

The Rockfinder

Michiana Gem & Mineral Society

Tom Noe, Editor

305 Napoleon Blvd.

South Bend, IN 46617



MARCH, 1996



# THE ROCKFINDER



## HIGHLIGHTS IN THIS ISSUE:

- New Fossil Bill Introduced, p. 4
- Collecting Micrometeorites, p. 10
- 50th Anniversary of American Federation of Mineralogical Societies, p. 9
- Club Field Trips Scheduled, p. 8

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Publicity	.....	Tom Noe	305 Napoleon Blvd., South Bend, IN 46617
Membership	.....	All Members	
Field Trips	.....	Kathy Miller	1106 Clayton Drive, South Bend, IN 46554

THE PURPOSE of the Michiana Gem & Mineral Society is to promote interest in and study of the earth sciences and the lapidary arts, and the sharing of knowledge and techniques.

General meetings are held the fourth Sunday of each month, 2:00 pm EST, at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, 805 S. 29th St., South Bend, IN. Exceptions include field trip meetings, June (field trip), July (no meeting), August (club picnic) and December (Christmas Party).

Board meetings are held the second Wednesday of each month, 7:00 pm, St. Joseph County Public Library, basement level.

The annual club show is Labor Day Weekend.

The Michiana Gem & Mineral Society, a not-for-profit organization, is affiliated with the Midwest Federation of Mineralogical Societies and with the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies.

*Rockfinder* staff:

Editor, Tom Noe, 305 Napoleon Blvd., South Bend, IN 46617  
 Co-Editor, Margaret Heinek, 7091 E. East Park Lane, New Carlisle, IN 46552-9400

Reporters, Bob Heinek, Herb Luckert, club members  
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cut \_\_\_\_\_

**Yearly Membership Dues (Payable before January 1)**

_____ Individual	\$ 6.50 per year
_____ Family	\$10.00 per year
_____ Junior	\$ 2.00 per year

Please send your dues and this form to  
 Michiana Gem & Mineral Society  
 c/o Margaret Heinek  
 7091 E. East Park Lane, New Carlisle, IN 46552-9400

Please make address corrections to the mailing label (reverse side) and/or fill in the optional information below.

**Check your SPECIAL INTERESTS:**

- |                       |                      |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| General Geology _____ | Beads _____          |
| Gems & Minerals _____ | Silversmithing _____ |
| Fossils _____         | Artifacts _____      |
| Cabochons _____       | Rockhound _____      |
| Faceting _____        | Crystals _____       |
| Carving _____         | Micromounts _____    |
|                       | Other _____          |

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
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**List Family Members (spouse and children):**

- |               |                           |                                      |
|---------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Name _____    | Birth Mo/Date _____       | will attend meetings, yes ___ no ___ |
| Name _____    | Birth Mo/Date _____       | will attend meetings, yes ___ no ___ |
| Name _____    | Birth Mo/Date _____       | will attend meetings, yes ___ no ___ |
| Name _____    | Birth Mo/Date _____       | will attend meetings, yes ___ no ___ |
| Address _____ |                           |                                      |
| Phone _____   | Anniversary Mo/Date _____ |                                      |

# THE ROCKFINDER

Volume 36  
Number 3

March, 1996

Published by  
Michiana Gem & Mineral Society

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**Meeting:** Meeting: Sunday, March 24  
Doors Open 1:30 PM  
Meeting at 2:00 PM

March program: a hands-on presentation by Donna Mark on stringing and restringing beads.

**Place:** Our Redeemer Lutheran Church  
805 S 29th St. (29th & Wall)  
South Bend, IN

**Hosts** Sr. Jeanne Finske &  
Tom Noe



## UP AND COMING

March 29--31: Gem & Mineral Show, Rockford, Ill.

April 12--14: South Bend Gem & Mineral Show, at Century Center, downtown. Bring your friends. Our club is sponsoring the silent auction; see page 10.

April 12-14: Mid-America Paleontology Society's National Fossil Exposition XVIII, featuring brachiopods, at the Student Union of Western Illinois University in Macomb, IL. For additional information call Herb Luckert at 282-1354.

April 21: Club field trip to Mazon Creek area, IL, to look for fossils in concretions. See p. 8.

May 4--5: "Fabulous Fluorites" theme for Cincinnati Mineral Society's show at Cincinnati Gardens.

May 17--19: "Western Wonders" theme for Dearborn club's gem & mineral show, at Dearborn Civic Center.

