

Tulip City Gem & Mineral Club Conglomerate

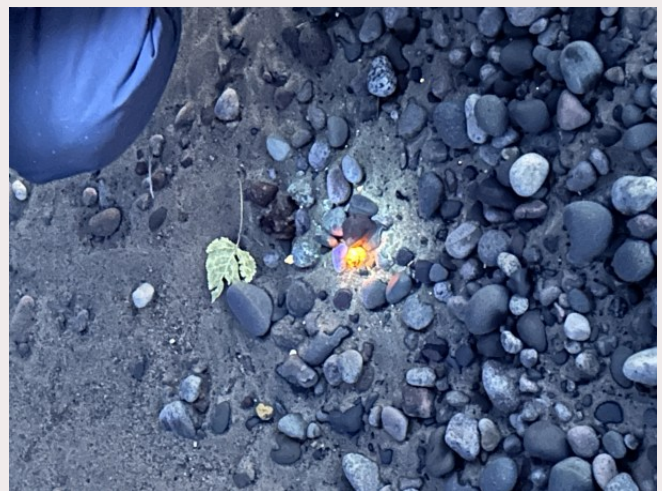
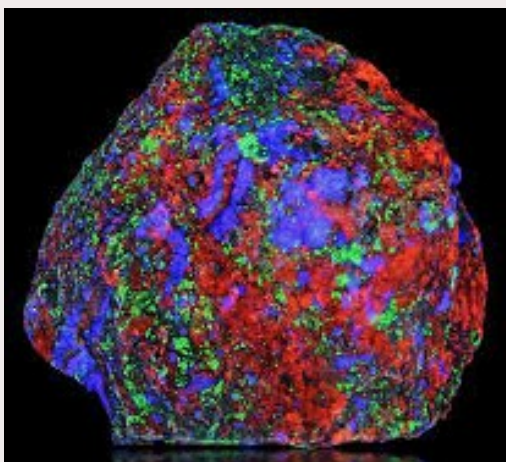
Monthly Newsletter of the TCG&MC
PO Box 2082, Holland, Michigan 49422

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

November, 2025

Volume 58, Edition 9

As fall changes to winter and we feel the crisp breeze as we step outside, we look to rearranging our indoor displays, polishing, and creating with our rocks, better yet, some will head south to continue the hunt when you can feel your fingers. We will be here counting down the days for that spring thaw, the first peak at what Mother nature has given us this year. I am not ready to say I've had my last 2025 hunt, but I am super excited to be trying some new crafts, being more creative than ever. This will be a great Month to be a Junior as Rick Smith showcases his talents while teaching the youth in our club, how to make gem trees. How EXCITING! As for the general meeting it is going to look like a party in the 80's with flashy neon colors from all of the Fluorescent minerals! This has been a topic I have wanted to present for quite some time. Well what a better time than now! The minerals are not new, however the hobby of fluorescent mineral collecting is newer. Technology has come so far in the past 7 years. UV flashlights are now affordable for most and minerals and fossils will fluoresce or even phosphoresce, so now everyone can get out and try. This will be fun and informative, we will even have some displays! As we look forward to next month we will have our Holiday meeting which will be a lot of fun! **Our rock of the month will be Fluorescent of course! Bring you favorite specimens bring your lights and lets have fun!** We will even get to see some of the differences a SW light makes with some minerals.





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.

11/19 (Wed.) Tulip City General Meeting

12/3 (Wed.) Tulip City Board Meeting

12/17 (Wed.) Tulip City General Meeting

Member News

WELCOME to our newest Members

Anne Rivers & Mark Werkema

Lennis & Danielle Baggech/Moran Family

John Bentancourt

Linda & peter Burrows/Stieler

Justin & Michaela Dore/Majava Family

Julie & Justin Dueweke Family

Bruce Echert & Family

Cecelia & Joseph Fenwick Family

Laura & Sam Gustafson

John Hoffnagle Family

Philip & Michelle Huizinga

Calvin & Lori Schutte

Edith & Scott Modzelewski

Lisa & Kahn Need

Lisa & Brian Staple Family

Mary Wilkinson Family

Andi & Josh Simmons Family

Bill Astle

Elizabeth Blue

Barb Yost

Priscilla Schultz

Doreen Reurink

Jennifer Elwood

Susan Salee

Tania Snyder

Matthew Kuehl

Mary Tenbrock

Sue Porter

Event details can be found on the Midwest Federation Site - www.mwfed.org/calendar

What do people
love most about
Geologists?

