



Grindings

Idaho Gem Club, Inc.

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

VOL 87 NO 7

JULY 2026

DIRECTORY

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello Rockhounds.

July is here and the heat has turned on. Be really award of driving and parking on dry grass because fires are a real danger this time of year. Our June field trips to Beacon Hill were a great adventure. The area was dug up and many agate geodes were found. Many thanks to Willa and Doug for getting that done for us and leading the weekend field trips. If you missed the trips we'll be going there again in October.

This month our meeting will be on Tuesday, July 21st at 7 pm. It's park time, so we'll be at Kristen Armstrong Municipal Park, back under the covered shelter. We are NOT meeting at the Grange!! Our picnic will be a pot luck so bring your favorite dish to share, your table service and anything you want to donate to our auction, held after a brief meeting. The auction helps to fund our awards banquet in January, so you can help by donating good material: slabs, cabs, jewelry, equipment and/or get in on the bidding for some of the nice items we'll be auctioning off. Get there early to help set up or to get a good parking spot. Drinks and ice cream will be provided by the club and Doug and Willa Renken. Our August meeting will also be in the park on the 18th at 6 pm.

This month our field trip is to Spencer, ID, for Spencer opals. It's an overnight out-of-town trip and I'm looking forward to digging for opals. The sign-up for this trip occurred in the last two months as there is a limited amount of people allowed to the mine during the season. I'll bring some examples and probably have some in the auction.

Next month we'll be going to our own opal claim, the Whangdoodle, and we'll also be going to the Queenstone claim area for a beautiful Owyhee jasper. That trip is on August 22 and we'll meet at the Chevron Ion station at the intersection of Hwys 55/95 outside of Marsing. We meet at 7:30 am, leaving at 8 am, so come prepared to dig for jasper and opal.

Check the *Grindings* at idahogemclub.com for information on meetings, field trips and all the other activities that the best rock club in Idaho is planning. Come and share your finds and spend time with your friends in the Idaho Gem Club.

Respectfully Submitted, Rick Corbett, President

The deadline for issues is the Friday after each Board Meeting for the current month's edition. To submit articles, please send them through email to Dana Robinson, Editor
drobinso@boisestate.edu

ACTIVITY CALENDAR

JULY

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1	2	3	4
5	6 ROLE* Workshop 6-8:45 pm	7 Board Meeting 7 pm	8	9 Thunderegg Days, Nyssa Noon-9 pm	10 Thunderegg Days, Nyssa 9 am-9 pm	11 Thunderegg Days, Nyssa 9 am-9 pm
12	13	14 No Class This Month	15	16	17	18
19	20 ROLE* Workshop 6-8:45 pm	21 Picnic Meeting 6 pm	22	23 Workshop 6-8:45 pm	24	25 Field Trip Spencer, ID Overnighter
26	27	28	29	30	31	

AUGUST

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1 Workshop 10 am-2 pm
2	3 ROLE* Workshop 6-8:45 pm	4 Board Meeting 7 pm	5	6	7	8
9	10	11 Wire Wrap Workshop 6-9 pm	12	13	14	15
16	17 ROLE* Workshop 6-8:45 pm	18 Picnic Meeting 6 pm	19	20 Workshop 6-8:45 pm	21	22 Field Trip Queenstone 8 am
23 30	24 31	25	26	27	28	29 Workshop 10 am-2 pm

SEPTEMBER

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1 Board Meeting 7 pm	2	3	4	5
6	7 ROLE* Workshop 6-8:45 pm	8 Wire Wrap Workshop 6-9 pm	9	10	11	12
13	14	15 General Meeting 7 pm	16	17 Workshop 6-8:45 pm	18	19 Field Trip Silver City 8 am
20	21 ROLE* Workshop 6-8:45 pm	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

OCTOBER

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3 Field Trip Beacon Hill 8 am
4 Field Trip Beacon Hill 8 am	5 ROLE* Workshop 6-8:45 pm	6 Board Meeting 7 pm	7	8	9	10
11	12	13 Wire Wrap Workshop 6-9 pm	14	15	16	17
18	19 ROLE* Workshop 6-8:45 pm	20 General Meeting 7 pm	21	22 Workshop 6-8:45 pm	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31 Workshop 10 am-2 pm

*To participate in the ROLE workshops, you must complete your first level in the general workshops.



