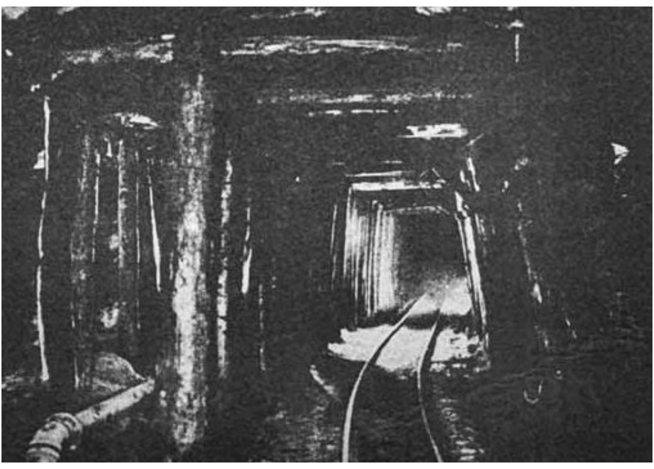
FOMS NEWSLETTER — 2026.03

Franklin-Ogdensburg Mineralogical Society

FRANKLIN, NJ

March 2026



300-foot level, Franklin Mine, Franklin, New Jersey.

March Dig and Meeting

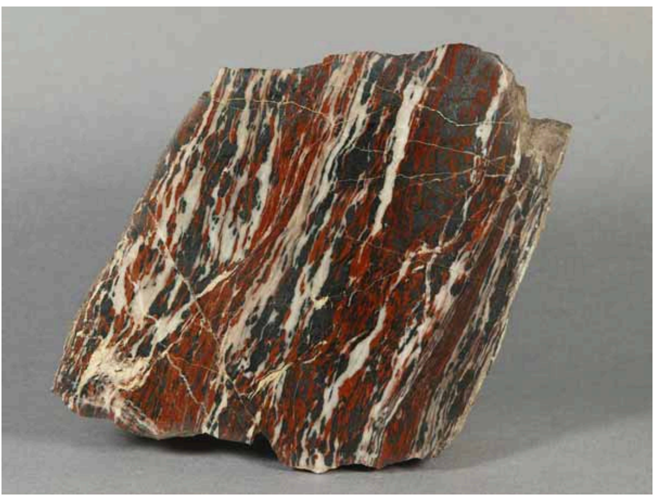
***DIG UPDATE* FOR ALL 2026 DIGS**
MEMBERS ONLY ON DIGS (CHECKED AT SITE)
RSVP REQUIRED, ONE WEEK PRIOR TO DIG
NO ADDITIONAL RESERVATION NECESSARY
To RSVP, email:
Email: digs@foms-nj.us

DIG: MARCH 21, 2026 (SATURDAY)
Fowler Quarry
Meetup at Franklin Mineral Museum, 8:30 a.m.
Fowler Quarry, 9 a.m.–12 noon dig.
Members join or renew.

MEETING: MARCH 21, 2026 (SATURDAY)
General Membership Meeting
1:30–3:00 p.m. Open to members and the public
Franklin Mineral Museum, Franklin NJ

Speaker
Dr. Earl Verbeek will be giving his talk from the GANJ October 2025 conference. See downloadable Guidebook and data. Dr. Verbeek will discuss the five episodes of faulting that affected the Sterling Hill ore deposit and relate each of them to the minerals that formed over time in response to those events.

See below, an example of a highly collectible product of faulting at Sterling Hill, Ogdensburg, New Jersey.



Mylonite from 1250 stope below 700 level of the Sterling Mine. Highly sheared (mylonitized) ore from 1250 stope below 700 level of the Sterling Mine, where the Nason Fault cut through the east limb of ore. Specimens of this material are prized for their texture and attractive fluorescence, with the brown willemite and white calcite fluorescing green and red, respectively. Sterling Hill Mining Museum specimen SHMM-1367, 13 cm (5.1 inches) tall as shown. Dimensions 13 × 12 × 7 cm. Earl R. Verbeek photo.

New Efforts

SOCIETY EMAILS

New email addresses:
info@foms-nj.us
digs@foms-nj.us
membership@foms-nj.us
newsletter@foms-nj.us
pickingtable@foms-nj.us

FOMS ARCHIVES / MEMORY BOX
We have begun a project to gather digital images and to catalog them into a FOMS Archive, informally named The Memory Box. This project has begun by bringing into our system 7,000 digitized images. Roughly half of the photos are of minerals. Most of the photos are fairly recent. The work to catalog these and to digitize physical objects will likely take decades. It may be foolish to start, but to *not* start is tragic. So, we begin.

