

Tulip City Gem & Mineral Club Conglomerate

Monthly Newsletter of the TCG&MC
PO Box 2082, Holland, Michigan 49422

Website: www.Tulipcity.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/tulipcityclub

December, 2025

Volume 58, Edition 10

Happy Holidays!

The year is winding down quickly!

Our presentation for the meeting will be given by Mary Johnson and Pam Havermans, they will share with us some of the knowledge they gained from classes they took, with our first ever Member scholarships! I am super excited to hear, I enjoy learning about our hobby and all of the areas of lapidary arts! Following their presentation we will have some open mic time for other members to share what they may be working on, maybe a field trip they took. It will be a rocking night! Please bring holiday desserts or cookies to share, a white elephant gift to exchange (A rock or rock related item) if you'd like to do so, and be ready to have a great night in our festive holiday wear (if you'd like to!)

A huge thanks to all of the members who have supported the club on a committee, been board members, helped at the show or rock swaps, you guys are amazing! This next year we hope to be able to provide more opportunities, including getting out in the community to share our hobby with others.

As one year closes, the next year is there ready to shine brighter than the last. Please if anyone has any presentation ideas, would like to present or topics they want to hear presented, please let me know! I am working with a couple different groups to try to make 2026 Amazing! This next year is already shaping up to be an amazing trip around the sun!



Being that we will spend time with our White Elephant gift exchange we will not have a color of the month contest but we look forward to bringing that back in January.

-Justin



Events



For Our Club and Beyond!

2025 TCG&M Board

President - Jodi Miller

V.P. - Justin Moore

Secretary - Jordan Zych

Treasurer - Kurt Brinks

Field Trips - Jon Mull

Historian - Alexandria Vanderski

Junior Club - Steve Miller

Liaison - Chris Silich

Membership - Rhonda Gehringer

Newsletter Editor - Megan Moore

Webmaster - Aaron Nelson

Show Chair - Steve Miller

Social Coordinator - Michelle Lanting

Dir. at Large - Bill McDonald
Dir. at Large - Patsy Williamson

Past President - C.H. Falstad

Meetings are held at 7:00 pm at the Community Center in Zeeland.

12/19 (Wed.) General Membership Meeting

1/14 (Wed.) Board Meeting

1/28 (Wed.) General Membership Meeting

2/11 (Wed.) Board Meeting

Member News

CONGRATULATIONS

to all nominated Board Members for 2026! We cant wait to see the FUN you have in store for us!!

Welcome New Members:

Gina Wassinger and Family

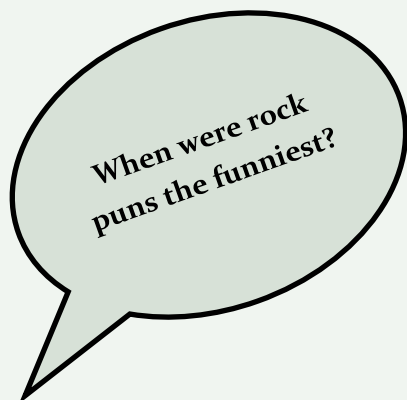
Membership Dues Reminder

If you haven't paid your Membership Dues* for 2026, please do so soon so you don't miss out on next year's conglomerate. You can sign up at this months meeting, contact Rhonda Geringer (through December), or contact Tanya McDonald (starting in January). Current dues are \$15 for an individual and \$20 for a family.

*If you signed up at our September 2025 show, you are already covered for 2026

Festivities in December

Lets have some fun in our last meeting of the year, please feel free to dress **FESTIVELY**, bring a snack to share, and a ~\$10 valued "white elephant" gift to exchange.



Field Trip Fun

I'm looking forward to another great field trip season in 2026.

