

# THE ROCK LICKER

PAGE 1

MAY 2009

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE-

Did you enjoy last month's program as much as I did? Several people have mentioned how much they liked our game and, especially, how much they appreciated Randy's great hosting job. Many thanks go to Randy and Warren for their invaluable time and input in helping to put the questions together. And many thanks to the three teams - the Delightful Diamonds, the Energetic Emeralds, and the Raging Rubies - for participating so enthusiastically. It was a fun and informative experience!

Make sure that you mark your calendars for a very interesting club meeting on May 12. Our guest speaker will be Jake Shapley from Mid-Columbia Basin Old Nature Education Sciences (McBones). Based in the Tri-Cities, McBones is a non-profit organization that was established just eight months ago. Its mission is to give the community, and local youth in particular, the opportunity to assist in the excavation of a mammoth skeleton near Kennewick. You can find more information online at <http://www.mcbones.org/>.

As always, please remember to bring one or more interesting specimens for our Show-and-Tell. I'm looking forward to seeing you soon!

Tim Tiffin-President

## **WANTED \* \* \* \* WANTED ONE TANDEM AXEL TRAILER**

Our club needs to replace the trailer currently being used to store and haul the clubs show equipment and other materials. Several members have inspected the trailer, which is stored in Bill and Linda Stonecipher's shed for several years and determined that it is no longer sound enough to risk another trip. They have also looked at the possibility of rebuilding the box unit on the frame and determined that that would not be practical.

The club has an urgent need for a tandem axle trailer (two axles and a total of four wheels) that is about 16 feet long, 7 to 8 feet wide and at least 6 feet high. Having rear access would be handy, but having both side and rear access would be most desirable. A bumper pull hitch is necessary.

If anyone has or knows of such a vehicle please call Bill Stonecipher (trailer search chairperson) at (509) 337-6454 and he will contact them.

## COMING EVENTS

*Don't forget the next club meeting is May 12 at 6:30 pm at the Lions Club House in College Place.*

## May

### Refreshments

If your last name begins with the letters A-M please bring Doughnuts or Chips and Dip or Salsa.

## **IN THIS ISSUE**

President's Message	1
Club News	2
Coming Field Trip	3
Knapping Class	4
Field Trip Reports	4-6
April Meeting minutes	7

## Start Planning for the Club's Gem and Mineral Show now

I know that our Gem and Mineral show in September seems like it is a long time from now. However the time will fly and our show will be here before we realize it. So, the question is, what can you be doing right now to get ready for our show? Well, there are several things that you can do.

- Volunteer to tumble some smaller colorful agates, wood or jasper. We will need quite a bit of these sparkly beautiful stones for our kid's mine dig. The kids in our community really love this.
- Start planning and working on a beautiful display case that will show the community our very best material.
- You can be dreaming of small things that we can do to improve our show and let Warren know of your ideas.
- Mark your calendar for September 11-13. We need you to volunteer some time during the weekend to make this years show a success. You will be glad you did, it is an exciting, fulfilling weekend.

Warren Rood—Show Chairman

### May Program Features McBones Project Presentation

Most of us here in SE Washington are not aware of the McBones project. Jake Shapley will be at our May meeting to discuss to project and answer questions the audience may have.

The Mid-Columbia Basin Old Nature Education Sciences, McBones for short, is a non-profit origination established to share information on "The Dig".

"The Dig" provides the youth of the area with a once in a life-time experience that most individuals, let alone local students, never get to experience. 'The Dig' is located on 12-acres of land, in southwest Kennewick, where known Mammoth fossils give our community the chance to excavate and study of bones dated from the Ice Ages. We hope everyone can attend this informative talk.

### May Show N' Tell

Everyone is invited to participate in the Show n' Tell segment of the program each month as part of the educational aspect of our monthly meetings. During this part of the program members display and discuss the items they brought.

Each month the theme for Show n' Tell changes. For most months the theme will be any material that starts with a specified letter of the alphabet. For the April meeting members are asked to bring rock or mineral specimens that start with the letter "S".

