


Grindings

Idaho Gem Club, Inc.

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

VOL 73 NO 7

July 2013



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Brent Stewart
President
863-9336

Willa Renken
1st Vice President
362-3941

2nd Vice President
Phil Neuhoff
939-4508

Ed Moser
340-8060

Jim Clinton
283-8891

Deana Ashton
794-5628

Melodee Worley
890-6834

Phillip Worley
891-3990

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906-5968



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322-5985

TREASURER

Barbara Wanner
794-9474

NFMS DIRECTOR
Charles McCreath
344-5085

EDITOR

Tony Griffin
467-9286

highdesert2003@q.com

CLUB WEB SITE

www.idahogemclub.com

President's Message

I hope everyone had a safe and fun 4th of July! The weather was pleasant for the forth considering how miserably hot it has been. I just returned from the rough rock show over in Madras Oregon. Had a enjoyable time and was surrounded by beautiful rock and lots of other rock hounds. Yes, it was hot over in Oregon also, but we managed all in the name of rocks.

The General meeting for July and August will be at the Old Timer's Shelter in Ann Morrison Park at 6:30 pm. There will be a potluck and an auction with choice material to follow. Please come and join the fun and bring a hot or cold dish to share. This is a great time to socialize and show off your culinary skills along with acquiring some nice material from the auction. The Club provides the drinks and ice cream but you will need to bring your own table service. The Old Timer's Shelter in Ann Morrison Park is off 9th Street and Royal Blvd. See map inside for directions. Remember there will be an auction after each picnic so if you have a rock or item you would like to donate for this it would be greatly appreciated. Our auctions go toward off setting the cost of your Banquet each year so the funds are applied to help with this event.

It's also not too early to begin working on your Project of the Year contest entry. We would love to see as many entries as possible. It's so much fun to see the variety and quality of the projects presented and it would be wonderful to be able to award everyone for their beautiful work. The winner (club members vote at the December meeting) will have his or her project in a display case with the plaque [which travels with the winner for the year] at the club show in February. Time just goes by so quickly and before we know it Project of the year time will be here. This is the time to start in on those projects.

Be aware that with all the wet weather we have had earlier this spring, the grass is taller and now that it's dry it doesn't take much to spark a fire with a hot catalytic converter, cigarettes or campfires. Always contact the BLM to check on areas that may be closed due to fires. Be aware of critters hiding in the tall grasses. Last year we came across several rattlesnakes, they will usually avoid you unless they feel threatened. Please respect nature and think things through so you do not cause harm to yourself, others, or the great outdoors. I would also like to thank members of the club for their participation on our field trips; sounds like everyone is having a lot of fun and have been able to make new friends. Sounds like everyone had a great trip to McDermitt and I have seen some of your bounties from that trip. Impressive!! Next field trip will be to Dismal Swamp and it was devastated from the terrible fires last year, so it could be an interesting trip, so go with caution and care.

Brent Stewart

President

MINUTES OF THE IDAHO GEM CLUB GENERAL MEETING June 18, 2013

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

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Aaron Wanner.
Adult door prizes were drawn for 21 lucky winners.
Junior door prizes were drawn for 13 lucky winners.
Building fund prizes were drawn for 4 lucky winners.

A motion to accept the minutes as printed in the "Grindings" was made by Willa Renken and seconded by Phil Worley, motion carried.

Secretary's report-- received a few pieces of mail for our treasurer. I placed some flyers on the greeting table about an upcoming rock show being put on by Maplewood Rock & Gem Club, out of Edmonds, WA. You can find further information by checking www.maplewoodrockclub.com or www.facebook.com/MaplewoodRCG. I've delivered another directory to Jeri Kelly. I'm still awaiting Max White to get his. We had numerous new members and guests present this evening.

Treasurer's report-- Barbara spoke of balances and disbursements.

Federation report-- Charles spoke about the recent Proposal by the Lakeside Gem & Mineral Club, Inc. at our recent board meeting, it was accepted and a motion carried. He's now making it known to members. A motion to approve the new resolution was by Brent Stewart. Willa Renken called for a vote and it was approved by all.

Junior's report-- Ed thanked all the visitors for coming this evening. Tonight the juniors will be studying fossils. He spoke about "sand dollars" and the many varieties. In September the juniors will be studying sand dollars.

Library report-- I've received a new Rock & Gem Magazine and the library will be open at our break time.

Workshop report-- There will be a workshop this Thursday the 20th. From 6:30 to 9:30pm. The big saws won't be run at this workshop due to Phil and Jim being out of town for the upcoming field trip to McDermitt, NV. Marge won't be there either but Rick and his dad, Dick will be available to help with wire wrapping. Willa asked for helpers for the evening and hopes she'll be seeing some new faces.

