

# Grindings

**Idaho Gem Club, Inc.**

P.O. Box 8443 ♡ Boise, Idaho 83707-2443

VOL 71 NO 4

April 2011



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**467-9286**

**highdesert2003@q.com**

**CLUB WEB SITE**

**www.idahogemclub.com**

## President's Message

Spring has sprung and can't wait for the warmer weather. We are all saying and thinking "If you don't like the weather just wait five minutes." Spring in Idaho... we have to love and wait for it. I'm sure excited about our next field trip, so get your rock picks ready for some fun.

Field trips and workshops are a fantastic feature of belonging to the Gem Club, so I would love to see all the new members along with junior members taking part of all we have to offer. I have been working hard with Aaron coming up with new locations and things to do on our field trips. Our ears are waiting to hear of any great ideas and or locations. As a matter of fact Aaron spent a night stuck in the mud while scouting a new location.

Update on our Gem Show down in Turlock CA. I'm always impressed on what a wonderful show the Mother Lode Club puts on. Over the past five years they have doubled the size and attendance of their show. Turn out was great and people still found some money to spend. Weather was also a nice bonus and enjoyed wearing short sleeves for a few days.

The Club would like to welcome our new Secretary, Ben Nunez. He is ready to dig in and work hard for us. Ben has a passion for rocks and fossils. He would like to become a geologist or a paleontologist; he also belongs to a paleontologist club. I'm glad to see young energetic new members like Ben. Again, welcome and enjoy your year.

*Brent Stewart*  
*President*

**MINUTES OF THE IDAHO GEM CLUB  
BOARD MEETING ♦  
APRIL 5, 2011**

**Minutes of the Idaho Gem Club Board Meeting:**

**Called Meeting to order by President, Brent Stewart at 7:31 p.m.**

**Board members present: Ed Moser, Deanna Ashton, Rick Corbett, Dan Phillips, Jim Clinton, Brent Stewart, Willa Renken, Jason Madsen.**

**Officers present: Kathy Griffin, Ben Nunez**

**Guests: Gene & Joan Alvey, Shirly McCreath.**

**Any corrections to the minutes: No Report**

**Secretary's Report: No report**

**Treasurer's Report: Kathy Griffin discussed balance & disbursement of Gem show.**

**Federation Report: Chuck McCreath, Discussed excavation sites of Federation field trips.**

**Committee Reports:**

**Field Trip: Cold/ Windy weather, overall successful, those who went enjoyed themselves**

**April Program: Quartz crystal mining, UT**

**Mining Claims: No report**

**Public Lands Adviser/ Scholarship: Discussed scholarship formalities/ applicants**

**Juniors: Discussed visitation by geology professor from University of Idaho**

**Workshop: Thursday April 21st, 6pm**

**Old Business: Discussed Grit & tumbler issues, also polish issues. Voted to Continue tumbling program**

**New Business: Review proposed budget for 2011. Motion to accept budget made by Ed Moser, 2nd by Deanna Ashton, motion was carried**

**Membership applications: Steve Curtin, Glenn**

**Westendorf, Alta M. Seitz, Don & Betty Metzger, Ben & Brett Nunez, Faye Stokes, Jim & Jacque Yandle**

**Motion to accept new members: Rick Corbett, 2nd, Ed Moser, motion was carried**

*Respectfully submitted,  
Ben Nunez  
Secretary*

**MINUTES OF THE IDAHO GEM CLUB  
GENERAL MEETING ♦  
MARCH 22, 2011**

General Meeting Minutes for March 2011

Brent Stewart called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

Phil Capps led the club in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Brent Stewart asked guests to introduce themselves.

Each Junior received a Mexican coconut geode, courtesy of Brent Stewart.

Door prizes were awarded by Linda Phillips.

Building fund prize was awarded by Jim Clinton.

Brent Stewart introduce new members. They are John and Nancy Skene, Phil and Wesley Capps, Jerry and Janie Sankow, Janelle Winterstein, Anthony Rose, Sandra Stephenson, Cathy Bourner, Brain Goffin, Linda Lawson, Alan and Pam Miller, Jim and Phyllis Mitchell, Pamela Paterson, Ben Cook, Lonnie and Cindy Hicks, Bob Regan, Robert Dodson, Shannon Tharp, and Jack Lavoie.

