



PICK & SHOVEL

August 2019, Volume 61, Issue 12

Editor: Sharon Marburger

MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES

General Meetings:

Monthly meetings are held on the **third Thursday** of the month during February, March, April, May, September, October, and November. The January meeting is held on the **fourth Saturday** and also includes the Mid-Winter Rock Swap followed by a Club Supper. The December meeting is held on the **first Sunday** and includes the annual Awards Presentations and Potluck Christmas Party.

Youth activities begin at 6:00 p.m. and adult meetings begin at 7:00 p.m. at the Bethany Park Shelter House.

**Next General Meeting
September 19, 2019**

Board Meetings:

Most Board Meetings are on the first Wednesday of the month at the home of Vera Lyman, beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Exceptions: If the first day of a month falls on Thursday, the meetings will be changed to the **last Wednesday** of the **previous** month. This allows a minimum of 10-days public notice of the meetings, per Corporation rules.

Next Board Meeting: September 4, 2019

Upcoming Activities:

Show and Tell at the September 19th meeting

Bring your summer finds to the meeting and share your field trip stories.

**HAPPY
BIRTHDAY**

**Andrew Tiedje
Rowdy Cropp
Karen Messenger
Nykki Lytle**

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Charles "Wooly" Wooldridge

I would like to thank all club members and guests who attended the Wyoming field trip. I believe we had 22 participants. I am sure there will be an article in this issue describing all the great rock hunting we participated in. I am also sure that everyone went home with all the treasure they could carry, and then some. In the end, it was the people that made it a success.



Let's start quarry planning for the next adventure, since the Kentucky trip has been put on hold for now.

I'd like to tell you about a couple of other activities that I took part in this summer, in case you may be interested to attend next year. First, I went on a fossil dig north of Bassett on July 10th with the University of Nebraska. The site was the Rick Irwin dig along Highway 7. The area was first worked by paleontologist Morris Skinner. It is estimated to be 6.6 million years old. This makes it important as it is the only one of its age discovered in Nebraska. This activity was part of the 19th Annual Sandhills Discovery Experience held the next day in Ainsworth. There were speakers and activities all day pertaining to the Sandhills Region. That evening, we had a delightful and enlightening dinner with Shane Tucker. I went to the fossil dig again the following day. We mostly found micro fossils at this site. They are critical in understanding the environment at that time. The second dig was with the Friends of Ashfall. It was held Thursday, July 25th and Friday the 26th. This site was located in a field about five miles from the Ashfall Museum. I went with a couple friends on Friday. The dig has exposed numerous large ice age specimens. The day was very productive. We jacketed six different groups of bones, including a very well preserved pair of rhino jawbones. The club has a membership for Friends of the Museum which includes Morrill Hall, Ashfall, and Trailside Museum. I believe Vera Lyman has the membership card that you can use visit any of these museums and get discounts on activities, such as this fossil dig.

Bring treasures from your summer collecting to the September meeting. We should have a huge show and tell!

It's the dog days of summer now, so ALWAYS drink lots of water!

New Editor!

By Charles "Wooly" Wooldridge

I am excited to announce that **Brett Jurgens** has accepted the position of Editor of the Pick & Shovel. Please send articles, pictures, and notices to him at lgmc.editor@outlook.com (same as when Sharon was editor). Let's all support him by writing articles and sending pictures to him in a timely fashion.

I know I speak for all as I extend a huge THANK YOU! to Sharon Marburger for the ten years she has given the club as editor. I usually would say, "Please feel free to edit," when I sent her articles because I was confident she would correct my literary guffaws and composition inadequacies. Looking back I am amazed at her skill and dedication. Please take time to thank her and support Brett as he undertakes this new endeavor.



Outgoing editor's note

PRESIDENT'S FIELD TRIP - JIM'S SCOOP

By Jim Marburger

A Revisit to Southwest Wyoming: Rock Collecting

It has been 40 years since I had the opportunity to collect petrified wood in the Blue Forest area near Farson, Wyoming. The last time was me and my trusty Subaru station wagon. Many sights were familiar, but this trip was much better.

