



SKAGIT GEMS

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

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Did you know.....

The Skagit Rock and Gem Club
is just one of **67** clubs that belong to the
Northwest Federation of Mineralogical
and Lapidary Societies, Inc.

The NFMS was organized in 1938 to bring about a closer association of Clubs and Societies devoted to the study of the Earth Sciences and the practice of the Lapidary Arts and related crafts in the northwest portion of the United States. Beginning with seven "founding" clubs and seven "charter" clubs, the NFMS has now grown to a membership of well over 5,000 individuals.

The NFMS is a member of the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies, the umbrella association for the seven regional federations in the United States. It joined the AFMS in 1947.

The Northwest Federation Mineralogical Societies
includes clubs in these states:

Alaska - (1) Club	Idaho (10) Clubs
Montana (6) Clubs	Oregon (20) Clubs
Utah (2) Clubs	Washington (28) Clubs

For more info: <http://northwestfederation.org>

President's Message

Hello Rock hounds,

I hope everyone is well. The weather has not been all that cooperative yet for getting out and looking for new material, but we have had our Silver Smithing class and I will be having a number of metal working classes due to conflicts of schedule and limited space.

Remember the gem of the month for April is any red rock (garnet, agate, and many others) so bring your red rocks to the meeting for show and tell. If you have something that you want help identifying bring it in too. And as a reminder, we will need to get a work party together and do some maintenance on the stands for the displays after the weather gets better.

We are happy to welcome all our new members and hope to see more of you. Come to the meetings and let us know what we can do to make your experience fun. And you can always gain info from our older members, most of us know something.

We will be having the shop open, and classes this spring so signup or volunteer to help with a class or field trip of your own.

Thank you from your president, Wes Frank

If I can be of some help call 757-6276

Welcome
New
Members!



Next Meeting April 1st 10am -No Foolin'

Gem of the month: Any Red Rocks

Program: Mike Fiedler will demonstrate the Petro-Viewer. A Petro-Viewer uses polarized light to view mineral slices.

Refreshments: Janet G., Peggy P., and Greg H.



Board Meeting Minutes March 4th, 2017

- Meeting called to order at 9:20
- Board Members present: Wes Frank, David Britten, Debbie Frank, Greg Hochmuht
- Meeting Minutes: Approved as printed in the newsletter
- Treasurer's report was read by Dave and approved
- The gem of the month for April is any red rock
- New Business: The Sedro-Wooley Community Center has been rented for our annual show in November. Dave suggested raising the price of vendor fees from \$10 linear/ft. to \$12 linear ft. The Board voted unanimously to increase the vendor fees. Dave will be offering a cabochon class this Spring
- Meeting adjourned at 9:40

General Meeting Minutes March 4th, 2017

- Meeting called to order at 10:05
- Guests this month: Bob, Rick and Peggy
- Meeting Minutes: Approved as printed in the newsletter
- Treasurer's report: Read by Dave and approved.
- The Gem of the month was Sparkly and Shiny rocks. Debbie won the displayer prize. Thank you to everyone that brought something to share!!
- Dave presented a video titled *Life's Rocky Start*. The video discussed the origin of life on Earth from minerals.
- Refreshments: Thank you to everyone that brought snacks!
- We had sign-up sheets for the silversmith class, the metal forming class and the cabochon class.
- Birthdays for March: Gail and Stephanie
- Meeting adjourned at 11:35 Submitted by Debbie Frank

Mineral Council Field Trips

4/15/17 Darrington Club-Going to Racehorse Ck for Fossils & Morell mushrooms. Meet at the IGA @ Nugent's Corner 9:00am. Dig & Hard Rock Tools
For more info go to www.mineralcouncil.org

Local Gem Shows

Maplewood Rock and Gem Club April Sale

April 8th 9am - 6pm 9th 10am - 6pm

Maplewood Rock and Gem Clubhouse

8802 196th ST SW Edmonds WA

SOME ROCKS ARE DANGEROUS TO YOUR HEALTH

JIM KARSTELL MARCH 7, 2013 from Listverse.com



Cinnabar (mercury sulfide) is the single most toxic mineral to handle on Earth. The name of the crystal means dragons blood, and it is the main ore of mercury. Forming near volcanos and sulfur deposits, the bright red crystals signal danger of the worst kind. Cinnabar may release pure mercury if disturbed or heated, causing tremors, loss of sensation and death. In the Middle Ages and late 1700s, being sent to work in Spanish mines containing cinnabar formations was widely considered a death sentence. Cinnabar was widely used in Chinese history for ornamental food dishes, and intricate carvings were created from chunks of it, sometimes at the expense of the artisans. Even more incredibly, some ancient medical practitioners believed cinnabar held healing powers, and prescribed it for certain conditions.