Secretary's report - No report.

Treasurer's report – Kathy Griffin discussed the balances and disbursements of the club.

Federation report – Chuck McCreath discussed the Federation newsletter and reported that the delegates will be going to the regular meeting and not the mid year meeting.

**Committee Reports**

Field trip – The club will be visiting the Queenstone and Wandoodle claims the coming Saturday. The group will meet at Ion Jct. At 7:00 am.

(continued on page 4)

## Did Vikings navigate by polarized light?

'Sunstone' crystals may have helped seafarers to find the Sun on cloudy days.

Jo Marchant

As highly skilled navigators, Vikings crossed thousands of kilometres of open sea.

A Viking legend tells of a glowing 'sunstone' that, when held up to the sky, revealed the position of the Sun even on a cloudy day. It sounds like magic, but scientists measuring the properties of light in the sky say that polarizing crystals — which function in the same way as the mythical sunstone — could have helped ancient sailors to cross the northern Atlantic. A review of their evidence is published today in *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B*1.

The Vikings, seafarers from Scandinavia who travelled widely and settled in swathes of Northern Europe, the British Isles and the northern Atlantic from around 750 to 1050 AD, were skilled navigators, able to cross thousands of kilometres of open sea between Norway, Iceland and Greenland. Perpetual daylight during the summer sailing season in the far north would have prevented them from using the stars as a guide to their positions, and the magnetic compass had yet to be introduced in Europe — in any case, it would have been of limited use so close to the North Pole.

But Viking legends, including an Icelandic saga centring on the hero Sigurd, hint that these sailors had another navigational aid at their disposal: a *sólarsteinn*, or sunstone.

The saga describes how, during cloudy, snowy weather, King Olaf consulted Sigurd on the location of the Sun. To check Sigurd's answer, Olaf "grabbed a sunstone, looked at the sky and saw from where the light came, from which he guessed the position of the invisible Sun"<sup>2</sup>. In 1967, Thorkild Ramskou, a Danish archaeologist, suggested that this stone could have been a polarizing crystal such as Icelandic spar, a transparent form of calcite, which is common in Scandinavia.

(Vikings - continued on page 11)

## Gem Show 2011

Thanks to all the individual club members who helped out this year. The annual gem mineral and fossil show was once again a resounding success. The turnout for setup and tear down was tremendous and we managed to set another record this year. The efforts of the demonstrators are always appreciated as they were again this year. They show the public the many talents they have learned in the lapidary field. Willa did a wonderful job arranging our demonstrators through out the building, giving more people the opportunity to see each persons expertise. As always the display cases were once again spectacular. Twila worked very hard to see everyone that contacted her was given their space to display some very unique materials. Mike Jones and Laura Lindsey did a wonderful job with the grab bags, wheel of fortune and the garnet table. We do need someone to be the garnet table committee chair. Mike and Laura did a wonderful job this year but they are already doing their part with the grab bags and wheel of fortune. The main job is scheduling people to work 2 hour shifts during the show. So with the show barely in our rear view mirror I will start reminding you now to sew more bags and keep your tumblers going. I would like to give a heart felt thanks to the committee chairs for their efforts in scheduling the people who worked the different venues during the show. We appreciate all the individual efforts provided by all of you and thank you for once again making this year's show profitable, productive, and special for all those who came.

*Doug Renken*

*Assistant show chair*

(General Meeting - continued from page 2)

Librarian – Aaron Wanner reported that there are some great books and media to visit at the library.

Juniors – Ed Moser reported that there will be some donated materials to pass out at the Junior's meeting.

Show – Doug Renken thanked everyone for the help with the show. Charlie Smith also wrote a letter of gratitude to the club for all the help at the show.

Workshop – Willa Renken reported that there will not be a workshop in March.

New Business – Brent Stewart asked the membership if there was anyone willing to fill the Secretary's position. Ben Nunez volunteered.

