FOMS NEWSLETTER — 2026.04

Franklin-Ogdensburg Mineralogical Society

FRANKLIN, NJ

April 2026

Alice Kraissl and Jack Baum at Shuster Park, June 1980, Franklin Mineral Museum Archives, Franklin, New Jersey.

FOMS April Dig and Meeting

!! > New link < !!
You can now RSVP for all the digs at once with Google.
Use the QR code above, or open the form here.

April 1st: Franklin Mineral Museum opens at 11 a.m.!
At noon, join us at the FMM for a casual rockhound get-together. Dig, socialize with FOMS friends, and renew your FMM membership. For questions, email info@foms-nj.us.

Read the Whole Newsletter!

****View this email in your browser****

See the very top line of the newsletter each month for the link, as your email will likely cut the newsletter short!

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

FOMS DIG: APRIL 18, 2026 (SATURDAY)
Braen Franklin Quarry
Meet 8:30 a.m. at Braen Franklin Quarry,
280 Cork Hill Road for sign-in.
Orientation at 8:45 a.m.
All PPE required, no minors.
RSVP by April 11th
Members join or renew.

FOMS 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

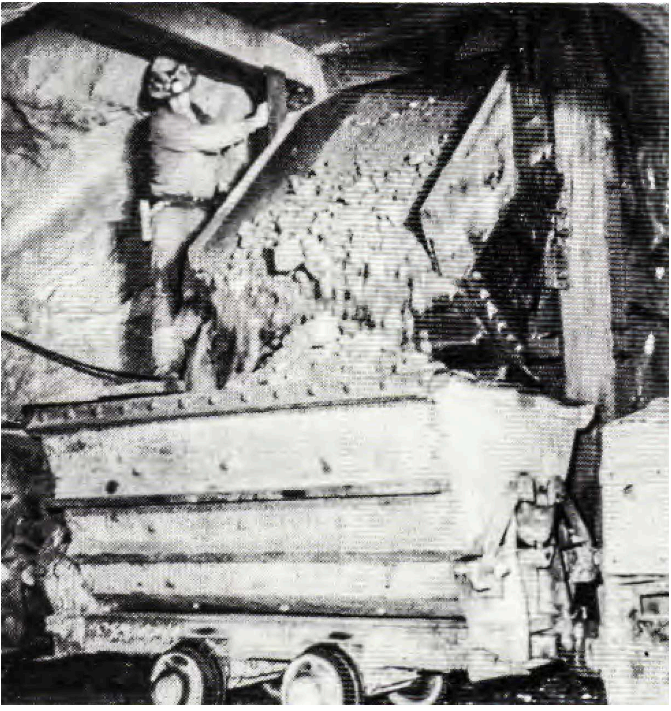
Speaker
Ryan Klockner
"The Importance of Cataloging Minerals in Private and Shared Databases." (1 hour)
As the creator of Geology365.com, Ryan explores why cataloging a mineral collection is more than just record keeping—it's preservation of history, value, and knowledge. He'll look at how collectors 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 practicable, modern techniques for cataloging, including a 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
Ted Bayles, owner of Franklin Mineral Rock And History, Franklin, NJ
"Understanding Willemite from Franklin and Sterling Hill."
Hands-on training and Q&A. Ted will bring a flat of willemite specimens in assorted colors. (30 minutes)

Lode up on Ore!

Chlorophoenicite
Ferrostilpnomelane
Why such long, hard names?
(Haiku by Earl R. Verbeek)



Loading an ore car in the Sterling Mine, Ogdensburg, New Jersey, undated. Photograph courtesy of the Franklin Mineral Museum Archives.

Franklin Mineral Museum & Sterling Hill April Digs & Sales

Visit the Franklin Mineral Museum page (notice nj at end), that has all the latest information about the digs.
April 24–26, Spring Mineral Sale, Franklin Mineral Museum, Franklin, NJ
April 25, Swap and Sell (outdoor) Franklin Firehouse, Franklin, NJ, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.
April 25, Mill Site pile dig at Franklin Mineral Museum, 11 a.m.–3 p.m.
April 25, Night dig on Buckwheat Dump at FMM, 6:30–10:30 p.m.
April 25–26, Sterling Hill Garage Sale, Sterling Hill, Ogdensburg, NJ, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.

