

Friends of Mineralogy Inc. Midwest Chapter Newsletter



Volume 41, Issue 1

January + February 2026

Mineral Corner—Pride from member collections.

Kings Mountain railroad cut, Kings Mountain, Lincoln County, Kentucky

Johan Maertens collection. Uncatalogued
All images by Johan Maertens ©

The Kings Mountain railroad cut (37.457 N, 84.707 W) in Lincoln County, Kentucky, represents a premier stratigraphic exposure of the Mississippian Borden Formation. The north-south rail line of the Norfolk-Southern Railway begins a downgrade in the Green River Valley. The steep topography and grade of the rail line has created deep cuts in the rock at the rim of the valley. The railroad cut begins at the tiny town of Kings Mountain where KY501 passes over the tracks and cut continues for about 0.8 miles.

The Kings Mountain railroad cut (1963) exposes an approximately 100 meter vertical section of Osagean (Lower Mississippian) strata. The base of the cut consists of the Nancy Member, characterized by blue-gray shales and siltstones, which is unconformably overlain by the Halls Gap Member and the cherty, dolomitic limestones of the Muldraugh Member.

The geological context is defined by the progradation of the Borden Delta across the Cincinnati Arch, where distal turbidites and siltstones were later subjected to diagenetic silica replacement and carbonate leaching.

Continued on page 4

Calcite on dolomite on quartz. View 37 mm wide. Kings Mountain railroad cut, Kings Mountain, Lincoln County, Kentucky Johan



Highlights

- **Kings Mountain, KY**
- *Get involved*
- *Field Trips*
- #
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Contact and submissions via E-mail at newsletter@fommidwest.org
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From the Newsletter Editor

Thank you for your patience with the late release of this edition.

Life got very busy at the 2026 start.

Wishing you all a great 2026 filled with the joy of fabulous specimens and friendships.

I attended my first Tucson mineral shows visit and presented there during the FM Symposium. Both were a great experience.

I encourage you to share your discoveries with our community. Whether it's a new find, a memorable story, an event you attended, or even just a photo of your favorite specimen, we'd love to include it in our newsletter. Your contributions will help keep our collective passion for mineral collecting vibrant and engaging.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Johan Maertens at the K. Limper Museum, Miami University. 2026



Get Involved: Your Contribution Matters!

Inspired by the famous equation "E=MC²," we believe that our Existence as a thriving organization depends on Member-engagement and Two-Way Commitment. For this to work, we need your active involvement!

Commitment is key. We rely on members to stay connected with officers and committee chairs, while it's equally important that our leaders respond promptly to your inquiries. To keep things running smoothly,

we need members who are ready to answer the call for action and step up in leadership roles.

The Friends of Mineralogy needs fresh energy, new ideas, and passionate individuals to help us grow. There are several open leadership positions, and it's crucial that we fill them with dedicated volunteers like you. Just as a body needs all its parts to function—arms, legs, back, and heart—our organization thrives when we all contribute. Together,

we can build the resources we need, from insurance to training to credibility, that allow us to enjoy and advance our shared passion for mineralogy in ways no individual could do alone.

This is your opportunity to make a real difference. Help shape the future of the Friends of Mineralogy and take an active role in our community. Whether you have leadership experience or a passion for helping others, there's a place for

This Newsletter is published six times a year by the Friends of Mineralogy Midwest Chapter for digital distribution to members in good standing.

Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the Friends of Mineralogy. We reserve the right to decline any submission judged to be inconsistent with FM-MW's purpose or not in keeping with the sensitivities of its membership.

Contributions of articles and photos are welcome: Articles may be edited for style, clarity, and length. The newsletter assumes no responsibility for lost mate-

rial. **SUBMISSION DEADLINES:** the 15th of every evenly numbered month, for each issue.

Guidelines for Newsletter Submissions: E-mail preferred (written material accepted); clearly state that the submission is intended for publication in the Newsletter; send photos as color, high resolution email attachments.

Send all submissions and suggestions to

newsletter@fommidwest.org

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Field Trips

Field trip details are communicated by email to members.

Field trips

Sylvania Minerals (July 11)

[Hogg Mine \(Memorial Day Weekend\)](#)

To offer a field trip you can organize, contact the Field Trip Chairperson or a FM MW officer (see below).

