



## Friends of Mineralogy, Colorado Chapter Newsletter – May 2013

**Next meeting September 5th, 2013 meeting at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science**

2001 Colorado Blvd., Denver, CO

Enter the museum via the staff/security entrance, to the left of the main entrance doors on the north side of the museum.

Security staff will direct you to the Meeting Room

*(Board meeting 6:30-7:30)*

***Due to the silent auction, we are not having a program this month. We will continue our meetings this fall. See you at the auction on Saturday May 18th.***

### **2013 FMCC Board of Directors:**

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### **From the editor;**

We have done well collecting specimens for the silent auction. Many wonderful minerals were donated. Opal seems to have been a favorite as we have at least three donations of this mineral, two from Ethiopia and one from Australia. The following article seems particularly interesting given what is being offered. Many other fine minerals should bring a crowd to the auction and make for a wonderful afternoon. I hope to see many of you there.

## MUSEUM MUSINGS:

### Colorado School of Mines (CSM) Geology Museum Musings

#### Colorado School of Mines (CSM) Geology Museum Musings

Greetings Museumophiles! Since my last communication, we: successfully held our combined Book Sale/Garage sale, held many receptions from across campus, received grants from the Golden Civic Foundation and the Greater Denver Area Gem and Mineral Council, displayed at the Tucson, Denver Guild, WIPS, and Fort Collins mineral shows; and have received many donations that included some entire mineral collections and countless books.

The Advisory Council has met monthly and has discussed publishing a book about our Museum, remodeling our Gift Shop, and other topics. On-going projects involve cataloguing new specimens, improving our database, and researching new advances in LED lighting.

I held weekly meetings with our Collections Managers and volunteers. These folks ran our Book/Garage Sale and have been busy keeping our Gift Shop well stocked. Our year-to-date sales are down 36% over the same period in 2012 and our donations box is down 10%. Our volunteer ranks have now risen to 58. Our facebook fans are up 66% over last year at this time. Check out our facebook page at: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Colorado-School-of-Mines-Geology-Museum/168875179736>.

I have met monthly with our twelve Student Aides, who have led a vast majority of our tours this spring, rented our teaching and fossil kits, helped with our Book/Garage Sale, and rung up all of our Gift Shop sales.

One of our Student Aides, Brianna Svoboda, compiled our attendance data from 2012, which were really impressive. For example, we had over 22,200 guests, which is up 8% over 2011. Guests came from 113 Colorado towns, 40 foreign countries, and six continents. Interestingly, over 85% of our guests were first-time visitors.

Our Friends of the CSM Geology Museum (FCSMGM) support group is going strong. We now have over 138 members! By-laws are being reviewed and several field trips are being planned for later this year. As always, FCSMGM members receive 20% discounts in our Gift Shop. Application forms can be found at: [http://issuu.com/csmgeologymuseum/docs/friends\\_app](http://issuu.com/csmgeologymuseum/docs/friends_app).

Recently, our semester has wound down. Three Student Aides will graduate, and three are ready to replace them this August. As for upcoming events, we will host a petrified wood workshop taught by Walter Wright in our conference room from 7/18-21. Registration costs are \$125. Please phone for details.

**We will hold another famous(?) Garage Sale on 7/27 from 9-4 P.M. in the Conference Room across the hall from our Museum entrance.** Prices will drop throughout the day on most items. Come check out the bargains.

Colorado **fluorite** is the mineral we will be featuring in one of our display cases later this year and we invite all fluorite collectors to submit digital photos of their own specimens, for consideration as loans to our Museum for the period 8/2013 to 10/2014. We realize that many of you may have qualifying candidates, so our Museum staff reserves the right to select the very best loans for this display. Our Annual Open House is scheduled for September 11, 2013 from 6 to 9 P.M.

Come visit our Museum during our normal hours: Monday – Saturday 9 A.M. to 4 P.M. or Sundays 1 P.M. – 4 P.M., except for certain legal and school holidays. Admission to our Museum is free (donations are greatly appreciated), but parking fees are required in our lots and on campus streets Mondays through Fridays before 5 P.M. From May 15<sup>th</sup> -August 15<sup>th</sup>, free parking is permitted in the neighborhood streets north and east of the Museum.

