

# THE ROCK LICKER

VOLUME 49—ISSUE 3

MARCH —2008

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**-Tim Tiffin-President

Families form an integral part of our club. And when children become excited with the hobby, our future remains bright!

Perhaps you've already noticed the club's recent effort to make our meetings more family-friendly. Three changes come to mind:

Since Tuesday is a school night for the kids, we now start our meetings at 6:30 pm – which is half an hour earlier than we used to.

To better accommodate the wide range of children's ages, the Junior Club has been split into two sections – those 10 years of age and up, and those under 10.

The refreshment list has been updated to include healthier options like vegetables and fruit.

Much appreciation goes to our officers for the idea of (1) and to our wonderful supporting cast for helping to implement it. Many thanks also go to Kim French, Crystal Walk, and Tracey Tiffin for helping to make (2) and (3) possible.

Now, our March meeting should be a real treat for the whole family. Warren Rood will present an original game show called "Who Wants to Be a Mineralaire?" There will be lots of interesting questions and, of course, lots of fun for the entire club.

Finally, the viability of our club is dependant on the volunteers who serve on the work groups that support the club's activities. Currently we have openings on several of the work groups. Let me know if you have a few hours a month to spend serving on one of these groups. A listing of the supporting cast work groups can be found on page 7 of the Rock Licker. Thank you.

P.S.—Remember to bring something interesting for Show and Tell.

See you there! Tim

## **HELL'S CANYON CLUB AUCTION INVITATION**

I would like to invite all of you to attend the Hell's Canyon Gem Club annual auction. The auction will be held on Saturday April 12, 2008. Viewing of material will begin at 12 p.m. and bidding will start at 1.p.m. and end no later than 5 p.m. The auction will be held at the Lewis and Clark State College, Meriwether Hall, auditorium in Lewiston, ID.

Jack L.Edwards, President HCGC

## **COMING EVENTS**

- *The next meeting will be on March 11 starting at our new time, **6:30 pm**.*
- *Don't forget to bring minerals or metal samples for show and tell.*

## **March**

### **Refreshments**

Members whose last name begins with A-M bring either cupcakes or  
cheese and crackers

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## March Club Meeting Program

### Who wants to be a “Mineralaire”?

Once in awhile we have a program that is meant to help members get to know each other better. At the March meeting we will have a game that is meant to do just that. Along the way we hope to have a lot of fun and learn many things about our hobby. Winners of the game will definitely earn some cool prizes.

### Rock of the Month—Pyrite—“Fools Gold”

Pyrite is the most wide spread and abundant of the sulfide minerals and is usually found associated with other sulfides or oxides in quartz [veins](#), sedimentary rock, and metamorphic rock, as well as in coal beds, and as the replacement mineral in fossils. Pyrite can be pale yellow to brass-yellow in color, often tarnished with a brown film of iron oxide, thus leading to the name fool’s gold. Despite being nicknamed fool’s gold, small quantities of gold are sometimes found associated with pyrite. In fact, such auriferous (gold bearing) pyrite is a valuable ore of gold.

This mineral occurs as isometric [crystals](#) that usually appear as cubes. The cube faces may be striated (parallel lines on crystal surface or cleavage face) as a result of alternation of the cube (6 sided crystal) and pyritohedron (20 sided crystals) faces. It has a slightly uneven and conchoidal fracture pattern, a hardness of 6–6.5 on the Mohs scale, and a specific gravity of 4.95–5.10. It is brittle and can be identified in the field by the distinctive odor released when samples are pulverized.

Pyrite exposed to the atmosphere during [mining](#) and excavation reacts with [oxygen](#) and [water](#) to form [sulfuric acid](#), resulting in [acid mine drainage](#). This acidity results from the action of [Acidithiobacillus](#) bacteria, which generate their energy by oxidizing ferrous iron ( $\text{Fe}^{2+}$ ) to ferric iron ( $\text{Fe}^{3+}$ ) using [oxygen](#). The ferric iron in turn attacks the pyrite to produce ferrous iron and sulfuric acid. The ferrous iron is then available for oxidation by the bacterium; this cycle continues until the pyrite is depleted.

Pyrite is commercially used for the production of sulfur dioxide, for use in such applications as the paper industry, and in the manufacture of sulfuric acid, although such applications are declining in importance.