July 26--28: Annual Midwest Federation Convention and Show in Macomb, IL.

August 9--11: American Federation's Convention and Show in Riverside, CA.

**MARGARET'S COLUMN**

It certainly looks like winter will not release it's grip on Northern Indiana, but we know it will be warmer soon. Then we will be able to do some rockhounding.

I am excited about our March 24th program! And you may be too, so mark your calendar now and come. This will be a hands on bead stringing workshop, by Donna Mark from Buchanan. I have talked to her several times and she is excited about it too.

She suggests you bring beads that need stringing or restringing. Donna will supply the members with needles, "tiger tail", other stringing material and printed information so you will be able to do more at home. As I announced at the February meeting, she will bring "bead boards" for members to purchase, then you may take the boards home. She was able to get them at a good price, and will charge you \$4.00 for the boards you purchase. She told me the boards were as nice as the ones she had ordered before, and had to pay about \$10.00 for those. I had her order about eighteen, so we think there will be enough for all that would like to purchase one. Suggest you bring a towel, to put on the table, to keep from having dropped beads from dropping on the floor and being lost. So come and learn.

Some exciting news...I had a call from the 'field trip chairman' of a rock club in Canton, Ohio. He called to ask if we knew of any quarry in our area to do rock hunting. But the exciting news is, he will be glad to take anyone out hunting in the Canton area, all you have to do is call him and make arrangements. His name is Tony Dreussi, 315 Hazlett NW, Canton, Ohio, phone 216-452-3585. Tony also told me about a couple of quarry that will allow rock hunting, and he give me the names of the contacts, at least two quarries. If you are interested, let me know and maybe we can get a car caravã going for a trip later. One quarry is in Defiance, Ohio and the other is also in the 419 area code area. I did not make a note of the town. But I do have a phone number for

each quarry.

As I told the members, at the show that is being held April 12, 13 and 14 at the Century Center, Tom Noe will have a "silent auction" table to benefit the Michiana Society. If you have items you would like to sell, inform Tom, and offer to help sometime after 2 PM on Friday, 10 to 6 on Saturday and especially after 3 PM on Sunday. The show closes at 4, but the tables will have to be cleared, the left over rock packed up. Tom suggests you mark any item you want to sell, and he will take a % for the club, **ALSO YOU MIGHT OFFER TO HELP HIM.** The money realized from this will help pay for the bus trips.

Just heard on the TV that Americans are reported to eat 66 billion hot dogs each year. How many do you consume?

See you at the meeting March 24th. Make sure you pick up your 1996 roster and add the name of a new member:

Diane Schlundt, 310 Ostemo Pl.  
South Bend 46617.

**TIDBIT.....**

We are learning more and more that deafness can be attributed to our lapidary equipment. The noise from our saws and grinders can affect our hearing. As we use face masks to protect our lungs and eyes from dust, we should also consider earplugs to protect our hearing.

from TRIASSIC VALLEY BULLETIN 11/93

**HUMOR....**An optimist is one who builds castles in the sky, a dreamer is one who lives in those castles, and a realist is one who collects rent from both of them.

from THE TUMBLER.

**Hint....** The next time you clean your saw, line the bottom with a double layer of burlap. When it is time to clean again, pick up the liner by the corners and let drain overnight on the carriage. Most of the sludge will be trapped on the burlap. The oil is left much cleaner for future use. From GREEN VALLEY ROCKER

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON FEBRUARY 25.

President Margaret Heinek opened the meeting at the Lutheran Church.

The program featured a discussion of the fossil preservation bill, HR 2943, by Tom Noe; and also an excellent video on "Gems of the Smithsonian", courtesy of Mike Slattery, V.P.

Minutes of the February meeting, as published in the Rockfinder, were unanimously voted as accepted. The motion was made by Margaret Schultz and seconded by Bob Miller.

Treasurer's report was given by Margaret in Pam Rubenstein's absence. Fees for the Lapidary Journal were sent in. We also received a check as a donation from the Chicagoland Gem & Mineral Assoc. for Bob Miller's demonstration at their show. Thank you, Bob!

Kathy Miller reported motel information concerning the September field trip and also more on the trip to Mazon Creek scheduled for Sunday, April 21. Reservations for the 41-seat bus are almost filled, so please sign up ASAP.

