

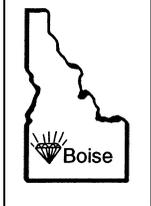
Grindings

Idaho Gem Club, Inc.

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

VOL 72 NO 10

October 2012



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Brent Stewart
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863-9336

Willa Renken
1st Vice President
362-3941

2nd Vice President
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939-4508

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Phillip Worley
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322-1812

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EDITOR
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467-9286
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CLUB WEB SITE
www.idahogemclub.com

President's Message

Well, our hot summer is just over and it's time to get back to a little more serious business—DUES ARE DUE! Seems that sometimes we tend to forget that October is the month for renewing our dues and they will slip by until spring. Paying dues keeps our members receiving "The Grindings" and after December the newsletter won't be sent until dues are paid. So get them in as soon as you can. Thank-you.

Auctions are scheduled for our November and December meetings. These Auctions are fun and help set the mood for the Holidays. The funds raised help support funding for our banquet in January. The December auction is typically completed items, so you can finish your Christmas shopping then...who needs the mall.

Please keep tumbling rocks, and preparing grab bags. Mark the dates for the next show which will be February 23rd-24th 2013. Remember we need everyone's contribution to make it a success.

The Project of the Year contest is coming up in December. This is a terrific opportunity for you to share your talents and ambitions with the rest of the club, as well as receive some recognition. The project can be any media, as long as it is related to earth science or lapidary. Something rather new is that the club will have two categories for the Project of the year, one for the adults, and one for the juniors. The projects will be voted on by the general membership and the winner will receive a plaque that they get to keep for a year. The project will also be displayed at the annual show in a case the end of February.

We still have plenty of cookbooks left and are available for sale. These books make wonderful Christmas gifts. If you are interested extra books are at Stewart's Gem Shop or contact me.

Brent Stewart
President



**MINUTES OF THE IDAHO GEM CLUB
GENERAL MEETING
September 18, 2012**

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

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Phil Worley.
Adult door prizes---14 winners were drawn.
Junior door prizes--2 winners were drawn.

A motion to accept the minutes as printed in the "Grindings" was by Willa Renken and seconded by Bill Knapp. Motion carried.

Secretaries report---Just a reminder to members to make sure their contact information is correct in our roster. New information can be given to myself at break and I'll forward it to Tony Griffin, our Editor. Examples of this information would be telephone numbers, and/or e-mail addresses.

I received a flyer about 2 upcoming rock shows. One in Mountain Home, on the 6th of October, from 9am-4pm. The other is the 1st Payette Rock and Jewelry Show on October 12-13, from 9am-4pm. For more information you can contact Margaret Stallknecht at 208-740-0937.

Treasurers report--Kathy spoke of deposits, balances, and disbursements.

Juniors report---Ed Moser took 2 juniors for their meeting. He mentioned having some unusual specimens available to be seen by anyone interested.

Library report---I've gotten 3 new Rock and Gem magazines. Also anyone interested in donating books or magazines, are welcome to do so. The Library will be open at our Break. The John Stillinger Family has donated numerous magazines and books to our Library. I'll be sending a "Thank You" card for their donations.

Federation report--Charles McCreath stated there isn't much to report. He's asking everyone to keep saving those stamps for "Cancer" funding.

Workshop report--Willa Renken stated the workshops would resume in October. She spoke of the "Grab Bag" sew-off. Tonight on display were 2 of the prizes being given for the most grab-bags sewn. 1st and 2nd prizes. I've sent a "Thank You" card to thank the Dingley's for their Spheres they've created for the prizes.

License plate report--Deana stated sales are still ongoing. Advertising is happening in the Rock and Gem Magazine and soon on a created website.

Barb Carey has been kind enough to donate 40 yards of fabric for grab bag sewing. I'll be sending a "Thank You" card to her.

Guests present were Steve and Shannon McMahan.
No new members were present.

Old business--Just a reminder about the dues increasing in October. Family 23.00, couples 20.00, and singles 17.00.

There won't be a program tonight due to Phil Neuhoff being absent.

No new business.

Break was called and the meeting was adjourned at 8:45pm.

**MINUTES OF THE IDAHO GEM CLUB
Board Meeting
October 2, 2012**

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

Board members present were Willa Renken, Phil Worley, Jim Clinton, Rick Corbett, Deana Ashton, and Phil Neuhoff. Ed Moser contacted Kathy Griffin to be excused for the evening.

Officers present were Melodee Worley, Charles McCreath, and Kathy Griffin.

Guests present were Shirley McCreath, Doug Renken, and Karen Butler.

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

Secretaries report--I advised the Board of sending "Thank You" cards to the Dingley's for the beautiful spheres, to Barb Carey for her donation of 40 yds of fabric for grab bag sewing, and the John Stillinger Family for their recent donation of books and magazines for the Library.

Treasurers report--Kathy spoke of balances and disbursements.