The program was a presentation on Geodes. All the Juniors had an opportunity to crack open their Mexican coconut geodes.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Madsen  
Acting Secretary

## Jewelry Tips

### SOLDERING

### EARPOSTS



**I don't solder enough earposts to develop the dexterity for holding the wire by hand. So I modified a set of locking tweezers to help with the job. It's quick and easy.**

**Use a triangular file to make a notch at the tweezer tip to keep the wire from moving around, and file a groove in the tweezer body to rest the tweezers on a stand that keeps the earpost wire at the right angle. The stand is just soldered up from scrap copper or nickel.**

**This way the tweezers act like a see-saw that's weighted just a little bit more on the soldering end. I felt that if the tweezers put too much pressure on the earpost wire, it could buckle when the wire gets up to soldering temperature.**

### LOWERING THE NOISE

**A simple way to cut down the noise when you're hammering on your mini anvil or bench block is to place it on an old mouse pad or other similar rubber material.**

**Acknowledgement to be included with each publication: More BenchTips by Brad Smith are at [groups.yahoo.com/group/BenchTips/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/BenchTips/) or [facebook.com/BenchTips](http://facebook.com/BenchTips)**

**March Field Trip Report**

Good news. The rain held off long enough for a chilly but fun early day of moist digging at the well known fire opal claim, Whang Duddle on Saturday 19 March 2011. The 19 members, 1 guest, and 3 juniors braved the cold wind in the pit they had dug to find their own opal to add to the collection they have or they are just starting.

Around mid day the caravan packed up and went out to the clubs other claim Queenstone for colorful jasper. Several nice pieces were found right around the parking area.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Aaron Wanner*

**Northwest Federation News****Inter-Regional Rockhound Rendezvous  
and Field Trip**

**May 27 – 30, 2011**

**Hampton Butte, OR**

**The Northwest and California Federations  
of Mineralogical Societies**

**NW Rockhound Retreat**

**Hancock Field Station, Antelope, OR -  
Labor Day weekend, September 5-11, 2011**

**For more information please go to this  
website if you aren't getting the Northwest  
Federation News:**

**[http://www.amfed.org/nfms/nwnews/  
nw0311.pdf](http://www.amfed.org/nfms/nwnews/nw0311.pdf)**

**April Field Trip  
Haystack Butte/ Negro Rock**

**When:**

April 23rd 2011 weather depending.

**What:**

We'll be collecting jasper at Haystack Butte, thanks to Steve Schultz granting permission on his claim. Plus petrified wood at Negro Rock. This trip will also have a demonstration on scouting your hunting area.

**Where:**

6:30 am Meeting @ Flying J 3512 Franklin Rd Caldwell, ID 83605 just off Hwy 84. Take Exit 29 then a right at the light and a right in to the parking lot of Flying J. 7:00 am Travel to Haystack Butte. High clearance vehicle needed for rocky terrain or hitch a ride with others from the club. Location to the site is tricky, so the best way is to follow others in the caravan.

**Equipment needed:**

Rock hammer, shovel, bag or bucket for specimens collected, appropriate clothing for the weather and location, lunch, water, fuel, and any items you need for your personal use. Don't forget your EYE PROTECTION!

**Other equipment you may need:**

Sledge hammer, rock bar, pry bar, and a spray bottle with water.

Thank you again Steve. You can reach Steve @ <http://www.silverstreams.com>

If you would like more information, please come to our Idaho Gem Club meeting on April 19th, 7:30 p.m. at the Mountain View Church of the Brethren 2833 N. Cole Rd. Boise, Idaho

Call our Field Trip Chairman

Aaron Wanner @

208-794-9474 cell phone or

Email: [aaronwanner@gmail.com](mailto:aaronwanner@gmail.com)