For your education, watch Collector Safety Training videos by Scott Kell on YouTube. See [FM-MW newsletter Volume 39 Issue 2](#).

FM-MW Fieldtrip Requirements

1. Be a FM-MW Member in good standing to participate.
2. All field trips are weather dependent per decision of quarry supervisor.
3. Field collecting is physically de-

manding! All trips require at least an average level of physical fitness!

4. Quarry trips require members to be at least 18 years old, and fully comply with the FM-MW field trip guidelines posted on <https://www.fommidwest.org/field-trip-guidelines/>

Complete and sign the Waiver of liability and hold harmless agreement for activities (including field trips) of the Friends Of Mineralogy – Midwest Chapter Inc.

After receiving the announcement, sign up for the field trip by email to the acting Field Trip Coordinator.



MSHA Hazard Training

ALWAYS bring your **certificate of training Mining Safety and Hazard** with you to all quarry field trips.

If you did not complete Hazard training, or you lost your certificate or if you are new to the club, then you can **take the online safety training course**.

To sign up and receive instructions about the online course, contact Craig Kramer at craigwkramer@gmail.com with the following information in your email:

- club affiliation
- full name
- address
- telephone number

Website for test : <https://edpuzzle.com>

If you have taken the class before online .go to test website. Top right click Log In. Select **I'm a student**

Rock and Mineral Shows, Clubs, Rock Shops, Mineral Museums can be found using the Internet www.rockandmineralshows.com;

<https://xpopress.com/show/exposearch>;

<https://www.mindat.org/museums/>;

https://www.mindat.org/shows.php?frm_id=searcher&cform_is_valid=1¤t=1&country=1&su

Friends of Mineralogy Inc. - Midwest Chapter

OFFICERS

President – Vacant

Vice President – Vacant

Field Trips/ Safety Officer – Johan Maertens
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Treasurer - Jeff Spencer

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FM Liaison Officer - Sean Stimac

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906-250-5758 seanstimac@gmail.com

COMMITTEES

Membership - Vacant

Newsletter - Johan Maertens

Webmaster - Jeff Spencer

Nominating Committee - Vacant

Audit Committee - Frank Konieczki

Continued from page 1 ...

This locality is recognized by mineralogists for its high concentration of quartz-centric geodes that frequently host rare accessory sulfides, most notably millerite. Geode formation is attributed to the dissolution of syngenetic anhydrite nodules within the carbonate-rich horizons of the Muldraugh Member, followed by the precipitation of a chalcedonic rind. The paragenesis is dominated by alpha-quartz which forms the primary geode lining. Unlike the typical geodes that are usually found along the streams of this region, these are rich in various mineral occurrences. These geodes and the limestone matrix compare to geodes at the nearby Hall's Gap KY 27 locality.

Mineralization within the geodes follows a specific paragenetic sequence beginning with chalcedony and macrocrystalline quartz, followed by carbonates such as strontianite, malachite, calcite and dolomite, and concluding with metallic sulfides and sulfates including millerite, sphalerite, pyrite, chalcocopyrite, marcasite, and celestine.

Disclaimer: The collection spot is next to an active railroad track. Rocks and geodes fall off the limestone cliffs. Per Friends of Mineralogy Midwest collecting practices, this is a hazardous location.



Geode: Calcite on quartz. View 80 mm wide. Kings Mountain railroad cut, Kings Mountain, Lincoln



Geode: Calcite on quartz. Fluorescence under UV-B radiation. View 80 mm wide. Kings Mountain railroad cut, Kings Mountain, Lincoln County, Kentucky Johan Maertens collection and image.

2026 Dues

Annual dues currently are \$20.

Dues are for calendar year January 1st through December 31st

Dues should be paid by January 15th

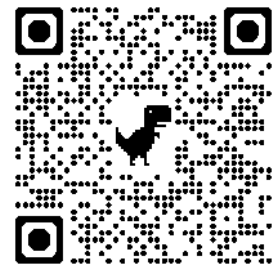
Dues must be current to participate on FM MW activities.

To register for membership you have 2 options for payment.

1. You may print the form and mail it with your \$20.00 payment

2. You may pay on-line (\$21.00) through our website with a credit/debit card or PayPal. You do not need a PayPal account to use a credit card. Our website has received security verification and certification.