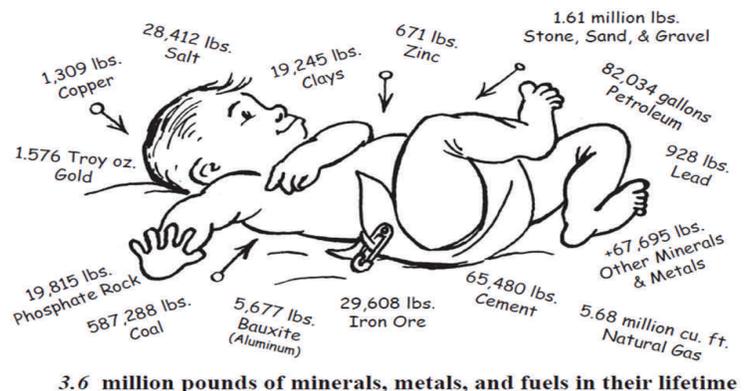
### Local Gem and Mineral Shows

Check out the current NFMS "Northwest Newsletter" for a listing of the upcoming gem and mineral shows in the Pacific Northwest.

A local show coming up soon is the Hactrockhounds Gem and Mineral Society's annual show will be May 16-17 at the Hermiton Conference Center in Hermiston.

Lets show our support of the neighboring clubs by attending one or both of these events.

### Every American Born Will Need . . .



### **Davis Creek Field Trip**

The article below which was included in the April Rock Licker contains details on the trip to Davis Creek. We will discuss the trip at the May meeting and those planning on participating are asked to meet during our refreshment break with Warren Rood to coordinate travel, etc.

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Mark your calendars. May 20-25, the Northwest and California Federations of Mineralogical Societies are hosting an inter-regional rockhound rendezvous and field trip to Davis Creek/Lassen Creek area of northern California. All AMS members and guests are invited.

This area is the premier California obsidian collecting area with an abundance of a great variety of beautiful obsidian. It is noted for sheen obsidian: multi-colored rainbow, electric blue, green, mahogany-gold, silver, gold and pink sheen. Also to be found is mahogany, lace, double flow and needle obsidian.

Events include numerous day trips to the various obsidian gathering sites in the area as well as potluck dinners, happy hours, speakers, evening campfires, knapping demonstrations and tailgate displays.

The rendezvous headquarters will be the Lassen Creek Campground on the Modoc National Forest. RV parks and motels are available in Lakeview, OR and Alturas, CA, both about 30 miles from the campground.

Please notify the Dick Parks at the address below if you plan on attending the gathering. The last day to sign up is May 16.

Dick Parks, Northwest Federation

E-mail: packrats2@msn.com

Phone: 360-892-3716

Safety note: Remember Obsidian is Mother Nature's glass and, like glass, it shatters and is extremely sharp. Goggles or safety glasses, long sleeves shirts and gloves are strongly recommended.

Refer to the March, 2009 Northwest Federation Newsletter, page 11 for additional information.

### **Kid's Corner—**

During the April Junior's activity, the Junior's participated in a contest. They had rock or fossil puzzles and raced to put them together. The older ones worked on their own and the younger ones teamed together. As they finished their puzzles, they picked a nice rock prize. Thank you to Beth Huntley for helping and also volunteering to help in the future with the Junior's activities. See you all next month for fun another activity...

Kim French  
Juniors Advisor

### **Rock tip:**

If you that brought back some of that beautiful opal from the Weaver pit, it is a good idea to store it in a dry place. The constant change in moisture, especially when combined with freezing temperatures can cause it to fracture and crumble.

### **Announcement:**

If you are a paid-up member of the club and are not receiving your NFMS newsletter, please let Sandy Kinsfather know at the May meeting so she can follow up.

### **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**

## Memorial Day Basic Knapping Class

Curt Schell and Ralph Groom will teach a "basics" class on flint knapping the modern way on May 24th and 25th. They will supply some blanks to work on. They will also have our trim saw and grinder to form any slabs you might want to bring. If anyone has a diamond wheel 60-80 grit grinder that they could bring it would also help. The first day will be on knapping. The second day will continue with the knapping and construction of knapping stands for those that want to continue on their own. If anyone wants to build some of their own tools before the class please contact Curt at 529-3036. It would involve a ¾ inch handle ¼ inch copper rod and a set screw.

Any monetary donations will be welcomed to help defray some of Curt's expenses for rock grinder wear and preparing the slab blanks.