## DATES TO REMEMBER

**GENERAL MEETING**  
3rd. Tuesday of every month

**April 19, 2011**  
**Church of the Brethren**  
**2823 N. Cole Road, Boise, Idaho**  
**Meeting Starts at 7:30 pm.**

**BOARD MEETING:**  
1st. Tuesday of every month

**May 3, 2011**  
**Church of the Brethren**  
**2823 N. Cole Road, Boise, Idaho**  
**Meeting Starts at 7:30 pm.**

## GOLD IDENTIFICATION WORKSHOP

**1 hour workshop**  
**(practice panning)**

**Sunday, May 1, 2:00pm**

**Instructors: Lois McDonald**  
**& Coyote Short**

**Location: Idaho Museum of Mining**  
**and Geology**

**2455 Old Penitentiary Rd**  
**Boise, 81712**

**Information: 713-2061**

**Free for IMMG members,**  
**\$2.00 non-members**

## APRIL

4/2	Sherri Potts	5/6	Jeremy Schuster
4/2	Lance Olson	5/7	Larry Arnold
4/3	Bill Marsh	5/8	Leah Kelly
4/3	Marcy Belcoe	5/11	Phil Capps
4/3	Hannah Denton	5/14	Carl Woodland
4/8	Phyllis Marsh	5/15	Dick Corbett
4/8	Ann Brasley	5/16	Mike Witschen
4/10	Douglas Williams	5/18	Geri Whitlach
4/11	Frank Baillargeon	5/19	Linda Lawson
4/12	Nathaniel Loewen	5/19	Twila Gallaher
4/12	Joyce Murray	5/20	Camille Ridenour
4/13	Rick Olmstead	5/21	Amy Watson
4/13	Edwin Moser	5/21	Nathan Brasley
4/15	Dorothy Snowball	5/22	Janice Egner
4/17	Jim Da Silva	5/22	Larry Odell
4/18	Tara Hilgert	5/22	Steve Curtin
4/22	Willa Renken	5/24	Deanna Holloway
4/24	Neil Potts	5/24	Mary Ridley
4/26	Vern Boyd	5/24	Chelsey Griffith
4/27	Terry Belcoe	5/25	Mike Egner
4/27	Linda Harder	5/26	Chuck Fawcett
4/27	Nikki Kelly	5/27	Joan Dethlefs
4/28	Kyleigh Jackson	5/30	Pamela Peterson
		5/31	Alea Ingle