Please consider contributing high resolution scans of your photos of Franklin and Sterling if you would like to be involved. Also, if you have photos of physical objects: specimen labels, bottles, items from miners, New Jersey Zinc Company, or scans of family letters, diaries, maps, books, or even old emails—all of this is "ephemera" that is considered important and which helps develop a more complete picture, the context of the mines, the people, and the society. Certainly there are many books and collections of such items, but much of the material is still out of sight, and we want you to have access to it.

As our first success in connecting to other groups and adding to our FOMS Archive / Memory Box, we have a treat from an Eastern Federation field trip with a large group of collectors, a Unit Crane & Shovel crawler-mounted cable excavator, and a bulldozer at work in Buckwheat Dump in Franklin, New Jersey in 1952. The image has been provided to us by the Gem & Mineral Society of Syracuse, New York.

Buckwheat Dump, Franklin NJ, 1952, Courtesy of the Gem & Mineral Society of Syracuse, New York, Archives. Franklin-Ogdensburg Mineralogical Society Archives, 2026, Franklin, New Jersey.

How Was it Formed?

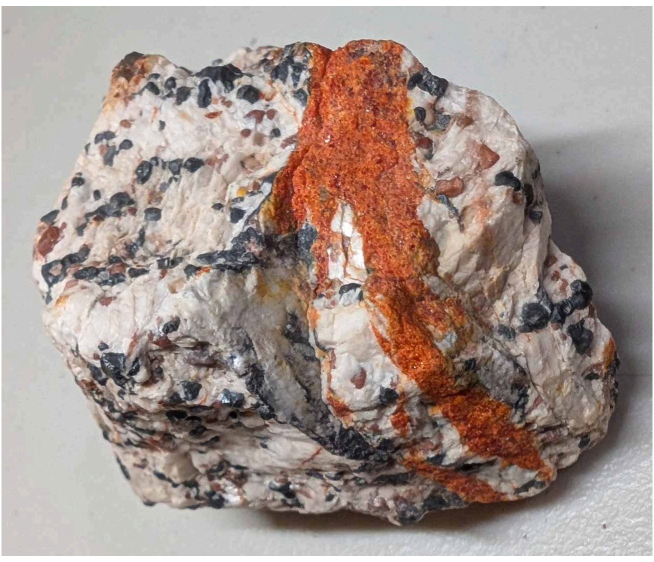
By Frank Casella

For me, and perhaps many others, rocks have an unknowable history. How old is it? How was it formed? Where has it been?

For about ten years, I ravaged the Buckwheat dump with my sledgehammer, and if I didn't stop I would have turned the entire dump into a fine powder. Did I really want to contribute to mineral extinction? So, I stopped collecting and returned my entire collection to where it came from. But I went through rock collector's withdrawal and suffered greatly. I tried to treat myself by purchasing rocks and minerals at various shows, all to no avail. My condition worsened, and in order to survive, I was forced, like a convict, back to Buckwheat dump. But, for some reason I couldn't find a damn thing. Maybe I never knew what to collect in the first place.

For good measure, after toiling at Franklin, I'd head over to Sterling and collect there, which is where I picked up an admittedly common rock. But like every rock, it has a story to tell. If only I could unlock its history. I piled up and read various geology and mineral textbooks, along with those of Palache, Dunn, and King to acquire enough brainpower to make at least a rudimentary assessment beyond declaring, “Yes, it is a rock from Sterling that is mostly calcite with several other minerals common to this mineral deposit.”

Here, I present this rock that I collected at Sterling Hill. It sits on my end table for me to gaze upon when I am taking a break from my incessant searching the Internet. To my eye, the insinuation of the zincite along what appears to be a small cleavage looks like it formed by way of hydrothermal mineralization. But how could I know if my rudimentary assumption was of any merit? I did what any reasonable human being would do: I asked someone who is expert in such things, Dr. Earl R. Verbeek.



Zinc ore. Dimensions: 8 × 10 × 6 cm. Photograph by Frank Casella.

