

Michiana Gem & Mineral Society
Jason Hefner, Editor
229 East State St
Etna Green, IN 46524



April 2026

Volume 66 Number 3

**THE
ROCKFINDER**

We're on the Web! See us at: www.MichianaGMS.org

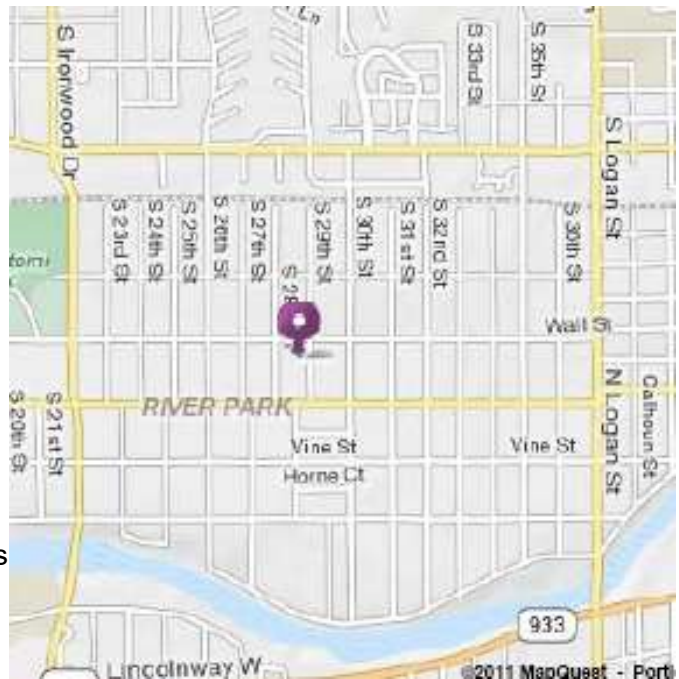
The purpose of the Michiana Gem & Mineral Society is to promote the study and enjoyment of the earth sciences and the lapidary arts, and to share lapidary knowledge and techniques. General meetings are usually held the fourth Sunday of each month at 2:00 p.m. at,

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
805 S. 29th St.,
South Bend, IN.
Please see the map to the right.

Doors usually open at 1:30 for meet & greet time.

Regular meeting exceptions include May (third Sunday), July (Club Picnic), August (Club Show) and the November/December meeting and Christmas party.

Board meetings are held before the monthly meetings. The annual club show is in late August.



DUES

Yearly Membership Dues are payable by December 15th of each year. Please choose type of membership below.

- Individual \$10.00 Family \$20.00
- Junior \$1.00 Subscriber \$7.50

Please indicate areas of special interest.

- General Geology Gems & Minerals
- Fossils Micro mounts
- Crystals Field Trips
- Cabochons Faceting
- Carving Beads
- Jewelry Making

Name(s) _____
 Street _____
 City, ST, Zip _____
 Phone(s) _____
 Email _____

Please send your dues and the bottom half of this form to:



Please read and sign this section

With my signature I hereby release the Michiana Gem and Mineral Society, Inc., and its individual members and the owners of any premises upon which I enter under permit granted to the society, absolutely free of any liability whatsoever, to my person or property, and further I will respect the equipment and property of the aforesaid owners.

Signed _____ Date _____
 Signed _____ Date _____

Family Information:

Name: _____ Birthday: _____
 Name: _____ Birthday: _____
 Name: _____ Birthday: _____
 Name: _____ Birthday: _____
 Name: _____ Birthday: _____

Michiana Gem & Mineral Society
 c/o Deb Longworth
 7415 East 900 North
 New Carlisle, IN 46552

The purpose of the Michiana Gem & Mineral Society is to promote the study and enjoyment of the earth sciences and the lapidary arts, and to share lapidary knowledge and techniques.

Michiana Gem and Mineral Society www.MichianaGMS.org, is a not-for-profit organization affiliated with the Midwest Federation of Mineralogical Societies <http://www.amfed.org/mwf/> and with the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies www.amfed.org

The *Rockfinder* is usually published monthly except July and August.

Please note that all items for a given issue of the *Rockfinder* are due to the **Editor** no later than the 5th day of the previous month. This means that the due date for the March Issue will be February 5th. Advance items are appreciated. Material may be e-mailed to hefner_family@hotmail.com or submitted via the U.S. Mail.

Editor:
Jason Hefner
229 East State St
Etna Green, IN 46524

Permission is hereby granted to reprint any original *Rockfinder* articles as long as recognition is given along with the reprint.

REMEMBER – Items in The Rockfinder that are **BLUE & UNDERLINED** are links to the internet or email addresses. Just click on them for more information.



President's Message, Jason Hefner, President

What a wonderful winter we have experienced this year. 80 degrees of temperature swings. My little thermometer had us at a high of -5 in late February and 75 degrees just a few days ago! Looking ahead we are most likely done with snow. Why do I mention this, well I do not know about you, but I want to get out and go rock hunting.

