

THE ROCK LICKER

VOLUME 49—ISSUE 11

NOVEMBER —2008

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE-Tim Tiffin-President

We all enjoy field trips. Traveling to outdoor locations with family and friends, along with the excitement of finding that wonderful rock or mineral, is simply hard to beat! Unfortunately, as we move closer to winter, the weather precludes us from engaging in such activities. But for those of us that still need more material coupled with the thrill of discovery in a controlled environment, we offer our annual rock auction. And when you figure the savings of gas, food, and lodging that often accompanies field trips, the November auction can be a fairly inexpensive way to get those special pieces you've been looking for. I know that many of you have bid on and won some very nice material at our previous auctions!

Prior to the rock auction, we will be voting on the 2009 club officers. In case you missed the first reading at our last meeting, they are: Tim Tiffin (president), Keith Bacus (vice-president), Sandy Kinsfather (secretary), Randy Pierce (treasurer), and Kim French (junior activity director). Unfortunately, the positions of Federation Director and Federation Delegate remain unfilled. If either of these two interests you, please contact me. So be sure to pencil in November 11 on your calendar!

We are also looking for one or two individuals who could lead out or assist with activities for our pre-junior children. This need has been steadily increasing as the number of younger children in our club has increased. Please contact me if you are interested.

Finally, don't forget that the November 4th board meeting will be an opportunity for members to share their ideas on ways to improve the club. Since the date and time may change at the last minute, please call me at 525-3766 to confirm time and location if you plan to attend this meeting .

I hope to see you in a few days! —Tim

Obituary—John W. Rand

On September 30 the Marcus Whitman Gem and Mineral Society was saddened to hear of the passing of John Rand. He loved the outdoors and was an avid rockhound. He along with his wife Mary, who preceded him in death in 2006, joined the club in 1961 and was a life time member of our organization. John was 89 years old.

Our condolences are extended to John's surviving family members who includes a son Darrel Rand of Milton-Freewater, a brother Earl Rand of Walla Walla, a sister Ann Donahue of Spokane and numerous grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren.

COMING EVENTS

- *The next meeting will be on November 11 starting at our usual time, **6:30 pm**.*
- *.Election of 2009 club officers set for November meeting*
- *Open Board meetings tentatively set for November 4.*

November Refreshments

Members whose last name begins with N-Z please bring fresh fruit or vegetables

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September Field Trip visits diatomaceous earth pit and Gingko Petrified Forest Museum

At our last meeting most of you saw the rough opal from our field trip to the diatomaceous earth pit. It was a trip that started out early on Saturday morning, September 27 when about 6 of us caravanned over to the Gingko Museum in Vantage. If you have not been there yet, I would highly recommend the museum. They have a quality video, beautiful polished displays and an outside collection of logs and petroglyphs that are very impressive.

Next door to the museum is a rock shop that is full of spheres, fossils and a lot of rough material. Frank Vasconcelles looked at one of the 12-inch spheres and said, "I can make one of those". He promptly went home and started to make a sphere machine. As we were leaving the shop, we spent a little time helping the Huntley family get back into their vehicle so they could find the key. Every trip has some unexpected moments.

After we left the shop Keith led us to the pits. The diatomaceous earth pits that is. They mine the pits for the powdery white earth, which is fossilized diatoms. The opal forms in layers and is in the way of the miners. They throw it in big piles, which makes it easy for us to select just the right piece. Most of the big piles had inferior pieces, but if you looked long enough there were some prizes. We also started to look around in other areas and found some beautiful pieces of opal. You could also find soft chunks of the white earth that contained fossils. Bill Stonecipher found the only leave fossil. Jared Kinsfather was jumping into piles of white powder up to his waist. Craig Olson helped Frank, Keith and I load some of the big ones in Keith's truck. All of us were covered in the powder but very pleased with our finds.

On the way home some of us stopped at Saddle Mountain and dug some wood. Paul McCaskill and I spent the night and heard only two coyotes. The next day the Wister's and Ladderud's joined us as we found a lot of the red wood that was just below the surface. Gorgeous weather for both days, and a whole lot of fun to explore with friends.