Description provided by Dr. Earl R. Verbeek: This is primary zinc ore consisting of grains of franklinite and brown willemite disseminated in calcite. The ore was later cut by a vein of secondary hydrothermal zincite. The source of the zinc is problematic. The proximate source of zinc for the zincite vein was the ore itself. As hydrothermal fluids migrated through the fractured orebody, they reacted with the ores, dissolving some chemical components and reprecipitating them elsewhere (commonly nearby) in veins. But we still don't know where all the zinc came from in the primary ores. The generally accepted model, that the ores formed as hot, metalliferous brines ascended through the crust and erupted onto the floor of a shallow sea about 1.3 billion years ago, and later underwent high-grade metamorphism, does not explain the high zinc content, so the conceptual model for our local orebodies is still incomplete.

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As the snow falls once again, this rock sits close by as I dig into the topic of hydrothermal mineralization and hope to gain a better understanding of this lonesome rock—I look forward to collecting a few more to keep it company.

And I want to say, “Thanks, Earl!”

Frank Casella

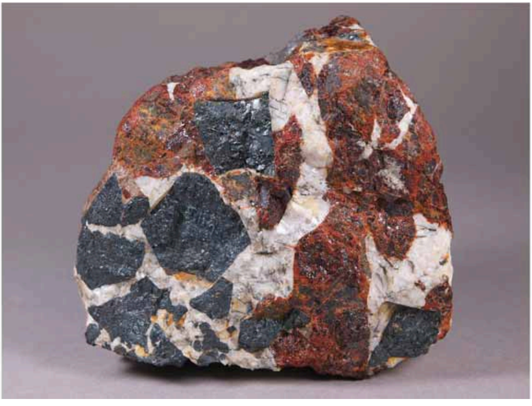
Letter from the First Vice President

Dear FOMS Members,

I am honored and excited to serve as your First Vice President for the 2026-2027 term. I am a lifelong resident of northern New Jersey, and I only began to appreciate the amazing minerals that exist here a few years ago. That fascination, and my career as an organic chemist have led me here. I enjoy digging, collecting, and meeting many great friends in this community. I am passionate about analytical research on our local fluorescent minerals, and I hope to contribute many articles to our beloved *The Picking Table* and upcoming newsletters. I have a lot to learn, but I know this is the best society for that!

You will continue to see routine communications from our new leadership and myself throughout the year. I welcome your suggestions and feedback. I look forward to meeting with you all soon, and let's do some research together!

Kind regards,
First Vice President



High-grade zinc ore, 1200 Stope, 600 level, Sterling Mine. Pete J. Dunn specimen no. S-003, now in the Franklin Mineral Museum, Franklin, New Jersey. Specimen consists of roughly equal volumes of franklinite (black), zincite (red), and calcite (white) and measures 10.5 × 9 × 6 cm. Earl R. Verbeek photo.

Committees & Leaders

PUBLICATIONS AND MEDIA
Our Facebook page The Franklin-Ogdensburg Mineralogical Society and *The Picking Table* will now come under a new board committee so that both operate as smoothly as possible with a unified structure across our media landscape to best serve you as members. If they fall short in any way, please contact us.

***THE PICKING TABLE* IN 2026**
Earl R. Verbeek and Charles Merguerian are leading our scientific team and are performing the technical editing required to ensure our articles meet the highest standards. Dave Kaminski will help communicate with those who submit manuscripts, as well as assist in copy editing and editorial team coordination.

PT Volunteer?! Your help is needed and requested!
FOMS will be adding additional proofreaders, nonspecialists, collectors, and hobbyists into the cycle of editing and publishing. While this is a departure from previous practices, we know that many very talented people are among our members, and we know that your help and feedback will help us further improve *The Picking Table* for all readers.

PT will have two volumes in 2026
Members who have signed up for 2026 will be receiving two volumes of *The Picking Table*: one this summer and another in the late fall. Work has begun on these already. For questions and manuscript submission, email pickingtable@foms-nj.us

Photo Contest

St. Patrick's Day 2026 Photo Contest

SUBMIT TO THE NEWSLETTER AND POST ON FACEBOOK IMMEDIATELY! (DEADLINE MARCH 10th)

The Franklin-Ogdensburg Mineralogical Society will be celebrating St. Patrick's Day with a contest for the best daylight and UV photos.

Official entrants must be FOMS members, have no virtual images or AI-generated elements in their photos or graphics, and must remember to send their entries here to our newsletter address. Please list the minerals and any other background items of importance, if there are any, and provide your name and contact info in an email to newsletter@foms-nj.us.

In the time between the posting of this contest and the selection of the winners, you are welcome to post your official entries on Facebook or any other platform. (Nonmembers should also feel free to garner some attention with their terrific photos, as well, on Facebook and other platforms. However, nonmembers are not eligible to be winners.)