Upcoming Events

Far West Lapidary Rock & Gem Show, August 7-8, 10 am-5 pm, August 9, 10 am-4 pm. Ko-kwel Casino Resort, 3201 Tremont St., North Bend, OR

The Crystal Festival plus Oddities Market, August 16, 10 am-8 pm. The Monarch, 455 25th St., Ogden, UT

The Crystal Festival, August 29-30, 10 am-8 pm. Mountain America Expo Center, 9575 State St., Sandy, UT

2026 FIELD TRIPS

Jul 25	Spencer Mine Overnight Trip
Aug 22	Whangdoodle & Queenstone for Opal & Jaspers
Sept 19	Silver City for Quartz Crystals
Oct 3-4	Beacon Hill for Geodes

SPENCER MINE FIELD TRIP

Spencer Mine Field Trip

This year we are planning on having an overnight field trip to the Spencer Opal Mine on July 25. There is a full slate of 40 folks signed up for this date. The balance of \$355 is due at the shop prior to starting the experience. If the weather cancels the dig, they will ship one of their digging boxes (valued at \$35 dollars plus \$10 shipping) to any customer that paid the reservation fee.

You should travel to the area on Friday, July 24, and spend the night. We will be meeting at 7:30 am at the Spencer Shop at 27 Opal Ave. in Spencer, leaving promptly at 8 am. Their phone number is 208-374-5476.

There are limited options for hotels. The nearest is in Dubois or Idaho Falls. There are several camping areas that are fairly close, as well.

WIRE WRAPPING WORKSHOPS

Idaho Gem Club Wire Wrapping Workshops

2nd Tuesday of each month
6 pm to 9 pm

\$10 to participate, includes copper wire and stone

Maryann Weed is offering Wire Wrapping Workshops for club members at her shop. There is plenty of room for anyone who wants to come and there is so much to learn. Please call to reserve your place. Check it out!

10417 W. Shiloh Dr.
Boise, Idaho
208-412-0205

WORKSHOPS

See the calendar for upcoming workshop dates. Come cut your rocks and learn cabochon making. Brent Stewart, Rick Corbett, and Liz Warner keep the club lapidary workshop operating year round.

Third Thursday of each month from 6:00 pm-8:45 pm
Saturday the week after general meeting — 10:00 am-2:00 pm

ROLE Workshops are the First and Third Mondays —
6:00 pm-8:45 pm

WORKSHOP LOCATION

2620 W. Idaho St., Boise, ID
Next door to Stewart's Gem Shop

\$5 Fee for each visit (kids free)

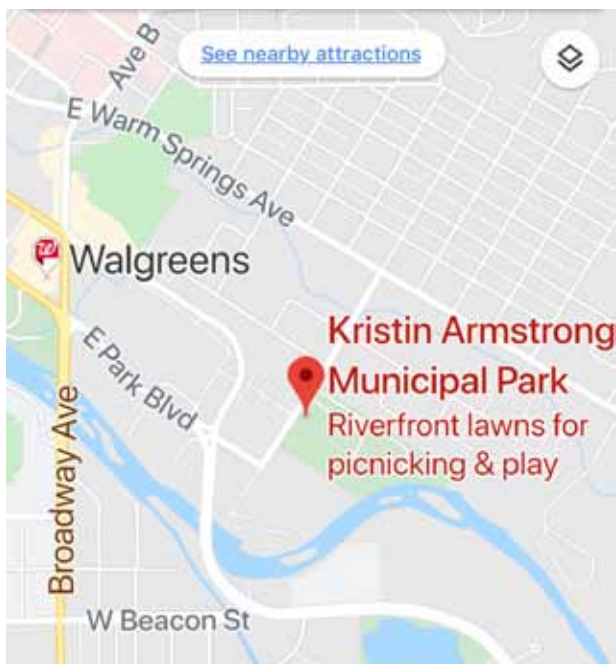


JULY POT LUCK PICNIC MEETING

July 21, 2026, will be the Pot Luck Picnic at Kristen Armstrong Memorial Park Shelter at 6:00 pm. Dinner is at 6:30 pm. Bring a dish to share for dinner and your table setting. We will have door prizes and a short business meeting to go over current events. The club provides drinks and an ice cream dessert.

After dinner there will be an Auction to help offset costs for our annual Banquet in January. Bring whatever you would like to donate and be ready to look for new pieces for your collection. Come join us for a fun evening. Hope to see you all there!