License plate report--Deana is advising the Board of additional advertising and the creating of a website for the sales of our license plates. She will be submitting a contract on behalf of "Social Eyes Marketing" for their help with our web creation.

Juniors report--Ed was absent for the evening. But just a reminder for Juniors to bring their folders for the meeting on October 16th at 7:30pm.

(Board Minutes continued on page 6)

*Respectfully submitted,
Melodee Worley--Secretary*

Bench Tips

WAX TOOLS

Save your used X-Acto or scalpel blades for utility work on the bench. They're wonderful for delicate wax work. Use a cutoff wheel or other type of grinding wheel to shape the blades to what you need. For instance, you can carve away excess metal on the spine to make yourself some narrow carving knives that do a great job of detailing small pierced areas of your waxes.

REVOLVING SOLDER PAD

Often when we're soldering we have multiple pieces on the pad or a single piece and would like to work on several sides of it during the same heat.

One of the ways to deal with this is to put your solder pad onto a turntable. That way you can rotate each piece into position when you need to or can rotate the pad to reach another side of a larger piece.

All you need to make one of these is a piece of aluminum sheet and an inexpensive turn table assembly. A good hardware store will have both, although you can usually find the aluminum in the scrap pile of a local sheet metal shop.

In building a turntable for my 6 inch solder pad, I used a seven inch square piece of aluminum and cut out 1/2 inch notches from each corner. Then I used a bench vice to bend the sides along the dotted lines to form a tray that cradles the solder pad. I attached the tray to the turntable assembly with a couple small machine screws and nuts.

DENTAL TOOLS

A ready source of free tools is your local dentist. Dental picks can be reworked into wax tools or straightened and sharpened to make a stylus for marking and layout. The steel in these tools is high quality, and the handles are designed for comfort. A special note however - don't try to bend one of the tips to a different shape—the steel will snap. To change the shape, heat the tip to red hot and bend it with pliers while it's hot.



And don't forget to ask your dentist for some of the cutting burs they throw out. These are useful for a variety of things. It's best

to call a week or two before your visit and ask the dentist to put some of these tools aside for you. It's good practice also to ask that they run them through the sterilizer for you.

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In addition, here's an interesting web site that might be of interest to your readers.

### FAKES & FRAUDS

Unfortunately, there's a growing amount of deception and outright fraud these days at gem and mineral shows and in some of the online venues that sell these items. Often "genuine turquoise beads" turn out to be dyed magnesite, and I've been told that the majority of colored stones being sold typically have had some "enhancement" done to them.

If you're interested in what kind of fakes and frauds have been uncovered, there's a well-done page at <http://www.the-vug.com/vug/vugfakes.htm>

### INVENTORY RECORDS

How do you keep your records?

In an ideal world each of us has a complete pictorial record of all pieces of jewelry in our inventory. We use it for insurance. We use it as a record of what was sent out on consignment. We use it to remember which items we are taking to a show. And eventually, we use it as a record of what we have sold.

Unfortunately, we don't always have time to take good pictures for the inventory. In situations like this I've been able to make a quick record with the help of a color copier. Simply place a number of pieces face down on the glass and make a copy. The quality is more than sufficient for an accurate record.

Acknowledgement to be included with each publication:

More BenchTips by Brad Smith

can be found at [facebook.com/BenchTips](https://www.facebook.com/BenchTips)  
or  
[groups.yahoo.com/group/BenchTips/](https://groups.yahoo.com/group/BenchTips/)

**HAPPY****BIRTHDAY****OCTOBER**

10/4 Gina Gartman  
 10/5 Nicole Baron  
 10/6 Kevin Chase  
 10/8 Todd Jackson  
 10/9 Jo Thompson  
 10/9 Cindy Woolsey  
 10/14 Patricia Dailey  
 10/14 Rebekah Jackson  
 10/15 Dawn Schuldenfre  
 10/16 Ted Reynolds  
 10/21 Violet Gomm  
 10/22 Jim Dillion  
 10/22 Betty Trebilcock  
 10/22 Bryce Dethlefs  
 10/23 Colleen Lamansky  
 10/25 Karen Butler  
 10/26 Michael Baker  
 10/26 Lois McDonald  
 10/26 Christopher Griffin  
 10/26 Janelle  
 Wintersteen  
 10/28 Sue Clark  
 10/28 Allan Young  
 10/29 Sandy Johnson

*October Birthstones*  
 Faceted — Tourmaline  
 Cabochon — Opal

**NOVEMBER**

11/1 Peggy Dean  
 11/5 Hauns Snyder  
 11/6 Jaden Wanner  
 11/7 Peggy Blickfeldt  
 11/7 Christopher Brewer  
 11/7 Brandon Chase  
 11/7 Larry McConnell  
 11/10 Chance Wilson  
 11/11 John Munson  
 11/12 Penny Dudley  
 11/13 Rick Bidwell  
 11/13 Daniel Brock  
 11/14 Dennis Woodbury  
 11/19 Jim Brock  
 11/19 Steve Ostrander  
 11/20 Natalie Bruner  
 11/21 Gary Hanes  
 11/23 Marge Conley  
 11/24 Alta Seitz  
 11/26 Phil Neuhoff  
 11/26 Rick Denton  
 11/27 Gary Smith  
 11/28 George Carlson  
 11/28 Mary Munson

