From the Desk of the President  Cheryl Neary  
AFMS President 2022-2023

“Beware the Ides of March” is a term that many of us know from history and associate with the day Julius Caesar was assassinated.

Did you know, though, that there are several months with “ides” on the 15th day of the month, including March, May, July and October; the “Ides” in the other eight months is the 13th day of the month. The Roman’s calendar was connected to the phases of the Moon. The passage of time was marked by the following:

- “kalend” — the first day of the month
- “none” — the first quarter of the Moon, either the fifth or seventh day, and
- “Ides” — the full Moon, which is either the 13th or the 15th day.

March 15th was the first full moon of the new year in the Roman calendar. Ides is usually the middle of the month, the timing of the full moon.

The word “ides” is derived from a Latin word meaning to divide. In Roman times the Ides of March was also a deadline for settling debts.

Before his untimely death, Julius Caesar enacted a calendar that was similar to our modern calendar, with 365 days, 12 months, and even a leap year every few years, as the Earth orbit around the sun is not exactly 365 days!

In our modern calendar, the months’ names are from Greek or Roman gods. The exception is July, the month named after Julius Caesar, who was born in the seventh month.

Not all countries changed from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar when it was introduced in 1582. In the USA for instance, Texas, California, Nevada, Arizona, and New Mexico changed in 1582, as did Spain. Washington and Oregon changed, along with Britain, in 1752. Alaska changed in October 1867 when it became part of the USA. Many of the British colonies changed in 1751 due to an Act of Parliament of the United Kingdom specifying the use of the Gregorian calendar. Currently no countries use the Julian calendar.

So, what does any of the above have to do with the AFMS?

It has to do with your calendar. It has to do with you — marking your calendars for meetings or field trips or deadlines. We live our lives around the calendar. We work and play based on the calendar we each create for ourselves.

Have you marked your calendars for your meetings so you don’t miss out on them? Did you mark your calendar for deadline dates — perhaps for your own club’s bulletin, your federation’s newsletter or the AFMS newsletter?

Did you mark your calendar to attend the AFMS convention in August? Or your own Federation’s convention? Or your club’s show? Be sure to check the calendar in the AFMS Newsletter and mark the dates of the conventions you plan to attend. Note the CORRECTIONS to the calendar in this newsletter!

continued on page 2
While a calendar is a great tool to have, you need to follow it! Remember, your calendar is in a constant state of change — and you need to be flexible to have it work for you.

Talk about calendars:
Most hotels require you to have your group reservation by a deadline date, usually a month earlier. Whether it is for your own Federation’s convention or the AFMS convention — do not dally!

More about this year’s AFMS convention will be mentioned next month — mark your calendar!

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**New Programs Competition Deadline**

*DeLane Cox, New Program Competition Chair*

Every lapidary club needs programs for their meetings. And they prefer programs that are specifically for and about topics of interest in the lapidary areas.

One of the best ways to get such programs is to have our members make productions that can be used as programs. If your member(s) have created some good programs, make sure these are entered in the AFMS New Programs Competition.

The New Program Competition is an AFMS contest, held every year. This is one of the ways to get new materials into the Federation’s Program Libraries for clubs to use.

What can be covered in these programs? Things of interest in the earth sciences, good field trips, good shop techniques, coverage of a specific rock or mineral. Lots of things!

The Competition is open to any AFMS member or club in good standing who has put together an original program that makes a good club program. The rules, regulations, suggestions and helps for good programs, and Judges Form are on the AFMS website under “Downloads,” and “Program Competition.” You will also find the deadlines and where entries are to be sent there.

Entries are divided into categories of similar interest, and are judged against the best program ideas, NOT against each other. The program in Class 1 through Class 4 with the top score above 95 receives a $200 prize. Copies of the top two winning programs are made and given to each Regional Federation library.

The deadline for this year is fast approaching. **Entries are due by April 5.**

There is still time to make a program, get it in electronic form, and send it off to be judged. If your own federation has a contest for New Programs, check to see when that deadline is, also. I will accept direct submissions this year only due to the lack of some regional federation committees.

But hurry! New Programs are needed, and you just may have a winning idea or even video or slides or pictures just ready to be put together for submission. If so, put your program together and get it finalized and off for judging.

If anyone has questions, please contact me at:

**DeLane Cox**
<delanec3 at earthlink.net>

Hope to see some entries real soon!
2023 - What you need to know about the All American Club Yearbook

from the AFMS website, www.amfed.org

IMPORTANT! - the deadline for entry in the AFMS contest is March 31, 2023. Your regional chair may have a different deadline. Please send your entry to your regional chair - and they will pass it on to the AFMS.

The All American Club Award is given to the individual club Yearbook, highlighting a club's activities for the past year, including group activities, individual member participation, workshops and shows. Credit is given for attendance at regional and national shows, participation at meetings, holding officer positions on various committees, writing to state representatives, and involvement in ALAA - all these activities reflect an active club that makes membership worthwhile for everyone. The AACA awards are recognition of these activities, with bronze, silver and gold levels and an overall 1st place gold award.