Bruce Geller  
303-273-3823

## Notes from the world of minerals:

# Ethiopia: Rough Gem Exports to Be Banned

*By Mahlet Mesfin, 13 January 2013*

The federal government will soon ban the export of rough opal, a precious gemstone; a move aimed at persuading exporters to add value and hence increase revenues, according to senior officials at the Ministry of Mines.

It will be the second extractive resource to be banned, after the Ministry stopped the export of unprocessed tantalum five months ago.

Although opals remain low in the nation's growing revenues from exports, the precious gemstone has gained momentum recently, after being included in the list of exportable items, in 2005. It has since increased, both in terms of production and revenues.

Opal is used to produce ornaments and jewellery (sic), largely blended with gold and diamond.

Ethiopia exported 10,104Kg of gemstones during the last two quarters of the current fiscal year; 600Kg larger than the Ministry's anticipated capacity. This has generated 4.6 million dollars in export revenues, which is equivalent to what gold has brought in, during the same five months, in 2012/13.

India, one of the largest exporters of gemstones in the world, is also the largest destination for opal, buying close to 80pc of Ethiopia's exports last year.

Close to 2,061 individuals, organised (sic) under 17 associations, are engaged in opal mining, in Wollo, Delanta, Amhara Regional State, where the precious stones are extracted. These artisans extract the stones and sell them on to the 200 exporters, recognised (sic) by the ministry.

Almost all export the precious stone in its rough form, without any value addition, according to Tekle Yilma, president of the Ethiopian Gemstone Association.

"The industry is pretty new and requires time to evolve," he told Fortune. "It is a recent phenomenon to see the sector is booming."

Of the total amount of opal exported, only 5.83Kg is done so after being polished, generating a mere 184,724 dollars, whilst the remaining rough stones generated 4.4 million dollars. Senior officials at the Ministry, last week informed exporters to prepare for value addition, through the procurement of opal polishing machines.

The ban has been prompted by the significant price gap between polished and non-polished opal, hence depriving the country of obtaining more benefit from its resources, according to an economist at the Ministry.

Only six of the 52 members of the Association have cutting and polishing machines, which cost between 800 dollars to 3,500 dollars.

"We support the idea," Tekle told Fortune. "Returns for polished opal are high for the country as well as for us. We're not only exporting the stones to India, but also creating employment opportunities that we need here so badly."

Close to 1.8 million people are employed in the opal gemstone industry in India, an Indian government website, [www.investinindia.com](http://www.investinindia.com), disclosed. Gemstone is also one of the leading foreign exchange earners for the country. India projects the generation of 35 billion dollars from processed opal export, in 2015.

Opal exporters in Ethiopia are required to repatriate 1,500 dollars, when exporting one kilogram of first grade rough opal, and 800 dollars and 450 dollars for second and third grade, respectively. The Ministry revises the repatriation amount every three months, considering international prices. However, when exporting a kilogram of polished opal, exporters are expected to repatriate 40,000 dollars.

Colours in clay and base, as well as the size of the stones, are among the considerations taken into account in determining the grade, according to Brehanu Kassa, an exporter of black opal. If the stone has a larger size with no cracking, and if it has a black base color with green, red and gray clay, it is a grade one opal, Brehanu said.

Although Ethiopian opal has gained recognition in the opal market next to Australia, which is the world's top producer, it has not received enough attention from the government so far, according to a geologist who lectures at the Geology Department of the Addis Abeba University.

"No one has conducted a comprehensive study to determine opal's potential," he told Fortune. "But devoid of petroleum discovery, thus far, opal might be the brightest hope for the country's economic development."

This is the volcanic rock located in Northern Wollo Zone, Amhara Regional State which most of the inhabitants mine the precious stone.

## Zimbabwe Proposes Mineral Deposit Auctions, Policy Shows

*By Godfrey Marawanyika - May 5, 2013 4:00 PM MT*

[Zimbabwe](#) is considering auctioning mineral deposits, restricting production of commodities deemed strategic and having the state sell the output from all mines, according to a draft policy document obtained by [Bloomberg News](#).