*November Birthstones*  
 Faceted - Topaz or  
 Citrine  
 Cabochon — Amber

**DUES ARE NOW DUE.****Rates are as follows:****\$17.00 per person****\$20.00 per couple****\$23.00 per family**

**Dues are due by October 31 each  
 year . Please pay at the next meeting  
 or send them to**

**Kathy Griffin, Treasurer  
 P.O. box 8443  
 Boise, ID 83707-2443**

**Dates To Remember****GENERAL MEETING****3rd. Tuesday of every month****October 16, 2012****Church of the Brethren****2823 N. Cole Road, Boise, Idaho****Meeting Starts at 7:30 p.m.****BOARD MEETING:****1st. Tuesday of every month****November 6, 2012****Church of the Brethren****2823 N. Cole Road, Boise, Idaho****Meeting Starts at 7:30 p.m.****October Refreshment Committee****Chair: Phil Neuhoff****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.

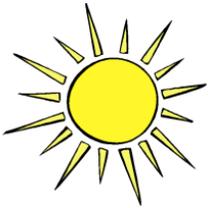
**November  
 Refreshment  
 Committee**

**Chair: TBA**

### Welcome New Members

**Steve & Shannon McMahon**  
 1905 W. Lonesome Dove St.  
 Meridian, ID 83646-8269  
 509-552-1342

**Anna Stafford**  
 2192 Old Highway 95  
 Jordan Valley, OR 97910-9619  
 541-643-5012



#### Sunshine Lady or Gent

The Idaho Gem Club is in need of a  
 Sunshine person!

This important position includes, but not limited to sending some cheer to club members that are ill, in the hospital, have had a death in the family, or are just need some "cheering up".

Sending cheer means sending a card or flowers whenever appropriate, letting the Club Board of Directors and editor know when someone is in need of Sunshine or has received Sunshine.

It is everyone's responsibility to help out the Sunshine Person make this position function properly. Without each of us helping we won't know who is in need of Sunshine. Please see a club officer to volunteer!

Many Thanks to Arlene Bailey for the wonderful job she has done over the years as our Sunshine Lady!

#### October Program:

**Rick Corbett will talk about "Fossilized Fish".**

#### Kemmerer Fish fossils

My favorite dig site is Warfield Fossils, though Ulrich's & Tynsky's quarries are also ok. Go to Fossilsafari.com for details. Warfield charges the same as anybody, but lets you keep all you dig instead of limiting to 6-7 fish. Has the same list of "Rare & Unusual Species" that they keep, but you can buy them at wholesale unprepared price if you find one.

Evan Day,  
 Golden Spike Gem & Mineral Society

#### YESTER YEAR

Jan 1969

There were 91 people present for the dinner at the Chuck Wagon. George Fields was the master of Ceremonies. A citrine stone faceted by Quincy Howell for the door prize was won by "Smoky" Colson.

Harry Samuels was installed as President. A motion was passed that exhibitors pay for one day at the show.

Betty Crocker coupons were collected for the scholarship fund; also postage stamps up 6 cents, unless they are commemorative.

Pat Conley gave a pair of agate earrings for the February door prize, won by Jim Seabright.

Dudley Stewart gave a brief history of the Whangdoodle Bird.

The Oregon rock maps were received and were for sale for .75 cents

Displayers were to pay .48 cents plus .2 cents tax to enter the show for both days. Only one door prize ticket would be given to them.

Two field trips were planned for the summer months and a log should be made so a book of maps could be published. A trip to the Opal Mine was planned for the 4th of July Holidays. If 20 people would buy opal the price would be \$10.00 for 10 lib. Otherwise it would be \$15.00 for 10 lbs.

Dr. John Warner gave the program on how to find gems and minerals by the process of sedimentation and would be available for demonstrations or help on field trips.

*In Loving Memory*  
*Patsy Bethel - Historian*

**Two links for additional newsletters we receive as members of the rock club.**

[http://www.amfed.org/afms\\_news.htm](http://www.amfed.org/afms_news.htm)

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

**EARTH SCIENCE/LAPIDARY ARTS LICENSE PLATE COMMITTEE**

Looks like we have one of the last specialty plates to be approved by Idaho Legislature! This means that no more designs will be accepted unless they are government causes. It also means, WE NEED TO MEET OUR SALES QUOTA!!

During 2013 and 2014 and years thereafter, 1000 plates must be purchased or renewed. WE CANNOT drop below 1000 during two consecutive years, or we will lose the plate program forever. Please, support your local school Earth Science classes by purchasing the Earth Science Lapidary plate.