There are numerous excellent collecting localities throughout North America. Among the most prominent are sites in Utah, Colorado, Illinois and Pennsylvania.

### Pyrite



### Show and Tell Schedule

An important part of our monthly meeting is the Show and Tell segment. It is one of the ways members can learn about different gems, minerals or fossils collected by other club members.

The following is the show and tell schedule for the next few months.

March—Mineral or metal

April—Faceted stones or cabochons

May—Begins with “O”. Opals, oxides, obsidian or ores.

June—Jasper and Jade

## **Expanded Youth Program Coming**

Rock of the month was such a good idea that Warren Rood took an expanded idea to the board last month and everybody liked the proposal. Warren proposed including a short article in the Rock Licker each month describing a specific mineral or rock, hand out a sample of the featured rock or mineral to all the kids at the meeting and say a little something about it at the meeting.

At the end of the year the kids have 12 nice samples that will be the start of a good collection for them, plus they are learning. Kim French is going to have them make a nice plywood display case in the juniors craft time. To start us out right, Dave Williams, who recently joined the club, donated a small bag of pyrite and said it was for the kids. Long time club member Bill Smelcer will coordinate this part of the youth program.

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## **Federation News**—Jack Edwards, Federation Director

First I want to thank all of you who brought stamps for the Federation Stamp Drive.

Again be reading the articles in the Federation News Letter on the Tri-Federation Rendezvous and Field Trip May 21 -26, 2008 at Texas Springs, NV. It is a great chance to visit one of the premier rock hunting areas.

You members with Juniors should consider working with your child to enter the NFMS Junior Achievement Award Program. The information is printed in the February Federation News Letter. It is simple to enter with a little work, and rewards are nice for the winners. The competition is usually small so those who enter have a excellent chance to win.

There is new information on the IRS filing requirement in the Federation Newsletter and a number and website that can be used to contact Mike Kokinos, California Federation Tax Advisor.

Finally plan on attending the 68<sup>th</sup> Annual NFMS Show and Convention June 20-22, 2008 at Ontario, OR. There should be field trip information available soon.

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## **A few web links to learn more about Gems and Minerals include:**

[www.minerals.net](http://www.minerals.net)

[www.mnh.si.edu/earth/text/2\\_0\\_0.html](http://www.mnh.si.edu/earth/text/2_0_0.html)

<http://geology.about.com>

<http://www.desertusa.com/Thingstodo/geo/geology.html>

<http://minerals.usgs.gov/minerals/pubs/commodity/gemstones/sp14-95/index.html>

## **KID'S CORNER**

The meeting for the older group, in March, will be an activity called "Turn That Bone to Stone" See you then.

## **ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES SCHEDULE**

**FAMILY—\$15.00**

**SINGLE—\$10.00**

**JUNIOR—\$3.00\***

**\*WITH ACCOMPANYING  
ADULT MEMBERSHIP**

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**—  
BLUE DIAMOND CLUB  
NAME TAG  
\$6.50**

## **A Note from the Editor**

I am always looking for material to include in the Rock Licker. My goal is to make the Rock Licker 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@gte.net](mailto:jrbrain@gte.net)

Or call 509-522-2261

## **February Program Highlights—Field trip planning**

The February program focused on determining the club field trips for the year. The following trips were most favored by those in attendance:

- Saddle Mountain near Mattawa, WA for petrified wood.
- Regional Museum and Oregon Trail Interpretive Center in Baker City
- Roosevelt, WA for petrified wood.
- Crystal claim near Clarkia, ID led by Jack Edwards.
- Jubilee Lake for goethite (round iron clusters)
- Idaho for leaf fossils
- Club member collections and local shops (winter months).
- Diatomaceous earth pits and Ginkgo Museum near Vantage, WA
- Kaner Flats near Naches, WA for thunder eggs.
- Mica Mountain near Deary, ID for mica, beryl crystals, tourmaline, etc.
- Windmills near Kennewick, WA (tour and pick up crushed obsidian).

Members are also encouraged to attend the NFMS show in Ontario, OR in June and Tri-Federation field trip to Jackpot, NV in May.

**Shop Tips**—A quick and safe way to determine the hardness of a stone is to mark it with an aluminum pencil. The fainter the mark, the harder the stone. This will not harm the tested piece.