Here are some public events to think about. Moose Lake Agate Days July 18-19, Keokuk Geodefest September 25-27, and Kentucky Agate Festival April 25-26.

Speaking of Moose Lake Agate Days have you ever been? They dump agate containing gravels on the road and you can search to your hearts content. After February's meeting we had our own Agate Days event when someone tripped on their own shoelaces and dropped Eva's beautiful agates on the road. I found a few small ones, but one large one was found as well. They all made their way back to their rightful owner, but it was fun while it lasted.

Right now I would suggest heading to a beach on Lake Michigan or even head over to Ohio to hunt for space rocks!

Up & Coming

Next Meeting: April 26, 2026

Doors open at 1:30 pm
Meeting starts at 2:00pm

Place:
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
29th & Wall
South Bend, IN. (This is in River Park area)

Board of Directors

President: Jason Hefner
574-354-0478

Vice-President: Open

Secretary: Kathy Wallace
219-380-1252

Treasurer: Lyn Zeiger
574-259-5944

Liaison: Open

Past President: Ross Fergerson
574-850-6208

Committee Chairs

Displays: Kathy Miller
574-251-0255

Editor: Jason Hefner
574-354-0478

Educational: Jesse Zeiger
574-259-5944

Facebook: Jason Hefner

Field Trips: Jason Hefner, Ross
Fergerson

Historian: Open

Hospitality: Open

Juniors: Kathy Chidister
574-202-3864

Librarian:

Membership: Deb Longworth
574-250-2825

Programs:

Publicity: Josh Klosinski
574-274-8714

Show Chair: Ross Fergerson
574-850-6208 &
Pamela Weishaupt 574-538-9623

Sunshine: Sarah Lane
574-276-7554

Webmaster: Joe Perry
574-295-9050

March Meeting minutes

By Kathy Wallace, Secretary

Meeting Minutes – Date: March 22, 2026

Members in Attendance - Adults 37 Children 2
New Members Guests 3

Call to Order - Jason Hefner

Pledge of Allegiance - Jason Hefner

Welcome - Jason Hefner

Past Presidents – Ross, Kathy, Jason

Secretary Report - Read and approved

Treasurers Report – Read and approved

Parliamentarian – Jason Hefner

Midwest Federation –

American Federation –

American Lands Access –

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Show & Tell – Nick, Ross, Tom, Erica

Editor – Jason Hefner

Educational –

Facebook – Josh Klosinski – Nancy Foreman – Stephanie Hughes

Field Trips – Jason working on Auglaze for this fall some time

Historian –

Hospitality – Eva Jakab

Juniors – Kathy Chidister

Membership – Deb Longworth – has a list of approx. 35 people who still haven't paid 2026 dues and some that are even older than that. She is going to send out reminders to those who haven't paid yet.

Programs – John J in April

Publicity –

Safety – Jennifer Hefner

Show Chair – Stephanie Hughes & Ross Fergerson

Sunshine – Sarah Lane – Sympathy card to:

Get well card to:

Webmaster – Joe Perry

OLD BUSINESS - Correction to the August show dates are: August 14, 15 & 16. Setup is Thursday, August 13. Show hours are: Friday and Saturday from 10 – 7 and Sunday is from 10 – 4.

Picnic is Sunday, July 26. The place is yet to be determined.

Continued on Page 4

Public Relations Ronna Watkins, AFMS President excerpted from [Volume 79, Number 3 — April 2026](#) - click the link to read the entire article

April is here and there are many opportunities to get outdoors. Among my favorite things are free National Parks Days. This year's dates are May 25—Memorial Day; June 14—Flag Day and Trump's birthday; July 3-5—Independence Day weekend; Aug. 25—110th birthday of the National Park Service; Sept. 17—Constitution Day; Oct. 27—Theodore Roosevelt's birthday; and Nov. 11—Veterans Day. But before you get outside, be sure to fill out your registration for the upcoming AFMS/MWF Show and Convention in St Charles, Illinois, and get it in the mail. The deadline for registration is April 24th. The cut off for the group rate rooms is in a few days—April 6. Also, you must register if you want to get on the coach to the Lizzadro Museum of Lapidary Art on Sunday afternoon. There you will enjoy hundreds of carved pieces, lots of Arizona petrified wood, and the 18K gold Lizzadro castle!

Now, I would like to share some hints and ideas from two of our NFMS clubs about growing and retaining your club memberships. For one northwest club, maintaining a vibrant membership has been an ongoing challenge, as many of us have experienced. Early on, the club had reached a peak with approximately 400 members and numerous committees actively overseeing various club functions. However, by 2011 membership had dropped below 100, with only about 25 members attending meetings.