Some of the funds paid to purchase plate are redirected to the schools who request assistance with education in field of Earth Science/Lapidary. Students can request field trip funding, educational materials, Mineral and Gem tools.

We need your support and help passing the concept of the plate on to your local science class teachers and students. Recently, we started increasing the volume of advertising. There are business cards with the plate information available, as well as other materials we will gladly send you for display in your local business, school or neighborhood.

Please, contact me with any questions or ideas. Your ideas and participation are welcome!

Deana Ashton - Gem State Plate Committee [shesteched@msn.com](mailto:shesteched@msn.com)

(Board Minutes continued from page 2)

Workshop report---Willa stated there will be a workshop the evening of the 18th of October from 6:30pm to 9:30pm. With Thanksgiving coming soon there won't be a workshop in November but in December a workshop weekend will be scheduled. Dates will be in the next "Grindings".

This months program will be given by Rick Corbett on "Fossilized Fish". The following months will be auctions (November and December) of numerous kinds of materials and items.

Just a reminder about submitting "Scholarship" applications for consideration.

Old business---Brent is working on his Nominating Committee. He has appointed Phil Worley to be his Chairman for the Board Nominations. The Nominees will be presented to the Board in November for approval. At this time 3 interested people will be forwarding their "Bios" to our editor, Tony Griffin, to be printed for members to consider when voting happens at our General Meeting in November.

New business--a new current member (Karen Butler)  
(continued at top of next column)

inquired why our "Workshop" isn't open more time than just once a month? She was interested in maybe a different location, making it open more hours and having it be run by members. Members using the equipment would be subject to fees for whatever equipment they use, at an hourly rate. We appreciated her addressing the Board about her suggestions and concerns. The Board had a lengthy discussion on this and decided the current course of action was more than adequate.

New memberships--2 applications were received , a motion to accept them was made by Jim Clinton and seconded by Rick Corbett.

The meeting was adjourned at 9pm.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Melodee Worley - Secretary*

## 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.

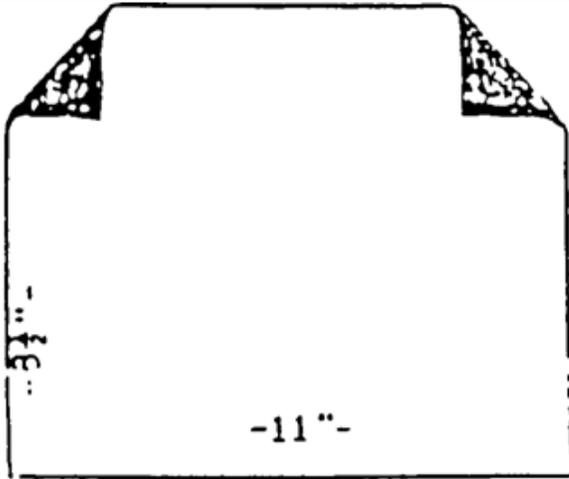
I will report to my club or Federation officer, Bureau of Land Management or other authorities, any deposit of petrified wood or other materials on public lands which should be protected for the enjoyment of future generations for public educational and scientific purposes.

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.

## Easy Grab Bags for Grab Bag Contest

The easiest method of cutting out grab bags is to cut fabric into 8 1/2" strips. Press down 1/2" on the top edge of each strip. Fold strip in half and cut on fold (you'll have two 22 1/2 inch pieces. Cut each of those halves into two pieces (fold & cut on fold). Following the pattern, fold up the outer edges of the top hem and make the dog ears, and then place your draw-string under the hem (but over the "ears"). (I place a few pins in the edge of the hem to make sure it stays put before I sew. And, I sew each seam factory-style/chain stitching—not cutting between each bag, etc. So, if I cut out the 4 strips from the yard of fabric, I'm going to stitch down the top hem on all the bags before I go to the next step, etc.