Warren Rood

November Program to Feature Annual Club Rock Auction

One of the major sources for funding the clubs activities is the annual rock auction. If you have been to previous auctions you know how much fun it can be to hear auctioneer Bill Stonecipher try to draw the last dime out of a bidder.

Again this year there will be a large variety of material available to purchase. You may find polka dot agate, Graveyard Point plume agate, petrified wood, large and medium size thunder eggs, garnets, Apache tears and opal. The material ranges in size from large chunks, to tiny pieces, to cut slabs. You will definitely plan enjoy the large variety of beautiful specimens and will surely go home with a bargain.

Goethite Field Trip Cancelled

The field trip to the goethite pit on the other side of Jubilee Lake scheduled for last month was cancelled due to lack of participants. If there is enough interest we will try to schedule it again for next season.

Federation News

Please keep the stamps coming. We are getting good participation, but more members could still save stamps for the project.

The 2009 combined AFMS/NFMS Annual Show and meetings will be held at Billing Montana this year. Show dates are July 30th thru August 2, 2009. The Show theme is "2009 Earth and Sky Treasurers". Field trips are scheduled for August 3 through August 10th which is the week after the show and meetings. For more details on the show, meetings and field trips go to www.afms.org/nfms/ which will get you to our NFMS website.

Jack L. Edwards — Federation Director

Rock of the Month— Petrified Wood

The term petrified wood comes from the Greek word “petro” which means rock or stone. The “trees of stone” that we find across the Columbia Basin are a reminder of the fact that central Washington was once vastly different from what we see today. Imagine standing in a lush semi-tropical forest surrounded by conifers and lush deciduous flora. Picture slow moving streams and swamps populated with fish, clams, fallen logs and reptiles. It is a scene that is hard to imagine 15 million years later, when the landscape we see today is a semi-arid desert where the only fragments of the original vegetation to be found are in the form of stone.

Petrified wood is real wood that has turned into rock. A local site with the greatest variety of petrified wood in the world is at the Ginkgo Petrified Forest State Park near Vantage, Washington. Thousands of trees of various species have been excavated near this area and at other sites along the Columbia River. Ironically few are Ginkgos.

What turned the wood to stone? The wood has been preserved for millions of years by a process of petrification. This is the process that turns wood into quartz crystals, which are very brittle and shatters easily. Even though petrified wood is fragile, it is still harder than steel. Petrified wood is known for its exquisite color and detail. Some pieces of petrified wood retain the original cellular structure of the wood and the grain can easily be seen. It is easy to find and identify though if you have been to the Roosevelt site you may question the latter. It is used in jewelry and for other decorative artwork.

What is petrification? The process of petrification starts with three raw ingredients: wood, water and mud. Petrification of wood found in the central Washington began during the Miocene Period when the primitive hardwoods and conifers that covered the area fell to the ground and into the waterways, thus entering their journey toward turning to stone. Species of both broadleaf and upland conifers ended up being buried in the mud of these small lakes and ponds. Perhaps they were transported from the higher elevations by mudflows produced by volcanic eruptions in the Cascade Mountains; perhaps the fallen trees were carried by normal river flow and flooding. No one really knows. Later, a volcanic fissure in southeastern Washington sent floods of molten lava across the Columbia Plateau, leveling the landscape and destroying the standing plants and trees. However, the waterlogged, mud covered trees were left intact. When the lava from the “Ginkgo Flow” contacted the water, it formed the layered pillow basalt that further protected the buried trees.

Entombed in basalt, the wood slowly began a chemical transformation. Buried wood usually decays, but when the groundwater contains enough silica (picked up from the volcanic ash) and other minerals, the minerals penetrate the wood in a process known as petrification. Some wood remains, visible under a microscope, but most is replaced by silica. Other minerals and compounds in the groundwater also percolate through the wood, adding the brilliant color patterns often seen. Iron provides the red, brown and yellow colors; silica the whites and greys, and manganese the pink tints. Over time, the wood becomes stone.

