Welcome to "Rockin' In Music City" the 2006 convention and show for the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies, Inc. and the Southeast Federation of Mineralogical Societies, Inc., sponsored by the Middle Tennessee Gem & Mineral Society. The convention will be held in Nashville "Music City" Tennessee in August of 2006.

The following pages will provide you with much information that we believe you will find to be helpful in attending the conventions and the Gem & Mineral Show in Nashville, Tennessee. Much more information is provided on the Nashville area on the AFMS web site <www.amfed.org> and the MTG&MS website at www.mtgmts.org.

Host Hotel
The host hotel is the Hotel Preston. Most convention activities, including the convention banquet, will take place there. You must state that you are with the AFMS to get the convention special rate of $82.00. Be sure to make your reservations at the earliest possible date as this is a heavy tourist time in Nashville and many hotels are already booked. Reservations at the Preston must be made by July 15th as this is the end date for our block of rooms.

The hotel may be reached at their toll free number 1-877-361-5500. More information concerning the hotel, including a map, may be found at the AFMS web site (www.amfed.org), the MTG&MS site (www.mtgmts.org) or the hotel web site <www.hotelpreston.com>.

Several MTG&MS members have visited the hotel, without any announcement of who they were, and have enjoyed the meals they ordered.

Camping
Many of you will want to come in various motor homes, etc. and we are pleased to tell you that you can camp at the show site on the Tennessee State Fairgrounds. There are 250 spots so no reservations are needed. All have full hookups with electric (most are 30 amp but some are 50 amp, all with standard plugs so no adapters are needed), water and sewer connections. Find your spot and pull in. Fairgrounds security will come by, collect your payment for the stay and provide a notice to place in your window so no other security person will come by and try to collect again. Cost is $30 a night. They will take cash or check and there is an ATM on site if needed.

For other camping locations check the AFMS website show link where you can find a lot of information about the Nashville area including camping.

Convention & Show Pins
We have very attractive show/convention pins. They are shaped in a rock form with "Rockin' In Music City '2006" on them. They are numbered from 1 to 2006. The cost is only $2.00 each. They will also be available at the registration tables at the show and host hotel. Please purchase one, or more, to assist us with the cost of promoting the show and convention.

"Bring A Rock"
The MTG&MS is working with the Middle Tennessee State University's Mineral, Gem & Fossil Museum. We would like you to bring two rocks (minerals, slabs, rough, cabs, faceted stones, fossils, etc.) One will be given to the museum and one will be used at our silent auction at the show to assist in paying the expenses of the convention and show.

As you will arrive from many locations in the US this is a chance for us to obtain a number of new items for display at the museum. These items displayed will be credited with your name as the donor. Please provide us with the identity of the material, location of its origin, and your name in writing, along with the donation.

A complete schedule of activities, meal menus and registration forms are included in this issue beginning on page 7. We hope to see you in Nashville, "Music City" this August.
From the President

This month's message concerns the way our annual meeting is being scheduled. I've no doubt there will be some who disagree, but I feel we are making it difficult for our younger members with families to attend.

Currently we are scheduling the Uniform Rules meetings on Tuesday, the AFMS meeting on Wednesday, the middle of the week, and the Awards Banquet on Saturday evening. The show itself is scheduled for Friday, Saturday and Sunday with Thursday left for field trips. In my view, this schedule does not justify a full week away from home just to attend two meetings in the middle of the week.

With the ever-increasing cost of transportation and lodging it is making it difficult if not impossible for many people who are still working or those with families to participate in our activities, especially for those who have to travel across country. Many people are not comfortable flying anymore, (me being one of them) and choose to drive their cars instead. Doing so adds another 2 to 5 days to the trip. For myself it's not a problem, I just look at it as a vacation and enjoy it, but too many people I have talked with tell me they would not consider serving as an officer or on a committee that required them to attend our meeting because of the time they would lose from their job or businesses, to say nothing of the expense involved.

When there is a three day show, as there is this year, there is no logical reason to schedule the meetings the way they are being done. I want to use our meetings on Wednesday and the AFMS Annual Meeting on Thursday this year. That would have left Friday for those of us who are judges to be available for the judging. All my attempts to accomplish were ignored by the individual who is working on the AFMS Convention portion of the week. The reason given was that there would be no time for field trips. I felt and I am sure many will agree that our primary reason to attend these meeting is to conduct the business of the AFMS. The field trips are a side luxury and those who attend for that purpose would be free to arrive and depart as they please. The trips could also have easily been scheduled for the Tuesday before the meetings begin so only those who wanted to participate would have to spend that extra day away from home.

With more and more Regional Federation shows now being 3 instead of 4 day shows, we need to consider the difficulties and expenses encountered when we ask those coming to the Convention to spend that extra day - and the extra night in the hotel or campground etc.

How do you feel? I would like to hear from you.

Humor Can Brighten a Day

One thing that I have learned about Rockhounds is that they have a sense of humor - sometimes strange. Without exception, I have never attended a Rockhound function where the mood was not festive. Oh, there are sometimes disagreements, but they are always settled amicably. Rockhounds are friendly and fun loving.

Speaking of fun, I'll bet we all have stories to tell that will amuse almost any listener.

I have one that I would like to share with you. It was in 1987 when the AFMS donated the "American Golden Topaz" to the Smithsonian Institution. A friend and I went to Washington, DC for the presentation. We flew economy class and at a result had to stay a week. To fill the week, as rockhounds will do, after the dedication ceremony, we went rockhounding.

After a brief unsuccessful stint at digging at local locations, we decided to go to Franklin, New Jersey. After a fruitless search through the mine tailings, we visited some of the old miners who had specimens for sale. We bought plenty.

When it was time for us to fly back to the state of Washington where I lived at the time, we had quite a load of specimens. We boxed them carefully and stayed within the limit of checked articles that the airline would allow. I'm not sure if there were any rockhounds at the airport, but everyone was friendly and helpful. As we went through the security line, even the bag checkers were kind. When it was time for Mother's Day, we loaded our luggage onto the conveyor belt, she said "what have you got in there, rocks?" When we said "yes", she brightened to the point that I think our response made her whole day.