### **What to Bring:**

Bring any slabs of obsidian, flint or other soft material that you might want to knap. (Agates and petrified wood must be cooked first). Slabs must be ¼ inch thick.

A chair it makes it a lot easier.

A small mill file

Leather gloves and Safety glasses are a must.

### **Directions:**

Follow Highway 12 to Dixie. Turn right onto the Biscuit Ridge Rd at the Dixie school which is on the corner. Go 2 miles up the Biscuit Ridge Road and turn left onto Seaman Rd. (If you go 2.5 miles you missed the turn and have gone to far.) Go 1.5 miles up Seaman Rd and turn into the field in front of the barn. There is plenty of parking. The knapping will be done in the barn.

The address is 1252 Seaman Rd, Waitsburg.

## April 14 Club meeting Recap

The Energetic Emeralds lived up to their name and came up with a whopping 6500 points during our lively game at the last club meeting.

Randy Pierce was the MC for the evening asking some easy and some tough questions from about 9 different categories. Ralph Tretheway's energetic and knowledgeable team just squeaked by Dave Williams team, the Delightful Diamonds. Those Diamonds were sharp and almost caught up at the end with a grand total of 5800 points.

The Raging Rubies did not quite survive the subtraction of points when they missed an answer. This left them with a minus 300 points. However Bill Stonecipher's team was strong and had a lot of fun along with all of the teams.

Thanks to everyone for their participation.

## Saddle Mtn Trip Report

On the morning of April 11<sup>th</sup> six cars were again winding their way up Saddle Mountain heading for petrified wood. Two other cars joined us later in the day, bringing the total to at least 22 members from our club participating in the trip. Most of us dug in the red-coated area. I believe everyone (except maybe the baby), found plenty of wood. I wish I had taken a picture of baby T in his cardboard box. I need to get Thatcher some gloves, so he can pick up his pieces of wood and still keep his hands clean! I

It was a beautiful day, and after a long winter hibernation, we all enjoyed every bit of it.

Keith Bacus-Trip Leader

## **The Edwards Family Trip**

Charlene and I made a trip down to Las Vegas, Nev. April 4 through 10<sup>th</sup> to meet with some rock hunting friends, Neil and Joy Lamb.

We spend part of the time visiting the new Casino's which are amazing. We also did a little gambling, and actually came out ahead. We stayed at the new South Point Casino which is south of town. A very nice place.

Neil and I spent two days investigating old mine sites close to Las Vegas and over in California. Many of the CA sites involving copper have been re-claimed, but we did find some material on the old dumps. Some of the NV mine tunnels have been closed or covered up, but we did find one old mine still intact with the steel rail tracks still coming from the tunnels and along the mountainside to the dump areas. It had been a large zinc/lead mine and we found some nice specimens. We think it was named the Sultan Mine of the Good Springs Dist. and active in the early 20s.

On the way home Charlene and I stopped just North of Jackpot, NV and dug a few small geodes. We were caught in a bad rain and lightning storm so that ended our digging, and we went on into Twin Falls. Next day we continued on home.

It was a fun trip.

Jack Edwards

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## **Galena Field Trip Report**

Thirty-eight brave souls, looking for adventure, met at the Lions Clubhouse on Sunday, April 26, our destination...Galena, Oregon in search of petrified wood. The 10 car caravan was lead by our fearless leader, Warren, "looking for Walter", Rood. The drive was scenic as we wound around rivers, open grasslands, hills and mountains. Sightings of antelope, Canada geese, mallard ducks and rabbits were sprinkled all along the trip. Warren was in constant contact with those of us with Walkie-Talkies, making sure everyone was still in the caravan.

Did everyone see that high butte just 10 miles from the Ritter turn-off with 10 visible layers of lava flow? (See Vern, Suzanne's geology class is paying off.) Also we saw evidence of long ago dredging just before Galena on the Middle Fork of the John Day River.

The group met up with Elmer Ringering, our guide, at Malheur Campground. We then followed him to the Lick Creek diggings. Weather couldn't have been more pleasant and the digging was good. We all want to thank Elmer for sharing his knowledge of the area and good hunting sights. Elmer took time to show us two big logs, 3 feet in diameter, that he had located. It was a wonderful day. That's what rock hounding is all about.

