



BULLETIN OF FRIENDS OF MINERALOGY

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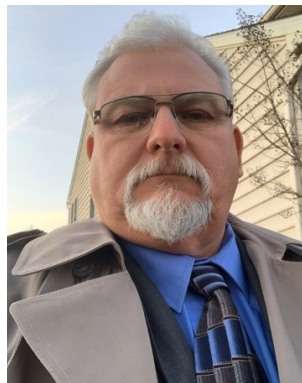
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to promote, support, protect and expand the collection of mineral specimens and to further the recognition of the scientific, economic and aesthetic value of minerals and collecting mineral specimens

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Bill Stephens

Hello Everyone!

I hope everyone is enjoying the summer and prime digging season. For my part, I have been nose-to-the-grindstone at work since the Hogg Mine trip Memorial Weekend and do not expect to get out to dig until after the Preliminary Plan hearings for two of my subdivision projects mid-July. Our affiliate YMC is running a dig at Treasure Mountain unfortunately I

cannot make.

Two important events have occurred since my last report and one more item is pending.

First, Our election of at-large directors has resulted in three candidates being elected or re-elected in Bill Besse's case. Let's all take a moment to welcome Dr. Brittany McNamee, PG, PhD, professor at UNC, and Mr. David Tibbits, PhD candidate at Rutgers and Bill Besse, returning at-large director and current FMN Treasurer, Bill Besse. Ms. Haley Nedbalski withdrew her candidacy and Mr. Chris Painter, operator of the Hogg Mine has volunteered to fill the vacancy and is currently up for election. Please cast your vote soon!. According to our outgoing and acting secretary, Jeanine Mielecki, the 22 votes received was one of the largest turnouts for voting in years. Hopefully the electronic ballot made things easier for everyone and we will continue to use that format going forward including the current ballot for Chris. See his profile elsewhere herein.

Second, David, Sean Price and I successfully executed the first ever in decades field trip run by FMN and it was a success! As David and I are both FMPA Chapter members, I sort of consider this also an FMPA sponsored event. See excerpts from my email previously issued to our HDRI research group below.

David and I had a great time at the Hogg Mine, we collected a lot of samples for study and learned a lot about the deposit. I had flown it a couple weeks prior and we have a lot of photographic documentation as well. Very little has been published about this site, and it is "low hanging fruit" for publication.

This machine dig was sponsored by yours truly and the Friends of Mineralogy National as the first field trip offered by FMN in decades and was a great success. We had about 16 attendees for 1 to 3 days, all of whom were happy and had a great time. We added about 8 or 9 new members to FMN.

More importantly, the field trip funded the machine dig for our host and David, Sean Price and I were able to dig and conduct our sampling with machine assistance at no cost outside our travel and lodging expense. This is a great business model for our team going forward.

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Thea Stender • theasmineralworld@hotmail.com

Sean Stimac • seanstimac@gmail.com

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William Besse • wwbesse@gmail.com

Christopher Painter (Pending)

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*Chapter representatives also have a board position

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ONLINE RESOURCES



WEBSITE:

friendsofmineralogy.org



CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

friendsofmineralogy.org/calendar-of-events



FACEBOOK:

Page: [@FriendsofMineralogy](https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofMineralogy)

Group: www.facebook.com/friendsofmineralogy



INSTAGRAM:

[@friendsofmineralogy](https://www.instagram.com/friendsofmineralogy)



(President's Message, continued from page 1)

In addition, we were able to discuss the start-up of a Southeast Chapter of FMN, which will get organized and established and start running later this year. The chief organizer (Chris), who operates the Hogg Mine, has a track record for building a club up from scratch in the past from a few members to over 600 and he has a massive following.

So, what does all this mean? It proves the field team of FMN/HDRI can organize and execute a successful field mission simultaneously with an outreach effort with our outreach partner FMN.

Samples we collected at Hogg, including rose quartz, beryl and other minerals, whole rock and saprolite samples are now in David's custody for various testing. The samples were entered into the new sample management module Ryan Klockner created for us in Geology365. I had flown the site with my mapping drone and some survey ground control previously on my way to NASA MSFC and expect to process the base map before the fall. All of our sample locations were well documented and photographed. Stay tuned for results and abstracts forthcoming.