To me it was an amusing anecdote. We need more of these in our communications. Humor, however strange, helps us bond with ourselves and others.
HAVING FUN - JUNIOR ACTIVITIES
ONE CLUB'S EXPERIENCE WITH THE FRA BADGE PROGRAM

by Jim Brace-Thompson, Junior Activities Chair

I've received calls asking for more specifics in how to go about implementing the AFMS/FRA merit badge program. The following letter is reprinted with the kind permission of Inga Wells, the Junior Activities leader of the Che-Hanna Rock & Mineral Club of Sayre, Pennsylvania. I provide her letter to illustrate how one club has been using the program as an example to others who may be considering it.

"I'm the junior group coordinator for Che-Hanna Rock & Mineral Club (Eastern Federation). I think the merit badge program is great idea. I picked up a copy of your handouts at the Syracuse convention. I printed all the pages from the website and several juniors started working on their badges. Our pebble pups/junior group membership has been steadily growing. We now have 10 kids of various ages and knowledge of our hobby. I'm working with 3 of new ones on the Rock & Mineral badge before the show. Then, they can help me teach new members when we're learning Mineral ID and such later in the year.

"Our Annual show will be March 25-26. I'm expecting more families to join then. At each show, we usually have many new families join; however, lots of them are too busy with other things to attend the club meetings. I'm hoping for a strong attendance in April and May at our scheduled meetings on Sunday afternoons at a local church. We're planning to start working on the Fossil badge at the April meeting. Your outline and back-up pages will make my job so much easier. Thank you for putting it all on the web.

"As of the show date, the pebble pup that has been with the group the longest, Ariel Walter, will have completed requirements for Showmanship, Leadership, and Collecting. She completed work for Rocks & Minerals and Lapidary Arts the previous month. She will be installed as the club's Junior President at the show. All in all, at this stage we're ready to award the following: 10 FRA membership badges, 1 Collecting, 1 Showmanship, 1 Leadership, 3 Lapidary Arts, and 7 Rock & Minerals badges. We started working on these at last year's show. Two of the juniors (Ariel and Cameron) learned how to cab a stone and operated a mini-mill. Both were on hand for both days of the show and worked very hard.

"During the summer, we had 2 club picnics where we panned for gold, looked for minerals with a metal detector, dug for minerals in a sand pit and identified them, carved soapstone, and sorted rocks into the 3 rock groups as well as other activities. We had one field trip for fossils. Then September 25, we had a huge mineral identification meeting and learned more about the special properties and characteristics of minerals, the Mohs hardness scale, making and using a mineral ID kit and crystal structure, making a collection of minerals, state minerals and more. Ariel, Luke, Cameron, and I have completed requirements for the Rock & Mineral badge by October 23 and started on Lapidary Arts.

"In November, we learned more about minerals and learned about unpolished and polished stones and enjoyed matching them up. The kids have a box with at least 30 identified tumbled stones glued in. We gave some tumbled agates our own variety name, according to their looks, since we didn't know the location. We learned about bell-caps and findings and made jewelry items as well as a small gem tree. In November and December, we learned how to make gem trees and flowers and landscapes, incorporating items we had learned how to make. We also learned about work-shop safety, which will be repeated at the show since there are power tools being used by club members for geode cutting, faceting, and cabbing, and the kids will be around the machines. This should complete the Lapidary Arts badge.

"At each meeting, we learn more about minerals, have little tests with rewards, have lots of fun, and the kids go home with a box full of labeled rocks and their own creations. It's good to see the kids and their parents learn more about the hobby, and they are identifying more minerals each time. Parents ask to bring friends of their kids since everyone enjoys the meetings. I have asked that one of the parents stay at meetings to help with the kids at a ratio of 3 to 1. If the parents stay interested as well, I can hope they will make the time to bring the kids to the meeting since we live in rural area where one needs to drive to activities. Most kids live out in the country.

"In January, we talked about showmanship and Ariel elected to enter a display in the Annual show. She borrowed my display case, the Federation rulebook, various Federation publications, and her grandmother (with many years of exhibiting experience) reported on her progress learning these things. Ariel is using minerals from her collection and items she has made. Her theme is Minerals of the West. Meanwhile, she has taught many people how to make gem trees, do simple jewelry and such, and helped with the Girl Scout troops earth science badge. She gave talks, show-and-tells at school and at various groups and brought in labeled mineral samples for all from her grandmother's and father's collections. Her enthusiasm is very contagious. She has designed and will be in charge of the mini-tree craft for people to do at the Girl Scout fair this week. Cameron Shepler taught the Mohs' hardness scale to the scouts in his group and gave an excellent talk on mineral ID. He had handouts and all the minerals needed for this task (except diamonds) for each person. He led a show-and-tell for his troop and at school as well.

"Thank you very much! Inga Wells, Junior Advisor Che-Hanna Rock & Mineral Club, Inc.

Actually, all the thanks go to you, Inga! With good youth leaders like Inga Wells leading the way with enthusiastic kids, we all have terrific examples to illustrate how one club has been using the program.
11. Lady's 14kt gold wax cast ring. This stunning beauty was created for the 2006 Drawing by Bural LaRue, CFMS Second Vice-President, who is well-known for his outstanding craftsmanship, metalsmith teaching, and his generous contributions over the past three years to our AFMS Drawings. Bural assures us that it can be easily resized and all of the information therein. All this for free on the AFMS website <www.amfed.org> and you can download the issue for FREE. It's FREE

12. Carving - Virgil Keltz, master carver, created this minutely detailed frog, sitting on a leaf, from Lake Wenatchee, WA soapstone, which is tan in color with a tinge of rose. Virgil is a four-time winner of AFMS trophies for his carvings; most recently in the 2004 AFMS Endowment Fund Drawing. As many of you know, Marve is an AFMS Past President, and Kitty has served as AFMS Club Publications Chairman for a number of years. The 18” necklace features 41 beautifully polished, 6-mm to 8-mm rhyolite beads, made from material collected by the Starbuck near Deming, NM this past winter. The picture-perfect rhyolite pendant drop was created, polished and set in a delicately bezeled sterling silver mounting by Marve. The clasp, accent pieces and pierced earring settings are also sterling silver. Kitty says, “Marve did the silver work, I did the stringing.” This excellently-executed set of lovely jewelry is valued at $100. (MVF) (Photo by Norman Hansho)

Thanks to Marty Hart, AFMS Webmaster, who has reworked the AFMS Website to include larger pictures of the prizes - and he has added all the new ones, too! You might want to revisit the page to see all the color pictures of the updated list. We have added a second prize brochure, too which puts all the prizes and descriptions into a clickable format for the convenience of newsletter editors. Hope you will feel free to cut, copy and paste any and all of the information therein. All this for free at www.amfed.org.