Jan

First off in the year will be a basement field trip to the home of **Janette O'Shaughnessy**. Janette will be doing the newsletter for 2026 and happens to be a huge fan of **agates** from all over, and is quite skilled at polishing them as well. Save the date for **Saturday, Jan. 10 from 1 to 4**. She would love to show us her small workshop as well as her collection. She did want to make folks aware that she has dogs and although they will be stashed away while we visit, people with allergies will probably want to steer clear.

Janette's address is **4344 Whitetail Dr, Holland, MI 49423**. I will try to have a sign up sheet at the meeting in December so we can get an idea of how many people might attend. It's always nice to spread things out when we visit someone's home.

Spring Break 2026

I am still planning to head to **New Mexico**. I have quite a bit of interest already. Dates to plan on would be **April 1 to 10**. Anyone who has already reached out, I will be putting together some early info in January and should be emailing you back then. If you had not expressed an interest yet here is the link <https://forms.gle/qgDwGRz5srqdzjys6>

Apr

This will be an amazing trip for sure!!



- Celestite quarry in Rockwood, MI Saturday May 9th
- TBD- Memorial Day weekend
- New York and New Jersey for a week in August, probably the 1st - 9th. Save the date and a sign up link will follow in the future.
- TBD- Labor Day weekend

During the
Stone Age



Juniors Section

Have FUN being **FESTIVE**, enjoying snacks & the “White Elephant” gift exchange this month!

In January, Megan M and Ellie L will be your new Jr. Club Coordinators. We will work together to enrich your knowledge of Rocks, Gems and Minerals. We look forward to finding out what interests each of you have and what new things you would like to learn.

Challenge #1:

Bring a list of what Rocks/Gems/Minerals you like, to the December meeting, and give it to Megan M (she will be dressed very festively).



Tulip City GMC General Membership Lapidary Scholarship

Purpose: To provide scholarships for members to enhance their lapidary or stone related skills. Scholarships can be used for a lapidary class, instruction (on-line or in-person), or any stone/rock/gem related activity. (*Not for fieldtrips or travel)

Scholarships: Three members will be selected annually. One \$400, and two \$200 scholarships will be awarded.

Eligibility: Any member may apply for either the \$400 and/or a \$200 scholarship if they meet the following criteria.

1. Must have been a member of the TCGMC for at least two years before applying.
2. Must have worked at the September show for one of the last two years before applying.
3. Must present to the membership what was learned during the scholarship activity
4. Must pay for the activity and then be reimbursed the cost, up to the amount awarded.
5. May take multiple classes with a cost up to the amount of the awarded scholarship, but must present to the membership for each activity/class.
6. Must be used in time to present before March 2027 and is not transferable.
7. Recipients cannot receive scholarships two years in a row.
8. If a Junior Club Member is the recipient, a parent may receive part of the amount to cover their participation.

Process:

1. Applications (form completely filled out) will be accepted until March 30, 2026.
2. Applications will be reviewed by a three member committee for eligibility and then scholarships will be drawn randomly at the Scholarship Banquet in April. The \$400 scholarship will be selected first so that all others can be entered into the \$200 scholarships.



A Message from the President

This is my final message as your President. Having been a member of the club for almost 19 years, I have certainly made great friends and learned a great deal about rocks, gems, minerals, fossils and the lapidary arts. Our travels have taken us from New York to Oregon, Canada to Georgia, and we look forward to many more adventures in the years to come. I know that Steve and I already have three large trips and two smaller ones planned for 2026, and we spent a great deal of time this summer organizing the many buckets that we have collected over the years so we have room for new acquisitions.

I am so thrilled that Justin agreed to run for, and was elected as our next President. He has already presented us with several wonderful ideas for 2026 of ways to get people involved and excited about rocks. From field trips to workshops, we hope to be able to share our love of the hobby with everyone who steps into our meetings. I am especially excited to be the 2026 Show Chair, and grateful to have so many returning to be on the committee. Any suggestions or ideas are always welcome. Now that we have been at the new facility for a year, we can be much more prepared to consider space and time availability. It will be a little later this year, since we are always the second weekend AFTER Labor Day, so that makes it September 18, 19 and 20. Maybe being a little later will also mean cooler temperatures!!

