in your club who deserves appreciation? There is no easier way to express that appreciation than by presenting your fellow club member as the AFMS Club Rockhound of the Year. All it takes is the honoree's name, the club name, the federation, your name, your office (if any) and a few words about why you are submitting the honoree. No points off for spelling or grammar, just glory for your choice!

Submissions should go first to your federation representative and then to me (unless you are in the Eastern Federation, in which case, send me the information first). The accolades will appear in the AFMS Newsletter for all to appreciate.
AFMS Club Rockhounds of the Year

Eastern Federation

The Mississippi Gem & Mineral Society's choice for AFMS Club Junior Rockhound of the Year is fourteen-year-old Jamie Summers. Growing up as a "river rat", wading the shallows of the Pearl with her Dad in search of petrified wood, Jamie became an "official" rockhound in 2001 when she joined M&MS. She has a passion for fossils and the many types of rocks she finds in the Mississippi creeks, but she also enjoys helping her Dad as Hospitality Chairman for the Society. At monthly meetings she helps serve the goodies brought by club members, and throughout the show, Jamie sees to it that our workers and dealers are well fed, but food is not her only contribution. She spent several days prior to the show at the workshop helping to paint and spruce up the exhibit cases and was as diligent in helping to put the show together. In addition to her rockhound activities, Jamie is a hard worker and a good student in the 8th grade at Pearl Junior High School and an active member of St. Jude Catholic Church in Pearl. She enjoys outdoor activities and sports and has participated in various sports interscholastic and extracurricular activities such as collecting and delivering prepared food to homeless shelters and helping with the Annual Tootsie Roll Drive for a local mental retardation center. Jamie is one of our most active members, always ready and willing to join in any project.

West Federation

The Three Rivers Gem & Mineral Society takes pride in naming Ed McDonald as our candidate for the AFMS Club Rockhound of the Year recognition. Mr. McDonald has been an active club member for many years. He has served in many capacities over the years including Club President and Vice President and is currently serving on our Board of Directors as Field Trip Chairman, Club Historian and as a member of our Scholarship Committee. For the past several years he has worked with our 4H program promoting Earth science and paleontology through talks and displays in the school system and in local libraries. He supervises the display area at our annual show, and in addition, this year he coordinated and explained the fluorescent exhibit to approximately 900 school children. Ed's interest and knowledge in the field of paleontology is well known. For the past 2 summers he has spent time working at the Pipe Creek project in Swazee, Indiana. This is an ancient sinkhole where researchers have uncovered abundant plant and animal remains some over 5 million years old. He has written many articles on a variety of subjects that have been published in our newsletters, and he is currently Vice President elect of the Indiana Society of Paleontology.

South Central Federation

AFMS Club Rockhound of the Year, selected by the DeRidder Gem and Mineral Society, Leesville, Louisiana, is Jim Marler. Jim is a faithful member who not only travels a roundtrip of approximately ninety (90) miles to attend each meeting, he contributes his time and energy selflessly. He and his wife, Briget, go on many "digs" and return with sample finds for everyone to enjoy. He is the secretary of the club, a photographer in his own right, a jeweler, a great cook, and he has such knowledge and boundless energy that he keeps every club member inspired. His programs are both educational and entertaining. We, as a club, feel very fortunate to have him as a member.

AFMS Newsletter - February, 2006
TRUTH & SOME CONSEQUENCES
by Jon Spunaugle, Conservation & Legislation

During the last few weeks of the year 2005, Congress was trying to pass a Budget Bill entitled Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 (HR 4241) before adjourning for the year end holiday. Contained in a version of the U. S. House of Representatives Bill were two sections (Sections 6201 and 6202) that would make changes to the Mining Law. One section increased the annual fees paid on mining claims and increased, slightly, the size of a mining claim. A second section would have removed the prohibition on patenting a mining claim. This prohibition on patents was put into law in the mid ’90s. The patenting of a mining claim transfers, for a fee, the surface rights on public land to the claim owner and thus is, in fact, selling public lands to private parties. Perhaps you read about all of this in the news reports last December.

