Kid Safety

Ellery Borow, AFMS Safety Chair

Kid safety begins with adult safety. Adults learn in multiple ways. Some read the directions and instantly understand the material and get the nuances. Some read the material, work with instructors, see demonstrations, ask questions and need all those aspects to get it. Some rarely read the book, don’t ask questions, and somehow manage with the trial and error approach. They are all genuine and useful approaches to learning, but each has various pros and cons.

Kid safety is different. Most kids do not have the background to read a manual and then understand all the material. For kids (and adults) the trial and error approach to learning safety is a non-starter. The middle option is usually the best for safety—read the material, work with instructors, see demonstrations and ask questions. Many kids are not all that interested in reading safety manuals, or being lectured by adults. So here we are with what is left—part instruction, part demonstration, and part asking questions.

Many safety matters require a measure of judgement. Adults may have had sufficient experience with safety to make good judgements. Kids do not usually have as much experience. Keep that in mind so that more complete explanations of safety matters can be offered to kids when presenting demonstrations and discussions.

Safety requires a good measure of effort. We want our kids to be safe, want our kids to share in the family hobby we love, and have fun in the process. Putting all that together, we adults need to make a concerted effort to devise safety plans to engage, teach, ensure understanding, and make the learning as fun as possible for kids. The thing that makes this easier is that kids are like sponges—they soak up all they see, hear, touch, taste and smell. To grow and become a part of the world, kids will absorb all that interests them and that which might not yet be so interesting—but it is still taken inside for future reference.

Kids watch one another and they watch adults. One of adults’ greatest teaching aids is to be a role model of good safety practices. Take the guy who is walking across a pile of loose rock and slip sliding along the way. Kids will look at that and think, ok, it’s being done by an adult and is ok to do. And yet, it is so very easy to lose one’s footing and fall down the slope if they try such a traverse. If kids see an adult chipping a rock with a rock pick while not wearing safety goggles, the kid might think that it is safe for them to do so as well. Yes, kids watch their parents set good examples; however, they also watch all adults. Adults, ALL adults, should model good safety practices.

Kids may see and hear a demonstration on the importance of wearing gloves. They may be told how sharp quartz shards can be after hammering. What might some kids do with a sharp shard? Some might be curious as to Continued on p. 5
Greetings from Montana

Lora R. Hall, 2022 AFMS Junior Programs Chair

“What is FRA?” That is a question folk frequently ask when the topic of AFMS youth programs comes up. Although FRA has been around for 38 years, it is still often misunderstood. So, what is FRA? FRA stands for Future Rockhounds of America; a name that requires FRA membership such as the Badge Program and Junior Volunteer Outreach programs. Another common question is, “Our society has its own youth program. Why should we sign-up with FRA?” The simple answer is, so you can share your ideas. If you have a juniors program that works for your club, it may be exactly what another club is looking for. Signing up with FRA also places your society’s name and contact information in the data base and on the mail list. If your club or society is thinking of starting a youth program, Future Rockhounds of America is a great place to start. The only requirement is that your group must be members in good standings with one of the Seven Regional Federations affiliated with AFMS. There are no dues to pay to AFMS, but there are a few programs that require FRA membership such as the Badge Program and Junior Volunteer Award since these are financially supported by AFMS. Signing up is easy. Visit the new AFMS Juniors Website at http://www.juniors.amfed.org and follow the link under “About FRA”. The new on-line form will take only a few minutes to complete. You can also use a link on the same page to see if your club is already registered. And as always, I am a phone call, text, or email away if you have questions or ideas to share. You can reach me at youth@amfed.org or 406-370-1863.
Call to Donate to AFMS Scholarship Foundation

Sandie Fender,
Foundation President

Did you know that the AFMS scholarship foundation runs on donations only? I was not a where of this before I became President. Knowing all of the good that this organization does, I am sending out a request that all clubs and federations make a small donation to the Scholarship foundation.

How much should you donate? If every club in every Federation of the 6 participating federation donated 50 cents per member, the foundation would have most of their necessary budget.

Having been a teacher, watching 6th graders ask how much it would cost to go to college, I would always tell them to look for scholarships. Having met college students at Caltech, I truly understand the importance of scholarships. Many Universities and Colleges will match a student’s scholarship, so AFMS is really helping the student.

AFMS Scholarship Foundation - A Résumé to Refresh Our Memories

The establishment of the Scholarship foundation was authorized by the addition of an Article to the By-Laws of the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies in 1958. The AFMS Scholarship Foundation, Inc. was set up as a separate corporation with its own officers and directors.