We would also like to keep the official entry photos as part of our FOMS Archive / Memory Box project, and we can send you our paperwork for the terms of our use and of sharing it with others. (See CC-BY licensing.) If you do not want your photo to become part of our Archives, indicate that in your entry email.

The winners (daylight and UV) will be posted in the midmonth email so they are viewable near the date of St. Patrick's Day. If you wish to remain anonymous, only the names of minerals will be listed.

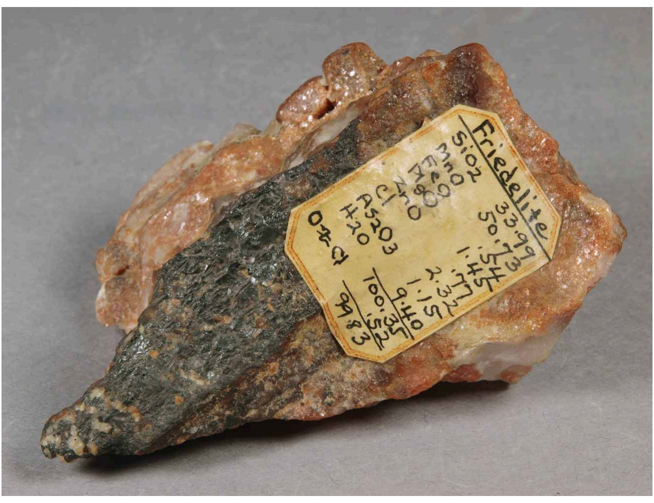
The winning photos will be downloadable to anyone who receives the email, so watermark them in the corner if you would like.

Banquet

Contact Banquet Co-Chair, Lois Verbeek in advance for a banquet reservation during the fall show. The Banquet will be Saturday, September 19, 2026.

Our auction will take place after the dinner. Please contact Lois for information:

Email: loismverbeek@gmail.com
Cell: text, or call: 201-317-4040
Home phone: 973-786-5763



Friedelite. Bauer, Lawson, specimen label. A specimen of friedelite analyzed by Lawson H. Bauer (1889–1954), chief chemist for the New Jersey Zinc Company at Franklin. Bauer was a superb analytical chemist and, to his long-standing credit, often affixed his results directly to the analyzed specimen, thus ensuring they stay together. The snipped corners of the label are characteristic. The fine-grained, orange-tan mineral is the friedelite. This specimen, 7.5 cm (3 inches) long as shown, is Sterling Hill Mining Museum specimen SHMM-1206. Earl R. Verbeek photo.

2026 Shows and Upcoming Events

NATIONAL AND NEARBY
March 7–8, Earth Science Gem, Mineral & Fossil Show, Wilmington, DE
March 7–8, Meriden Mineral, Gem, and Jewelry Show and Sale, Meriden, CT
March 13–14, Leidy Micromount Symposium, Richboro, PA
March 14–15, Gems, Jewelry & Mineral Show at The Metropolitan Pavilion, NYC
March 14–15, Gem, Mineral and Fossil Show, Buffalo, NY
March 14–15, Rock & Mineral Show, Winsted, CT
March 21–22, Western Mass Mineral, Jewelry & Fossil Show, Chicopee, MA
March 21–22, Gem, Mineral, Fossil & Jewelry Show, Gaithersburg, MD
March 28–29, Che-Hanna Gem & Mineral Show, Wysox, PA
March 28–29, Philadelphia Mineral Treasures & Fossil Fair, Plymouth Meeting, PA

April 4, Chesapeake Gem, Mineral, Jewelry & Fossil Show, West Friendship, MD
April 11–12, New Haven Mineral Club Show, North Haven, CT
April 11–12, North Jersey Gem, Mineral & Fossil Show, Midland Park High School, NJ
April 11–12, NYST Geology Club Mineral & Gem Show, Johnson City, NY
April 24–26, Spring Mineral Sale, Franklin Mineral Museum, Franklin, NJ
April 25, Swap and Sell (indoor/outdoor) Franklin Mineral Museum, Franklin, NJ
April 25–26, Sterling Hill Garage Sale, Sterling Hill Mining Museum, Ogdensburg, NJ

FOMS DIGS and MEETINGS 2026
All FOMS meetings and digs are held on Saturdays.
Members only on digs due to insurance: join or renew.
DIG UPDATE
RSVP one week ahead is all that is required.
To RSVP, email digs@foms-nj.us

Not all locations are confirmed. Plan on 8:30 a.m. meetup, 9 a.m.–12 noon dig.
The monthly FOMS meetings are held at Franklin Mineral Museum from 1:30–3 p.m.