Because several sections of this Budget Bill were controversial (including this mining bill change and a provision to open a small part of the Arctic National Wildlife Reserve (ANWR), to oil drilling and other provisions), this version of the Budget Bill failed to get enough votes to pass and was withdrawn to be modified to remove the controversial provisions. However, Congress is still working on this Budget Bill so stay tuned. It is hard to predict what will happen when Congress reconvenes in late January, 2006. The “sitter” legislation to this House Bill is found under Senate Bill S-1932.

When I reviewed the House Bill HR 4241, I did not see any major threat to hobby collectors in either section of the proposed mining law provisions. Those inclined to oppose the patenting of mining claims would feel otherwise. However, I always deplore these “hidden” sections in what is a Bill that should normally contain budget or appropriation language only. It just seems to me that if these things need to be changed then it should be done, in this case, in a separate Bill, not as an addendum to the mining law. Hiding these provisions in these gigantic last minute Bills that are put together hurriedly by staff members and voted on with little debate and even less knowledge of what all they contain is not what most people I talk to think Congress should be doing. A recent example I am reminded of is a Bill passed a year ago that contained a section creating the new “America the Beautiful Passport”. Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act of 2004. This Act was added as a section of the general appropriations Bill (HR 4818) late in 2004. It was reported as a Committee was adjourning a year ago in November. We did not realize what had happened until January, 2005 when it was already the law of the land.

Speaking of the “America the Beautiful Passport” I expect that there will be public input opportunities on the development, use, and cost of this national pass in 2006, in preparation for implementation in 2007. These opportunities will be published in the Federal Register. We’ll be watching for them and try to keep you informed.

HAVING FUN - JUNIOR ACTIVITIES
Organizing a Club Library

by Jim Bruce-Thompson

One club I've visited has a small but nifty 3-shelf bookcase on wheels with doors that may be locked to keep kids from falling out if it's transported. Each year, a new club librarian is elected to house and oversee the collection. Work with your kids to decide how best to store your club's book collection.

Activity 4: Devising a checkout system to catalog and monitor your library. You may want to use whatever system your local library has for cataloging and monitoring your club books—or devise your own. Kids should then decide who is to oversee the collection, the adult youth leader, a junior librarian elected from among the kids, a librarian selected from among adult members of the club, etc. How should books be accessed and checked out? How long should they be loaned? How will you keep track of them? Kids should explore these questions and more.

Activity 5: Working with the public library, Part I: Rather than run a club library, work with the public library. Make and maintain a list of books and magazines related to the earth sciences and lapidary arts available at your local library. Give the kids in your club a copy to keep as a reference for when they’re working on various FRA badge projects. Take the kids to talk with the librarian. See what books on geology, paleontology, mineralogy, and lapidary arts might be of value for the community at a whole and arrange to purchase those books from your library fund to donate to the public library.

Activity 6: Working with the public library, Part II. Talk with local librarians and tell them about your club. They may be interested in helping with activities. For instance, I've worked with several libraries that welcomed one-month installations of rockhound displays in their lobby display cases incorporating books about the hobby. I also worked with two libraries that made fossils and dinosaurs a "summer theme" for their kids book collection and sponsored weekly story-time readings as well as presentations by fossil collectors in the local club. Librarians might be interested in helping to start a "rockhound book club" at the library for young readers to meet and share comments about hobby-related books they've read. In fact, your local librarians are likely your best allies for opening up the world of references and published resources to assist your kids. So head to the library, introduce yourself as the junior leader for your club, and open up the possibilities for helping kids learn while—as always—having fun.

There is nothing new to report on the Fossil Bill which seems to be bottled up in the U. S. House of Representatives, Natural Resources Committee for now.

LASTLY, if you’re aware of any hobby problems in the area of my Committee’s responsibility that I have not written about, I would appreciate an e-mail at jonspe@uno.com or a phone call at (360) 835-9315 to alert me. This is big country to cover and your concerns are important. I am very grateful for all the feedback that I have received as well as tips on what is going on.
Here is the listing of the people who have agreed to serve as AFMS Chairs for 2005-06. Please feel free to contact these people (or the person in your regional federation who serves on the, as well) if you need information or have ideas to share with them.