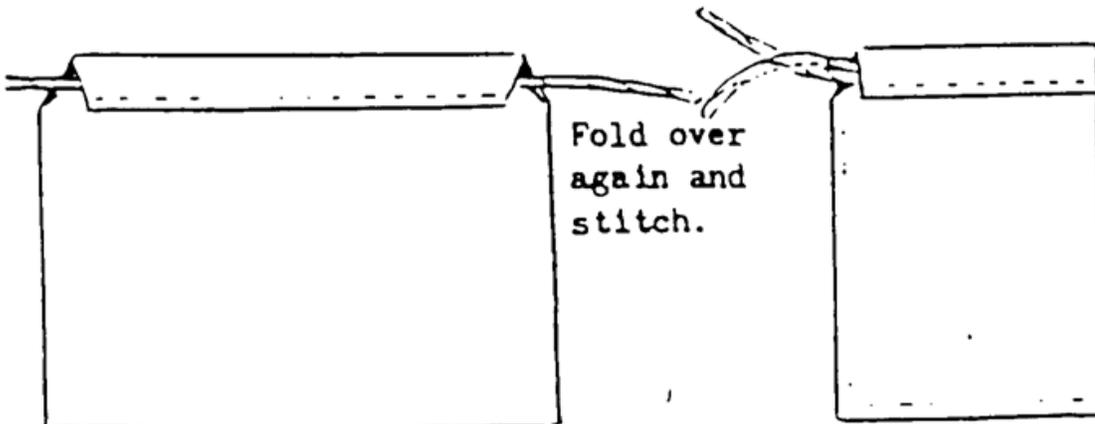
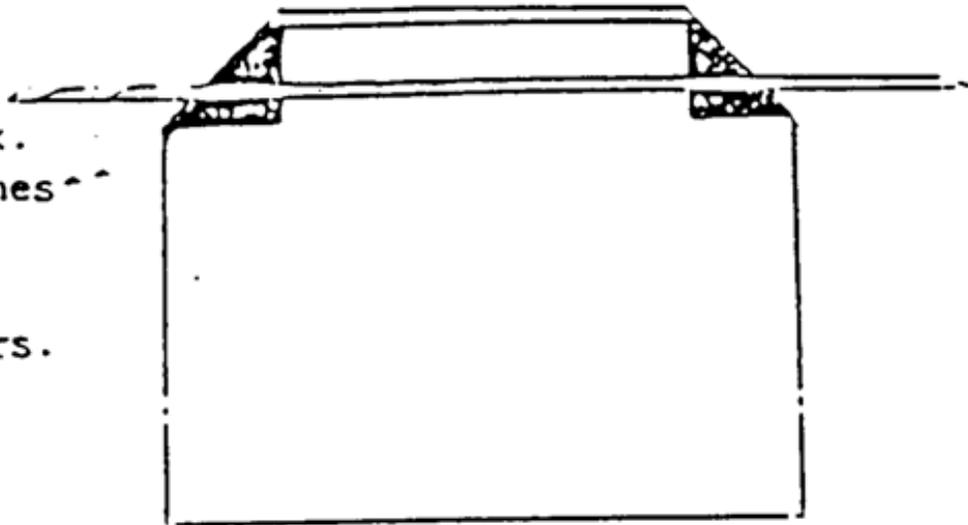


Time is saved by folding the two corners over diagonally, then folding The top down over the cord. Try it.

Fold over 1/2inch and crease. Lay cord in place.

Approx.  
2 inches

Fold  
corners.  
over



Fold over  
again and  
stitch.

Fold in half. Stitch in  
across bottom and up  
side.

## Idaho Gem Club Field Trip Report

Our latest field trip to Beacon Hill was very rewarding for several who joined in the adventure. We had 18 vehicles make the journey up and down the mountain with 0 mishaps. Rain chased us off the mountain a little early on Sunday. Lots of fun was had by all.

Our last field trip of the year will be the 20th of October, to Texas Springs, south of Jackpot Nevada. We will meet in Jackpot, Nevada at the Horseshu Casino parking lot at 8:00am mountain time. Bring tools for all types of Rock Hounding. Pink Limb cast, agate and much more.

The Owyhee Club will be joining us on this field trip, so lots of new folks to share in tall tales. So lets make them welcome to our outing. Thanks to all for a wonderful year of hard digging and lots of fun.

*Happy Hounding*

*Phillip Worley - Field Trip Coordinator*

## Federation & Other Club News More Dates to Remember

Owyhee Gem & Mineral Society

<http://www.owyheerocks.com/>

October 20th

Texas Springs, Nevada

See the Idaho Gem Club Field Trip Report  
in the column to the left for  
where to meet and times

1st Payette Rock and Jewelry Show

October 12-13, from 9am-4pm.

Payette Community Center

695 2nd Ave S. Payette, Idaho

For more information

contact Margaret Stallknecht

at 208-740-0937.

Magic Valley Gem Club

October 20—Oakley—Pole Creek areas

Dave Hughes and Andrew Humphries are  
the field trip leaders for this outing

Hells Canyon Gem Show

October 20-21, 2012

Sat. 10—6

Sun. 10—5

Nez Perce County Fair Building

Lewiston, Idaho

**Save Stamps For 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!**

### THE GRINDINGS

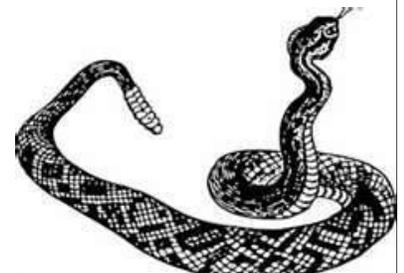
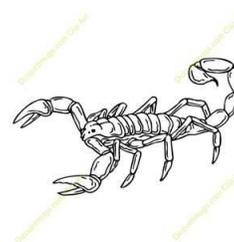
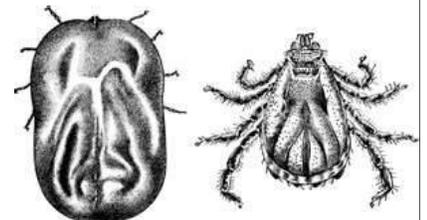
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CHECK OUT THE CLUB WEBSITE!

