

CEDAR VALLEY GEMS

CEDAR VALLEY ROCKS & MINERALS SOCIETY
CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA

CEDAR VALLEY GEMS

MARCH 2014

VOL. 40, ISSUE 3

MARCH 18 MEETING — 7:00 (NOTE NEW TIME & PLACE)

Cedar Valley Rocks & Minerals Society will meet on **Tuesday, Mar. 18**, at 7:00pm at **The Science Center, 5824 Council St NE**, Cedar Rapids, IA. (Just north of Blairs Ferry on the right side of the street. The building is set back from the street.) **Host:** ???

Board Meeting: The next meeting will be held **Tuesday, April 1** at 7:15 pm at the home of Marv and Sue Houg.

Program: Scholarship students from Cornell College will present the program.

SHOW—MARCH 15-16

The 2014 Show will be held March 15th-16th, 2014, at Hawkeye Downs, Cedar Rapids. Hours are 8:30am to 6:00pm on Saturday; 9:30am to 5:00pm on Sunday. This is our 50th show. The theme is "All That Glitters ...," The show also featuring a juvenile T-rex, compliments of Michael and Barbara Sincak. Set up will be Friday, the 14th, starting at 8:30. We hope you are planning to help!

EXPLORERS SEMINAR SERIES: MAR 27 - 7 PM - MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, U OF I WILLIAM WHITAKER: "THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF IOWA CITY"

<http://www.uiowa.edu/mnh/programs.html>

The area around Iowa City has a surprising number of significant archaeological sites, ranging in age from the Late Archaic to the 20th century. This slide show will give an overview sites which have been documented or explored during the past century, including the Late Archaic Edgewater Park site, numerous Woodland mounds, the Late Woodland Dee Norton site, Early Historic Indian sites near Napoleon Park, Early Historic sites on campus, and the historic Plum Grove site.

MAPS EXPO APRIL 4-6; PRESHOW APRIL 2-4

Sharpless Auctions Facility, I-80, Exit 249, Iowa City. www.midamericapaleontology.org. Paleotom234@comcast.net.
Apr 2-4 MAPS pre-show at Travel lodge, Iowa City. www.midamericapaleo.org.

PICK UP YOUR 2014 MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY AT THE SHOW!

Our Deepest Sympathy to Doris Juhl on the death of her husband Marvin in December. Marvin demonstrated cabbing for many years at our show.

Speedy recovery to Bill Mitchell, who had open-heart surgery in February, and to Michael Sincak, who had surgery in February.



Dues were due in December: Check your mailing label to see when your dues expire. (If you joined in the last half of 2013, your dues should not expire before Dec. 2014). Dues are \$15 per family. Please pay at a meeting or send dues to Dale Stout. His address is on the back. If your dues are not paid by

April 1, your membership will lapse.

**CLUB MEETINGS TO MOVE
TO THE
NEW SCIENCE CENTER
ON BLAIRS FERRY ROAD
IN MARCH**

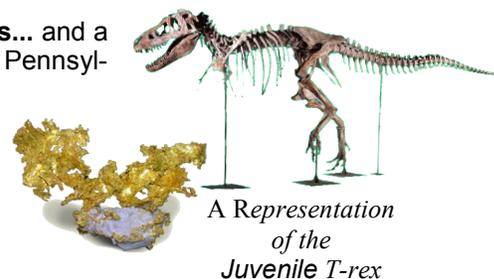
OUR 50TH SHOW IS MARCH 15-16

The countdown is on for our show featuring **Our 50th Show: All That Glitters...** and a special exhibit of a **juvenile T-rex** (courtesy of Michael & Barbara Sincak, Pennsylvania) the weekend of March 15 and 16, with set-up on the 14th.

Door Prizes & Silent Auction: We give out many door prizes each day, and the silent auction runs throughout the show, so we need **LOTS** of rock-related items for both. If you have something to donate, but don't know which is the best place for it, bring it in, and the chairs of the those committees will decide.

Pebble Pit: The Pebble Pit for the children is always a very popular place. If you can go through your collection and do some high-grading, please set aside those specimens which don't quite measure up to your standards. We need **LOTS and LOTS** of material for the Pebble Pit.

Cases: Again this year, we are offering a "community case" - if you don't have enough items to fill a display case, bring a specimen or two (mineral, fossil, jewelry, etc.) with a label and your name and we will put it with others to make a full case.