So, I thank you for the opportunity of being your President. I took your trust in me very seriously, but hope I added a little fun to the meetings and the events. It is the fifth position I've held on our board, and clearly I believed I have some important skills that are needed to put together something as large as our Show! I am looking forward to working with the members of the 2026 Board, and believe we have the talent needed to do great things! Merry Christmas and here's to a wonderful New Year.

-Jodi

I think this is the perfect time of year to reflect on everything in life to be thankful for and appreciative of, so I was super happy to have two of Bob's field trip memories to share with all of you. Please enjoy Bob's memories and reflections of a trip that happened almost 50 years ago now. I find his reflections to be priceless and I hope it is encouraging for others to consider documenting theirs too.

Arkansas Field Trip Reflections– 1976

The majority of our club trips to Arkansas have been taken in April, during school break so families have the opportunity to participate. This is an ideal time in other respects; its before the southern humidity sets in, before the buzz flies, poisonous plants and other undesirables are out. Best of all, the dogwood, redwood and wisteria are generally in bloom by this time.

In 1976, our club took what I believe to be the first field trip to Arkansas, primarily to collect quartz crystals (hereafter shortened to xls). We rented a motorhome and Gord & Jeanette Boone, Chet & Bette Smith, Frank & Vivian Bolhuis, Norm & Helen Gibson, and myself, the “young Turk” in the club then, drove to collect in the mines in the greater Hot Springs area. We met Clark Runyon in North Little Rock who drove us to his claim in Magnet Cove, an old dormant volcano, where we spent the better part of a day working the vein-quartz seams for coontail and black quartz xls.

In an early 1976 “Lapidary Journal” article, I read about the several abandoned zinc and silver mines in north central Arkansas, around the hill country of Rush. It mentioned exciting names like Morning Star, Red Cloud, and the Philadelphia. The Monte Cristo was described in the most detail, its minerals included “turkey fat” smithsonite, calcite, dolomite, hemimorphite, quartz, sphalerite, azurite and others. This article quickly inspired me to put together a nine-day June trip with four other club members, Joe Moran, Al Nutile, John Kingshot, each retired, pulling a small U=Haul trailer behind my GMC “Jimmy”.

Somewhere in Missouri we hiked up a dry creek bed that Joe was familiar with and found a huge geode-too large for any of us to carry out intact, so we broke it up. My portion, with its nice quartz xls decorates our rock garden today.

It was hard to believe upon reaching Rush that this little deserted community of mostly abandoned homes, on the Ozark Mountains, just south of the Missouri border, was once the second largest city in Arkansas when the mines were operating. In town, we obtained more detailed directions to the Monte Cristo Mine from the locals, and followed a winding, hilly road until it became a two-track and virtually disappeared in undergrowth at which point we proceeded on foot. Along the way, we encountered the largest painted turtle I had ever seen and one of the fellows yelled out that he had come across a copperhead snake.

Cont. from Page 5..

After considerable searching and probing along the trail, alongside the Buffalo River, we finally discovered the overgrown opening to a tunnel thought to be the Monte Cristo Mine. Carrying only a couple of basic tools and flashlights, we followed an old ore-car rail, perhaps a third of a mile, avoiding pools of water, to where it widened out and ended in a cave. This was an extremely hot day and the coolness in the tunnel was most welcome. It was obvious others had been there before and had pretty well stripped the walls of xls but we did find a few small clusters. Casting light on one wall, we discovered a high ledge. Locating an old wooden ladder, I climbed up and discovered a very narrow opening into a chamber some four feet high by six feet wide. A sight I will never forget! The interior walls and ceiling were entirely covered with glittering xls of untouched dolomite, quartz, and chalcopyrite. The opening was too narrow and even with my shirt off, I was unable to maneuver more than my head, one shoulder and an arm through (and I was a lot thinner then)! Additionally the rock either side of the opening was too thick to enlarge with a chisel and hammer. In the intervening years these mines have been closed to entry, but I hope someone was able to break through into that chamber...explosives perhaps?

