



The Official Publication of the Lincoln Gem & Mineral Club, Inc.

THE PICK & SHOVEL

In association with



The Midwest Federation of
Mineralogical and
Geological Societies



The American
Federation of
Mineralogical Societies

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.

Current club by-laws can be found at [www.lincolngemmineralclub.org/About/General Information](http://www.lincolngemmineralclub.org/About/General%20Information).

GENERAL MEETINGS

Third Thursday of the Month, except for January (3rd Sunday), December (1st Sunday), and summer break (June, July, August). Bethany Park Shelter House, 65th & Vine

Meeting Times: Juniors meet at 6:15 p.m.
Adults meet at 7:00 p.m.

Next meeting: October 16, 2025
Program: Jim Marburger - Where to Find Rocks in Nebraska

BOARD MEETINGS

Until further notice, Board Meetings will be held at 6:30 p.m. on the first Thursday of each month.

Next Board Meeting:
Thursday, November 6, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.
Vera Lyman's Residence

Persons of general membership are invited to attend Board meetings and offer agenda items.

2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Brett Jurgens, 402.850.3256, quartz89@aol.com

1st Vice-President: Jayne Beer, 402.890.3307, JBeer60070@aol.com

2nd Vice-President: Clyde Ogg, 402.326.8682, clydeogg55@gmail.com

Treasurer: Vera Lyman, 402.464.6089

Secretary: Sharon Marburger, 402.429.3323, lgmc.editor@outlook.com

Board Member: Corey Beer, 402.466.6628

Board Member: Jeff Kubitz, 402.540.9395, jkubitz@neb.rr.com

Board Member: Mike Stiles, 402.890.1760, mcestiles72@outlook.com

Board Member: Charles Wooldridge, 402.975.0416, charles.wooldridgeii@gmail.com

ANNOUNCEMENTS & CLUB FUN

DATES TO REMEMBER

October 8-12 - Field Trip to Mt. Ida, Arkansas - CANCELED due to lack of interest

October 16 - General Meeting

October 19 - Rock Party at Wooly's

November 22 - Rock Party at Hidden Gems

December ? - Rock Party at Marburgers' (to be discussed at October meeting)

January 18, 2026 - Mid-Winter Swap (flyer on page 10 may be copied and distributed)

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Juniors:

- Kaden T.
- Sterling P.
- Ellie H.
- Max H.
- Ezequiel C.
- Asher C.
- Jonah C.
- Tenzin M.

Adults:

- Jeremiah Moore



OCTOBER ROCK PARTY

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 19 @ 4:00 P.M.

Wooly's & Jackie's 6115 Huntington



Bring picnic food. Bring your projects to work on, or just hang out with other members. Wooly has some equipment in the basement.

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- Terry Anderson**
- Gary Baumert**
- Brett Jurgens**
- Dick Lieb**
- Vera Lyman**
- Steve May**
- Brad Nielsen**
- Tom Sawyer**



Please send your hobby-related photos with captions or explanations for publication in the Pick & Shovel. Field trips, lapidary projects, fossil projects, metal projects, wire wrapping, tumbling, or any other activity of interest to the club. Your project may inspire someone else. Send via email (lgmc.editor@outlook.com) or via Facebook Messenger to Sharon Marburger (https://www.facebook.com/mamamar7880).

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.

PICK & SHOVEL STAFF

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Vera Lyman and Donitte Stiles;
402.464.6089
Sharon Marburger;
402.429.3323

DEADLINE:

Last Sunday of the month.

Follow us on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/223555904325876>

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Brett Jurgens, President

Hello LGMC.

It is great to be back from summer break! We really returned with a bang, ending our summer with the very well-attended September meeting. I couldn't believe the number of new faces, including juniors, that were present. In the juniors group alone, we had ten guests interested in joining up. Even with all the new faces, I did notice that we were missing some familiar faces. I know that life happens, we get busy, and the summer break doesn't help with the routine of coming to meetings. But I urge you to get back into the routine. We've got a great thing going, and I'd like for it to continue. Where else can you find an entire room full of people interested in rocks. And I haven't even mentioned the snacks!

I hope to see you all at our October meeting - and don't forget to bring your costume as your favorite rock or mineral, or hobby related thing! We will have everyone who dresses up stand and try to stump other club members as we guess what you are. Just the costume contest alone makes this one of my favorite meetings of the year.

Wooly has offered to host our October Rock Party at his home on Sunday, October 19th starting at 4 p.m. We will have a campfire and roast hot dogs and marshmallows. It will be a potluck just like our other rock parties so please bring a dish to share. Wooly has some rock equipment if people would like to give it a try and, as always, there will be tons of food and conversation.