Phil Neuhooff said tonight's program will be an auction of different donated items. The next two months will also be auctions at our potluck meetings in July and August. He asked for volunteers to help with papering the tables and providing door prizes for the adults and juniors.

License plates report-- Deana reported advertising for the plates as well as membership for the club was a great success.

Several members came to the Renaissance Fair in costume. She said two more fairs will also be used for promoting plates and membership.

Old business-- there was none.

New business-- Barb Carey has a source willing to provide a large moving truck, to help with our Rock & Gem show in 2014. It's free and she has all the details available.

Willa is wanting to ask our seasoned members help to mentor new members and especially the youth. The youth this evening are also being presented with fossilized bone to keep, donated by Marge Conley. Brent wanted to let members know that Stewart's Shop has numerous pieces of equipment for sale. Anything not sold; he'll be taking to Madras Show.

Refreshments were served at 8:30pm.

The Auction began at 8:45pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30pm.

*Respectfully submitted,
Melodee Worley - Secretary*

Betty McLin Hare

Betty McLin Hare, 59, died Saturday, July 6, 2013, at Life Care Center in Ammon, Idaho. Arrangements are pending at Buck-Miller-Hann Funeral Home in Idaho Falls.

Betty was kind and generous with her time, she was always encouraging to those that met her, and always engaged in some research either in community or family history. she worked at the Gooding Historical Society as a volunteer, she had a great personality and was a great mom, grand mother, and a very good friend to many of us who knew her!

Betty was the author of Fossils Of Idaho, her thesis that she was able to publish and make available an invaluable resource for future generations of those interested in Earth Science. She had an interest in pretty rocks and minerals as well.

Tony Griffin

I have contacted Betty McLin Hare 's family and I have permission to set up a memorial fund in Betty's name at the museum. She was very dedicated to research of the area. The fund would help to buy book shelves and if enough is raised a machine to read microfilm and copy and digitize it for computer use. Memorials may be mailed to Gooding County Museum and Research Center, P.O. Box 580, Gooding, Idaho 83330. Please make sure that in the memo it is designated Betty Hare research center.

Sharon Lee Huff Cheney

Director of the Gooding County Musuem and Research Center

MINUTES OF THE IDAHO GEM CLUB Board Meeting July 2, 2013

President Brent Stewart called the meeting to order at 7:45pm.

Board members present were Jim Clinton, Phil Worley, Melodee Worley, Ed Moser, Deanna Ashton, and Willa Renken.

Officers present were Charles McCreath, Barbara Wanner, and Melodee Worley.

Guests recognized were Shirley McCreath and Phil Stephenson.

Barb Carey and Phil Neuhooff were excused.

A motion to accept the minutes as printed in the "Grindings" was by Phil Worley and seconded by Jim Clinton; motion carried.

Secretary report-- I had nothing.

Treasurer's report--Barbara spoke of balance and disbursements.

Federation report-- Charles wants it known that at this upcoming General Meeting, on July 16th, is the last possible time to turn in stamps for cancer research. Charles is going to make it known to the NFMS, that not all folks have access to computers and would like the NFMS to continue mailing newsletters out. There was some additional discussion and the board gave Charles permission to voice concerns. Show headquarters is at the Best Western Plus Butte Plaza Inn. Additional information about shows, lodging, and fieldtrips can be seen at www.amfed.org/nfms.

Our program for the next two months will be auctions; the money raised helps pay for our Annual Banquet in January 2014.

Junior's report--- Ed showed us several specimens of Sand Dollars. At our September meeting the juniors will be receiving Sand Dollars as special specimens. In September "Bring Your Folders."

License plates report-- Deanna mentioned we've had a lot of special interest at the Renaissance Fair that she had attended. Mailings will be going out to teachers about our club. Several articles are also in the works to be written about the Idaho Gem Club. Deanna is planning to travel to Pocatello to attend a state teachers conference to speak to the Teachers Association. Workshop report-- Willa said there will be a shop on Thursday, the 18th. She'll speak more about it at the general meeting.

Old Business-- none.

New Business-- Willa gave us a proposed budget for Clubs spending for 2014. A motion to accept was by Ed Moser and seconded by Jim Clinton; motion carried. She also had a proposed budget for the Show for 2014. A motion to accept was by

Ed Moser and seconded by Phil Worley; motion carried.

New members-- four applications and a motion to accept was made by Willa Renken and seconded by Deanna Ashton; motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 10pm.