The proposals are made in a minerals policy prepared by the Ministry of Mines and Minerals, which is yet to be released publicly. The ministry will start discussing the policy with the [mining industry](#) tomorrow, Prince Mupazviriho, permanent secretary for mines, said by phone from the capital, Harare, on May 3, declining to comment on the contents of the draft.

The country needs "an open, transparent and competitive auction procedure for known mineral deposits," the ministry says in the policy. "The State of Zimbabwe reserves the right to market the people's mineral assets, but undertakes to recompense the miner at fair and transparent market prices for mineral exports."

Miners including [Impala Platinum Holdings Ltd \(IMP\)](#), and Rio Tinto Group are currently free to market their own minerals. The policy comes after companies including Impala and [Anglo American Platinum Ltd. \(AMS\)](#) agreed to comply with an existing law to cede 51 percent stakes in their local assets to black Zimbabweans or the government.

Zimbabwe has the world's second-largest platinum and chrome deposits after [South Africa](#) as well as deposits of coal, gold, diamonds and iron ore.

## Restricted Output

If implemented the marketing policy will be a reversal of an earlier liberalization of mineral sales, which formerly had been undertaken by the Minerals Marketing Corp. of Zimbabwe and, in the case of gold, a unit of the central bank. Under the proposal gold and platinum group metals will be sold by a dealer authorized by the Ministry of Finance and all other minerals will be sold by the MMCZ.

In addition to the changes to the marketing of minerals the ministry is proposing auctions of deposits as well as imposing new taxes, the policy shows.

A resource rent tax, defined as a tax on profits in excess of an average national return on investment, is proposed to replace the current additional profits tax. An export tax may also be imposed to encourage local processing of minerals, according to the policy.

“The current free mining colonial mineral regime is inappropriate for using national mineral assets to underpin wider development and industrialization,” the ministry said in the policy.

Mining licenses will be awarded for a maximum of 25 years and minerals including [iron ore](#), coal, copper and limestone may be deemed strategic, meaning that their output can be restricted and their prices of the minerals regulated, the ministry said.

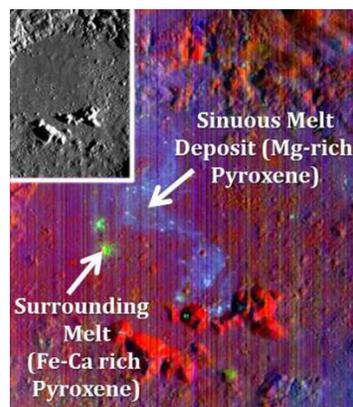
Another state company, the Zimbabwe Mining Development Corp., may be tasked with producing some minerals to supply industries and given a three-month period to assess new, state- financed geological data to decide whether to develop mines.

To contact the reporter on this story: Godfrey Marawanyika in Harare at [gmarawanyika@bloomberg.net](mailto:gmarawanyika@bloomberg.net)

## Pre-existing mineralogy may survive lunar impacts

April 2, 2013 | Contact: [Kevin Stacey](#) | 401-863-3766

Large impacts on the Moon can form wide craters and turn surface rock liquid. Geophysicists once assumed that liquid rock would be homogenous when it cooled. Now researchers have found evidence that pre-existing mineralogy can survive impact melt.



Pre-existing mineral deposits on the Moon (sinuous melt, above) have survived impacts powerful enough to melt rock. Not detectable in the crater image (inset), deposits are visible only in light at certain wavelengths.

*Credit: NASA and Deepak Dhingra PROVIDENCE, R.I. [Brown University]* — Despite the unimaginable energy produced during large impacts on the Moon, those impacts may not wipe the mineralogical slate clean, according to new research led by Brown University geoscientists.

The researchers have discovered a rock body with a distinct mineralogy snaking for 18 miles across the floor of Copernicus crater, a 60-mile-wide hole on the Moon's near side. The sinuous feature appears to bear the mineralogical signature of rocks that were present before the impact that made the crater.

