

# ROCK LICKER

VOLUME 50—ISSUE 2

WALLA WALL, WASHINGTON

FEBRUARY 2009

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE-

Lately I realized that something had been missing in my life.

I grew up on a 100-acre farm in rural Oregon. Most of the farm was pasture, but at the very back was a forested area with a small creek. In this creek I found lots of wonderful things such as water skippers, dragonflies, frogs, tadpoles, salamanders, small fish, agates and jasper. In the forest I found birds, bird nests, mushrooms, berries, skunks, raccoons, and deer. It was a magical place for a kid, a place that I loved to explore.

When I was 16 my folks sold the farm. We moved to the city where there was not a lot of natural places to explore. As I got older and got married and had my own family, exploring became a luxury. All the daily tasks involved in raising a family, maintaining a home and keeping a full time job kept me too busy to explore.

After joining the club I have again found the joy of discovery. I find pure joy in discovering a treasure that has been hidden. Our field trips have filled that void and helped to make my life richer. In the middle of a cold winter, I now dream about finding colorful picture jasper, a pink agate limb cast or long beautiful crystals.

Have you ever felt this way? Come to the next meeting and we will talk about the joy of exploring.

Warren Rood,

Past president

## February Program:

At our next meeting on February 10 we will discuss field trip options for this coming year. Warren will lead out in this lively discussion of possibilities. You will be able to vote on the choices. Come with your ideas and enthusiasm.

Going along with the theme of the February Program, the meeting's "Show and Tell" segment will feature items that you have gathered on one of the Club field trips you went on.

**LOST**—Large, white oval, porcelain dish (with scroll-work on the ends) with plastic lid that was half full of carrots (which by now are probably not orange). After the Christmas party, if you brought home this dish by mistake, please call Warren Rood, 522-2330, so he can be reunited with it. Thank you.

## COMING EVENTS

*Don't forget the next club meeting on February 10th at 6:30 pm at the Lions Club House in College Place*

## February

### Refreshments

If your last name begins with the letters N through Z please bring a pie or ice cream for the refreshment break.

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**Walla Walla Fair and Frontier Days-2009**

At the November Board meeting the decision was made to drop our involvement with the Gem and Mineral Department of this coming year's fair. This decision was made based on the conflict with our Club's Gem and Mineral Show the week following the fair and the limited number of exhibitors from outside our club the fair has drawn.

Jim Brain will continue to work with the fair administration to find a way for those who desire to enter lapidary work in the fair to do so. Currently it looks like the best alternative is going to be to have a lapidary division within the Arts and Craft Department which would give an opportunity for individuals desiring to do so to exhibit their items at the fair. We may be asked to provide a judge for this division. More information about this will be shared as it becomes available.

**Kid's Corner—**

At the start of the meeting, there was only one Junior member in attendance. Another one or two came later. I decided to keep the planned activity until there were enough Juniors to make the game a competition. I have a few game activities planned and will continue to bring them to see if we have enough interest to get them going.

Kim French  
Juniors Advisor

**WORD GAME—**We all have our favorite rock gathering area. Can you find the nine sites visited by club members and written up in the Rock Licker field trip articles in 2008.

C	R	Y	S	T	A	L	C	L	A	I	M
R	F	R	A	I	R	O	M	R	M	I	T
V	Q	A	D	I	P	E	L	P	C	S	H
A	Y	G	D	P	S	U	M	L	D	T	S
N	U	O	L	I	N	Q	L	E	E	E	U
C	J	N	E	E	A	U	T	A	R	R	C
Y	A	I	M	S	I	A	H	I	M	E	C
L	C	T	T	A	D	R	T	E	O	D	O
Q	K	A	N	E	R	F	L	A	T	I	R
X	P	N	I	S	O	O	I	P	T	A	C
T	O	D	F	O	O	S	O	K	S	L	R
Y	T	A	I	E	S	S	W	A	T	A	E
O	R	G	E	T	E	I	Y	P	Q	R	E
P	R	G	D	T	V	L	U	A	N	T	K
P	I	A	W	I	E	N	E	R	E	A	O
T	L	T	O	M	L	N	T	R	A	A	P
L	B	G	O	E	T	H	I	T	E	P	T
P	W	R	D	O	O	W	N	E	T	O	R