FOMS Board at Spring Sale

April 25th, at the FMM outdoor sale at the Franklin Firehouse, 137 Buckwheat Road, you will see members from the FOMS Board. As a reminder, here is the current FOMS Board:

Officers (2026–2027)
David Vonderheide, President
VP1
Tommy Hennighan, VP2
Tema Hecht, Corresponding Secretary
Dave Kaminski, Recording Secretary
Denise Kroth, Treasurer
Mark Kucera, Assistant Treasurer

Trustees
Dick Bostwick (2026–27)
Stephanie Koles (2026–27)
John Kushmerick (2026–27)
Charles Merguerian, PhD (2026–27)
Earl Verbeek, PhD (2025–2026)

Looking Ahead to May Dig and Meeting

FOMS DIG: MAY 16, 2026 (SATURDAY)
Sterling Hill, open cut
Meet at 8:30 a.m. at Sterling Hill Mining Museum for sign-in.
30 Plant St., Ogdensburg, NJ 07439
Orientation at 8:45 a.m.
All PPE required, no minors.
Members join or renew.

FOMS MEETING: MAY 16, 2026 (SATURDAY)
General Membership Meeting
1:30–3:00 p.m. Open to members and the public
Sterling Hill Mining Museum, Ogdensburg, NJ

Speaker
TBD

Fowler Quarry Dig

Photographs, March 21, 2026

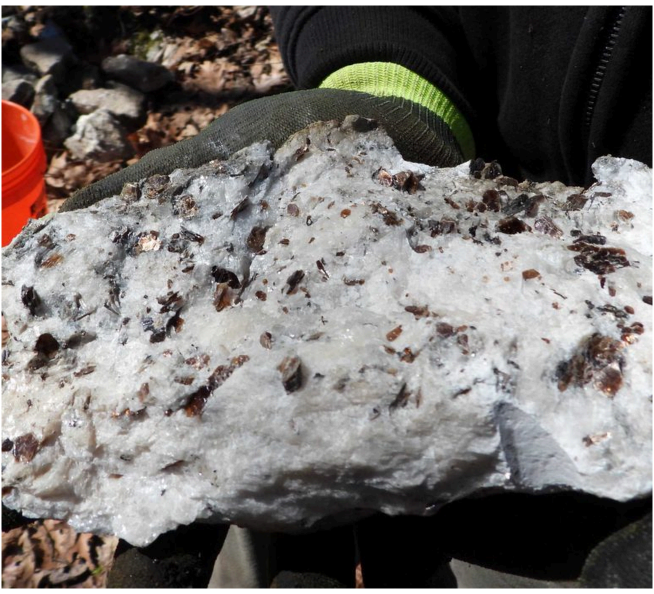


Photo 1: Small phlogopite crystals

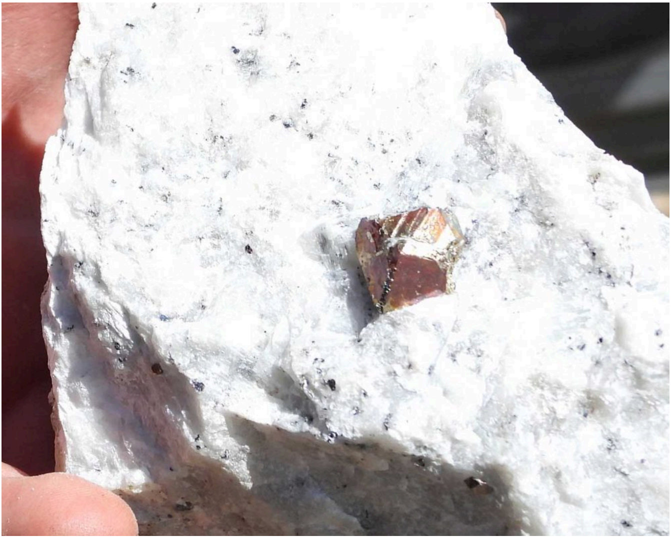


Photo 2: Pyrite crystal

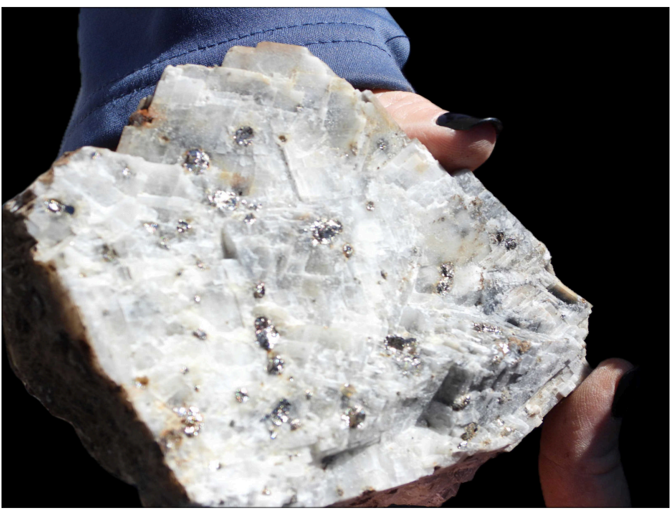


Photo 3: Graphite flakes

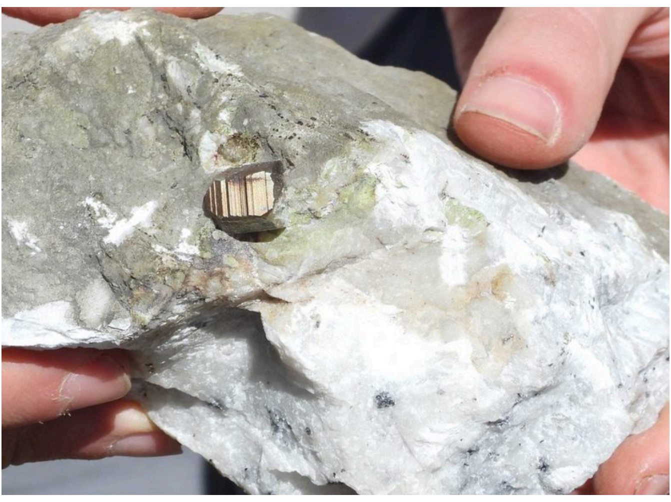


Photo 4: Pyrite crystal

Fowler Quarry Dig Report

For our first dig of the season, 20 FOMS members met in the cool morning at Franklin Mineral Museum for our briefing by our dig coordinator, Dave Wellbrock, and our caravan of vehicles set off promptly to Cork Hill Road.

Upon arrival, members helped each other carry gear up the steep, muddy embankment, and we saw the first signs of Franklin marble strewn about on the level trail. Our members got to work immediately at the ample sites along a dirt roadway, and hammers rang out within 10 minutes!

The trail toward the Gooseberry Mine offered many productive areas to work. Everyone was on the lookout for red-fluorescent corundum. Micas (phlogopite) and graphite were abundant, and some called out fluorite and possible apatite finds.

