

FALL ROADSIDE CLEAN UP 2014 AND NOVEMBER ROCK PARTY

by Jim Marburger, Chairman

It was nearly a perfect day to pick up trash on our section of Highway 77 south of Lincoln. The temperature was a brisk 50 degrees with full sunshine. (I had ordered 60 degrees a month ago, so it was close for this time of the year.) The only drawback was a pesky north wind around 20 miles per hour.

When Sharon and I arrived at the meeting place in the old Rest Area, the crew was waiting. Sign-up sheets were signed, vests were distributed, and a safety talk was presented, then the 24 trash pickers were off like a herd of turtles.

My job was to place the "Litter Pick Up" signs at each end of the area to warn highway traffic that we were out and doing our pick up. A second job was to check on the people as they were collecting trash; providing extra bags and water, doing a safety check, and shuttling people back to their cars.

LGMC's section of the four-lane highway is two miles long. With the great turnout of workers, each team worked a half mile length of road. A few people helped out other teams where the trash was heavy. A half-mile section does not seem like much to walk, but with all the back and forth zigs and zags, from the fenceline to the edge of the road, and the amount of uneven walking, does take its toll. The trash pick up took just over an hour and half to complete.

This fall's cleanup netted over 24 bags of trash, along with various car parts, tires, and trailer parts. The Department of Roads will come along and pick up the bags. They also provide the bags, vests, safety program, and signage. For those who don't know, LGMC has a sign at each end of our section that tells the public this two-mile section is cleaned by the Lincoln Gem and Mineral Club.

Thanks to those who helped with the cleanup. Most of the people were club members or family and friends. We even had four club members from Omaha make the trip to help. We will have another cleanup in the spring; we will let you know the date and time when it gets closer.

This project is not a collecting area, but it does support the AFMS' "Code of Ethics": I will support the rock hound project H.E.L.P. (Help Eliminate Litter Please) and will leave all collecting areas devoid of litter, regardless of how found. This is also a great community service.

After the clean-up was done, a few people had to return to Lincoln for other activities. The rest of the attendees continued to Hickman for the monthly Rock Party.

The Rock Party was hosted at Sharon's and my home. There was lots of food brought in: chili, beef soup, tomato and beef soup, Mongolian beef, rice, chips, cheese, crackers, chocolate-banana bread, wheat rolls, cinnamon rolls, apple crisp, cookies, and a whole bunch of pumpkin-based desserts. Jayne's pumpkin bars were made-from-scratch-pumpkin, and they were delicious!

I gave a quick lesson on face polishing of rocks to the Kemper family. They polished fluorite, Coyamito agate, and bubblegum agate. Sharon worked on some "parking lot finds" and Jayne Beer worked on some cabochons for a friend.

A group went outside to the porch to look through some boxes of specimens that were donated to the club. The rocks were sorted into four groups: youth group, silent auction, bingo prizes, and gem dig. Some fantastic specimens were found.

Sharon showed rocks she had found during multiple parking lot field trips. The kids present thought some of the specimens were pretty cool. Sharon also showed her finds from the Des Moines field trip, including a Lake Superior agate.

Although Ed Dvorak brought his wire wrapping supplies, there was not enough energy or interest in pursuing any lessons.

Most people at the Rock Party visited about anything and everything, enjoying the warmth and lack of wind inside the house. It was a very pleasant afternoon and evening, and we look forward to doing it again very soon.

