The Excitement Builds!

by Donna Moore, Endowment Chair

Just think - twenty-seven lucky ticket buyers will be taking home some terrific prizes from the Tulsa AFMS/RMFMS Convention after the drawing is held on July 12. It could be you! But, if you have not purchased your tickets, it will not be. The 2014 Endowment Drawing winners will be announced at the awards banquet. You need not be present to win, but you will need to hold one of the winning tickets. If you’re not in attendance, I’ll be glad to mail your prize to you.

Monies garnered from the sale of tickets for the drawing is invested with the interest from these investments used to fund various AFMS projects including the purchase and distribution of the various badges that can be earned by junior rockhounds in the various AFMS affiliated clubs throughout the country. These badges are available at no charge to clubs, thanks to the AFMS Endowment Fund and your generous contributions. Additional programs funded by the fund include digitization of many of the older AFMS slide programs, purchasing new programs to distribute to the regional federations and the judges training seminars.

New prizes have been added this month and more are on the way!

Prize #14 - a wulfenite on limonite matrix specimen donated by the Wichita Gem & Mineral Society. The specimen has an estimated value of $50.00 (RMFMS).

Prize $15 - a specimen of fluorite from the now closed Minerva Mine in Hardin Co., IL. This beautiful dark purple specimen was donated by the Lincoln Orbit Earth Science Society and Charles Mansfield and has an estimated value of $50.00 (MWF).

Prize #16 - another Specimen of fluorite from the now closed Minerva Mine in Hardin County, Illinois. This beautiful dark purple specimen has been donated by Lincoln Orbit Earth Science Society and Charles Mansfield. This specimen weighs about 3 # 5 oz., and the approximate value is $100.00. (MWF).

Prize #17 - a necklace fashioned by Doris Keane of Clinton, IL. She wire wrapped the faceted green fluorite stone and made the necklace from gold filled wire. The estimate value of this piece is $90.00 (MWF).

Prize #18 - a framed poster of the Dom Pedro aquamarine recently donated to the Smithsonian Institution. The poster is signed by Curator Jeffrey Post and has an estimated value of $500.00. (EFMLS)

Prize #19 is a druzy quartz from Mexico that has been dubbed “Van Gogh’s ear”. Donated by K. C. Foster, it has an estimated value of $50.00. (EFMLS)

Please Note:

Due to illness and travel by the editor, there was no AFMS Newsletter published for May.

In addition, this is the last issue you will receive until September since the Newsletter is traditionally not published during July and August.

Deadline for the September issue is August 1.

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The AFMS
Proudly
Serving
Seven Regional
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From My Desk to Yours
by Richard Jaeger, President

One thing I have been surprised by during my time as AFMS President is being asked on a number of occasions to intervene in disputes involving rockhounds. These have been a variety of disagreements between clubs and their regional federation or between individuals and their clubs or federation. The AFMS is not set up to settle disputes between individuals with their club or regional federation! We cannot dictate the policies of individual clubs or federations. This went so far in one case as to an individual wanting the AFMS to provide them with legal council so they could sue their club’s board of directors! At least two other cases were equally absurd.

There are always going to be disagreements on what is best for a club, or for any level of organization within the AFMS. Clubs or federations should be open and fair in their deliberations. Usually a controversial issue has two sides, both of which have valid arguments; I know I sometimes disagree with actions taken by own club. But, once a decision is made, let’s pull together, get along, move forward, and not hold grudges; don’t get mad and drop out. I know of one case in the Rocky Mountain Federation where a large club split into two clubs over a dispute; now both clubs have folded. In another case a very successful club split into two clubs; only one still exists and it is no longer part of the federation. Please don’t let disagreements destroy or weaken your organization; it ends up benefitting no one and certainly not our hobby!

On a more pleasant note, I just had the pleasure of visiting with the Eastern Federation officers and members during their annual convention in Plymouth Meeting, PA. In addition to attending their well run and spirited meeting, I was able to enjoy their show, awards banquet as well as the Sunday breakfast with the editors and webmasters. Despite a weekend of pouring rain, I was also able to spend time in downtown Philadelphia touring Independence Hall, the Philadelphia Mint and the Wagner Free Institute. I was also able to “put my foot” in Delaware, one of the states I’d previously had a chance to visit and also visit Valley Forge.