Members were asked if they'd like an onboard TV again for this trip. A motion to have one reserved was made by Jessie Zieger, and seconded by Tom Slattery. As we all enjoyed the tapes onboard the last fieldtrip, the motion passed unanimously.

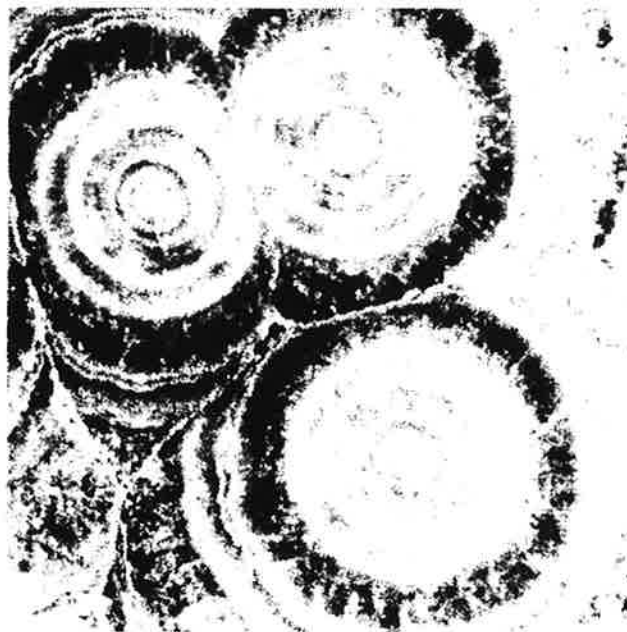
New rosters had been made up and were distributed. Margaret mentioned that she sent for information on the Arkansas Crystal Mines. A thank-you note was received from the St. Joseph Co. Public Library for our participation in "Science Alive". Gordon Dobecki said that 320 youngsters polished rocks at our booth there. He also stated that beginning lapidary classes will start the first week in March. Tom Noe needs volunteer help for

the show coming up in April. Proceeds from the silent auction at the show will go to the club bus trip fund. Two other charitable organizations were presented for review as candidates for donations.

Tom's lecture on HR 2943 (fossil preservation bill) gave insight into some of the features of the new bill. As an NFP group, the club cannot take a position on the bill, so support must come from individuals. So send congress your opinions.

Other business & Miscellaneous:  
We welcomed guests Norm Schweiger, Rob Cotterman & Rachelle Shefsick. Also welcome to new member, Diane Schlundt. Next month's meeting will feature beading and wire-wrapping. Bring your own beads; bead boards available for \$4.00. Doorprizes this meeting were won by Bill Nelson, Irene Ungright, Mike Slattery and myself.

Emily Johnson, interim secretary



## NEW BILL WOULD REGULATE FOSSIL COLLECTING ON PUBLIC LANDS

By Tom Noe, Club Member

In February, the "Fossil Preservation Act of 1996" was introduced in the House of Representatives as HR 2943. This proposed legislation is based on 10 recommendations from a National Academy of Science committee, and will affect all those who now collect fossils on public lands. As citizens, we should contact Congress with our views on this bill.

### Overall Goals of the Bill (my summary)

1) to set up a uniform national policy. (Right now, each federal agency has its own set of rules--often confusing and always more restrictive than the rules in this bill.)

2) to encourage collecting, by amateurs, educators, scientists and commercial enterprises, so that fossils are not destroyed by erosion and we can increase our knowledge of the history of life. (Permits are required for some types of collecting, and federal agencies can exclude fossil collecting in specific areas.)

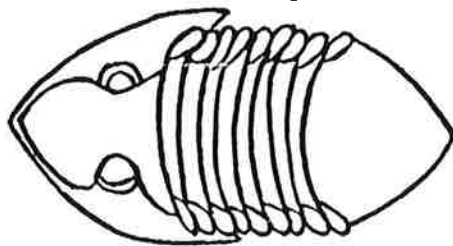
3) to encourage responsible collecting methods, so that the scientific value of fossils is not lost.

4) to identify and preserve scientifically unique fossils and to keep them in appropriate academic institutions.

### Specific Regulations for Amateurs

Most public lands will be open to reconnaissance collecting by anyone. Reconnaissance collecting involves: surface collecting by hand tools only ( pry bars, etc.), in an area of less than two square meters. No permit is required and no fees are charged. Unless the fossil is "scientifically unique," it becomes the property of the collector. Vertebrate fossils are included (which is not the case under current regulations).