*A Representation
of the
Juvenile T-rex*

SET-UP DAY FRIDAY—THINGS TO DO AT SET-UP Starts at 8:30 a.m. March 14

- Set chairs in the booths
- Put ribbons on Name Tags
- Clean glass inside and outside display cases with Windex
- Spray inside of display cases with Fabreze, if smelly
- Straighten out cloth for case liners
- Cover tables when set-up has been checked and electric cords laid out appropriately
- Use Wide Paper for skirt & Narrow for top OR the opposite – somebody try it and see which is best - Leave 2" toe-hole at bottom of skirt
- Help carry material to pebble pit & silent auction areas
- Help set up Bone dig area
- Help Dealers move in

POTLUCK FRIDAY NIGHT AT 6:30

Friday night we invite our dealers to be our guests at a pot luck at 6:30. Because we will have extra people eating, plan to bring a large dish or two to share. Drinks will be provided. Our members and dealers always rave about our great pot lucks, so we have a reputation to uphold every year.

CATERED DINNER SATURDAY NIGHT AT 6:15, FOLLOWED BY A PROGRAM

HyVee will cater a dinner right after the show closes Saturday. The menu will include beef and chicken, party potatoes, green bean casserole, seven-layer salad; dessert and drinks furnished by the club. Cost is \$11.00. **Please let Marv know if you are planning to attend the dinner (364-2868). Reservations are required.** Following dinner, **Ryan Clark**, from the Iowa Geological and Water Survey Bureau, will present a program on a potential source of billions of dollars of minerals found in NE Iowa. This should be interesting, so plan to attend.

WANTED: VOLUNTEERS TO BRING DESSERTS: To hold down the cost of the catered dinner, we are looking for a few members who can't help in other ways during the show or who just like to cook to bring desserts. We expect 80-100 for the dinner, so 6-8 people bringing a dessert should cover it. Please contact Dell James (cycladelics@netins.net; 319-446-7591) if you can help.

MSHA SAFETY TRAINING CLASS MARCH 13

LADD LIBRARY, 3750 WILLIAMS BLVD. SW, CEDAR RAPIDS (OLD TARGET STORE)



The club is paying expenses for John McArdle, Minneapolis, to come a day early for our March show and teach two MSHA-certified safety classes on March 13, the Thursday before our show. Reservations are required for the 2 classes—2:00 and 6:00. Each class lasts 2 hours and ends with a test required for certification. If you are renewing certification, remember to **bring certificate and book to class.**

A ROCK-COLLECTING SAFARI TO AUSTRALIA

BY LYNN THAYER



A trip to Australia on a rock-collecting safari is almost every rockhound's dream. November and December 2012, my wife and I had the opportunity to make it come true. We planned the trip a year in advance.

The first thing we did was go to Google and type in rock collecting and Australia trips. Only one place came up—GeologyAdventures.com run by Bob Jackson, a retired geologist located in Ravensdale, Washington. For \$2900 per person plus lodging he would pick us up in Melbourne and take us out to the bush, stopping at a half dozen rock-collecting sites in the Aussie states of Victoria and South Australia, totaling 13 days. Of course I had my doubts

because of all the horror stories and scams via the internet that you read about. But we did it, sent him the money and hoped and got excited and nervous.

Got our passports renewed and contacted a travel agent to book us flights to and from Melbourne. The more my wife and I talked, we decided since we were already in the sunburnt country to add on other trips around Australia. So we booked a total of 3 1/2 weeks in Aussy.

Two days before Thanksgiving we boarded a plane in Minneapolis and went to LA. Arriving in LAX at 11am, we had a 12 hour layover. By choice, so we could go see the Rancho de la Brea Tar Pits. This is a place I have wanted to see since I was in grade school in the 1960's. DO NOT go across LA the day before a holiday because every student and person under 25 was trying to get home. Traffic was terrible, and two different buses and an 8-block walk with all our luggage showed our age! Awesome museum and the tar pits with life-size replicas of the tar pit mammals in the tar were very impressive.

Back to the airport and left LAX at 11:30pm the day before Thanksgiving. Thirteen hours later we were landing in Melbourne and completely missed Thanksgiving Day. We flew over the international date line and just "flew" over Thanksgiving.

Arriving at our hotel we had time for an afternoon walk around the docklands of Melbourne. Went back to the hotel to recover from jetlag and awoke the next morning to go on an excursion to Phillip Island for the Penguin Parade to see a koala preserve. The koalas are cute, but the penguins are the best. A 3 hour drive back to the hotel and up the next morn to meet Bob Jackson, hopefully at the airport at 10:30.