VP's Message John Rettler, MWF VP excerpted from [April 2026 - Issue No. 651](#) - click the link to read the entire article

When our MWF President, Tom Barnhizer, asked my opinion on the duty of sharing the opening message for the newsletter, I was happy to oblige. I wish to introduce myself to those of you who have not yet had the pleasure or task of meeting me, or my wife Mary.

We have been members of the Kettle Moraine Geological Society of Wisconsin (KMGS) since 2012. We have been very active in all endeavors of the organization and have enjoyed the privilege of watching KMGS grow, thrive, and expand since we joined. We have seen the early traditions continue, and had to adapt to changes imposed upon us, and despite the changing times, still see the future as bright, and hope to share this with the MWF other members.

As members who participate in club shows or events, or as chairperson(s) for our respective clubs, or vendors, we all know what it's like to recover in the days following an event. For Mary and me, KMGS' show chairs, hot off our event in the first week of March, it's not just a busy weekend, it's an incessant blur from the culmination of weeks of preparation – intense strategizing and making sure everything is as we planned so our members, vendors, and guests all leave excited, impressed, and happy, or at least satisfied enough to return in the future.



Purpose of the AFMS

To promote popular interest and education in the various Earth Sciences, and in particular the subjects of Geology, Mineralogy, Paleontology, Lapidary and other related subjects, and to sponsor and provide means of coordinating the work and efforts of all persons and groups interested therein; to sponsor and encourage the formation and international development of Societies and Regional Federations and by and through such means to strive toward greater international good will and fellowship.

www.amfed.org



Purpose of the MWF

To promote interest and education in geology, mineralogy, paleontology, archaeology and lapidary, and to sponsor and provide means of coordinating the work and efforts of groups interested in these fields.

www.amfed.org/mwf

March Meeting minutes continued from page 2

OLD BUSINESS -

We discussed again the percentage the club gets from the August show. 15% or 20% of what each individual sells. Some thought we should put it back to the 15% but others thought we should leave it at 20% in case we lose the church as our meeting place and need to rent/buy something else. It was discussed and voted on to leave it at 20%.

NEW BUSINESS -

Adjournment – Motion made & seconded

Program - Jason gave an EXCELLENT talk on meteorites. He travelled to Ohio when the last meteor just hit but he didn't find any

He did get to hold one in his hand that someone else found

Next Meeting - Sunday, April 26 @ 2 p.m. eastern.

West Michigan MWF Mineral Study Group Discusses Brown Minerals

Kreigh Tomaszewski
West Michigan MWF Mineral Study Group

Color is generally not a reliable key for mineral identification, but it is useful enough that some field guides use it as their primary key. Our study group decided to run with it for a year, ending the sequence with brown minerals.

Our Mineral Study Group likes to learn about the science and practical uses of the minerals we study, but we really want to learn to hand-identify them. Hand identification is a skill you learn from holding and studying many different specimens of a given mineral (and doing some homework on its physical properties).

We do our homework on the science and come prepared to discuss the mineral topic of the month, but we also dig through our collections and come with one or more specimens for everyone to handle. We really do learn from each other (and you have to share your specimens with others so they can be appreciated).

The concept behind our color study theme was to have as many different minerals of a given color as possible to examine together, so we can learn to distinguish between them. Our habit is to circulate minerals around the table, roughly in alphabetical order, so everyone has a chance to examine each specimen and comment on it.

We started with the phosphate collinsite, followed by the cyclosilicate dravite, the brown tourmaline that is magnesium-rich. Next came the phosphate endlichite, an arsenic-rich variety of vanadinite. We then had a specimen of the oxide goethite, in the form of a pseudomorph after a pyrite cluster. There was a good discussion on

pseudomorphs before we got back on track.

Our next specimen was an hourglass selenite crystal, the State Crystal of Oklahoma. This was followed by an iron-stained Geode. Then we had the phosphates jarosite, kamarizaite, and kottigite, followed by a Moqui Marble. We had a discussion about the still-disputed method of formation of Moqui Marbles.

All West Michigan rockhounds are invited to attend our study group. Please contact me for details (kreigh@gmail.com). I'll tell you the week's theme and you can bring some specimens from your collection. I hope you can join us as we learn about minerals from each other. You are welcome even if you can't bring any specimens!



Oklahoma designated the unique hourglass selenite crystal as the official state crystal in 2005 after elementary school students from Bryant and Red Oak School petitioned the state legislature. All State Minerals & Rocks

Hourglass selenite crystals are found only on the salt plains of Oklahoma, a unique 11,000-acre geological area. The salt plains were formed by repeated flooding by sea water millions of years ago.

Selenite (hydrous calcium sulfate) is a crystallized form of gypsum, a common mineral in sedimentary environments that can take on a great variety of crystal forms and shapes. Crystals take on the characteristics of their environment - iron oxide in the soil gives the hourglass crystals their chocolate brown color.

Excerpted from statesymbolsusa.org. Photo from statesymbolsusa.org.