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

**Watch out for these critters when  
you are rockhounding!**

Female & male tick



**The Fundamentals Of Lapidary: Making Smaller Pieces**  
by Donald Clark, CSM of the International Gem Society  
One discipline that is common to all forms of lapidary is how to take large pieces of stone and reduce them to useful sized pieces. If you are in the field, you might be able to drop them off a precipice, and then retrieve the pieces at the bottom. This method has two disadvantages. One is that there is rarely a convenient cliff to drop them off.

Second is that the method is extremely wasteful. You have no control over how the pieces break and you are not likely to find them all. Lacking a handy cliff, you will have to resort to mechanical methods. The quickest way to reduce a large rock to smaller pieces sounds, many people swear by their saws when a few quick blows from a rock hammer would do the job.

Hammering rough does not allow precise control over the size pieces you get, although it is much more accurate than the dropping it off a cliff method. If the rock you are working on has a fracture, you can usually break it along that line. Cutting a kerf in the stone will give you greater control. A kerf is a shallow saw cut, usually less than an inch deep. You can create a kerf almost anywhere you need it. Place a chisel or large screwdriver in the kerf and give it a solid blow with the hammer. The rock will split in two under the kerf. While the technique does not always give you a clean, straight split, it is surprising how well it works. The above methods are only useful for capping material of moderate value. You would never want to hammer an expensive piece of rough where the loss would amount to much money. Nor would you want to use the technique on something fragile, like opal or calcite.

Expanding fractures would reduce the usable areas and value of the material too much to be worth the savings in labor. For these materials, saws and tile nippers are called for

#### Saws

Lapidaries use slab and trim saws, the difference is the size blade they use. Trim saws have small, thin blades that remove a minimum of material. Slab saw blades are thicker, because they are designed to do heavier cutting.

Trim saws use 4 to 6 inch blades that run between .004 and .012 inches thick. The cost will vary between \$25 and \$50. Diamond blades are like a revolving finger nail file. They will not cut fingers, but they will give you a creative manicure if you are not careful. The exception to this are the very thin blades of .004 to .006 inches. At this size they will cut fingers. They are also much easier to bend, or dish, than a heavier blade. So unless you are cutting very expensive material, it is best to use a slightly thicker blade. Slab saw blades run from 6 to 36 inches with thickness of .025 to .200 inches. A diamond blade will cost between \$30 for a small, medium quality blade, to well over \$1,000. Other than size, the main difference in price is the amount of diamond on the blade. How much you need depends on how often you are going to use it. A hobbyist, who just cuts an occasional stone, can get by with any of the good quality blades. These have the diamond abrasive rolled or bonded on. A professional shop, which uses their saws constantly, would best be served with a sintered blade. Sintered means the rim has diamond throughout it, not just on the surface. Because there is so much

more diamond in these blades, they cost considerably more. However, the value is there because they last so much longer.

Beware of very inexpensive blades. Some of them will only cut three or four stones and are not worth the money.

#### Mud Saws

Not all slab saws use diamond blades. An older style is called a mud saw and they are still available as used equipment. A mud saw has no abrasive attached to the blade. Instead, the blade runs through a troth of abrasive, which is usually silicon carbide. This is the "mud." It carries some of the abrasive with it on each pass.

The primary advantage of a mud saw is economy; they cost much less than one with a diamond blade. Their disadvantage of that they require more maintenance. The abrasive breaks down with use and the saw must be shut

#### Feed

When selecting and operating a saw you need to make sure the stones are fed straight into the blade if you feed the stone to the blade at an angle it will bind and possibly bend, ruining an expensive blade. With the new slab saws, this should not be a problem. However, on a used saw you should not take it for granted. Check the feed mechanism to make sure it runs perfectly parallel with the blade. With trim saws, you feed the stone in by hand. To do this properly, stand so your primary eye is in a direct line with the saw blade.

This way you can see if the blade starts to bend, indicating you are not feeding the stone straight. Keep the table around the blade clean of debris, as bits of rock can deflect the stone. With small pieces, it is helpful to press them into a piece of cardboard, and slide the cardboard into the blade. On some occasions, you might even want to embed your stones in wax or plaster. In all cases, you are instructed to hold the stone against the table as you slide it

That is what every saw manufacturer recommends. However, when trimming facet rough, it can be extremely difficult to both lay the stone on the table and feed it in a direction that removes a bare minimum of useless material.

The price of good quality facet rough tends to be quite high and sawing off more than necessary is an expensive proposition. As a rough dealer, I learned to feed stones into the blade by hand at whatever angle was best for preserving material. First, either find a line on the surface. Or mark the stone where it needs cutting. Now, the main trick is to keep your eye in line with the blade. Hold the marked line on the stone straight to the blade. Feed it in gently and watch the saw blade constantly. If you see any bending. Make a gentle but immediate adjustment.