Reconnaissance collecting by groups of more than 10 people requires notification of the land manager at least seven days in advance. No permits are required, though.



Quarrying (substantial excavating) for fossils is not considered reconnaissance collecting, and is allowed only by permit. Royalty fees may be required.

To summarize the parts most applicable to club members: Except for excluded areas, individual amateurs may collect any fossils on federal lands, using hand tools in a small area, without permits or fees.

The major part of the bill describes the ways of acquiring permits, the treatment of unique fossils, the various responsibilities of land managers, amateurs, commercial enterprises, scientists, educators, etc., and the various penalties for breaking this law. If you wish to collect fossils other than by reconnaissance collecting, you should read the entire bill.

### Recent Changes

If you heard my presentation at the February meeting, please note that the current version of the bill has some changes. Wilderness areas are now excluded from the bill (the earlier version did not exclude them). If you think wilderness areas should be included (perhaps for all collecting, perhaps only for collecting by academic institutions, or whatever), then let Congress know this. My opinion is that wilderness areas should be open to some fossil collecting, perhaps only by permit. On the other hand, this may be too hot an issue to bring up in the bill. That may be the reason it was changed.

Another change: in the previous version, all federal lands except national parks and Indian reservations were included. Now, the bill specifies that it apply only to lands administered by these agencies: BLM, Fish & Wildlife, Reclamation, Corps of Engineers and National Forests. These are the largest, but what about the other smaller agencies?

### Other Issues

Some questions seem unresolved in the text. A "scientifically unique fossil" (found by anyone) has to be deposited in a "suitable institution" for

research. What about ownership of the fossil? The privilege of naming it? Who decides what is a "suitable" institution? Should fines be levied if a person breaks this law inadvertently? Can amateurs get a permit to quarry as easily as scientific institutions? Is two square meters too small as a collecting area for marine invertebrates? If you are interested in these sorts of questions, get a copy of the bill and let Congress know what you think.

I received a copy of the bill from Representative Tim Roemer's South Bend office in about a week. Copies are free, and all you have to do is call. The more requests that come in, the more Roemer will know there is a lot of interest in this bill. Roemer has a 99% voting record; when this bill comes to the House floor for a vote, he'll be there, and he needs our input as to how he should vote.

With so many private locations being closed because of high insurance premiums, our continued access to public lands becomes all important. Recently, the BLM and the National Forests proposed new rules which would have severely restricted all fossil collecting on their lands. This bill is partly a countermeasure to those efforts. It not only preserves but actually expands the possibilities for fossil collecting, at least as written. As I mentioned, vertebrate fossils are collectible under this bill; they are not under current BLM and Forest Service rules.

In states like Indiana, where this is not as hot an issue as it is in the West, a few hundred letters may be enough to sway a vote in the House. Out West, it might take several thousand letters. I think we have a great opportunity to convince our Indiana and Michigan legislators to vote for this bill. If their mail is overwhelmingly for the bill, and they have no particular opinion one way or the other, they will listen to the input from voters.

Perhaps you disagree with the bill entirely. If so, let Congress know and state your reasons.

This is an important bill. If you agree, be sure to let your legislators know it. A letter is great. Sign your full name and address. A phone call is sufficient. A post card is fine. There's also e-mail and faxes. Call the public library for the various numbers.

Herb Luckert has volunteered his time and computer help for anyone who wants to mail out multiple copies of a letter or post card. Contact him about this at 282-1354. It's an easy way to reach many legislators.

Margaret Heinek, Bob and Kathy Miller and Tom Noe have sample letters you could copy or adapt.

Contact at least Roemer, Coats and Lugar. Add other state lawmakers. Below are the names of some of the committee members who must vote on the bill before it gets to the House and Senate floors. The process will take months, so you can contact your legislators regularly for updates. The more they hear from you, the more they will realize how important it is to you.

#### **SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE**

Forest and Public Lands Management  
all addresses are Washington, DC 20510  
(partial list)

The Honorable Dale Bumpers  
229 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg

The Honorable Bill Bradley  
731 Hart Senate Office Bldg

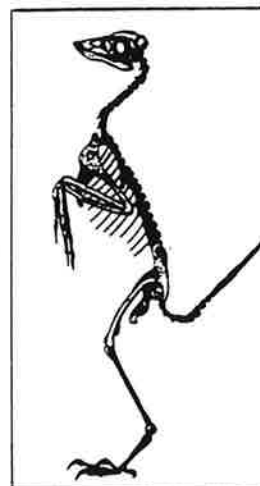
The Honorable Ben Nighthorse Campbell  
380 Hart Senate Office Bldg

The Honorable Larry E Craig  
313 Hart Senate Office Bldg

**HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE**  
National Parks, Forests and Lands

The Honorable James V Hansen  
2466 Rayburn House Office Bldg

The Honorable John J Duncan, Jr.  
2400 Rayburn House Office Bldg



(continued....)