Wonderful pieces of petrified wood were our reward for an afternoon of digging and hauling it up the hill to our vehicles. Several of us picked up quartz crystals, agate and yellow and red jasper near the dig sight.

Quoting Warren Rood, the trip leader, "As a planner by nature I was worried about the weather, safety, availability of material and people having a good time. It seemed like all of those categories rated an A+."

With another fun, successful rock hounding trip under our belts, we are counting the days until the next Great Club Adventure.

Suzanne Young

## Report On March 28-29 Weaver Pit Trips

The target of these field trips was what has been known locally for years as Gardena Jade. More properly the material is identified as common opal and is deep green in color with a few variations to white, brown and black. A secondary target was small zeolites that fill the small holes in the basalt and have some very interesting color.

When I retrieved the sign up list for the Weaver Pit Field Trip after the March Club meeting I was quite concerned. Nearly 60 people had signed up for the Sunday, March 29 trip. I was not at all comfortable leading that many people, swinging hammers and making flying rock chips, all within a limited area. So I asked if any could come on Saturday rather than Sunday. Enough were flexible enough to come on Saturday to convince me to lead groups both days.

The plan for both days was to meet at the Touchet store at 9 am for the short drive to the pit. Saturday morning, twenty two showed up, including the Teitzel family, members of the Hells Canyon Club in Lewiston. We were able to spread the diggers through out the pit area and lessen the risk of injury. In only a few minutes everyone had found a place along the vein in the upper floor or in one on the inviting cavities in the pit wall and were busy banging their hammers and chisels and admiring the treasures they were recovering. In a few cases they were removing as much as a foot of overhang in the cliff wall to pursue their vein safely.

As far as I know, everyone got some nice samples to take home and only a few suffered minor cuts from the sharp edges of the rocks. By mid-afternoon, most had collected their fill and were ready to head home.

As we were leaving a few asked about looking at the large erratic in a field a few miles east of the pit so we stopped there. It is hard to comprehend how a solid rock as big as an automobile could have floated all the way from Montana in an ice sheet that was part of one of the great Missoula floods.

Further up the Gardena Road we stopped to view the headstock of the Gardena Ditch where it comes across the valley from a high spot just beyond the famous (but restricted) little grand canyon area.

On Sunday morning I woke up before 6 am to eight inches of snow on the ground. Several people called me and I told them the trip was canceled. Then I talked to some Touchet area friends and was told they had some rain but no snow. So I whipped myself around to try to get to the Touchet store by 9 am. The weather there was breezy but not too cold and when we were in the pit itself things were pretty comfortable. A total of 29 hardy souls showed up that day, although some of those I had mislead earlier did manage to get there a little late.

Warren and Randy had arranged to have a generator and jackhammer and rotary drill to speed up excavation of the material along side the seam in the upper pit floor. That is not my form of rockhounding, but it sure did expedite getting to some very nice material. I was a little concerned about the closeness people were working but they spread out along the seam better as time went on.

By mid morning nearly all of the digging holes in the wall on the upper floor and some on the lower floor had people hammering and chiseling on the wall. They hammered, kibitzed, admired each others prizes and changed spots whenever they wanted. Some barely stopped for lunch.

Many gathered their precious finds and left as the afternoon wore on with the last of leaving around 6pm. Again, we had a few minor rock cuts from the sharp edges, but to my knowledge, no serious injuries. Thank you, God.

We had a wide representation from the club. There were experienced rockhounds who went right to work and there were some - both juniors and adults - who had never been on a field trip before. It is heartening to see how the more experienced help the first timers get started. Especially the kids. They will be talking to their classmates about what fun they had - the best possible.

When the numbers dwindled, my worry stomach quit grumbling so much and I was thankful and tired. A good time to thank the God who made all of these beautiful rocks for us and who helped us rescue them safely to take home and continue to admire.

Bill Stonecipher-trip leader

## Secretary's Report—April 14, 2009 Club Meeting Minutes –Sandy Kinsfather

President Tim Tiffin opened the meeting at 6:45 p.m.

**Welcomed Guests:** President Tim and the club members welcomed Ron & Sharlene Johnson, now new members & John Rock, who became a member during the break.

**Minutes:** Tim asked for a motion to approve the club minutes for March 10, 2009. It was so motioned and seconded. We voted and it was approved.

