



SKAGIT GEMS

Official Publication of the Skagit Rock and Gem Club
Serving Skagit County WA Since 1961

June/July 2017
Volume 57, Issue 5

Next Meeting June 3 10am * * * **NO July Meeting**

Gem of the month: Organic Minerals—see article pg 3

Program: Wes will give a presentation on identifying gemstones i.e. How to tell the Fakes

Refreshments: Peggy, Marie-Claire, Linda



1st Annual Skagit Rock and Gem Club Swap Meet

When: June 3rd

Where: at the Meeting

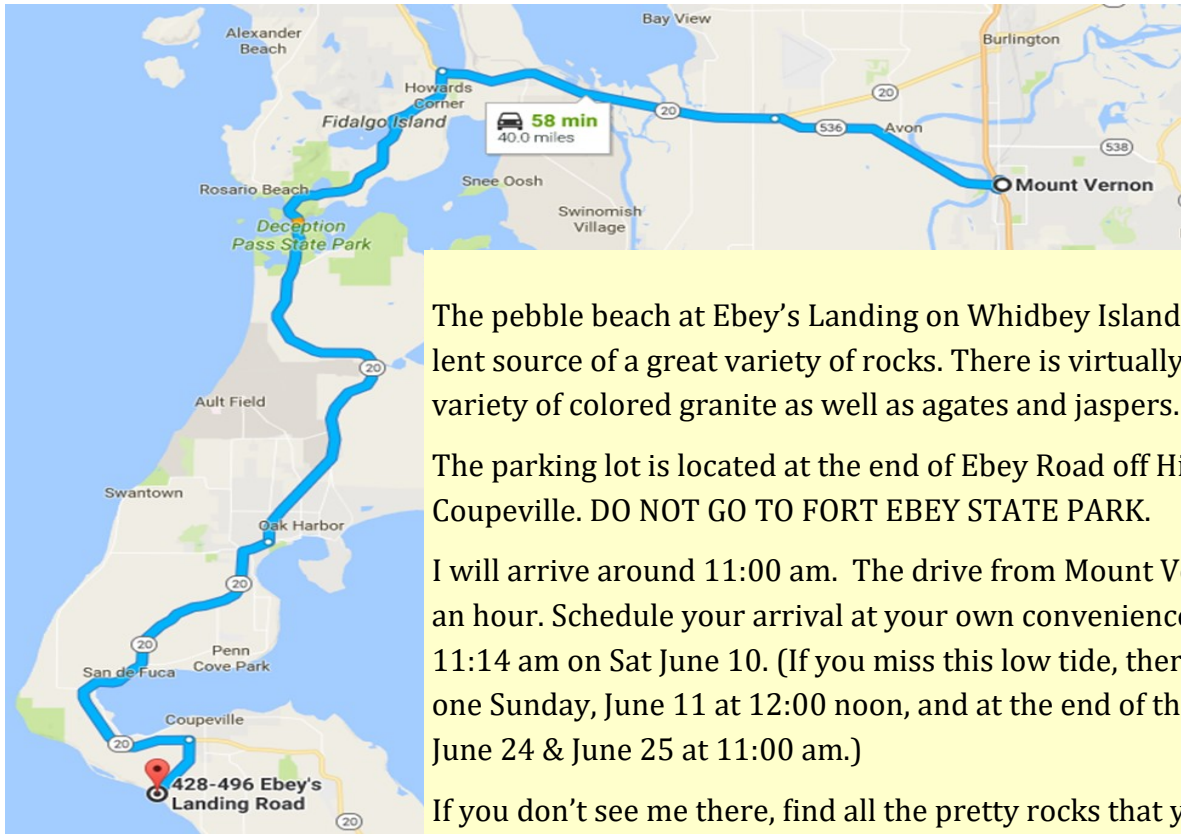
What: Bring your rock-related items that you have made or are in your collection to swap or sell to your fellow members.