There are also occasions where you need to saw a kerf in a stone that is too large to feed through your saw. The only way to do this is to set one end of the rock on the table and a side on the blade. Then gently rotate it forward until a

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suitable kerf is cut in place. Again, keep your eye in a straight line with the saw blade and make sure it doesn't end.

Do this at your own risk, if you do not have a keen eye, a steady hand, and an adequate attention span, you will ruin your saw.

#### Lubrication

Trim saws will work and last well without any lubrication other than water. However, that is not necessarily recommended. At the minimum you should add a rust preventive. There are commercial products available where saw blades are sold. These usually have a lubricating properties as well, which is all to your advantage. Slab saws have much more stringent requirement. There are saw oils on the market that are excellent, if a bit on the expensive side. If you are unsure what to use, get an oil that is specifically designed for lapidary use. Lapidaries have used a variety of lubricating solutions over the years. One of the most popular is a combination of kerosene and motor oil.

While it serves its lubrication purposes well, it is both toxic and flammable. There are water-soluble oils that are designed for use in machine shops. These do away with the flammability problem and are much less toxic. Several people like to use automotive antifreeze. Bear in mind that all of these substances are toxic to breathe and there is always mist when the saw is in operation. When setting up a saw make sure there is adequate ventilation. If you are using a flammable solution, outside is best. You certainly do not want the fumes collecting in a closed room while you are away! I have seen some excellent workshops set up in a carport or under an awning.

#### Cleaning

Before throwing out a blade because it no longer cuts, try cleaning it by sawing through a common brick. It is amazing how much this can extend the life of your blades. It removes tiny particles of grit that have accumulated between the diamonds. Harder stones, like agate will not do the same job. Periodically, you will also need to clean the sump of your saw. Fortunately, it doesn't have much odor, because it is one of the nastiest jobs you will ever undertake. You need a large can or bucket to hold the residue, scrapers and rubber gloves to protect your hands. Open the valve, or tip the saw to remove the lubricant. If you run it through a filter, (coffee filters work,) you can reuse it. There will be a layer of sludge left in the bottom that needs to be manually scraped out. Any flat scraper will do, but a putty knife works particularly well for getting into corners. You do not have to remove every last bit of sludge, but the more you get out, the longer it will be before you have to clean it again. Now all you have to do is to find a home for the mess you removed from your saw. The stone residue is nicknamed "the plumbers best friend" because it takes so little to plug up a drain. So that method is out. Most likely it is mixed with a toxic petroleum product, so you should find a hazardous waste disposal site. These are getting easier to find and many now exist at the local dumps.

#### Nippers

Tile nippers are available in all hardware and building supply stores. Their usefulness is limited, but in the right circumstance they are excellent. Nippers are used almost exclusively for re-

moving small amounts of material from facet rough, or edges of capping material that has already been slabbed. Simply place them and give them a squeeze. This is usually faster and more efficient than using a saw. There is no preparation or clean up afterwards. On fractured gems, you can press on the fracture and cause it to finish splitting all the way through. This will save you more material than the most careful sawing, as the fracture may be a curved line. A saw can only cut in a straight line and you always lose the width on the blade. This is an excellent method for preparing tanzanite for faceting. Where removing fractured areas is one of the most common steps. With the nippers you will frequently get a large piece with maximum recovery, and a smaller piece more melee. If you use a saw, the primary piece will be smaller and you will lose the small gem altogether. When the material is this valuable, all of it is worth

#### Grinders

The coarse wheels on a capping unit are also helpful for reducing rough to a useful size and shape. Indeed, that is what they are designed for. A saw is faster for removing large amounts of material, but a grinding wheel will give you more control. You can cut curves with a wheel, where you are restricted to straight lines with a saw. You must be careful when grinding delicate material. A coarse wheel that is ideal for jasper would shatter an opal. It can also open up dozens of fractures in stones with perfect cleavage. Always think about the stability of your gem before taking it to a grinding wheel. If you are in doubt, either practice on a piece of junk, or start with a finer grade. Certainly, do not drop your opal off a cliff.

via Breccia, 8/12; via Gem Cutters News, 9/11; from Gem and Mineral Journal, 6/11