Membership information with [this link](#) or use QR



FM MW visits Sylvania Minerals, Michigan—November 2025

BY AUGGIE HOWE AND JOHAN MAERTENS

Construction aggregates may be the primary product leaving the Sylvania Minerals Quarry, but they are not the only treasures found there. Alongside the steady flow of crushed stone bound for construction projects—perhaps even your next driveway—select pieces of quarry rock find their way into the hands of mineral collectors, where their scientific and aesthetic value can be appreciated.

Great Lakes Aggregates Sylvania Quarry,, South Rockwood, Michigan 2026. Johan Maertens image.



Our November field trip returned us to the Raisin River Dolomite, a fossil-rich remnant of a shallow marine environment that covered Michigan approximately

Great Lakes Aggregates Sylvania Quarry,, South Rockwood, Michigan 2026. Johan Maertens image.



410 million years ago. For many participants, the opportunity to collect from such a geologically significant formation was reason enough to be there.

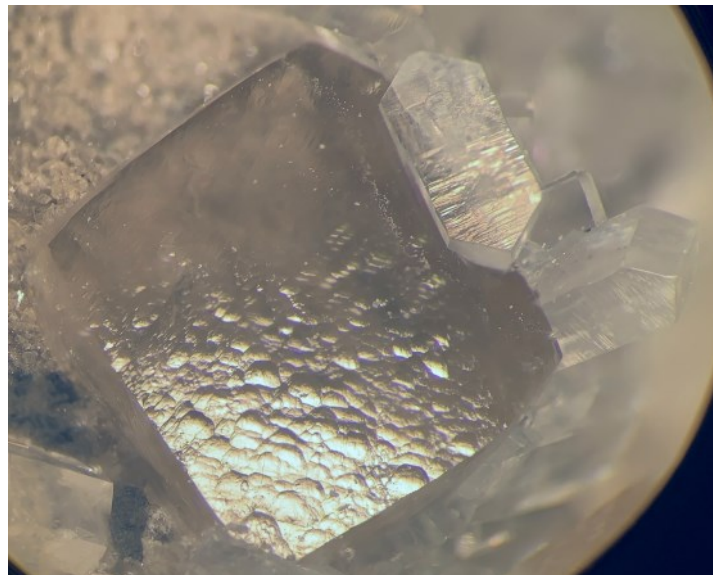
The day began in the visitor parking lot under a cool sky, where members gathered in good spirits. Conversations flowed easily—stories were exchanged, past discoveries revisited, and a few friendly “old collector” claims resurfaced, setting an engaging tone for the morning.

Following a digital check-in, the group attended a thorough MSHA safety briefing led by our guide and supervisor for the day, Nick Bunch. With safety protocols clearly established and gear in place, we organized into a caravan and made our way in the open pit.

Operations were active, offering an impressive backdrop to our visit. Large haul trucks moved steadily across the site, and the scale of the quarry was fully on display. Our group remained safely positioned away from active work areas, though we did briefly share the haul roads—an experience that underscored the magnitude of the operation.

Recent rainfall left portions of the pit floor covered with water, naturally limiting access to some collecting areas. Additionally, the designated collecting zone had been more thoroughly worked than anticipated prior to our arrival. While this constrained the available material, it also encouraged careful observation and selective collecting—skills familiar to experienced rockhounds.

Despite a shorter-than-planned collecting window, several members uncovered noteworthy specimens, demonstrating that persistence and attention to detail



Calcite with celestine. View 17 mm wide. Great Lakes Aggregates Sylvania Quarry,, South Rockwood, Michigan. Johan Maertens collection and image.

often yield results even under less-than-ideal conditions. By late morning, with weather and site conditions in mind, the group wrapped up the excursion.

While the day did not produce large, dramatic finds, it offered something equally valuable: time in the field, shared experience among fellow collectors, and access to a site with a long-standing tradition of supporting the mineral-collecting community. Participants left with meaningful additions to their collections and an appreciation for the continued cooperation of Great Lakes Aggregates in making opportunities like this possible.

It was, by all measures, a rewarding day—one that many would be glad to repeat.

Thank you Johan Maertens for scheduling and setting up the trip. Thank you Auggie Howe for site coordination.

We are indebted to the Sylvania Minerals quarry personnel who made this outing possible.

Thank you to the attendees for great behavior at the quarry. The supervisor was very happy with our group and is open to having Friends of Mineralogy return for trips.