November 1 and 2 is the Nebraska Mineral and Gem Club's annual rock show at the Liberty First Credit Union Arena at 7300 Q Street in Ralston. The Omaha club really helped out at our show this year, with loaning us cases and bringing volunteers to help set up and tear down the show. We need to step up and return the favor by volunteering at their show. I will have a sign-up sheet at our October meeting. I am also a member of that club and help out every year. It is a blast.

Our Mid-Winter swap is right around the corner on January 18th. Club members had first chance of reserving vendor spots at our September meeting. On the 1st of October, registration was opened to the public on the club website. Spots are filling up very fast and I think we may have a new record for selling out. By the end of the day, only two spots remained!

As a reminder, Barb and I ask that adult members be respectful of the juniors' lessons. Please do not interrupt with anecdotes or other tidbits. Also, please carry on your private conversations quietly and away from the juniors' tables. We have a curriculum and would like to proceed unimpeded.

I look forward to seeing everyone at the meeting. Don't forget your costumes!



JUNIORS

by Brett Jurgens, Junior Leader

Hello Juniors.

It was great to see so many of you after our summer break. I was pleasantly surprised and, admittedly, a bit overwhelmed with the number of new faces. I thought I had brought an excess of specimen boxes to be handed out to new members and actually came up short. I apologize for that and guarantee I will have enough at our next meeting.

With so many new members, I am very thankful for Barb's help with the juniors. Junior meetings will continue start at 6:15 p.m. and I do ask for a bit of grace with getting everyone situated and familiar with the club. I understand 6:15 can be a difficult time to make, and we will do our best to catch up people who come later, but we do have limited time before our regular meeting starts. I am hoping to start having printouts of our lesson to make it easier for everyone to follow along and catch up on missed meetings. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to me through either email or phone listed under the officers in the Pick and Shovel. I look forward to getting to know all of you better and help introduce the world of rocks.

With so many new juniors, I ask that parents sit in chairs away from the tables so the kids can be close to the lessons presented.

Our club consists of members with varied interests in the hobby as well as levels of expertise and all are welcome. We encourage all juniors and parents to stay for our regular meeting and program. This month, Jim Marburger will talk about where to find rocks in Nebraska; a good program for newer members. It is a great way to learn more about the club and the hobby and a great way to grab some snacks. I know how hectic life can be and I often don't have time to have a meal between work and club meeting and that's why I bring lots of snacks for everyone to enjoy.

Make sure to bring your specimen kit with you as I will have a new specimen for you to add to your collection.



Juniors lesson on September 18. Look at all the new kids!
Photo by Jayne Beer.



SEPTEMBER GENERAL MEETING

September 18, 2025 at Bethany Park Shelter House
By Sharon Marburger, 2025 Secretary

Meeting called to order at 7:07 p.m. Over 30 adult members, 19 juniors, and five visitors were in attendance.

The minutes of the May meeting were published in the June and September issues of the Pick & Shovel. Mike moved to accept the minutes as printed, 2nd by Clyde. Motion carried.

Vera read the Treasurer's report. Gene moved to accept the report as read, 2nd by Patrick. Motion carried

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Brett set up a table at the Camp Creek Railroaders event in early September. 195 people came through his area, not looking for rocks but being pleasantly surprised to find them.

Ken Crowder will be having a rock sale at his home on September 19 & 20.

Cedar Valley Rock Auction will be held at Hawkeye Downs Expo Center on September 20 & 21.

The November Rock Party will be hosted by Hidden Gems on November 22 at 5:00 p.m. The theme is Comfort Foods.

OLD BUSINESS:

The Nemaha River field trip was great, even though four vehicles got stuck in the sand and had to be pulled out.

The Crawford field trip had 15 or 16 members and family attend. Chalcedony, petrified wood and Fairburns were found.

NEW BUSINESS:

The slate for the 2026 Board of Directors was presented and nominations from the floor accepted.

President: Brett Jurgens
1st Vice: Jayne Beer
2nd Vice: Clyde Ogg
Treasurer: Vera Lyman
Secretary: Sharon Marburger
Board (Vote for 4):

Mike Stiles
Charles Wooldridge
Jeff Kubitz
Corey Beer
Arvid Olson
Sarah Nichols

Members wishing to be a vendor at the Mid-Winter Swap should see Sharon tonight for reservation form, rules, and floor plan. Four reservations were received with payment and three will be mailed in.

UNL is considering cancelling the Earth Sciences division due to budget cuts. Contact everyone you can think of at the

University, expressing opposition to cutting Earth Sciences. The final decision will be made in December.

Arvid asked about adding rock identification before meetings. We were reminded that anyone can bring specimens for identification to any meeting.