Buried treasure. A combination of ancient floods and wind erosion helped unearth the petrified wood we find today. Beginning about 15,000 years ago, a series of ice dams in northern Montana collapsed, sending huge floods over eastern and central Washington. These floods eroded portions of the basalt flows exposing some of the petrified wood. Native Americans often used petrified wood to make arrowheads and other tools. Eventually the logs were again buried by soil carried by the wind.

In 1975, the Washington State Legislature designated petrified wood as the official “state gem”.

Source: DesertUsa and Historylink.org web sites.

Editor's Note: I am resurrecting the "Trip of the Month" feature that we ran for a few months last fall in the Rock Licker. If any member takes a special trip or has a favorite place to vacation or look for rocks, take a few minutes and write up a short article about it and send it to me. I will find a place for it in the Rock Licker. It doesn't have to be a finished article, just the highlights. I can clean it up.

Trip of the Month—The Edward's Trip to Texas

On Sept 13 we started our trip to Fort Worth, and spent the first night at Bozeman, MT. The next morning it was 32 deg.

At Casper, WY we decided to check out an area on I-90 where years ago we had found selenite rosettes. We did find selenite there, but also a whole lot of petrified wood that was in the selenite type sand. We ended up with one nice log, limbs and some interesting pieces. All this was located about 20 ft off the road.

We spent that night at Casper and the next day drove through Colorado to Raton, NM for the night. The next day we drove on into Fort Worth where we spent the next five days visiting with my son and his family. Didn't have time to do any fossil hunting this trip.

On the way home we stopped at Colorado Springs and did a little rock hunting and played tourist for several hours in Manitou Spgs. Found some interesting metal ore that I have not been able to identify. Again we were unable to do any fossil hunting because we couldn't get to the Teepee Hills.

Made a stop at Florissant, CO hoping to dig

at the fossil beds there, but it was closed so we continued on to Lake George to look for feldspar crystals. Next stop was at Leadville, CO (10,200 ft) for lunch and to visit rock shop and antique stores for a break.

We started off down Tennessee Pass to I-70 with the idea to stop at Parachute, CO to pick up some oil shale samples. Bad timing. It was like Seattle when Boeing lets out because all of the oil workers had just gotten off work. We just drove on into Grand Junction.

We found a good jasper/agate site close to Green River, UT. The road in was getting rough, and with our load we decided to try it another day. We did find some interesting material and nodules, and Charlene found a small piece of petrified wood. There are about six areas to collect on, but a truck is needed. We plan to go back next year. We continued out trip through Salt Lake and into Burley for the night.

Next day we finally made it home. It was a long trip (4200 mi), but interesting places and a nice visit with family made it a great time.

Jack and Charlene

October Program Highlights—Tim Tiffin

The club was treated to two presentations! The first one was conducted by Curt Schell, who gave a fascinating demonstration of an unconventional but effective flint-knapping method. There was much interest in Curt's technique and a collective desire to have him conduct a class next year. Incidentally, the arrowhead he produced will be auctioned off at this month's meeting!

Afterward, Janice Nielsen gave a very informative presentation on fossils. She brought along many fine examples of sea, plant, and animal fossils that she has collected over the years. Everyone enjoyed her talk and I, for one, would like her to give another presentation in the future!

Many thanks to both Janice and Curt for their fine presentations!

Secretary's Report—October 14, 2008 Club Meeting Minutes –Sandy Kinsfather

President Tim Tiffin called the general meeting to order.

Welcome Guests: Gary Rittenbach(a new member), David and Lavina Loran, Thomas Arneson, Lee Nelson Jr., Ruth Harpe, and Sally Reed were welcomed.

Minutes: Tim asked for approval of the minutes of the September meeting. They were approved.

Treasurer's Report: Ralph Trethewey gave the report and told us that we have money.

Officer Elections: President Tim presented the list of officers for 2009 that were suggested. The first reading of the names are as follows:

President-Tim Tiffin

Vice-President-Keith Bacus

Treasurer-Randy Pierce

Secretary-Sandy Kinsfather

Junior Director-Kim French

Jack & Charlene Edwards are stepping down from the position of federation director and delegate. So we need someone to volunteer for their positions.