A similar event is planned for later this year at Treasure Mountain after the main core drilling work is completed. I have been invited by the Board of Directors of the NYS Council of Professional Geologists to prepare a 1-Day Field Conference, probably the first Saturday in October, during which I hope FMN can work with Bob to sponsor a machine dig at Treasure Mountain/ Herkimer Mountain. I anticipate David and I, and perhaps a couple others will run both events. This is also a huge deal and honor, and it is in keeping with FMN's mission to provide continuing education for professional geologists as well as others.

As re-elected President of FM National and the new Symposium Chair, there are a number of initiatives I have put in place and intend to expand upon including but not limited to:

- With Symposium co-chair Sean Stimac, run the annual symposium as a hybrid meeting and advertise heavily amongst our chapters, national members and affiliates well in advance of the event to generate the highest attendance possible and expand membership and awareness of FM and its chapters. This past February Sean & I ran the symposium hybrid and the in person and online attendance combined was more than double the normal in-person only attendance. As a result, we have picked up additional new FM members and a new at-large director. I signed 8 PG certificates for zoom and in-person attendees. The hybrid symposium model has been success-

fully implemented by the PA Chapter, of which I am President, since 2020. Next Year's symposium will be Saturday, February 13, 2027. Please mark your calendars and know that you will be able to register online and attend remotely or in person.

- Engage more actively with our affiliates, particularly MSA, which is now conducting an annual Conference immediately after the TGMS show concludes. David presented at the Poster session this year on our Herkimer Diamond Research Institute (HDRI) proposed research activities and he and I both anticipate submitting abstracts and participating next year. I am now in contact with MSA's administrator, President Dr. Robert Bodner and VP Dr. John Racovan and hope to have a closer coordination with MSA including cross-organizational information and event advertising through website and social media announcements. Part of our engagement during the TGMS show will be to have a booth for FM National and its chapters at the TGMS show and hopefully secure a spot next to MSA.

- Expand our social media presence and general awareness of FM National, its mission and events and those of our chapters across a much broader landscape of mineral enthusiasts. Our social media campaigns will help promote our symposia to Professional Geologists for continuing education, leverage the resources of our affiliates to improve attendance and awareness in the more academic communities with researchers and students alike, and organized lay collecting clubs. We are always looking for more collaboration on the social media front from our chapters and our primary affiliates MSA and YMC.

- Continue to enhance and maintain the website. So much of the website content was out of date with some information having not been updated since 2016. We continue to provide updates and amendments to make the experience more useful with current content. The bylaws, directors, operating regulations and other content has been updated this year, and new content is being added. Our new webmaster Sean Stimac, our outgoing webmaster Bill Besse and I have made a lot of updates to bring the information current and keep it that way.

- Plan and execute one more field trip this year and two per year going forward with the first one completed May 22-24 at the Hogg Mine having been a great success as noted above. Stay

(President's Message, continued from page 3)

tuned for future field trips announcements for later this year. We expect to have another trip for 2 days at Treasure Mountain in Little Falls New York. This locality is the initial research focal point for the HDRI team, and I have been asked by the New York State Counsel of Professional Geologists to prepare a 1-day field trip conference to the Herkimer Area for the first weekend in October. I suspect the event may be open to PGs and students, with collect-on-your-own at the mine of your choice the following day(s). Stay tuned.

- I have deep involvement as a director and the principal mapper in the Herkimer Diamond Research Institute (HDRI) team. Research will begin soon in the summer or 2026 with a field investigation coring program led by David Tibbitts of Rutgers University and will focus on the stratigraphy of the Little Falls Dolostone, host to the world famous Herkimer diamonds. I have laid out control points for coring reference and will complete mapping later this year once the coring program is concluded.

- FMPA will have its annual Symposium and field trip the weekend of November 14, & 15, with the symposium to be held hybrid at West Chester University (WCU) Saturday November 14 and the field trip the following day. Please mark your calendars. The event will have 6 speakers and will be worth 6 CEUs for PGs.