SHOW:

The theme for the 2026 Show is "Discover Chalcedony". We are hoping to have lots of displays at the show. Displays can be of any hobby-related items, not just the show theme.

The meeting was adjourned to snacks and program by a motion by Jim M., 2nd by Patrick. Motion carried.

The program was presented by Bob Diffendal on Black Hills Geology and Natural History.

2026 BOARD OF DIRECTORS SLATE

President: Brett Jurgens
1st Vice: Jayne Beer
2nd Vice: Clyde Ogg
Treasurer: Vera Lyman
Secretary: Sharon Marburger
Board (Vote for 4):
Mike Stiles
Charles Wooldridge
Jeff Kubitz
Corey Beer
Arvid Olson
Sarah Nichols

Contact Jayne Beer if you would like to nominate someone. Nominations will also be taken from the floor at the November meeting.



SEPTEMBER BOARD MEETING MINUTES

September 4, 2025 at Vera Lyman’s Residence
by Sharon Marburger, 2025 Secretary

Roll Call

President:	Brett Jurgens	Present
1st Vice Pres.:	Jayne Beer	Absent
2nd Vice Pres.:	Clyde Ogg	Present
Treasurer:	Vera Lyman	Present
Secretary:	Sharon Marburger	via telephone
Board:	Charles Wooldridge	Present
	Mike Stiles	Present
	Jeff Kubitz	Present
	Corey Beer	Absent

Visitors: Ed Ridge and Donitte Stiles.

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m. by President Brett Jurgens.

Sharon read the minutes of the last meeting. Jeff moved to accept the minutes as read, second by Mike. Motion carried.

Vera distributed the Treasurer’s Report. Wooly moved to accept the report and it was seconded. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS:

Wooly is planning a field trip to Arkansas on October 8 - 12. Contact him if interested in going. 402.975.0416

There was no updates on the Odell field trip.

The Miles Ranch (Nemaha River) field trip was fun, even though four vehicles got stuck.

The President’s Field Trip to Crawford was well attended by 15 or 16 members and family. Petrified wood, chalcedony, and two Fairburns were found.

Clyde is still working on the new member onboarding. Considering a welcome letter, Who’s Who, General

Information sheet, and the latest newsletter. Wooly suggested a welcome phone call. Sharon was asked to write up a short club history to include incorporation date. Wooly and Brett will follow-up on applicants who have not paid dues.

Sharon was asked to update the membership application to clearly state where to send application and dues. Clyde moved and 2nd by Mike to make dues payments available online. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

The confirmed proposed slate for 2026 includes: President - Brett Jurgens; Treasurer - Vera Lyman; Secretary - Sharon Marburger; Board Members - Mike Stiles and Charles Wooldridge.

SHOW

The 2026 Show theme will be “Discover Chalcedony”, as moved by Clyde, 2nd by Mike. Motion carried. Because the Show falls on Easter weekend, possibly use Easter egg backgrounds on the Show postcard.

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m. on a motion by Wooly, second by Jeff. Motion carried.



Allan & Tammy Jeanneret



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Jewelry, Rock Paintings

By Appointment Only

402.873.6515 / 402.209.0747

306 O St, Union, Nebraska

tjeanneret@hughes.net

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We buy collections and estates

MINDAT.ORG AS A MEASURE OF RELATIVE RARITY OF MINERAL SPECIES FROM SPECIFIC LOCALITIES

By Eric Fritsch



The website <http://www.mindat.org> hosts a wealth of information about mineral species, localities, and other information. Users are encouraged to contribute information, photographs, and articles making it a kind of Wikipedia of mineralogy. Currently there are close to 1.5 million photographs of minerals on the website from up to 87,000 users (probably much less than that as most users do not contribute photographs).

That being said, 1.5 million photographs of minerals is a considerable amount. Mindat users typically want to contribute photographs of rare or unusual minerals. For instance, there are millions of quartz specimens from Herkimer County, New York, however there are only 423 quartz specimens depicted on the website. When you search for native tellurium specimens from Boulder County, Colorado, you find there are ten specimens depicted.

This isn't to say that Herkimer quartz are 42.3 times more common than tellurium from Boulder County, but it paints a picture of rarity in collections. Most collectors would agree that ludlockite from Tsumeb, Namibia is a rare mineral however there are 70 pictures of it in this database. It is likely assumable that more collections have Herkimer quartz, than Tsumeb ludlockite, than Boulder County tellurium.

The rarity is more a reflection of the mineral market and what Mindat collectors collect and photograph. Colorful minerals are probably more accentuated than white, black, or grey minerals, and good crystal shapes are more desired than amorphous blobs.