Although we are just about at our limit of 14 prizes for this years’ drawing, we have heard of a couple more yet to come. We’ll keep you advised - of course. You still have plenty of time to get your tickets from your Regional Committee Person, or to contact me directly to have yours mailed, But, please don’t wait too long.

See you next month with more...
Joy

13. Rhyolite Necklace and Pierced-Earring Set. This strikingly beautiful set of beads and earrings was hand-crafted by co-producers, Marve and Kitty Starbuck especially for the 2006 Endowment Fund Drawing. As many of you know, Marve is an AFMS Past President, and Kitty has served as AFMS Club Publications Chairman for a number of years. The 18” necklace features 41 beautifully polished, 6-mm to 8-mm rhyolite beads, made from material collected by the Starbuck near Deming, NM this past winter. The picture-perfect rhyolite pendant drop was created, polished and set in a delicately bezeled sterling silver mounting by Marve. The clasp, accent pieces and pierced earring settings are also sterling silver. Kitty says, “Marve did the silver work, I did the stringing.” This excellently-executed set of lovely jewelry is valued at $100. (MVF) (Photo by Norman Hansho)

My thanks to the many clubs that have sent in their names and addresses of their 2006 President, Editor and Federation Director/Liaison or Secretary. As of this month, we’ve updated all of the Eastern and Rocky Mountain Federation mailing contacts and many from the other five regions as well.

But we need YOUR help in keeping our mailing list current. Please take a moment and send us the information on your current officers.

It's Free

I ran into a lovely elderly lady over the weekend who asked about subscriptions to the AFMS Newsletter. See page 3 for details about ordering extra copies via “snail mail”. Her question though was “How much does it cost to get an e-mail copy of the AFMS Newsletter?” My answer of course was “IT'S FREE”! Just visit the AFMS website <www.amfed.org/afms_news.htm> and you can download the issue for FREE.

OFFICER UPDATES from Carlyn Weidinger, AFMS Central Office

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How Can You Possibly Resist?

by Joy Bourne, AFMS Endowment Chair

We promised you some more beautiful prizes for the 2006 Endowment Fund Drawing, and sure enough, here they are! Since our last article appeared in the April newsletter, we have received another three spectacular prize contributions - bringing the total number of prizes to 13 so far.

Now Get This!!:

1. 14kt gold lost wax cast ring. This stunning beauty was created for the 2006 Drawing by Bural LaRue, CFMS Second Vice-President, who is well-known for his outstanding craftsmanship, metaldsmith teaching, and his generous contributions over the past three years to our AFMS Drawings. Bural assures us that it can be easily resized and all of the information therein. All this for free on the AFMS website <www.amfed.org> and you can download the issue for FREE.

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See you next month with more...
Joy

Hubba Hubba for Joe Schmoee!

by Carlyn Weidinger, Club Rockhound of Year

When was the last time someone in your club was recognized for contributions to the club? It’s mid-March and I have only seven AFMS Club Rockhounds of the Year for 2006. That averages out to one per federation (though 2 federations actually have no submissions). Is there only one person in your federation who deserves to be thanked? I don’t think so!!

Think for just a moment. Is one of your officers doing an outstanding job? Has your shop foreman or field trip director opened new horizons? Has one of your members given a special program or worked with kids? Is there someone who is always there, always willing to pitch in with anything that needs doing? How about your show chair, your librarian, your hospitality chair or your sunshine person? A club can not function without the efforts of people like this. Why not take five minutes to show them that you appreciate their efforts. Submissions need to include the name of the exceptional member (or couple), the name of the club, the federation, the name of the submitter and, if applicable, any office held. Anyone in the club can submit, first come, first serve. Don’t forget juniors! They get their own chance to be named AFMS Junior Rockhound of the Year. Please include the age of any junior submission. Each club can submit a name for both adults and juniors every year.

Send this information to me if you are in the Eastern Federation. Send it to your Federation representative in other federations. Do it now! Everyone submitted will have their information printed in their regional federation newsletter and the AFMS newsletter. They will also have their name on the list as part of the AFMS convention record. It is a special way to show everyone how important these people are.

Cathy Gaber
<bg@his.com>
Calculated Risk

We often use the term "calculated risk" but I wonder if we always think about what we are saying.

The term "calculated risk" should be clearly defined in our mind. To do this for myself I reverted to the training I received in elementary school which involves "breaking down" anything we are not clear about. The risk part we probably understand but what about the "calculated"? Do we think through the issue or just use the term to justify things that did not go well but obviously could not be our fault. Surprisingly enough I think we really do consider potential outcomes more often than we think we do.

I think we often look at a situation in terms of risk vs. reward. Some examples I would suggest include:

- The situation that may arise when we are cutting a cabochon from a stone. One of my mentors, the one and only E. T. Pike always said, "don't cut any garbage". He meant if a stone shows evidence of a crack or a fissure, don't use it. Now if it is the only stone you have of a particular color or pattern, you may want to take that "calculated risk".
- You have assembled your torch outfit and are preparing to solder or heat something. You smell the faintest whiff of acetylene and think that you will "not touch the hem of the garment" and I have only begun to touch the issue of calculated risk. My closing admonition is the we must THINK and try to avoid doing the stupid things that will hurt us.

As I sit here and type this message I admire my hands and realize that I always have cuts, burns, abrasions and contusions and I know that most of them resulted from inattention (which is a 35 cent for stupidity). So, I am not just preaching to the choir. I am just as guilty as many of you.

There is an old country expression that says that we have "not touched the hem of the garment" and I have only begun to touch the issue of calculated risk. My closing admonition is the we must THINK and try to avoid doing the stupid things that will hurt us.