The Lincoln Gem and Mineral Club's Presidential Field trip had great attendance. Thank you, Wooly, for leading and doing the legwork to set up the trip. Many good friends were in the party. Some of us did the motel, while others were camping. The motel in Farson was a trip back in time; it had not changed in 40 years. It was clean but cramped, the rooms small with an exceptionally small bathroom. No air conditioning, but the high plains air did cool off late at night. Yes, the rooms had been updated some and the operator was very pleasant and accommodating. Oh yeah, there was an introduction to the little problem of Wyoming ground water...sulfur.

Sharon and I had visitors from California; daughter Olivia (Lea), granddaughter Cheryn, and grandson Jacob. It was an introduction to the world of rock collecting for them and a trip away from people, electronics, and the city. Overall, we all had a great time visiting and collecting rocks together. Thirteen-year-old Jacob was busy looking for things most of the time, but ran out of steam after three days. He lasted longer than I thought he would, by two days. They have learned that collecting at a rock show is far easier, but they will miss the openness of the wild west. It was fun to see their excitement, and pleased that they found enough to each fill a 5-gallon bucket.

We had picked up ten orange Home Depot buckets to hold our treasures. This worked out better than I thought. Everyone had their own bucket, filling it with treasures found. We used Ziploc bags for the smalls. Sharon and I were mostly collecting smalls to share with others who could not attend the trip. We found some great petrified wood, blue agate, turrutella, and stromatolites. Material was plentiful and we left tons of it still sitting out there on the prairie.

We ended up bringing back a load of rock for the Beer family since their minivan was overloaded, with literally no place to sit. They still had another several days before going home, so we helped out. Boy, was it hard to not high-grade their material!

The weather could not have been any better. Blue sky, afternoon showers, and high plains coolness. We had a great time with everyone who attended the trip. The only bad thing for me was elevation. Most of the trip was around 7,000 to 8,000 feet and the air was thin for me. At one point I Googled "nearby hospitals to me" and found that it was about 65 miles, so I concentrated on deep breathing and doing things slowly. I survived, but have learned that I am now limited to flatland collecting.

Silversmithing classes

Tuesday Evenings
7:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.

The Jewelry Connection Ltd.
Indian Village Shopping Ctr.
13th & Arapahoe, Lincoln

Tuition: \$150 plus \$30 supply deposit

~~Session 1: Jan 8 - Feb 26~~

~~Session 2: Mar 5 - Apr 23~~

~~Session 3: Apr 30 - Jun 18~~

Session 4: Aug 13 - Oct 1

Session 5: Oct 8 - Nov 26

Contact: Jayne Beer 402-890-3307
Judith Bay 402-423-7058
jbeer60070@aol.com

PRESIDENT'S FIELD TRIP - BRETT'S STORY

By Brett Jurgens

There is a saying - how does it go? "The best laid plans...". My friend, Jon Vopata, and I had counted down the year to our next trip to Wyoming. We had sent e-mails back and forth, made packing lists of what to take, and drew diagrams of where to load things in my vehicle so they would be accessible when needed. After all that planning, I felt my vehicle's transmission struggle to shift four days before the planned departure. I took it in for a diagnosis, wanting to depart with a clear mind that my car would not break down on us in the middle of nowhere. Standing at the counter, after the diagnostic, I was assured that it was only the torque converter and not to worry. Actually, quoting them, "Don't worry; the part isn't six million dollars, only thirty-one fifty." After verifying where the decimal point was in that figure, I politely declined. I typically drive a car until it's dead, and at that point, I considered it exactly that.

After a few panicked phone calls and brainstorming sessions on who had a vehicle with enough storage and clearance that we could possibly borrow, I started looking online for a rental. Turns out, a truck can be rented from one of the Eppley Airport rental companies for a reasonable amount. Crisis averted, and with the rental truck picked up, we loaded it and started to make our way west.

Our tradition is to stop at the Petrified Wood Gallery in Ogallala to see their wonderful examples of Blue Forest and Eden Valley petrified wood. We pulled up to the Gallery just as the brothers were locking the door. Turns out, their volunteers hadn't shown up that day so they had been there all day and had decided to close a little early. That changed when they saw us pull up; the doors were quickly opened and lights turned on. I've mentioned it before, but if you haven't been to see the Petrified Wood Gallery, I highly recommend it.