I want to invite and to encourage you to attend the combined American Federation/Rocky Mountain Federation Show and Convention in Tulsa, Oklahoma from July 9 to 13, 2014. The actual show is from July 11 to 13 with various meetings beginning on the 9th. The AFMS Show is always a wonderful opportunity to visit with fellow rockhounds from around the country.

The Tulsa Rock & Mineral Society, in conjunction with the RMFMS has been working hard to provide us with an excellent show; it will be complete with dealers, a variety of exhibits, kid’s activities, programs, silent auction, field trips and more. They will also be providing the usual All-Officers Luncheon on Thursday, the Cracker Barrel on Friday, the Awards Banquet Saturday evening and Breakfast with the Editors & Webmasters on Sunday morning. Of course this is also where the AFMS will conduct the business of our Federation. The AFMS Uniform Rules Committee will meet Wednesday evening with the AFMS Board of Directors and the AFMS Scholarship Foundation meetings taking place on Thursday.

Check out the AFMS Website, <www.amfed.org> for all the registration forms and information on the show. Once again, I invite you to attend the AFMS/RFMS Show & Convention and am looking forward to visiting with as many of you as I can.

Richard

Club Rockhounds of the Year
from Evelyn Cataldo, AFMS Chair

SPRING into action club members! Every club has a special member (either individual or couple) that has contributed to the success of the club. Honor that member(s) by sending a short paragraph (100 words or less) to your Federation’s ACROY chairperson telling us why that rockhound is special. Each club can choose one AFMS Rockhound (or couple) per year. In addition, every club can honor a junior rockhound each year. If you have questions about the process, send me an email at <cataldoevelyn@yahoo.com>. Happy spring!

Eastern Federation
The Che-Hanna Rock and Mineral Club was pleased to select Dave MILLS for our 2014 Club Rockhound of the Year. Dave returned from sunny, warm Florida to help with our annual show. He assisted with set-up, cleanup and all through the show by offering craft lessons to attendees. Dave volunteered to be in charge of the education and entertainment at our covered dish meeting and two summer picnics, and donated all the prizes. He also donates door prizes for regular meetings.

Dave presents programs to the club and schools, led a field trip to Canada, took school groups to look for fossils and served as auctioneer of a collection from a deceased member for a scholarship in that person’s name. We would like to honor Dave’s work with this award.

submitted by Inga Wells, President

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Prize #20 is a copper specimen from the Champion #3 Mine, Painesdale, MI. Collected in the 1970's it was donated by K. C. Foster and has an estimated value of $75.00. (EFMLS)

Prize #21 is a malachite desk set, with handles turned on a lathe by Mary Boesdorfer of Springfield, Illinois. Donated by J.C. and Donna Moore. Approximate value of the set is $130.00. (MF)

Prize #22 is a mala chite desk set, with handles turned on a lathe by Mary Boesdorfer of Springfield, Illinois. Donated by J.C. and Donna Moore. Approximate value of the set is $130.00. (MF)

Prize #23 is a blue lace agate with black agate necklace wirewrapped in gold. Donated by Cathy Patterson, the approximate value of the necklace is $60.00. (EFMLS)

Prize #24, also donated by Cathy Patterson is a necklace made of jet, amber and shell and has an estimated value of $50.00. (EFMLS)

Prize #25 is a beautiful hand turned California walnut wood bowl made and donated by Marion Roberts, AFMS President-elect from California. It is 13” in diameter and has an estimated value of $200 - $250.00. (CFMLS)

Prize #26 is a gem tree fashioned by Jerri Heer of Florida. It is a large maple style made with 24 gauge silver plated copper wire mounted on a specimen of blue fluorite from the Blanchard Mine is Bingham, NM. With leaves made of abalone, the tree has an estimated value of $100.00. (SFMS)

Prize #27 is another gem tree fashioned by Jerri Heer. It is a large Bonsai style also with silver plated copper wire on a Uruguayuan druzy Amethyst base and set with Amethyst leaves. It has an estimated value of $75.00. (SFMS)

To purchase tickets for a chance to own these or any of the other prizes send a check (payable to AFMS Endowment) along with a stamped, self-addressed envelope and your name, address and phone number to the endowment representative for your regional federation. Deadline for receipt of all mail requests is July 1. Tickets are $5 each of 5 for $20.00.