Why: We have many talented members that make jewelry and/or members that have an extensive collection of rocks and minerals from years of collecting.

Contact Debbie to sign up for space— newmoon2323@gmail.com or 360-757-6276

Field Trip Saturday June 10, 2017

Ebey's Landing Beach



The pebble beach at Ebey's Landing on Whidbey Island is an excellent source of a great variety of rocks. There is virtually an infinite variety of colored granite as well as agates and jaspers.

The parking lot is located at the end of Ebey Road off Highway 20 at Coupeville. DO NOT GO TO FORT EBHEY STATE PARK.

I will arrive around 11:00 am. The drive from Mount Vernon is about an hour. Schedule your arrival at your own convenience. Low tide is 11:14 am on Sat June 10. (If you miss this low tide, there is another one Sunday, June 11 at 12:00 noon, and at the end of the month on June 24 & June 25 at 11:00 am.)

If you don't see me there, find all the pretty rocks that you like, and bring them to our next meeting.

Annual BBQ and Swap Meet

July 8th @ the Vandenberg's

Danny and LaVonda, longtime members of the club, invite everyone to a potluck BBQ at their gorgeous property on Fruitdale Rd. They have a fun outdoor area with a zip line, walking trails, pond, and lots of other treasures to find. You are welcome to camp for the weekend.

It is also time for club members to bring items from their own collection to share, sell or trade.

The swap starts at 10am or come at Noon for the BBQ. Bring a dish to share.

Directions: 6414 Fruitdale Rd. Fruitdale Rd. does not go thru from Hwy 20. Head up Hwy 9 from Sedro to Mosier Rd (a little over 2 miles up). Take a Right on Mosier and a Left on Fruitdale. When you pull in the driveway head straight up the hill to find the parking area.



Gem-of-the-month : Organic Material

Organic materials form a special group within the gem world. The common factor that ties them together and sets them apart is their origin. They all come from living organisms~ in other words, plants and animals.

Pearls are composed of numerous thin, concentric layers, which are deposited successively by the mollusk in an onion-like structure. To some extent, the older the pearl, the bigger it is, and the more numerous are the constituent layers. About 92 percent of pearl is calcium carbonate, in the form of aragonite crystals, held together by an organic substance (concholin), which is identical to the horny outer layer of oyster shells, plus a small quantity of water.



Amber is fossilized resin of pine trees that lived between 10 million and 125 million years ago. More than 1,000 different kinds of insects, flowers and seeds occur as amber inclusions. These were caught in the soft resin and encased when it hardened. Collectors pay high prices for such time capsules and scientists study them to learn about life in the distant past.

Jet is an organic gem material composed of lignite, and is a bituminous coal which can be polished. It is compact, homogeneous, has a hard, glossy surface and black interior variety of fossilized lignite or coal. It was popular in Victorian England and used in mourning jewelry. One of the most famous jet-producing localities is near the community of Whitby on the eastern coast of England. Jet, as a form of coal, has a very low specific gravity. That makes a long strand of jet beads much lighter in weight than a similar-size strand of any other gem material except amber.



Corals are the supporting framework of small polyps. Each coral polyp, a tiny marine animal that lives in enormous colonies, extracts calcium carbonate from the sea and exudes it through their bases to build a protective home around and above itself. Each generation of polyps dies in its protective home and each succeeding generation builds on top of its predecessor. They precipitate calcareous material in their outer body wall and thus build reefs, atolls, and coral banks with many intertwining branches down to a depth of 300 meters. Only these branches are used for working as precious stones.
Article information found on Gem5.com

Rock Tumbling

by David Britten

In nature, rocks are tumbled by icy glaciers, roaring rivers, and tumultuous ocean shores. This process can take many years. Rock hounds want to speed up that process. We want our prize finds in the rough to be smoothed and polished so we can enjoy them in our lifetimes.

Most rocks can be tumbled to a polish in four weeks or less.