Both Matthew Lukaitis and I brought battery-powered hammer drills and feather wedges, and we split a few boulders that revealed some nice fluorite. Joe Jaeschke found an interesting euhedral, reddish crystal, which was almost completely intact after our efforts to separate it from a large boulder.

I wish to express my sincere thanks to Dave Wellbrock for coordinating the dig and to Transblanc for providing us with access to this wonderful location.

Emails & Sites

Society Emails
info@foms-nj.us
digs@foms-nj.us
membership@foms-nj.us
newsletter@foms-nj.us
pickingtable@foms-nj.us

The Picking Table Distribution & Free Digital Access up to Fall 2022

The Society has a numerous issues of *The Picking Table* that it will begin to distribute (sometimes free, and sometimes for a small sum) at events. In the past, there has been a greater effort to store and save them all for sale at a profit to the Society, and now the goal is to serve the Society with the knowledge it needs and wants. If you have any questions, send them to pickingtable@foms-nj.us

Access to digital versions up through Fall 2022 is available online here

Micromounters

MICROMOUNTERS
Tommy Hennnighan is restarting our micromounting committee. (It has been inactive for several years.) Please send a note to info@foms-nj.us with a message about this if you have an interest or questions.

The Picking Table

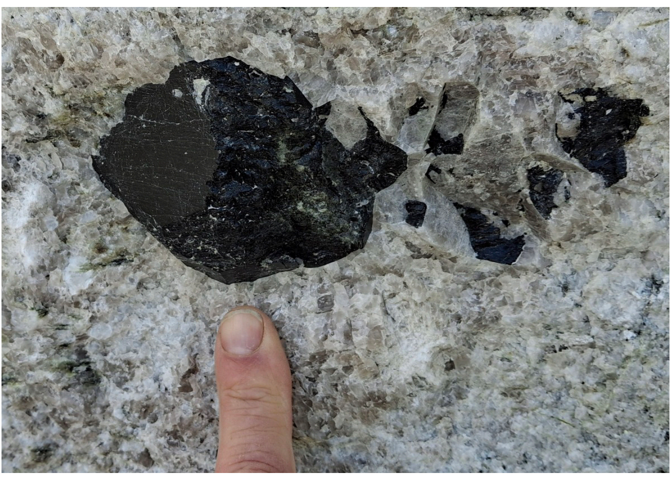
As a reminder from last month…with new requests…

***THE PICKING TABLE* in 2026**
***NEW!* Authors needed! for mineral articles**
We are seeking authors for Franklin and Sterling mineral-specific articles, or articles with a strong tie-in. We are eager to talk to you about your current interests, work, and research, so that we can put your article into our publication schedule. We can assist in some thoughtful feedback and technical help.