As I sit here and type this message I admire my hands and realize that I always have cuts, burns, abrasions and contusions and I know that most of them resulted from inattention (which is a 35 cent for stupidity). So, I am not just preaching to the choir. I am just as guilty as many of you.

Thank You

by Joy Burns, AFMS Endowment Chair

We are grateful for the continuing support of friends and clubs who quietly support AFMS Endowment Fund by making annual personal gifts, special memorial contributions, or who regularly earmark proceeds from club auctions to be sent to us.

Monies for these gifts and contributions should be sent to Toby Cozens, AFMS Treasurer, at 4401 S Hill Street, Seattle, WA 98116-1924. Upon receipt of these gifts, Toby informs the Fund Chairman of the gift. The chair then sends letters of appreciation and, in the case of a memorial gift, informs the family of the contribution to AFMS.

We wish to acknowledge the following special gifts to the AFMS Endowment Fund which have been received since the beginning of the 2005-06 Federation year.

These contributions were made by:

- Mr. & Mrs. Wendell Mohr
  members of the Gem, Lapidary & Mineralogical Society of Montgomery Co., MD
- The Fossils For Fun Society, Inc.
  Gold River, CA
- The Mt Hood Rock Club
  Beaverton, OR
  which has sent two contributions designated as memorials to recently deceased members. The first of these, received in January, honors Marge Davis, member of the Mt Hood Rock Club since 1972. The second contribution, in memory of Vania Dunn, member of the Mt Hood Rock Club since 1966, was received in March.

Thank you all for your continuing support of the AFMS Endowment Fund, and for your thoughtful gifts in sharing the memories of your faithful long-time club members.

AFMS Rockhound of the Year

Eastern Federation

The 2006 AFMS Club Rockhound of the Year from Central Pennsylvania Rock and Mineral Club is Scott Snively. Scott is our club Fieldtrip Coordinator. Scott was no doubt instrumental in making our slate of annual fieldtrips the best ever scheduled. Scott, assisted by Fieldtrip leaders Tom Smith, R.J. Harris, Kerry Matt and Terri Nestinot arranged over twenty mineral and fossil collecting site visits between mid-April and early November. Fieldtrip Coordinator cannot be an easy job. It involves a lot of dead end leads and telephone calls to get proper permission from quarry and land owners to allow club members access to collecting areas. We heartily nominate and thank Scott for taking on a huge job. He got results.

submitted by Betty Oberheim, President

Northwest Federation

I take pleasure in nominating Ace and Barbara Nash of the Hells Canyon Gem Club in Lewiston, ID for the 2006 AFMS Club Rockhound of the Year. Ace and Barbara have both been dedicated in supporting the Club. Ace held the position of Field Trip Chairman for several years. On field trips he shares finds with others and is always available to help clean out or dig a hole to help a member. Ace is also a member of the Board of Trustees and provides support for printing needs of the Club. For many years, Ace has been Chairman of the always successful Silent Auction held during the Club's Annual Show. Barbara not only supports Ace in his efforts, but has been responsible for Chairing the Junior Activities at the Annual Show. She also has been a member of the Board of Trustees and was Editor of the Club bulletin, Boulder Buster, for three years, winning a second place award for Bulletin Editor in the Northwest Federation of Mineralogical Societies (NFMS) in 2004, and 6th Place for New Editor, of the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies (AFMS) in 2004.

**CALVIN GEORGE**

1919 - 2006

Long time AFMS Bylaws and Operating Procedures Chair, Calvin George passed away in late January. Cal and his late wife Harriet, lived in the Chicago, Illinois area for many years and were members of the Earth Science Club of Northern Illinois (ESCONI) where Cal served as Vice President and then President in 1968-69.

Both Cal and Harriet served as AFMS Judges. Cal was also a member, and for one year chairman, of the AFMS Rules Committee and was involved in writing some of the rules of competition. He had a keen understanding of what should and should not be included in a display and what evaluators should and should not be looking for and commenting on.

Cal’s expertise in the legal field was invaluable to the AFMS. He was easily able to answer legal questions put to him by the officers during the years he served and provided a keen understanding of the Federation Bylaws. His expertise also was needed in formulating and keeping the various Operating Procedures (the nuts and bolts “how to’s”) of the organization up-to-date and valid.

One anecdote about Cal comes to mind. The year after his resignation as Bylaws and OP Chair, Cal decided to attend the AFMS/MWF Convention in Houghton, MI. Harriet had passed away and Cal was a bit lonely so a few of us “adopted him”. One event that remains firmly engraved in my memory was having a Friday night dinner in a popular Chinese Restaurant. The place was packed and our “group” numbered about 60 (someone had made reservations for 10, then proceeded to invite everyone, so of course the 10 grew to 60). The hostess did what she could to seat us, but obviously was overwhelmed by the size of the group. Nine of us ended up in a booth meant for 4. Very cozy. Cal said that he’d never eaten in a Chinese restaurant so we answered his numerous questions about sharing dishes, what the foods with the exotic names were etc. We were so crowded that there was no room to pass anything around, let alone place the serving bowls anywhere on the table, so Cal never got to taste anything other than what he ordered. Nervous at first, Cal dug right in, and seemed to enjoy his selection. After that night he quickly agreed to join us for most of our evening dining adventures. Sitting amongst us in that crowded booth must have been quite an experience for him! We loved being with him and really got to know him a lot better.

Cal served the AFMS well over many, many years and we’ll all miss him. He is survived by two sons, two daughters and nine grandchildren. Contributions in Cal’s memory can be made to the AFMS Scholarship Foundation, % of your local Scholarship Foundation Coordinator or mailed to Arlene Burkhalter, PO Box 1007; Chocow, OK 73020. (Be sure to indicate the name of your club and Federation so proper credit can be given.)

Carolyn Weinberger  
John Washburn, Marga Collins  
Ruth Bailey and Shirley Leeson

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**Rx for Attracting New Members**

by Ed Pederson, via CFMS Newsletter, February, 2006

Two trends are prevalent in nearly every club: declining numbers and increasing age. Part of this decline is due to a “passing fad” (those with marginal interest drop out). Another part of the decline is due to “burn out” and some is due to members and/or clubs “getting in a rut” and dropping or de-emphasizing activities that attract new members.