- FMPA will be hosting the Eastern Federation of Mineralogical and Lapidary Societies, Inc. EFMLS annual Convention Saturday April 24, 2027, after the next National Symposium. The EFMLS is a regional service organization, one and the largest of 7 regional feds that are Members of the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies, and it serves 86 clubs east of the Mississippi from northern Maine to West Palm Beach Florida with over 10,000 members in those 86 clubs. This event will be a special event with 4 speakers qualifying for 4 CEUs for PGs. Please mark your calendars. Expect the event symposium will focus on Herkimer diamonds and HDRI research. I have been asked and have agreed to serve as President of the EFMLS again for 1 year after a 2-year hiatus.

- Assist the nominating committee in identifying and securing nominees for at large director positions at next year's annual meeting, to find a director willing to serve as Treasurer next year and one to fill the vacant VP position immediately.

- Prepare field trip reports for inclusion in the newsletter and help solicit articles for the newsletter.

As the year progresses I expect our organization to be far more active than it has been the past decade or so. I want to personally thank Mark Jacobson for his service as Symposium Chair, and President and for his guidance along the way. I also wish to thank Jeanine Mielecke for her stellar service as secretary and appreciate her offer to guide the next. The wealth of knowledge these two former National Board members possess is irreplaceable and we hope they will each remain available for consultation in the future.

As a matter of administrative interest, I believe all chapters are current. I had previously issued a policy regarding dues payment and reminder notifications which will become a motion and when adopted will require a slight clarification in the bylaws and perhaps an operating regulations update. For the purpose of proper accounting at the annual meeting, including our internal and chapter membership head count/census, we need all clubs to pay their dues by January as noted and provide their report with membership count and any officer changes, and anything they want on the website promoting their chapter. In the past only a couple chapters pay on time making it impossible to assess our chapter membership, officers and their contact info, our overall financial position and the general health of our chapters. That confusion and the burden on our treasurer to chase after money all year long has to and will end. We thank you for your cooperation.

In other news, our affiliated, Minerals in Context, formerly FMVA Chapter, has been accepted into the Eastern Federation and expects to begin offering their "Rockhound 101" course as well as running exhibits at shows very soon according to MIC President and former at-large FMN director Tom Hale. Congratulate Tom on successfully completing his PhD at the University of Delaware.

Happy Hunting, Stay Tuned and hope to see you on a field trip or at least next year at Tucson! As always, feel free to contact me directly with any questions, concerns and/or event advertising you'd like to see us help you promote.

Sincerely,
Bill Stephens, PG, President

CHRISTOPHER PAINTER - CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHY



Christopher Painter is a lifelong mineral enthusiast, outdoorsman, and mining professional whose passion for the Earth's natural treasures began practically as soon as he could walk. With nearly three decades of executive management

experience and 17 years as the owner and operator of the renowned Hogg Mine in LaGrange, Georgia, Christopher has built a reputation as both a respected leader and a hands-on steward of one of the Southeast's most recognized mineral localities.

Blending technical expertise with artisan craftsmanship, Christopher is an accomplished faceter, lapidarist, and metalsmith specializing in gold, silver, and platinum fabrication. His work reflects a deep appreciation for both the scientific and artistic sides of the mineral world, combining traditional craftsmanship with a relentless pursuit of excellence and authenticity.

A graduate of the University of Tennessee with a Bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering, Christopher has spent his career applying engineering principles, operational leadership, and practical field experience to mining, mineral exploration, and business development. His unique ability to bridge technical knowledge with real-world mining operations has made him a respected voice within the gem and mineral community.

Beyond the mine and workshop, Christopher is an avid outdoorsman with a lifelong connection to the Appalachian Mountains, where much of his inspiration is drawn from the rugged landscapes, mineral wealth, and traditions of the region. His dedication to education, preservation, ethical collecting, and fostering enthusiasm for the hobby has helped introduce countless individuals and families to the world of gems, minerals, and lapidary arts.

Today, Christopher continues to advocate for the advancement of the gem and mineral community through leadership, mentorship, and a steadfast commitment to preserving the spirit of exploration and discovery that first sparked his passion decades ago.