New Business: Bill Stonecipher told about our trailer situation. He told the club that we are looking for a newer trailer about 7 x16 or 8 x 16 ft. long.

Hobby Store: Tim Tiffin and Sandy Kinsfather talked to the club about the Frog Hollow RC & Hobby Shop that moved to College Place recently. Sandy had talked to the owner, Scott Binder and he had mentioned that he would be willing to order lapidary products and rock polishing products. Scott was invited to visit our club so he could get ideas of what kind of products he could supply in his store. His brother Tom was going to try to attend our meeting, but he could not make it. If any member would like to talk to Scott or his brother, Tom, then please stop by their shop at: 335 N. College Ave., College Place. The Phone number is 525-4461.

Field Trip: Tim took a poll on the interest in the goethite trip and due to a change of his plans and lack of interest the trip is cancelled.

Donation: Warren Rood read the touching words from Donna Norton, daughter of Merna & Alfred

Young, about her parents and the club and stated that she was presenting the club with a \$200.00 donation in honor of her parents.

Warren said that the club would use the donation for the Alfred & Merna Young Library to improve our library.

Presentation of Amethyst: Warren Rood presented the amethyst to Thomas Arneson, the winner of the raffle. He was very happy about winning and told some interesting stories to the club.

Thank you, Randy, Ray, and Crystal for using your cell phones to take pictures. It was very much appreciated.

Annual Show: Warren Rood acknowledged all the helpers for the show and said that we did well. Members were reminded to let the board members know if they have any ideas on how to make the show better. Warren presented his ideas.

1. Fly swatters
2. Smaller info booth
3. David Walk to head up the promotion area
4. Assistant show chairman
5. Suzanne Young volunteered to make new liners
6. Names bolder for display cases
7. Signs about different areas
8. Possibly reward the volunteers

Add a section, such as, cab and flat lap to have rocks cut and polished for a fee.

Show & Tell: Bill Stonecipher lead out in the show and tell. Ruth Harpe showed some thunder eggs. Sally Reed showed a Victorian black diamond and a box of treasures from Iceland, including opals. Glenn Wister showed petrified limbs. Dave Williams showed polterite (?). Bill Stonecipher showed a leaf fossil from the diatomaceous earth pit. Frank Vasconcelles showed pictures of the Gingko National Park and the diatomaceous earth pit, and opalized nodules and snowflake obsidian he purchased. Russell and Jared Kinsfather showed clam shaped rocks or fossils. Paul McCaskill showed diatomaceous opal. (cont.)

October, 14 Secretary's report continued

Warren Rood told about the big piece of opal that he and Frank worked on and brought home. Jeff Laderud showed a fossil.

Raffle: Bill Stonecipher held the raffle with the help of many junior helpers. Cabs, agates, crystals and cans of goethite were given away.

Rock of the Month: Kim French gave samples and information of perillite to all the junior members. Tim thanked Jim Brain and Bill Smelcer for all the work done on the rock of the month.

Rock Auction will be next month.

Break: Refreshments were apples and drinks.

Programs: Curt Schell demonstrated flint knapping. He showed us the rock hounds version of flint knapping. It was a very interesting demonstration. He completed an arrowhead during the demonstration and donated it for the raffle or auction.

Janice Neilson gave an interesting presentation on fossils. She presented background information on fossils and told us about the different types of fossils. She had samples of plant, sea, and animal fossils.

Thank you, Curt and Janice for your interesting presentations.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sandy Kinsfather

Secretary

Treasurer's Report

We have a positive balance in our account after a very successful show. I personally want to thank Randy Pierce for banking the funds at show's close in my absence.

Our Club's account is with Washington Mutual, now bought out by J.P Morgan-Chase Bank. Shelly at our local branch assured me October 7 it is "Business as usual" and of course the funds are FDIC insured.

Ralph Trethewey-Treasurer

Kid's Corner

There was a small turnout for the October Juniors Meeting. We worked on setting them up with Field Trip Journals. These are something they can add to for years to come. At the November Meeting we will be playing a game for prizes.

