



# **FRIENDS OF MINERALOGY**

## ***MIDWEST CHAPTER***

### ***AFFILIATIONS***

*THE MINERALOGICAL RECORD*  
*THE MINERALOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA*  
*AMERICAN GEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE*  
*ROCKS & MINERALS MAGAZINE*

*MARCH - APRIL*

*2013*



### ***NEXT MEETING***

*Saturday, March 16, 2013*

*Miami University, Oxford, OH*

*10:30 AM*

*See Inside For Details*



**FRIENDS OF MINERALOGY**

**FIRST CLASS**

John Blue, Editor

16155 Shurmer Rd,

Strongsville, OH 44136

**FRIENDS OF MINERALOGY  
MIDWEST CHAPTER**

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**AFFILIATIONS  
AMERICAN GEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE  
THE MINERALOGICAL RECORD  
THE MINERALOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA  
ROCKS & MINERAL MAGAZINE**

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**PURPOSE**

**Friends of Mineralogy, Midwest, Inc, Midwest Chapter is organized to promote interest in and knowledge of mineralogy; to advance mineralogical education; to protect and preserve mineral specimens and promote conservation of mineral localities; to further cooperation between amateur and professional and encourage collection of minerals for educational value; and to support publications about mineralogy and about the programs of kindred organizations**

### NEXT MEETING

We will hold a Friends of Mineralogy bi-monthly meeting, March 16<sup>th</sup> (Saturday), at Miami University in Room 10, Shideler Hall (downstairs), 250 S. Patterson Ave., Oxford, Ohio. For information about the campus contact John Rakovan, [Rakovajf@muohio.edu](mailto:Rakovajf@muohio.edu), or call 513-529-3245, or go to Miami's webpage at <http://www.miami.muohio.edu/about-miami/visiting-miami/index.html>. On weekends, parking is not restricted and free around campus. The Cook Field parking lot, located at the corner of Patterson Ave. (Rt. 27) and Rt. 73 is just across the street from Shideler Hall, and it is recommended. The Limper Geology Museum and selected laboratories will be open for viewing. You can bring a bag lunch, or if you prefer to eat out, the following link has a list of places to eat in town, <http://www.miami.muohio.edu/about-miami/visiting-miami/restaurants.html>

This meeting will be a mini-symposium with speakers on topics of interest to mineral collectors. The tentative itinerary (subject to minor changes) is as follows:

10:00 – 12:30 AM	Museum and Labs open for visitation
10:30 – 11:30 AM	John Rakovan: Mineral Collecting in Poland
11:30 – 12:30 AM	Lunch break (Museum and Labs open)
12:30 – 01:30 PM	Terry Huizing: Second Mindat Conference, Morocco
01:30 – 02:30 PM	Tom Bolka: Tucson recap (subject to change; possible substitution/addition of student presentation(s) as practice for Rochester)
02:30 – 03:00 PM	FM business meeting; report on National meetings in Tucson

### MINUTES OF JANUARY FoM MEETING

Minutes from FoM meeting held 1/12/13 at the Indiana State Museum in Indianapolis Meeting was chaired by incoming President Clyde Spencer. Officers present were: Clyde Spencer, President ; Peggy Fisherkeller, Vice President - Programs; Reggie Rose: Vice President - Field Trips; Nelson Shaffer - Treasurer; and John Davis - Secretary. 11 people were in attendance.

The meeting opened with everyone introducing themselves. Followed by the Treasurers report; the balance in the account currently is \$1,962.41. Nelson Shaffer announced concerns with the credit union being hard to deal with. He would like to resign his Treasurers position ASAP.

Clyde Spencer opened up discussion on ways to improve club membership and membership activity. The discussion was dominated by collector's personal conduct in the field and our booth at the Tucson Mineral Show. At which, Nelson Shaffer has asked for volunteers to help with manning the booth during the main show in February. We need to have 2 people in the booth all times. If you are going to be there and can volunteer time, Nelson can be contacted on his cell phone at (812) 360-0386 for scheduling. There was much discussion about collector field conduct. It is getting harder everyday to find premium spots to collect and poor conduct doesn't help at all.

Reggie Rose is asking for everyone to become involved in trying to find places for us to collect. If you have any contacts, or know someone who might have contacts with collecting areas, please contact Reggie for follow ups. Discussion on the Indianapolis Hanson quarry came up and Clyde will take it on himself to work on getting our club back in for a field trip.

Peggy Fisherkeller, as the previous Treasurer, has agreed to audit the club check book before Nelson leaves office. Peggy also stated she would like to have her resignation become effective immediately.

## Minutes of January Meeting (Cont'd)

Reggie is trying to work on updating the contact list. But it needs to be known, we have many members with inaccurate emails. It is the member's responsibility to make sure that Nelson and Reggie have the correct information.

Nelson showed an FM banner that was donated by Bob Harmon and commented on Bob's commitment and service to the club.