Organization: The Foundation was incorporated as the AFMS SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION, INC., a Minnesota Corporation on March 18, 1964. A Tax Exemption Certificate was obtained from the Internal Revenue Service on November 6, 1964. The Board of Directors consists of The President of the AFMS who is automatically both the Vice-President and a Director of the Foundation. The other Directors are: the AFMS President-Elect, and the President and the Vice-President of each of the six participating Regional Federations. The Board of Directors has the management of the Foundation. The Board elects a President, a Treasurer, and a Secretary, each for two-year terms, the President being elected one year, the Treasurer and Secretary being elected the next year, to insure continuity of experienced management. It will be seen that the Foundation, while an independent Corporation, is entirely in the control of AFMS Federation personnel.

Purpose: The object of the Foundation is to accumulate a Fund, using only the income from the Fund to be used to finance Scholarships. The principal cannot be used for any purpose whatever, hence the usefulness of the Fund is perpetual.

Awards to Beneficiary Students: Beginning in 1965, one student received a scholarship grant of $300.00 per year for two years to help achieve an advanced degree in any of the Earth Sciences. In 1966, the grant was increased to $400.00 per year for two years; in 1967, the grant was increased to $500.00 per year for two years. As the Fund, and hence the income from it, increased, the grants were increased and, subsequently, more students received scholarship grants. By 1972, each Regional Federation received one grant of $750.00 per year for two years. Grants were increased to $1,000.00 per year in 1976; to two scholarship grants per each Regional Federation in 1981. In 1983, each grant was increased to $1,500.00 per year for two years; and the amount was increased to $2,000.00 per year for each grant in 1988. In 2009-2010 additional funds were raised to allow the educational grants to increase to a single $4,000 educational grant starting with 12 students selected in the 2009-10 school year. Grants are restricted to Graduate students to avoid the possible waste of money on students who are not committed to Earth Science subjects, or who drop out before graduation (Any student working toward an advanced degree is presumed to have definitely decided to follow that field for his/her lifetime vocation, insofar as such decision is possible). Since our joint interests lie in that field, grants are restricted to Earth Science students who are U.S. Citizens.

Selection of Beneficiary Students: Until 1972, one person of prominence in the Earth Science field was selected from among twelve nominees, 2 from each Regional Federation. That person, normally associated with a prominent University or College, selected the schools, and the students who received the grants. Since 1972, each participating Regional Federation has selected their own Honorary Award Winner who then selected the school(s) and assisted with the selection of the student, or students, who then received the scholarship grant(s). This indirect method has served our purpose perfectly in that it benefits needy students, yet avoids the enormous task and expense of receiving, sifting through and evaluating applications from hundreds of applicants, which would otherwise be necessary if selections were made by ourselves in the conventional manner.

The Fund: In the beginning, Betty Crocker coupons were accepted and turned in to General Mills at 1/2¢ per point until December 31, 1974., when the program was discontinued by General Mills. Coupons accounted for approximately 10% of the Fund at that time. Since that time, the trust fund has been supported by donations and memorials from "rockhounds", nationwide. The market value of the investments of the Foundation, as of October 31, 2010, stood at just over $1,024,170.00. With the exception of a few thousand dollars received from outside organizations, the entire amount has been donated, by Earth Science Clubs and Societies throughout the entire nation, and by individual members of such groups.

Gifts: All gifts to the AFMS Scholarship Foundation are held to be tax-deductible to the donor, and are normally added to the "trust" account. Gifts should be sent to be sure Regional Federation's Scholarship Chairman, who will see that the donor receives proper credit, and will forward the gifts to the proper Foundation Officer. Founder's Certificates are issued to individuals, dealers, or firms that contribute $500.00 or more to the Fund, either as one gift or cumulatively, but the individual's club does not receive credit for such gifts. Gifts may be made directly to the "Unrestricted Fund" by marking "Unrestricted" on the donation check or in a letter accompanying the donation. Unrestricted funds are not automatically put in to the investment account and may be directed out as educational grants to students instead of using the investment income only from the trust (investment) account, for the educational grants.

Goals for the Future: Our first goal was to establish a Fund of $50,000.00 which would provide an annual scholarship in Earth Science. This goal was reached in 1968. Having attained that goal, do we stop when such attractive vistas and horizons appeared? By no means! The Fund has now achieved over twenty times it first goal and we are providing a single year scholarship grant of $4,000.00 each year to two students selected by each of the six participating Regional Federations.

