

THE ROCK LICKER

VOLUME 49—ISSUE 5

MAY —2008

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE-Tim Tiffin-President

Earlier today, I was thinking about pearls and thought of the following problem. Imagine a long line of 1000 oysters, each with their shells closed. A fish swims by and each oyster opens its shell. Next, a second fish swims by and every other oyster closes its shell. Later, a third fish swims by and every third oyster changes its position – that is, it opens a closed shell or closes an open one. Still later, a fourth fish swims by and every fourth oyster is affected in the same way.

Now, suppose this process continues until a thousandth fish swims by and affects only the last oyster. If each oyster contains a nice shiny pearl, how many pearls would be visible? In other words, how many oysters would be open after these 1000 fish swam by?

From a certain point of view, I suppose that a pearl oyster could be considered a natural tumbler. After a small foreign particle enters the mollusk and starts to irritate it, the oyster begins to secrete nacre to cover the particle. The result of many iterations of this process is a pearl! Perhaps, though, a better example of a natural tumbler would be the ocean.

Earlier this month, my family and I walked along Rosario Beach near Deception Pass State Park and saw a myriad of examples of the Puget Sound's rock tumbling ability.

This month, we will be treated to a program on tumbling by our own Bill Smelcher. I am really looking forward to this! Please remember to bring something for Show and Tell. And I'll be interested to hear your answer to the oyster problem.

Lumbermen's Donation Supports Junior Program

As you know the junior club members have been building boxes for displaying the "Rock of the Month" specimens they receive each month. This project would not have been possible if it were not for the generous donation of plywood from Lumbermen's Building Center in Walla Walla. Club members can show their gratitude by shopping at Lumbermen's the next time you need building materials or supplies.

In addition to an appreciative thanks to Lumbermen's, we would also like to extend a thanks to Vern Young who suggested the idea of approaching Lumbermen's and to Kevin French who cut the material for the kids to work with.

Save Those Stamps

Members are encouraged to save commemorative and regular stamps. The money generated from stamps collected by all of our NW Federation Clubs are sold and the funds are used for Cancer Research. If each member saved five stamps a month it would add up fast. Start by saving the stamp from this month's Rock Licker newsletter.

Please save your stamps and give them to Jack Edwards at our monthly meetings. He will turn them in to the Federation.

COMING EVENTS

- *The next meeting will be on May 13 starting at our usual time, **6:30 pm**.*
- *Don't forget to bring a rock or mineral beginning with O for show and tell.*
- *Next field trip is May 4th to Roosevelt.*

May

Refreshments

Members whose last name begins with A-M bring either donuts or chips and dip/salsa

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May Club Meeting Program

As part of our continuing effort to provide educational programs at our monthly club meetings, Bill Smelcer will give a presentation on tumbling different material. Bill has many years of experience tumbling a variety of material such as beach agates, jasper, obsidian, petrified wood, etc. He and his wife Charlotte are lifetime members of our club and Bill currently heads up the "Rock of the Month" program for the junior members. Plan on attending the May program to learn more about the art of tumbling. Also if you have a small tumbler, bring it to the meeting so members can see the variety of equipment available.

Rock of the Month—Aragonite

Aragonite is a carbonate mineral; one of two common, naturally occurring polymorphs of calcium carbonate, CaCO_3 . The other form is the mineral calcite. Aragonite is named after a region in Spain where it was first found, Molina de Aragon. Its crystal lattice differs from that of calcite, resulting in a different crystal shape. Repeated twinning results in pseudo-hexagonal forms. Aragonite may be columnar or fibrous, occasionally occurring in branching stalactitic forms called flos-ferri ("flowers of iron") from their associations with the ores in iron mines.

As with most other minerals, the color of Aragonite varies based on the other minerals it is associated with. It can be found in colors ranging from nearly transparent to light shades of brown, gray, yellow, red, pink, purple, blue and green. Aragonite is very brittle and lacks luster. Its specific gravity is 2.9-3.0 and has a hardness of 3 ½ to 4 on the Mohs scale.

Aragonite frequently contains sand inclusions, which give a specimen a brown color. It forms in many environments, but a particularly interesting one is its formation from deposition of hot mineral rich springs. The water releases the calcium it contains upon reaching the air and forms mounds and thick crusts around the springs. When these deposited mounds and crusts are banded, they sometimes are termed "Onyx Marble".