The Honorable Linda Smith  
1217 Longworth House Office Bldg

The Honorable Bruce F Vento  
2304 Rayburn House Office Bldg

The Honorable Nick Joe Rahall, II  
2269 Rayburn House Office Bldg

The Honorable Peter Torkildsen  
120 Cannon House Office Bldg

The Honorable Nathan Deal  
1406 Longworth House Office Bldg

Be sure to write to Tim Roemer, our local representative, at 217 N. Main in South Bend, 46601 (or in Washington: 407 Cannon House Office Bldg., Washington, DC 20515. Also write our Indiana Senators: Dan Coats, 404 Russell Bldg., Washington, DC 20510; Richard Lugar, 306 Hart Bldg., Washington, DC 20510.

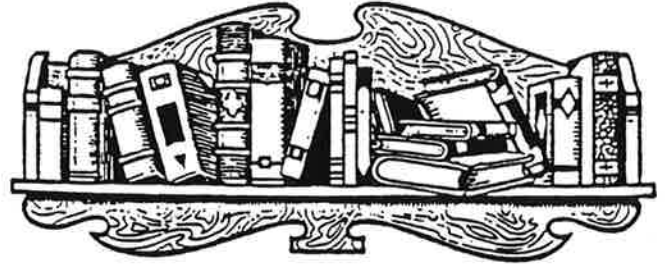
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## CORYDON QUARRY NEWS

Vandals, believed to be local teenagers, damaged some quarry equipment at the Corydon Crushed Stone Co., near Corydon, Ind., leading the quarry's insurance carrier to require stricter quarry access measures. To comply, the quarry has blocked auto entry into the quarry. Although collecting is still allowed (the quarry is prized by rockhounds for its dolomite), collectors must park their cars on the road outside the quarry and walk the 1,500 or more feet to the collecting areas inside. The quarry owners hope to be able to ease the restriction in the spring.

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"One of the greatest lessons that can be learned from the history of science is one of humility." Martin Gardner



## FOR FURTHER READING....

An Irish paleobotanist says that fossil leaves indicate, through the number of pores they have, whether ancient atmospheres were rich in carbon dioxide. These results dovetail with similar conclusions reached through geochemistry.

See *New Scientist* (Jan. 27, 1996)

Many experts agree that a hot spot under the Pacific plate has resulted in the series of volcanic Hawaiian islands we see today. But was this hot spot completely stationary as the Pacific plate traveled over it?

See *New Scientist* (Dec. 5, 1995)

A road cut in South Dakota has provided mosasaur fossils which indicate that one such critter ripped the head off the other. A tooth of the victor was found in the jawbone of the loser.

See *Discover* (Feb., 1996)

The Department of Defense's Global Positioning System (the satellites you can use to find out where you are on earth) was originally intended for the military, but civilians are finding many uses for the information. They have also learned how to bypass the D. of D.'s security procedures.

See *Scientific American* (Feb., 1996)

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Anyone going to the New York area in the next few months might like to see a special exhibit of amber at the American Museum of Natural History. Runs February 10 to September 2, 1996. Has both fossil enclosures and carved objects.



**MICHIGAN GEOLOGY**

**DID YOU KNOW...**

...that Michigan rests atop an enormous series of saucers, the Michigan Basin?

...that during Paleozoic times this large basin intermittently and gradually filled with sediments from early landmasses, along with chemical precipitates and shells of an infinite number of marine creatures?

...that by the end of Paleozoic times the basin became a broad floodplain of low swamps?

...that 1 to 2 million years ago, beginning the Pleistocene Epoch, the climate in the northern part of the continent changed; winters lengthened, snowfall increased and did not entirely melt in the short, cool summers?

...that great masses of ice accumulated in the Hudson Bay region, forming a continental glacier similar to the ice caps on Greenland and Antarctica now?

...that during the Great Ice Age glaciers came and went four or five times?