Take a look at what your club has accomplished this past year, and give credit where credit is due! The more members contribute to the yearbook, the more completely it can serve as an historical document for the club, as well as an excellent tool to encourage prospective members. Canvassing members for any missing documentation, letters, flyers or other materials to fill in some gaps just might make the difference between a good and a great Club Yearbook entry.

Take advantage of the guide that is on the AFMS site written by John Washburn. "An All American Club Yearbook: A Guide for Preparation." [link: https://www.amfed.org/AllAmericanGuidebook.pdf ] This gives an explanation of each section, and what judges look for in rating the entries. It also highlights areas that are usually the weakest for many clubs and offers suggestions to improve those areas, as well as hints and tips for organizing the book.

Remember - you can get credit for activities such as participation in Competitive Displays, Junior activities, and for club members volunteering as Judges for AFMS contests.

PDF entries are welcome as it saves a lot in postage. Page limit is 150 single pages for the pdf, and 100 double sided pages if printed.

[Editor’s Note: On the Home Page of the AFMS website, www.amfed.org , you will see the hot link to a page containing everything you need to enter your club yearbook. Application Forms, Judges Score Sheet, the All American Guidebook, and links to copies of some previous winning yearbooks. Enjoy reviewing your club’s activities and putting together a yearbook!]

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2022 AFMS Adult Poetry Winners

**Rock Story**, a poem by Sigrid Stewart

Inside every rock is a story of how it came to be
And on the outside is another, of its journey to the sea
For everything was born to die, to be made and then undone
To serve as the stuff of making, because creation isn’t done

When you stand on the top of a mountain, look around and you will see
The Mountains wear a skirt of rocks eroded from the peaks
Ice and snow and the rain that falls carry them to merry streams
Ever smoother as they tumble into sand for the waiting seas

Sand forms rocks deep underground that rise as mountains high
Until the waters wear them down again and bare their roots unto the sky
The heat of the sun and the cold of night, and the grinding of the ice
Combine to carve this land we see into an earthly paradise

Life does her part, for She has learned some cunning tricks
Silica and calcium build shells and bones like bricks
When her creatures die the hard parts pass into the deeps
Pressure will form limestone while Mother Earth sleeps

Heat from our planet’s burning heart drives currents through the earth
Magma rises from below and to volcanoes it gives birth
The sea floor spreads from giant faults, carries islands on its back
Then dives beneath the continents on an ever-moving track

Mountain ranges rise and fall, mighty oceans form and close
New lands are born and waste away or fall to nature’s blows
Ephemeral are we who live upon the surface of this earth
Everything that falls repeats itself and will surely find new birth


**Brothers**

by Steven Wade Veatch

The photo you left
from gold rush days
turned up today.
It lasted over a century.

I would say go
to Cripple Creek,
again, grab
some gold.
Have some fun —
ride a burro,
and look down
the winding trail,
to a time that didn’t
last long enough.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CRIPPLE CREEK DISTRICT MUSEUM

If you are a fan of the great outdoors, you have probably noticed that you feel happier beyond the confines of your home.

This little tidbit of wisdom is not my original writing; however, I suspect all rockhounds probably have “thought this” and just neglected to place it on paper. Instead, we waited for Michael Bassey Johnson to publish such in *Song of a Nature Lover.* He wrote, “Did you know that it is scientifically proven that flowers make you feel better? And even just looking at pictures of nature lowers your stress level?”

That is one reason my office is crowded, and I mean crowded, with paintings, sculptures, do-dads, a thousand minerals (more or less) and photographs of “nature.” In fact, my wall time piece sounds like a Minnesota loon every hour. No cuckoo for me.

From my desk chair I look directly at seven framed prints by South Dakotan Terry Redlin. They all remind me of past experiences, both real and in my dreams. I look to them for inspiration in releasing words and thoughts from the back recesses of my mind. For example, how did I get to be an old rockhound and geologist? Why? Yeah, I know my mind works in mysterious ways and I am again reminded of Michael Bassey Johnson: “I saw a tree dancing in the wind, and it said to me, I’m not doing this to entertain you, but to remind you of what life is — a dance in the wind!” That sort of sums it up for my great life thus far, a dance in the wind!

During the last two or three years I certainly have given thought to “my life” and how I danced to reaching this current point. Part of this remembering is probably a normal process when one ages and starts to think about their mortality (I turn 80 this summer); however, the coronavirus pandemic sort of exacerbated the situation and moved it onto the front burner.

My pushing forward in trying to understand “life” certainly had bumps in the road, and I often take a break and revert to reminiscing about youth, especially the geology aspect of “growing up.” I often wonder how my younger years of picking up any stray rock affected my career choice to play with minerals and fossils and then think that my entire life choices are probably due to: 1) growing up in a rural area with nurturing parents and relatives who let me explore the “outdoors” and tune into nature; 2) caring and enthusiastic primary and high school teachers (47 total students in high school) where four years of English, four years of math, four years of science, and four years of history/civics and social science, prepared me for college (and life); and 3) university geology instructors who mentored me all those years, even during the times I was greatly confused with crystallography and stereo-nets (still am).