Friends of Mineralogy, Inc. Midwest Chapter. Annual Business Meeting Minutes

BY FRANK KONIECZKI

The teleconference meeting was scheduled for November 22, 2025 at 2:00 PM, but owing to technical difficulties, the meeting was postponed until 3:00 PM.

Field Trips/Safety Officer Johan Maertens, who served as the meeting chair, welcomed those who attended the meeting.

Called to order by Field Trips/Safety Officer Maertens at 3:06 PM, after declaring a quorum. Five members were present during the meeting. The following officers were attendees: Johan Maertens, Field Trips/Safety Officer; Jeff Spencer, Treasurer; Frank Konieczki, Secretary. Additional attending members were past president Clyde Spencer and member Sean Stimac.

The following items/topics were presented and discussed:

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes:

Field Trips/Safety Officer Maertens asked if any corrections to the November 30, 2024 meeting minutes that were published in the January-February 2025 newsletter were necessary. No changes to the minutes were suggested or adopted by the attendees. A motion was requested and made to accept the minutes as published, and the motion was passed by unanimous vote. (Maertens/JSpencer/P).

Officer Reports:

Field Trips/Safety Officer: Officer Johan Maertens indicated there were four field trips in 2025, namely Danville, Ohio State University Orton Museum, Williamsport, and South Rockwood. Johan has reconstituted a list of past field trip locations in Ohio, Michigan and Indiana that were accessible to collectors in past years; however, there has been a large turnover of management personnel at the eight or nine quarries that FM has traditionally frequented, so arranging trips is challenging. There is already one trip scheduled – July 2026 at South Rockwood.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Jeff Spencer stated that a financial summary is available for 2025. Jeff



Frost . 2026. Johan Maertens Image

indicated that the starting balance for 2025 was \$12,102.00 and the current balance is \$12,316.18. He noted that the only unusual financial activity in 2025 was \$296 for 2024 FM National dues paid in 2025. He observed that the overall picture is that we cannot lose any more members without having the organization's account balances start to decline. Johan Maertens asked about major expenses and Treasurer Spencer replied that the two major expenses without having a symposium are always insurance and National dues. Clyde Spencer asked if there have been any changes to insurance and if the premiums might increase. Jeff Spencer replied that contacting insurance companies might trigger a review of our rates. Sean Stimac asked if FM Midwest might be able to piggyback with the Midwest Federation of Mineralogical Societies to get lower rates. He stated that FM's New Jersey chapter is affiliated with the Eastern Federation of Mineralogical Societies. There was agreement that there is nothing to preclude FM from partnering with different organizations. Treasurer Spencer noted that we are chartered with FM National and we are financially tied to them.

Secretary: Secretary Frank Konieczki stated there was not a Greater Detroit show this year, but he will contact the 2026 show chairperson to see if FM may have an educational table at the shows as in past years. He also volunteered to conduct the annual financial audits for 2024 and 2025, in addition to conducting the 2023 audit when the materials are received.



Old Business:

There was brief discussion about an item that was addressed during the November 2024 annual business meeting, namely the current status of FM Midwest having a Facebook page. Johan Maertens asked for a status report about how FM Midwest could have material posted. Sean Stimac stated FM National has a Facebook page and FM could either appoint a person to post content for the Midwest Chapter, such as field trip reports, announcements, symposia, etc., on its own page or ask National to share information on the Chapter's behalf. Sean noted that there are criteria necessary to post the material.

Johan Maertens noted that an amendment to the FM Constitution regarding officer titles and duties that was voted on and approved in 2020 was not current on our website. Secretary Konieczki indicated he has shared a draft of the changes with the officers and upon finalization, it will be posted on the website. Treasurer Spencer stated that it will also be uploaded to the Ohio Secretary of State (SOS) since they are the agency that handles FM Midwest's 501 c(3) filings. Note: the revised document was approved and it was uploaded to FM Midwest's website and the Ohio SOS on November 24, 2024.

New Business:

Field Trips/Safety Officer Maertens noted that the language in Article 1 and Article 3 of the FM Midwest Bylaws does not match the current practices of the organization. The bylaws currently state that six meetings per year are to be held. Johan indicated that we are not holding meetings according to this schedule. He suggested that the language be changed to regular meetings, including an annual business meeting, to allow some flexibility. Johan also mentioned that changing the language concerning when dues are voted on would help the treasurer to more easily process the tasks associated with dues processing and accountability. The matter will be brought to the membership as a proposal for a subsequent vote by members in a business meeting.