...that there was once so much water in the Great Lakes that Lake Michigan and Huron once comprised one enormous lake called Algonquin?

...that Lake Erie was the first modern Great Lake to form, at the same time that Niagara Falls were born with the freeing of the Niagara Falls escarpment from the glacier's icy grasp?

...that at one time, about 9,500 years ago, the lakes were drained down to extreme low level when the retreating ice front uncovered a sea-level outlet at North Bay and that Lake Michigan became the tiny "pond" Lake Chippewa?

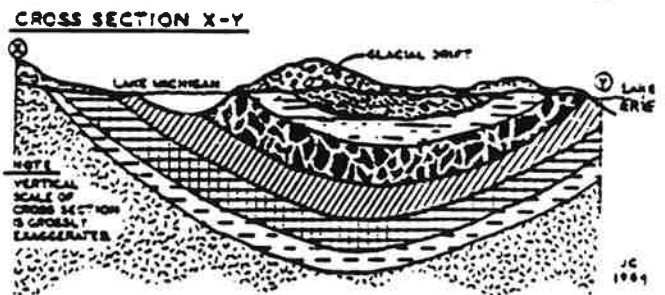
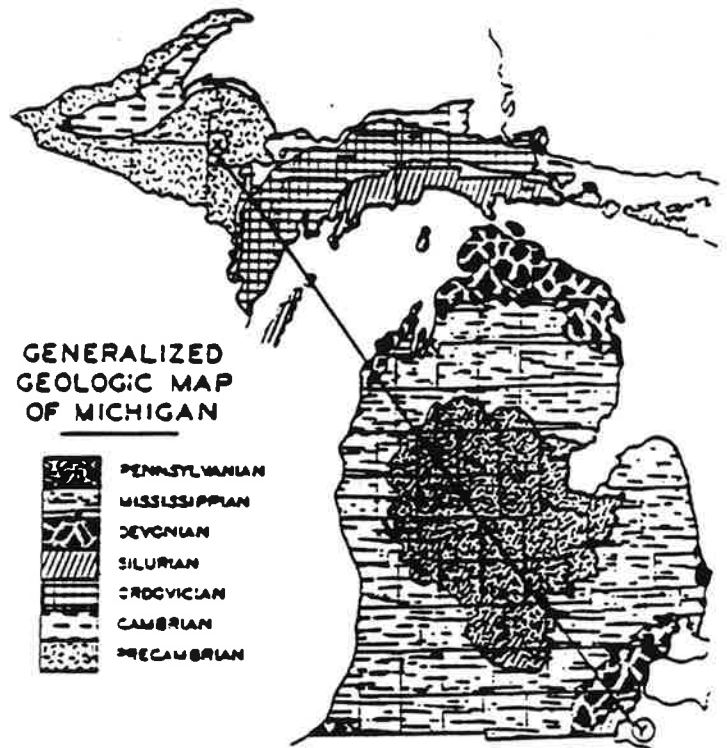
...that many of the sand dunes along the east shore of Lake Michigan originated during the Chippewa low state, when sand of the former lake bottom was free to blow eastward?

...that the last glacier, the Wisconsin glacier, permanently retired from the Great Lakes region about 4,500 to 3,500 years ago, at a time when in other parts of the world, the Egyptian kingdom was beginning to fade from power and picture writing was emerging in China?

...that, as the ice mass dissipated, the earth's crust began to rise slowly upward, a process called crustal rebound?

...that though much diminished in rate rebound is still proceeding in the northern Lake Superior region at about 1/2 foot per century, and may not cease until the surface has returned to its altitude prior to glaciation?

From *The Prospector*



**ONE-DAY FIELD TRIP**

Sunday, April 21, 1996

By Kathy Miller, club member

We will be collecting at the famous Mazon Creek area in Braidwood, Illinois. We hope to find fossils such as fish scales, jellyfish, insect wings, fern leaves such as pectopteris, and much more.

This is a one-day trip and our mode of transportation is a 41-passenger Cardinal motor coach. The fare is covered by the club as an educational experience for all active club members. You just have to sign up, and there are 14 seats left. I will need your name as soon as possible, so call me at 291-0332 to reserve your seat.

**REMEMBER TO BRING:**

- 1) sack lunch and snacks,
- 2) something to drink,
- 3) two pairs of shoes (one for collecting, one for the bus),
- 4) bag to carry fossils,
- 5) your rock equipment, including a hammer and chisel to split nodules and eye protection,
- 6) container for the bus to put your fossils in,
- 7) raingear if needed.