One of the great things about collecting and working with rocks, minerals and fossils is that I get out in the open spaces of nature. For me, most anytime that I get out in the country, a “runners high” is achieved. Physicians tell me this endorphin rush is related to strenuous exercise, pain, excitement, danger, or stress. In my case, I am convinced that the “rush” is simply related to the excitement of seeing birds and sagebrush and trees and rocks and whatever else is out there. All these external stimuli seem to trigger my pituitary and hypothalamus glands to produce these endorphins, a compound that sort of acts like an opiate to produce a feeling of well-being.

Erich Fromm used the term biophilia to describe our attraction to all that is alive and vital (animals and plants). Edward O. Wilson, in his book entitled *Biophilia,* stated that biophilia describes the connections that humans seek with other life forms, something that is inherent in our internal biology. In other words, our “humanness” connects us with other living creatures, and we have this affinity with nature ingrained in our genes. Phobias (the love of nature) are the opposite of phobias (our fears of nature). We often use biophobias (think arachnophobia -- fear of spiders, ophidiophobia -- fear of snakes, or even xenophobia -- fear of “foreigners”) to try and scare people, or even eliminate animals and people. However, biophilias are used to calm and comfort people; think about the use of green plants in homes and business or even the use of animals, especially infants, in all sorts of advertisements. Research findings on environmental aesthetics, especially by Robert Ulrich from Texas A & M University, seem to show that nature has a positive and calming effect on hospital patients. I argue that experiencing, or even seeing “nature,” also has the same calming effect on most everyone. Biophilias, I believe, can produce the release of endorphins, and cause a feeling of well-being.

In reading Wilson’s book, he stated that *most children have a bug period, and I never grew out of mine.* I started thinking about how my childhood and my love of rocks, fossils and minerals made me believe that I had a rock period and never grew out of it. For me, the endorphins seem to release as I climb among the ledges or simply reach down and pick up that shiny specimen of calcite out of my drawer. I suspect that similar feelings are achieved by cab grinders and jewelry makers as they inspect their final projects.

So, these thoughts made me ask “is there a *geophilia* hypothesis”? The literature about such is quite scarce but Paul Faulstich in 2004 used the term to define a *biologically based tendency to emotionally associate with the landscape* and further believed this evolutionary heritage forms the basis for our conservation ethic. I believe *geophilia* is much broader than Faulstich’s thoughts and should include our *emotional association with all things geological,* not just the landscape, and closer to Mary Grady’s definition of *loving the earth.* This would put the term in a context similar to *biophilia.* Every morning I “need” to see Pikes Peak, where I get that calming effect and release of body opiates to notify my brain that “all is good” in the world. I may be ill or in a cranky mood, but the vision of Pikes Peak reminds me that the natural world is still in order, and that is a calming effect.

In the opposite spectrum, perhaps a geophobia would include a fear of a beautiful, treed landscape with a trout stream running down the middle of the property.
“Pyrite Decay” is one of the biggest problems for mineral collectors. Minerals that are made of iron and sulfur can have this problem. The two most common minerals are pyrite and marcasite.

For reasons that scientists have not been able to fully understand, the sulfur and iron in these minerals combine with oxygen and hydrogen. The sulfur reacts to become sulfuric acid and the stinky gas called hydrogen sulfide. “Hydrogen sulfide” smells like rotten eggs.

If you have pyrite or marcasite in your collections and it is decaying, you will be able to smell the sulfur! Open a drawer with pyrite in it and sniff. When this chemical reaction happens, the pyrite and marcasite specimens will first turn dark and lose their shiny metallic luster. Over time you will begin to see yellow and white crusts form. The crusts will be crumbly and will rub off very easily. In the worst case, the specimen will actually fall apart! As the specimens deteriorate, the acids created will attack your specimen labels, too. The paper will turn brown and very brittle.

Scientists don’t know how to stop or even control pyrite decay. There are two things that are known that can help you:

1. When one pyrite or marcasite specimen deteriorates, it can cause other specimens nearby to deteriorate, too. If you have a number of pyrite and marcasite pieces, keep them separated from one another. If you have a specimen that is beginning to deteriorate, remove it from the collection immediately.

2. Remember that one of the chemicals created by pyrite decay is the gas called hydrogen sulfide. Keep your specimens in a place where the fumes can’t build up. On an open shelf is a good option. In other words, good air circulation helps.

Many mineral collectors report that pyrite specimens that are more of a darker greenish color are much more likely to change and fall apart from pyrite disease. Avoiding adding pyrite specimens that are darker in color is smart. Bright, brassy, metallic pyrite crystals are much less likely to have pyrite disease. There are some pyrite specimens, like the great cubes and groups of cubes from Spain, that don’t seem to get pyrite disease. The bright, shiny, metallic pyrite specimens from Peru also seem to not break down with this disease.

[Editor’s Note: This was published as a Kids Korner article and used as reading prep for their juniors activity, “learning about the history of gold and gold mining” with a hands on craft related to the lesson. Pyrite is often confused with gold… Maybe you can use this as a springboard for a juniors activity in your club! Are you using the AFMS Juniors Website? Check it out, www.juniors.amfed.org and experience the excitement and joy shown there!]