*Respectfully submitted,
Melodee Worley - Secretary*

Welcome New Members

Cheryl Peterson
722 E Baldwin St.
Meridian, ID 83646
cpete4421@gmail.com
Phone 887-5363

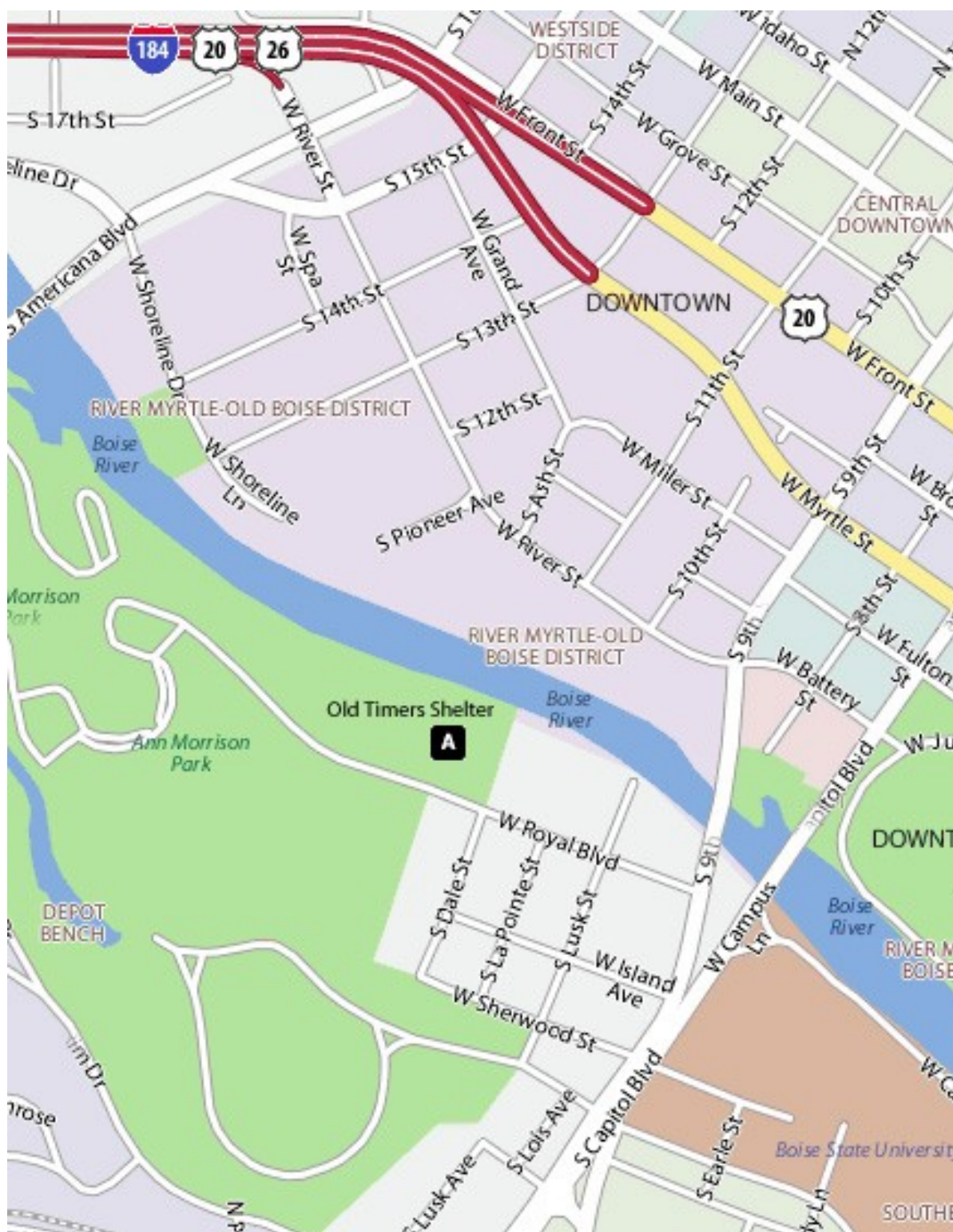
Mike "Red" Lovette
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Daniel and Afton Johnson
11397 W Rader Court
Boise, ID 83713
aftondawn8@yahoo.com....
phone 208-914-4159

Map To Picnic

The July and August meetings are both picnics. They will be held at the Old Timers Shelter at the East end of Ann Morrison Park. If you drive from 9th Street turn right on Royal Blvd. and shortly after entering the park turn into the parking lot on your right and you will see the shelter next to the River. If driving from the south turn left on Ann Morrison drive then turn right on Lusk St then left on Royal Blvd. and go to the parking lot. The picnic begins at 6:30 p.m. and is a potluck. Bring your favorite dish, plates, and silverware. The club will provide soft drinks and ice cream.



Earth Science and Lapidary License Plate Committee: Greetings!

