

# Hatrockhound Gazette 2019

PO Box 1122, Hermiston, Oregon 97838



Meetings at 6:30 on the 2<sup>nd</sup>  
Tuesday of each month  
First Christian Church of  
Hermiston:  
775 West Highland  
(go to back of church)

Officers:  
President –Bill Shipp  
V. Pres. – Mike Filarski  
Secretary – Rita Watterson  
Treasurer – Mel Lambert  
Members at Large – Laura  
Tiffany, Doug Gill

Newsletter/Website – Judi Allison,  
1701 NW 11<sup>th</sup> St Hermiston, OR 97838 541-720-4950



Hatrockhounds Gem and Mineral Society is Affiliated with:

The Northwest Federation of Mineralogical Societies  
And The American Federation of Mineralogical Societies



## AFMS Rockhounds “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 officers, 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", 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.

**NFMS SHOW, LEWISTON, IDAHO, OCTOBER 18, 19, 20 FAIRGROUNDS**

# HATROCKHOUND GAZETTE

## October 2019 Issue

Get ready to try your skills at creating an entry for the "Rock Costume Contest". All you need is a rock or two-or three, a little imagination a few odds and ends and you will have a creation for all to see. A good story or poem to go along with your creation might also win a prize. We'll be seeing you on *October 8<sup>th</sup>* with your entries!!!!

**(Treats by Garcias and Randy Free)**

Food for thought. . .



### Hatrockhounds Gem and Mineral Society

#### Meeting Minutes

#### September 10, 2019

Our small group included one guest, Chris Lundquist. (Mike's daughter-in-law's aunt)

**General Information:** With the absence of our Treasurer, Mike reported that we made \$141.50 from the picnic auction. With the cost of the gazebo at \$50 and sandwich material at \$65.88 our net take was \$25.62.

The possibility of having chicken again for the picnic was brought up. It sounded like a number of people really enjoyed the sandwich makings, so we can decide for sure when the time is closer next year.

Elections are to be held next month for Vice President and Treasurer. Those holding the positions (Mike and Mel) are willing to continue, so we will most likely have a vote of confidence to keep in line with the by-laws.

We talked about the fact that an axle bearing broke on the trailer. Mike and his son are planning to get it repaired before the winter sets in. Jim Bryant has also volunteered to help.

Judi showed examples of a possible green banner. It would be 8' by 3' feet with grommets every 2'. The wording would be in black, indicating that we have a show "this weekend". It would also have u-shaped holes to allow the wind to blow through and not damage it. The estimated cost is \$120. The question of having the lettering on both sides was brought up. (Judi checked and the cost doubles, so it might be just as feasible in that case to purchase two.)

**Show Talk:** Mike talked a bit about the date and venue of the show. Roy Kessell, a vendor and former member, gave input as to his take on the show. The discussion included the possibility of moving the show back down to the Community Center and/or moving the date back to the third weekend. In order to get the third weekend at EOTEC we have to get in a bid before those who have had it sewn up for the last three years. Other discussion included the idea of getting more vendors from other hobbies such as crafters or a car show. The possibility of food trucks and vendors from the farmer's market were also mentioned. Another possibility was to expand the show to include Friday night, and possibly exclude Sunday. Mike will check with vendors to get their take on staying at the EOTEC or moving back to the Community Center. The Senior Center was mentioned as a possible venue. There is a possibility that it is probably too small. If the show ran on Friday perhaps there could be something special for school kids to do as a field trip with educational activities.

**Announcements:** Randy let everyone know that Elmer Ringering fell and broke his pelvis, and is now in a wheelchair. They are having a rock sale for the club with buckets of rocks and slabs going for good prices. Members who would like to go are to meet at the Pilot in Stanfield at 1:00 pm on Sunday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Jerry Sorensen announced that Lakeside will be having an estate Rock Sale the second and fourth weekends in October. Stay tuned for further information.

The Lakeside picnic and live auction will be this Saturday, September 14<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 pm at the Union Library Park in Kennewick.