From Rush, we drove the scenic Hwy. 7 to Hot Springs, then West to a motel from which we could operate for the next several days. Here, I had an unusual experience. Noting the car next to where I had parked had Oklahoma plates, with a Norman locale, I asked the woman getting out if she had ever heard the name Charlie Wiesner. While in U of M Grad school, Charlie from Norman had been my roommate in the dentistry program. Well, it turned out that Dr. Wiesner was her dentist and she had an appointment with him in the following week! Talk about a coincidence.

We continued down to the Ouachita Mountain region of Arkansas, one of the primary quartz xl producing areas of the world. Most of the quartz veins and crystal deposits occur here in a belt, 30 to 40 miles wide, that stretches across Western Arkansas into Eastern Oklahoma. There are two major areas of quartz xls mining: the Hot Springs/Jessieville area in Garland County (known for large, milky crystals), and the Mt. Ida area in Montgomery County (where crystals tend to be smaller but with clear points and generally more desirable). If collecting in the Montgomery County area, in hot weather, and you feel the need for a cold beer, be warned, it's a dry county! One of the several fee-based mines at which we collected was that owned by Ocus Stanley. The Stanley Crystal Yard and his home was in Mt. Ida and the mine on a long ridge on Fisher Mountain. He had the oldest, continuously active mining claim in the region at that time. His yard had tables and tables of quartz xls of all quantities as well as wavellite, an attractive green hydrous aluminum phosphate occurring as densely packed fibers radiating from a common center.

Cont. from page 6..

Ocus' premier specimens for sale were displayed in a locked outbuilding– an amazing sight when we were allowed in and the lights turned on! On the previous club trip, Ocus had a couple of tables laden with solution quartz from the Jeffrey Quarry near North Little Rock. These unusual xls get many collectors excited. Formed in pockets of rectorite, with many single crystals growing and interlocking together with some being doubly terminated, they are highly lustrous and clear. Fifteen years after being discovered, the quarry ceased operation and the pit is now filled with water.

The remainder of our time was spent collecting near Hot Springs at the Ron Coleman Mine as well as at Jim Coleman's Mine on Miller Mountain. One did not get to dig the quartz veins but material was brought out of the mine and dumped in a collecting area. Coleman's had a shop where there was a wide selection for sale. I remember slipping into the back-room operation where vats, dedicated to cleaning and rinsing, took place and the gleaming xls laid out to dry. I picked out a particular beauty and took it to the counter for a price; it now sits on our Arkansas display shelf. Finally, it was time for the 825 mile drive home.

What makes these club trips so special are the opportunities to get to know one another in a more personal way; the times collecting together, evenings around the campfire, and the camaraderie with fellow rockhounds. Fifty-one years later, I have great memories of such experiences with long gone friends, other than Bob Zigler, who lives in Ft. Wayne.

-Bob Sherwood

Editors note: I hope you have enjoyed Bobs reflections the past two months and that they have spurred you to reflect on your own trips and what & who made them so special for you. I'd like to HIGHLY encourage you to submit your reflections to Janette (newsletter-editor@tulipcity.org) in the coming year so your stories can be shared too. Not super good at writing, but still want to share a story, let Justin (vice-president@tulipcity.org) know and he will work with you to arrange some "stage time". Each person will have their own perspective, so please don't feel shy about sharing even if you think another from the same trip might too. One may never know, understand or appreciate your reflection, interests, experiences if they aren't shared. Our club was founded to do these exact things: learn, teach, share, care, and have fun. I want to personally thank Bob for his support and encouragement this year in trying to put together a decent newsletter; Thank you Bob and thank you even more for your shared experiences.