What do we see ahead? Wonderful additional opportunities for service and help for more and more students. Remember, the Fund itself is not consumed - only the income from it. Whatever is in the "restricted trust fund" keeps working year after year, indefinitely into the future. The larger it grows, the more it can do - not only once, but time after time as the years go by. After the 2010-11 educational grants were paid out, 566 students have received financial educational assistance because of your generosity. At that time, the total dollar amount of grants paid out since the program inception in 1964 totaled $1,540,850.00.

First written by W.H. DeHeui President (10/69); updated by Glenn Lee, President (10/83); updated (7/83) by Louellen Montgomery, President; updated (12/04) by Dee Holland, AFMS Scholarship Foundation President; updated (7/11) by Jon Spunaugle, Treasurer and Foundation Past President
Tips for Professional Emailing  
Mark Nelson,  
2021 AFMS BEAC Chair

As editors and rockhound hobby leaders, we need to be aware of professionalism in our email correspondence. I call it email etiquette. The ALAA refers to it as “Be kind to our email friends.” This is important because the way you communicate reflects our level of professionalism, tact, and attention to detail. Here are some things we all should be aware of when we communicate by email.

Use standard formatting in emails, such as Times New Roman or Arial, as well as standard colors and sizes. Never use bold or italics on more than one word or a string of words in a single email.

Sometimes, if you’re copying and pasting text, there are formatting instructions that will make your message appear “dis-jointed.” Make sure you clear the formatting before sending the email. To clear formatting, you can use “Command + V” on a Mac or “Ctrl + Shift + N” on a PC. Or you could copy it to a word processing program and clear the formatting, then paste it in your email.

Include a clear subject line in a way that the recipient immediately knows what the message is about. For example, if you’re emailing to follow up on a field trip, you might write, “Quick question about the Dendrite Field Trip.”

Be cautious with “Reply All!” The benefit of using “Reply all” is that you can respond to everyone at once to let them know an issue has been addressed. However, when in doubt, use “Reply” to avoid inundating a list of people with unnecessary emails.

Avoid using all caps. I once worked at a firm whose sales department manager always typed his emails in all capitals. Without success, I tried to explain that he should use sentence case as you would for any formal communication, and avoid using all caps as it can read like you are screaming your intentions. It also made him look less intelligent.

If you’re proofreading before you send, as an editor will do before considering his or her bulletin ready for the members. Proper spelling and grammar are important when sending business correspondence, so always proofread your work before you hit send. Likewise, double-check the spelling of the recipient’s name and email address. Sometimes autocorrect will alter names.

Don’t use emojis; unless the recipient has used emojis when communicating with you in the past, resist the temptation to use them yourself. They can come across as unprofessional in business cultures.

And finally, but perhaps most important: Use Bcc appropriately! I see so many forwarded emails that list many previously forwarded emails. Bcc stands for blind carbon copy, which is similar to Cc except that the email recipients specified in the Bcc field do not appear in the header or to the recipients in the To or Cc fields. Using Bcc is good etiquette if you want to protect someone’s email address from being exposed to others. For example, if you are emailing a club bulletin to your club or to a group of exchange editors, it’s considerate to Bcc everyone on the list. It also allows recipients who don’t know each other to keep their addresses private.

Thanks to my friends at Indeed.com for some of their career-enhancing advice which I used for this article.

An 8th Continent?  
Matthew Lybanon,  
Editor, MAGS Rockhound News, 11-12/2021

About 3,500 feet under the south Pacific sits a piece of land adjacent to New Zealand 2 million square miles in size—about half as big as Australia. But scientists can’t agree on whether this sub-merged land mass—a collection of submerged chunks of crust called Zealandia (or the Māori name Te Riu-a-Māui) that broke off an ancient supercontinent called Gondwana about 85 million years ago,—is a continent or not. A team of geologists declared it one in 2017, but not all researchers are convinced.

Nick Mortimer, a geologist from New Zealand’s GNS Science who led the 2017 group, explains that a continent should have clearly defined boundaries, occupy an area greater than 1 million square kilometers, be elevated above the surrounding ocean crust, and have a continental crust thicker than that oceanic crust.

Zealandia meets all those stipulations. The problem, however, was that until recently, the oldest crust and rock ever sampled from Zealandia was just 500 million years old, whereas all the other continents contain crust that is 1 billion years old or more. But a recent study found that part of the submerged continent is twice as old as geologists previously thought, which could boost Mortimer’s argument.

Tiny mineral grains taken from granite rocks have led to a potential breakthrough in ancient continental reconstructions. The geologists behind the recent research (published in Geology) looked at 169 chunks of Zealandia granite, which were found under New Zealand’s South and Stewart Islands.