Orpiment The only thing worse than arsenic itself could be a rock made from arsenic and sulfur. The lethal and chemically reactive orpiment crystals are found growing below the surface in mineral formations, often near hydrothermal vents. The colors are seductive, but holding the crystals in your hands may release carcinogenic, neurotoxic arsenic powder. Like cinnabar, the Chinese made extensive use of this mineral, but to far more terrifying ends. Arrows would be rubbed on crushed samples of these stones and then launched to poison the enemy in a rather fancy way to throw a rock. Orpiment is known to give off a strong garlic smell due to its arsenic content, and may crumble into dangerous powder when exposed to light. The mineral was used as a primary component of ochre paint, and likely poisoned many of the artists who used it.



Arsenopyrite is fool's gold, but with a difference. One would not just be a fool to mistake it for gold. Equally foolish would be a decision to pick up this mineral on a hike at a quarry, and proceed to use your hands to put trail mix in your mouth. Arsenopyrite is arsenic iron sulfide, which is the same type of mineral as pyrite (fool's gold, iron sulfide), but with a heavy addition of arsenic. If one attempts to heat or in any way alter the mineral, a strong garlic odor of arsenic will be produced as lethally toxic, corrosive and carcinogenic vapors are released. Just handling the mineral brings one into contact with unstable sulfuric arsenic salts. Interestingly, arsenopyrite may be identified by striking a specimen with a hammer. The powerful garlic odor of arsenic can be briefly detected as the sparks fly.



Torbernite is the mineral from hell. The prism shaped green crystals form as secondary deposits in granitic rocks, and are composed of uranium. Formed through a complex reaction between phosphorous, copper, water and uranium, the stunning crystal displays have seduced many mineral collectors into taking a sample for a shelf collection. If the uranium decay from a pocket sized Chernobyl were not enough, lethal radon gas capable of causing lung cancer slowly releases from these hot rocks. This is one crystal to leave alone. Torbernite can occur in granite, so your stone countertop just might contain traces of torbernite. The bright green crystal blooms were used by prospectors as indicators of uranium deposits.



Galena is the principle ore of lead, and forms glistening silver cubes with almost unnaturally perfect shapes. Although lead is normally extremely flexible, the sulfur content of galena makes it extraordinarily brittle and reactive to chemical treatment. Galena is capable of taking an equally heavy toll on workers and amateur researchers who are exposed to it. Contact with specimens may lead to lead dust exposure, while workers in mines face a high risk of poisoning from contact with the mineral and the deadly dusts released through production. Once extracted, the lead content from this mineral poses environmental and health threats during treatment and extraction. Galena has a cubic fracture, and if hit with a hammer, the crystal will shatter into multiple smaller replicas of its original shape.



Coloradoite is a recently discovered crystalline mineral originating in magma veins. The mineral is a mercury telluride compound formed when mercury fuses with tellurium, another extremely toxic and rare metal. Coloradoite therefore poses a doubly toxic threat to anyone daring to handle it. The combination of the two elements poses the risk of serious poisoning if carelessly handled. If heated or chemically altered, deadly vapor and dust is released by this strange mineral. Interestingly, the mineral may be mined for its tellurium content. Tellurium minerals may combine with gold, but were previously not recognized. In a strange twist of fate, the streets of Kalgoorlie in Australia were mined in a bizarre gold rush after the realization that gold-bearing tellurides had been used to fill potholes.



BE AN ADVOCATE FOR YOUR HOBBY

Jim Bosley, NFMS President

An advocate is a “person who publicly supports or recommends a particular cause or policy.” This is an important time for rockhounds to speak up and be part of the process to ensure that our public lands remain open to the collecting of rocks, minerals, and fossils. There are several things you can do:

1. Contact your BLM and NFS regional and state offices and ask to be put on their mailing list for road closure and land use planning. This is the easiest way to find out about the proposed changes to the use of public lands. Find opportunities to assist the local BLM and NFS with cleanup projects or other ways you can help them.
2. Become a member of your local 4-Wheel Drive club. They are active in many states and work to keep roads open in many of the areas where you rockhound.
3. Become a member of the American Lands Access Association (ALAA). They promote the right of the amateur hobby collecting, recreational prospecting and mining on public lands. They need your help in monitoring the changes to the public land use in your area.
4. Write your congressmen and let them know of your concerns with the proposed changes to public land use.
5. Contact your local officials and let them know of your concerns
6. Encourage your fellow rockhounds to become active. The more voices, the more effective you can be to influence the use of public lands.

BLM and NFS personnel work hard to implement the laws Congress passed concerning use of our public lands. The corner stone of BLM and NFS management of public lands is a written notification of a proposed change in the use of public lands (road closures, land withdrawal, grazing, etc.); public hearings to collect comments on the proposal from the stakeholders (users of the public lands); a published draft decision; and public comment of the draft decision and a published final decision. It is important to be part of the process from the initial proposed changes through to the final decision.

Don't get mad - get involved. Speak up, write letters, attend meetings and promote your hobby

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

Every Committee that
 says 'OPEN' is an
 opportunity
 to help!

Skagit Rock and Gem Club
Debbie Frank, Editor
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OH, BROTHER!

BY BOB WEBER JR. & JAY STEPHENS