**April Birthstones**  
**Faceted -**  
**Diamond**

**Cabochon -**  
**Rock Crystal**

## MAY

5/2	Frank Masley
5/2	Marshall Robbins
5/5	Deb Butte
5/6	Richard Clark

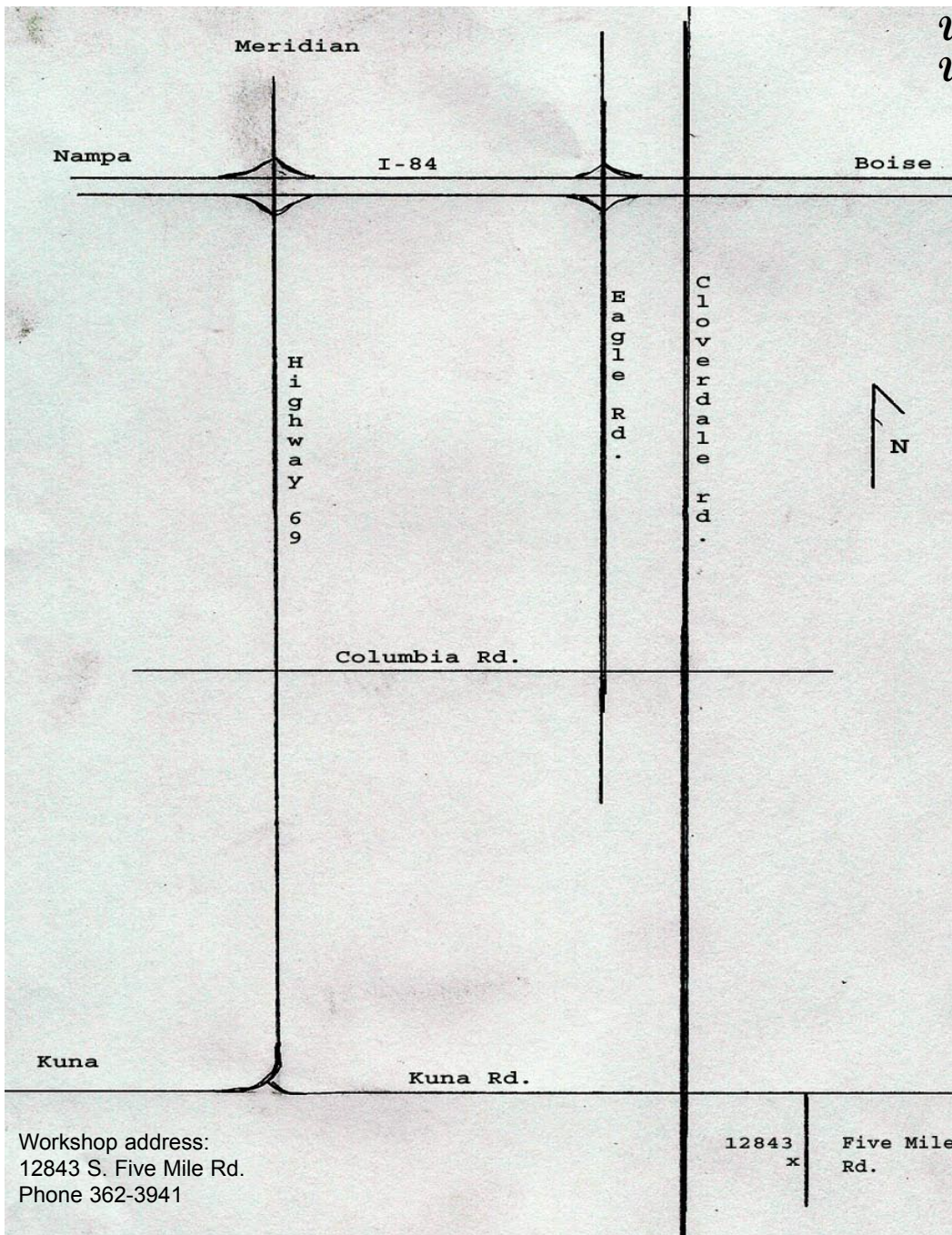
**May Birthstones**  
**Faceted**  
**Emerald**

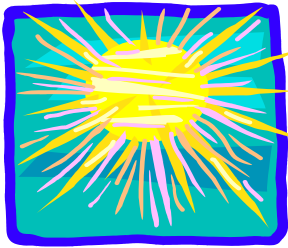
**Cabochon**  
**Chrysochryse**

# Workshop April 21st

We will have another workshop this month. It will be Thursday April 21st. The shop will be open at 6:30pm and run until 9:30pm. If you are interested please sign up at the meeting or call me at home. We also offer wire wrapping which carries a small charge for the wire. The address is 12843 S Five Mile Rd off of Kuna Rd. I will need instructors so please step forward and volunteer. It usually takes about five to seven instructors, depending on the interest. If you aren't able to make this month we will be having them throughout the year so everyone who wants should get a chance to learn how to cab. All we ask is that you please help clean up the machines at the end of the evening. Hope to see you all there.

*Willa Renken  
Workshop Chairmen*





# Sunshine Report

Welcome New Member

Get Well Flowers were sent to Alice Stewart, Alice recently had surgery.

Sympathy Cards were sent to:

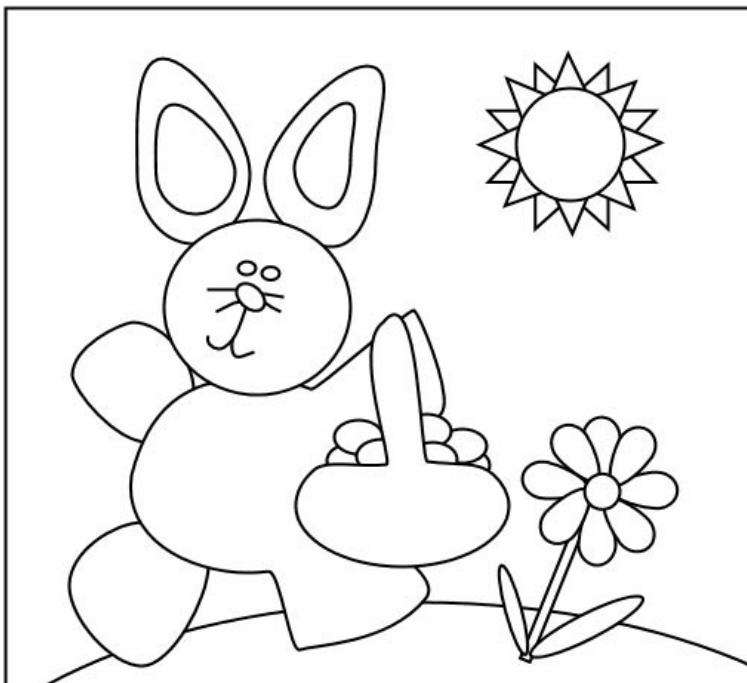
Lynne Davis, Lynne's father passed away on March 25th

Harold & Deanna Holloway,  
Harold's brother passed away.

Our thoughts and prayers are with you in this time of need!

*Arlene Bailey*

*Sunshine Lady*



**Steve Curtin**

**John Beck & Alix Schow**  
3325 N. Bottle Brush Ave.  
Boise, ID. 83713-1963

**Don & Betty Metzger**  
7602 Charismatic St.  
Nampa, ID. 83687-7532

**Ben & Brett Nunez**  
7432 W. Lamplighter St.  
Boise, ID 83714-2057

**Alta M. Seitz**  
8100 Dutch Ln.  
Payette, ID. 83661-5523

**Dick & Kari Stokes**  
**Macy & Faye**  
5445 N. Rosa Springs Ave.  
Meridian, ID. 83646-5833

**Glenn Westendorf**  
808 N. 10th  
Boise, ID. 83702-5422

**Jim & Jacque Yandle**  
5599 S. Santa Cruz Way  
Boise, ID. 83709-5164



## Show Hostess Report

I want to thank all who helped welcome our guests at the Idaho Gem Club's show.

I really appreciated everyone who stepped forward to meet and greet our guests and answer their questions. I am sorry I was unable to do more due to the nerve damage in my leg and I really want to thank Kathy Griffin for her immense and thoughtful help! I could not have done as much as I was able to do without her.

For those who want to know what is involved in hosting the show it includes gathering the door prize donations from each vendor (30 total if we provide door prizes each half-hour), drawing the names/announcing/collecting the winner's information for Expo Idaho, answering questions/providing directions to specific vendors or to those who might have answers about what kind of rock they have, giving out membership forms and information and collecting them and the dues, selling cookbooks, etc.

*Cathy Parsons*

## Rocky Rattlers

**Juniors need to bring their folders to the meeting this month**

### April Refreshment Committee

**Chair: Richard & Sue Clark 336-6930  
Jim & Belle Witt 890-8035  
Shelley Shearer 891-072**

#### REFRESHMENT COMMITTEE GUIDELINES

Need approximately 15 dozen cookies. Wrapped door prizes are also needed. Arrive early enough to set up the chairs. The chairperson brings the coffee urn, coffee, punch, cream, sugar, cups and napkins. Afterward, put meeting tables & chairs away, clean kitchen and sweep the room. Gather and take all the trash with you. Don't forget it is the responsibility of the chair for the coming month to pick up the coffeepot, take it home and bring it the next meeting.

### May Refreshment Committee

**Chair: Loren Francis 467-1498  
Cathy Parsons 465-1646  
Jean Dingley 867-9892**

**FROM THE EDITOR**

The deadline for articles is the board meeting, if it needs to be typed. If the article is sent via e-mail the deadline is the Saturday after the board meeting.