Those of you who are unaware, the Idaho Gem Club oversees a very special project. Idaho has a special interest license plate that was designed by Melissa Osgood. Her father, Dr. Charles Osgood had a brilliant idea. He proposed a license plate featuring the Idaho Gemstones which we are famous for! A star garnet, smoky quartz crystal and a faceted gemstone are on the EARTH SCIENCE AND LAPIDARY SPECIAL INTEREST LICENSE PLATE.

A portion of the license plate costs are redirected to a Committee. The committee receives requests from Earth Science Teachers across Idaho who can use the extra funding for teaching Kindergarten through 6th Graders about rocks, fossils, minerals, geology, anything relate to Earth Sciences! If the students want to take a field trip to the Opal Mines, we can get them there! All they have to do is write to earthscience-plate.com! We will review requests and get the funding to their classrooms!

What a wonderful way to show Idaho's richest resource on your vehicle! The DMV will give full credit to upgrade your current registration/plate to purchase the Earth Science & Lapidary plate!

Please help us keep this program available by purchasing your plate today! Contact your local Department of Motor Vehicles and ask for "The Earth Science Lapidary Plate. Thank you for your support and for investing in educating our future rockhounds!

RENAISSANCE FAIRE BOOTH/LICENSE PLATE PROMOTION

A very special thank you to new Idaho Gem Club Board member Barbara Carey for her outstanding support and encouragement to have a booth at the Ye Olde Renaissance Faire this year! Barb provided the shade tent, tables, draperies, costumes! so we could all keep the theme of Renaissance times ..but most of all, she gave her time and enthusiasm reaching out to families and really pumping up our License

Plate project and promoting the Idaho Gem Club!

I was so thrilled to see the men from our club come and help out IN COSTUMES!! Wow guys! That was great! Dr. Charles Osgood gave his time both days and displayed his Sea Glass Pendants and passed out flyers and cards. Rick Corbett had his beautiful cases of wire-wrapped pendants and spoke to many people about the Gem Plate, the Gem Club, and Lapidary Arts and Education our Club provides. We had Chris Wheeler, our chairman of the Building Fund bring IGC t-shirts to sell. Everyone had a great time and the enthusiasm for rocks and gems was amazing! Big Thank You to Stewart's Gem Shop who provided items for display, education and gave the kids a chance to take home some cool rock and gem stuff! We sold all the fossil and mineral, jewelry, slabs and agates, and a lot of polished rock bags! One highlight was meeting and visiting with a Canadian family of 4 were vacationing in Idaho for the next two weeks.

They asked where to go to find fossils. Well did they ever get hooked up! I told them they should join our club for the field trip outing to McDermitt! Not only did they come to the club meeting a few days after Ren Faire, bidding wildly in the auction, attended the workshop and made perfect cabs and learned so much, they also showed up for the field trip with two extra kids, camped out and had a blast! My thanks to Jim Clinton and Phil Worley for their leadership and hospitality showing this awesome family a good time. Jim said just when he didn't think they could get another rock stuffed in their car, they were bringing more buckets! I am so proud to be a member of a club that can be so gracious and giving of their time and enthusiasm and knowledge. Members like the ones I mention here are what keep our Gem Clubs mission and purpose strong. Thanks again to all of you for your help and support. You are Idaho Gems!

Sincerely yours,

Deana Ashton

Earth Science Plate Chairman

EARTH SCIENCE AND LAPIDARY SPECIAL INTEREST PLATE:

Another new and exciting development and hope for saving our license plate from extinction, was joining forces with the Idaho Science Teachers Association President. We are composing a letter directly to teachers in Idaho, and he promises to get in their email boxes directly. He really values the concept and with over 4,000 science teachers statewide, we may just get lucky and sell the 1,000 plate minimum soon! I also plan on attending a Science Teacher Conference in Pocatello in the fall to speak and show the plate design and promote our program.

We are working on a promotional sticker for the back windows of cars sharing information about the plate. Hopefully we can make sure the text on sticker is large enough we don't end up with hazardous rear end crashes from motorists trying to read them! Pretty creative ideas...we have to try it all! Ask me for the business cards to pass out for anyone you know. We have plenty!

Thank you for supporting the Earth Science special interest plate!



The image shows a design for an Idaho license plate. At the top, the word "IDAHO" is written in large, white, serif capital letters on a dark red background. Below this, on the left, is a graphic of three gemstones: a clear quartz, a purple amethyst, and a green emerald. To the right of the gemstones is a white rectangular box containing the text "EAT POTATOES ! BUT put 'The Gem State' On YOUR PLATE". Below the box is a blue banner with the words "THE GEM STATE" in white. To the right of the banner is a small white box with the word "SAMP" in blue. At the bottom of the design, there is a black banner with white text that reads: "Purchase the Earth Science/Lapidary Special Interest License plate for your Vehicle or RV At your local Idaho DMV or online ! Current registration credited towards purchase. Proceeds benefit Idaho K-12 Earth Science Education."