Your regional sales representatives are:

California Federation
Colleen McGann
P.O. Box 224, Santa Clara, CA 95052

Eastern Federation
Carolyn Weinberger
P.O. Box 302, Glyndon, MD 21071-0302

Midwest Federation
J.C. Moore
25235 N. State Route 97, Cuba, IL 61427

Northwest Federation
Chris Blickfeldt
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Rocky Mountain
DeLae Cox
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South Central
Catherine E. Roucnon
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Southeast
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Purpose of the AFMS: To promote popular interest and education in the various Earth Sciences, and in particular the subjects of Geology, Mineralogy, Paleontology, Lapidary and other related subjects, and to sponsor and provide means of coordinating the work and efforts of all persons and groups interested therein; to sponsor and encourage the formation and international development of Societies and Regional Federations and by and through such means to strive toward greater international good will and fellowship.

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In 2009 the U.S. Congress approved, and President Obama signed, the Paleontological Resources Preservation Act, part of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009. I have always been interested in Subtitle D—Paleontological Resources Preservation, section 6301 and following. Although many people battled against passage of the bill, I believed the PPRA was a positive step forward for rockhounds since it gave the community certain rights to collect: CASUAL COLLECTING—The term ‘casual collecting’ means the collecting of a reasonable amount of common invertebrate and plant paleontological resources for non-commercial personal use, either by surface collection or the use of non-powered hand tools resulting in only negligible disturbance to the Earth’s surface and other resources.

It also stated that rockhounds do not need a permit (there are exceptions) to collect common invertebrate and plant fossils on BLM and USFS land: (2) CASUAL COLLECTING EXCEPTION: The Secretary shall allow casual collecting without a permit on Federal land controlled or administered by the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Reclamation, and the Forest Service, where such collection is consistent with the laws governing the management of those Federal land where this subtitle.

In addition, rockhounds are allowed to collect a “reasonable amount” of these common fossils. Furthermore, the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture were assigned to work together and define “reasonable amounts, common invertebrates, common fossil plants and negligible disturbance.” And, this latter requirement seems to be the fly in the ointment!

Last July the USFS made an attempt to define the terms listed above and the rockhound community (at least the fossils collectors) was “not very happy with results.” Some/cany causal collectors wrote letters to the agency, and I contacted several of the BLM paleontologists since the two agencies are working together. The full text of the USFS draft proposal may be found at:www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2013-05-23/pdf/2013-12173.pdf.

Here are a few parts of the draft that sort of rankled rockhounds.

291.5 Common invertebrate and plant paleontological resources are invertebrate or plant fossils that are of ordinary occurrence and wide-spread distribution. Not all invertebrate and plant paleontological resources are common.

In my opinion, not all common invertebrates and plant fossils are of widespread occurrence—widespread is not the same as common. But what does widespread really encompass? Fossil collectors know from their experience those fossils that are rare and should be shared with the museum/university communities. I can’t imagine the term “widespread” holding up in a court of law and think it better to allow fossil collectors the opportunity to present a museum with an uncommon specimen. This seems a bad solution looking for a problem.

291.5 Negligible disturbance means little or no change to the surface of the land and causing minimal or no effect on other resources. The authorized officer has discretion to determine what constitutes negligible disturbance.

This rule, as written, sees essentially unenforceable. Different rangers certainly would have diverse views about land disturbance. I realize that hand tools can cause “negligible disturbances”—all I need to do is look at forest land near Colorado Springs where quartz and amazontite hunters have dug up a storm. However, I would not want to be the USFS and take this ambiguous statement to court. Education of rockhounds seems the best answer; however, TV shows talking about big bucks for specimens brings out a wide variety of non-ethical rockhounds looking for the “easy” money and destroying the landscape. It seems reasonable prohibit negligible disturbance; however, I believe the regulation should be constructed in a better understandable manner.