**Announcements:** Tim mentioned that we are still searching for a trailer.

He also mentioned that Treasurer Randy Pierce received a letter from the Lions Club stating that they are raising our rent to \$75.00 in July. Tim mentioned that we are looking for a different venue for our meeting place.

Next month at our general meeting, we will have a representative from McBones, a group from Kennewick, who found a mammoth last September. This group lets the public assist by allowing people to help dig up the Mammoth.

A possible field trip for the group would be to help dig up the mammoth.

**Field Trip:** April 26, Sunday, is our next club field trip to the Middle Fork of John Day for petrified wood and agates with Elmer Ringering leading. It is a 3-hour trip, no hard rock digging, and a fairly easy hike.

**Classes:** Curt Schell told the club that he would have a flint knapping class Memorial Day weekend. He said he could have 4 set-ups in his barn at his place in Dixie on Seaman Rd. He said to bring ¼ inch slabs of obsidian or soft mat rock.

**Treasurer's Report:** Randy Pierce mentioned that he has put together the membership list and there are some names on the list that have not paid yet.

**Show & Tell:** Keith Bacus lead out in the show & tell with rocks and gems beginning with the letter "R". Paul McCaskill showed what Keith calls "replacement wood". Jack Edwards showed rosites, related to quartz. Frank Vasconcelles displayed round rocks he made into spheres. Glen Wister showed a large piece of rose quartz and rhodonite. Bill Stonecipher showed rhodochrosite. Rudi Domazlicky displayed a large petrified wood chunk, 25.8 lbs. Dave Williams showed rutile from Arkansas and Norway, and ruby zinc form Oklahoma. Linda Stonecipher showed rhyolite, realgar with orpiment crystals (arsenic). Ralph Trethewey showed rock called Senora Sunrise from New Mexico. Keith Bacus "replacement wood" or petrified wood from Saddle Mt. and limb casts from Jackpot. Warren Rood showed a large piece of petrified wood from Saddle Mt. Bud Roup showed a couple of buckets of petrified wood that he and his daughter found at Saddle Mt. and a large piece of opalite

from the Weaver Pit. Janelle Lacey showed chalcedony from Steen's Mt and dinosaur bones. We appreciate all the participants.

**Upcoming Shows:** Tim mentioned the Lakeside Gem & Mineral Show in Kennewick and the Yakima Show, both this weekend.

**Raffle:** Bill Stonecipher showed some of the raffle items that included goggles, wire wrapped bracelet, bucket, treasure bag, crystal specimen, and a few others. Bill had about 9 young helpers.

After the raffle, Bill thanked all the people on the Weaver Pit dig for being cooperative and helpful to the others on the dig.

**Break:** At 7:30 p.m. we took a break for refreshments of sweet rolls, cookies, donuts and strawberries and something to drink.

**Program:** The club members played a game of Jeopardy. We divided into 3 groups: Bill's group-- Raging Rubies, Ralph's group-- Energetic Emeralds, and Dave's group-- Delightful Diamonds. Randy Pierce was the Jeopardy host, Tim Tiffin was the scorekeeper, and Warren Rood & Tim were the judges.

The groups had a fun time of answering questions from these categories: agates, club members, fossils, gems, geology, lapidary, minerals, and miscellaneous. The winning group was the Energetic Emeralds.

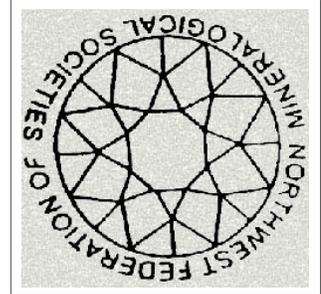
Meeting then adjourned 9:00 p.m.

## Treasurer's Report—

There are still some unpaid memberships, which may mean they won't receive the Rock Licker in the mail until current. The club relies on these paid memberships and the monies raised from our shows to fund all of the club activities throughout the entire year, including the club meetings, the Rock Licker and the postage. The paid memberships are greatly appreciated, and allow our club to maintain a representative community presence.

MARCUS WHITMAN GEM AND MINERAL SOCIETY  
PO Box 338  
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**The Rock Licker**  
Volume 50  
Issue 5



To:

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THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF  
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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.