The deposit is interesting because it is part of a sheet of impact melt, the cooled remains of rocks melted during an impact. Geologists had long assumed that melt deposits would retain little pre-impact mineralogical diversity.

Large impacts produce giant cauldrons of impact melt that eventually cool and reform into solid rock. The assumption was that the impact energy would stir that cauldron thoroughly during the liquid phase, mixing all the rock types together into an indistinguishable mass. Identifying any pre-impact mineral variation would be a bit like dumping four-course meal into a blender and then trying to pick out the potatoes.

But this distinct feature found at Copernicus suggests that pre-existing mineralogy isn't always blended away by the impact process.

"The takeaway here is that impact melt deposits aren't bland," said Deepak Dhingra, a Brown graduate student who led the research. "The implication is that we don't understand the impact cratering process quite as well as we thought."

The findings are published in online early view in the journal [\*Geophysical Research Letters\*](#).

Copernicus is one of the best-studied craters on the Moon, yet this deposit went unnoticed for decades. It was imaging in 83 wavelengths of light in the visible and near-infrared region by the Moon Mineralogy Mapper — M3 — that made the deposit stand out like a sore thumb.

M3 orbited the Moon for 10 months during 2008-09 aboard India's Chandrayaan-1 spacecraft and mapped nearly the whole lunar surface. Different minerals reflect light in different wavelengths at variable intensities. So by looking at the variation at those wavelengths, it's possible to identify minerals.

In the M3 imaging of Copernicus, the new feature appeared as an area that reflects less light at wavelengths around 900 and 2,000 nanometers, an indicator of minerals rich in magnesium pyroxenes. In the rest of the crater floor, there was a dominant dip beyond 950 nm and 2400 nm, indicating minerals rich in iron and calcium pyroxenes. "That means there are at least two different mineral compositions within the impact melt, something previously not known for impact melt on the Moon," Dhingra said.

It is not clear exactly how or why this feature formed the way it did, the researchers say. That's an area for future study. But the fact that impact melt isn't always homogenous changes the way geologists look at lunar impact craters.

"These features have preserved signatures of the original target material, providing 'pointers' that lead back to the source region inside the crater," said James W. Head III, the Scherck Distinguished Professor of Geological Sciences and one of the authors of the study. "Deepak's findings have provided new insight into the fundamentals of how the cratering process works."

These results will now permit a more rigorous reconstruction of the cratering process to be undertaken.”

Carle Pieters, a professor of geological sciences at Brown and the principal investigator of the M3 experiment, was one of the co-authors on the paper, with Peter Isaacson of the University of Hawaii.

Editors: Brown University has a fiber link television studio available for domestic and international live and taped interviews, and maintains an ISDN line for radio interviews. For more information, call (401) 863-2476.

## A Fight in Colorado Over Uranium Mines

By [DAN FROSCH](#)

Published: April 16, 2013

SLICK ROCK, Colo. — The Dolores River bends through southwestern Colorado like a gooseneck, shaded by red rock canyons that leave those who pass through here breathless.

[Enlarge This Image](#)



**Scott D.W. Smith for The New York Times**

The Burros uranium mine, with the Dolores River in the background. Wildlife groups fear that uranium and radon will seep into the water surrounding the shuttered mines.

Hidden from the riverbanks, behind cottonwoods and mule deer tracks, are different, artificial formations. Off a nearby road, an aging tower marks the property of the Burros Mine, partly owned by State Representative Don Coram. Heaps of rocks tinged with the greenish hue of uranium are visible. Abandoned mining equipment lies strewn about. A darkened portal is gated shut. Downstream, another mine, owned by the Cotter Corporation, lies similarly silent.

Despite bursts of activity from 2003 through 2008, most uranium mines scattered across Colorado have largely been out of production for decades, a testament to fluctuating mineral prices. Now the future of these mines is at the crux of a dispute that could set a precedent for how they are handled.