HAPPY



BIRTHDAY

JULY

7/1 Mike Jones
 7/1 Paula Lane
 7/2 Wayne Snowball
 7/5 Andrea Kinnaird
 7/5 Patrick Vanderbeek
 7/10 Renee Carpenter
 7/10 Lonnie Hicks
 7/12 Debra Burns
 7/12 Loren Francis
 7/12 Aaron Weslowski
 7/13 Anna Gomm
 7/15 Gordon Roberts
 7/17 Jennifer Wilson
 7/18 Kathy Griffin
 7/20 Pat Bethel
 7/20 Lynne Davis
 7/22 Tom Rogers
 7/24 Amy Hinkler
 7/24 Keith Lenzner
 7/24 Maxine Smith
 7/25 David Douglas
 7/26 Larry Ridley
 7/28 Philena Thompson
 7/29 Catherine Parsons
 7/30 Debbie Housh
 7/31 John Huffer
 7/31 Travis Leach

July Birthstones

Faceted — Ruby
 Cabochon — Carnelian

AUGUST

8/1 David Alley
 8/1 Cody Jackson

8/6 Michael Gartman
 8/6 Craig Kaumans
 8/7 Gene Thompson
 8/8 Charles Peterson
 8/10 Dan Conley
 8/10 Cindy Hicks
 8/11 Daniel Asp
 8/11 Corey Glick
 8/16 Carla Arnold
 8/16 David Snyder
 8/17 Chris Mangrum
 8/17 Gabriel Miles
 8/19 Salma Gomm
 8/22 Debbie Baldwin
 8/22 Betty Hare
 8/22 Pam Zimmer
 8/23 Chester Carpenter
 8/24 Frank Hederer
 8/24 Fred Hodges
 8/24 Walt Woodall
 8/26 Deana Ashton
 8/26 Nora Kreitzer
 8/27 Miers Johnson
 8/27 Christine Neuhoff
 8/27 Linda Phillips
 8/28 Mettie Clay
 8/28 Leon K. Doar
 8/28 Misty Parker
 8/28 Carol Da Silva
 8/30 Erick Davies

August Birthstones

Faceted — Peridot
 Cabochon — Jade or
 Sardonyx

Dates To Remember**GENERAL MEETING**

3rd. Tuesday of every month

July 16, 2013

Old Timer's Shelter

Ann Morrison Park

Royal Blvd.

Picnic starts at 6:30 p.m.

BOARD MEETING:

1st. Tuesday of every month

August 2, 2013

Church of the Brethren

2823 N. Cole Road, Boise, Idaho

Meeting Starts at 7:30 p.m.

July Refreshment Committee

Chair: Rick Corbett 383-9930

Twila Gallaher 853-6703

Marge Conley 375-8935

REFRESHMENT COMMITTEE GUIDELINES

1. Have tables covered with paper obtained from Statesman and ready by 6:00 p.m.

2. Bring door prizes

3. Order ice cream and arrange for pickup.

4. Serve ice cream

When picnic is finished, clear all paper from tables and deposit all litter and debris in trash containers

Potluck Dinner

Ice cream and sodas provided

Bring your own plates and silverware

August Refreshment Committee**August**

Chair: Aaron Wanner: 794-9474

Brent Stewart 863-9336

Phil Worley 890-6834

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.

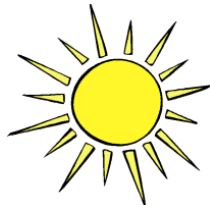
CHECK OUT THE CLUB WEBSITE!

www.idahogemclub.com



SUNSHINE LADY REPORT:

Please let me know if you are aware of any of our members having surgery, an illness, or just in need of cheer. We all can use some good cheer! We try and keep in touch with all our members, and I apologize if we have overlooked any member who has lost a loved one. Please let us know if we can help in any way. Contact Deana Ashton at 208-794-5628 or any Idaho Gem Club Board Member/officer.



As a Private duty Hospice Care provider, and I am more than willing to offer respite care to any families in need of a break caring for their loved one who is preparing to pass on. It would be my pleasure to help out a family caregiver while they go catch a movie, take some time alone, make arrangements, care or themselves, whatever they need. I encourage you to call Deana at 208-794-5628. I will gladly help if I can.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO ATTEND ANY GEM CLUB FUNCTIONS BUT ARE UNABLE TO DRIVE, CALL ME! WE WILL DO OUR BEST TO GET YOU THERE!

Deana- 208-794-5628

Mettie Clay is in a nursing home--address 3165 N. Meridian Rd. Meridian, Id. 83646.

Marion Phillips is now out of the hospital and in a nursing home. She fell and broke her neck and leg. She still needs nursing care but can use the phone and is doing better.