Please remember your table setting! We have limited extras.



Map to Picnic Location
Kristen Armstrong Municipal Park
500 S. Walnut St., Boise
Tuesday, July 21, 2026
6:00 p.m.

BEACON HILL TRIP



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Theron & Corinthia Hale
Scott & Shannon Throm

New Members:

Our website at idahogemclub.com has all of the information regarding our club operations. We also have a facebook page for interacting and socializing. Please contact any Officer or Board Member with questions or suggestions! Welcome to your Gem Club!

IGC LIBRARY

Our Club Library will be open during the general meetings. Take a look at the books, magazines and videos available for check-out. New issues of *Rock & Gem Magazine* are added monthly.

If you have any books you would like to donate, you may bring them in a bag marked for the Librarian and leave them on top of the library cabinet. If you have questions, please contact Tia Call at tcall76@yahoo.com.



SUNSHINE LADY REPORT

By Deana Ashton

Longtime member and good friend Jim Witt is having some health issues. A cheerful floral basket was sent to him at home. Please keep him in your thoughts and prayers as he gets back on his feet.

IGC Sunshine Lady sends cheerful greetings to club members needing get well wishes, sympathy and anniversary expressions. If you know someone in need of cheer or attention, please text or call Deana at 208-794-5628.

SAVE STAMPS PROGRAM

NFMS members are encouraged to use and save commemorative stamps. Cancelled stamps are collected and sorted, then sold to stamp collectors. Cut a 1/2" or larger margin around the stamp. The money generated is then donated to scholarships. The collected stamps can be given to Debbie Mitchell, the Federation Director in our club.

**IDAHO MUSEUM OF
MINING & GEOLOGY****Bogus Basin:
Granite, Gold & Wildflowers**
Date: July 25, 10 am to 3 pm

Join Steven Sawyer and Alyssa Veatch for a geologic field trip to Bogus Basin. Learn about how geology controls the distribution of Gold in the area and see how veins in the granite (pegmatite's) can tell you a lot about where the gold is (or isn't).

We will meet at Frontier Point/Nordic Lodge, 16.3 miles up Bogus Basin Road at 10 am.

Admission:

IMMG Members & Kids — Free
Non-members — \$20 plus Eventbrite fee

Pre-registration is required at:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/bogus-basin-granite-gold-wildflowers-tickets-1993846951906?aff=oddtcreator>
Contact operations@idahomuseum.org if you have questions.

Sponsored by
Idaho Museum of Mining and Geology
2455 Old Penitentiary Rd.
www.idahomuseum.org

**Western Snake River Plain:
Field Trip**
Date: August 8, 8 am to 11 am

This field trip is guided by Dr. Terry S Maley, PhD. We will learn about the Western Snake River Plain by visiting 4 field sites in the Boise foothills near Table Rock. The geology we see at these sites is representative of the geology of the western Snake River Plain. We will meet in the Old Pen gravel lot, 2445 Old Penitentiary Rd. in Boise, near the trailhead sign at 7:45 am for an 8 am departure. This site will also serve as the first stop. We will not be hiking up the trail, just meeting there for the first stage. Throughout the morning there will be minimal walking—no more than a few hundred yards. Trip ends by 11 am.

Admission:

IMMG Members & Kids — Free
Non-members — \$20 plus Eventbrite fee

Pre-registration is required at:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/western-snake-river-plain-field-trip-tickets-1992316525359?aff=oddtcreator>
Contact operations@idahomuseum.org if you have questions.

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SPINEL

Spinel is the magnesium/aluminum member of the larger spinel group of minerals. The name comes from the Latin word *spinella*, a diminutive form of spine, in reference to its pointed crystals.

History

Spinel is an underappreciated gem. In ancient times, the mines of central and southeast Asia yielded exceptionally large spinel crystals, but they were usually confused with better-known stones like ruby and sapphire. Some of them became the treasured property of kings and emperors and are among the most famous gemstones, including two that are called “ruby” in the British Crown Jewels, as well as one formerly from the French Crown Jewels.

Properties

Spinel is singly refractive, with the same physical properties in all crystal directions. It belongs to the cubic crystal system, and its characteristic crystal shape is an octahedron, which looks like two back-to-back pyramids. Spinel can also form flattened crystals that look radically different from octahedral crystals. The flattened shape occurs when the pyramids that form an octahedron rotate against each other during growth. This is described as a “twinned crystal.” It has no true cleavage and its hardness is 8 on the Mohs scale. It is transparent to opaque with a subadamantine luster.