The mineral torbernite has 1,377 photographs in Mindat. Broken down by countries:

• Australia	64 specimens
• Czech Republic	32 specimens
• Democratic Republic of Congo	117 specimens
• France	404 specimens
• Germany	128 specimens
• Itay	83 specimens
• Mexico	17 specimens
• Portugal	223 specimens
• United Kingdom	109 specimens
• United States	87 specimens



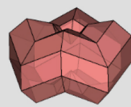


Again, this is an artificial picture of rarity and certainly the most prolific source of fine torbernite crystals is probably the Democratic Republic of Congo. There are several countries which have one or two pictures of torbernite (Argentina, Chile, Namibia, Poland, Zambia) such that specimens from these countries are probably relatively rare (at least on the mineral market, are aesthetic, are collectable). Some collectors post multiple pictures of the same species, but not the same mineral specimen, from a particular mine.

Torbernite worldwide has been described from more than 1,000 localities. From France alone, it has been described from 126 localities, however of the 404 pictured specimens, nearly half of them come from 4 mines.

French Mines	number of torbernite photographs
• Margabal Mine	73
• Le Boucheron	42
• Previnquieres Mine	34
• St-Priest-La-Prugne	34
• St Barbe Vein	28
• Roffin Mine	25
• Bigay Mine	19
• Le Mazet	19
• Bluttenberg Mine	16
• Chameane	15

The photographs are also there for you to compare. You can often get a good idea of how your specimen stacks up against others from the same locality. It's important to know your specimen's size and the photographs size when comparing as well. When you look at the 117 torbernite from the Democratic Republic of Congo, 106 of them are from the Musonoi Mine. The other 9 are from the Shinkolobwe Mine. A breakdown of USA torbernite localities shows 25 of 87 photographs from Spruce Pine (NC), 13 from the Tyrone Mine (NM; one photographer/micro collector), 13 from Arizona (8 from the Old Reliable Mine), 10 from Nevada (4 from Majuba Hill), with 7 Connecticut, 6 New Hampshire, 5 Maine, etc. I strongly encourage people to use this great resource. Just playing with it daily will increase your knowledge of minerals.

Mineral species	Rock names	Other names	Localities	Occurrences	Photos	Articles	Glossary items	Registered users
6,174	3,217	53,710	412,831	1,633,792	1,453,893	2,943	26,057	87,313

 Welcome Mindat.org is the world's largest open database of minerals, rocks, meteorites and the localities they come from. Mindat.org is run by the not-for-profit Hudson Institute of Mineralogy.	 Learn Learn more about rocks and minerals, their origins and their uses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn how to use mindat.org • Enter our learning center 	 Support us We can't continue without your financial support. We are a 501(c)(3) non-profit. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a donation • Corporate sponsorship information 	 About us Mindat.org is built and maintained by a worldwide community of experts. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About mindat.org • Who we are 	 Our Science Our 'big data' has been instrumental in major new discoveries. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read about our scientific work • Mindat.org as your research partner
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UNL PROPOSED ELIMINATION OF GEOLOGY MAJOR

Erin Haacker, Associate Professor, Earth & Atmospheric Sciences

Despite cutting \$75 million from the budget in the past five years, with the continued increase in costs relative to revenue, UNL has decided that it must cut another \$27.5 million from its operating budget moving forward. The administration decided from the outset that this time, cuts would be vertical, meaning that they would close academic programs.

After some dubious statistics, the Department of Earth & Atmospheric Sciences (EAS) was ranked about 20th from the bottom out of the 70-ish programs that were evaluated. Following further discussion (which the administration insists on referring to as “qualitative analysis” despite having no documentation and refusing to provide details), EAS was one of the six programs selected for elimination. This involves firing all the faculty and staff and getting rid of the geology and meteorology majors. This would remove the only pathway for UNL students to prepare for licensure as a Professional Geologist, and also take away the only graduate programs in geology in the state of Nebraska. We would also lose the only meteorology program of any kind (undergrad or graduate) in the state.

The next step is to make our case before the Academic Planning Committee (APC). Executive Vice Chancellor Mark Button has led the APC to believe that EAS is redundant with offerings in the Institute for Agriculture and Natural Resources on East Campus. This is not true – there are no majors on East Campus that train students to be Professional Geologists or make graduates employable based on the standards set by the National Weather Service. EAS is a great department; we work on topics ranging from tornadoes and hail to uranium in groundwater, critical minerals research, carbon sequestration, and exploration for hydrogen mining here in Nebraska.

The APC is taking comments until October 13 at this address: <https://apc.unl.edu/fall-2025-budget-reduction-feedback-form/>.