A vote was taken on the club providing a \$250 per diem for Clyde Spencer and Nelson Shaffer as our representatives to the National FoM Meeting at the Tucson Mineral show. Nelson Shaffer: John Davis made the motion to give the per diem and Peggy Fisherkeller, seconded it. Unanimous vote to approve.; Shaffer abstained from voting. For Clyde Spencer: Reggie Rose made the motion to give per diem and John Davis, seconded it. Unanimous vote to approve; Spencer abstained from voting.

Following these votes, Clyde called to adjourn and Peggy gave a fabulous back room tour of the prep area and storage areas of fossils and minerals not seen by the average visitors. I personally want to thank Peggy for this rare opportunity. It truly added the wow factor to our visit

Respectfully submitted, John Davis, Secretary

### **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

## **Barriers to Field Collecting – Part 1**

### **Clyde Spencer**

I'd like to talk about concerns I have that affect our ability to collect minerals. There are many legal and social changes that have taken place during my lifetime that negatively impact those in the vocation and avocation of mineralogy.

Because the US is a notoriously litigious country, some of the restrictions are related to liability concerns by property owners. When I was a young man living in California, there were numerous abandoned gold mines in the Mother Lode, and even mercury mines in the San Francisco Bay Area (San Jose). Most of them hadn't been worked since at least the Great Depression, or longer. There was no interest in them, and no interest in discouraging anyone from poking around the dumps. In 1979, the price of gold hit an all time high and there was suddenly interest in the old gold mines. However, probably more importantly, during the '70s and '80s, people began buying patented mining claims to build homes. Along with the homes came No Trespassing signs. Similarly, when I lived in Vermont in the late '60s, it was rare to encounter a No Trespassing sign; when I took a short trip to Vermont last Summer, I encountered them frequently.

Also, sometime during the '80s, Vermont banned gold dredging. An area I used to visit frequently to pan and sometimes dredge for gold now has signs banning even using a sluice box. Recently, the California legislature refused to fund the Department of Fish and Game to issue dredging permits, effectively banning an activity that has been ongoing without problems since the 1950s! Had that been the situation when I was doing field work for my thesis, it would have been a serious impediment to acquiring rare platinum group minerals for study. About eight years ago, I ran into some problems in the Whiskeytown National Recreation Area in Northern California, where a friend and I accidentally found ourselves while stopped at a roadside picnic area. The nearby reservoir was created by the Army Corps of Engineers, but is administered by the National Park Service. The NPS is managing the recreation area as though it were a park and had instituted unposted permit

## President's Message (Cont'd)

regulations for gold panning that effectively make it improbable that anyone can actually find any gold. I was asked by the rangers if I would pan for gold in Yosemite or Yellowstone. I was sorely tempted to say, "No, there isn't any gold there;" however, I bit my lip out of concern that my friend's gear would be confiscated.

Along similar lines, there are many former mining districts throughout the west that have been incorporated into designated Wilderness Areas, and roads leading into them have either been gated or bulldozed shut. A Wilderness Area is supposed to be an area that is unique and has not been altered by the Hand of Man. Instead, it seems that Congress thinks that virginity, once lost, can be claimed if the evidence is hidden. Further, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has instituted permit areas where one has to pack out anything and everything you bring in on foot. Yet, refuse left behind by mining operations during the Great Depression and earlier are protected historical artifacts.

There have been continuing skirmishes between the BLM, concerned about 'asbestos,' and those who want to use the Clear Creek Management Area (San Benito Co., CA) for recreation. It is the type locality for the state gemstone, benitoite, and hosts many unusual minerals. I should note that neither I or nor anyone I know who has been visiting Clear Creek for over 45 years have contracted mesothelioma nor even asbestosis. ([http://www.mesothel.com/asbestos-cancer/exposure/environmental/clear\\_creek.htm](http://www.mesothel.com/asbestos-cancer/exposure/environmental/clear_creek.htm)). Might the terms "toxic," "lethal," and "deadly" be exaggerated? I see the proper role of government as being advisory, not supervisory or patronizing.

Another problem that I'm aware of, particularly for Colorado and South Dakota, are the actions of the U.S. Forest Service closing perfectly serviceable, durable roads to vehicular traffic. These roads have been open to the public for decades and provide access to many abandoned mines and quarries. The locals are sufficiently displeased with this posting that some of them routinely tear the signs down when they find them. In any event, the closing of roads makes it problematic for many of the elderly to get into collecting sites carrying heavy tools, let alone get back out with their prized specimens. In case you haven't noticed, the age of the average mineral collector is increasing. Since advanced courses in mineralogy and ore microscopy are becoming rare in the university curricula, I suspect that the average age of professional mineralogists is also increasing steadily. After all, 10,000 Baby Boomers are now retiring daily for the next 20 years!