10:30 and no guide, 10:40 and thru the crowd came Bob looking just like his picture on his website. Got into his rental van and went to the largest rock shop in Australia. Our show is not this big! If you are ever in Melbourne, you must go see CRYSTAL WORLD ROCK SHOP. It is well worth the time to drive there.

Back to the airport to pick up 4 more rockhounds, and the 7 of us took off for the bush. Stopped at Ballarat to tour a gold mining museum and buy our "mining" permits as required by Aussie law. Ballarat is where that 11.5 lb. gold brick was found last year. Back in the truck and several hours later, we stopped at a rural Aussie B & B. The hospitality, food and exotic plant life was excellent. Left in the morn for Mt. Shadwell.

Mt. Shadwell is an extinct volcano being mined for road gravel. But in the volcanic bombs, pockets of peridot can be found. This is the only known place in the world where iridescent peridots are found. The quarry owners gave us hard hats and green vests, pulled down a pile of loose lava rock and told us to have a bloody good time! Very different from quarries in the States! We broke the bombs to find pockets 2-3 inches across completely filled with peridot, but highly fractured. But the black bombs with the green centers are very impressive. I picked up way too many even knowing I was going to have to pay interna-

tional shipping to get them home, but I figured I would never be here again. Bob asked if anyone would like to see a fumaroles. Colin, a hound from British Columbia, and I jumped at the chance. Up an almost vertical slope to the top of the lava flow and there was a hole 10 inches across and pea-size spherical balls of philipsite, a rare mineral found at volcanic vents deposited around it. Back down and OMG!!! How did I get up her? One the way back down I found a two inch crystal of ilminite, a titanium dioxide mineral. Also large pieces of drusy ilminite coating scoria. Again I loaded them up.

By the way it was summer down ther. The people of OZ use the metric system and have right-hand-drive cars, drive on the left side of the road. So it was only about 32C degrees, which equates to about 90F.

Another several hour drive (yes, the van was air-conditioned), and the whole time the Grampians were in site. These are a block-faulted limestone range. We turned down a gravel road and WATCH OUT FOR THE KANGAROO!! And arrived at Moralla. We were here to look for smoky quartz. These are prized around the world. They are clear, very aesthetic and have occasional enhydros. But they are only found in a area 400 meters x 400 meters and 6 meters down! We met up with Doug Littleby, an 80-year-young retired rancher and hound who is a good friend of Bob's. They had already dug an 18 ft. hole, 8' by 8' with a winch system down to the phenocryst layer where the rhyolite nodules with the smokies inside are found. The flies were terrible—in your eyes, ears, and crawling up your nose! We were given facial fly nets like you see worn in jungle shows. And they worked.

We misread our travel instructions and were supposed to bring a bed roll for a 3 day stay here. Bob had a tent but no bed roll for us. Laura and I slept on the ground with our suitcases as pillows, and a light afghan and now here comes a rainstorm. Two inches that night and muggy the next day. Oh well, part of the experience! Waking up with kangaroos down the road and a blue-tongued lizard looking for its breakfast, red and blue gum trees all around, kookaburras callin, and cockatiels in flight is one morning we will always remember!

Taking turns winching overburden up and digging for two days, we had an ice cream bucket full of smokies. That night we went for a long walk in the bush. A spiny anteater—an echidna—was headfirst in an ant pile gutting supper. And more roos and wallabys.

Next morn we packed up and went to Naracoorte Fossil Caves to see fossil marsupial deposits. Coming out of the caves, we all wanted to stop at a wood carving shop. A few gumwood souvenirs and as we came out of the shop, there was a fossil olive sea-shell the size of a baseball still in matrix laying by the door. "Got that at the rock quarry 10 Ks down the road."

A quick side trip—this was not on our itinerary; it was unscheduled and impulsive—we were at the quarry. Bob had never been there, he did not even know about it. We were handed green vests and hard hats and told to have fun! Again about 33°C and humid. Marine fossils of Cretaceous age were found—2 sea urchins, a lot of nice smaller shells, but no huge shells like we saw. That morning the quarry workers had pulled down a wall of limestone and a small cave was discovered 0 complete with flow stone and stalactites. Too dangerous to climb up to see closely, but still great to see.