Aragonite does not have many practical uses, but interesting specimens are popularly collected by mineral collectors. The "Onyx Marble" formed from mineral springs is often cut into cabochons and ornaments.

Aragonite is found primarily in Spain, Sicily and Italy though can be found in many other locations around the world. In North America fine specimens have been found in and around Carlsbad, New Mexico.

We would like to thank Dave Williams for donating the Aragonite mineral specimens that will be given to the Junior club members this month.

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.

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

June—Jasper and Jade

July—A pin, button, buckle or necklace

August—Geodes or Nodules

Special Announcement to Club Members

Attention members with tumblers. We need all the tumbled agate, wood, jasper, etc. that we can get our hands on to supply the "Mine Dig" at our fall Gem and Mineral Show. This is a very popular event for the kids who attend. It is also a good way to get rid of some of that material you collected but don't know what to do with.

Between now and the show in September run a load or two of material through your tumbler for the club. It will be greatly appreciated.

Warren Rood-Show Chairperson

Federation News—Jack Edwards, Federation Director

On April 19 I attended our Federation Mid-Year Meeting at the Benton County Fairground, Kennewick, WA. There was a large turnout of club delegates and the meeting was about four hours long.

Highlights of the meeting were as follows:

- The fifty slots for our NW Rockhound Retreat held Labor Day week are already filled. There are six members on standby. This is the first year, in the four years, where the retreat been fully reserved. If anyone is interested in attending the 2009 retreat, it is suggested you get your bid in early.
- Also requested are email addresses for the Federation Director and Delegate. Names and emails should be submitted by each Club Federation Director to the NFMS Secretary. Purpose of the request is to speed up communication on Federation subjects.
- The NFMS claim will probably be cancelled at the Ontario meeting due to lack of interest.
- The NFMS Endowment Fund continues to grow, thanks to donations from clubs and the annual show income.
- Our Federation Field Trip Chairperson is planning a Labor Day weekend field trip to the Prineville/Ochoco area on Aug 29-31.
- This years Membership Directory includes an updated slide and video list of material that is available to clubs for programs. There are programs on slides, video, and CD and DVD. The directory also includes phone numbers, by-laws and operation procedures.
- Clubs are encouraged to submit nominations for All American Rockhound of the year.
- The AFMS is polling Clubs about its programs. They are trying to find out what programs are useful and those that should be discontinued.
- Information was discussed about a procedure that members can complete to be nominated Land Advisor for the BLM Eastern Washington Resource Council. If you are interested, see me.

Life Members

Doug Anderson
Paula Bremrose
L. A. Davin
John Rand
Bill Smelcer
Charlotte Smelcer

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES SCHEDULE

FAMILY—\$15.00
SINGLE—\$10.00
JUNIOR—\$3.00*

*WITH ACCOMPANYING
ADULT MEMBERSHIP

--
**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

Or call 509-522-2261

Safety Tips

Drive your chisel through a rag when splitting a rock. It will keep those chips from flying and may save an eye.

Update on June Field Trip to Crystal Claim

According to the Lewiston club's claim chairman the Idaho State Forest Service reports as of the middle of April the roads are still drifted closed and not open for general access because of the unusually large snowfall this year. It is estimated that there is 8 to 9 feet of snow on the ground.

Their claim chairman will have an updated status for their May club meeting, and I will give an update to our club at our May 13 meeting.

Jack Edwards

Web links to learn about Gems and Minerals:

www.minerals.net

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>

Local Area Shows Coming Up—Plan on attending one

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

June 20-22—68th Annual NFMS Show and Convention-Ontario, OR

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

Kid's Corner—

April was a busy (and noisy) meeting for the Juniors Group. Those members attending, put together their display shelves. They took them home to sand and paint and will be bringing them back to the May meeting. It will be nice to see how they all turn out. I picked up a variety of mineral samples for their displays at the Kennewick show. Those Juniors who bring back their shelves painted in May, will receive a sample. At the May 13th meeting, we will be starting to mount some of the rock and mineral items. Please bring the recent "Rock of the Month" items (pyrite, obsidian, etc.) to put on your display. Those Juniors that bring back their display will also be receiving their file folder and cards, to start an identification system. We will have labels, typewriters and mounting squares to use.

