



Mineralogical Society of America



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MSA 2026 EVENTS IN TUCSON

We are happy to report that the MSA events in Tucson (USA) in February went according to plan and greatly exceeded our expectations. We are most grateful to all who had a role in planning, implementing, presenting, and attending all of our events. Thank you! Below is a synopsis of the various events. We hope that the descriptions encourage you to attend next year.

MSA Booth at the Tucson Gem and Mineral Show (TGMS) – February 12–15, 2026

MSA once again had our booth on the second floor of the Tucson Convention Center, complete with publications (including *Elements* magazine), educational displays, giveaways, and chances to interact with mineralogists. As in the past two years, we had the *Walk-by Workshop* (Saturday, Feb. 14) hosted by MSA Past Presidents Donna Whitney and Sarah Penniston-Dorland. Members of the general public attending TGMS that day were able to learn about specific minerals during the workshop, as well as ask questions about minerals in general. MSA also had a book-signing that Saturday by Monica Tsang Rakovan, author and illustrator of the new mineralogical book for children: *Johnny and Max's Magical Mineral Hunting Adventure*. This book is available from the MSA online book store (<https://msaweb.org/online-store/>). Thanks, as always to Alex Speer, who organized the booth, created the educational displays for it, and took the lead in hosting and educating the many visitors who stopped by.

Breakfast with a Mineralogist

This new *Breakfast* event took place on Sunday, February 15, from 10–11 AM in rooms 102 and 103 at the Tucson Convention Center. At the event, 70 participants (members of the general public and MSA members) talked about their favorite minerals with the mineralogists hosting tables around the room. There were mineral-themed giveaways, and a continental breakfast for all mineral-hungry attendees. MSA wants to offer a huge **thank you** to Patricia McClain of the Tucson Gem and Mineral Society, for organizing the set-up and the catering. We also wish to thank the MSA members who hosted tables and provided materials, examples, and information to attendees: Dave Vanko, Donna Whitney, John Rakovan, Sarah Penniston-Dorland, and Dan Hummer.



MSA Past President Sarah Penniston-Dorland (RIGHT) and University of Maryland graduate student Kate Bickerstaff (LEFT) at the first-ever MSA Breakfast with a Mineralogist event in Tucson.

Field Trips!

On Monday, February 16, there were five field trips to geoscience-themed venues in and around Tucson. These included trips to: the Copper Queen Mine and Mining Museum in Bisbee, AZ; the Silver Bell site; Biosphere 2; Sonora Desert Museum; and the Caris Mirror Lab and LaserChron Lab at the University of Arizona. MSA thanks the members of the Annual Meeting Program Committee who participated as MSA representatives on each trip, as well as to those who took a key role in the various excursions. These latter include Joaquin Ruiz of the University of Arizona, who led the group at Biosphere 2; Mark Barton who organized and led the trip to Silver Bell; Cathi Duncan at the Caris Lab and Mark Pecha and Mauricio Ibañez-Mejia at the LaserChron Lab, both at the University of Arizona; and Annie Graeme Larkin (Bisbee Mining Museum) and Doug Graeme (Copper Queen Mine Tour) who were instrumental in making the Bisbee trip such a success.

MSA Inaugural Annual Meeting

The MSA Inaugural Annual Meeting in Tucson was an opportunity for mineralogists to share their scientific discoveries and insights. Led by MSA President Bob Bodnar and Program Committee Chair and Past MSA President Jeff Post, oral sessions were in the GEM Ballroom of the Doubletree Hotel. Poster sessions were in the Turquoise and Copper Rooms of the Pima County Historic Courthouse.



Dr. Celia S. Chari from Harvard University.

Sessions were extremely well-received by the attendees and MSA is grateful to all who prepared and presented oral sessions and posters. We were fortunate to have keynote presentations by Peter Megaw, Elizabeth Rampe, Pupa Gilbert, Alexandra Navrotsky, Jolyon Ralph, and Nancy Ross. We also wish to thank those MSA members who chaired the oral presentation sessions.