Granite forms when magma crystallizes deep within the Earth’s crust. The granites were brought to the surface by uplift of the Zealandia continent in response to earthquake activity along a plate boundary over millions of years. By extracting microscopic crystals from the granite, the team was able to determine both the age of the crystals themselves and of the crust in which they formed. The results showed that crust was once part of another supercontinent known as Rodinia, which formed between 1.3 billion and 900 million years ago—far earlier than 500 million years ago.

Dr Rose Turnbull (also of GNS Science, and one of the authors of the Geology article) says that a key finding in this study was the unique isotopic signature measured in microscopic grains of zircon (ZrSiO43−), a mineral that is found in all granites. The isotopic composition of zircon is used in geology to understand deep time and can be used to reveal what the Earth’s crust looked like both at and deep below the surface.

“To use a human analogy, all of today’s eight continents have older ancestors such as Gondwana, Laurasia, and Pangaea.

“The new study has enabled scientists to place Zealandia in the ‘family tree’ of continents descended from Rodinia.”

With this new information, Zealandia may yet turn out to be a ‘missing link’ between South China, Australia, and North America—and this opens up the position of South China and Zealandia within Rodinia to new international scrutiny, Dr Turnbull says.

what they can cut with it—so they might try cutting the draw string on their hoodie, cutting their new shirt’s sleeve, or their shoe laces. Kids learn by doing. What better way to judge sharpness than by cutting something? So, give kids some corrugated cardboard to cut. Give kids a direction or opportunity to utilize their energy safely.

Face it, some kids in the family will be interested in rocks and some may not be so enamored. To keep less interested kids busy, try and perhaps find interesting rock things—colors, patterns, and shapes. Then ask them to describe or draw what they saw. Encourage them to come up with interesting ideas of how the colors, patterns, and shapes formed. Other kids may be more happy exploring rock history or identification or use. There will be kids who are more interested in reading a mystery novel. That too is cool, so long as they don’t start exploring away from the dig site. Even if kids are not interested in rocks, sometimes they will watch other kids and begin participating in discovery. Sometimes those kids will share in the excitement of other kids as they discover their treasures. They may even enjoy a new friendship in the process.

Make demonstrations of safety easier for kids to accept. Have adults describe and put on goggles or safety glasses first. Kids will then see it is ok for adults and, therefore, okay for them to do so. There are decorative and festive elastics that can be used with goggles to dress them up for kids (and some adults as well). Most OSHA-, MSHA-, NISC-, NIOSH-approved hard hat suspension systems will fit young adults. One can make hard hats fun with name personalization, rock stickers, and other decorations. Please be aware though that some companies have policies disallowing such adornment. Kid’s gloves have some festive styles, although most of them are the garden-style glove, not the heavy work glove. Some small, leather gloves in ladies styles will fit on junior size hands.

Working with kids can be a rewarding, frustrating, cooperative, enlightening and otherwise challenging enterprise, but it is worth the effort to keep kids safe. Always remember that everyone’s safety matters—short or tall, big or small.

AFMS Historian Relationship with Federations
Jennifer Haley, AFMS Historian

I want to remind everyone that as AFMS Historian, I need to receive your federation’s monthly newsletter. Some of you are doing that well, either sending it by snail mail or emailing to me; others haven’t been participating. Your life as a federation is an important quality of what the AFMS is all about. Please double check with your federation’s editor or whoever it is who would be in charge of making sure I’m on their list. Thank you!

AFMS Land Use Policy

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

9. The AFMS urges its members to work with any or all government authorities to achieve a good working relationship in order to improve the public image of recreational collectors.
Oddities of Obsidian


Obsidian is an extrusive igneous rock formed when the magma of an erupting volcano reaches the earth’s surface and cools rapidly. It is an extrusive rock because it was pushed out onto the surface. The cooling of the extrusive rock occurs so rapidly that the magma doesn’t form minerals at all, but a volcanic glass.

It derives its name according to Pliny, an ancient Roman naturalist, from a fellow named Obsius, who found it in Ethiopia. Originally, it was named “obsianus”, but the spelling was changed over the centuries to its modern form.

Obsidian occurs in many colors, black being the most common. It can also be red, brown or even green. It can contain inclusions of magnetite, ilmenite, iron oxide, potassium oxide, sodium, oxide, lime and magnesium. It is composed of 66-77% silica, with about 13-18% alumina. Magnetite most likely gives obsidian its black color, and oxidized magnetite or hematite the reds and browns.