Geophilia: Communing with the Rocks

Someone with that fear would likely envision the bustle of a housing sub development! I don’t know! I have not run across any specific listed geophobias, except perhaps spelunkophobia (fear of caves) and acrophobia (fear of heights).

So, what does all this mean for readers? Perhaps nothing except to think about how all aspects of rockhounding and lapidary have allowed us to experience a calming mechanism that helps us cope with today’s environment of fear of the unknown. But then again, I also believe it means that rockhounds have some sort of an evolutionary propensity, something built into our genes, that allows us to communicate with, and hear the call of, rocks, minerals, and fossils. I learned long ago that the rocks could really talk; one just had to listen and to understand!

Perhaps we need this relationship and affiliation with living organisms (biophilia) and the land (geophilia) to not only enhance our commitment of living sustainably with the earth, but also to live in a life full of moments of well-being.

The contemplation on this question during these days of Coronavirus, and aging, has led me to a very relaxed state of mind as I dream of flowers, quartz points, mountain peaks, and snakes in the grass. Life is good. Enjoy it to the fullest even in this time of confusion and fear. Be like the famous naturalist who only went out for a walk and finally concluded to stay out till sundown, for going out, he found, was really going in.

References and Credits - continued on page 10
When the Wheel Ain’t Broken . . .
Appreciating Seasons Past as We Plant for Seasons Future

Jim Brace-Thompson, AFMS Public Relations Chair

Last month, I noted the AFMS Public Relations Chair was not a position I actively sought and, quite frankly, it baffled me. I thought to myself, “Why me? Is this even an area where I can do a good job?” Sure, I began a career in educational and scholarly publishing with nearly a decade in sales, PR, and marketing, but that was 40 to 30 years ago during a sort of hazy “Mad Men” era before I moved into editorial acquisitions for the next few decades, and then, into old-fogy retirement. Heck, I thought, as I sat on my rocking chair scratching my aching back, we didn’t even have email accounts, and some crazy guy over in design and production was off-his rocker talking about weird companies named “Google.” I mean, really. Who names a company “Google” and expects anything to come of it??

When Cheryl Neary suggested this position, I explored AFMS documents, including recent AFMS convention packets. Most often, under “Public Relations,” I found “nothing to report” or “no report submitted.” This left me at a loss as to what exactly my responsibilities would be. Exploring further, I found that the last PR Chair to faithfully submit monthly AFMS Newsletter articles and convention reports over an extended period was Francis M. Sick, who wrote a series of articles from November 2007 to April 2011. Given that this was 12 to 16 years ago, I took a snobbish attitude and thought to myself, “I’ll only find ‘old-school’ advice here,” as if I myself ain’t old school!

Well… I’ve since downloaded and read Fran’s amazingly helpful material. In fact, I was startled to find her very first article mirrored my own in that she suggested most PR efforts in which we engage reach inward to those “already in the fold,” or to fellow clubs and club members, rather than outward to the general public and to those we need to reach in order to enlarge our fold. While many of her articles do indeed involve “old-school” print and press-the-flesh suggestions, she does include an article or two about websites and what was then still-evolving social media. Quite frankly, her suggestions about “old school” PR are imminently applicable, and were she chairing this position today, she’d be right on social media!

When we assume a new position within AFMS (or within our regional federation or a local club), we seem to think we need to reinvent the wheel and start from scratch—as if, for everything there is a season, and it is our season to plant anew. But the ancient words of wisdom about seasons say that seasons repeat in an endless cycle that we all might learn from and appreciate. In reading the nearly two dozen articles Fran authored over the years, I’ve come to appreciate the accumulated wisdom already conveyed by those upon whose shoulders we stand and the many seasons that have preceded and that will follow us. In fact, I’m considering scanning and assembling Fran’s wise words into a PR e-pamphlet that we might post to the AFMS website as an evolving source of info that will capture her words, those of other past PR chairs, and future articles for the benefit of us all. And why stop there? How about making it socially interactive so that anyone reading these past articles can chime in with “likes,” “dislikes,” and suggestions of their own? Meanwhile, our “old school” AFMS website contains an archive of past newsletters. I encourage you to check out Fran in her own words if you—like me—seek words of wisdom from seasons past to help in PR efforts for seasons future.

In my inaugural article as PR Chair, I requested ideas large and small. I’m happy to note I received three emails right away. Many thanks! I hope to incorporate helpful comments as our year progresses. If you have thoughts to provide regarding public relations, I welcome them. Please contact me via snail-mail, e-mail, or phone: 7319 Eisenhower Street, Ventura, CA 93003, <braceth at roadrunner.com>, (805) 659-3577. By the way, Francis Sick made this very same request back in 2007. For everything, there is a season, and it is never too late to plant for seasons future.

The American Federation of Mineralogical Societies began the Future Rockhounds program for youth a couple decades ago. One facet of FRA is the badge program, centering on Earth Science education through 20 different badge topics. Completing all 20 badges takes perseverance. Only fifty Juniors in the entire USA have done it, and in doing so, they earn the AFMS Rockstar award.