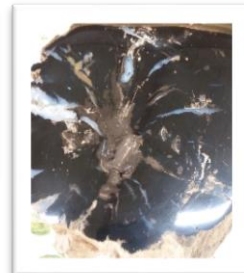
**Door Prizes:** Prizes were won by Bill Shipp, Rita Shipp, Gordon Weber and our guest, Chris Lundquist.

**Show and Tell:**

Randy brought a piece he questioned about being a meteorite, but had pretty much concluded was not. He also had a piece of chrysolite.

Mike brought agates, from the Middle Fork and some geodes and basalt.

**Program:** Jerry Sorensen gave a demonstrative talk on using a sander to contour polish larger rock faces. He had some nice examples of his work and showed folks what things would be needed to get started. Thanks Jerry.



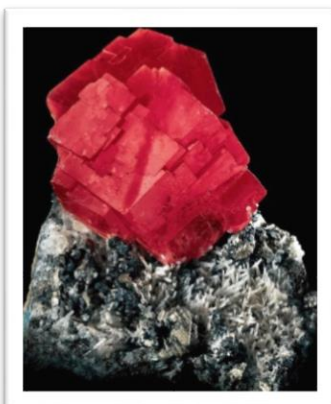
**Executive meeting: Wednesday, September 25, 2019, 7:00 pm, Judi's. (Everyone welcome) (Cancelled)**  
**OCTOBER MEETING Tuesday, October 8th. Annual Rock Costume Contest. . .get creative and win a prize!**

**WEBSITE: [jall23.wixsite.com/hatrockhounds](http://jall23.wixsite.com/hatrockhounds)**

Rita Watterson, Secretary, Typed and collated by Judi Allison

## Famous Mineral Specimens by H. Pearson Grant

There are some mineral specimens that are known by most serious mineral collectors. They are specimens that are of unusual color, form and quality. They often have a unique and interesting history. Because they are so special, they are typically pictured in mineral magazines and mineral picture books and, therefore, become even more famous. One of these exceptional specimens is a rhodochrosite discovered at the Sweet Home silver mine



in the mountains of the Mosquito Range near Alma, Colorado. This very special specimen is known all over the world as **The Alma Queen**. Gold. The rush west always seemed to be driven by gold, by the promise of sudden riches and life in the lap of luxury. The picture of Colorado in the 1850's was painted by this crazy search for instant wealth, colored in shades of silver and gold. By 1859 the high mountain communities of Blackhawk and Central City, 38 miles west of Denver, were buzzing with prospectors mining for their fortunes in the river's placer deposits. Some miners were more professional, if not better educated and prepared, to seek out Rocky Mountain treasure hiding under the rust-red soil and rock of which the central Rockies are composed. Daniel Plummer and Daniel H. Mayers prospected the 14,000 foot Mount Bross in 1868, finding silver ore. Their continued searching was soon rewarded with yet another discovery of even more silver ore. The Precambrian rocks on the opposite side of Mount Bross soon

revealed their silver-bearing treasures. As the miners broke out chunks of silver ore, they would occasionally hit spaces in the rock, "vugs" as they are known by the geologists, lined with eye-catching rhombs of the manganese-bearing mineral called rhodochrosite. But even pretty rocks don't bring fortune to silver miners, so most of these crystals were tossed aside on the waste dumps. In the early 1870's, prospectors discovered silver minerals 1,200 feet above Buckskin Creek near the new mining town of Alma. These silver outcrops were patented and one became the Sweet Home mine. Though the silver ore was rich in silver, the Sweet Home never produced enough silver to make a real profit. From the very beginning, though, miners discovered deep red rhodochrosite crystals. Most of these beauties were tossed on the gangue pile. Some were traded for beers and drinks at Alma's taverns. A few of the more exceptional pieces found their way to museums around the world. We jump now to the 1960's. The Alma Queen, continued In 1963 a small company called "Douglas Brothers" leased the Sweet Home mine with the plan of discovering more silver ore. But Clarence Douglas, the older of



