FOMS NEWSLETTER — 2026.01

Franklin-Ogdensburg Mineralogical Society

FRANKLIN, NJ

January 2026



ZINC MINES, FRANKLIN, N.J., C.1890-1901, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

President's Message

As we begin a new year, I would like to thank all of you who continue to support the Franklin–Ogdensburg Mineralogical Society. Our society exists because of the time, knowledge, and dedication that members willingly contribute, and that collective effort remains our greatest strength.

In the months ahead, our goal is to strengthen the foundations of the organization so that participation is easier, communication is clearer, and volunteer efforts are better supported. We are focusing on improved coordination through committees, more regular communication with members, and clearer timelines for publications, programs, and events. These steps are intended to reduce uncertainty, share responsibility more evenly, and allow the society to function more smoothly.

At the same time, we remain deeply committed to the traditions and mission that define FOMS.

Our history, publications, and field activities are central to who we are.
By making thoughtful adjustments and modernizing where appropriate, we can preserve these strengths while ensuring the society remains active and relevant for current and future members.

I encourage you to stay engaged, share your ideas, and consider participating in one of our committees. Together, we can make this a productive, positive, and enjoyable year for FOMS.
Enjoy this month's newsletter!

David Vonderheide

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N.J. ZINC CO. MILL, FRANKLIN FURNACE, N.J., WESTJERSEYHISTORY.COM

Society News

LEADERSHIP

The Franklin–Ogdensburg Mineralogical Society enters 2026 with a mix of new leadership and experienced members continuing in service. This combination of fresh perspectives and institutional knowledge positions the society well for the year ahead.

Congratulations to the 2026 Officers:

- David Vonderheide, President
- Vice President I
- Tommy Hennighan, Vice President II
- Tema Hecht, Corresponding Secretary
- Dave Kaminski, Recording Secretary
- Denise Kroth, Treasurer
- Mark Kucera, Assistant Treasurer

Congratulations to the 2026 Trustees:

- Dick Bostwick
- John Kushmerick
- George Elling
- Dr. Charles Merguerian
- Stephanie Koles

Thank you current Trustees:

- Dr. Earl Verbeek
- Carmelo Colón

MEMBERS

This newsletter is part of a renewed effort to keep members informed and connected throughout the year. You will see more updates, clearer dates, and regular communication. If something is happening, you should hear about it in a timely way.
Committees are open to participation, and interest matters more than titles. You do not need to be an expert to contribute meaningfully to FOMS. Ideas, photos, questions, and feedback are always welcome. This society works best when members know what is happening and why. We are glad you are here.

Community Updates

FALL AND WINTER NOTES

For members who were unable to attend local events, the Franklin Mineral Museum hosted an impressive sale in September featuring mining artifacts and mineral specimens from the James Van Fleet collection. The event included hundreds of flats of mineral specimens, along with dozens of additional items—many of them uncommon or rarely seen—drawing strong interest from collectors and researchers alike.

In October the Sterling Hill Mining Museum hosted Geological Association of New Jersey (GANJ) for a two-day conference focused on the history and geology of the zinc ore bodies at the Sterling Hill and Franklin mines in Sussex County, NJ.

The program featured expert speakers, technical presentations, field-based perspectives, and a guided tour that highlighted the continuing scientific importance of this unique mineral district.

The full conference guidebook and additional downloadable materials are available here:
https://ganj.org/ganj-guidebooks
Conference-related files and guidebook excerpts can be found here:
https://ganj.org/2025-auxiliary-data

UPDATES AT FRANKLIN MINERAL MUSEUM

You will find the Franklin Mineral Museum's new website has added an "nj" a the end of its weblink. That is now newly spelled
https://www.franklinmineralmuseumnj.org

The museum will open in the spring with fresh paint on its interior, new flooring, and a makeover.

BETWEEN A ROCK AND A SOFT PLACE

Franklin has some local subsidence on High Street, so prepare to drive around that as you travel the neighborhood. What would a mine be, without a hole in the ground?



USE MINERS SOAP AND KEEP CLEAN, C. 1900-1920, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Member Volunteering & Involvement

We invite members to take part in many of the projects currently underway, as well as those planned for the coming year. In many cases, interest and enthusiasm matter more than prior experience, and much of this work can be done remotely.

We welcome help from writers, editors, graphic designers, photographers, researchers, technologists, and web contributors—as well as from anyone who simply enjoys rocks, minerals, and the community that surrounds them.

Members are also encouraged to share for the newsletter and posterity: personal stories of collecting, memories of people and places, photographs, videos, letters, specimen labels, and other related materials. If you would like to contribute materials, stories, or ideas—or be interviewed—please contact us.

Committees! A Call to Action
New committees are forming, with new ways for members to get involved. Your time, ideas, and skills can help bring new life to the society.



CALENDAR FOR 1879, VIA SMITHSONIAN LIBRARIES



Events Calendar

January 28–February 15, Winter Gem, Mineral & Fossil Showcase, Tucson, AZ

Jan. 31 Rutgers Geology Museum's 58th Annual Open House, 43 College Avenue, New Brunswick, NJ. All events are free to the public.

February 12-16, Tucson Gem and Mineral Show®

FOMS dates for digs will be announced through email, internet, and this newsletter. *The Picking Table* will soon return to a regular cadence.

Contact Information

FRANKLIN-OGDENSBURG MINERALOGICAL SOCIETY

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