### AFMS Club Rockhound of the Year
- Cathy Gaber
  - bg@his.com

### AFMS Newsletter
- Carolyn Weinberger
  - P.O. Box 302, Glyndon, MD 21071-0302
  - (410) 833-7926
  - <editor@amfed.org>

### AFMS Boundaries
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  - brownegj@aol.com

### AFMS Bulletin Editor-Hall of Fame
- Shirley Leeson
  - <shirleyleeson@msn.com>
  - <beauholland@salmoninternet.com>

### ByLaws Revisory
- Steve Weinberger
  - P.O. Box 302, Glyndon, MD 21071-0302
  - (410) 833-7926
  - <central_office@amfed.org>

### AFMS Central Office
- Steve Weinberger
  - <central_office@amfed.org>

### AFMS Club Publications
- Kitty Starbuck
  - <minedump@iserv.net>

### AFMS Commemorative Stamp
- Wendell Mohr - Chair
  - <wmohr@erols.com>

### Conservation and Legislation
- Jan Spaulngale
  - <jonspe@juno.com>

### Education-All American
- John Washburn
  - <jwwashburn2@msn.com>

### Endowment Fund
- Joy Bourne
  - <csprings@epix.net>

### Financial Investment
- Dee Holland - Chair
  - <beauholland@salmoninternet.com>
  - <shirleyleeson@msn.com>

### Historian
- Shirley Leeson
  - <shirleyleeson@msn.com>
  - <beauholland@salmoninternet.com>

### International Relations
- Janet Smith
  - <beetlebill@silverlink.net>

### Junior Programs
- Jim Brace-Tompson
  - <jbraceth@adelpia.net>

### Long Range Planning
- Bill Smith
  - <beetlebill@silverlink.net>

### Name Badge
- Frank Muloney
  - <rockyfive@aol.com>

### Nominating
- Bill Smith
  - <beetlebill@silverlink.net>

### Parliamentarian
- Ruth Bailey
  - <rba51825@aol.com>

### Past President's Advisory
- Bill Smith
  - <beetlebill@silverlink.net>

### Photography
- Barbara Sky
  - (636) 207-8766

### Program Competition
- Marge Collins - Chair
  - <margaret@qtm.net>

### Safety
- Don Monroe
  - <acmonroe@att.net>

### Show Consultant
- Mary Trammell
  - <trammell@our-town.com>

### Supply and Publications
- B. Joy Bowman
  - <bjb@pcwan.net>

### Ways and Means
- Isabella Burns - Chair
  - <isbill@p.com>

### Uniform Rules
- Betty James - Chair
  - <mineralid@jam.rr.com>

### URC Eligibility Files
- Amc Gook
  - see AFMS Secretary, page 2

### Website/Webmaster
- Marty Hart - Chair
  - <webmaster@amfed.org>

### Ad Hoc AFMS Judging Seminar
- Dee Holland, Chair
  - <beauholland@salmoninternet.com>
  - <shirleyleeson@msn.com>

### Ad Hoc AFMS 60th Anniversary Planning
- Shirley Leeson, Chair
  - <shirleyleeson@msn.com>
  - <beauholland@salmoninternet.com>
**AFMS Code of Ethics**

I will respect both private and public property and will do no collecting on privately owned land without the owner’s permission.

I will keep informed on all laws, regulations of rules governing collecting on public lands and will observe them.

I will be to the best of my ability, ascertain the boundary lines of property on which I plan to collect.

I will use no firearms or blasting material in collecting areas.

I will cause no willful damage to property of any kind – fences, signs, buildings.

I will leave all gates as found.

I will build fires in designated or safe places only and will be certain they are completely extinguished before leaving the area.

I will discard no burning material – matches, cigarettes, etc.

I will fill all excavation holes which may be dangerous to livestock.

I will not contaminate wells, creeks or other water supply.

I will cause no willful damage to collecting material and will take home only what I can reasonably use.

I will practice conservation and undertake to utilize fully and well the materials I have collected and will recycle my surplus for the pleasure and benefit of others.