FM ELECTS THREE AT-LARGE DIRECTORS AND NOMINATES A FOURTH FOR 2026–2029

William "Bill" W. Besse, Brittani McNamee, PhD, PG, and David M. Tibbits have been elected to serve the Friends of Mineralogy, Inc. as At-large Directors for a three-year term from 2026–2029. A total of 22 members have voted with Besse receiving 20 ayes, 1 nay; McNamee 21 ayes, 1 nay; and Tibbits 21 ayes, 1 nay. Hayley Nedbalski has withdrawn her candidacy. A new candidate, Chris Painter, has been nominated to take Nedbalski's place.

Congratulations to our incoming At-large Directors.

Duly recorded this 4th day of June 2026,

Jeanine N. Mielecki
Acting National Secretary
Friends of Mineralogy, Inc.

BULLETIN EDITOR

Dear Reader,

This is a light issue, focusing primarily on organizational business. The president's message covers a recap of the Hogg Mine field trip and lays out direction for the months ahead. You'll also find the results of our recent election.

One of the directors on the ballot did back out, so you'll also find the bio of the candidate now running in her stead. To vote in the election, please use this link: <https://tinyurl.com/2uuu9yj4>. This election is open to any and all members of Friends of Mineralogy.

As always, this bulletin is only as good as the content our members contribute. If you would like to submit content for consideration — a field trip report, a specimen writeup, a bit of collecting history, or anything else you think fellow members would enjoy — please email me your idea or your finished piece. I would love to look it over.

Thank you, as ever, for reading.

Sean Stimac, Newsletter Editor

FRIENDS OF MINERALOGY AFFILIATES

MINERAL NEWS

THE MINERAL COLLECTOR'S NEWSLETTER

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American Geosciences Institute

AGI is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to serving the geoscience community and addressing the needs of society. AGI headquarters are in Alexandria, Virginia.

<https://www.americangeosciences.org/>

MiC
MINERALS  CONTEXT

*Understanding the material
needs of our energy future...*

Minerals in Context (MiC) is a new grassroots 501(c)(3) civil-society organization dedicated to education and raising public awareness about minerals and their importance to society.



The Mineralogical Society of America
Resources and Coming Attractions
minsocam.org

The Mineralogical Society of America (MSA) was founded in 1919 to advance mineralogy, crystallography, geochemistry, and petrology, and to promote their uses in other sciences, industry, and the arts. MSA encourages fundamental research about natural materials; supports the teaching of mineralogical concepts and procedures; and raises the scientific literacy of society on issues involving mineralogy in the widest sense. MSA encourages the preservation of mineral collections, displays, mineral localities, type minerals, and scientific data. MSA publishes the journal *American Mineralogist*, *Elements* magazine, the book series *Reviews in Mineralogy & Geochemistry*, textbooks, and monographs.

Anyone with an interest in mineralogy/petrology is eligible to join MSA. Information about membership is on the MSA home page: minsocam.org



Young Mineral Collectors
youngmineralcollectors.org

The Young Mineral Collectors group is an online, global mineral collecting community, in which over 1700 members from 50+ countries have come together to celebrate mineralogy, share knowledge, and create a positive environment for the newest generations of collectors. We welcome all collectors under 40 years of age.

The Friends of Mineralogy National Newsletter is issued quarterly, near the change in the four seasons – March, June, September and December. The Midwest Chapter distributes the Friends of Mineralogy National newsletter via an email notice from Google Groups that the newsletter is available. It is up to each member to download their own copy. The Pennsylvania Chapter sends the National newsletter out as an internet link. The Virginia Chapter sends the National newsletter out both as an internet link and attachment to the email. The New Jersey Chapter forwards the actual National newsletter via email. The Colorado Chapter has the National organization deliver the newsletter directly to its members. The Mississippi Valley Chapter has National organization send the newsletter directly to its members. The Pacific Northwest Chapter forwards the actual National newsletter via email. The Southern California Chapter President receives the National newsletter and emails the pdf copy directly to the chapter members. National only members receive their National newsletter as an attachment to their email. All Chapter presidents, at-large board members, and affiliated societies also receive the National newsletter directly by email. The National newsletter is also available directly from the National Friends of Mineralogy Website at: <https://www.friendsofmineralogy.org/newsletters-2/>