Our own IMRMC members Delaina Cook and Olivia Long are #49 and #50!

IMRMC began using the Future Rockhounds program in the fall of 2016. Olivia and Delaina were there…they received their first badges in January 2017, at the ages of 11 and 12. Since our club meets once a month, and a few badges take two months to complete…well, you get the picture. It takes commitment!

Each badge requires three major tasks from the FRA manual, and sometimes more to really comprehend the topic, even at a grade school level. Our club gives more challenging activities for high school level.

Besides completing the badges over the past five years, Olivia and Delaina have participated in Silent Auctions, Rock Shows, Field Trips, and more club activities. Both earned our club Junior Volunteer award. Olivia wrote the first ever Junior article for our newsletter. She has taught wire-wrapping to a club group. Delaina and Olivia also assist our newer juniors. Their help is invaluable for our 50+ member junior group. Congratulations!

Photo courtesy of Joan Stoker, used with permission
2022-2023 AFMS Rockhound of the Year Recipients
Judith Allison, AFMS RoY Chair

Midwest Federation (2022)
The Lincoln Gem and Mineral Club (LGMC) of Nebraska has honored Jayne Beer as Rockhound of the Year for 2022. She was selected for her hours of work over the past year to find new housing for the club’s lapidary equipment and the lapidary class. Jayne also attended most meetings, took care of audio-visual equipment, served on committees, participated in field trips, and attended and hosted rock parties. Jayne was both the 2022 Show Chairman and 2022 Summer Swap Chairman. She was Jaynie-on-the-Spot when needed. Congratulations, Jayne. The LGMC is very fortunate to have you as a member.

California Federation (2022)
It is with great pleasure that the Conejo Gem and Mineral Club presents its 2022 Rockhound of the Year award to Sue Soy. Over the years she has compiled a long list of contributions, as she is always eager to pitch-in and help wherever there is a gap that needs to be filled. Every year she works diligently, helping in various ways at our annual show. She assists with the set-up and take-down and has grown numerous plants for the plant booth. During the show she greets attendees at the Hospitality Table, making them feel welcome. At other times she rolled up her sleeves as part of a cleanup crew at our lapidary shop. Other contributions include helping at our silent auctions, donating raffle prizes and submitting articles for our club newsletter. Some of her favorite rockhounding excursions have included trips to the Mojave Desert or searching for perdita in Arizona with her husband, Jack. At home she makes jewelry, which she gives away as gifts. Sue has served as 1st VP (programs) for the last two years. Diagnosed with cancer, she continued to do her job while undergoing chemo, radiation and surgery, all the while bringing in outstanding speakers month after month. On behalf of all the members of our club we thank Sue with this honor. Submitted by Mary Pat Weaver, President, Conejo Gem and Mineral Club.

Bob & Sonia Zola were nominated as San Gorgonio Mineral & Gem Society Rockhounds of the Year for 2022. Bob is a long time member and has held various board positions. Together, he and Sonia have overseen our annual picnic and have been a supportive and positive influence on others in our club. When there is a need for help, Bob always steps forward. We are very appreciative of all they do and find it such a pleasure to have them in our membership. Submitted by Peggy Richard, President.

Eastern Federation (2023)
The Mineralogical Society of the District of Columbia, Inc. is lucky to have Ken Rock as our newsletter editor and online innovator. Therefore, we name Ken as our Club Rockhound of the Year for 2023. Ken became our newsletter editor January 2021. The newsletter had been an email attachment. By July, Ken had researched and proposed a modern approach, one more visually inviting and accessible — one in which a newsletter email contains each article’s headlines and leads (each with its own image) and a click-through option for more of each story. This approach is popular with members. In May 2022, at Ken’s recommendation and effort, we started an online membership application, renewal and payment. It was online, yet still print and mail-able if desired. Thanks to Ken’s newsletter and application/renewal process, membership keeps growing. We owe much to Ken and enthusiastically name Ken Rock as our Club Rockhound of the Year. Submitted by Andy Thompson, Secretary, MSDC

The Southern Maryland Rock and Mineral Club honors Kurt Knower as our 2023 Club Rockhound of the Year. Our club had a difficult time during 2020. The same small group of people came to meetings and did all of the work. Covid prevented in person meetings. We lost our meeting place, found a new one, and reached for normalcy. Kurt Knower, a retired school teacher, joined the club and started our Facebook page. The Facebook group grew to 183 members. Some joined our club. Kurt became the Vice President for Membership. During 2022 membership grew from 44 to 84, largely because of Kurt’s effort. We now have enough members that we get volunteers when asked! For these reasons, we honor Kurt Knower as our Club Rockhound of the Year. Respectfully, Joe Davis, President, SMMRC.