Rocks to be tumbled should be of approximately the same hardness. Agates and jaspers are usually about a hardness of seven on the MOHS scale. Rocks should also be a variety of sizes. A twelve pound tumble barrel should not include rock larger than four or five inches. Pebble type rocks are OK but the smallest will disappear (completely ground to dust) before the end of your process. This “dust”, does however, provide grit to aid in tumbling.

Grit is the material we add to the rocks to wear the rocks down. Grit is usually silicon carbide. #60 - #100 grit is the coarsest grit. The higher the grit number, the finer the grit. (Medium grit contains grit #120 - #220. Fine grit contains grit numbers 300 and higher.)

To polish the stones, we use a very fine powder – usually a metal oxide. Aluminum oxide is a popular and less expensive polish that works well on agates and jaspers. Some stones require a specific polish for best results.

The next ingredient to your tumbler is water. Water assures even contact between grit and rocks during tumbling. Water also provides a cushion to prevent rocks from colliding with enough force to crash and chip one another.

In addition to rock, grit, and water, we add detergent to help keep grit suspended in the slurry. (A slurry is the thick mixture of water, grit, and rock dust.)

Always use powdered laundry detergent. Liquid will foam excessively.

After one week of tumbling with coarse grit, open barrel and check your stones. If rough or sharp edges are not rounded to your satisfaction, add another full dose of coarse grit and tumble for an additional week. If rocks are satisfactory, add your medium grit and another dose of detergent directly to the coarse slurry. Wipe any splashed slurry from around rim of the barrel or you won't get a tight seal. Water will leak and the lid could pop off the barrel during tumbling.

After two weeks tumbling in medium grit, empty the barrel and wash rock thoroughly outdoors. You do not want any left-over coarser grit to contaminate your polish. Dispose of expended grit, water and rinse water in an appropriate part of your garden or yard. DO NOT FLUSH DOWN THE TOILET or your sink. It will clog your pipes!

Load your washed cleaned rock into your cleaned barrel. You may find the barrel is less than 2/3rds full. Some of the rock disappears in the coarse grit grinding. You may want to use a smaller barrel so that the polish action is maximized. OR you can add polish-ready rock from a previous tumbling to attain proper action. Add water and polish for one more week of tumbling. This should bring your rocks to a nice shine!

WARNING: Check that your tumbler is rotating properly on a frequent basis. If the drum stops rotating for any length of time, the slurry of rock, grit, and water will set up like concrete. It could require a chisel to pry your rocks out of the drum.

Herb Wilkinson's Rock Tumbling Instructions (from East King Co Rock Club)

When Choosing Rocks:

Need rock of varying sizes, pea to walnut size or larger ones.

Rock needs to be of similar hardness so hard rocks don't wear away the softer ones or shatter brittle ones.

Fill barrel 2/3 to 3/4 full with rocks. (Won't get proper action if not enough rocks.)

Fill with water to 1 inch above rocks.

Herb uses two operations to tumble his stones: first grinding, then polishing.

Grinding is done in two steps

First Grinding:

60 -100 Grit – 1 Tablespoon per pound of rock

(6 Tablespoons for 6 # barrel /// 12 Tablespoons for 12 # barrel)

Powdered laundry detergent

(½ teaspoon for 6 # barrel OR 1 teaspoon for 12 # barrel)

Tumble for one week

Second Grinding: Add to existing slurry

120 – 200 Grit - 1 Tablespoon per pound of rock

(6 Tablespoons for 6 # barrel /// 12 Tablespoons for 12 # barrel)

Powdered laundry detergent

(½ teaspoon for 6 # barrel OR 1 teaspoon for 12 # barrel)

Tumble for two weeks

Open barrel and thoroughly wash rocks

Polishing

Add water to 1 inch above rocks.