We pulled into Rock Springs for the night with plans to get an early start to the Blue Forest in morning. That quickly changed when a quick Google search of events in the area showed a Geology Expo at the local community college. We made the event a quick stop; there were 8-10 vendors with a couple tables each and a wide variety of items for sale. Even though we were headed to the Blue Forest, I couldn't resist and bought a few small samples.

I won't report on the club activities during the week as I believe Corey is going to write about those. For accommodations, we set up a tent in the Blue Forest. Allan Gossman joined us and set up his tent as well. I enjoyed getting to know Allan better over the next few days. His jokes, stories, and company were a welcome addition. Other than the few rain storms that chased us out of the club trips, the weather was great. Mid-June is our favorite time to camp out there. The

days don't get overly hot but the nights and mornings are cool enough that a nice sleeping bag and sweater or jacket are comfortable.

After a few days of collecting at the Blue Forest, we decided to try something else out, and departed for the Crawford, Nebraska area to try our luck at finding Nebraska Blue Agate. After having camped out for multiple nights, we opted to stay at the Hilltop Hotel in Crawford. As Jon and I began to relax in a soft bed, both of our phones went, off alerting us to a tornado warning. Stepping out the front door, we were met by other occupants of the hotel who had been roused by the same alert. The hotel does not have a basement, so we were told the safest place was the bathtub. I jokingly said the safest place was under the truck, as it was so weighed down with our findings. Luckily, we didn't encounter any tornados. I did lay some shipping blankets over parts of the truck, with a very clear mental image of the rental form that stated that any hail damage counted as damage.

Armed with a map from Jim Marburger, and some coordinates from Jayne Beer, we headed out in the morning in search for Nebraska Blue. As a child in the club, I had several pieces and remember being told that you could no longer find it. The large, darker, figured specimens may be hard to find, but the chalcedony is literally covering the ground. Two different locations yielded slightly different colors and quality. Having been warned about the local ground turning to sticky gumbo when wet, we headed out when threatened by approaching thunderstorms.

We spent the night in Chadron, and visited the Mari Sandoz Heritage Center located on Chadron State's campus. The Center showcases the history of both Mari Sandoz and the local area. Jon was unfamiliar with this, but still enjoyed the exhibits. As a fan of Mari Sandoz, it was a place I had been wanting to visit for awhile.

Starting to wind down our trip, we headed to Scottsbluff to be hosted by Kim and Kathy Nielsen. We enjoyed a tour of Kim's shops and settled down to a delicious home-cooked meal (thanks again Kathy!). After our filling meal, Kim showed us his beautifully displayed personal collection. While the overall collection was amazing, what really stood out was how much of his collection he has personally collected.

In the morning, we were once again treated to wonderful food and conversation. Heading home, we made another quick stop at the Petrified Wood Gallery to show the brothers a few of our finds. Overall, a very rewarding trip. On the way back home, we were already planning for a trip next year.

Photo by Jayne Beer



PRESIDENT'S FIELD TRIP - COREY'S TALE

By Corey Beer

Our trip started on Friday, the 14th of June. We spent the morning packing our van, trying to leave as much space for foot room inside the car as we could, since we knew there was a long drive ahead of us. We got on the road around 2 p.m. and headed to Big Piney so we could be there for the show the next day. By the time we finally pulled into the parking lot at the show, it was nearly 4 a.m. and we were all tired, so we just ended up sleeping in our van for a few hours until we got into the show at 8 a.m.

The show opened and we all went inside to spend about two hours looking around and buying a few things, talking to vendors, basically all the fun things to do at a gem and mineral show. Around 20 minutes until 10 a.m., the leaders of the group that were going out to collect that day, announced they were leaving in half an hour, so we kept looking, waiting for the next announcement before they left. We looked at our watches and saw it was only a few minutes until 10 but, to our surprise, the group wasn't standing by the door. Brian went out to check if they were standing outside while we finished shopping. He came back in and waved, saying they were leaving, so we finished paying really quick and jumped into the car. Lucky we caught them just as we did; if we had been a minute later, we would have missed the group.