Kim French
Juniors Advisor

2009 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIPDUES SCHEDULE

FAMILY—\$25.00

SINGLE—\$15.00

JUNIOR—\$5.00*

*WITH ACCOMPANYING ADULT
MEMBERSHIP

BLUE DIAMOND CLUB NAME TAG
\$6.50

The Rock Licker is on the WEB

For the past few months we have been posting our monthly newsletter on our club's web site. Check it out at

<http://mwrocklicker.googlepages.com/home>

We try to get it posted to the web site the same day it is mailed. If this is the way you would prefer to receive your monthly newsletter drop me a note at jrbrain@verizon.net. I would then stop mailing you a paper copy.

A Note from the Editor

I am always looking for material to include in the Rock Licker. My goal is to make the Rock your newsletter, not limited to board members reporting club activities. If you have something you would like to have included, send it to me at jrbrain@verizon.net

Or call 509-522-2261

THE CLUB LEADERSHIP

Board of Directors:

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|----------------------|
| President: Tim Tiffin | 509-525-3766 | tiffin@charter.net |
| Vice-President: Keith Bacus | 509-529-1248 | keithbacus@yahoo.com |
| Secretary: Sandy Kinsfather | 509-529-1455 | sandyj@bmi.net |
| Treasurer: Ralph Trethewey | 509-529-9209 | |
| Federation Director: Jack Edwards | 509-529-3673 | edwardsj@wwics.com |
| Federation Delegate: Charlene Edwards | 509-529-3673 | |
| Junior Activity Director: Kim French | 509-525-7387 | frenchke@hscis.net |
| Past President: Warren Rood | 509-522-2330 | wrood@coffeycomm.com |

Supporting Cast:

Classes: Steve Rice, Ralph Trethewey
 Drawing: Bill Stonecipher
 Historian: Charlene Edwards
 Lapidary: Paul McCaskill, Ray Wister
 Librarian: Yvonne Brewer
 Photographers: David Walk, Russell Kinsfather
 Programs: Warren Rood
 Refreshments: Crystal Walk, Charlotte Smelcer
 Show and Tell: Keith Bacus
 Publicity: Linda and Bill Stonecipher
 Stamps: Jack Edwards
 Sunshine: Marilyn McCann
 Web Master: David Walk

Life Members

Doug Anderson
 L. A. Davin
 Bill Smelcer
 Charlotte Smelcer

Working Groups:

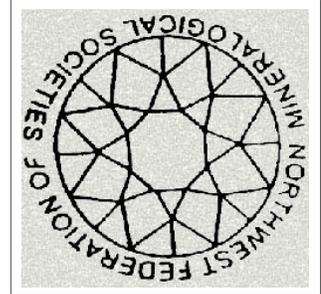
Field Trips: Bill Stonecipher, Steve Rice, Ray Wister, Keith Bacus, Warren Rood
 Junior Club: Kim French, Tracie Tiffin, Kellie Casebier, Bill and Charlotte Smelcer, Karen Bumgarner
 Membership: Charlene Edwards, Sandy Kinsfather
 Show: Warren Rood-chairperson, Jack and Charlene Edwards, Bill and Linda Stonecipher, Kim and Kevin French, Bill and Charlotte Smelcer,

Affiliations:

American Federation of Mineralogical Societies (AFMS) <http://www.amfed.org>
 Northwest Federation of Mineralogical Societies (NFMS) <http://www.amfed.org.nfms>

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THE MINERALOGICAL SOCIETIES
AND
THE NORTHWEST FEDERATION
OF MINERALOGICAL SOCIETIES

THE ROCK LICKER is the official monthly publication of the **Marcus Whitman Gem and Mineral Society, Inc.** (NFMS Club # 719), PO Box 338, Walla Walla, WA 99362. The objective of the Society is to encourage the study of earth science through suitable programs, field trips, exhibits and other educational activities. People of all ages are welcome to join us. There are junior club activities for youth under the age of 17.

Regular club meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month (except July and December) at the Lions Club Field House on the corner of SE 8th St and SE Larch Ave. in College Place, WA. Both the Juniors club activities and general club meeting start at 6:30 pm.

Note: July is reserved for a club picnic and December is reserved for the Christmas party and potluck.