Speaking of roads, road-cuts have been a staple of geology classes for decades both for examining cross-sections of structure and as an opportunity to collect fresh rocks and minerals. I noticed, when I was in Bancroft (ON) three years ago, one of the classic road-cuts was fenced and posted against collecting. Recently, the state of Indiana started making noise about how it was dangerous and illegal to collect in road-cuts. Considering that crushed rock from a quarry in this area goes for about \$10 per ton, if someone hauls off 20 pounds of mineral specimens from a road-cut they are depriving the state of a potential sale of about 10 cents worth of aggregate. I suppose it could be considered petty theft, but it is hardly worth tax dollars to prosecute someone. But, the bigger picture would dictate consideration of the educational and recreational value of minerals that would otherwise not be available to collectors; and, it should really belong to the tax payers, not the department of transportation. Fortunately, the state apparently decided that it was making a mountain out of a road-cut and decided to back off on the threats of prosecution – for now.

A few years ago, OSHA tightened up on safety regulations and, among other things, required professional miners to complete safety training, including annual refresher courses. Unfortunately, despite a specific exemption in the regulations for "scientific workers," and "visitors," many quarry operators in Ohio and elsewhere are asking for evidence of the annual miner refresher course before allowing collectors into their operations. I don't know whether the quarry operators simply haven't read the regulations carefully, or if they are motivated by the intent to make it more difficult for collectors to gain access by raising the bar for entrance.

## President's Message (Cont'd)

Clearly, the curriculum, which among other things instructs one on how to store flammables properly and how to climb scaffolding, is not appropriate for visitors who should not be going near such things. In any event, the requirement probably falls more heavily on geology students and their professors since the annual training requires the commitment of 8 hours of attendance at the annual refresher training. While the state of Ohio currently provides free training, there are some who charge for the training, further elevating the bar for entrance to quarries that require the MSHA refresher training certificate.

Concerns about the White Nose Syndrome (WNS) affecting hibernating bats is a new barrier – literally! Many abandoned mines have been closed to access by humans out of concern for infecting the bats. Interestingly, it seems no one has asked the question “Where did the bats hibernate before the man-made mines were abandoned?” Might it be that with the bats necessarily more widely dispersed in the past they were less susceptible to pandemics? If so, then the actions of excluding humans from mines and allowing bats entrance may be exacerbating the WNS problem. One of my favorite quotations is, “The road to Hell is paved with good intentions – and striped with stupidity.”

The problems that I've outlined above are not unique to the United States. If you haven't already had the opportunity to read the excellent missive by Stephen Moreton, (<http://www.mindat.org/article.php/1379/Defending+the+freedom+to+collect+minerals>) I strongly encourage you to do so. He has given considerable thought to the problems he has encountered and has good answers for those who would restrict things even more.

Fundamentally, liability concerns, bureaucratic restrictions by those with little acquaintance with geology, and environmental concerns have conspired to make it more difficult to engage in field collecting. In the next newsletter, I'll propose some things that the mineral-collecting community – particularly Friends of Mineralogy – might do to remove or at least reduce the barriers I've talked about above. If you have any suggestions along this line, please send them to me. I'll be glad to give you credit if I list them, if you so desire.

### MINE SAFETY TRAINING

Many collecting sites now require MSHA Training for entry. Here are sessions currently scheduled:

In Dayton, Ohio:

DAYTON GERMAN CLUB

1400 EAST 5 ST

DAYTON, OH 45402

DATE : Tuesday MARCH 12 2013

START TIME: 9:00 AM

COFFEE ON AT 8:30AM

To sign up for this course: contact Alex at 937-409-4157

In Columbus, Ohio:

The MSHA Part 46 training session for CRMS, OESTA and other affiliated chapters is scheduled as follows:

Date: Friday, April 19, 2013

Site: ODNR

Mine Safety Trng (Cont'd)

Address: 2045 Morse Road, Columbus, OH 43229,

Time: 8 am to 5 pm

On site location: in building E1 at the first floor assembly center (lecture hall). Lunch is on your own. When you arrive, you will have to get a visitor's pass at the security gate - the security person can direct you to building E, but basically it is back in to the right from the gate.

Sign up with Reggie Rose (614-875-2675/captaino@core.com) by phone or (preferably) email before Tuesday April 16, 2013, to guarantee yourself a seat.

Reggie Rose, Field Trip Chairman

**MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL**

**2013 MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE PAST DUE. THIS WILL BE YOUR LAST NEWSLETTER UNLESS YOU RENEW PROMPTLY. You may not participate in collecting trips unless paid.**

**FRIENDS OF MINERALOGY, MIDWEST CHAPTER  
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM**

Dues are for calendar year Jan1 through Dec 31

Dues should be paid by January 15<sup>th</sup>

Dues must be current to participate in FoM Chapter activities

Annual dues currently \$15 for individual member. \$10 each additional family member

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADD'TL FAMILY MEMBER NAMES \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

Street City State Zip

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

Commercial Mineral Dealer? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Company Name \_\_\_\_\_

CLUB NEWSLETTER VIA E-MAIL? YES \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_

TOTAL MEMBERSHIPS \_\_\_\_\_ TOTAL REMITTANCE \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Submit form with remittance to Jeff Spencer, FoM Midwest Treasurer, 4948 Beachwood Dr, Cincinnati, OH 45244