No aluminum mark can be made on a stone harder than a 7.

Which lap to use? A good rule of thumb is "the harder the stone, the softer the lap you should use".

Note: A lap is a flat grinding disk for shaping or faceting gems.

## **Local Area Club Shows Coming Up—Plan on attending one**

April 19-20—Lakeside Gem and Mineral Society—Kennewick

April 19-20—Yakima Rock and Mineral Parade of Gems—Yakima

May 17-18—Hatrockhounds Annual Gem and Mineral Show-Hermiston

(See the March NFMS Newsletter for additional details or information on other shows.)

## **Life Members**

Doug Anderson

Paula Bremrose

L. A. Davin

Bill Smelcer

Charlotte Smelcer

## **The club still needs your help**

WE NEED SMALL PLASTIC CONTAINERS WITH LIDS (LIKE COOL WHIP, BUTTER, COTTAGE CHEESE, ETC) TO PLACE SMALL TUMBLING MATERIAL IN FOR DISPLAY AT OUR AUCTIONS  
SEE BILL STONECIPHER

## **Junior Club Activities**

In February, eight Juniors came and completed their stalactite/stalagmite caves. Bill Smelcer brought some nice bags full of polished rocks, for all the kids attending. I also brought some "Popcorn Rocks" for the kids to take home and complete. I brought 24 packages, thinking I would have some left for the show. When the kids (toddlers to teenagers) quit coming over to get theirs, I only had 3 left. How great to see so many kids attending. Any of the older Juniors bringing back their completed "Popcorn Rock" to the March meeting, will get a small prize. Don Klebe brought some geodes to pass out to the kids. Thank you Don.

Kim French

## **Highlights From The Board Meeting**

- Club received thank you letters from the Walla Walla County Fair and Frontier Days Board for sponsoring 2008 gem and mineral awards and from the NFMS for donations in honor of Life Time members Myrna Young and Wilbur Wagoner, both of whom passed away recently.
- Two rock collections are being reviewed and considered for possible purchase by the club to support our club auctions.
- The club's new web site is up and running and includes a short video clip.
- Discussed a "Mineral or Rock of the Month" program for the juniors. It was moved, seconded and passed unanimously to have a Mineral of the Month. Each month juniors in attendance will receive a mineral specimen and brief write-up on it. Warren Rood will ask Bill Smelcer if he would head up this activity.
- Jack Edwards reminded the board of the Junior Achievement Award coming up through the NFMS and he is looking for nominations for the competition.
- The featured auction piece at the club's fall show will be another amethyst cathedral.
- A colleague of Tim Tiffin has meteorites he wants to sell. (Details later.)

## **Secretary's Report—February 12, 2008 Club Meeting Minutes**

The meeting was called to order by president Tim Tiffin at 6:40.

The following visitors were welcomed, Brett Huntley and family, Dan and Bailee Butler, and Jeramy Erb, as well as new members Don and Bailee Lechner, Boz Bozlee, and Dave Williams.

January meeting notes as printed in the Rock Licker were approved with minor corrections to names.

New Business: Warren Rood, Jack Edwards, Bill Stonecipher, Ralph Trethewey, and Keith Bacus went to check out the two collections that are up for

sale that the club is interested in purchasing for our auctions. They paid \$250.00 for Gilmore Fredrickson's collection. They will need help getting it transferred from his place to Bill Stonecipher's place. There was no date set for moving the collection. When asked about eight people indicated they would help.

David Walk handed out information on how to access the club's web site.

There is a possibility that Dick Daley would present a program on meteorites. He is the colleague of Tim Tiffin who has the meteorites for sale. This might be in May as Janice Nielson

would like to move her program on fossils to October.

A thank you to Jeff Ladderud who was the only member who brought material for the show and tell portion of the meeting. (Note: This is an important part of our club meeting as it helps new members better understand the world of gems and minerals. Please participate.)

The new "Rock or Mineral of the Month" program was introduced to the club. See related article on page 3 of this issue.

The break for refreshments was followed by the February program. See related article on page 3.

## **Treasurer's Report**

After paying our annual dues of \$401.00 to NFMS and spending \$250.00 on a collection of rocks for the club to auction off in the Spring, we still have a positive balance. Note: These auctions prove to be a good way for members to start their own collection as well as for the club to generate income to support our fun objectives. Also thanks to those of you who brought your dues to last meeting, that keeps your Rock Licker coming in the mail.