The EAS hearing with the APC can be viewed at 4:30-5:30 p.m. on October 10 at the Zoom link available on this page: <https://apc.unl.edu/fall-2025-budget-reduction-information/>.

For more information, feel free to contact me at haacker@unl.edu.

September 15 – October 13

APC collects and considers feedback. Public hearing schedule and live stream links [posted on APC website](#).

October 13 – 23

APC deliberates and prepares recommendations.

October 24

APC makes budget reduction recommendations to Chancellor.

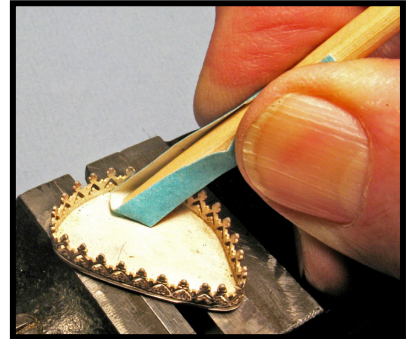
Graphics from <https://budgetprocess.unl.edu/>

BENCH TIPS BY BRAD SMITH

SANDING/POLISHING IN TIGHT PLACES

Often you'll need to sand or polish an area that's impossible to reach with even a small wheel on a flexshaft. Other times it might be the bottom of a pocket or the inside-bottom corner of a box that needs to be finished. One trick for these nit-picky jobs may be left over from your last Chinese dinner - a chopstick.

I've found quite a few uses for these in the shop. Prepare the tip by simply sawing it off at a 45 degree angle. Then apply whatever abrasive grit you will need for the job or hold a strip of sandpaper around the end. Loose grit can be held onto the tip with a bit of Vaseline or oil. Tripoli or rouge can be just rubbed onto the end of the chopstick.



DENTAL TOOLS

A ready source of free tools is your local dentist. Dental picks can be reworked into wax tools or straightened and sharpened to make a stylus for marking and layout. The steel in these tools is high quality, and the handles are designed for comfort.

A special note however - if you want to modify the shape of the tool, don't try to just bend it with pliers. Working this alloy of steel while it's cold will cause it to snap. Changing its shape can only be done when it's hot. I work it like a blacksmith. Prop your torch up on the bench so that you can use both hands for the work. Have a hammer and bench block ready. Heat the tip red hot, and hammer it straight or bend it with pliers.

And don't forget to ask your dentist for some of the cutting burs they throw out. These are useful for a variety of things. It's best to call a week or two before your visit and ask the dentist or hygienist to put some of these tools aside for you. It's good practice also to ask that they run them through the sterilizer for you. If that's not possible, pop them in an oven at around 250° F.



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2026 MID-WINTER SWAP

By Sharon Marburger, co-chair and webmaster

Advanced reservations were made available at the September 18 meeting, allowing members first choice for booth spaces. The form officially went online on October 1. By the end of the day, only two spaces remained open! It looks like there will be a wide array of goods for sale.

At co-chair Jayne Beer's request, I will make available an online waiting list after the last two booths are reserved, in order to fill any cancellations. As with the advanced reservations, the waiting list will be first come, first served.

The vendor response to the Mid-Winter Swap is unbelievable. Last year we relocated the Swap to the Firefighters Reception Hall in west Lincoln, in order to accommodate more vendors. It looks like we are already outgrowing the venue.

You will find a copy of the Swap flyer on page 10 of this newsletter. Feel free to copy and distribute it wherever permitted. Your help in bringing in customers is of vital importance. This is an easy task for all members, but especially for new members who wish to be more active in the club. This is a great opportunity to do your part for the club.

ZOOM SEMINAR WILL TACKLE PR FOR CLUBS

By Jim Brace-Thompson
AFMS Public Relations Chair

In the past two years, I've held an annual Zoom seminar open to members of all seven regional federations comprising the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies. The first was on "Practicing Public Relations in the Age of Social Media." The second focused on "Sharing Best Practices in Public Relations."

I'd like to continue the tradition with a third Zoom this coming November focused on the topic of "Public Relations through Community Involvement."

Public relations is about more than advertising or posting your club events. It's about engaging with your community in ways that are mutually beneficial – for instance, sharing your club's knowledge, resources, and volunteers to enhance a local school science night. Your local school and its students benefit from your knowledge and experience while your club benefits by raising its profile, and potentially attracting new family members and/or science teachers.

In what ways has your club endeavored to raise its profile through community action and involvement? Here's a chance to share your success stories and to learn from other clubs from across our varied regional federations. If you would like to join in on such a Zoom seminar, please contact me at jbraceth@roadrunner.com or (805) 659-3577, and I'll keep you posted when a date is scheduled.