There were approximately ten cars in the group, and maybe 25 people all together, so a pretty decent sized group for the day. As we got closer to the location, the roads got rougher and rougher (which would turn out to be a repeating trope as the trip went on). When we got to the location, we pulled up, found a parking spot, and eagerly got out of the car to go collect. This location was loaded with stromatolite, large and small pieces alike, along with some pretty agatized coral. By the time the group had packed up and we were getting ready to go back to the show, we had spent about four hours at this spot and collected many specimens and much cutting material, and had a great time doing it. After this, we headed back to the show and stayed there until they closed, then stopped by the rock shop there in Big Piney, which was very nice. We took the hour drive back to Farson to check into our motel room, unload the van, eat dinner, and then go to sleep for the day.

The next morning, the few members of our group that were staying at our motel got together and decided to go back to the show in Big Piney together because they hadn't been there yet. Once we finished there, we would all drive out to the Blue Forest to collect. We ended up being at the show a little longer than expected, but once the other members of our group were done looking around, we took a drive out to the Blue Forest to meet up with Brett Jurgens and his friend, Jon, at their campsite. We stayed out as long as we could, picking up the small, wind polished agate and wood pieces off the ground, and filled up quite a few plastic bags of them. We also got lucky and found some slightly larger specimens in the tailings from the holes

others had dug. It was a great first little teaser to what we would find in the coming days. As it got closer to night, we decided to head back to Farson in order to eat dinner at the



Photo by Jayne Beer

local campground, which Brett cooked up for us there.

So as it was now Monday morning, Kim Nielsen was finally arriving in the area and was going to lead us out to a few places which he knew. We all gathered at the mercantile and stood outside around our cars discussing what we would be finding and where we would be going. Kim explained to us that the first place we were going to was a location where you could find petrified wood that was well off the beaten path, although I'm not sure that expression works here because, as many others were, that was quite a beat up path. It was about 50 miles to get to that first location from the mercantile. The first 40 miles or so were on nice paved roads, but once we turned off onto the dirt country roads, it was quite the rough drive, especially in our minivan. We drove up to the top of one of the bluffs that had a really amazing view of the mountains off in the distance and I guess it was because we were so high up, but the clouds felt like they were unnaturally low in the sky; it



Photo by Jayne Beer

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PRESIDENT'S FIELD TRIP - COREY'S TALE—CONTINUED

(Continued from page 4)

was really cool to see. We grabbed our gear and climbed down the side of the bluff and started off by surface collecting to see where stuff was washing out from. We found some small pieces on the surface, but mostly just fragments of rounds of logs, nothing complete. Someone found an area higher up, closer to the cars, that had some material coming out of the cliff so we all climbed up to that area and started digging a hole, but ultimately found nothing to write home about. The clouds started getting darker, so we wanted to get out of there before we got stuck.

Later that day, after getting back out of that place, we regrouped at the mercantile to get some of their ice-cream, and then drive to the second location which was in the opposite direction from the first, over by the Big Sandy Reservoir. At this location, people have found fossilized cane and other petrified woods which sounded like it would be fun to find ourselves. This was another rough drive back to the site, but not nearly as bad as one previous. There was petrified wood all over the place, scattered on the surface, and some quite large chunks at that had a glassy sound when you hit anything against them. We found a couple of small pieces which we think are petrified cane, but aren't 100% sure. This time, we weren't so lucky as to have gotten out of there before it started raining. It started to come down pretty heavy, so we jumped back into the van and got out of there as quickly as we could, because that sandy dirt of the area gets very sticky when it's wet. We drove back to Farson for the last time that night.

The next day, we got up early, around 8:00, and headed out to the Blue Forest again for a full day of hunting at that spot. We went back to the same place we had been before with Brett, Jon, and the others, and started to surface collect. While collecting, we found a spot that seemed to have better material on the surface, with some nice blue agate, so we decided to dig to try to find something bigger. We dug for about 45 minutes or so, not finding much, but then we hit something. After digging through all the dirt, rock, and shale, there was a bigger rounded rock about four feet down in the shale. At this point, we were pretty sure we hit something good, so we kept digging the overburden off the top of it and pulled the first chunk out. Lo and behold, it was a piece of petrified wood encased in fossil algae. This got us pretty excited and made it feel like our digging was worth the effort. As we kept digging, we

pulled out piece after piece, some larger, some smaller. All in all, after a long day's worth of work with some rain in between and lots of surface collecting, the one continuous log ended up being about 5 feet long, and two other logs found in the hole were about 2 feet long apiece, so we were pretty stoked about our finds that day.