**Phone: (208) 467-9286**  
**E-mail: highdesert2003@q.com**  
**My mailing Address is:**  
**Tony Griffin**  
**4126 Apache Dr.**  
**Nampa, Idaho 83686-8978**

**Electronic Grindings**

Thanks to those who signed up for the electronic Grindings. Not only does this save the club money it helps save me time putting on labels and postage. Currently it costs around \$1.70 per issue or \$20.40 per year to print and mail each newsletter.

If you would like to receive the Grindings newsletter through e-mail let me know. Please send an e-mail to WLR\_DKR@msn.com and I will add you to our e-mail list. The Grindings will be sent in PDF format.

**SAVE STAMPS**

Just a note to remind people to save their postage stamps to donate to the Federation. The stamps are sold and the proceeds are donated to cancer research. Cut at least 1/4 inch margin around the stamps. You can turn them into Chuck McCreath at our next meeting. **THANK YOU!**

**Sunshine Lady**

Arlene Bailey is the club sunshine lady. Her job is to send some cheer to members who are ill or just need some cheering up. But she needs your help in doing this job. If you know of someone who has been recently ill let her know so she can send them a card. Her phone number is 562-8030. Thank you in advance for your help.

**"CODE OF ETHICS"**

I will respect both private and public property and will do no collecting on privately owned land without permission from the owner.

I will keep informed on all laws, regulations or rules governing collecting on public lands and will observe them.

I will, to the best of my ability, ascertain the boundary lines of property on which I plan to collect.

I will use no firearms or blasting material in collecting areas.

I will cause no willful damage to property of any kind such as fences, signs, buildings, etc.

I will leave all gates as found.

I will build fires only in designated or safe places and will be certain they are completely extinguished before leaving the area.

I will discard no burning material - matches, cigarettes, etc.

I will fill all excavation holes which may be dangerous to livestock.

I will not contaminate wells, creeks, or other water supplies.

I will cause no willful damage to collecting material and will take home only what I can reasonably use.

I will practice conservation and undertake to utilize fully and well the materials I have collected and will recycle my surplus for the pleasure and benefit of others.

I will support the rockhound project H.E.L.P (Help Eliminate Litter Please) and will leave all collecting areas devoid of litter, regardless of how found.

I will cooperate with field trip leaders and those in designated authority in all collecting areas.

I will report to my club or federation officer, Bureau of Land Management or other authorities, any deposit of petrified wood or other materials on public lands which should be protected for the enjoyment of future generations for public educational and scientific purposes.

I will appreciate and protect our heritage of natural resources.

I will observe the "Golden Rule", I will use Good Outdoor Manners and will at all times conduct myself in a manner which will add to the stature and Public Image of Rockhounds everywhere.

**THE GRINDINGS**

is the monthly newsletter of the Idaho Gem Club, Inc., associated with the Northwest Federation of Mineralogical Societies. Permission to copy is freely granted when proper credit is given to both the publication and the author. Articles without bylines are written by the Editor or President.

**CHECK OUT THE CLUB WEBSITE!**

[www.idahogemclub.com](http://www.idahogemclub.com)



(Vikings - continued from page 3)

Light consists of electromagnetic waves that oscillate perpendicular to the direction of the light's travel. When the oscillations all point in the same direction, the light is polarized. A polarizing crystal such as calcite allows only light polarized in certain directions to pass through it, and can appear bright or dark depending on how it is oriented with respect to the light.

### Centered on the light

Scattering by air molecules in the atmosphere causes sunlight to become polarized, with the line of polarization tangential to circles centred on the Sun. So Ramskou argued that by holding a crystal such as calcite up to the sky and rotating it to check the direction of polarization of the light passing through it, the Vikings could have deduced the position of the Sun, even when it was hidden behind clouds or fog, or was just beneath the horizon.

Historians have debated the possibility ever since, with some arguing that the technique would have been pointless, because it would only work if the crystal was pointed at patches of clear sky, and in such conditions it would be possible to estimate the position of the Sun with the naked eye, for example from the bright lining of cloud tops.

Gábor Horváth, an optics researcher at Eötvös University in Budapest, and Susanne Åkesson, a migration ecologist from Lund University, Sweden, have been testing these assumptions since 2005. The special issue of *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B* in which their review appears is dedicated to biological research on polarized light<sup>1</sup>.