Polish – Use appropriate polish for your rocks – 1 Tablespoon per pound of rock

Powdered laundry detergent

(½ teaspoon for 6 # barrel OR 1 teaspoon for 12 # barrel)

Tumble for one week

Remove and wash



Board Meeting Minutes May 6, 2017

- Meeting called to order at 9:20
- Board Members present: Wes Frank, David Britten, Debbie Frank, Eric Self, Greg Hochmuht, Linda and Virgil Keltz
- Meeting Minutes: Approved as printed in the newsletter
- Treasurer's report was read by Dave and approved
- The gem of the month for June is Organic materials
- New Business: Dave will check the tide tables for a field trip to Whidbey Island. Linda will check with someone that has fossils and mastodon bones to see if they will do a presentation at a meeting.
- Meeting adjourned at 9:35

General Meeting Minutes May 6, 2017

- Meeting called to order at 10:05
- Guests this month: Rita
- Meeting Minutes: Approved as printed in the newsletter
- Treasurer's report: Read by Dave and approved.
- The Gem of the month was Blue rocks. Thank you to everyone that brought something to share!!
- Our program this month was on tumbling rocks. Dave brought a drum and explained the process.
- Refreshments: Thank you to Greg, Noni and Peggy!
- Birthdays: Wes, Greg, Joanie and Bev
- New Business: Dave will have the shop open Wed night at 6:30 for people to the Richardson Ranch polishers. The Swap will be after the June meeting in the shop. Contact Debbie to get a spot.
- Meeting adjourned at 11:30 Submitted by Debbie Frank

Mineral Council Field Trips

6/15-18 Prineville, Ore. Pow Wow Collecting at Richardson's and McDonalds Ranches ?
Meet @ Fairground Contact: 541-510-4750

6/22-25 Madras Ore. Jefferson Co. Fair Ground Trips @ 8:00am
All Rockhounds Pow Wow Larry Vess vessel3755@gmail.com or (253)473-3908

7-15-17 Sweetwater, Darrington Rock Show 11:00 @ Show -Travertine, Dig & Hard Rock
Contact: Ed Lehman wsmced@hotmail.com h# (425) 334-6282 c# (425) 760-2786

Local Gem Shows

July 15th 10am—5pm, 16th 10am—5pm Darrington Rock & Gem Club
Rock and Gem Show and Sale
Manford Grange 1265 Railroad Avenue Darrington, WA, (behind IGA)

VISITORS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!

Meetings are on the FIRST Saturday of the month (except for Jan, July and Dec) at 10:00 am at the
Mount Vernon Community (Senior) Center
1401 Cleveland St. Mount Vernon WA 98273



- The purpose of this non-profit earth society shall be to stimulate interest in the study of geology, lapidary, and the collection of geological specimens
- We are a member of the Northwest Federation of Mineralogical Societies and the Washington State Mineral Council. We are affiliated with the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies.
- Dues are \$15.00 per year for adults and \$7.50 for those under age 16
- Visit our website: skagitrockandgem.com
- Email: skagitrockandgem@gmail.com
- Mailing address: PO BOX 244 Mt. Vernon 98273

Officers and Committees

President	Wes Frank
Vice President	Greg Hochmuht
Treasurer	David Britten
Secretary	Susan May
Fed Director	Virgil Keltz
Bulletin Ed	Debbie Frank
Past President	Eric Self
Annual Show Chair-Eric Self	
Banquet- The Men	
Display Table-Open	
Education Coordinator-Open	
Facilities/Field Trips- Dave Britten	
Greeter-Linda Keltz	
Library-David Britten	
Scholarship-Noni Avery, Joe Kantor	
Mineral Council & PLAC-Open	



NFMS Competition-Open

Nominating Committee-Executive Board

Program-Open

Publicity-Frank Isca

Stamps-Virgil Keltz

Sunshine- Noni Avery

Swap-Vandenburs

Ways & Means-Executive Board



Skagit Rock and Gem Club
Debbie Frank, Editor
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Burlington WA 98233



Gena working on her ring in
Marie-Claire's Silversmithing class.