Got a motel at Mt. Gambier, a town situated on three extinct volcanoes filled with Caribbean blue water. We were 30K from Port O'Connell on the Southern Ocean and talked Bob into driving down there for the evening. A nice walk on the ocean at low tide in a small Aussy town on a 75°F December night; couldn't get much better than that! Back to the motel and had roo burger for supper and an Aussy beer.

Back to the motel and up the next morn to the Swan Lake selenite area. We have all seen the beautiful large green, brown, and white selenite crystals from Aussy. We walked on them for several hours. Acres were feet-thick with these crystals. The bushes that happened to get covered with the water before it evaporated were coated with inch long crystals—making them look like Christmas trees with flocking. An-

other walk to another pit and blue fish-tail selenites were found. Halite crystals on selenite were common in this area as was rusty iron from the old ruins of a gypsum processing plant. I found a large beetle whose feet had got stuck in the crystallizing selenite and then partly coated with halite! Is this considered a fossil! And again more roos; they were dead along side the road like we see dead deer.

Another small town and an Aussie motel, and away in the morn again. Next we went to Nyhill, Victoria, to see Doug Littleby's private collection. A lifetime collection of Aussie crystals, minerals, agates, and petrified wood. While at the Littlebys, we were shown some Cretaceous seal shells completely replaced by selenite. Some were the size of grapefruit! We were told the area is now closed; due to the heirs wanting to go green, they were all covered up. I guess I smiled right at Mrs. Littleby because she sold me a 3 inch turitella for \$30AUS. Not available any more. I thought a darn good deal. We were also allowed to purchase agates, thundereggs, and wood from their collection that they were downsizing.

Then up a small road to Netherby, Victoria, to look for huge gypsum crystals. Pulled into a ranch complex that could have been in Montana or North Dakota except for the roos in the distance and the plant life. These were the owners of the gypsum mine. The Whites had a BBQ for us that put a Christmas dinner to shame. They treated us like family. Their 3 children were so excited that Americans were there. I gave each of them an American \$1 bill—probably some of the best good will ever. Bet those dollars went to show and tell at school!

Drove out through rye fields to a pit several acres big by about 30 ft. deep. In the clay you saw selenite crystals all over. Shaped like large arrowheads 4x4x1 inches, they were easy to find, but as selenite cleaves in planes, they were difficult to extract. Butter knives and toothbrushes were the tools of choice. One wrong brush stroke and the crystal cleaves. Better luck next time. It was a cloudy day and cool, which was good, what with all the white clay it would have been brutal.

To another small town Aussie motel and the next morn away again. Stopped at a road cut and drove down an abandoned road to another road cut. 100°F and humid and we were digging marine fossils again. This time under an overhang on our stomachs. Nice pectins and olives were found in abundance. Brachiopods and pelecypods were found that when sliced are filled with barite and/or yellow calcite.

Now we have a 14-hour ride—on way to Andamooka to look for opal. Stopped in Port Augusta for the night and then on to Andamooka. Emus by the hundreds were to be seen in the fields. But driving to Andamooka is like crossing Texas. Nothing but kilometers and kilometers of nothing but more kilometers. We got to Andamooka about mid-afternoon. Arrived at the only B & B/motel in Andamooka. A town of 900 people, whose power comes from Cat generators and diesel brought in by truck, and solar power. We immediately went to the first public tailings and started noodling. Found a few small opals, nothing impressive, but we can say we found opals in Andamooka, Aussie!

Next morn the owner of the B & B showed us his private opal collection which is probably worth several millions of dollars. He let me hold a completely opalized pleisiosaur vertebra valued at \$40,000AUS. Two opals from his mine that were the size of quarters were valued at \$500,000AUS. A third one he gave to queen Elizabeth the II. He had painted ladies the size of basketballs. Two opal after glauberite - pineapple opals—each valued at \$100,000AUS. Opal replaced belemites, baculites, pelecypods, wood, bones, and breathtaking jewelry! Then he allowed us out into his private mine to look for our own opals. He pointed out the layers where opal could be and then left us there for the morning. Only found a few pieces, but still quite an experience. 100°F and about 20% humidity with no shade on the 8th of December, pretty nice. This miner told of a fossil bed south of Andamooka with fossil plant leaves. Unfortunately, the road was being worked on and closed, plus it was on aboriginal land. But he gave us each a nice specimen from his collection.