## A JANUARY AFTERNOON IN RED BIRD CANYON

My new-year's resolution is to spend as many days as possible outside in 2008! The weekend of January 12 and 13 was coming up, and the weatherman said Sunday would be sunny - so I cleared my schedule and made a plan.

Have you ever played that guessing game "Animal, Mineral or Vegetable"? Here in the rock club we always focus on the mineral aspect, but today I was after the "animal" category, specifically whitetail deer, and not as a hunter but a gleaner of their cast-off antlers.

In Washington we have elk, moose, whitetail and mule deer and even some caribou. The males of all these species lose their nature-sculpted headgear around this time each year, and many dedicated collectors roam the woods and foothills to find them. The whitetails are the first to drop, around the first of the year.

I spoke with Dave at the Idaho Fish & Game Dept. in Lewiston, (1 208 799 5010) and found that indeed the whitetail bucks had "shed" their antlers and there were "gobs" of whitetails in a newly acquired Wildlife Management Unit, (WMU) called "Redbird Canyon". The canyon is east and south of Lewiston about 15 miles. Go out Tamany Creek Road to Webb Road, then Waha Road, up hill, past the agricultural areas to a 4 way intersection, then right on Redbird Road and note signs of the newly established access/parking area on right. If you get a little lost, ask friendly people for help. We did.

Starting out in the foothills of the Waha range and winding down to the Snake River breaks, it is a flowing open gorge with lots of brush patches on the south side, (north facing slopes) and open grass faces on the north side, ( south facing slopes). The whitetails favored the brushy hillsides on the south and the mule deer browsed the upper reaches of the sunny north side. A group of 11 feeding mule deer had three bucks, one a large 3x3.

My son Michael and I spread out and covered the canyon, taking a gentle contour on the canyons shoulders heading towards the river. We were within sight of each other most of the time to communicate by hand signal, whistles or shouts. The brush on the south side can be a jungle, but I followed the maze of deer trails, knowing this is where the whitetail bed down. Michael found the only antler of the day, a freshly fallen 3 point with the "wax ring" under the burr, polished, burnished with tree barks and smelling mildly of musk.

Like a rock-hounding trip we weren't so totally focused on one objective to be oblivious of the canyons other sensations. The uncommonly warm January sunshine, the abundance of robins in the thorn apple trees, (maybe that's why it's called Redbird Canyon), the soaring hawks, cedar waxwings with their timid whistle song perched on wispy branches above me, a therapeutic silence and isolation where one's whirlwind of weekly chores and routine was pleasantly forgotten and unconjurable in the stillness, peace and vastness.

We discovered an eerie area of bones, bleached and scattered from two or more dead cows, twisted trees in the canyon bottom, and fresh evidence of a deer kill. There were no discernable tracks of the predator in the rocky, semi-frozen ground, but probably the work of a stealthy mountain lion who watched us go by. Michael found an outcropping of an off-white chalk deposit near these bones and we brought a hung of the chalk back to show the club.

Regretfully , but tired and satisfied from the trek we headed back to the vehicle reaching it at dusk. I promised Michael some authentic Thai food for supper in Lewiston. The warm dishes went down very well, filling in the voids of a perfect day to always remember. We specified "go mild on the curry" so our much needed sleep would not be interrupted with tremulous dreams.

Ralph Trethewey

## THE CLUB LEADERSHIP

### Board of Directors:

President: Tim Tiffin	509-525-3766	ttiffin@innw.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:  
 Sunshine: Marilyn McCann  
 Web Master: David Walk

### 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,

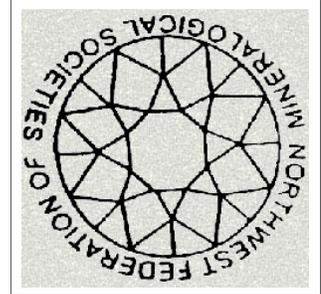
### Affiliations:

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

MARCUS WHITMAN GEM AND MINERAL SOCIETY  
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# The Rock Licker

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To:

(Place mailing label here)

Remember to save your stamps



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

THE MARCUS WHITMAN  
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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.