-Megan

Tulip City Gem and Mineral Club
Howard Miller Community Center – Zeeland
November 5, 2025, 7:00 pm; Board Minutes

The general purpose of our educational non-profit 501c(3) club is to develop interest in and increase knowledge of minerals, rocks, gems, fossils and the lapidary arts. The objectives of this club shall be promoted whenever possible through family participation.

7:00 PM – Call to Order – declare quorum

Approval of Agenda

Approved

Approval of Minutes of the August 13 , and October 15, 2025 Board Meeting

Approved

Approval of Minutes of the August 27, and October 29, 2025 General Meeting

Approved

Approval of Financial Report

Approved

Board Reports

President – Jodi Miller

Put lapidary scholarship for 2026 in the newsletter (someone should be in charge of it to make sure it happens every year)

Its nice to have scholarship awarded at the banquet, make banquet in april the year mark instead of actual calendar year

Motion to roll out scholarship application in Jan then accept applications in Feb and March. Course and presentation are completed as outlined in the scholarship application.

Pass

Vice President – Justin Moore

Fluorescent minerals talk at next meeting

Treasurer – Kurt Brinks

Immediate Past President – C.H. Falstead

Secretary – Jordan Zych

Conglomerate Editor – Megan Moore

Field Trip Coordinator – Jon Mull

Nothing planned for the rest of the year but ideas for basement field trips

Maybe talk with lapidary place in grand haven to see if they would do a talk

Geode cracker talk: would club potentially help fund replacement of broken chain since he often uses it for club events/shows.

Motion to spend up to \$400 to fix geode cracker (owned by John Mull)

Passed

Historian – Alex Vanderski

All agendas and expense reports are stored

Junior Club Coordinator – Steve Miller

Rick Smith doing final presentation of the year of gem trees

Get the kids there at 6:30

Liaison – Christine Silich

Sign up for Midwest Federation Newsletter

Membership Coordinator – Rhonda Gehringer
Show Chairperson – Steve Miller
Webmaster – Aaron Nelson
Social Coordinator – Michelle Lanting
Directors at Large – Patsy Williamson and Bill McDonald

Recurring Business

1. **Nomination Committee**
2. **Bylaws Committee Review and Recommendation**
Please give feedback to the committee
Committee will eventually require consult from a lawyer on ensuring constitution keeps us in line with requirements of nonprofit status

New Business

1. **Geode Cracker Equipment Replacement**
Handled under field trip coordinator

Correspondence

1. **Lori Lumis for Rock and Mineral Shows .com sent a letter**

Items from Visiting Members

Adjourn Meeting – by 7:59 PM

PLEASE NOTIFY Jodi Miller (jmillerlady@gmail.com or cell 616-250-5869) if you are unable to attend the board meetings so we know if we have a quorum.

Next General Meeting: November 19, 2025

Next Board Meeting: December 3, 2025





Our club is a non-profit 501c3 organization. It is a member of the Midwest Federation and the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies. The general purpose of this club is to develop interest in and increase knowledge of minerals, rocks, gems, fossils, and the lapidary arts. The objectives of this club shall be promoted whenever possible, through family participation.

Meetings are held monthly on the last Wednesday of the month at the Howard Miller Community Center 14 S. Church Street, Zeeland, MI at 7pm, unless otherwise noted in the *TULIP CITY CONGLOMERATE*.

Our Junior Club welcomes and encourages young rockhounds and meets separately during the meeting.

To become a member, complete the form at www.tulipcity.org

Advertising rates for club members are: \$5 for business card size, \$10 for ¼ page, \$15 for ½ page, \$30 for full page. non-member rates are double. Make check payable To: TCG&M with ad copy to Editor.

Tulip City Conglomerate
Megan Moore, Editor
Grand Rapids, MI 49505



Image: Chalcantite
Image credit: Wikipedia