That night, Jim, Sharon, their family, and ours drove to Rock Springs and slept at a Super 8 for the night. The next morning, we all went out collecting at some new locations. This was about two hours from Farson, so the material was quite different in appearance. Here, we found pieces of turrítella, algae, and even some petrified wood in its algae cast, although this algae was much more mineralized than at the Blue Forest, so there is no getting it off the wood. We drove some more, all around the top of one of the bluffs in the area, where we found little pieces of stromatolite that were a nice brown color, some with streaks of blue agate running through. The



Photo by Jayne Beer

worst part about this day was the wind. There was a constant 40-mile-per-hour breeze all day, gusting up to at least 50 mph at times. It was hard to hear much of anything other than the sound of the wind, unless you were talking right there next to each other.

We drove back to Rock Springs that night and stopped at the Santa Fe Southwestern Grill for dinner, which was very good. They even had free refills on their special lemonades, which made it extra special, and I highly recommend going there. We, again, slept at the Super 8 that night, planning to head out the next day to Riverton, Wyoming, where some of our family lives. Jim and Sharon were kind enough to let us unload some of our rocks into their van, as we were almost packed to the brim inside, and would have had a hard time fitting in anything else, so thank you to them.

The drive to Riverton was beautiful as we had to drive up through the mountain pass, where there was still some snow. But the best view of all was once we crossed the top and started going down. There were huge canyons off the

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Photo by Corey Beer

COREY'S TALE—CONTINUED

(Continued from page 5)

side of the road, all cutting through what was probably a thousand feet of red rock that really was quite stunning. It was about a five-hour drive to Riverton, where we met our family at the local Walmart to get groceries for our dinner. That night, we had hamburgers and homemade dill gravy, and it was all delicious.

One of the fun activities they had there was knife and axe throwing that they promptly showed Ja'zeil how to do, which makes sense because seven is the best age to teach kids how to throw sharp objects and get them to stick. We spent hours out there throwing knives as it was quite fun, I will admit. The next day, one of the members of the group there, Chris, took us out to collect some rocks in the area. We drove near Bison Basin, where there was supposedly Wyoming jade in the area. We stopped at one spot, picking up lots of shiny black rocks, not sure if they were jade, but we collected them anyway since we figured we could ask someone later. As we were finishing out the day of collecting, on our way back to where we were staying, we saw a large rock bed full of giant river rock, so we pulled off to the side of the road quickly and got out to look. We weren't there for long, but man, was it worth the stop. We didn't find much, only one large piece of petrified wood, maybe 5 pounds, and the biggest Montana agate I've ever found, at about 6 pounds, that had the prettiest blue color throughout with small dendritic inclusions.

We went back to the house for dinner, found another couple of small agates in the rock around the property, and then left for the night to drive to Cody, Wyoming for the show that weekend. At about midnight, and an hour away from Cody, we decided to drive to Yellowstone to look around for part of the day and then go back to Cody for the show for the second part of the day. The drive through Yellowstone ended up being a longer adventure than we planned, but it was a ton of fun. We saw herds of buffalo all throughout the area, even had some as close as five feet away from our van. Then we saw all the volcanic features including the dragon's cave, boiling mud pits,

and Old Faithful erupting before we had to leave to get back to Cody for the show. When we drove into Yellowstone, it was night so we couldn't see around us, but leaving was a different story. We realized just how crazy high those roads were up on the sides of cliffs, which was quite the white knuckle experience driving down. We arrived at the show around 4 p.m., looked around for a while, bought a few things, and talked to some of the members of that club. Turns out, they were leaving for a rock collecting trip soon, so we signed up for that since it would only be a few hours, then we could start driving home.