To understand how the interests affect the type of new members acquired, we need to look at some generalizations about our hobby. The following statements are gross over-simplifications based on real and perceived attitudes of rockhounds and the general public:

1. Mineral collecting is only for people with money.
2. Lapidary work is the only part of rockhounding that you don’t need a college degree for (the IMHO smart enough to collect minerals or fossils syndrome).
3. Lapidary work, especially faceting, takes a lot of expensive equipment and space.
4. You have to be retired to have enough time to cut and polish rocks. (the most nearly true).
5. Mineral collecting is only for people with money.
6. A strong emphasis on “show and tell” at meetings.

What factors are important to these individuals? To understand how the interests affect the type of new members acquired, we need to look at some generalizations about our hobby. The following statements are gross over-simplifications based on real and perceived attitudes of rockhounds and the general public:

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6. A strong emphasis on “show and tell” at meetings.

What about youth groups? Youth groups are a byproduct, adults bringing their kids, not the other way around.

According to my unofficial survey, the valuable and desirable new members are young adults and middle aged adults (ages 20-50). If this is true, a club effort to target these individuals is required. What factors are important to these individuals?

1. A wide range of hobby activities (minerals, fossils, lapidary) and opportunity to learn (study groups, classes, field trips, etc.) Club meeting programs that are diverse and interesting.
2. Club meeting times that fit the schedules of working people, especially those with smaller children.
3. A minimum of work requirements.
4. A maximum of field trips and other “exciting events.”
5. A minimum of club business conducted at meetings. Members come to visit and see the newsletter.
6. A strong emphasis on “show and tell” at meetings (display tables for before and after meeting discussions).

What are the best sources of new members of all ages?

1. club show
2. offering classes or study groups to the local community (senior centers, recreation agencies, parks, and recreation districts)
3. Word of mouth
4. Displays at schools, libraries, museums and visitor centers.

What about youth groups? Youth groups are a very worthwhile and satisfying activity, but will not contribute members. The youth members are a byproduct; adults bringing their kids, not the other way around.

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**DR. FREDERICK H. POUGH, PHD**

1906-2006

Dr. Frederick H. Pough, distinguished mineralogist and author has died at the age of 99 while attending the Rochester Mineral Symposium on April 7. Dr. Pough would have been 100 in June. He was excited about attending the Symposium where he was to be honored on his upcoming century mark. Shortly after arriving and chatting with a few participants, he suffered a heart attack and died shortly thereafter at the hospital. Medical professionals at the Symposium administered CPR until the EMT’s arrived.

Although it’s probably a good guess to say that most in the hobby never met Fred Pough, it’s probably also a good guess to say that must have a copy of his “Field Guide to Rocks & Minerals” first published in 1953 and now in it’s 5th revision. During his long and illustrious career, Fred served as curator at the American Museum of Natural History in New York, and wrote numerous papers and articles on a wide variety of minerals. He was a microscopist and mineral collector as well as lecturer. After retiring from the American Museum, he moved west, last living in Reno, Nevada before moving to Rochester, NY to be near his children.

Fred never was involved directly in the AFMS, but he surely had a major influence on us all through his writings. He was a generous and terrific fellow with a keen mind and lovely sense of humor and we’ll all surely miss him. He is survived by his son and daughter, a brother and several grandchildren.

Contributions in Fred’s memory can be made to the AFMS Scholarship Foundation, % of your local Scholarship Foundation Coordinator or mailed to Arlene Burkhalter, PO Box 1007; Chocow, OK 73020. (Be sure to indicate the name of your club and Federation so proper credit can be given.)

Carolyn Weinberger
## Rockin' In Music City - Schedule of Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday August 14</td>
<td>Noon</td>
<td>Registration opens</td>
<td>Host Hotel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday August 15</td>
<td>7:30 am</td>
<td>Registration opens</td>
<td>Host Hotel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8:00 am</td>
<td>Field trip for fossils</td>
<td>Host Hotel</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8:00 am</td>
<td>Rules Committee Meeting</td>
<td>Host Hotel</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7:30 pm</td>
<td>Cracker Barrel meeting</td>
<td>Host Hotel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday August 16</td>
<td>8:00 am</td>
<td>Registration opens</td>
<td>Host Hotel</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9:00 am</td>
<td>AFMS Annual Convention</td>
<td>Host Hotel</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1:00 am</td>
<td>Field trip - quartz geodes</td>
<td>Host Hotel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday August 17</td>
<td>8:00 am</td>
<td>Registration opens</td>
<td>Host Hotel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Noon</td>
<td>Dealer setup at show site</td>
<td>Fairgrounds</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3:00 pm</td>
<td>Exhibitor setup begins</td>
<td>Fairgrounds</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Field trip-workshop of the MTG&amp;MS</td>
<td>Fairgrounds</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8:00 pm</td>
<td>Show building closed</td>
<td>Fairgrounds</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Midday</td>
<td>General Jackson Showboat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday August 18</td>
<td>9:00 am</td>
<td>Registration opens</td>
<td>Fairgrounds</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9:00 am</td>
<td>Website seminar</td>
<td>Host Hotel</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Noon</td>
<td>All Officers luncheon</td>
<td>Host Hotel</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2:00 pm</td>
<td>Editors Seminar (tentative)</td>
<td>Host Hotel</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6:00 pm</td>
<td>Show closes</td>
<td>Host Hotel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday August 19</td>
<td>9:00 am</td>
<td>Registration opens</td>
<td>Fairgrounds</td>
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<td></td>
<td>9:00 am</td>
<td>Show opens</td>
<td>Fairgrounds</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9:00 am</td>
<td>AFMS Convention opens</td>
<td>Host Hotel</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1:00 pm</td>
<td>ALAA meeting</td>
<td>Host Hotel</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6:00 pm</td>
<td>Show Classes</td>
<td>Host Hotel</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7:00 pm</td>
<td>Awards Banquet</td>
<td>Host Hotel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday August 20</td>
<td>8:00 am</td>
<td>Editors Breakfast</td>
<td>Host Hotel</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9:00 am</td>
<td>Registration opens</td>
<td>Fairgrounds</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10:00 am</td>
<td>Show opens</td>
<td>Fairgrounds</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5:00 pm</td>
<td>Show closes</td>
<td>Fairgrounds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### All Officers Luncheon - Everyone is Invited to Attend

**Friday, August 18th, Noon, At the Host Hotel**

**Menu:**
- House Salad
- Ranch or Light Honey Mustard Dressing
- Penne Pasta
- Marinara Meat Sauce or Alfredo Sauce
- Dessert
- Iced Tea or Water

### Awards Banquet

**Saturday night, August 19th, 7:00 pm, At the Host Hotel**

Entrees are served with salad, fresh baked bread, iced tea water, coffee and dessert.