Juniors Section

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT




Please arrive at 6:30 on Wednesday, November 19, as we have a special program planned that will take us a little bit longer than normal

Raffle Corner

We, in the Raffle Corner are **especially thankful** this November for all of the generous donations which allow us to put together such wonderful and varied raffles for you!

This month's raffle includes the **last** and **LARGEST** piece of the **Ice Cream Opal** among the six items available!

You wont want to miss it!!



That they are so down-to-earth!

2025 Oct. 17 & 18 - Keokuk Geodes

Fall break for MSU started on Thursday Oct. 16 and Angie was home for the weekend. What a great opportunity to make a fall run for geodes! We had eyeglass appointments in the morning but were on the road by noon or so and safely in Keokuk at the Baymont just around dinner time on Thursday night. The Baymont used to be the old Holiday Inn and housed a small geode display in the lobby, back in the day. It fell on hard times for a bit and changed hands but is getting some much needed updates and is taking reservations again, but the geode display has been moved elsewhere. It is nice being so close to the bridge over the Mississippi though. The plan was set to meet our group at our first stop, the Tipton property along a section of Railroad Creek. Many sections of the creek have been known for geodes over the years and it is nice to have access to this one.

Our group assembled at 9am on Friday. A lovely pairing of new and familiar faces, at least new to one of my fieldtrips! Diehards, Rick and Deb Smith were on board, as well as Peter Riemersma. Scott and Vicki Brovont were excited to be on their first field trip for geodes and John and Dianne Graf were happily along for the adventure as well. Geode-fest had just concluded a couple weeks before and Tipton's got a little bit of excavation. I think we all did a little better because of it and I was surprised at how much ground they turned over and how much further the bank was cut in from the creek. We worked pretty steady until noon or so and made our way up to say hello and pay our bucket fees to Josh, the owner. A solid start to the morning!

Given the quality of the weather, we decided to check out the water levels in the Fox River. The Fox is in the Missouri portion of the geode collecting range and I have a couple of access points that seem to be reliable most years. I was hoping to find a previous bank that I had collected before and I repeatedly encouraged Angie to follow me around just one more bend, but alas, the river had simply changed more than I had expected. It had clearly flooded from bank to bank at one point and although the water was down, previous gravel bars and bank exposures had simply been scoured away. Peter did find a really beautiful baseball sized geode in one of the northern banks with salmon colored dogtooth calcite and a hint of pyrite hiding in the rind. Trudging the river in full waders tired us out quickly and we decided to head to town for some Mexican food. This is become a bit of a tradition on our trips as tacos and margaritas seem to go down so well after a day of collecting. Everyone went back to their hotels full and happy!

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Keokuk Geodes cont.

Saturday morning we made our way back to Missouri to try our luck in the hard digging at St. Francisville. Randy Alvis owns the property that is popular at Geodefest and he gets plenty of visitors outside of that as well. The shale in this location can be quite brutal when it is dry and baked. It feels more like breaking concrete. There were a few puddles around which I think provided some softer, although wetter options. I don't think anyone was looking forward to the back breaking work at St. Francisville but I was impressed that everyone rolled up their sleeves and gave it a try. I was pretty sure we all came away with something worthwhile and since there are large geodes to be found there, it is an exciting experience to dig them out.

Rick Smith managed to extract a geode about the size of a manhole cover that left it's lid cemented to the shale floor. It is a very impressive specimen. Quite a bit flatter than it is around but with a cavity that has grayish blue colored chalcedony as well as some beautiful pink calcite pagodas. Laying on the surface of the scattered debris was a geode half about the size of a rugby ball. It has beautiful gemmy quartz and will replace the unfortunate representation of a geode we had in our touch rocks. No one can figure out how it ended up there but everyone agreed it is not technically a geode. Since St. Francisville charges 50 cents a pound for anything that fits in a bucket, at just over 17 lbs, it came home with us for a whopping \$8.50!

Having tuckered ourselves out we decided to check out a local who sells buckets of geodes he and his son collect nearby. Mike and Ryan Shuman had enough for at least a few of us to snag a bucket. Since they are from a variety of exposures, they could have anything in them. That's how it goes with geodes!

Since I had my cracker with me we decided to spend the rest of the afternoon taking a peak at when we had collected. We set up at the city park in Hamilton and started popping some geodes. We had a few winners and took the required bug eye pictures of our treasures. Just when things were getting good, we loaded up the chain with a rather large geode from St. Francisville. Angie was catching for me and because of it's size I had to put a little extra weight into it. In an instant, with an unusually loud pop, Angie was on the ground holding an uncracked geode, and the chain from the cracker! It was a surprise to all of us, but considering how old the pipe cutter is, it was only a matter of time. It is fixable, but the cracker is out of commission for the time being.