291.5 Non-powered hand tools mean small tools that do not use or are not operated by a motor, engine, or other power source. These tools are limited to small tools that can be easily carried by hand such as geological hammers, trowels, or sieves, but not large tools such as full-sized shovels or pick axes.

This is not an interpretation of the law but someone writing new law. The U.S. Congress, in passing the PPRA, allowed the causal collector to use non-powered hand tools. I find it hard to believe that anyone could/would not label a shovel or a pick axe as a hand tool!

291.5 Reasonable amount means a maximum per calendar year of one gallon by volume or 25 pounds by weight, and generally includes not more than five specimens of any one fossil kind. For rock slabs containing fossils, the amount is limited to a slab that can be hand-carried by one person with minimal effort without the aid of mechanical devices.

This is the section that really drove me “to drink” (in the vernacular)—rockhounds may only collect a single gallon or 25 pounds in one year! What about some of the large amoanites that may weigh in excess of 25 pounds? According to the rules, the rockhound would be finished for the year. I have seen landscapes littered with fossil oysters that would easily fill a gallon container in a few minutes. Not that I would need that many oysters, but some collectors give samples to school children. I also question if the writer(s) of this section has ever collected fossil Crinarians (bryozoans). At some localities a collector could reach down and pick up a handful of bryozoan colonies, somewhere in excess of “100 colonies—not five. How could this regulation ever be enforced? Will someone count my bryozoans—and could they tell the difference between those similar-looking little boogers? As for carrying a slab out of the field, what if the collector has a “bad back” and wanted to put the 10 pound slab on a small cart with wheels for a ride to the vehicle?

Not all rockhounds agree with me, but the PPRA was a good piece of legislation in that it: 1) prohibited the collection of vertebrate fossils; 2) allowed the causal collector a legal opportunity to collect common invertebrate fossils; and 3) essentially restricted the number of fossils collected by disallowing the sale or barter of fossils.

There are several other confusing provisions in the proposed rules but space in this column prevents further explanations. I will continue to monitor the situation, and work with the agencies to write the regulations. My big fear is that the USFS will adopt the rules and BLM would soon follow. If that happens, my guess is that the agencies will then begin to define limits of minerals and that would be even more of a disaster.

Most rockhounds are good and honest collectors and many collectors that specialize in fossils are anxious to donate rare specimens to museums. Honest rockhounds want to work with the agencies. Most regulations associated with PPRA should address the dishonest collectors selling specimens on the open or black market.

Till next time.
Glenn M. Lee
February 12, 1915 – April 10, 2014

The Dynamic Duo will now rest in peace….

Glenn Lee, surviving member of the dynamic Duo of Dorothy and Glenn Lee passed away in April 2014, at age 99. Notified by his daughter Peggy, of the sad news, all rockhounds from throughout the US mourn the passing of one of the most influential families in the rockhounding community.

Their odyssey began with their marriage in 1943 in Chicago, IL. Moving to McCord, Washington, on to Butte, MT and finally their home for the rest of their lives in Pendleton, Oregon. There they had three girls, Dinah, Linda and Peggy. Dorothy and Glenn were charter members till their deaths in the Oregon Trail Gem and Mineral Society. They were involved immediately in all aspects of the rockhounding community. Dorothy was President of the Northwest Federation in 1964. Glenn followed in 1973–74 and Dorothy became the third woman president of the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies in 1974.

You found them at all the Northwest Federation annual meetings offering their perspective and support in all manners of our hobby. They exhibited competitively, cut and polished the rocks they collected all over the country, shared their knowledge with local school children as well as those of us who wandered into their sphere of influence. They were in the forefront of the AFMS Scholarship Foundation inception and Glenn was president of the AFMS Scholarship Foundation from 1971 – 1983, during which the Foundation grew by leaps and bounds. Dorothy and Glenn were Honorees in the NFMS in 1985 and drew great pride in selecting two students for AFMS Scholarship at the University of Washington. At the time the Award was $1500. for two years for each student.