Environmental groups in Colorado contend that many of the state's 33 uranium mines should be forced to clean up, given that uranium mining, which flourished here during the cold war, has gone dormant. In legal filings, they have alleged that companies like Cotter are skirting potential costs associated with cleanup, which is required by the state after an operation shuts down.

The environmental groups say the companies should be prohibited from obtaining state-issued exemptions, under which the companies do not have to produce but are not obligated to restore the land, either. Letting the mines idle heightens the risk of contaminating treasured areas like the Dolores with radioactive substances like uranium and radon, the groups argue. At a hearing on Wednesday, Colorado's mining board will review the environmental groups' objections.

The dispute cuts especially deep in the West, where abandoned uranium mines pock the region and have cost the federal government millions to reclaim.

"State law says that you should be either mining the land or you should be reclaiming the land so it can be released for other uses," said Travis Stills, a lawyer with Energy & Conservation Law, a firm that represents [the Information Network for Responsible Mining](#), a Colorado watchdog group that goes by the acronym Inform. "But you can't just go out and occupy the land for decades while doing essentially nothing, except be an ongoing source of pollution."

Over the last two months, the minerals law group has filed objections with Colorado's mining board over seven uranium mines that recently filed for the exemptions, known as "temporary cessation" permits. The permits allow mines to stop production for five years without closing, and are intended to consider the nexus between mining activity and mineral prices. Operators can reapply, but production cannot be halted for more than a decade. A mine must eventually show activity or shut down and restore the land it used.

In their objections, the environmental groups note that the mines in question, in all but one case, exceeded the 10-year limit years ago, and have merely applied for additional permits.

The groups filed several more objections Tuesday over Mr. Coram's Gold Eagle Mining company, which has applied for the extensions on four mines.

"We feel these mines are doing everything they can not to reclaim," said Jennifer Thurston, Inform's executive director. "These are sites where there's a great potential for radioactive contamination. They shouldn't be just casual operations."

In response, Colorado's Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety, part of the Natural Resources Department, said that many of the mines are legally still eligible for temporary cessation. A lawyer for the division, Julie Murphy, wrote that state law restricts the permits to 10 consecutive years, not 10 years total.

Cotter's mines, for example, had reached their limit in the early 1990s. But Ms. Murphy noted the mines had since switched "to intermittent status," allowing them to stay open with minimal activity, remaining eligible for a third exemption.

Officials with Cotter or its parent company, General Atomics, did not immediately respond to requests for comment. But the company has defended its operations in legal filings.

“Inform seeks to permanently close the mines as if they have no value, are unregulated by the division and were abandoned long ago by their owner,” wrote Robert Tuchman, a lawyer for Cotter. “Nothing could be more remote from the truth. The mines are of great importance to Cotter.”

Nonetheless, Tony Waldron, minerals program supervisor for the division, said Colorado was “taking a hard look” at when a mining operator needed to shut down and begin reclamation — the cost of which can range from a few thousand dollars into the millions.

Mining has long been a source of glory and ghosts in Colorado’s Uravan mineral belt, especially during the cold war, before the industry crashed in the 1980s.

As the United States now seeks homegrown energy sources, the uranium industry has shown signs of a resurgence. Beginning in 2009, one company, Energy Fuels, began seeking a license for the first new uranium processing mill in more than three decades, in Colorado’s Paradox Valley.

Still, there has been no major uranium ore production in Colorado since 2009, according to state records.

The dispute in Colorado is complicated by a federal injunction that temporarily prohibits all mining activities on 25,000 acres of Department of Energy land here, including tracts leased by Cotter and Gold Eagle. A federal judge ordered the ban in 2011, after the Energy Department moved to extend its leasing program for uranium mining. Judge William Martinez found the government had failed to consider the environmental impacts.

The Energy Department recently drafted a new environmental [impact statement](#), and public hearings are scheduled for this month. Mr. Coram said he had already completed reclamation on one of the mines and planned on using the other mines when the timing was right.

But Mr. Stills said that granting Gold Eagle’s mines and others another five years to avoid reclamation would only increase the risk of contamination.

