



A.F.M.S. Newsletter

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Safety Matters: Mushroom Collecting

by Ellery Borow, AFMS Safety Chair

Yes, this is a great time of year for rockhounds to do some serious mushroom collecting. The mushrooms being referred to here are not those collected by mycologists, but those more specific to the rock collecting hobby. We are talking here about the mushrooms that form on the head and end of our rock splitting and gap widening chisels. Diagram #1 illustrates the mushrooms that can grow on our chisels...if we are not careful.

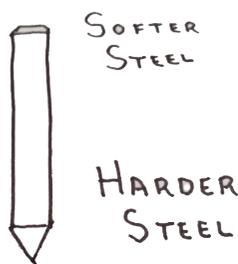


MUSHROOM
HEAD ON
CHISEL

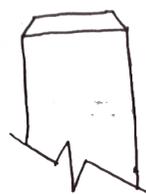
Mushrooms growing on our chisels are indicative of several issues:

- that the chisel is working properly
- that the chisel may be developing dangerous fractures on its struck end
- that there may be little bits of sharp metal flying off from the mushroom forming process when its head is struck.

Why do mushrooms form? A bit of background information is needed to explain. Good rock hammers are expensive. Rock splitting chisels are much less expensive. If we want a thing to break, we would want the cheap chisel to break rather than the expensive hammer. Well, engineers would rather not have anything break so what they did was to create a better rock chisel. The designed chisels to have two different harnesses of the metal used in their making. The sharp end of a chisel is rather harder than the end being struck by the hammer. See diagram #2. The reason for there being two hardness is simple. The metal in the end of the chisel being struck by the hammer will absorb some of the shock, deform its shape slightly, transfer the energy to the rock being split. If the end of the hammer or chisel was hard, and the hammer was hard, it could end up with either the hammer or chisel being damaged. So, as a compromise, chisels are designed to "wear out" by mushrooming and thus protecting the expensive hammer from damage.



So, this is the time of year, as we prepare for the upcoming collecting season, to collect all the mushroom-head chisels. Once collected, we grind down the damaged ends re-form them, and recreate new, safe, struck surfaces. So just how does one do that? Many home workshops have a metal grinding machine. Such machines are rather common in most home workshops. We use the grinding wheels to reshape the chisel's end by grinding away the damaged parts to form a new surface. Please see Diagram #3. Water is used to cool the metal as it is being ground. Water keeps the metal cool so as not to change its metallurgical hardness or have it



A GOOD SHAPE
FOR THE
STRUCK END
OF A CHISEL

continued on page 2

Also In this Issue

A Word from the President.....	2
Junior Activities.....	3
AFMS Endowment.....	3
Editor Tip: Proofreading.....	4
Things to do in Raleigh.....	4
Corrections to Exhibit Forms.....	4
Regional Federation Conventions.....	4



Rock & Gem
THE EARTH'S TREASURES • MINERALS AND JEWELRY

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The AFMS

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A Word from the President

by Sandy Fuller, President

Spring is just around the corner (I hope, as I sit here in the Northland looking out at several feet of snow). It's almost time for we northern folks to get out in the field and do some serious collecting.

I'm really looking forward to checking out the field collecting opportunities near Raleigh, NC in early April during and after the AFMS convention. This combined Eastern and national convention is the first gathering this year of federation leaders. Other regional conventions are planned for later in the spring and summer.

Each regional convention provides an outstanding opportunity for the host club to showcase its interests and expand local outreach. I love the chance to see the great displays and bring new ideas back to my own club.

The regional conventions bring together club representatives from across the area to direct the work of the federation. Delegates and federation leaders discuss common concerns and initiate actions. It's also an opportunity to recognize individual and club accomplishments.

It is important that each club send a delegate to their regional convention. The region is the voice of the club members, so those who show up get to craft that mission and message. Make sure your club is heard.