1st Annual Crystal Music Festival @ Board Camp Crystal Mine Board Camp, Arkansas

July 19-20-21, 2013 Featuring "Diamond Rio" and Many More.....

July 26-27-28, 2013 Featuring "The Marshall Tucker Band"

For Tickets Visit: <http://www.crystalmusicfestival.com/>

Office: 479-243-0871

Board Camp Campground.com 479-243-0771

Close to: Wolf Pen Gap, Ouachita River, Crystal digs, Little Missouri Falls, Big Fork, Mount Ida

Welcome: ATVs, OHVs, ORVs, Bikers, Hikers, Fish, Hunt, Play, Clubs, Churches, Orgs, Reunions, Day-use, Gatherings

Dig for crystals for \$10 per person and take crystals home with you @ \$10 per 5 gallon bucket.

Thanks, David Alley

YESTER YEAR

Oct. 5, 1971

Quincy Howell gave a report on his talk to the Ustick School kids. Several slides and specimens have been provided for use in illustrating talks to the various groups who request them.

George fields will be the show chairman for our April 1972 show.

A bid was put in for 30 used cases that the N.W. F. was selling.

The field trip will be to Lower McBride area for petrified wood. At the club meeting some nice pieces of wood from that area were shown.

School children have been asking for samples of rock and minerals from different places in Idaho, John Beckwith is writing a short history of rocks to be sent along with them.

Dudley Stewart showed slides of some of his beautiful gem stones. The November field trip will be to Succor Creek, weather permitting. The treasurer's report showed the club had a total of \$1,269.46 on hand.

The club made the trip to Succor Creek and several nice thunder eggs were found. No trips are planned for December and January due to weather conditions.

*In Loving Memory
Patsy Bethel-Historian*

Idaho Gem Club Field Trip

Our trip to McDermitt was a good one. We had 20 rockhounds over the four days we were there. Lots of material was brought home by all who attended. The weather held out and was perfect for digging. I will return again.

Our next trip will be to Dismal Swamp, north of Featherville, Idaho. We will meet in the parking area on the left side of the road after you cross the river entering into Featherville. On Saturday July 20th we will meet there at 9:30 am and head up the mountain around 10:00 am. Bring shovel's, pick's, screen's, rock hammer's, bucket's and plenty of water, sunscreen and spray or lotion for flies and mosquito's. High clearance vehicle's recommended. We will be digging for Smoky Quartz's and clear Topaz. Hope to see ya all there. Phil

Happy Hounding
Phillip Worley
Field Trip Coordinator

July Program:

After the picnic, there will be an auction to support the cost of having the picnic. Please support the auction by bringing items that would be of interest to other club members (rough rock, finished pieces, used but working tools and equipment, books, etc). This is a great chance to obtain interesting material for your own collection...in the June auction many great deals were had on hard to find materials. Bid generously!

Federation & Other Club News More Dates to Remember

Nyssa Thunderegg Days
<http://www.nyssachamber.com/>
 July 12th & 13th, 2013
 Nyssa School Grounds,
 Nyssa, Oregon

Magic Valley Gem Club
 August 3rd & 4th—Chllis/Mackay (Lime Creek)

Northwest Rockhound Retreat Labor Day Week
 September 3 - 9, 2012—OMSI camp at Hancock Field Station
 about halfway between Antelope and Fossil, Oregon. This is a weeklong event of learning and sharing.

<http://www.amfed.org/nfms/NwRockHoundRetreat.asp>

Federation Show 2013 - Butte, MT - August 9-11, 2013

NFMS' 75th Anniversary Show

Presented by: Butte Mineral and Gem Club

Location: Butte Civic Center
1340 Harrison Avenue
Butte, MT 59701

Hours: Fri 9 – 5, Sat 10 – 5, Sun 10 – 5

Cost: Adults \$5, Seniors \$4, Students 10 – 17 \$3, Under 10 free
 if accompanied by an adult.

26+ Dealers with 100+ exhibits

Field trips every day, Silent Auction, Speakers

<http://www.amfed.org/nfms/FederationShow.asp>

Show Chair:
 Pete Knudsen
 1301 West Gold Street.
 Butte, MT 59701
 406.723.8524

Hunting Opals in Virgin Valley

Philip S. Neuhoff, Ph.D. and Jackson Neuhoff

We recently returned from a trip to Virgin Valley in northern Nevada where we collected precious opals. This was our second trip there; both times we were successful in finding an assortment of great opal specimens for which this locality is known. Since we haven't heard of a lot of people from the club going there, we thought we would share some insights and helpful hints.