Both Colorado’s mining division and the state’s Public Health and Environment Department monitor water quality around mines, which are also subject to inspections. And mines must now present a detailed plan showing how they will stay environmentally compliant. In 2010, mining inspectors found that uranium from Cotter’s closed Schwartzwaldler mine contaminated a creek flowing into a local reservoir. The company has agreed to clean up the mine and the creek.

The United States Geological Survey is also poised to start researching the potential long-term impacts of uranium mining on wildlife, the environment and humans.

For now, the future of uranium mining here remains murky. Near a ridge named Last Chance, uranium mines bought by Energy Fuels in 2012 sit vacant, generators abandoned, wires clawing the air as if searching for signs of life. A company spokesman said it hopes to restart mining as soon as the price of uranium rises again.

But Ms. Thurston of Inform said that time has passed. “The uranium boom ended a long time ago, and it hasn’t come back all this time,” she said. “I don’t understand why we have to wait for the past to be cleaned up.”

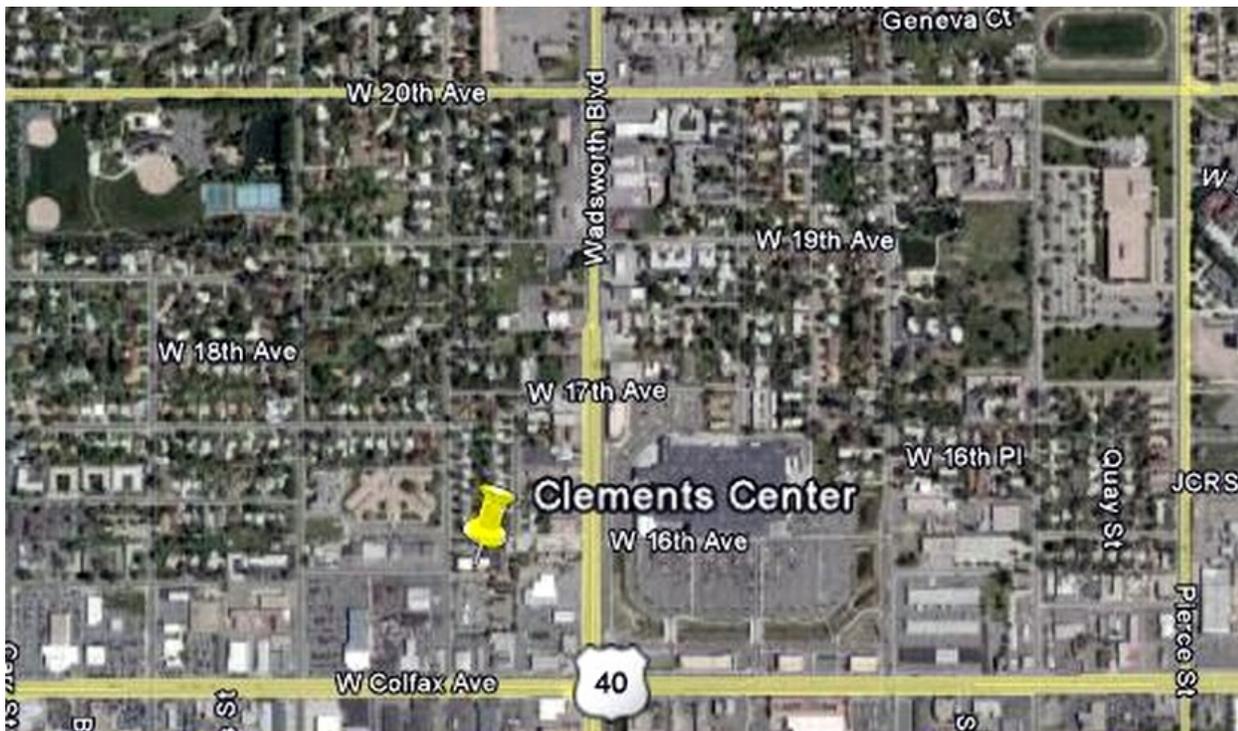
# FRIENDS OF MINERALOGY COLORADO CHAPTER SILENT AUCTION

May 18<sup>th</sup>

The 2013 Silent Auction will be held at the same place as last year, the Clements Center, 1580 Yarrow Street near the intersection of Colfax and Wadsworth. Many mineral specimens, books and other mineral related paraphernalia will be available to bid on. The silent portion of the auction will be tables set up with specimens with bid sheets. The tables will be closed in an organized manner and they will be removed to tally the bids. The verbal auction will be held during this time and the specimens will be shown around the room to anyone wishing to bid on some of the better offerings at the auction.