- House Salad
- Ranch or Light Honey Mustard Dressing

**Entrees:**
- Southern Bleu Chicken
  - Breast of chicken stuffed with country ham, smoked gouda cheese and baked en croute topped with a creole tomato sauce and chef's choice vegetable
- Pecan Crusted Trout
  - Fresh trout filet with pecan coating, wild rice pilaf and chef's choice vegetable

### Editors Breakfast

**Sunday, August 20th, 8:00 am, at the Host Hotel**

- The Preston Starter
  - Chilled fruit juice
  - Assorted baked breads, bagels and breakfast pastries
  - Scrambled egg
  - Bacon
  - Breakfast potatoes, Fresh brewed coffee and assorted teas

### Upcoming Regional Federation Shows

**by Mary Trammell, AFMS Show Coordinator**

- **California Federation**
  - June 9-11, 2006 - Angel's Camp, California
- **Eastern Federation**
  - November 17-19, 2006 - West Palm Beach, Florida
- **Midwest / AFMS**
  - May 19 - 21, 2006 - Southgate, Michigan
- **Northwest**
  - July 14-16, 2006 - Kelso, Washington
- **Rocky Mountain**
  - June 9-11, 2006 - Stillwater, Oklahoma
- **South Central**
  - August 18 - 20, 2006 - Bossier City, Louisiana
- **Southeast / AFMS**
  - August 14-20, 2006 - Nashville, Tennessee
**Field Trips**

**Tuesday, August 15**
- Field trip to Davidson County (Nashville) for fossils.
- **Time:** 8:00 am
- **Meeting place:** Host Hotel.
- **Trip leader:** Nancy Stetten.
- **Tools:** Rock hammer or small pick, fossils are showing in rubble at base of road, cut no holes to be dug. A hammer and chisel may be handy if any are located in larger rocks. Carry a bag or bucket for your finds.
- **Limit:** Just be reasonable in the quantity you take.
- **Cost:** No charge, but a donation to the MT&GMS would be appreciated to aid with cost of convention and show.
- **Regulations:** Listen to trip leader and stay away from high walls or the highway.

**Wednesday, August 16**
- Field trip to Woodbury, Tennessee for Tennessee quartz geodes.
- **Time:** 1:00 pm
- **Meeting place:** Woodbury, Tennessee.
- **Trip leaders:** John and Portia Stanley and Mike Waters.
- **Tools:** Rock hammer or small pick, geodes are showing at the surface, no holes to be dug. Carry a bag or bucket for your finds.
- **Limit:** Just be reasonable in the quantity you take.
- **Cost:** $5.00 to the landowner. Pay with your individual ticket.
- **Regulations:** Must not break geodes on site. Field must be dug, no extra charge.

**Other Events**

**GRAND OLD OPRY**

**GENERAL JACKSON SHOWBOAT**

This is available for a mid-day cruise. We have left time for this on Thursday night. The tickets, by mail order, are: $49.11 plus the $3.75 charges for mail order. Should 15 or more want this and get together the cost will be about $44.20 for the best seating and no extra charge.

**Call 1-800-733-6779 to make reservations for either of these special events.**

**Field Trips**

**Tuesday, August 15**
- Field trip to new MTSU Gem, Mineral and Fossil Museum in Murfreesboro.
- **Time:** 10:00 pm
- **Meeting place:** At museum or on return from geode hunt.
- **Cost:** No charge, but a donation to the museum would be appreciated to aid in additions to the museum displays.

There will be a map in your packet, at the Registration Table, showing you how to get to the museum. There will be an attendant at the museum all day to allow visitors to enter.

**Wednesday, August 16**
- Field trip to Woodbury, Tennessee for Tennessee quartz geodes.
- **Time:** 8:00 am
- **Meeting place:** Woodbury, Tennessee.
- **Trip leader:** Nancy Stetten.
- **Tools:** Rock hammer or small pick, fossils are showing in rubble at base of road, cut no holes to be dug. A hammer and chisel may be handy if any are located in larger rocks. Carry a bag or bucket for your finds.
- **Limit:** Just be reasonable in the quantity you take.
- **Cost:** No charge, but a donation to the museum would be appreciated to aid in additions to the museum displays.

There will be a map in your packet, at the Registration Table, showing you how to meet for the trip. We will meet at Woodbury at 9:00 am. We will then caravan to the collecting site. It is requested that you “car pool” as much as possible as the road to the collecting site is passable in a car, but is more suitable to a pickup or SUV.

**Other Things to Do**

Besides the Opry and General Jackson showboats, there are a lot of things to do and see in the Nashville area. Here are just a few:

**The Hermitage,** home of President Andrew Jackson is just a few miles from the host hotel. This stately mansion and grounds opened as a museum in 1889 and has attracted over million visitors since.

**Belle Meade Plantation** is south of Nashville and gives an excellent overview of “Southern plantation living”.

The Parthenon in Nashville is an exact replica of the famed Parthenon in Athens. The plaster replicas of the Parthenon Marbles found in the Nax are direct casts of the original sculptures which adorned the pediments of the Athenian Parthenon, dating back to 438 B.C.

When people think of the Grand Ole Opry they usually think of the Ryman Auditorium. Built in 1892, this was the original home for the Opry shows.

The Opryland Hotel is located next to the Grand Ole Opry auditorium north of Nashville and near the host hotel. This huge hotel features several indoor themed atria filled with lush vegetation, and places to eat and shop.

Nashville Zoo at Grassmere is located near Belle Meade Plantation south of Nashville. The zoo features a wide variety of animals, birds and reptiles including meerkats, lorikeets, elephants, and macaws.