As published in the *MWF News*, October 2025, Issue 645

MWF PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Cheryl Neary, MWF President

Due to emerging and more accessible technology, our idea of the geology of the Midwest has begun to change. In the year 2025, there were several significant geological discoveries that occurred in the Midwest.

Beneath the area characterized by its vast plains and agricultural land – from the Great Lakes to the Great Plains – lies ancient fractured bedrock with fault lines that had been inactive for millions of years; deep seismic shifts in Illinois; ancient volcanic cores found beneath Missouri's Ozarks; buried lava tubes found beneath Indiana farmland; a fossilized hydrothermal vent system in Ohio; hidden aquifers in Wisconsin; sudden uplift detected beneath Minneapolis; and magnetic anomalies in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. For more information, go to YouTube and watch "What Just Emerged in the US Midwest Terrified Scientists."

Scientific American reported in April of 2025 that something strange appears to be happening deep underneath the US Midwest and the Ohio Valley in the area from Michigan to Nebraska: A long-lost geological plate may be siphoning molten rock from the underside of the North American craton – a massive block of continental rock – and eroding it.

Based on computer models, the Farallon plate is sinking through the Earth's lower mantle. The Farallon plate was an ancient oceanic tectonic plate.

In December of 2024, an earthquake with a magnitude of 3 impacted New Madrid, Missouri. Most earthquakes in the Midwest occur in the New Madrid Seismic Zone (NMSZ). NMSZ lies in the Mississippi River Valley and spans to northeastern Arkansas, southeastern Missouri, western Tennessee, western Kentucky and southern Illinois.

This seismic zone receives the most attention, but it is only one of three seismic zones located in the Midwest. Among them, the NMSZ, the Wabash Valley Seismic Zone, and the South Central Illinois seismic zone could affect parts of Missouri, Arkansas, Mississippi, Tennessee, Kentucky, Indiana, and Illinois.

There have been significant events in the year 2024-2025 with the Midwest Federation, too. J.C. Moore, former MWF President, served as AFMS President, fostering future changes to the distribution of the AFMS newsletter.

In addition, the revised "New Club President Binder" has become available. The Juniors Program has escalated. The MWF had record number of Bulletin Editors Aids Contest entries. Let's keep the momentum rolling!

I too had an interesting year serving as the President of the Midwest Federation. I would like to thank my Board for their support in fulfilling their roles.

Each club, take a bow! Thanks for everything each of you has done for the Federation, and thanks to all who have made this year educational, entertaining and energized!

Let's keep on rockin' and rollin'!

FAMOUS MINERAL SPECIMENS THE ALMA QUEEN

As published in Diamond Dan's Mini Miners Monthly, September 2025, Vol. 17, No. 9

(This article is based largely on the article written by Steve Voynick for the Mineralogical Record, July/August 1998 issue. Other sources include the Colorado Geological Survey at www.geosurvey.state.co.us and the Summit Daily News, Wednesday, October 27, 2004, "Sweet Home Mine Closes in Alma."

There are some mineral specimens that are known by most serious mineral collectors. They are specimens that are of unusual color, form and quality. They often have a unique and interesting history. Because they are so special, they are typically pictured in mineral magazines and mineral picture books and, therefore, become even more famous. One of these exceptional specimens is a rhodochrosite discovered at the Sweet Home silver mine in the mountains of the Mosquito Range near Alma, Colorado. This very special specimen is known all over the world as The Alma Queen. Gold. The rush west always seemed to be driven by gold, by the promise of sudden riches and life in the lap of luxury. The picture of Colorado in the 1850's was painted by this crazy search for instant wealth, colored in shades of silver and gold. By 1859 the high mountain communities of Blackhawk and Central City, 38 miles west of Denver, were buzzing with prospectors mining for their fortunes in the river's placer deposits. Some miners were more professional, if not better educated and prepared, to seek out Rocky Mountain treasure hiding under the rust-red soil and rock of which the central Rockies are composed. Daniel Plummer and Daniel H. Mayers prospected the 14,000 foot Mount Bross in 1868, finding silver ore. Their continued searching was soon rewarded with yet another discovery of even more silver ore.