Set-up will be at 10:30 to 11:00; Dealer set up at 10:30; Auction begins at 12:00;  
Auction is over at 3:00 Check-out 3:00-4:00

Members are asked to bring finger foods and refreshments.



On the following page are bid slips for your convenience.

**Our sincere thanks to all the rock and mineral donors we met at the Denver Spring Show and thank you all for your contributions!**



## **MINERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

### **Sat. May 11,**

Dinosaur Discovery Day (DDD)-Boy Scout Day Scouts earn badges, pins, and beltloops. Public welcome. 10am-3pm. For more information contact Amber Cain at [amber\\_Cain@dinoridge.org](mailto:amber_Cain@dinoridge.org) or 303-697-3466 x 107

### **Sat., May 18,**

Silent Auction, 12:00-3:00 p.m., sponsored by the Friends of Mineralogy, Colorado Chapter; Clements Community Center, 1580 Yarrow St., Lakewood CO (just NW of Colfax & Wadsworth); all are invited to come.

### **Sat Sun May 18-19**

Cheyenne Mineral & Gem Society; Archer Complex - Bldg. M; south side of I-80 at Exit 370, 6 miles east of Cheyenne; Sat. 9-6, Sun. 10-4; adults \$3, children (12 and under) free with adult; exhibits, jewelry, fossils, petrified wood, grab bags, fluorescent minerals, dealers, beads, rock sphere making, faceting demonstration, New Zealand minerals, gold panning, silent auction; contact Bob King, (307) 632-2702

As my friend from that club points out, "Cheyenne is only 12 miles from Colorado!"

### **Friday, Saturday, and Sunday June 7-9. 9am – 5pm**

Pikes Peak Gem and Mineral Show and Rock Fair held at the Western Museum of Mining and Industry, Colorado Springs. See <http://www.csms.us/> or [www.wmmi.org](http://www.wmmi.org) for more info.

### **June 15, 2013, 9 am to 3 pm**

GEOdyssey's Annual Mineral & Fossil Home Sale, 15339 West Ellsworth Drive, Golden, CO 80401 ([303-279-5504](tel:303-279-5504)). "A wide variety of individual specimens and low-priced flats will be available. All specimens are a minimum of 10% off, with bigger discounts for volume purchases. We'll have many specimens priced at 50% off and at \$5 or less. Drinks and snacks provided. Directions: from west 6th Avenue, exit onto Indiana Street and go south on Indiana. Drive into Mesa View Estates. Turn right at the first street (McIntyre Circle) and right at the next street (Ellsworth Drive). We are about midway down the street on the left." (from Pat Tucci)

**Aug. 8-11,** "Contin-Tail" outdoor Rock Show, Rodeo Grounds, Buena Vista, CO; see [www.coloradorocks.org](http://www.coloradorocks.org)

### **Friday-Saturday-Sunday August 16-17-18, 2013 9am to 5pm**

Lake George (outdoor) Gem & Mineral Show, Lake George, Park County, CO; see <http://www.lggmclub.org/>

## **Meeting Dates for 2013**

The dates for our 2013 meetings will be Sept 5th, Nov 14th.

Membership in FMCC and National FM is \$13 for 2013.

Payment by check can be sent to our Treasurer or any Board member.

**Your newsletter editor encourages all FMCC members to send your email address so that you will receive the newsletter electronically. The email version of the newsletter is in color; the paper version will have none. Please send your email address to Editor Bill Hutchinson at [wmhutchi5@gmail.com](mailto:wmhutchi5@gmail.com). Also if you only want a paper newsletter but are presently receiving an email newsletter, please let your editor know.**

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