Luster is the intensity and quality of light that is reflected from the surface of a gem. Spinel has the ability to accept one of the brightest polishes of all gems. The only other gems with that polish luster listed in the GIA Gem Reference Guide are the corundums and the chrysoberyls. The luster of a polished spinel is only exceeded by diamond, sphene and zircon. These gems have a polish luster known as adamantane.

Well-formed spinel crystals are fairly common in nature and may be colorless, but usually come in shades of red, lavender, blue, green, brown, black or yellow. Chromium(III) causes the red color in spinel, while orange and purple stones owe their color to a mixture of iron and chromium.

Violet to blue spinel can be colored by trace amounts of iron, and vibrant blues owe their saturated color to trace amounts of cobalt.



Geologic Occurrence

Spinel is found as a metamorphic mineral in metamorphosed limestones and silica-poor mudstones. It also occurs as a primary mineral in rare mafic igneous rocks. In these rocks, the magmas are relatively deficient in alkalis relative to aluminum, and aluminum oxide may form as the mineral corundum or may combine with magnesia to form spinel. That is why spinel and ruby are often found together.



Geographical Occurrence

Spinel has long been found in the gemstone-bearing gravel of Sri Lanka and in limestones of modern-day Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Myanmar. Over the last few decades gem quality spinels have been found in the marbles and gravels of Vietnam, Tanzania, Kenya and Madagascar.



Since 2000 spinels have been discovered with unusual vivid pink or blue colors. Such “glowing” spinels are from Myanmar, Tanzania and Vietnam. In 2018 bright blue spinels were also reported in the southern part of Baffin Island, Canada.

Spinel was recently added as an August birthstone, sharing this month with peridot and sardonyx.

Synthetic Spinel

Modern technology hasn't helped spinel's confused identity as far as the general public is concerned due largely to the widespread use of synthetic spinel as an imitation for many other gems. Many people aren't even aware that there's a natural version of the stone.

Synthetic spinel can be produced by similar means to synthetic corundum, including the Verneuil method and the flux method. It is widely used as an inexpensive cut gem in birthstone jewelry for the month of August. Light blue synthetic spinel is a good imitation of aquamarine beryl, and green synthetic spinel is used to imitate emerald or tourmaline.

By 2015, transparent spinel was being made in sheets and other shapes through sintering. Synthetic spinel, which looks like glass but has notably higher strength against pressure, can also have applications in military and commercial use.

Healing Properties

Spinel's fiery red coloring, like other red gemstones, embodies passion as well as longevity. Spinel's spiritual meaning is the embodiment of hope, joy and vitality.

Physical Healing

Physically, spinel properties are believed to soothe inflammation of the nerves with its vibrational calming frequencies. Crystal healers also recommend it for boosting stamina and shortening recovery times from injuries or illnesses.

Emotional Healing

Spiritually, spinel symbolizes hope, gratitude, inspiration, renewal and passion. Mentally, spinel benefits the mind by instilling it with intellectual capabilities. It also balances emotions, bestowing people with the power to self-soothe and heal from personal traumas. If you're susceptible to bad influences, the spinel stone acts as a protective barrier against negative influences and energies.

Chakra Healing

Chakra healing is the process of opening blocked energy centers to resolve negative physical or emotional symptoms by allowing energy to flow properly. Most gems only open one

or two chakras, but spinel is a chakra stone for opening and balancing all seven chakras! This allows balanced energies to flow from your base chakra — the center of foundational needs and stability — up to your crown chakra — the center of spiritual ascension.

Care and Maintenance

Spinel is easy to take care of, thanks to having no cleavage, high scratch-resistance, and excellent wearability — they're even a popular non-diamond alternative for engagement rings!

Most spinels can even be cleaned with ultrasonic, mechanical, or steam cleaning systems, but it's always best to be on the safe side. That's why it is recommended that you use the standard mild soapy water and a soft-bristled toothbrush to scrub away any built-up residue.