Rocky Mountain Federation (2022 & 2023)
In recognition of his volunteerism to Mineralogical Society of Arizona (MS), 2022 Rockhound of the Year is awarded to Chris Whitney-Smith. His numerous hours of service as President; Chair, MSAs 1st & 2nd Phoenix Heritage Gem & Mineral Show; Publicity & Graphics Designer for Field Trips, Society, & Shows; Field Trip Committee member & Field Trip Leader; Co-Membership Chair; Curator, MSA Mineral Collection with collection on public exhibit at UArizona Alfie Norville Gem & Mineral Museum in Tucson and Pinal Geology Museum in Coolidge; Project Manager, MSA Program Preservation Video Archive Committee and Chair, Volunteers MSA Spinning Wheel Booth 2022 Flagg Gem & Mineral Show and 2022 MSA Shows. His Earth Science contributions to the hobby have been immense & elevated MSA’s public image to further promote the hobby and society and is truly inspiring. Congratulations on your well-deserved selection as 2022 Rockhound of the Year as voted by general membership!

In recognition of her volunteerism to Mineralogical Society of Arizona (MSA) at 2022 shows, Hannah Brodhagen is awarded 2022 Junior Rockhound of the Year. Hannah entered her first competitive mineral exhibit at 2022 Tucson Gem & Mineral Show® and 2nd competition at 2022 Rocky Mountain Federation of Mineralogical Societies Convention Show in Las Vegas and won 1st Place and Best Junior Trophies for both competitions. Hannah installed an exquisite mineral and gemstone exhibit at MSA’s November 2022 Show that received much acclaim. Her volunteerism & Participation at MSA Show and earth science events promoting the hobby and society is truly inspiring. Congratulations on your selection as 2022 Junior Rockhound of the Year as voted by general membership!

The Grand Junction Gem and Mineral Club (GJGMC) is proud to recognize Thom and Kathy Ericson as its 2023 Rockhounds of the Year. Prior to joining the GJGMC over a decade ago, they were regular attendees at the Club’s annual rock shows. Upon joining, they immediately became involved in club activities. Kathy has taught classes and is instrumental in the various operations of the Club. She undertakes many of the unseen tasks, such as coordinating the Club audit, handling Club correspondence, and procuring supplies for the Club’s kitchen and cleaning needs. She has always been involved in the Club’s various events, particularly the preparation, set-up and hospitality at the annual rock shows.

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Thom’s varied lapidary skills, ranging from mechanical to artistic, have added tremendously to the Club’s class offerings. Fundamental to the operation of the Club’s rock shop/teaching facility are Thom’s expertise and contributions in maintaining the shop’s various rock cutting and polishing machines. In addition to his familiarity with the shop’s operation, Thom has long served as Shop Foreman, overseeing Open Shop days for members to use shop tools and machines for personal lapidary or jewelry projects. Thom’s lapidary skill extends well beyond the Club’s shop. He is a go-to expert for mineral/gem identification and can assess the potential for individual specimens to be cut, polished and transformed into jewelry. Thom also teaches an Advanced Lapidary class that focuses on more difficult to process stones such as opal. One of his specialties is faceting, which he also teaches. On top of all these contributions to the Club’s shop and class offerings, Thom has also served on the Club’s Board of Directors, has run the Club’s silent auction at its annual rock show, led field trips, and coordinated security for outdoor vendors at the Club’s new rock show venue at the County Fairgrounds. The GJGMC greatly appreciates Thom and Kathy, who exude a welcoming and nurturing demeanor toward club members, adding to the appeal of belonging to the GJGMC. Submitted by Patrick Martinez

The Value of the Unsung Hero

Judi Allison, AFMS Club Rockhound of the Year Chair

Every club has at least one. Some clubs may have many. Those may be the folks who are almost always at the meetings. Perhaps they quietly help clean up the room. Or maybe they are the ones who regularly bring items for show and tell, or provide treats, or quietly help others learn about some aspect of the hobby. They are the folks who help keep our hobby going even if they are not the ones who are in the “limelight.”

We can honor these folks in such a simple manner. That is what I believe the “American Rockhound of the Year Award” is all about. This award is not a contest. The only requirement is that someone in your club takes the initiative to pass on the information to the right people. Some clubs have committees to choose a person, some have the Executive Committee do the choosing, or possibly, the previous recipient makes the choice. The point is that the process is not set in stone with strict guidelines. The idea is to honor someone in your club who may have gone unnoticed in what they have done for the club during the year. Please don’t overlook the quiet majority.

With the above being my “soapbox,” let me introduce myself. I have been active in the Northwest Federation since 1998 when my husband and I opened our mouths and found ourselves creating the first NFMS website. I have fallen in love with the people of our hobby, as that is what holds me here. After our previous Federation Secretary passed away in 2013, I volunteered to take over the duties. I must have passed the test, as I am still serving in that position. I have been widowed for fifteen years, still substitute for Head Start, where I taught for twenty years, and love to travel when my income allows. I “play” belly dance and take lessons in that and do Zumba for exercise. I belong to two local rock clubs, and I am a Court Appointed Special Advocate for foster children (CASA). Although they are spread around the country, I really enjoy my family of 4 children, 23 grandchildren and significant others and fourteen great grandchildren.

Now to jump back on the “soapbox” for a second: Spread the word. Be sure your clubs know this is a simple process. Call me: 541-720-4950; email me: jms46 at outlook.com and I will gladly expound on the value of the American Rockhound of the Year Program. There are regional representatives who will gladly help you with the process. They are listed below.