Dorothy and Glenn also attended almost all of the American Federation annual meetings and were among those instrumental in establishing the AFMS Endowment Fund. You could find them for many years along with Charley and Betty Leach hawking their donations to get the funds we now have for the AFMS Endowment Fund.

Both Dorothy and Glenn supported the newly established American Lands Access Association, founded in 1992, and Glenn was a member when he passed away. We will miss their combined support of this important arm of the AFMS.

They supported the AFMS Scholarship Foundation by helping establish the ‘Stone Auction’ at the NFMS and later it was added to the AFMS banquets as a continued fundraiser. When Dorothy passed away in June 2010 Glenn decided to give all the stones that they had purchased through the ‘stone auctions’ over the years to the AFMS Scholarship Foundation to be ‘recycled’. The stones are currently being sold again in their honor.

We shall never forget. Dorothy and Glenn will be in our hearts forever…. Shirley Leeson, AFMS Historian and friend

Glenn spent his “working career” as a meteorologist for the weather bureau. He also spent 26 years as a volunteer fireman. He and Dorothy loved to travel and spent each winter exploring the American Southwest. Because of his good health, he was able to spend 40 years travelling, and collecting rocks and friends after he retired in 1973.

He is survived by his three daughters, Dinah, Peggy and Linda as well as numerous grand and great-grandchildren.

Contributions in his memory may be directed to the AFMS Scholarship Foundation, % of your local Scholarship Foundation Coordinator. CW

The Rock and Arrowhead Club of Klamath Falls, Oregon names Marshall Curran as their 2014 Rockhound of the Year. Marshall’s talents not only benefit our club, but the Klamath County Community, including school field trips to find Yadenite. Last summer, Marshall designed and constructed a native plant garden with rocks and a water feature at the Klamath County Museum as well as a black light display of the rock club’s collection. He cataloged and provided the information for this display, which is also an important feature of our annual show and educational programs.

Marshall is a Special Program provider for schools in Northern California and Oregon. He identifies specimens and provides information on what, why and where your treasure most likely came from. His knowledge about rocks is kept current through classes at GIA. He has held office in our rock club and is a valuable member.

Rocky Mountain
Lois Splendoria’s work with the Mineral Society of Arizona (MSA) is a story of service and devotion. Lois became a Milestone Life Member in 2014 and served as President in 1998, 1999 and 2009. Lois also served in the strategically important position as Editor of our Rockhound Record newsletter for three different intervals; first time for one year, second time for two years and most recently for over three and a half years.

On behalf of MSA, we are grateful for Lois’ many years of service. MSA is here largely due to her talents and passion. We will always appreciate her contributions and can continue to enjoy her Rockhound Record newsletter legacy as archived on MSA’s website under the Newsletters tab. Thank you, Lois, and we wish you well in all of your future endeavors. MSA needs you!

Submitted by Bill Cain
Federal and State Public Lands Management Agencies are moving forward with their plans to update, revise and chart the course of Public Land Management policy on our lands for the next 15 to 20 years. We all need to be reminded and aware of some simple facts as this process plays out on Public Lands within our NFMS geographical area and elsewhere in our nation. There are some fundamental truths regarding the “RS 2477” law which I would like to share with you in hopes they might not be forgotten and lost in this process of change.

What is RS 2477 you ask! It is a simply worded and straightforward law. The entire text of RS 2477 reads as follows, “The right-of-way for the construction of Highways across public lands not reserved for public purpose is hereby granted.”

In 1976 Congress specifically and clearly reaffirmed the validity and intent of RS 2477. Having become a law in 1866 there are those with a mind-set now, who argue that RS 2477 is not relevant and consistent with modern public land management policy. But when Congress repealed RS 2477 twenty-two plus years ago and replaced it with many other laws found within the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLMPA) they also specifically and explicitly reaffirmed all RS 2477 grants previously made. RS 2477 was a self-executing law. When the conditions were met, the right-of-way was made. No further action by the grantee or by Congress was necessary to validate it.