Meet the bus at the K-Mart parking lot on the corner of South Michigan and Ireland Road. The loading time is 7:45 AM, departure is 8:00 AM. We will be back at 7 PM. Be ready to have fun, fellowship and good collecting.

**WEEKEND FIELD TRIP**

September 27-29

By Kathy Miller, club member

I have a first-hand report that we can find so many fossils we'll get bored picking them up. How about that!

Our transportation will be a 41-passenger Cardinal motor coach with a VCR. There is no charge to members for the bus. Because of required early motel reservations (end of June), and having 5 fewer seats than last year's bus, I would advise you to get in touch with me as soon as possible. I have 15 bus seats left.

We will be staying in Oxford, Ohio, at the

Oxford Motel. It is only 6 miles from Huestor Woods State Park, where we will do the major part of our collecting.

The prices for the motel rooms are reasonable, but rooms are limited. When you make your reservation for the bus, I will also need to know what type of room you need. I will try to accommodate you, although I can not designate smoking or non-smoking. This is a small, privately owned motel.

**PRICES for one night**

2 double beds—10 available

\$47.04 (includes tax)

1 double bed—7 available

\$39.20 (includes tax)

1 single bed—1 available

\$31.36 (includes tax)

Remember when you write your check that you are staying for two nights.

On Sunday we should have time to tour a geology museum and collect at another area, or tour historical sites, compliments of the Oxford Chamber of Commerce, and then collect, or just collect. More of our itinerary in a later bulletin.

Remember, your early sign-up is a guarantee of a place for you on this fantastic field trip. Call me at 291-0332 to reserve your seat on the bus and to discuss your motel room.

**MAZON CREEK FOSSILS—  
AN OPEN LETTER TO THE INQUIRING  
FOSSIL COLLECTOR**

By Andrew A. Hay

Let us begin by saying that fossil collecting in general has been curtailed by: the irresponsible behavior of collectors who aroused the ire of the quarry/mine owners and the insurance companies; government reclamation directives (covering over fossil localities for reasons of safety); illiterate bureaucratic attempts to save archaeological remains (archaeologists hunt for human remains); last but not least, housing developments. Some, but not all, of these things have affected fossil-bearing concretion collecting in the northeastern Illinois area labeled "Mazon Creek."

Ironstone concretions and their fossil contents

have been known in this area since the 1840s. With the opening of shaft mines in the 1920s, the fame of the area and its fossil resource grew. The stories of the almost endless number of concretions collected in the middle of this century are legend. The author can remember the days the strip mines were being bulldozed over. It was impossible to get any more in the trunk or inside the car. That was then.

Despair not; it is yet possible to come and collect concretions, although not in such great quantities. A caveat: any experienced collector will tell you that one must open a great number of concretions before finding a keeper. Knowing someone who lives in one of the small towns that grew up around the shaft mines of yesteryear is a tremendous asset. Goodly portions of some towns are built on a mine's flattened spoil heap. A road or shopping mall under construction offers a chance to search for concretions. The Mazon Creek area is dotted with conical heaps—spoil piles of defunct shaft mines. Getting the landowner's permission presents the opportunity to search for concretions.

Best collecting times are in the spring or after heavy rains. Rain and freezing and thawing of winter expose the partially buried concretions.

From *Crystal Cluster* (Feb., 1996)

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## AMERICAN FEDERATION PREPARES FOR 50TH ANNIVERSARY

By Ed Ries, President, AFMS

Looking beyond the horizon we can see 1997--the 50th anniversary of the AFMS. Just think: 50 years of rockhounds working and cooperating together at the national level. I wonder how many of us can say, "I was a rockhound back then." Maybe you can say, "I was interested." Regardless of your rockhound years, this should be a time of fond memories about your hobby.

The Mississippi Gem and Mineral Society of Jackson, MS, will host the combined EFMLS/AFMS show and meeting in 1997 in the heart of the deep South. To prepare for such a momentous occasion, I have appointed a Committee for the 50th Anniversary of the AFMS in 1997. It is to study, plan and carry out an

appropriate celebration of these 50 years. And your help is needed.

The committee's co-chairs are Shirley Leeson of La Mesa, California, and Diane Dare of Evansville, Indiana. The coordinator is Dee Holland, AFMS 1st Regional Vice-President, and the advisor is Fred Shaefermeyer, AFMS Past President. Also on the committee is Carolyn Weinberg of Glyndon, Maryland.