California: Chris Ward, chris_ward678 at yahoo.com

Eastern: Ellery Borow, PO Box 47, Waterville, ME 04903-0047, rocknellery at fairpoint.com

Midwest: Jeanine N. Mielecki (312) 623-1554, jaynine9 at aol.com

Northwest: Laurie Ellis, PO Box 3326, Irrigon, OR 97844 nfmsoy at gmail.com

Rocky Mountain: Sheri Johnson, 339 S. Milan St, Henderson, NV 89015, 702-525-0256 sherisrocks89121 at gmail.com

South Central: open (to Judi Allison - jms46 at outlook.com)

Southeast: Marty Hart, 4935 Olivia Dr., Antioch, TN 37013, webmaster at amfed.org

So give us lots of work in 2023! Send in those names!
Back issues are an all-too-common issue in today’s rockhound activity. We carry things, often heavy things. We carry lapidary machines, large rocks, pails of rocks, show cases, meeting tables, boxes of stuff for our dealer booths. On top of that we carry these things upstairs, downstairs, up hills, down hills and across show halls. We are often lifting things from the floor, table, or tail gate. Or we are lowering items down to those levels. One could get tired just thinking of all that work.

Fortunately for us, there are plenty of guides, booklets, instructional videos, and websites with important information on how to lift things.

The human back is a complicated system and an equally complicated geometry. The curious “S” shape of our spine and its movement utilizes a good many overlapping muscles. Stresses on our backs are compounded largely by insufficient exercising of our muscles, most often our lower back muscles. The lower back area is the one most frequented with concerns and complaints.

The first item of business when dealing with any back issue is, of course, to prevent it from happening in the first place. The second item is to seek medical attention and care if there is sufficient concern for evaluation and help with the problem. There is no cents (that is dollar and cents) in making a back problem worse.

The following is a list of back concerns and maintenance ideas complied from several sources:

• Know one’s limits and abilities.
• Know the weight of what one is to lift.
• Ask for assistance with moving heavy, bulky items.
• Secure one’s grip on the item before trying to lift.
• It is not easy to grip or lift wet and slippery items.
• When two or more people are cooperating in the lift, coordinate the lift with a count-down of, “three, tow, one, lift,” or some other coordination.
• When lifting, keep the load close to the body.
• Lift with the legs and brain, not the legs and lack of forethought.
• Before lifting, make sure there is a clear area onto which to lower the item (it is no fun to hold something while waiting for another person to clear the area… I have actually seen that happen).
• Plan the carry route ahead of time. Will someone be walking backwards? Walking backwards should be avoided if possible. Walking side by side is preferable — use careful assessment.
• Does the item being carried contain liquid? Moving liquid can change the balance of an item and cause the losing of one’s grip (carrying a saw with a reservoir of oil is such a situation).
• Does the load need to be kept level (such as the saw containing a reservoir of oil)?
• Is the floor clear of obstructions, such as boxes or electrical cables? Forest pathways are particularly vexing for safely carrying items.
• Ensure there are no wet or slippery areas on the floor (or recent waxing).
• Instead of carrying all the rocks in one pail, try using two pails with approximately 1 half the weight in each pail. This helps keep the spine straighter instead of adding another curvature to its already curved shape.
• If one has only one pail, try carrying it for a while with right hand and then switch to the left hand. Alternate the weight from left to right and keep switching.
• Some people like to carry the one pail in front of them using both arms. This, while keeping the spine straight, is harder to balance than a load in a backpack. Use caution.
• Backpacks are sometimes slung over one shoulder. As with a single bucket, try alternating shoulders to keep redistributing the load.
• The metal wire, or thin plastic handle on many five-gallon pails is stressful for the hand. Try replacing a thin plastic handle with a thicker one. If the wire loop has no handle, put on a comfortable handle.
• Some small plastic pails have thin plastic handles that do not have sufficient capacity to carry rocks. If the handle breaks while carrying a load it may shock the spine and cause injury.
• If one has the use of one, use a four or two-wheeled cart for heavy or bulky carries.
• When using backpacks for the carry, check to make sure the straps are not frayed and the stitching is in good order.
• Backpacks with padded straps are easier on the shoulders.
• Do not carry too heavy a load in a backpack, pail, or rucksack.
• Take breaks during long carries.
• I saw a fellow carrying two heavy pails using a yoke-like device to distribute the weight across his shoulders. I did not ask him about how it worked for him, but it did not look distressful. I did not find out how easy it was to load or unload the two pails from the yoke.

As one might guess, lifting is not the only back injuring activity rockhounds experience. People over-reaching, twisting the spine to reach an item that rolled under a table, or wrenching backward while using a pry bar, gad bar, crowbar as they extract their prized specimen are also back stressing activities. With any activity that uses one’s back it is wise to position the body and footing thoughtfully. It is also wise to keep the spine straight, and think first - before engaging one’s back.

Your safety matters. So do back injuries. Please be careful and have fun with all you do.