**ATTENTION:** I would like to draw your attention to page seven of the Rock Licker. Here, in addition to the elected officers, you will find a listing of the "supporting cast" and standing working groups that are essential to the success of our club. You will also note that some of the support positions are vacant. In addition the working groups could use a few more members. If you are interested in serving in some capacity to help the club please contact one of the board members and express your interest.

## **Rock of the Month: The Mineral Phlogopite**

During the January meeting's Show and Tell segment Dave Williams showed a piece of phlogopite and mentioned one of its properties was that it could be bent and would return to its original shape. This sparked my curiosity so I did a little research on the internet and share the following.

**Chemistry:**  $K Mg_3 AlSi_3 O_{10} (OH)_2$ , Potassium magnesium aluminum silicate hydroxide.

Phlogopite is a rarer member of the mica group and is not well known even by mineral collectors. It has been mined however for its heat and electrical insulating properties which are considered superior to other micas. The typical light brown color of phlogopite is characteristic although it is difficult to distinguish brown biotite from dark brown phlogopite. The two are actually end members in a series that is dependent on the percentage of iron. Phlogopite is iron poor and biotite is iron rich. The darker color and density increase with an increase in the iron content. Biotite tends to form in a wider range of conditions than phlogopite which is limited mostly to ultramafic rocks and magnesium rich marbles and pegmatites.

Phlogopite, like other micas, has a layered structure of magnesium aluminum silicate sheets weakly bonded together by layers of potassium ions. These potassium ion layers produce the perfect cleavage. Phlogopite is rarely considered a valuable mineral specimen, but well formed crystals are rare and some are now on the market showing nice crystals. These come from the Kola Peninsula area of Russia. Single large plates or "books" of phlogopite can grow to considerable size.

**Uses:** Heat and electrical insulator for industrial purposes.

### **PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS:**

- **Color** is pale brown to brown.
- **Luster** is vitreous to pearly.
- **Transparency** crystals are transparent to translucent.
- **Crystal System** is monoclinic;  $2/m$
- **Crystal Habits** include tabular to prismatic crystals with a prominent pinacoid termination. Phlogopite's four prism faces and two pinacoid faces form pseudo-hexagonal crystal "books". The sides of the crystal often tend to taper and can have a "hard candy that has been sucked on, look". Also as lamellar or granular rock forming masses.
- **Cleavage** is perfect in one direction producing thin sheets or flakes.
- **Fracture** is not readily observed due to cleavage but is uneven.
- **Hardness** is 2.5 - 3.
- **Specific Gravity** is approximately 2.9+ (average)
- **Streak** is white.

**Other Characteristics:** cleavage sheets are flexible and elastic, meaning they can be bent and will flex back to original shape. Thin flakes show an asterism or six rayed star when a light source is viewed through the crystal due to inclusions.

**Notable Occurrences** include Ontario and Quebec, Canada; Russia and at many localities in Europe. Best Field Indicators are crystal habit, color, cleavage, elastic sheets and associations.

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**Birthstones** –Over thousands of years, a tradition has developed, associating certain gemstones with times of the year. In 1937, the (British) National Association of Goldsmiths (N.A.G.), organized a uniform "official" list, which seems to have become, more or less, internationally recognized. The February Birthstone is Amethyst.

**Answers to the January's Word Puzzle:** Materials that have been featured in the Rock of the Month column in the Rock Licker the past 12 months.

Aragonite	Chalcedony	Gypsum	Perlite
Jasper	Petrified Wood	Petoskey Stone	Pyrite
Quartz	Obsidian		

### **Treasurer's Report—Randy Pierce**

The transfer of check writing authority from Ralph to myself is complete so I am officially the club treasurer. With that I want to remind those who haven't already paid their annual club membership dues that they were due on January 1, 2009.