At the national level, the AFMS is composed of just seven members. Yes, that is right! the seven regions are the "members" of the American Federation. At the national level, each federation has three representatives on the 23-member board (only the secretary and treasurer are selected without regard to region).

AFMS services are delivered through numerous committees, such as Bulletin Aids, Program and Conservation/Legislation. Each regional chair fo similarly named regional committees serves as a member of the national group to ensure both local input and nationwide consistency.

Early April is a great time to visit Raleigh, NC. Come check out a great show! Better yet, come early and check out the AFMS meeting on Thursday morning just before the weekend show. Then you will have time to visit local world-class collecting sites in the area.

And be sure to plan on attending your own regional convention.

Sandy

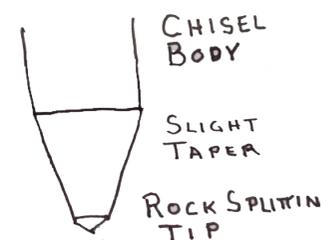
Safety Matters

continued from page 1

loose it "temper". If your workshop does not have a grinding machine, there are without doubt, members who have such machines and might be willing to help. If not, there are sharpening services available which specialize in reforming mushroom end chisels.

While one is at it, how are the chisels' business ends, the ends which do the actual splitting? Well, ow might be a great time to do a little judicious reshaping there as well. Please see Diagram #4.

Sharp chisels, non-mushroomed chisels are safer chisels. "Safer" because the tool can still be used unsafely - a topic to be covered under a future Safety Matters article.



We wish you all a good and safe collecting season. Please remember that your Safety Matters!

Having Fun

By Jim Brace-Thompson, Juniors Activities Chair

Helping One Another: Thoughts From the Heart of the Fire

During our rockhound ramblings in January at the annual shows in Quartzsite, Arizona, Nancy and I (along with Symon, our Australian shepherd), ran across several folks affiliated with the American Federation. Our sincere thanks to each for their concerns and questions about the big Thomas Fire that swept through Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties in December and January. This proved to be the largest fire in recorded history in the state of California. Nancy and I were spared by a distance of two blocks from an evacuation zone. The morning after fires swept through on their first night, we walked just four blocks to see flames that continued to sweep across fields and hills—flames that required the evacuation of many friends and families we know and love.



While we were spared, four families within our Ventura Gem & Mineral Society lost everything. Our clubhouse was spared because it's located across from a county park that fire fighters used as a staging ground. The Poinsettia Pavilion (where we hold our monthly meetings and where we held the 2017 AFMS Show Banquet) nearly burnt. Two homes immediately adjacent the Pavilion burnt to the ground, and fires licked palm trees 15 feet from the doors of the Pavilion. This is as close to hell as I ever hope to come! Again, our sincere thanks to all we met in Quartzsite for their concerns.

As noted, while Nancy and I and our club in general were fortunate, several of our club members lost literally everything. These include Raul and Maria Barraza. Raul has been instrumental in our monthly kids program. He and Maria lived very close to "ground zero" in the Thomas Fire. Everything they acquired to help educate kids, along with everything they knew and loved, evaporated within just a few hours. This disaster has reinforced to me just how precious life is and how important it is that we support and help one another. Does your club have a plan in place should disaster strike? Are your material possessions safe and secure? How will you respond in the aftermath of disaster? These are questions we just now—belatedly—are dealing with in Ventura. We urge that one and all consider and debate in advance before disaster strikes. Consider today—not tomorrow—what course of actions to take—and how, on a very personal level, to best to help one another!

Last Call for Endowment Tickets via Mail

from Cheryl Neary, AFMS Endowment Chair

Have you purchased your 2018 AFMS Endowment Fund tickets yet? If not, the deadline for doing so via mail is fast approaching. You can see the prizes that you could win if you hold a lucky ticket on the AFMS website (www.amfed.org) and you can find the contact person from whom to purchase tickets there as well.