With slow cooling, silica crystals Cristobalite form, giving the “snowflake” obsidian or “flowering” obsidian. Iridescence reflected from minute inclusions arranged in layers is known as “rainbow obsidian”. Another kind with gold inclusions with a strong metallic luster is called “gold sheen obsidian”, and if the inclusions are grayish silver in color, it’s called “silver sheen”.

Obsidian is interesting in many ways, but mainly, for all practical purposes, it is a true glass. It has a hardness of 5-5.5 on the Mohs hardness scale. It represents a quickly congealed mass of molten rock, for if it had time to cool slowly, it would have crystallized into a rock similar to granite or rhyolite.

It shows no trace of crystalline structure nor possesses any established composition and must be considered a rock instead of a mineral. It is amorphous, having no regular internal arrangement of atoms as in crystals. The word amorphous is taken from the Greek and means “no form” because there is no pattern to amorphous materials. The atoms are jumbled together in small groups like particles in a pile of sand. It is extremely brittle and breaks easily with shiny, black conchoidal fractures – a feature so perfectly developed that it is easily identifiable in the field. It is translucent and will not soften when heated to a bright red.

Obsidian is found throughout the western United States, mostly in Alaska, Colorado, Utah, New Mexico, Arizona, Wyoming, Oregon, Nevada and California. It is also found in B.C. and throughout Mexico. American Indians valued obsidian highly. Its perfect texture and easy fracture made it a prize possession for chipping into arrowheads and large ceremonial spear points. The Aztecs called obsidian “itzli”, “teotl” or “divine stone” because of its usefulness in carving ceremonial blades. Even one of their gods was named “Itzopoziotl”, meaning “obsidian butterfly”.

Obsidian is also used to make attractive jewelry as cabochons or faceted. Thin slabs can be cut with a common glass cutter. Due to its extreme heat sensitivity, great care must be taken in working obsidian. Industries use obsidian as a raw material to make rock wool. Surgeons have even used thinly chipped obsidian knives in surgery because of the fine exact cut an obsidian knife makes.

Field Trip Safety

The U.S. Forest Service provides these safety tips for rockhounding field trips:

• Stay out and stay alive; abandoned mines are potential killers. Rotten timbers, open shafts, toxic gases, and a lack of oxygen can be deadly.

• Rockhounding is mostly a rugged and dirty pastime. Clothing, especially footwear, should be serviceable and adequate for hiking in rugged terrain, digging, and weather conditions. Boots are recommended.

• Be prepared for extreme weather conditions including rain or snow at any time of the year. Temperatures in the winter can drop below 0 degrees and summer-time temperatures can be over 100 degrees. Carry extra food, water, clothing, fuel and other supplies.

• Always tell someone where you are going and when you plan to be back. • Always wear proper protective equipment (gloves, safety glasses, etc.) when striking or breaking rocks.

• Be aware that the roads leading into the digging sites may be used by heavy trucks carrying logs, gravel, livestock or other products. Travel at your own risk. Unimproved roads can be dangerous to travel when wet, muddy or snowy. Rockhounds should inquire with the BLM or USFS about possible road closures and fire restrictions prior to visiting the rockhounding sites.

• Rattlesnakes may be found in certain areas during the warm months. Watch for them in rock slides, around damp areas, under old buildings, ledges, etc. Prompt medical treatment is always advisable if bitten.

• In the spring, wood ticks are found in sagebrush and timber fringe areas, where they can hang on the tips of bushy twigs and transfer to any person or animal that brushes past. Ticks can carry spotted fever and other infections. They should be removed promptly, and the bites should be treated.

• Protect your pets by keeping them under control at all times.
Here is the Committee Chairs list for 2021-22. You can contact these people if you need information, have questions or to share ideas with them. Please note that the @ sign in the email address has been replaced by the word “at” to foil bots that collect email addresses.

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AFMS Club Rockhound of the Year
Judi Allison
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Web Site Contest
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AFMS Scholarship Foundation
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<sandie.fender at gmail.com>
Judy Beck, Vice President
Margaret Kolaczyk. Secretary
Barbara Ringhisier, Treasurer
**AFMS Code of Ethics**

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

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

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

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

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

I will leave all gates as found.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I will appreciate and protect our heritage of natural resources.

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

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**Upcoming AFMS and Regional Federation Conventions**

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2023

| Western Federation | Howell, MI | Sept. TBD |
| Rocky Mountain Federation | Billings, MT | Aug 3-6 |

2024

From Walt Beneze