### **ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES** **SCHEDULE-2009**

**FAMILY—\$25.00**  
**SINGLE—\$12.00**  
**JUNIOR—\$5.00\***

**\*WITH ACCOMPANYING  
ADULT MEMBERSHIP**

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

### **Secretary's Report—January 13, 2009 Club Meeting Minutes –Sandy Kinsfather**

President Tim Tiffin called the general meeting to order at 6:45 p.m.

**Welcome Guests:** President Tim welcomed Mia & Jeremiah Stafford, and Darling Walk. Darling is the daughter of Crystal and David Walk.

**Treasurer's Report:** Randy Pierce said the club's financial accounts are in good shape.

**Minutes:** President Tim asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the December 14 meeting. A motion was made and seconded and the club members voted for approval.

**Award Presentation:** President Tim presented Jim Brain with the Northwest Federation New Editor Award for 4<sup>th</sup> place. Congratulations, Jim!

**Show & Tell:** Keith Bacus led out in the show & tell. Items shown were to start with "P". Frank Vasconcelles showed pendants and cabs that he had made. Linda Stonecipher showed some pyrite

and pyromorphite from Bunker Hill. Dave Williams brought phlogopite, a type of mica, from Quebec. Paul McCaskill showed a cab, picture wood, and a slab from Saddle Mt. Jim Brain showed a pretend rock, which was actually a Petosky stone which he had forgotten to bring. Sally Reed showed a petite rock, which was a miniature thunderegg (1/2 inch in diameter), polished and mounted.

**Trailer Issue:** Bill Stonecipher talked about our need for a new trailer to haul the clubs show cases in and other items. He has been looking and Tim mentioned that Randy Pierce would be helping him look.

**Refreshment Break:** At 7:00 p.m. the general meeting was adjourned and the members visited and had cookies and veggies.

**Quick Forum:** The Board members gathered for a quick discussion of needed changes to the clubs bank account. The bank required that we change the nec-

essary signatures for business concerns. Keith Bacus moved to change the appointed signatures to Tim Tiffin, President, and Randy Pierce, Treasurer. Warren Rood seconded the motion. The Board voted and it was approved.

**Raffle Drawing:** Bill Stonecipher held the raffle with some help from the Junior members. Many good items of ammonite, petrified wood, rocks, and minerals were drawn.

**Program:** My Favorite Rock Story! There were 3 junior members that participated and 11 adults as listed below. All of the stories were very interesting! David Walk took a group photo of our great rock storytellers.

Meeting adjourned about 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sandy Kinsfather-Secretary

\*Thank you, Linda Stonecipher for taking notes on the "Favorite Rock Story" program during my absence.

## **January Program Summary**

The theme of the Club's January program was "My Favorite Rock Story". Members were invited to share their favorite rockhound experience. Presentations were judged and the winners awarded prizes donated by other club members. For fairness the youth competed against youth and adults competed against adults. To add a little variety to the judging, the adult presentations were judged by a panel of three youth and visa versa for the youth presentations.

Eleven adults and three youth made presentations during the program.

### **Junior Participants:**

Trissa Tiffin talked about finding rocks in her yard.

Theron Tiffin talked about digging for goethite.

Matthew Rittenbach told about some rocks he found.

### **Adult Participants:**

Ray Wister told of a memorable family trip with his dad, himself and his son gathering petrified wood to Saddle Mt.

Gail Rittenbach showed iridescent rope magma from Mt. Kilauea volcano in Hawaii.

David Walk talked about finding crystals as a young boy. (That is not the same Crystal he later married.)

Su Meredith talked about finding a large blue beach agate on the Oregon coast.

Don Nash told about a rare pre-historic tooth he found while picking up petrified wood near Selah.

Dave Williams told about young family friend finding Apache tears in Arizona that turned out to be black jelly beans.

Wally Mandigo told about plume agate and angel wing in a cave and also of finding Drew Bledsoe's game ring.