I will support the rockhound project HELP (Help Eliminate Litter Please) and Will leave all collecting areas devoid of litter, regardless of how found.

I will cooperate with field trip leaders and those in designated authority in collecting areas.

I will report to my club or Federation of fossil, Bureau of Land management or other authorities, any deposit of petrified wood or other materials on public lands which should be protected for the enjoyment of future generations for public educational and scientific purposes.

I will appreciate and protect our heritage of natural resources.

I will observe the “Golden Rule”, will use “Good Outdoor Manners” and will at all times conduct myself in a manner which will add to the stature and Public “image” of rockhounds everywhere.

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**LAND USE POLICY**

1. Adherence to the AFMS Code of Ethics assures compliance with most statutes and regulations governing collecting on public lands and encourages respect for private property rights and the environment. Clubs are urged to read the AFMS Code of Ethics in at least one meeting every year, to publish the Code frequently in the club newsletter, and to comply on compliance on club field trips.

2. Individuals and clubs are urged to write their elected representatives and land use management agency supervisors regarding issues of rule making, legislation and enforcement affecting field collecting of minerals and fossils.

3. Individuals and clubs are urged to join and support activities of the American Lands Access Association (ALAA), a sister organization with responsibility for advancing the interests of earth science amateurs with legislatures and land use management agencies.

4. The AFMS will receive a report from ALAA at its annual meeting.

5. The AFMS endorses the principle of multiple use of public lands as a guarantee of continuing recreational opportunities.

6. Wilderness and monument designations are inconsistent with the principle of multiple use. In view of the vast amount of public land already designated as wilderness and monuments, future such designations should be minimal, taking into account the increased demand for recreational opportunities, including rockhounding, created by a growing population.

7. In furtherance of the principle of multiple use, the AFMS believes that laws, regulations and rules established by relevant governmental authorities should be designed to allow freest possible access to all public lands, coupled with minimal restrictions on the recreational collection of minerals, fossils, gemstone materials and other naturally occurring materials.

8. A right to collect minerals and fossils on public lands should be protected by statute.

9. The AFMS urges its members to work with any or all government authorities to achieve a good working relationship in order to improve the “Public Image” of recreational collectors.

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**SOAP BOX**

**by Carolyn Weinberger**

“Communication is the Key to Our Success” has long been the motto of the Eastern Federation. It could easily be the motto for all of us.

The AFMS Convention for 2006 is hosted by the good folks in Nashville, TN and will be held the week of August 16 - 20. The problem is that the same weekend (August 18-20) is also the weekend that the South Central Federation has scheduled their annual convention and show.

How did this happen? How can a similar situation be avoided in the future?

The answer is communication.

The AFMS has a “Show Consultant” whose job is to serve as a clearing house for the seven regional federations when they schedule their annual conventions. No regional federation convention should be held at the same time as the AFMS convention because officers from the regional federations are expected to attend the AFMS meetings. Unless there’s a Houdini among them, it’s impossible for folks to be in two places at once...and it’s asking too much time to go to the AFMS annual meeting, usually held on a Wednesday or Thursday and then immediately fly or drive home to attend their regional meeting. Bossier City is about 550 miles from Nashville so it’s a full days drive.

So how do we avoid this type of situation in the future? The answer again is communication.

As the president of your regional federation you need to contact the AFMS Show Coordinator before you accept a bid for your annual convention. You’ll quickly learn if the AFMS has locked in the date you were looking at and it will be early enough for you to make changes. Of course if you’ve already locked in a date when the host federation for AFMS inquires, then AFMS has to make the change. It’s simple...first come...first served.

So let’s reopen those lines of communication. It’s not difficult to do and will avoid unfortunate consequences down the road.

For the record...here are the dates of upcoming AFMS conventions that have already been confirmed...

2007 June 7 - 10 Roswell, New Mexico (RMFMS)
2008 September 25 - 28 Houston, Texas (SCFMS)

Yes I know - sometimes the bid you receive from a club is the only bid for the convention that year, but there is sometimes a bit of “wiggle room” with the dates and we need to explore the possibilities. With e-mail and/or telephone, it’s easy to get an answer very quickly.

Communication IS the Key to Our Success!