DIG: MARCH 21, 2026 (SATURDAY)
Fowler Quarry
Meetup at Franklin Mineral Museum, 8:30 a.m.
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Members join or renew.

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1:30–3:00 p.m. Open to members and the public
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DIG: APRIL 18, 2026 (SATURDAY)
Braen Franklin Quarry
Meet 8:30 at Braen Franklin Quarry,
280 Cork Hill Road for sign-in.
Orientation at 8:45.
All PPE required, no minors.
Members join or renew.

MEETING: APRIL 18, 2026 (SATURDAY)
General Membership Meeting
1:30–3:00 p.m. Open to members and the public
Franklin Mineral Museum, Franklin NJ

Speaker
Ryan Klockner
"The Importance of Cataloging Minerals in Private and Shared Databases."(1 hour)
As the creator of Geology365.com, Ryan explores why cataloging a mineral collection is more than just record keeping—it's preservation of history, value, and knowledge. We'll look at how collectors documented specimens in the past, examine real examples where provenance and written history dramatically increased a specimen's significance, and discuss the risks of relying on memory alone.

The talk will then transition into practical, modern techniques for cataloging, including a live walkthrough of how collectors can efficiently organize, track, and preserve their collections using Geology365. Whether your collection is small or museum-scale, this session will show how proper documentation turns "just rocks" into a lasting legacy.

Speaker / Demonstration and Training
Dr. Steve Kuitems
"Identifying Willemite, typical versus atypical from Franklin and Sterling Hill."
Hands-on training. (45 minutes)

May 16, Sterling Hill, open cut / Meeting 1:30–3:00 p.m., FMM, public invited
June 20, Taylor Road Dump / Meeting 1:30–3:00 p.m., FMM, public invited
September 26, Hamburg Quarry / Meeting 1:30–3:00 p.m., FMM, public invited
October 17, Braen, Lime Crest Quarry / Meeting 1:30–3:00 p.m., FMM, public invited
November 21, Andover Mine, / Meeting 1:30–3:00 p.m., FMM, public invited

FRANKLIN MINERAL MUSEUM DIGS ONLY 2026
April 25, Mill Site pile dig at FMM, 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.
April 25, Night dig on Buckwheat Dump at FMM, 6:30–10:30 p.m.
June 6, Night dig on Buckwheat Dump at FMM, 6:30–10:30 p.m.
July 18, Night dig on Buckwheat Dump at FMM, 6:30–10:30 p.m.
September 5, Night dig on Buckwheat Dump at FMM, 6:30–10:30 p.m.
October 3, Night dig on Buckwheat Dump at FMM, 6:30–10:30 p.m.
November 7, Night dig on Buckwheat Dump at FMM, 6:30–10:30 p.m.

FRANKLIN MINERAL MUSEUM 2026
April 1, Museum opens
April 24-26, Spring Mineral Sale
April 25, Spring Swap and Sell (indoor and outdoor sale)
April 25, Daytime dig on the Mill Site pile at FMM, 11 a.m.–3 p.m.
April 25, Night dig on Buckwheat Dump at FMM, 6:30–10:30 p.m.
June 6, Night dig on Buckwheat Dump at FMM, 6:30–10:30 p.m.
July 3–September 6, Summer Mineral Sale
July 18, Night dig on Buckwheat Dump at FMM, 6:30–10:30 p.m.
September 5, Night dig on Buckwheat Dump at FMM, 6:30–10:30 p.m.
September 18-20, Fall Mineral Sale
September 19-20, Fall Mineral Show (indoor and outdoor sale)
October 3, Night dig on Buckwheat Dump at FMM, 6:30–10:30 p.m.
November 7, Night dig on Buckwheat Dump at FMM, 6:30–10:30 p.m.

Advertising

The FOMS newsletter and *The Picking Table* will now begin to feature advertising. Please contact the newsletter or *The Picking Table* for more details.

BUY & SELL
COLLECTIONS
Franklin & Sterling Mineral Rock
and Artifacts
"Fluorescent Mineral Capital of the World"
Franklin Mineral Rock and History LLC
124B Main Street, Franklin, NJ, 07416
Mr. Ted Bayles - Owner
973-862-9348
RareFranklinMineralRock@gmail.com
Hours: Sat 10am - 6pm
call or text for appts weekdays
FranklinMineralRockandGem.com

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