Getting there: It takes about 4.5-5 hours from our house in Eagle to reach Virgin Valley. The best route is to take Highway 95 south out of Nampa, crossing into Oregon. Past Burns Junction, a well-marked gravel road (Whitehorse Ranch Road) heads West (the road sign indicates that it is the route to Denio, NV—the closest town to Virgin Valley). Continue on Whitehorse Ranch Road to the end, where it hits Denio-Fields Road). Go left (South) on Denio-Fields Road, passing through Denio to Denio Junction. At Denio Junction, go left (West) on Highway 140. The turn for Virgin Valley is well-marked with a highway sign that says "Virgin Valley Black Opal". Turn left here and drive several miles to reach the campground and mines at Virgin Valley.

Lodging: The closest motel rooms are in Denio Junction, about a half hour from Virgin Valley. We have not stayed there, but here that they are clean and functional. We usually stay at the Virgin Valley Campground on the Sheldon Wildlife Refuge (the directions above take you there). The campground is free, has drinking water, pit toilets, showers, fire pits, and best of all, a warm spring-fed swimming hole. There are angling opportunities near the campground, as well as a nearby trailhead for a beautiful hike down a picturesque canyon. Wild burros are common in Virgin Valley, and sometimes come near the campground and are very often seen along the road to the Bonanza and Royal Peacock Mines. The other camping option is at the Royal Peacock Mine, which has an RV park with full hookups.

Services: Other than the campgrounds, services are minimal in Virgin Valley. Ice can be obtained at the Rainbow Ridge Mine. The Royal Peacock Mine has some snacks and perhaps ice. The near-

est gas is usually in Denio Junction (~27 miles away), but this summer their pumps are down and the closest gas is in Fields, OR (~50 miles away). It is best to gas up in Denio Junction or Fields before you venture to Virgin Valley (if you go to Fields, the burgers and shakes are excellent). Restaurant service is available in both Denio Junction and Fields. Groceries are limited in Denio Junction (somewhat more is available in Fields, but not much) so be sure to bring all you need. Firewood was not available for gather or purchase anywhere we observed. The closest hospital is in Lakeview, OR, over 100 miles away. Virgin Valley is generally pack it in-pack it out, but there are dumpsters at the rest area just west of the turnoff from 140 to Virgin Valley.

Other rockhounding opportunities: The drive to Virgin Valley passes by a number of classic rockhounding sites. In addition to those well-known to Treasure Valley rockhounds like McBride Creek, the club's Queenstone and Whangdoodle claims, and the Rome snakeskin agate area, you will drive by several other excellent localities. Along Whitehorse Ranch Road is a superb fossil leaf locality (see Garrett Romaine's Oregon guidebook for directions). Near Denio is a copper mineral locality that we haven't visited (yet) but is a short detour from the suggested route (this locality is mentioned in several guidebooks to Oregon and Nevada). North of Fields, OR is Borax Lake, where small crystals of borax and other borate minerals can be collected.

If you get tired of hunting opals in Virgin Valley, there are a number of other collectables in the area. Apache tears (obsidian nodules) are common...we usually pick up several handfuls waiting for Rainbow Ridge to open in the morning as the road bed is graded with gravel containing them. Various common opals, jaspers and obsidians are common on the ground surrounding Virgin Valley. Perhaps the best non-opal collectable is high-quality carnelian that is found in small rhyolite hills north of the Virgin Valley turnoff from 140. The carnelian can be found as float, but is sourced in seams and gas cavities in the rhyolites. Be aware that only surface collecting is allowed in this area (outside of the opal mines) so excavations are not permitted. Exact directions to the carnelian locality (Virgin Valley—continued on page 10)

(Virgin Valley—continued from page 9)

and other spots in the area can be obtained by visiting the Opal Negra Miner mill site south of the Virgin Valley campground. A visit to Opal Negra is worthwhile, especially for first-time visitors. The owner is very happy to give a tour of his rock garden (where he will share tips on collecting items like the carnelian) and show opal specimens from his mine in Virgin Valley.

Virgin Valley is reasonably close to other great collecting areas as well and can be combined into a nice week-long trip. The club's claims in the sunstone area near Plush, OR is about two hours away from Virgin Valley along with the commercial mines in this area. The rainbow obsidian localities near Davis Creek, CA are only about 3 hours from Virgin Valley. The fee dig for fire opal at Juniper Ridge, OR is only about 3 hours away as well.

What to bring: Virgin Valley is generally open desert country with elevations of 5000-6000 feet. Make sure to dress appropriately to minimize sun exposure (hats, sunscreen, long pants, long sleeves). Bring plenty of water, though water is available at the Royal Peacock and Rainbow Ridge Mines and the Virgin Valley campground. Sturdy shoes are recommended. For opal hunting, bring several buckets, plus a smaller, closed container to store the smaller, really nice opals. Digging tools are available to lease or borrow at the mines, but small rakes, spray bottles, and screwdrivers are nice to have along. Sifting screens are generally not welcome because of the dust. If you choose to do a wall dig at Royal Peacock, your favorite digging tools would be good. Rainbow Ridge loans tools appropriate for their material. As noted above, do not plan on being able to go to a store for necessities other than ice...bring it along with you.