Kim French-Junior Advisor

Classified Ad

Wallace Mandigo is hosting a "Yard Sale" featuring over 1000 pounds of cut thunder eggs and other material as well as a variety of lapidary equipment at his home in College Place.

Date: Sunday, May 18

Hours: 9am-5pm

Address: 126 SE 3rd, College Place, WA

For more information you can contact Wallace Mandigo at (509) 529-9767.

May—Field Trip to Roosevelt

The club's next field trip to the petrified wood site at Roosevelt will leave the Lion's Clubhouse on Sunday, May 4 at 7 am. It takes about 2 hours to get to the site.

Please no small children on this trip as the hill is very steep, walking is difficult, and you need to have good balance and mobility.

Though walking is tough and digging is hard work, the beautiful vistas of the Columbia River and the award winning wood make the trip worthwhile. Some of the most beautiful petrified wood in the country comes out of this site. Bring water, lunches, digging tools, bucket, back pack, etc.

Please call Warren Rood (522-2330) if you plan to go on this trip.

Highlights From The April 1 Board Meeting—Sandy Kinsfather-Secretary

- Board discussed options for the May program. Discussed as possible subjects were one on flint knapping by James Payne or possibly a discussion of rock tumbling by one of our members.
- Yvonne Brewer has indicated an interest in helping out with the Junior club.
- Ralph Trethewey stated that our annual show dates are not yet mentioned in the NFMS newsletter along with the other club show dates.
- Kim French announced that she had gotten supplies for the display shelves the juniors are making as a donation from Lumbermens. She had followed up on a suggestion from Verne and Suzanne Young that Lumbermen's might donate materials for groups such as ours.

Secretary's Report—April 8, 2008 Club Meeting Minutes –Sandy Kinsfather

The meeting was called to order at 6:47 p.m.

President Tim Tiffin welcomed visitors: Lance Hodges, Craig Olson, and S. E. Fletcher.

He asked if there were any corrections to the March 11 meeting minutes printed in the April Rock Licker. No corrections were needed.

Announcements: There are sign up sheets for the Saddle Mountain trip on April 12 and Roosevelt on May 4. Members are to meet at the Lyon's club house at 7:00 a.m. for both trips.

Raffle: Bill Stonecipher conducted the monthly raffle drawing. Prizes included copper samples, a claw tool, crystal pyrite, pure silver and a few other good samples of minerals. Funds raised at the monthly raffle support the Junior activities.

Show and Tell: Keith Bacus led off talking about the quartz crys-

tal and tourmaline he brought. Linda Stonecipher showed a tray of faceted glass and gemstones. Janice Nielsen showed some rough amber and an amber necklace and earrings. Ralph Trethewey showed blue obsidian and granite from England. Mark Blackburn showed sunstones from Plush, OR. Glenn Wister showed some mahogany and sheen obsidian, tiger eye and jade. Tim van den Dikkenburg showed a treasure chest with a variety of rocks. Bill Smelcer brought some cabs and Biggs jasper to show. Jack Edwards showed sunstones from Plush, OR, gypsum from Nevada, fossils, balls of peralite with obsidian in them, opalite, agates, & leaf fossils. Dustin Bennett showed some petrified wood. Thank you to all who participated.

Rock Feature of the Month: Bill Smelcer gave a short presentation on obsidian, the April

“Rock of the Month”. He passed out a brief information sheet on the material and gave an obsidian sample to each junior member for their display cases.

Evening Program: Jack Edwards gave an interesting presentation on faceting, including some of the terminology, techniques and tools needed to facet material.

There are four parts to a faceted stone: The pavilion (the pointing part), the girdle, the top (crown), and the table (the flat part).

The faceting process uses four diamond discs that range from course to fine. After mounting the stone to a dop stick, you start by cutting the pavilion and then move down the stone.

According to Jack sunstones cut easily. Thank you Jack for the nice demonstration!

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Treasurer's Report—Ralph Threthewey

The club continues to operate within our projected budget. We have deposits from four vendors for the fall show. We welcome two new members this month, Wallace Mandigo and Kyler Blevins (a junior) which brings our total paid membership for 2008 to 121 individuals. (80 adult members and 41 Junior members.)