**Country Music Hall of Fame** in downtown Nashville traces the history of the evolution of country music. The historic RCA Studio B is housed here as well.

In addition, Nashville features a wide variety of first class restaurants to fit every dining preference and pocket book. Guided tours of the city are also available thru such vendors as Gray Line Tours.

**Show Committee:**

- **Lewis Elrod:** General Chair
- **Anna Elrod:** Event Secretary
- **Mary Clyde Sparks:** Convention Chair
- **Ann Buckner:** Accommodations
- **Barbara Fields:** Decorating & Favors
- **Steve Henegar:** Dealer Chair
- **Bill Buckner:** Demonstrations Chair
- **Marty Hart:** Physical Arrangements
- **Will Smith:** Show Chair, Treasurer & Publicity
- **John Stanley, Portia Stanley & Mike Waters:** Exhibits
- **Anna Elrod & Ann Buckner:** Hospitality
- **John Stanley, Portia Stanley & Mike Waters:** Field Trips
**Official Registration Form**

**AFMS/SFMS Annual Convention and Show**

Sponsored by the Middle Tennessee Gem & Mineral Society, Inc.

**Note:** Cut-off date for motel reservations is July 15, 2006. The hotel will not hold rooms past this date and you may not be able to get a room at the agreed price after this date. The cut-off date also applies to this registration sheet and the activities thereon. We may be able to entertain you after this date but this is not guaranteed.

**Please copy this form as needed and complete a separate form for each person registering.** Each registrant will be provided with a packet of information concerning the Nashville area, tickets for meals, name badges, etc. Packets for same household will be combined. Meal tickets will be collected at the function to determine attendance.

Confirmation of registration will be sent to all registrants. Tickets to meals and show will be included in your packet. Everyone is welcome to attend any session or function. Please register so we will be able to plan to accommodate you properly.

**Name:** ____________________________________________________________  **Phone:** ___________________________

**Address:** ________________________________________________________________  **Email:** ____________________

**City:** ______________________________________________________  **State:** _______  **ZIP:** ____________________

Please check all items that apply to you so we may correctly issue your name badge.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AFMS</th>
<th>SFMS</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>AFMS Officer</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Past President</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Delegate</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Alternate Delegate</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>AFMS Officer</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Editor</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Judge</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Exhibitor</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Office(s) held as indicated above for name tag: __________________________________________________________

**Society affiliation:** ___________________________________________________________________________________

**City:** __________________________________________________________  **State:** _______________________________

**Tickets for which registration and/or payment must be made in advance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Net Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Three day show pass-only with pre-registration</td>
<td>$6.00</td>
<td>$__________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Officers Luncheon</td>
<td>$17.00</td>
<td>$__________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convention Banquet-Pecan Encrusted Trout</td>
<td><strong>$29.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>$35.00</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banquet-Southern Bleu Chicken</td>
<td><strong>$29.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>$35.00</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editors breakfast-The Preston Starter</td>
<td>$17.00</td>
<td>$__________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geode Hunt</td>
<td>$5.00</td>
<td>$__________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show pins, $2.00 each plus $1.00 per order for shipping</td>
<td>$__________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>$__________</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following are at no fee, but donations are welcome.

Please indicate your intent to attend. This will assist us with space planning, etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rules Committee</th>
<th>AFMS Annual Meeting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scholarship Meeting</td>
<td>Fossil hunt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cracker Barrel</td>
<td>Museum visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editors Seminar</td>
<td>Web-Masters Seminar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Mail to:** MTG&MS, P. O. Box 1256, Murfreesboro, TN 37133-1256.
In this document, the instructions for the Competitive Exhibit Entry Form are provided. The form is for the Combined SFMS & AFMS Convention held in Nashville, Tennessee, August 18-20, 2006. The form includes details on how to submit information, the instructions for setup, dismantling, and the rules for case and space information. It also includes a statement from the exhibitor certifying that all materials exhibited are their personal property, and that all workmanship was done by them. The form is filled out with personal information, exhibit details, and includes a section for the exhibitor to sign. The final note mentions that SFMS will furnish security and take reasonable precautions to protect property and person of exhibitor, but will take no responsibility for any losses or claims.
COMBINED SFMS & AFMS CONVENTION
Tennessee State Fairgrounds
Nashville, Tennessee
August 18-20, 2006

Non-competitive Exhibit Entry Form

Installation and setup: All exhibits are to be setup by the exhibitor between 3:00 pm and 8:00 pm on Thursday, August 17, 2006 and 8:00 am and 9:00 am on Friday, August 18, 2006.

Dismantling: No exhibit shall be dismantled before the close of the show at 5:00 pm on Sunday, August 20, 2006 without permission of the Show or Exhibits Chairman. Exhibitors are responsible for dismantling and removing their exhibits as soon as possible after the show closes.

Security: The MTG&MS will furnish security and take reasonable precautions to protect property and person of the exhibitor, but will take no responsibility for any losses or claims.

Deadline Date: Exhibit forms must be received by July 15, 2006.

Dealer Exhibits: Dealer exhibits will be encouraged, but are not mandatory.

Application and Submission: Complete this form and send to the address below. After exhibit acceptance you will be notified.

Exhibitors Name: _______________________________________________________ Phone: (_________) _______________________
Address: ___________________________________________________ Email: ________________________________________________
City: ___________________________________________ State: _________ ZIP: _______________________________
Club Affiliation: __________________________________________________________________ Federation: __________________________________________
Give a short description of your exhibit: ________________________________________________________________________________________
Case width (in feet) _________________ Electricity required: yes: __________ No__________

Host society has a limited number of cases, without liners, that will be allotted on a “first come” basis. The interior dimensions of the cases can be found on the website. Please indicate if you need a case provided to you: _____________

Exhibitors Signature:__________________________________________________

Mail to: Lewis Elrod
2699 Lascassas Pike, Murfreesboro, TN 37130-1541

Applications must be received by July 15th as a deadline.

Please use a separate form for each application for display.

Reproductions of this form are acceptable.
HIGHWAY CLAIMS FAMED ROCK SHOP BY EMINENT DOMAIN

©by Todd C. Frankel, St. Louis Post-Dispatch, March 26, 2006. Used with permission of the author.

ALEXANDRIA, MO.