Randy Pierce told about lessons learned as a youth while picking up rocks on his way home from school without telling his mom where he was going.

Bill Stonecipher talked about a trip to southern Idaho to Shell Hill and Poison Creek.

Crystal Walk told about a rock trip when she injured her foot and husband had to carry her back to the car.

Darling Walk told about finding coprolite (dinosaur dung).

### **Adult Winners:**

First Place—Don Nash, selected a piece of gypsum as his prize

Second Place (tie)—Gail Rittenbach and Wally Mandigao

Third Place —Randy Pierce

Fourth Place (tie)—David Walk and Bill Stonecipher

### **Junior Winners:**

Firat Place—Matthew Rittenbach, selected the modern spear point knapped by Curt Huntley

Second Place (tie)—Theron Tiffin and Trissa Tiffin

It was a very informative program and thanks to all those who participated.

## The Wonderful World of Rocks- Submitted by Dave Williams

Many rocks and minerals have very strange and interesting features. Some you could even say are out of this world—or at least come from there. There are the moon rocks that were brought back by the astronauts and the meteorites that strike the earth at a rate of approximately 500 strikes per year although only a few of the meteorites are ever recovered.

Then there are the petrified rocks and fossils—some of which have been buried for hundreds of millions of years that can give us a glimpse of what life was like back then. We can find fossilized fish, plants and animals at many locations around the Pacific Northwest.

We all are familiar with petrified wood, but how about petrified coral. A recent issue of the Rock Licker featured Petosky stone, petrified coral which is found on the shores of Lake Michigan, a fresh water lake. But coral grows in salt water doesn't it?

Amber is petrified tree resin. It frequently encloses insects or crustaceans. Amber is typically a dark honey color, but other colors are also found. Blue amber is very valuable because of its rarity.

Another unique rock is Itacolumite—a flexible sandstone found in North Carolina.

On the mineral side there is Palygorskite, a clay mineral sometimes found in Washington. It looks and feels like soft leather. It is usually grey and is very light-almost weightless.

Kyanite is unique because of its hardness. One face has a hardness of 5 the other has a hardness of 7.5.

Then there are those with optical features:

Precious Opal glows from brilliant colors on the inside while Fire Agate shows its color on the outside.

Many of the feldspars exhibit iridescence. Tytownite is one example. Moonstone literally glows with a light blue color.

Ulexite is a natural fiber optic mineral—place it on an image and the image appears on the top of the specimen.

Calcite is double refracting. Place a piece of clear calcite on a card with a dot on it and you will see two dots. Rotate the specimen and one dot will rotate around the other.

Tiger Eye exhibits a feature called “chatoyancy”; literally it means “Eye of the Cat”.

Some Sapphires exhibit asterism, a star pattern, so they are naturally called “Star Sapphires”.

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**Editor's Note:** I am always looking for material of general interest to include in the Rock Licker. It can be on any subject though is best if it is related to an experience you may have had as a rockhound. It doesn't have to be a literary masterpiece or even the finished product. Typed or hand written is fine. I can clean it up, format it and correct spelling. If you have e-mail send it to me at jrbrain@verizon.net. If not you can give a copy of what you want to submit to me or my wife (Su Meredith) at the monthly club meeting.

## 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: Randy Pierce	541-938-3685	randy@c-zone.net
Federation Director: Norma Long	509-525-4640	
Federation Delegate: Olan Long	509-535-4640	
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:  
 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

### Life Members

Doug Anderson  
 Bill Smelcer  
 Charlotte Smelcer

### Working Groups:

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

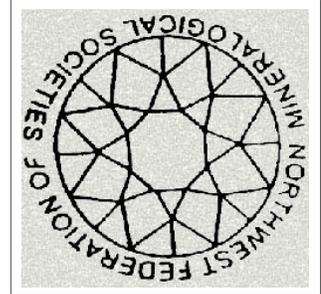
### Affiliations:

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  
PO Box 338  
WALLA WALLA, WA 99362

# The Rock Licker

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Issue 2



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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.