In one study, the researchers took photographs of partly cloudy or twilight skies in northern Finland through a 180° fisheye lens, and asked test subjects to estimate the position of the Sun<sup>4</sup>. Errors of up to 99° led the researchers to conclude that the Vikings could not have relied on naked-eye guesses of the Sun's position.

To check whether sunstones would work better, in 2005 they measured the polarization pattern of the entire sky under a range of weather conditions during a crossing of the Arctic Ocean on the Swedish icebreaker *Oden*.

### Through the clouds

The researchers were surprised to find that in foggy or totally overcast conditions the pattern of light polarization was similar to that of clear skies. The polarization was not as strong, but Åkesson believes that it could still have provided Viking navigators with useful information.

"I tried such a crystal on a rainy overcast day in Sweden," she says. "The light pattern varied depending on the orientation of the stone."

She and Horváth are now planning further experiments to determine whether volunteers can accurately work out the Sun's position using crystals in various weather conditions.

Sean McGrail, who studied ancient seafaring at the University of Oxford, UK, before retiring, says that the studies are interesting but there is no real evidence to indicate that the Vikings actually used such crystals. "You can show how they could be used, but that isn't proof," he says. "People were navigating long before this without any instruments."

Surviving written records indicate that Viking and early medieval sailors crossed the north Atlantic using the Sun's position on clear days as a guide, in combination with the positions of coastlines, flight patterns of birds, migration paths of whales and distant clouds over islands, says Christian Keller, a specialist in North Atlantic archaeology at the University of Oslo. "You don't need to be a wizard," he says. "But you do need to combine a lot of different sorts of observations." Keller says he is "totally open" to the idea that the Vikings also used sunstones, but is waiting for archaeological evidence. "If we find a shipwreck with a crystal on board, then I would be happy," he says.

<http://www.nature.com/news/2011/110131/full/news.2011.58.html>

Emerald Gems March 2011

The purpose of the Idaho Gem Club is to promote mutual, educational and scientific interests and benefits of its members in mineralogy, geology, gemology, the art of lapidary and kindred arts and sciences.

**Dues:**

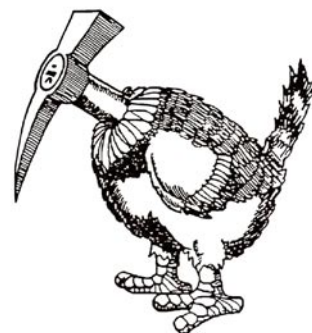
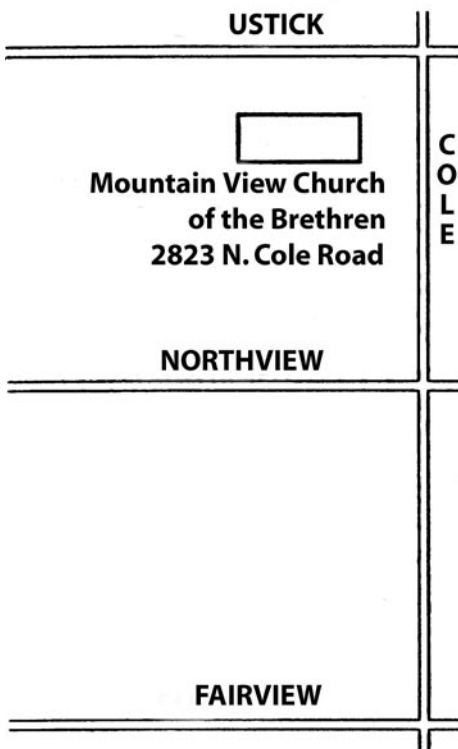
\$12.00 per person  
\$15.00 per couple  
\$17.50 per family

**Subscription:**

\$10.00 per year

**General Meeting:**

3rd. Tuesday of each  
Month at 7:30 p.m.



The Whangdoodle Bird  
(Often seen on field trips)



**Idaho Gem Club, Inc.**

P.O. Box 8443  
Boise, Idaho 83707-2443