GEM CLUB OFFICERS

PRESIDENT: Rick Corbett, 208-890-2599
ricksrocks17@gmail.com

1st VP: Willa Renken, 208-362-3941
wlr_dkr@msn.com

2nd VP: Terri Frostrom, 208-407-2405
s_tfrostrom@hotmail.com

SECRETARY: Dana Robinson, 208-713-8582
drobinso@boisestate.edu

TREASURER: Barbara Lee, 208-794-7968
bwanner2@yahoo.com

FEDERATION DIRECTOR:
Debbie Mitchell, 208-880-7991
debbiemitch2@gmail.com

FIELD TRIP GUIDE: Brandon Favreau,
208-724-2287, gerbil51@yahoo.com

HISTORIAN: Jean Hoene, 360-961-4241
greyhorsejean@aol.com

LIBRARIAN: Tia Call, 208-602-4594
tcall76@yahoo.com

SUNSHINE LADY: Deana Ashton
208-794-5628, gemdigger2014@outlook.com

GRINDINGS EDITOR: Dana Robinson
208-345-3823, drobinso@boisestate.edu

BOARD MEMBERS:

Jason Smith, 208-899-3899
fuzzyhatleather@gmail.com

Cordell Blaine, 208-781-0229
cordellandkrista@gmail.com

Liz Warner, 208-631-8830
lperson55@hotmail.com

Dana Robinson, 208-345-3823
drobinso@boisestate.edu

Debbie Mitchell, 208-880-7991
debbiemitch2@gmail.com

Lynn Hansen, 208-297-0500
2020hansen@gmail.com

WEBSITE: www.idahogemclub.com

EMAIL: info@idahogemclub.com

MINUTES OF THE IDAHO GEM CLUB GENERAL MEETING

JUNE 16, 2026

The meeting was called to order at 7:08 by Rick Corbett and the pledge was recited. Ten guests and new members introduced themselves and commented on what brought them to our club.

Becky drew winning door prize tickets for 8 juniors and 10 adults.

Rick asked for any corrections to the minutes as printed in the *Grindings*. Willa made a motion to accept the minutes, Terri seconded, the membership voted and the motion carried, with Mike opposed.

Field Trip Report: The Saturday field trip to Beacon Hill had more than 120 folks in 58 cars, and on Sunday there were about 16 cars. The site was much better with room to spread out and two trenches started for digging. It was a great time and everyone found good stuff. Brandon had a lot of folks that want to join the club.

The July field trip is to the Spencer Opal Mine on the 25th. If you don't want to pay for the mine tour, you can dig in the pile at the gift shop parking lot for a \$45 fee.

Treasurer Report: Barb reported the CDs have been renewed for another year. The Treasurer's Report is on the front table for anyone who wants to have a look.

Program Report: The next two meetings will have an auction after the picnic meetings in Kristen Armstrong Municipal Park. Please bring any donations for the auction.

Workshop Report: Liz went over the dates for the next workshops. The next general workshops are June 18, 6-8:45 pm, and June 27, 10 am-2 pm. The ROLE workshops will be July 6 and 20, 6-8:45 pm. The July general workshops are July 23, 6-8:45 pm, and Aug. 1, 10 am-2 pm.

She also discussed the ROLE program advanced classes on the first and third Mondays of the month. You need to do two cabs in the general workshop before joining the advanced group.

Juniors Report: The juniors head off to their meeting room.

Old Business: The July and August meetings will be a potluck picnic in Kristen Armstrong Municipal Park, with auctions following. Bring a dish to share and your table service. The club provides drinks and ice cream dessert. We meet at 6 pm with dinner at 6:30 pm. Bring any donations and money to bid on new material for your collection. The auctions benefit the banquet fund.

Thunder Egg Days in Nyssa is coming up in July. The show runs from Noon to 9 pm on July 9, and 9 am to 9 pm July 10 and 11. We didn't do a table this year, but you should stop by to check it out and support other club members. On Saturday afternoon there is an ice cream social and fireworks after dark.

New Business: Laura Pape is looking for a guide to lead a rockhound trip on July 11th. It is a paid position. See Rick for details and contact information.

Sandy has a 6" Kingsley North cab machine for sale. He also has a very old genie for sale, both for good prices.

The Madras and Prineville rock shows are coming up over the next two weekends.

Let Dana know if you are not getting the newsletter so we can update the email address.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:44 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Dana Robinson, Secretary

MINUTES OF THE IDAHO GEM CLUB BOARD MEETING JULY 7, 2026

Present: Rick Corbett, Willa Renken, Barb Lee, Terri Frostrom, Cordell Blaine, Jason Smith, Liz Warner, Lynn Hansen, Debbie Mitchell and Dana Robinson

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 by Rick Corbett.