Annual member dues were discussed and those present agreed that the current dues amount of \$20 per individual (\$21 for online registration) was appropriate. A motion to keep membership dues at \$20 per individual by check and \$21 for online registration for 2026 was then brought for vote and it passed without opposition (JSpencer/CSpencer/P).

The nomination and election of officers was discussed. Current officers (Johan Maertens, Jeff Spen-

cer and Frank Konieczki) had all indicated they would be willing to continue in their current roles for the coming year. The President, Vice-President, and Liaison positions are currently vacant. Field Trips/Safety Officer Maertens opened the floor for nominations, either to serve or to nominate another member to serve. There were two nominations made for the vacant Liaison position, namely Sean Stimac and Clyde Spencer. No nominations to fill the vacant President or Vice President candidates were received prior to the meeting or made from the floor. The floor was closed for nominations. Each position was voted on separately since there were two candidates for Liaison Officer. The results were as follows: Johan Maertens, Field Trip/Safety Officer (elected 5-0); Jeff Spencer, Treasurer (elected 5-0); Frank Konieczki, Secretary (elected 5-0). Clyde Spencer withdrew his name for Liaison Officer shortly before the vote for same because he very likely will not be able to attend the Tucson shows in 2026. Subsequently, the vote for Liaison Officer was conducted and the results were as follows: Sean Stimac, Liaison Officer (elected 5-0).

For the Good of the Order:

Newly elected FM Midwest Liaison Officer Sean Stimac indicated he is filling multiple roles at National and is preparing for Tucson.

Field Trips/Safety Officer Johan Maertens noted he will be conducting a presentation at Tucson.

Treasurer Jeff Spencer asked Liaison Officer Stimac to send out the Tucson meeting schedule. Sean indicated he is already working on it and he will send it to Jeff.

Field Trips/Safety Officer Maertens thanked all attendees for attending the meeting.

A motion to adjourn was entered and carried without opposition. (Maertens/Konieczki/P).

Meeting adjourned: 4:05 PM.

Friends of Mineralogy Midwest visits Karl E. Limper Geology Mu- seum,

Miami University, Oxford, Ohio January 2026

BY JOHAN MAERTENS

As the Cincinnati Museum of Natural History and Science shifted its focus away from mineral exhibits, enthusiasts in southwestern Ohio found themselves seeking a new sanctuary for geological exploration. The Karl E. Limper Geology Museum, tucked away in the lobby of Shideler Hall at Miami University, has quietly stepped into this void, offering an immersive look into Earth's history that spans from local fossil beds to the far reaches of our solar system.

The Karl E. Limper Geology Museum functions as a repository and pedagogical center for collections-based earth science. Housing approximately 150,000 specimens, the museum's primary strengths lie in its taxonomic arrangement of Upper Ordovician marine invertebrates, reflective of the world-famous "Cincinnatian" strata. The structural history of the museum traces back to the 1920s in Brice Hall, evolving into a state-of-the-art facility following the 2016 renovation of Shideler Hall.



Entering Shideler Hall

The visitor experience begins before one even enters the museum proper. Walking through the first-floor lobby of Shideler Hall, one is greeted by large glass windows showcasing a vibrant array of regional and worldwide minerals that hint at the treasures within. These include a variety of calcite and fluorite crystals. The modern, open design of the museum, which reopened in 2016 after a total building renovation, feels less like a traditional dusty archive and more like a dynamic laboratory.

Upon entering Room 126, I was met by Museum Director Kendall Hauer, whose insights provided a rare curatorial perspective on how a university collection evolves. He noted that while the museum serves the public, its primary mission remains the support of undergraduate learning. This "collections-based science" is evident in the layout;

specimens are not merely for show but are actively used in labs for introductory and upper-level geology courses.

The Cincinnati Legacy

The core of the Limper Museum is rooted in the early 20th-century work of William Shideler, who began collecting late Ordovician marine invertebrates. Southwestern Ohio is globally recognized for these "Cincinnati" fossils, and the museum does not disappoint in its taxonomic presentation. Walking through the main hall, I encountered an extensive exhibit of trilobites, featuring both common species and rare local variations.