The Precambrian rocks on the opposite side of Mount Bross soon revealed their silver bearing treasures. As the miners broke out chunks of silver ore, they would occasionally hit spaces in the rock, "vugs" as they are known by the geologists, lined with eye-catching rhombs of the manganese-bearing mineral called rhodochrosite. But even pretty rocks don't bring fortune to silver miners, so most of these crystals were tossed aside on the waste dumps. In the early 1870's, prospectors discovered silver minerals 1,200 feet above Buckskin Creek near the new mining town of Alma. These silver outcrops were patented and one became the Sweet Home mine. Though the silver ore was rich in silver, the Sweet Home never produced enough silver to make a real profit. From the very beginning, though, miners discovered deep red rhodochrosite crystals. Most of these beauties were tossed on the gangue pile. Some were traded for beers and drinks at Alma's taverns. A few of the more exceptional pieces found their way to museums around the world. We jump now to the 1960's. In 1963 a small company called "Douglas Brothers" leased the Sweet Home mine with the plan of discovering more silver ore. But Clarence Douglas, the older of the brothers, died at the end of 1964 and the owner of the mine, E.C. Spray, died early in 1965. Spray's widow, Eleanor, gave the mine to her nephew, Leonard Beach. Now there was a man from Texas named John Soules who put up a large amount of money to fund the Douglas brothers' search for silver. Trying to get some profit for his investment, Mr. Soules began to look for fine

rhodochrosite specimens instead of silver. He had heard from Clarence Douglas's grandson, Hershall Ellyson, that the Sweet Home certainly still had fine "rhodos" yet to be discovered. And collectors were willing to pay a lot of money to own them. He hired a man, an experienced miner named Warren Good, to work with him in the search for rhodochrosite. They drilled a hole, filled it with dynamite and set it off. The explosion opened up a hole about the size of a small washtub, filled with red rhodochrosite! Mr. Soules returned to Texas feeling successful. But while he was gone, Warren Good continued to look for crystals. He opened up another vug and this spectacular crystal-filled hole was 7 feet high, 4 feet deep and 2 feet wide! Mr. Soules returned to see this spectacular sight.

He reported that it was filled with deep red, gemmy rhodochrosite crystals. There were hundreds of them covering the entire hole. He again had to go back to Texas, this time before the crystals could be removed. Six weeks later, though, he returned to the Sweet Home . . . to discover the spectacular vug was empty! In the cold months of the winter of 1966, Warren Good had cleaned out the entire vug and sold the specimens (that is, the ones he didn't destroy when he cleaned out the vug). Among the rhodochrosite pieces that quickly went to the mineral market was one enormous, eye-popping piece that would eventually be named "The Alma Queen." Now, the Alma Queen did not come out of its vug in one piece. The crystal detached from the matrix and was repaired after it was all removed. But it is such a spectacular specimen that no one was ever concerned about this fact. The first time it was sold it was to a mineral dealer named George Robertson. He paid \$2,500 for it in 1967. It was first displayed for the public to see in 1967 at the Las Vegas Gem & Mineral show. At this show, The Alma Queen was declared to be the absolute best mineral specimen known in the world at that time. Within a few months of the Las Vegas show, Dr. Peter Bancroft traded approximately \$6,500 worth of specimens for The Alma Queen. Dr. Bancroft is the man who actually gave this marvelous specimen the name "Alma Queen." When he published a book about the world's best mineral specimens in 1973, the Alma Queen was chosen for the cover of the book.

By 1979, the value of the Alma Queen had risen to \$185,000. The next time it sold, it was to a wealthy collector from Texas named Perkins Sams. He paid only \$85,000 (such a deal!). In 1984 he sold his collection, including the Alma Queen, to the Houston Museum of Natural Science. Author Steve Voynick reported in the magazine Mineralogical Record that in 1990, the Alma Queen was valued at \$250,000!!! The Alma Queen remains at the Houston Museum in the Cullen Hall of Gems and Minerals. The Alma Queen will always be regarded as one of the most important rhodochrosite specimens - and even one of the most important mineral specimens ever discovered anywhere in the world.

LINCOLN GEM & MINERAL CLUB'S
45th Annual Mid-Winter Rock Swap



**Lincoln Firefighters Reception Hall
 241 Victory Lane, Lincoln
 (off Sun Valley Blvd)**

**Sunday, January 18, 2026
 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
 Adults \$3.00; 15 and under FREE**

**FAMILY FRIENDLY
 Fun for All!**

**Buy,
 Sell, or
 Trade**

**Cash and
 Credit Card
 Sales**

Fossils

Jewelry

**Lapidary
 Supplies
 &
 Equipment**

**Rocks
 &
 Minerals**



**Help the Lincoln Food Bank
 replenish its shelves after the
 holidays. Bring canned items
 for the Food Bank.**

**Swapper Booths: See website for vendor rules, booth sizes, rates,
 advanced reservations, and floor plan for available booths**

www.lincolngemmineralclub.org/happenings

Vendor setup begins at 9:30 a.m. on January 18, 2026

**LINCOLN GEM & MINERAL CLUB
 Box 5342**

Lincoln, NE 68505-0342

Contact: Sharon Marburger, 402.429.3323 or Jayne Beer, 402.890.3307

2026 MID-WINTER SWAP COMMITTEE

Chairman:Jayne Beer
Advanced Reservations:Sharon Marburger
Club Booth/Rock Pile Andrea Kolodziejczyk
Finance & Admissions: Vera Lyman, Sharon Marburger
Floor Chairman:Jayne Beer
Insurance Vera Lyman, Jim Marburger
Publicity & Promotion:Jayne Beer, Jim Marburger
Web Master:Sharon Marburger
Youth Activities: Brett Jurgens