Rick asked for any corrections to the minutes as printed in the *Grindings*. Liz made a motion to accept the minutes, which was seconded by Willa. Board members voted and the motion carried.

Treasurer Report: Barb went over the financial statements for deposits and disbursements. The CDs were renewed for another year and the bill for ripping Beacon Hill was paid.

She is reviewing the sales and use tax information to avoid paying excess taxes. We need to submit a form for items that are exempt from taxes. She will also make a gmail account to use for club business.

Federation Director Report: Debbie reported she will be going to the annual meeting next year in April in Kennewick, WA. Keep saving those stamps.

Juniors Report: Cordell is getting mineral ID kits for the juniors to use.

Program Report: The next two meetings will be picnics with auctions. Terri will check with Chris to see if he will do a flintknapping demo at the September meeting.

Field Trip Report: The July field trip is to the Spencer Opal Mines. Rick will check and see if anyone is willing to lead a local trip that same weekend for those that don't go to Spencer.

Workshop Report: Liz went over the dates for the next workshops. The next ROLE workshops will be Aug. 3 and 17, 6-8:45 pm. The July regular workshops will be July 23, 6-8:45 pm, and Aug. 1, 10 am-2 pm. The August regular workshops will be Aug. 20, 6-8:45 pm, and Aug. 29, 10 am-2 pm.

She will check with Brent on a possible Kids' Day on August 8, 10 am-2 pm.

Old Business: Thunder Egg Days is on Thursday, July 9, Noon-9 pm, and Friday and Saturday 9 am-9 pm.

The July picnic meeting will be on the 21st. Willa will bring the drinks and ice cream. Set-up is at 5 pm to cover the tables, etc. The picnic starts at 6 with dinner at 6:30. Bring any auction donations. Quality trumps quantity. The August picnic is on Aug. 18th. Need to emphasize the table service section in newsletter.

New Business: August 8-9 is Nampa Art in the Park. Terri has a booth there and will need applications and brochures from Dana.

Willa presented the 2026 Budget. There weren't changes, but discussion is needed on adding to the scholarship fund. Also need to get back to doing the Building Fund raffles at meetings again. Rick will work on getting a Committee Chairperson. Joe Blume expressed some interest.

After discussion Jason made a motion to accept the 2026 Budget, Terri seconded, the board voted and the motion carried.

Liz will start the mining claims paperwork at the first part of August to get them in on time.

There were 2 new member applications this month. Jason made a motion to accept the new members, Liz seconded, the board voted and the motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 8:26 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Dana Robinson, Secretary

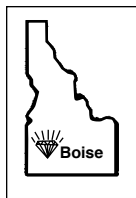


THE GRINDINGS

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www.idahogemclub.com



Idaho Gem Club, Inc.
P.O. Box 8443
Boise, Idaho 83707-2443

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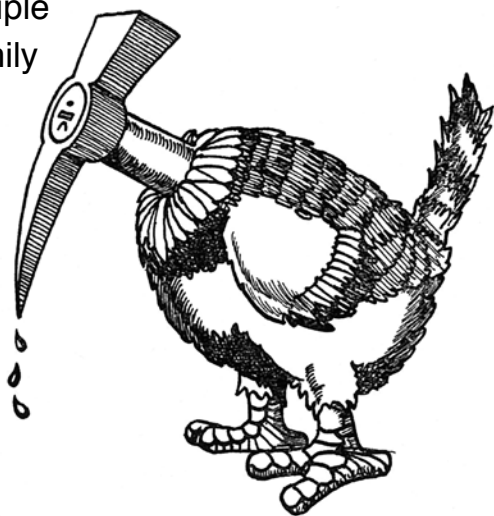
The purpose of the Idaho Gem Club is to promote mutual, educational and scientific interests and benefits of it's members in mineralogy, geology, gemology, the art of lapidary and kindred arts and sciences. Applications and/or renewals may be sent to the Idaho Gem Club, P.O. Box 8443, Boise, ID 83707-2443.

Dues:

\$22.00 individual
\$25.00 couple
\$28.00 family

Subscription only:

\$10 per year



GENERAL MEETING:

3rd Tuesday of every month: 7:00 p.m.

BOARD MEETING:

1st Tuesday of every month: 7:00 p.m.

ADDRESS:

Maple Grove Grange
11692 W. President Dr., Boise