Local Quarry & Dig Photo Request

FOMS ARCHIVE / MEMORY BOX

…an ongoing, and likely never-ending request for very good photos of minerals…
of proper local provenance



Cross section of schorl crystal in pegmatite at Lime Crest quarry; FOMS field trip, 2025-10-31. Photograph by David Vonderheide.

The Franklin-Ogdensburg Mineralogical Society has been collecting high-quality photos of minerals for the Archive / Memory Box. Consider helping us by donating photographs and videos. Multiple photos in daylight (up to 4-15, if needed) and as many UV photos as required are encouraged. Storage space is not the challenge—obtaining photos and videos is. And, of course, as we have all experienced, there is some challenge to getting a good or even great photos and videos. Don't let that challenge prevent you from participating, as we have photographers in our membership who may be able to help, and our photographic resources are being built out this year.

Also, as you can see from the Fowler Quarry photos above, even a cellphone photo is very informative to our members.

Consider mineral specimens that have good provenance, items that have been self-collected with good notes, or others whose minerals guarantee their location.

Please list the minerals and any other details of importance, if there are any, and provide your name, contact info, and photos in an email to info@foms-nj.us. We can accept numerous photos through Dropbox, Google Drive, and other service that allow for large transfers.

We accept photos posted to Mindat and other sites. If you are part of an institution and would like to partner with us on our archive, please contact us. We are seeking institutional partners for this project.

Quote of the Month

"All my tax return money is going to rocks."
Robyn Abrams
Locality: Franklin, New Jersey
Dimensions: \$ × \$ × \$

100
FW D 389
FEDERAL RESERVE NOTE
PK47591897F
K11
UNITED STATES FEDERAL RESERVE SYSTEM
Steven T. Mnuchin
Secretary of the Treasury.
Treasurer of the United States.
100
FRANKLIN

2026 Shows and Upcoming Events

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 18–19, Crystal Fest Fall Gem, Mineral, Fossil & Jewelry Show, Corning, NY
April 18–19, Freeport Gem and Mineral Show, Freeport, NY
April 24–26, Spring Mineral Sale, Franklin Mineral Museum, Franklin, NJ
April 25, Swap and Sell (outdoor), Franklin Firehouse, Franklin, NJ, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.
April 25–26, Sterling Hill Garage Sale, Sterling Hill, Ogdensburg, NJ, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.

May 2–3, New England Gem & Mineral Show, Topsfield, MA
May 2–3, MSNEPA. Pittston Mineral Show, Yatesville, PA
May 2–3, Berks Mineralogical Society, World of Gems and Minerals, Leesport, PA
May 6–10, The Spring NJ Gem Show, Edison, NJ
May 9–10, Quartz Fest Gem, Mineral, Fossil & Jewelry Show, Canandaigua, NY
May 11–17, EFMLS Wildacres Workshop, near Little Switzerland, NC
May 15–17, New England Mineral Conference (NEMC), Newry, ME
May 16–17 Cape Atlantic Rockhounds Spring Show, Mays Landing, NJ

June 6, Mineralfest, Macungie, PA
June 11–12, Gem Miner's Spring Show, West Friendship, MD

FOMS DIGS and MEETINGS 2026

All FOMS meetings and digs are held on Saturdays.
Members only on digs due to insurance: join or renew.

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Speaker
TBD

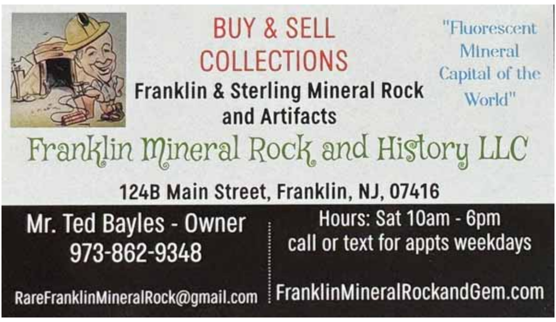
April 18, Braen Franklin Quarry / Meeting 1:30–3:00 p.m., FMM, public invited
May 16, Sterling Hill, open cut / Meeting 1:30–3:00 p.m., Sterling Hill, public invited
June 20, Taylor Road Dump / Meeting 1:30–3:00 p.m., FMM, public invited
September 26, Hamburg Quarry / Meeting 1:30–3:00 p.m., FMM, public 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, outdoor, Franklin Firehouse, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.
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 details.



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Franklin Mineral Rock and History LLC
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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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