2026 SHOW COMMITTEE

Theme:.....Discover Chalcedony

Chairman:Jayne Beer/Brett Jurgens
Dealers & Demonstrators: Vera Lyman
Displays:Brett Jurgens
Event Center Liaison Vera Lyman
Finance/Ticket Sales: Vera Lyman, Brett Jurgens
Floor Chairman:
Fluorescent Booth: Clyde Ogg
Forms Sharon Marburger
LGMC Club Booth: Barb & Clyde Ogg
Outside Rock Pile Charles Wooldridge
Plants:Ed Ridge
Publicity & Promotion:Jim Marburger
Raffle Gene Mulinix
Ribbons & Recognitions: Sharon Marburger
Rock Pile/Silent AuctionAndrea Kolodziejczyk
Security: Vera Lyman
Show Flyer & Printed Program Sharon Marburger
Website Sharon Marburger
Youth Activities: Barb Ogg & Brett Jurgens

2025 LONG RANGE PLANNING & BY-LAWS COMMITTEE

Jayne Beer, Chairman

1 year: Sharon Marburger & Clyde Ogg
2 years: Vera Lyman & Jim Marburger
3 years: Jayne Beer & Brett Jurgens

2025 NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Jayne Beer, Chairman

1 year: Jayne Beer & Brett Jurgens
2 years: Charles Wooldridge & Donitte Stiles
3 years: Vera Lyman & Ed Ridge

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

STANDING COMMITTEES

Audio/Visual:

Clyde Ogg

Audit:

Jayne Beer, James Marburger, Clyde Ogg

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Edward Ridge

Club Rock Pile:

Andrea Kolodziejczyk

Door Prizes:

Corey Beer, Brett Jurgens, Charles Wooldridge

Facebook:

James Marburger, Jayne Beer, Brett Jurgens

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James Marburger

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Mid-Winter Swap

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James Marburger

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Vera Lyman, Sharon Marburger

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Vera Lyman

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Jayne Beer, Brett Jurgens

Summer Gem Fest:

Jayne Beer

Website:

Sharon Marburger

Youth Activities:

Brett Jurgens

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 or club event 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.

Mail Exchange Newsletters to:
Lincoln Gem & Mineral Club, Inc.
P.O. Box 5342
Lincoln, NE 68505-0342



Or e-mail newsletters to:
lgmc.editor@outlook.com

A color version of the Pick & Shovel is available at:
<http://www.lincolngemmineralclub.org/index.php/newsletters/current>

PICK & SHOVEL

Hidden Gems by The Jewelry Connection Ltd.

Indian Village Shopping Ctr.

3227 S. 13th St., Lincoln (next to LAUNDROMAT)

Corey Beer - Lapidary
402.890.9155

Jayne Beer - Jeweler
402.890.3307

2025 Schedule

Lapidary Classes

(Stone Cutting)

\$100 for 5 3-hour classes

Sundays 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Choice of session:

- Session 1: Jan 26 - Mar 2
- Session 2: Mar 9 - April 20
- Session 3: Apr 27 - Jun 1
- Session 4: Jun 29 - Aug 3
- Session 5: Aug 10 - Sep 14
- Session 6: Sep 21 - Oct 26
- Session 7: Nov 2 - Dec 7

Silversmithing Classes

Tuition: \$160 plus \$30 supply deposit

Choice of Tuesday or Wednesday

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

Tuesdays

- Session 1: Jan 21 - Feb 18
- Session 2: Feb 25 - Apr 15
- Session 3: Apr 22 - Jun 10
- Session 4: Jun 24 - Aug 12
- Session 5: Aug 19 - Oct 7
- Session 6: Oct 14 - Dec 2

Wednesdays

- Session 1: Jan 22 - Feb 19
- Session 2: Feb 26 - Apr 16
- Session 3: Apr 23 - Jun 11
- Session 4: Jun 25 - Aug 13
- Session 5: Aug 20 - Oct 8
- Session 6: Oct 15 - Dec 3

Contact: Jayne Beer 402-890-3307 or look up "Hidden Gems by The Jewelry Connection LTD" in Facebook and send message