Next day back toward Melbourne. Stopped at Mildura at a touristy rock shop. Bought a packet of about

30 Aussy sapphires for \$6AUS—what a steal! Then Bob pointed out 6 medium-sized chunks of rock with selenite fossils in the for \$3 a piece; they now reside in nor Iowa. Next night at Ballarat again, then back to our hotel and the rest of the group left for the States. Shipped a lot of our finds home then. \$20 a kilo—2.2 lbs to a kilo. Cost us \$590 to ship this!

One day to recover, then we took the great ocean road along southern Australia. Viewed the London Bridge Natural Arch and the Twelve Apostles. Due to erosion there are now 7 apostles left. Next morn to Tasmania and the 1840 penal colony of Port Arthur. Took a walk the next day to the Royal Botanical Gardens with very exotic plant life. Next day in airports all day. Tazzy to Sidney to Alice Springs to Ayers Rock to Uluru.

Uluru and Kata Juta are aboriginal holy sites but really big rocks. Uluru is the largest monolith in the world and composed of 600-million-year-old conglomerate. 104°F and 22% humidity with a dust storm with rain drop in it. A guide said this was a rare event at Uluru. That night in the shadow of Uluru we had an Aussy BBQ to never forget: roo burgers and roast, steak, sausage, and Aussy beer, wine, cheese, fruits. We ate with Canadians, Brits, Aussies, Zealander, and Germans—what an experience. If you left hungry and sober was your own fault.

The next day Ayer's Rock to Sydney to Auckland, New Zealand. Somebody booked us into a 5 star hotel. Boy did we feel out of place. Next day a trip through the rain forest. The next day a trip to Waiheke Island off the north shore of the north island of New Zealand. Three hours of walking along the white tropical sand beach and we had to catch a bus back. Stopped at a black sand beach made of hematite so it was magnetic. Some big mining concern is trying to convince the Zealanders to let them mine this. Bet it doesn't happen!

Next morn up at 2am to make flight connections to Sydney, then LAX, then MPLS.

I got to know Bob Jackson pretty well and now consider him a fiend. We were added to his explorers club group. He and a group of his were allowed to mine pyromorphite at the Kellogg mine in Idaho, right before they shut the pumps off and let it flood. He takes groups to South Africa to look for minerals. Trips all over the northwestern states, possibly Madagascar and England. With his connections, he gets into mines closed to us as rockhounds, and even gets invited to new and old areas.

Bob gave a talk at Tucson on Feb 14, 2013, on a new claim for fluorite—la Fluorita Dulcita where ossenhaugen form of fluorite is found. We have been invited to dig there in the fall. He owns Rock Candy Mine in British Columbia where fluorite and barite are found together. He also owns the Spruce Mine in Washington State; large amethyst scepters with pyrite cubes are found there. This mine was featured on Cash or Treasures several years ago with Kirsten Gum of the Travel Channel. His is the one who jumped out of the helicopter on the side of the mountain!

The first of February, 2013, Bob got ahold of us and asked if we would like to meet him in Barcelona, Spain, to go to 4 different mines on the French/Spanish border for 10 days the first part of May. NO BRAINER! We are going to Navajun where the cubic pyrites are found, also Morales, Pistolos, and Berebes. I will write about that trip later.

Cedar Valley Rocks & Minerals Society

Presents its

2014

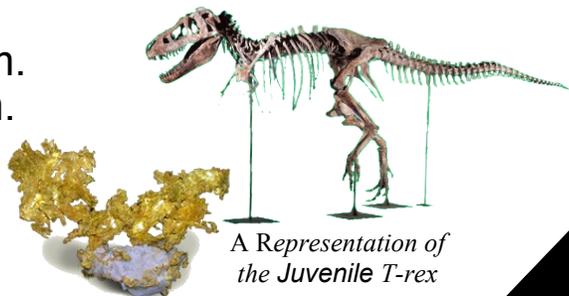
GEM, MINERAL & FOSSIL SHOW

Iowa's Largest & Among Midwest's Largest

Saturday March 15 - 8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Sunday, March 16 - 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Hawkeye Downs Expo Center
4400 6th Street SW
Cedar Rapids, Iowa



A Representation of the Juvenile T-rex

OUR 50TH SHOW: ALL THAT GLITTERS...

ALSO FEATURING A JUVENILE T-REX SKELETON

COURTESY OF MICHAEL & BARBARA SINCAK, TREASURES OF THE EARTH

PROGRAMS

Programs on Gold Topics

Call ahead or check our web site for Speakers & Times.