Congress specifically by-passed the Executive Branch of the Federal Government in making RS 2477 grants. Under our Constitution, Congress has the exclusive power to manage and dispose of public lands and property (Article IV, Section 3: “The Congress shall have Power to dispose of and make all needful Rules and Regulations respecting the Territory or other property belonging to the United States.”). In 1976 when Congress reaffirmed the RS 2477 right-of-way granting process as original established, it had the total power to do so. The Federal land management agencies really then have no authority over public lands beyond what Congress delegates to them.

This RS 2477 right-of-way grant is a property right. Therefore, it enjoys the same constitutional and legal protections as any other property. Legally, when the grant was made, the federal government’s interest in the land under the right-of-way became the “servient estate” and the interest of the right-of-way grantee became the “dominant estate”. That means that while the federal government is protected against unnecessary or undue damage to the land under the right-of-way, it cannot interfere with the grantee’s exercise of its rights.

The RS 2477 grant also conveyed a bundle of associated rights. These include the right to maintain the road and even upgrade the road. This federal law also is different because state law plays a major role. It can partially determine the scope of these associated rights, how the requirements of the grant offer were met, as well as the width of the right-of-way granted.

It is legally incorrect to call RS 2477 assertions “claims.” The term “claim” suggests that there is some process which must still be followed before the RS 2477 right-of-way is fully granted and valid. In reality, the grant was either validly made before RS 2477 was repealed in 1976 or it was not. If it was, then it is not a claim but a valid grant, and the grantee asserts its validity. If it was not, then it cannot be asserted under a repealed law. The anti-access activists and some federal bureaucrats like to talk about “claims” to confuse the issue. When someone talks about RS 2477 “claims,” they are either confused or deceptive.

Congress granted a right-of-way, not a road. In fact, RS 2477 rights-of-way can host a number of things besides roads. The legal definition of “highway” in the law means not only the frequently-traveled, periodically-maintained roads commonly associated with it, but also other kinds of public ways, including carriage-ways, bridle-ways, foot ways, trails, bridges, and even railroad tracks, canals, ferries and navigable rivers. The essential element in defining “highway” is that whatever the means of transport, the public has the right to come and go at will.

The present physical condition of a road is totally irrelevant to whether a valid RS 2477 right-of-way exists. This should be obvious, but this is the point on which the anti-access folks are spreading the most misinformation. Whether a road is barely visible on the ground or even has been obliterated for any other reason, the legal status of the right-of-way is not affected. The grantee can legally re-establish the road even if it has totally disappeared. It follows, then, that it is also impossible to determine whether a valid right-of-way exists simply by looking at it. A right-of-way can only be relinquished or abandoned in accordance with state law.

A valid RS 2477 road can be established merely by the passage of vehicles. The case law and federal policy for over a century are clear: construction by machinery is not required to do so. Anti-access forces are frantically trying to convince the public otherwise. Don’t be misled. No federal land management agency can determine the validity of an RS 2477 assertion. The agency can only determine for its own administrative purposes whether or not it will recognize the assertion as valid. Constitutionally, only a court can determine the validity.

No federal agency has the authority to close an RS 2477 road for any reason, period. This follows logically, but many federal bureaucrats think they have this authority and try to act accordingly. When next you run into one, outline the points listed here and ask them to cite the legal authority by which they claim they can close an RS 2477 road. Tie them in knots.

So here’s a request. Via Regional Federation newsletters, local newsletters, and local society meetings, get out the word to encourage youth submissions in those newsletters. Next year, give this old man a chance to be cranky 20 times, not just 10! And in case you think I’m lecturing at you, I’m taking myself to the woodshed on this one. My own local society didn’t have a single article written by a junior member in 2013 because we didn’t take it upon ourselves to encourage it. From the articles I’ve read, it’s clear that kids have had great fun during field trip adventures, while learning about fossils and mineral wonders, and while pulling together their first lapidary projects. Let’s put a pen in their hands and encourage them to share that fun!