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Keokuk Geodes cont.

The only thing left to do was go out for dinner one more time! We gathered at the Hawkeye for the evening and had plenty of time to share stories and laughter as we waited an impressive amount of time for our dinner. The food was satisfying, but the company was so much better. Thanks again for a wonderful time and I hope everyone enjoyed the trip as much as I did!

Peace! - Jon



Tulip City Club's First Geode Collecting Trip: St. Francisville, Missouri

While recent club programs and proposed field trips have centered around geodes and geode cracking by members, our early interest in geodes was spurred by a trip to St. Francisville, Missouri.

It was an April 1972 weekend, the first of many extended weekend trips for the club in the years to follow. Joe & Dottie Moan, Chet & Bette Smith and family, Frank & Vivian Bolhuis, Gord & Jeanette Boone, Norm & Helen Gibson, and I travelled to Keokuk separately on a Friday. We met our host, Steve Sinotte, Saturday morning in Keokuk. He then guided us to his mine: an outcropping and high wall of the lower Warsaw Formation on the east bank of a creek; a tributary of the Des Moines River, just west of St. Francisville. Steve had done extensive work with a bulldozer clearing the area of trees and making the outcropping more accessible.

I recall it being an especially hot day, especially for April. We were working on a west-facing wall with the sun boring down. It took serious rock hammer and chisel work to extract geodes from the Mississippian-age dolomitic formation; a rock unit approximately 250-300 million years old. By mid-afternoon, it became pretty brutal working in the direct sun. Taking a break, I cooled off in the shallow creek and noting a number of large, partially submerged geodes, smashed several on top of one another attempting to open them. When one finally split it turned out to be an enhydro and released ancient water, exposing a pink calcite rhomb on smoky quartz crystals! 13" in diameter and weighing 52 lbs., it is a favorite of mine along with another smaller one that has two, barrel calcites on a quartz interior. Yes, I do wish I had brought several others home to check out later.

Reminiscing a few years ago with Bob Zigler, he remembers working for a long time to chisel out an especially large geode from the base of the wall and then longer yet to manually chisel it open. He didn't want to take it home then find out it was solid quartz. When finally split, it turned out to be an enhydro and exposed a beautiful quartz crystal interior. This was before any of us had pipe cutters or were even aware of this kind of application.

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Geode Collecting Trip cont.

After a tiring but fulfilling day of work, we returned to Keokuk where most were staying at the Holiday Inn. Still in our dirty work clothes, we filed into the dining room where our orders were taken. Bob Z. remembers specifically that the orders were mixed up, but everyone was so hungry we just ate what was put in front of us. I remember being presented with an entire catfish, head and all, on a wood plank, caught from the nearby Mississippi River.

We met Steve again Sunday morning and he took us to other area geode sites. A memorable one was when suddenly a deputy sheriff showed up with the property owner, and while our leader was not issued a ticket, we were summarily told to leave. Steve had obviously not cleared it with the owner. That afternoon, we drove around Hamilton, the town just east, across the Mississippi River from Keokuk, to explore the neighborhoods. One home, perched on a hill had geodes lining the walkway and surrounding the house. I talked the owner into parting with a pair containing a botryoidal lining and one with whisker-like marcasite crystals on the surface. The following year, in 1973, I became aware of Steve's book, "The Fabulous Keokuk Geodes", published in 1969, in which he mentions that most hollow geodes from his site contain secondary periods of calcite growth, some pink. Others contain iridescent brown calcite linings, barite, filiform (hair-like) pyrite crystals, crystals of goethite, hematite, selenite and kaolinite. Barrel and rhombohedral calcite crystals are quite common. Subsequently, the club purchased a copy which was donated to Herrick Library, making it available to the public as well as club members. It provides useful information about the occurrence and the origin of Keokuk geodes as well as photographs and site information. Borrowed many times as evidenced by the date due stamps, it is a rare book, now years out of print. Just recently, Jon Mull mentioned he had the good fortune to obtain a used copy.

In more recent years, Shefflers Geode Mine in Alexandria, Missouri, has been a favorite, visited by the Tulip City Club where geodes are equally impressive. It is my belief that the best geodes noted for their quality of hollow, quartz-lining, and often with secondary mineral growths, are those found in the Iowa-Missouri-Illinois Warsaw Formation and are more interesting than those from Indiana.

-Bob Sherwood



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

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

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.

Keokuk, Iowa geode

<https://iowageologicalsurvey.uiowa.edu/iowa-geology/popular-interest/iowa-geodes>

Tulip City Conglomerate
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