The highlight of the paleontology section is a large diorama providing a living reconstruction of the Ordovician sea. A new large mural by regional artist Kyle Hartshorn depicting flora and fauna scenes from geological periods from Ohio bedrock. It is part of a new "Geologic History of Oxford" exhibit slated to be ready by fall of 2026.

It is a necessary visual aid that helps bridge the 450-million-year gap between the stone molds in the cases and the vibrant, shallow-sea environment they once inhabited. Hauer notes that the museum now serves as a repository for approximately 150,000 such specimens, making it an essential site for anyone studying the regional fossil record.

The exhibits are laid out to not only facilitate teaching students but also to teach Earth Science teachers.

The well-lit contemporary large pane exhibits show case rock forming processes, with multiple specimens of rock types from a wide range of geologic environments. A systematic mineral collection (Dana) with aesthetics samples is complemented by a small exhibit of gems, minerals that have been fashioned in various ways by humans to enhance their beauty. Labeling is traditional, with basic mineral and locality information on labels next to the specimens. In-case documentation is quite extensive in the rock exhibits and limited in the minerals exhibits, carefully crafted to allow a viewer to take as much information as wanted without feeling obligated to read everything.

Elevated Collections and Alumnus Support

A significant portion of the museum's recent growth can be attributed to the generosity of Miami alumni such as Bert VanderSchaaff and Walter Gross III. According to Hauer, high-quality, large-scale donations have "elevated the nature of the museum" and provided access to pieces that an academic program would otherwise find unreachable. These specimens transformed the visual impact of the gallery, moving it toward a world-class standard.

The museum's reach has also expanded through institutional acquisitions. A notable addition is a 2.3-billion-year-old glacial deposit, purchased from the dissolved geology department of Wittenberg University. This piece, along with a forthcoming suite of minerals local to Ohio and its adjacent states, ensures that the Limper continues to represent the broader regional geology even as other programs fade.

Technology and the Future

At the entrance of the first hall stands the 48-inch Omni-

Globe. This interactive digital sphere is a favorite for students and visitors alike, capable of animating everything from tectonic plate movements to atmospheric climate patterns. It serves as a modern counterpoint to the static displays, grounding the physical specimens in the larger, dynamic systems of the planet.

As our tour moved toward the storage and acquisition areas, Hauer offered a glimpse into the museum's future. Currently "behind the scenes" is a growing meteorite collection, which includes specimens of Moon and Mars meteorites. These planetary pieces represent the next frontier for the museum's teaching mission, expanding the curriculum from terrestrial mineralogy to cosmochemistry.

Community Resources

For the local collector, the Limper Museum offers more than just a viewing experience. One of its most valuable community services is the free identification of "UFOs" unidentified fossils and objects. Whether you have found a backyard mineral or a mysterious fossilized fragment, the museum staff remains dedicated to helping the public identify and understand their finds.

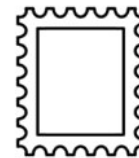
The Karl E. Limper Geology Museum is free and open to all ages. It remains a vital bridge between Miami University's century-old geology program and the residents of southwestern Ohio, proving that even a "hidden gem" can shine with world-class brilliance.

[Link to Museum visit details](#)



Johan Maertens (left) with museum director Kendall Hauer (right). Karl E. Limper Geology Museum, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio. 2026

Johan Maertens, Editor
Friends of Mineralogy Inc. - Midwest Chapter
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Short lived frost crystal collections.

Johan Maertens images. 2025-2026 winter

The Midwest Chapter covers an 8-state region: Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, Missouri, Iowa and Kentucky.

Our purpose is to organize and 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.

2026 Calendar year dues are \$20 per person.

View membership information at

<https://www.fommidwest.org/registration-forms/>

The Midwest Chapter is Affiliated

with:

FRIENDS OF MINERALOGY

www.friendsofmineralogy.org

THE MINERALOGICAL RECORD

<https://mineralogicalrecord.com>

THE MINERALOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA

www.minsocam.org

AMERICAN GEOSCIENCES INSTITUTE

www.americangeosciences.org

MINERALOGICAL ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

mac-amc.myshopify.com

ROCKS & MINERALS MAGAZINE

www.tandfonline.com/journals/vram20

MINERAL NEWS

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SCAN ME