### Rocky Rattlers

Juniors need to bring their folders to the meeting this month

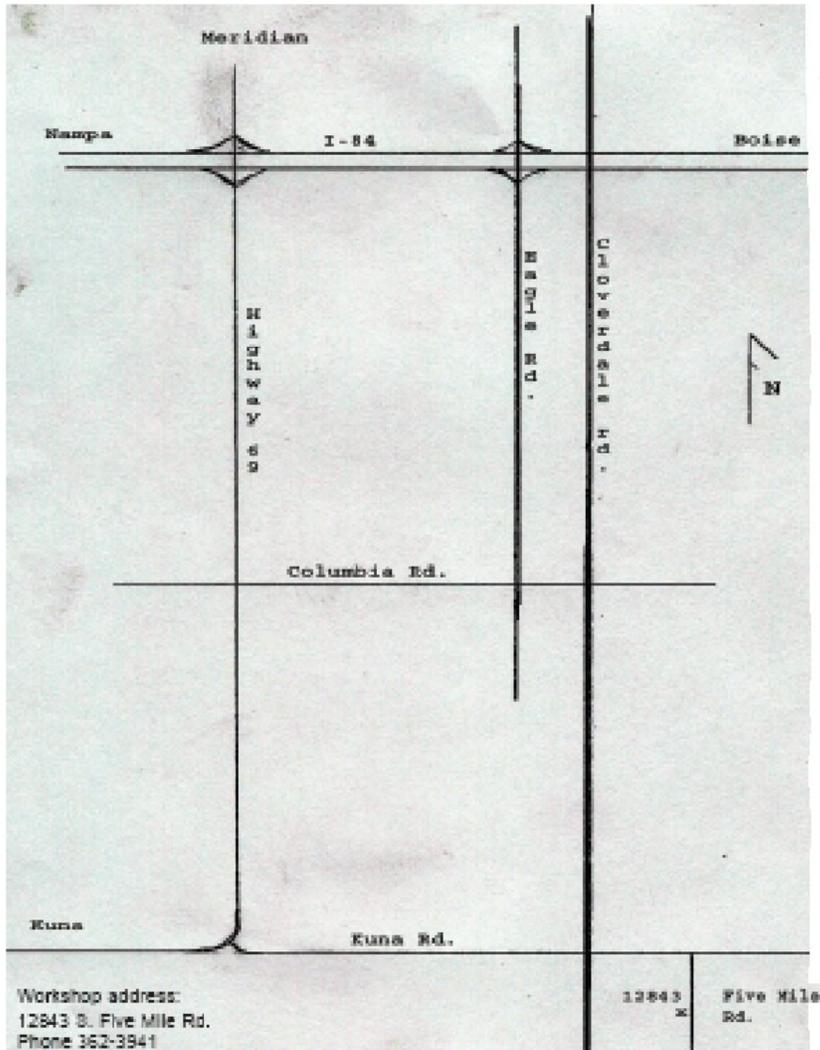
Are you ready to make a cab or two?

Remember these are for all members or guests. So be sure to bring that special person or child that you want to get interested in our hobby. We will begin on Thursday October 18th from 6:30pm to 9:30pm.

There will be a fire so if you want hotdogs and buns, please bring them, I will have the condiments. Supplies needed are hot-dogs, buns, and s'mores fixins; so come one come all to 12843 S Five Mile Rd.

You will need to get here off of Meridian and Kuna Rd. or Cloverdale and Kuna Rd. as Five Mile dead ends and starts again.

Marge Conley will be here to help you with the wire wrapping and there will be instructors to help with the cab making.



If you have a slab to make your cab out of feel free to bring it, there will be some material there to choose from if you don't have any. For those of you who have extra material, the workshop always needs donations so that everyone who comes has something nice to cut and chose from.

Remember there is a charge for the wire wrapping but the workshop is free.

I look forward to seeing you all.

Willa Renken  
Workshop Chairman  
362-3941



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.

**Black Light Sale:** We will once again be selling multiband (SW, MW, LW) 4 watt ultraviolet lamps to support our scholarship fund. The cost of the package is \$95 and includes the light, batteries, case, magnetic extender pole, and a free sample of Terlingua-type calcite from Mexico that fluoresces different colors in each wavelength and also phosphoresces.

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:**

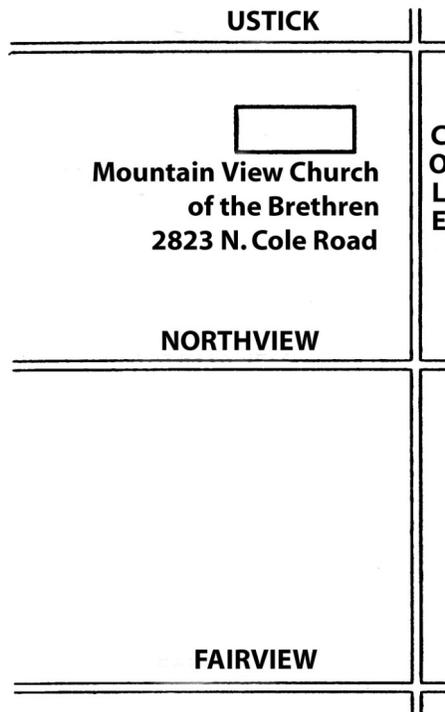
- ..... \$17.00 per person
- ..... \$20.00 per couple
- ..... \$23.00 per family

**Subscription:**

- ..... \$10.00 per year

**General Meeting:**

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



The Whangdoodle Bird  
(Often seen on field trips)



**Idaho Gem Club, Inc.**

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



**Dues**

**Are**

**Due**