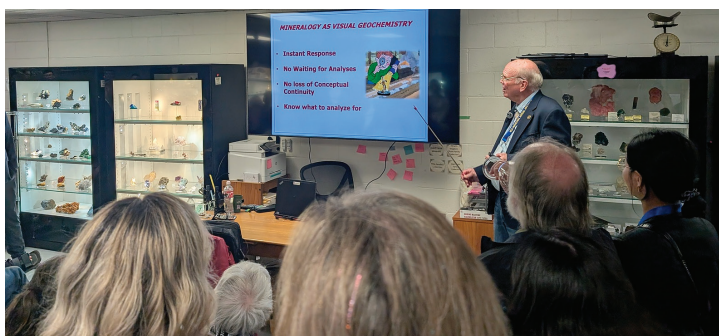
Receptions and Networking

The Welcome Reception took place at Mineral Nexus on the evening on Monday, Feb. 16. The venue was the perfect setting for anyone whose idea of a great party is food and drink surrounded by beautiful mineral displays and mineral enthusiasts. The keynote talk for that night was given by Dr. Peter Megaw. Huge thanks to Peter and to Mary Fong Walker, Director and founder of Mineral Nexus, for creating a memorable evening and a perfect start to MSA's first-ever Annual Meeting.

Receptions on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings (February 17 and 18) were in the Courtyard of the Pima County Historic Courthouse. The Courthouse is a beautiful old building that features a colonnaded courtyard. The Wednesday reception was particularly memorable, as it included access to the University of Arizona's Alfie Norville Gem &



Group photograph of MSA's Inaugural Annual Meeting Attendees at the Historic Pima County Courthouse's Courtyard



Opening Night Reception at Mineral Nexus featuring a keynote talk by Peter Megaw.

Mineral Museum. Bob Downs and Joaquin Ruiz spoke first to all assembled, giving the history of how the museum came to be the spectacular and unique collection it is.

Support for Student Travel

To ensure that as many students could attend as possible, MSA decided to offer travel grants and complimentary registration to students who were presenting oral sessions or posters. Through the generosity of the Gemological Institute of America, the Society of Mineral Museum Professionals, and MSA members, a fund was established to support this travel. As a result, virtually half of the conference attendees were students. Students not only presented, but participated in chairing the oral sessions.

Thank you to everyone who attended the events in Tucson! We expect to see you again next year. Spread the word!

NOTES FROM CHANTILLY

- **Renewal Season!** There is still time to renew your memberships for 2026, as well as subscribe to MSA's publications. Member dues are:

Regular Members and Fellows	\$90
Early Career Members	\$50
Student Members	\$20
Senior Members	\$0
Mineral Enthusiast Members (brand-new category)	\$40
Sustaining Members	\$240: \$90 membership plus a \$150 contribution to support MSA's many activities.

You can renew via the home page of MSA's website: www.msaweb.org. At that time, we hope that you will also make a contribution to one or more of MSA's funds. These funds support our student research grants, lecture series, websites, education and outreach activities, awards, and much more. **PLEASE NOTE: When you join or renew, you will be asked by our new membership system to create a password. This password is only for accessing your membership information. You will still use your email (username) and five-digit member ID (password) to access MSA's online publications.**

AWARDS AND FELLOWS NOMINATIONS 2026 DEADLINE

June 1, 2026 is this year's deadline for Awards and Fellows nominations. For more information on how and where to submit your nominations, please check the Awards section of the MSA website at <https://msaweb.org/awards-grants/>.

MSA STUDENT CLUBS

MSA Student Clubs are designed to encourage both undergraduate and graduate students to pursue mineralogical studies and to spread the word about the importance of the mineral sciences to all. To form a club, an institution needs at least one faculty sponsor, as well as three students willing to serve as officers. The officers receive complimentary student membership in MSA for one year, which makes them eligible for student research grants, as well as discounts on publications and conference/short course registrations. MSA can also provide up to \$500/year/club in grant funds to support club activities. Drs. Laura Breitenfeld and Steven Jaret, as well as Past Presidents Drs. Sarah Penniston-Dorland and Donna Whitney, are guiding this effort. Don't be left out! For more information on this new program, contact Ann Benbow at abenbow@minsocam.org.