Here is the listing of the people who have agreed to serve as Committee Chairs for 2012-13. Please feel free to contact these people if you need information, have questions or would like to share ideas with them.

All American Club
Regina Karta
<cgmc at comcast.net>

AFMS Club Rockhound of the Year
Evelyn Cataldo
<cataldoevelyn at yahoo.com>

AFMS Newsletter
Carolyn Weinberger
<editor at amfed.org>

Boundaries
Bob Carlson
<illegitimusnoncarborundum at inbox.com>

Bulletin Editor Hall of Fame
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Website/Webmaster
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Web Site Contest
Dan Imel
<lapidry at aol.com>

AFMS Scholarship Foundation
Dee Holland, President
(see Judges Training)
Richard Jaeger, Vice President
Cheri George, Secretary
Jon Spunaugle, Treasurer
Safety Matters

The Eyes Have It

They do! The eyes have it all! They give us depth perception, amazing colors, pattern perception in that pretty jasper slab – our eyes draw back the curtain on our window to the world.

Judging by experiences with all manner of rock and mineral collecting, it appears that the vast majority of our field identification of minerals and rocks is performed by visual means alone. Indeed, we use our eyes to judge the matting of facets on that stone we are cutting, to lay out the cabochon template on that pretty slab of jasper, to follow the visual clues of the trail as we hike to that long lost rock quarry. There is an endless variety of how we use our eyes in our hobby. Our eyes allow us to enjoy many areas of our rock, mineral, fossil hobby that we might otherwise be unable to pursue.

So, why do I see so many folks pursuing the hobby without protection for the valuable resource that is their vision? I see folks hammering rock, grinding stones, working in dusty environments, spending hours in the blindingly bright sunlight – all without benefit of suitable eye protection. It seems strange that folks would so risk the precious gift of sight.

I have heard numerous reasonable-sounding arguments as to why protection was not being used during vision-risking tasks. Excuses such as “my goggles were accidentally left home”, “the goggles’ elastic straps are worn out and no longer hold them in place”, “the goggles are too scratched or hazy to see through”, “the goggles were run over by a truck”, “the lenses keep falling out”, “they are uncomfortable to wear”, and other excuses too numerous to list. Well, trust me on this one, there are numerous solutions to these problems. Goggles are cheap (relative to the cost of eye surgery or vision loss). Lots of places sell goggles. Most hardware, grocery, department stores sell them. One does not need to visit a rock shop to find goggles. Please consider keeping an extra pair or two on hand.

There are replacement lenses available for many styles of goggles. New and replacement goggles straps can be made from elastics found in sewing, fabric and yard goods stores.

Store goggles in a protective box or case and keep them in the collecting bag so they are not inadvertently left home. Goggles are ill-fitting? There are numerous goggle styles. Visit a store and try on various kinds to locate ones you find comfortable.

Can’t find well-fitting goggles? There are other ways to protect ones eyes such as face shields, prescription safety glasses, safety glasses that fit over ones own regular prescription glasses, and aviator style goggles – among others.

Please consider protecting your precious gift of sight. We also hope you use that precious gift to keep reading these safety matters columns.

Your safety matters.

Regional Federation Conventions

As we’ve frequently said, please notify me as soon as you have the dates and location for your upcoming 2015 and 2016 Regional Federation Convention so we can avoid conflicts.

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<tr>
<th>California Federation</th>
<th>Eastern Federation</th>
<th>Midwest Federation</th>
<th>Northwest Federation</th>
<th>Rocky Mountain Federation</th>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>May 30-June 1 Pomona, CA</td>
<td>March 29-30 Plymouth Mtg, PA</td>
<td>Oct. 18 - 19 Des Moines, IA</td>
<td>August 15-17 Hermiston, OR</td>
<td>AFMS July 9 - 13 Tulsa, OK</td>
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<td>2015</td>
<td>March 27-29 Hickory, NC</td>
<td>May 23 – 24 Wheaton, IL (Chicago area)</td>
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<td>AFMS October 23-25 Austin, TX</td>
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<td>2016</td>
<td>Sept. 14-16 Placerville, CA</td>
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