Tickets remain at \$5 each of 5 for \$20. Make your check out to AFMS Endowment and send it, along with a stamped, self-addressed envelop to the Endowment Representative for your region. Be sure to also send us your own name, mailing address and phone number.

Deadline for receiving requests for tickets by mail is March 20. You do not have to be present at the convention in Raleigh, NC when the drawing will occur. Winners not present will receive their prizes by mail.



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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Address corrections and changes

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Content – Letters

Editorial Comments – Submissions

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Editor Tip: Proofreading

by Mark Nelson, Bulletin Editors Advisory Chair

I make every effort to spell-check and proof read my newsletters. Sometimes it is difficult to proof-read my own work because in my mind I know exactly what I wrote and what it means, and spell-check doesn't always catch words that don't mean what I want them to! I find that using a couple of procedures will help to improve the quality of my work, and you may find the same.

First, submit the entire document to spell-check. Everytime a word or name is flagged, take the time to look carefully at the word and make a decision as to its correctness. There is always a reason why spell-check questions an item.

Second, have someone else read the newsletter or bulletin. This is most effective when read by someone who enjoys reading for pleasure, because they are familiar with sentence structure and reading to understand what is printed. We may write about crystal structure, but if the average person can't understand what we are trying to say we are defeating our purpose and losing our reading audience.

Finally, pay particular attention to people's names. Double-check to make sure they are spelled correctly in your document. If in doubt, look it up a second time or find a corroborating source. Spell-check won't catch homonyms - especially proper names. For example, Mary, Mari and Mare differ by only one key-stroke and are proper names that are not flagged by spell-check. As Dale Carnegie wrote in his 1936 book, *How To Win Friends And Influence People*, "Remember that a person's name is to that person the sweetest and most important sound in any language".

Things to do In Raleigh

by Cindy Hummel, Convention Chair

There are numerous attractions for you to see in the Raleigh, NC area while you're visiting the annual EFMLS/AFMS convention.

In the Oakwood section you can see many historic buildings and Victorian homes. The Capitol Square building was built in 1804 with local granite quarried under where Central Prison is presently located. A railroad spur was created just for this purpose to bring the stone from the "country". Prisoners will not be digging out of this jail!

Raleigh has two museums across from the Square side by side. The Museum of History and the Museum of Natural Sciences are both free of charge. Downtown is also full of fancy restaurants of all kinds of food.

Please make the following corrections to the Application for Competitive Exhibit and Non-Competitive Exhibit forms (available at www.amfed.org).

"Please bring your own locks.... **The Tar Heel Gem & Mineral Club** has a limited number of cases available on a first come, first served basis."

"Use one form for each exhibit. "All exhibits may be set up from **8 am to 3 pm on Friday, April 6...**"

Do remember to make your hotel reservation and to send in your registration forms no later than March 1.

The 2018 AFMS Convention information is now on the AFMS web site. The folks at the Tar Heels Gem and Mineral Club have worked hard to make it a good one. They have also arranged for editors to have a time during the show for an "Editors Cracker Barrel". This is a time when we editors can get together for an hour and share questions and concerns about how to improve our bulletins and what works well in doing so. Please plan to attend the

show! The day, time and room location of the Editors Cracker Barrel will be listed in the show program, and the Editors Breakfast has been listed as 8am on Sunday, April 8th.

I'll see you there!

Upcoming Regional Federation Conventions

from Emerson Tucker, Show Coordinator

	California Federation	Eastern Federation	Midwest Federation	Northwest Federation	Rocky Mountain Federation	South Central Federation	Southeast Federation
2018		AFMS April 6 - 8 Raleigh, NC	Oct. 6-7 Springfield, IL	April 27-29 Yakima, WA	July 20-22 Rapid City, SD	May 5-6 Lubbock, TX	
2019		June 1 -2 Monroe, NY	AFMS March 16-17 Cedar Rapids, IA				