

Dear MMRC Members,

I thought I would take a moment and bring everyone up to speed with what's been happening in the background.

Club Bulletin

You are at this very moment receiving your very first official newsletter. It isn't an announcement for the next meeting and it isn't for the general public. This newsletter is for us, the MMRC and I hope over time to serve several purposes with it. I intend to publish it monthly and if you have information or requests that you would like to have included please forward them to me!

Field Trip Safety

First of all let me say I am so pleased and excited that we are able to offer field trips this year. If you didn't know, Joe Kchodl and Bruce Baker, two of our most experienced collectors, are acting as our current Field Trip co-chairs and they have put together an excellent itinerary for the upcoming season. Unfortunately, with greater possibilities comes the burden of greater responsibility, both as individuals and as a group. With that in mind, both I and the board have taken a hard look at risk management for all concerned. With the litigious nature of society today I believe it is in our best interest to take as many steps as possible to minimize and/ or mitigate our exposure to risk while still being able to participate in the hobby we enjoy. With that in mind the board has adopted the following policies,

- 1.) All participants prior to any scheduled field trip will be required to sign a waiver and assumption of risk form.
- 2.) All participants in club events will be required to be current members. (This does not include shows and presentations where the purpose of the event is intended for the public.)
- 3.) Any person wishing to participate in club event for the purpose of collecting minerals or other specimens must first attend a Mine Safety Class or equivalent that is sanctioned by MMRC.
- 4.) Children must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian in order to participate in a club event.

I will be releasing the details of a mine safety training class in the very near future.

Junior Club

It would appear that the junior club is a hit both with the kids and the adults! We had almost as many people on the junior side last meeting as we did on the regular meeting side. I think maybe I need to go next door and take some notes! Since the junior program appears to be taking root I decided it was time to recognize our junior division by creating a standing committee and appointing a chairperson. V.P. Cheryl Roggenbuck will serve as the interim chairperson until another appointment is made. If you have an interest in serving or acting as chairperson for this committee please see me or Cheryl.

Education & Outreach Committee

I have had tentative inquiries from various organizations and schools about appearing and/or assisting in classroom activities, providing materials or doing presentations. So far, we have been handling those requests as they come in. Currently Sec. Kim Sherwood and Patti Slusher are working with Dawn Wiseman from the Gladwin school district (also a member) to run a school program this summer. I have done a presentation at the Clare elementary; Bruce Baker does programs for the boy scouts, Deb McCauley assisted with around four hundred students back in December, and I suspect that many of you are involved in other areas that I don't even know about. With that in mind I am recognizing the formalization of an Education and Outreach Committee. The purpose of this position will be to keep on hand a list of presenters, presentations, topics, or activities that we can offer the public or other organizations at their request. At this time V.P. Cheryl Roggenbuck has accepted appointment as the interim chair. If you have an interest in serving or chairing this committee please speak with one of us.

The club is in search of a logo!

Having a club logo and/or logo branded apparel is a topic that has come up numerous times in conversation. I kept saying "I think it's a great idea! Do you want to facilitate the process?" I wasn't getting any takers though. So, I kept shuffling it off to the back burners of my mind. Until, the last board meeting when a man stepped forward from the shadows. I could swear I heard the faint strains of a ghostly whistle straight out of an old Clint Eastwood western.

He said "I'll do it."

I told him it was much more complicated than just committing to helping the club design a logo and sell a few shirts. I met his steely gaze down the length of my shiny new bic pen and said "You have to run a fund raising committee too."

He didn't even flinch, so I pressed harder. "And wash my car."

He just squinted at me from under his imaginary sombrero and again I heard those ghostly strains..... You'll be hearing from the mysterious stranger soon.

2011 Audit

It is time to audit the 2011 books. The club needs two volunteers from the general membership and one board member to donate a minimal amount of time to do this task. Please get in touch with me or Joe Powers if interested. This is a popular activity, please don't wait to respond!

Endowment Fund

In light of the recent memorial donation in Bill Hoover's name the board has established an endowment fund for purposes other than regular club business. The fund will be used for scholarships or other outreach activities of a similar nature. The fund's total purpose is still under discussion and will be open to comment and suggestion prior to any final decision.

From Kreigh Tomaszewski at The Indian Mounds Clubs

It is Winter in Michigan. Time for rockhounds to find other things to do than collect in the snow covered fields. It is time to go visit some basements, see some rock collections, and talk with other collectors.

Rockhounds from four clubs have volunteered to share their collections for two hours on either March 10 or March 24, 2012. Some are in the morning from 10 am to noon, and some are in the afternoon, from 2 pm to 4 pm. There is time between for travel and lunch.

So mark March 10 and 24 on your calendar. Plug the addresses below into your GPS or favorite search engine so you have directions, and join us for a winter field trip.

Kalamazoo:

Jerry and Allison VanNocker -- Mar 10 @ 10 am
13101 East Armour Lane
Battle Creek, MI 49014

Mid-Michigan Rock Club

Bill and Barbara Tite -- Mar 10 @ 10 am
5408 Michael St
Bay City, MI 48796

Tulip City:

Ken and Betty Hoekstra -- Mar 10 @ 2 pm
580 Julie St.
Hudsonville, 49426

Indian Mounds:

Don and Lois VanDyke -- March 24 @ 10 am
4296 Oakview
Hudsonville, MI 49426

Gordon and Nancy Spalenka -- March 24 @ 2 pm

2119 Waldron St SW
Wyoming, MI 49519

You won't need a bucket for specimens, but you might want a camera to catch some eye candy. Remember to thank your hosts, and start thinking about sharing your collection next winter when we hope to do this again.

This trip was organized by Kreigh Tomaszewski from the Indian Mounds Club. All rockhounds are invited, so share this with your club and put it in your club bulletin.>

Thank-you for your time!

Tim Middleton

p.s. He doesn't really have to wash my car!