Betty Sheffler stubbed out her cigarette in the turtle-asphalt, shifted in her motorized scooter and, with a whiff of resignation, signed the papers.

She'd get her money in a week or so. For now, the 80-year-old woman sits in the young man from the Missouri Department of Transportation.

"It is a house of history. And it seems such a shame, such a pitiful shame for so much thought to be put into any place," Sheffler said, "and have it destroyed."

They were gathered inside Sheffler's horseshoe-shaped shop in the state's northeast corner. The highway - the reason for this awkward meeting - runs close by on its way to the I-owalda border. The home's exterior walls were covered with exotic, multihued rocks from all over the world. Inside was even more rock - Mexican calcite, Brazilian quartz and thousands of Keokuk geodes, rocks unique to this region.

For years, hobbyists and tourists have stopped here, at Sheffler Rock Shop, to buy, talk, or spend a few hours digging for their own rocks at Sheffler's geode mines. Sheffler's place is considered a treasure for collectors, and an ever-more valuable one as the places open to rock hunters become increasingly hard to find, just like the rocks themselves. "They have quite a reputation all over the country," said Steve Weinberger of the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies.

"It's the same one," he responded.

But the rock shop and the house, and perhaps even the mines, will soon be gone. Sheffler has until May 1 to leave the land she's owned for nearly 60 years. The state needs it to expand Highway 61 from four lanes to two, part of the Avenue of the Saints running from St. Louis to St. Paul.

Sheffler fought the state. But the state pushed back with a court-ordered condemnation under eminent domain. Which is why the man from the highway department was visiting last week with the promise of compensation.

"I'll do as soon tear up the check and set fire to it and stay home," Sheffler said. "But it's not my home, now is it?"

Betty Sheffler stubbed out her cigarette in the turtle-asphalt, shifted in her motorized scooter and, with a whiff of resignation, signed the papers.

The man from the highway department stood with his hands clasped in front of him. He said nothing. Off to the side sat an old cash register with a hand-torn up check and a set of fire.

"It is another thing to let people go and dig their own and get the thrill of it."

Steve Rudloff knows the thrill. A short time after the highway man left Sheffler's house, Rudloff arrived looking to dig. He'd driven the 160 miles from Jefferson City that morning.

"I thought I'd give it a shot before the highway comes through," said Rudloff, 57.

He was covered in orange mud. Rudloff wore an insulated jumpsuit and gloves to protect against the chill. Sitting on his knees, he swung a hammer against a chisel pointed into the shale. Tap, tap, tap. He moved the chisel a bit. Tap, tap. He tossed broken pieces of black rock over his shoulder. He set aside two small geodes.

He hit the chisel a few more times and stopped. He picked up a gray geode that had split open. He held it in the sun. The light caught a wealth of crystals colored gold and shaped like tiny squares.

"I've just never found one that nice before."

"It's a terrible thing"

The 526-mile Avenue of the Saints project is completed except for a 17-mile stretch around Sheffler's place. The narrow highway is considered treacherous. Trucks fly past with only a double yellow line in between. In 2000, this stretch emerged as a symbol of unsafe roads when a teenager, just weeks from her high school graduation, was killed in a head-on collision.

Sheffler has known for years that the state might take her land. Last August, the highway department went to court, invoking the government's right to take private property for certain purposes. In January, the state paid $632,868 to compensate Sheffler for the loss of 21 acres, according to state records. She will keep about 30 nearby acres.

"That's right where the interchange needs to be," explained Tim Batkenhorst, a state highway project manager. "It's unfortunate."

"The rough exterior is not very pretty," Sheffler said. "But you look inside and it is beautiful."

In 1947, she married and moved to the property she is now losing to the highway. She recalled how her late husband was astonished at the truckloads of rocks that came with his new bride. Twelve years later, she opened her rock shop. In 1960, she opened her first geode mine. And in 1971, she and her husband finished the horseshoe-shaped house with 60 tons of rocks laid in the walls.

The beauty of rocks she collected her entire life are beyond her now.

"It is a house of history. And it seems such a shame, such a pitiful shame for so much thought to be put into any place," Sheffler said, "and have it destroyed."

Sheffler's son, Tim, manages the business for his mother. He doesn't know what will happen to the mines. He expects the mines to be closed this year, and perhaps forever.

Keokuk, a town of 11,000 residents, had declared Sept. 20, 1997, "Betty Sheffler Day." There were T-shirts and speeches. Last year, the town hosted its first Rocktober Geode Fest. Sheffler's place was one of the main attractions. Most prime rock hunting spots are off-limits due to concerns about liability insurance and trespassing.

Rockhounds, with numbers estimated at more than 50,000 nationwide, say they don't know what they'll do without Sheffler's place. There are perhaps fewer than a dozen such geode mines in the country, and none as well-known.

"It's a terrible thing for all of us," said June Culp Zeitner, of Rapid City, S.D.

Zeitner, known as the "Queen of Mineralogy," has authored nine books on rocks. At age 90 and with the days of climbing rock piles behind her, Zeitner is working on a new book. This one is about geodes. She has visited Sheffler's mine many times.

"Every place we lose, we can't get back. It was the last place that I knew of where we knew we could find something and it was legal," Zeitner said.

Back at her house, Sheffler recalled one of Zeitner's visits. She sat in her scooter in an area crammed with now-empty glass display cases.

"We sat here, right where you're standing and pulling out geodes. She loves daw-daw geodes. And the daw drop is so lovely," Sheffler said. "So lovely."

Sheffler recalled the crystal's appearance from memory. Her bright blue eyes see little these days. She can make out the shadows of a visitor standing in front of her, but not a geode's fine crystal fingers. The beauty of rocks she collected her entire life are beyond her now.

"I miss them. I really miss them," she said.

Soon, Sheffler will leave her house of rock.

Tim Sheffler secured two halves of a large geode with masking tape. His mother asked if it was one of her favorites. He asked her to describe it.

"Selenite from one side to the other, probably 20 some-odd inches of selenite," she said.

"It's the same one," he responded.

"The exterior felt different to me," she said.

Tim Sheffler finished wrapping the rock and packed it away for the move.

<tfirnkel@post-dispatch.com 314-340-8110>