the brothers, died at the end of 1964 and the owner of the mine, E.C. Spray, died early in 1965. Spray's widow, Eleanor, gave the mine to her nephew, Leonard Beach. Now there was a man from Texas named John Soules who put up a large amount of money to fund the Douglas brothers' search for silver. Trying to get some profit for his investment, Mr. Soules began to look for fine rhodochrosite specimens instead of silver. He had heard from Clarence Douglas's grandson, Hershhal Ellyson, that the Sweet Home certainly still had fine "rhodos" yet to be discovered. And collectors were willing to pay a lot of money to own them. He hired a man, an experienced miner named Warren Good, to work with him in the search for rhodochrosite. They drilled a hole, filled it with dynamite and set it off. The explosion opened up a hole about the size of a small washtub, filled with red rhodochrosite! Mr. Soules returned to Texas feeling successful. But while he was gone, Warren Good continued to look for crystals. He opened up another vug and this spectacular crystal-filled hole was 7 feet high, 4 feet deep and 2 feet wide! Mr. Soules returned to see this spectacular sight. He reported that it was filled with deep red, gemmy rhodochrosite crystals. There were hundreds of them covering the entire hole. He again had to go back to Texas, this time before the crystals could be removed. Six weeks later, though, he returned to the Sweet Home . . . to discover the spectacular vug was empty! In the cold months of the winter of 1966, Warren Good had cleaned out the entire vug and sold the specimens (that is, the ones he didn't destroy when he cleaned out the vug). Among the rhodochrosite pieces that quickly went to the mineral market was one enormous, eye-popping piece that would eventually be named "The Alma Queen." Now, the Alma Queen did not come out of its vug in one piece. The crystal detached from the matrix and was repaired after it was all removed. But it is such a spectacular specimen that no one was ever concerned about this fact. The first time it was sold it was to a mineral dealer named George Robertson. He paid \$2,500 for it in 1967. It was first displayed for the public to see in 1967 at the Las Vegas Gem & Mineral show. At this show, The Alma Queen was declared to be the absolute best mineral specimen known in the world at that time. Within a few months of the Las Vegas show, Dr. Peter Bancroft traded approximately \$6,500 worth of specimens for The Alma Queen. Dr. Bancroft is the man who actually gave this marvelous specimen the name "Alma Queen." When he published a book about the world's best mineral specimens in 1973, the Alma Queen was chosen for the cover of the book. By 1979, the value of the Alma Queen had risen to \$185,000. The next time it sold, it was to a wealthy collector from Texas named Perkins Sams. He paid only \$85,000 (such a deal!). In 1984 he sold his collection, including the Alma Queen, to the Houston Museum of Natural Science. Author Steve Voynick reported in the magazine Mineralogical Record that in 1990, the Alma Queen was valued at \$250,000!!! The Alma Queen remains at the Houston Museum in the Cullen Hall of Gems and Minerals. The Alma Queen will always be regarded as one of the most important rhodochrosite specimens - and even one of the most important mineral specimens - ever discovered anywhere in the world. (This article is based largely on the article written by Steve Voynick for the Mineralogical Record, July/August 1998 issue. Other sources include the Colorado Geological Survey at [www.geosurvey.state.co.us](http://www.geosurvey.state.co.us) and the Summit Daily News, Wednesday, October 27, 2004, "Sweet Home Mine Closes in Alma.") (Mini Miner September 2019)

**BE PREPARED FOR NOVEMBER'S "I DID IT" CONTEST WIN A PLAQUE FOR YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENT.**

**IT'S FUN AND IT'S EASY.**

- **CHOSE SOMETHING YOU FOUND, SOMETHING YOU BOUGHT AND/OR SOMETHING YOU MADE IN THE LAST YEAR. (NOVEMBER 2018 UNTIL NOW)**
- **ENTER ONE, TWO OR ALL THREE CATEGORIES.**
- **BRING YOUR ITEMS TO THE MEETING AND SHARE WHAT YOU HAVE.**
- **MEMBERS WILL VOTE ON THE BEST ITEM IN EACH OF THE CATEGORIES.**



Twenty-four small gem trees donated as prizes for the Lion's fun run/walk and banquet/auction in memory of Don Horneck, a past member who passed away unexpectedly five years ago. Funds will help raise money for 4-H Education Programming and Funland Park rebuild project. (Sponsored by Hermiston's Lions Club)