Geology of Virgin Valley: Virgin Valley is a volcanic caldera similar to the McDermitt caldera to the East. Eruptive activity probably started around 16 million years ago with the eruption of the Canyon Rhyolite. Creation of the caldera led to a localized area of low relief that supported a large lake. In contrast to today's desert climate, Virgin Valley was relatively lush during the Miocene area with a forest ecosystem that supported a healthy community of trees, grasses, and animal life. The lake bed was the site

of deposition of sediments, volcanic ash, and diatoms (microorganisms with opal tests). Around 1 million years ago, a volcanic eruption buried the forests in the Virgin Valley caldera. Subsequent volcanic eruptions accumulated at least another 1500 feet of ash and volcanic rocks, burying these trees. The trees were ultimately replaced by silica (usually opal, sometimes chalcedony) as ground waters laden with silica flowed through the rocks.

Where to Collect: There are currently three mines open to collecting in Virgin Valley. Conditions at the mines are always subject to change, so be sure to get current information. Gathering information about current collecting conditions from others in the campgrounds is very useful. Here are our observations:

(Virgin Valley—continued on page 11)

Rockhound "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.

(Virgin Valley—continued from page 10)

Bonanza Mine: This is a storied old prospect that has produced a lot of high quality opal. Current operations at the mine are largely restricted to shareholders in the mine, who buy into the prospect for the right to dig virgin material. Bonanza also allows tailings collecting by the public. We have not hunted there, but have visited the property and looked at the tailings. Given the current state of operations, this is likely the least productive place to collect at the present time. The mine managers at Bonanza are very friendly and will certainly assist collectors getting started.

Royal Peacock: The Royal Peacock has perhaps the largest resource in the valley in its set of patented claims. They allow virgin wall digging for people 12 and older. We have not done this, but others doing it while we were there did find some beautiful opals. Royal Peacock also allows tailings digging. We found some nice opals in the tailings at Royal Peacock, though it takes a bit of searching. A visit to their store is a must, however, to see the specimens on display (particularly the large piece of conk opal).

Rainbow Ridge: This is our favorite of the mines, as we have had good luck there. Access to the current pit is not allowed; instead, they offer the chance to search through loads of virgin ore that is hauled to the tailings area and dumped for you (basically a three yard load). In contrast to the harder digging at Royal Peacock, the sediments at Rainbow Ridge are dense clay that must be broken up to search for the opals. After you are done searching your pile, these are added to the existing tailings. Rainbow Ridge also offers tailings digging, which we have found to be quite productive as well. Due to the nature of the damp, dense clay at Rainbow Ridge, opals are often overlooked by those purchasing virgin ore loads. If you do find some great pieces, Glen at Rainbow Ridge will be happy to clean them and mount them in opal domes at a very reasonable price. Rainbow Ridge's shop also has some must-see pieces, including the largest precious opal in the world and some very unique types of opalization.

About the opals: Virgin Valley produces some of the most beautiful opals in the world, but they tend

to not be stable. Opals freshly dug from the walls or virgin loads need to immediately be placed in water to prevent crazing. Opals found digging in tailing will have already dried out. If not crazed, they are cuttable. Often they will be significantly crazed, however. There is a range of body colors including clear, white, orange-red, brown, and black. The play of fire varies considerably, but can often be spectacular. Many Virgin Valley opals are *contra luz* (literally "against the light") and only show their fire when light shines through them. In most cases, the opals are identifiable as limb casts, or more rarely replacing conifer cones or other plant material. A particularly rare but sought after opal from Virgin Valley is "conk opal", which started out as diseased wood with mm-scale pores that filled with fire opal. Petrified wood is abundant, and ranges from partially-replaced wood ("fiber wood") to completely opalized limb clasts. It is common to find stringers of opal through the wood, so all wood should be inspected carefully.

SHOP CARTS FOR SALE

Call for details

Ron Dingley

867-2912

Workshop Report

July 18th

6:30pm—9:30pm

Map available in the May "Grindings"

www.idahogemclub.com/news/2013/May13.pdf

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:

.....\$17.00 per person
\$20.00 per couple
\$23.00 per family

Subscription:

.....\$10.00 per year

General Meeting:

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

USTICK	C O L E
<div data-bbox="805 235 928 285" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>Mountain View Church of the Brethren 2823 N. Cole Road</p>	
NORTHVIEW	
FAIRVIEW	



The Whangdoodle Bird
(Often seen on field trips)



Idaho Gem Club, Inc.

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 Boise, Idaho 83707-2443