These people are well qualified and have served in many local, regional and national positions. They would like to receive your suggestions about this 50th anniversary celebration. Some ideas for this 1997 national show might include special events, table favors, speakers, commemorative programs, a special pin or special exhibits. Or, you might have other ideas to suggest and send to the committee. Besides suggestions, consider what you can personally do to make this a great celebration for rockhounds.

At the same time, let's not forget the other six regional federations' shows which will also occur during 1997. There should be something at each of these shows which will remind us of the 50 years of rockhounds associating and cooperating nationally.

Your input and support will help make this a truly national celebration for all regional federations. This should be the time to show others that we have a great hobby.

Reprinted from *American Federation of Mineralogical Societies Newsletter* (March, 1996)

Editor's note--Two of our Michiana club members are slated for positions on the national and regional level. Margaret Heinek is currently President-Elect of the American Federation, and will most likely be elected as President of the American Federation during the August convention in Riverside, CA. She would be serving as president during the 50th anniversary year of the AFMS. Bob Miller is currently 1st Vice-President of the Midwest Federation, and will most likely be elected President of the Midwest Federation at the July convention in Macomb, IL. We send our best wishes to Margaret and Bob for their service to our clubs and federations.

## COLLECTING MICROMETEORITES

There is an easy way to collect meteorites, but we must be satisfied with finding small metal ones. They are actually microscopic and are known as micrometeorites. Tons of these fall on Earth each day.

To collect micrometeorites you need to find a place where they can become concentrated. The drains of a house or building work well since rainwater can wash particles off an entire roof and collect them at the drain spout. Tile roofs are best since they drain very well and do not produce many other sorts of particles or debris. To find the metallic micrometeorites, collect and dry some of the material from a deep bowl, placed at the base of the drain spout. After removing leaves and other debris, place the remaining material on a piece of paper and place a magnet under the paper. Tilt and tap the paper so that all the nonmetallic particles fall off. Many of the remaining particles are pieces of space dust.

To examine them, place the paper under a microscope. High power will be required to see them clearly. Although most of the particles are not from space, the micrometeorites will show signs of their fiery trip through the atmosphere. They will be rounded and may have small pits on their surfaces. Much of what you are observing are particles that date from the formation of the solar system around 4.6 billion years ago! They are the debris remaining from the raw materials that formed into the nine known planets and the asteroids. Most particles have been broken off or ground down from larger objects.

From the Jet Propulsion Laboratory Public  
Education Office, Pasadena, CA

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## FOSSILIZED GRASS

Fossilized grass has been found on the molars of fossil rhinoceros jawbones. The grasses have well-preserved external and internal features, which makes them rare. Buffalo and garna grass seeds found show that those common modern grasses have been around since the Miocene epoch.

From *Serendipity Gems* (March, 1995)

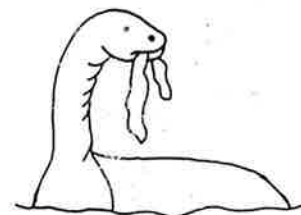
## SILENT AUCTION AT APRIL SHOW

The club will be able to run a silent auction during the rock and gem show, April 12 through 14 at Century Center. Any club member can bring items to be auctioned (up to 20 pieces per person). The club will keep 15% of the auction price; 85% will be returned to you.

You can also donate any number of items to the club. They will be auctioned with 100% going to the club's treasury.

Bring your items to the show, or get them to Tom Noe, either at his home or at the March meeting. You will need to fill out a bid sheet describing each item and stating the minimum bid you will accept at the auction.

At the last Labor Day show we had a lot of interest in the silent auction. Hundreds of items were sold--everything from equipment to finished jewelry. If you need any more information, or would like to volunteer to help staff the booth, contact Tom at 289-2028.



## NOTRE DAME STUDENTS DIG DINOS

Five engineering students joined Professor Keith Rigby on a trip to China last Christmas. In Yunnan Province, they were the first white people the villagers had ever seen. The students found completely articulated Jurassic dinosaurs, and did field preparation before donating the specimens to the Beijing Natural History Museum. They also got to taste such delicacies as squid egg soup. Rigby directs Earthwatch, a dinosaur research team which supports paleontological research, especially in China.

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"If I have ever made any valuable discoveries, it has been owing more to patient attention, than to any other talent." Isaac Newton