What’s this?
Jadeite, Jarosite, Juonniite, Feldspar, ferro-anthrophylite, fluorite, fluorspar, Franklinite, magnetite, manganite, malachite, marcasite, mendozite, mica, Millerite, mimetite, molybdenite, muscovite…
Hi, I am Walt Beneze, and I am privileged to be the AFMS show consultant again for the year 2023.

As the show consultant, I can help by providing you with the necessary meetings and events list during your show. More importantly, I am a clearing ground for all upcoming Federation Convention dates. Since the AFMS officers come from all the Federations and are expected to be at the AFMS meeting, avoiding any conflicting dates with the AFMS convention is very important.

Please keep me informed as soon as you know the date and location of your next convention so it can be published in the AFMS newsletter. Thank you.

Editor's Note: See CORRECTIONS in italics below to CFMS 2023 & 2024 and to RMFMS 2023.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Convention</th>
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<td>NY</td>
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<td>MI</td>
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<td>2025</td>
<td>AFMS 2025</td>
<td>CO</td>
<td>Grand Junction</td>
<td>May 9-11</td>
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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 related subjects, to sponsor and provide ways to coordinate the work and efforts of all interested persons and groups; to sponsor and encourage the formation and international development of Societies and Regional Federations and thereby to strive toward greater international good will and fellowship.

The AFMS Newsletter is normally published monthly except January, July and August by the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies. Each Regional Federation Club is entitled to receive three (3) copies of the AFMS Newsletter. These are usually sent to the President, Federation Director and Editor.

Subscription information, distribution questions and address changes should be sent to the AFMS Central Office. Subscriptions are $5.00 per year. Checks should be made payable to “AFMS” and sent to:
Cheryl Neary
AFMS Central Office
42 Jefferson Avenue
Patchogue, NY 11772-1008
516-449-5341 <centraloffice.afms at gmail.com>

Content: Letters, Editorial Comments, Submissions
Any questions or other communication concerning the content or format of the newsletter should be sent to the Editor:
Linda Jaeger
3515 E. 88th St.,
Tulsa, OK 74137
<AFMSeditor at gmail.com>
Deadline: 5th of the month preceding publication
Material in this Newsletter may duplicated for non-commercial purposes provided credit is given this publication and the author. For commercial use, the individual author(s) must be contacted for approval.
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.

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.
AFMS Committees: 2022-2023

Here is the list of Committee Chairs for 2022-2023. You can contact these people if you need information, have questions, or want 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.

All American Club
Mary Boesdorfer
<writteninwood at gmail.com>

AFMS Club Rockhound of the Year
Judi Allison
<nfmssec at gmail.com>

AFMS Newsletter
Linda Jaeger
<AFMSeditor at gmail.com>

Boundaries
Doug True
2622 Broadwater;
Billings, MT 59102
<dtruefossils 12 at yahoo.com>

Bulletin Editors Hall of Fame
Frank Mullaney
<rockyfiv at gmail.com>

Bulletin Editors Advisory
Linda Jaeger & Cheryl Neary
<LJGRALG at aol.com>

Bylaws Revisory
Steve Weinberger
<cscrystals2 at gmail.com>

Central Office Administrator
Cheryl Neary
42 Jefferson Ave; Patchogue, NY 11772
516-449-5341
<centraloffice.afms at gmail.com>

Commemorative Stamps
Ellery Borow (see Safety)

Conservation and Legislation
Susie Koppert
<susiekoppert at gmail.com>

Convention Advisory
<>

Endowment Fund
Cheryl Neary
See Central Office

Financial Investment
Wayne Cox
<wayne3 at earthlink.net>

Historian
Jennifer Haley
<ladybuglane at napablogger.com>

Inter-Regional Field Trip
Doug True
<dtruefossils 12 at yahoo.com>

Judges Training Seminar
Open

Junior Programs
Lora Hall
<silvertipminis at msn.com>

Long Range Planning
Matt Charsky
<matt2430 at comcast.net>

Name Badge & Trophy
Frank Mullaney
(See Bulletin Editors Hall of Fame)

Nominating
Matt Charsky
<matt2430 at comcast.net>

Parliamentarian
Evan Day
<>

Past President’s Advisory
Matt Charsky (see Long Range Planning)

Photography
John Martin

New Program Competition
DeLane Cox
<delane3 at earthlink.net>

Publications
David Wayment
<aastainedglass at bellsouth.net>

Public Relations
Jim Brace-Thompson
<jbraceth at roadrunner.com>

Safety
Ellery Borow
<rocknellery at fairpoint.net>

Show Consultant
Walt Beneze
<wmbenlbk at gmail.com>

Uniform Rules
Northwest Federation

URC Eligibility Files
Leslie Wayment
<aastainedglass at bellsouth.net>

Ways and Means
Richard Jaeger
<rjgrsci at aol.com>

Website/Webmaster
Marty Hart & Lori Carter
<webmaster at amfed.org>

Web Site Contest (open)
Open
<>

AFMS Scholarship Foundation
Sandie Fender, President
<sandie.fender at gmail.com>
Cheryl Neary, Vice President
Mary Bateman, Secretary
Barbara Ringhiser, Treasurer