DEMONSTRATIONS

- Tumbling
- Glass Bead Making
- Cabbing, Beading
- Silversmithing
- Flint Knapping
- Geode Cracking

PEBBLE PIT FOR KIDS

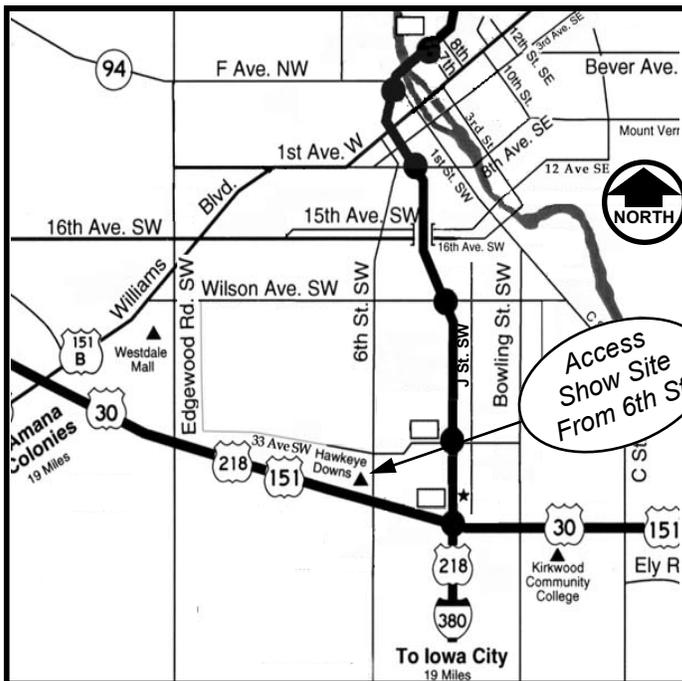
- 1¢, 5¢, 10¢, 25¢, & 50¢ Items
- \$1 Rock & Mineral Kits

SILENT AUCTION

Geodes, Minerals, Crystals, etc.

HOT FOOD

PROFITS GO TO SCHOLARSHIPS



Access Show Site From 6th St.

DISPLAYS

- Gold-Related Displays
- Juvenile T-rex
- Agates
- Minerals
- Amethyst
- Petrified Wood
- Polished Stones
- Artifacts
- Spheres
- Geodes

NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR ACCIDENTS

DONATIONS REQUESTED

- Adults.....\$2.00
- Students\$1.00 (12-18)
- Children Free (Under 12)
- Youth Groups Free (w/adult)

SLUICE FOR GEMS

MANY ITEMS FOR SALE, INCLUDING:

- | | | | | |
|-------|---------|----------|------------|------------------|
| Books | Fossils | Jewelry | Minerals | Book Ends |
| Opal | Agates | Carvings | Seashells | Petrified Wood |
| Slabs | Geodes | Crystals | Tumblers | Lapidary Equip. |
| Gems | Beads | Spheres | Meteorites | Jewelry Findings |

For Additional Information. Contact:

Marvin Houg (319-364-2868, m_houg@yahoo.com);

Sharon Sonnleitner (319-396-4016, sonnbn@aol.com); Tom Whitlatch (319-362-0684, whitlatcht@gmail.com)

For program, dealer, and show updates, check: www.cedarvalleyrockclub.org

CHILDREN MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN ADULT

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Cedar Valley Rocks and Minerals Society was organized for the purpose of studying the sciences of mineralogy, geology, and paleontology and the arts of lapidary and gemology. We are members of the Midwest (MWF) and American (AFMS) Federations. Membership is open to anyone who professes an interest in rocks and minerals.

Dues are \$15.00 per family per calendar year and can be sent to Dale Stout, 2237 Meadowbrook Dr. SE, Cedar Rapids, IA 52403.

Visit us at:
www.cedarvalleyrockclub.org

The club meetings are held the 3rd Tuesday of each month from September through November and from January through May at 7:00pm at the Science Center, 5824 Council St NE, Cedar Rapids, IA. The December meeting is a Christmas dinner held on the usual meeting night. June, July, and August meetings are potlucks held at 6:30pm at area parks on the 3rd Tuesday of each month.

SHOW Mar. 15-16
 Mar. 18 at 7:00
 March Meeting



Sharon Sonnleitner,
 4800 Sunset Dr. SW
 Cedar Rapids, IA 52404