There were two locations; at one, we found some small pieces of chalcedony scattered on the surface, nothing too crazy; and the second location was near Heart Mountain which is kind of famous in that area. One of the people on that trip found a very nice, large Heart Mountain agate, and we started to find some smaller ones too, once we got the eye for it. It got dark pretty quickly once we started finding some though, and we ended up having to leave, which was all for the best since we had to start driving to get home. We drove all through the night to get to Crawford, Nebraska the next morning.

Around 5 a.m., we ended up at one of the places we had been to previously where we found Nebraska blue agate all over the place. We ended up being there for about five hours in total, and picked up two 5-gallon buckets worth of the Nebraska blue, including some that had a beautiful coating of red on top of some of the botryoidal formations.

We also found two Fairburn agates, which made us quite happy. While we were in Crawford, we decided to stop at the rock shop there, since we had never been there before. It was a pretty neat place. We bought some rocks and had a good time talking to one of the owners. After we finished up and paid the lady, we drove home the last eight hours, finishing off a very fun-filled and productive 10-day trip.



Photo by Jayne Beer

J J & L Rocks & Minerals

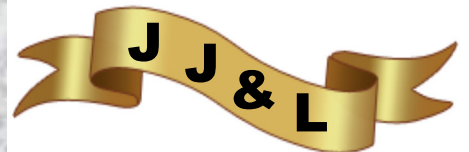
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MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Membership dues for the Lincoln Gem & Mineral Club are as follows:

- Adults (age 16 and over) - \$20 per year or \$30 per couple (within the same household)
- Juniors - \$3 per year (with a responsible adult)

All new memberships must be accompanied by a written application. Prospective members must gain Board approval and attend one regular meeting before paying dues. Applications are available on the website: <https://www.lincolngemmineralclub.org/about/> membership, or you may contact Treasurer Vera Lyman for a printed copy.

ADVERTISING INFORMATION

Advertising by rock / hobby business or interest is permitted with the approval of the Board of Directors. Contact the Editor with your proposed ad. The rate is set at \$20.00 per full page; \$10.00 per 1/2 page; \$5.00 per 1/4 page (minimum) per issue, paid in advance to the Club treasurer. Ads will be placed throughout the newsletter as space permits.

2019 SHOW COMMITTEE

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Property:

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James Marburger, Ed Dvorak,
Jayne Beer

Refreshments:

Vera Lyman

Scholarship:

Vera Lyman

Show—2019:

Jayne Beer

Swap—2019:

Sharon Marburger

Website:

Jim & Sharon Marburger

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Carolyn Ashmore, Cindy Ramey

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Jim Marburger

2 years: Pat Dvorak
Robert Gruit

3 years: Charles Wooldridge
Sharon Marburger

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Andrew Tiedje

2 years: Linda Guenter
Vera Lyman

3 years: Brett Jurgens
Sharon Marburger

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Or e-mail newsletters to:
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PICK & SHOVEL

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A NEW GOOD-BYE

By Sharon Marburger

Thank you, LGMC, for allowing me to be your editor for the past ten years. It has been a lot of fun and I have learned so much.

Being your editor has caused me to grow as a person. I was a “wallflower” most of my life, staying in the background and trying to not draw attention to myself. Now I find that people seek me out, and it is a strange feeling. I’m really not as knowledgeable as you think; I have just had to act as the local busybody to get information for the newsletter!

I have made so many new friends and acquaintances over the years, and you each are special to me. I look forward to more field trips and club activities. And now, I can write articles for the newsletter because I want to, not because I have to.

Thank you to Brett Jurgens for stepping into this important club role. Treat him kindly, provide lots of articles and pictures for him, and let him know how much he is appreciated. You will keep him for years that way.



**This Editor is
a member of
Special Congress
Representing Involved
Bulletin Editors**

All articles, tidbits, and photos not individually identified as being contributed to this publication are provided by the Editor.

The purpose of this corporation shall be to study, promote an interest in, and disseminate knowledge of lapidary and various Earth Sciences including but not necessarily limited to Geology, Paleontology and Mineralogy. It shall be a particular purpose of the corporation to provide education in these fields to its members and the general public, especially to youth and student groups.