Rock Club Outing to Saddle Mountain as Experienced by Ralph Trethewey

Saturday, April 12, was forecast to be the hottest day of the year to date, upper 70's, so I packed lighter clothes and a hat. Enjoying the two hour drive past the desolate Hanford Reach I kept an eye on the horizon for a mountain that looked like a saddle. Eventually we turned off the highway at Mattawa and headed up into some rather non-descript sage covered hills and at road's end were the early-bird members of our club who left Walla Walla at 6 a.m.

With a burst of energy I found a few played-out looking holes and opted to start my own on the eastern fringe of the dig site. The idea was to get down 2-3 feet to the ash layer and below, so I figured I had a workout ahead. We encountered a lot of basalt however and it was rough digging. A chip of likely wood turned out to be *Artemisia tridentata*, (sagebrush, pre-petrified.)

I brought along a guest and new member Kyler, age 8 and directed him to a hole and the use of his nice new shovels. He dug some, but roamed the other holes and networked especially with other young members finding small pieces and chips on the surface and in tailings. My question was, "where is the old block from which these chips came"?

The day wore on; David Walk found a 10" limb and Paul McCaskill found some nice hunks. The Vasconcelles family, Jerry Fletcher and his brother and I didn't find didley. What is a "didley"? Still don't know - like I said we didn't find any. I did notice Larry Bennett watching his grandson Dustin digging excitedly. What did you find Dustin? Everyone seemed to be enjoying the day; it was nice.

Warren persisted in the cool depths of his hole and announced he had found "Walter" the big trout from the Fonda's movie "On Golden Pond" I hung around to hear if he had any other fish stories, and sure enough "Walter" surfaced about lunch-box size. I was wondering where we would find "Big Bad John", Brutus, Toby or maybe a "Clyde". Sam, Henry, John, Tex or Buck, those sounded like massive male persona's to name a petrified log after, but where were they hiding?

After lunch my energy level took a dive. Not finding wood, even my fingers hurting from the hard-scrabble digging and sun-burned bare arms from the relentless sun, I felt between "a rock and a hot place!" My friend and new member Andy McClelland suggested we go to Vantage where a rock shop and the Ginkgo Petrified Forest Visitor's Center featured massive hunks of petrified wood. (He spread his arms wide to show the girth of the logs up there.) It didn't take me long to realize the advantage of going to Vantage. We left the dig-site at 3:00 pomp.

Vantage was as advertised. Freezer sized hunks of petrified wood, with lots of grain surrounded the parking lot of the rock shop, and the Ginkgo Forest Visitor's Center. The Center's mini-museum was sensational, with several two foot diameter slabs of polished wood, showing every growth ring, and samples of most modern woods, all petrified, and polished in the display cases. It reminded me of a lumber supply store. I once heard about a guy who came to a lumber yard and ordered 84 - 2x6's. The clerk asked him how long he wanted them. "Indefinitely", the man replied, "we're building a barn".

One final stop was the Ginkgo Forest itself. A rocky barren sage-stubbed hill a few miles west of the visitor's center had a ranger's residence and trail leading to the petrified logs. To my amazement, buried in the hill, cleanly exposed and covered with a chain link grate were over a dozen large log ends: walnut, elm, maple, Douglas fir and ginkgo wood. Randomly spaced over the hillside and hidden for eons, one had to wonder what walking through that forest must have been like before these logs fell and turned to stone. The leisurely 30 minute walk on this hillside park was relaxing as the sun set over a perfect day.

Tired and gritty, Kyler and I got in the vehicle to potluck from our packed lunches and drive the 140 miles home. It's fun to see the world through the eyes of an eight year old as he commented on the passing land and river-scapes. Near Tri-Cities he sang several songs that "Little Alvin" does, complete with a very realistic impersonation of the chipmunk's high-pitched voice/squeal. There was no danger of me falling asleep at the wheel!

Another great day of memories, and a greater appreciation of those chips of wood in our pockets, knowing that the "old block" is out there somewhere under those sagebrush hills, waiting to be discovered.

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: Jack Edwards
 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,

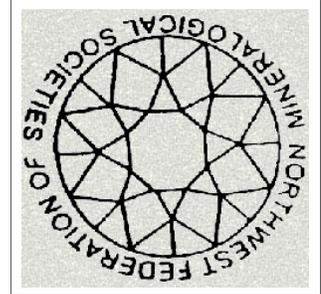
Affiliations:

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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WALLA WALLA, WA 99362

The Rock Licker

Volume 49
Issue 5



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THE NORTHWEST FEDERATION
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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.