



**Official Bulletin
of the
Chugach Gem & Mineral Society**

Alaska Pebble Patter
Chugach Gem and Mineral Society
Box 92027
Anchorage, AK. 99509-2027

Published by the
CHUGACH GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY, INC.
Box 92027, Anchorage AK 99509-2027

<u>OFFICERS</u>	
PRESIDENT	
Bobbie Turnbow – 337-6280	
FIRST VICE PRESIDENT	RECORDING SECRETARY
Anita Williams 345-2541	Bea Allen 696-4047
SECOND VICE PRESIDENT	CORRESPONDING SECRETARY
Steve Jensen 243-5245	Unice McCurdy 562-4968
TREASURER	BULLETIN EDITOR
Greg Durocher 337-2553	Sue Hilton 694-1934
	sueh@mtaonline.net

<u>COMMITTEES</u>	
PROGRAM	SUNSHINE & MEMORIAL
Greg Durocher 337-2553	Dorothy Arnold 279-3876
MEMBERSHIP	PARLIMENTARIAN
Jean Kane 243-4648	Norval Kane 243-4648
FIELD TRIP	FEDERATION LIAISON
Bea Allen 696-4047	Tom Cooper (907) 262-9759

THE CHUGACH GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY, INC. maintains memberships in:
AMERICAN FEDERATION OF MINERALOGICAL SOCIETIES
NORTHWEST FEDERATION OF MINERALOGICAL SOCIETIES

THE CHUGACH GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY MEETINGS ARE HELD AT
FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
725 WEST 9TH AVE., ANCHORAGE AK
(Enter the church from the rear parking lot.)

BUSINESS MEETING – 7:30 PM — 2nd Thursday of each month.
POTLUCK MEETING – 6:30 PM — 4th Thursday of each month.

Bring a hot dish, salad, or dessert (plus serving spoon) to serve 5 people.
Also bring your own plate, silverware and drink. But most importantly, bring a rock to show!

Annual membership fees: Individuals - \$15.00; Families (2 or more) - \$20.00; Bulletin Only - \$10.00
Lifetime membership fees: Individuals - \$150.00; Families (2 adults & children under 18) - \$200.00



President's Message

January - February 2004

Boy! Has it been a busy season for you? It certainly has for us. From what I could tell at the January business meeting we'll be able to have a CGMS club meeting in Arizona for February. You poor unfortunate souls who get to stay in the snow and cold will be thought of often....

Based on the input we received at the January meeting, the trip committee has done a great job of putting together an interesting spread of trips for this year. I'm trying to figure out how to do the day job, do the evening job, and get in as many trips as possible. It should prove to be another interesting year.

I noticed Jean was whipping out those membership renewals pretty fast the other night. It's hard to believe renewals are due again. Although she welcomes memberships throughout the year, this is

the "big push" so don't forget to stop by her spot at the head table, fill out a membership form, pay your dues, and get ready for another fun year!

Rondy is right around the corner. According to Steve, we've got space for 8 (maybe 9) display boxes. He's started a list for who's to fill these with their treasures. Give him a call or shoot him an e-mail if you want to be included. He'll also be looking for warm bodies to help with set up and tear down. The new tables will make both of those tasks a breeze....

I think Joe just found a rock he thought he'd lost. Guess I'd better go check!

See you at the next meeting.

bt

When snowmachining, cross country skiing or snowshoeing, keep your eyes open for cutbanks along streams, roads or trails. The layers of soil and rock may be exposed and are likely to be well drained and easy to dig. For example, there is a waterfall in the area of Boulder Creek that plunges over a tall bluff that has fossils in it. Be alert for similar opportunities! If you are willing to share the location of any finds you make, please contact Sue the Editor at 694-1934 or sueh@mtaonline.net and I will let members know of it via this bulletin. Have fun!

+==+==+==+==+==+==+==+==+==+

Another Little Nelchina Trip Report
By Anita Williams

After a summer of working Saturdays and missing all of the club outings I finally declared “enough” and had to go find some rocks. Fortunately Andres and Sheila Macias were going back to the Little Nelchina and were willing to have some company over Labor Day weekend. Linda Ewers and I met Andres late morning on Saturday at Eureka. We loaded our gear onto his 4-wheeler and ourselves on his other 4-wheeler and hit the trail. It was a two-hour trip over hill, dale, potholes, mires, puddles, rocks and streams to the campsite. At the camp, Sheila, Merlin, Rick Parkhurst and Greg Durocher greeted us. They had all come in the night before (see Greg’s article in the November - December 2003 issue for those details). After a quick lunch and a look at the agates collected so far we packed up for a trip to explore Flat Creek.

We were back on the 4-wheelers again. Sheila was spotting agates on the fly. Rick and Greg were honing their agate spotting skills rapidly while Linda and I were lurching behind just trying to keep up—much less look for agates at the same time! But we all made it to Flat Creek and started poking around.

Right away Linda and I found two nice pieces of petrified wood, enough to get the collecting juices flowing again. The creek paid off. We found agate, fossil-filled rocks, decorative pieces of limestone, skull rock (limestone concretions that look a lot like a cranium), green rocks, and red rocks. After regrouping we all made our way back to camp stopping frequently to pick up agates from the gravel bars.

The rain began as we were headed back to camp. Linda and I decided to head back to camp and get a fire started and some water heating. The others weren’t too far behind. By this time the rain had settled in as a steady downpour and we needed a shelter for dinner and drinks. Andres cut some posts while Rick and Greg rigged a tarp with bungees, twine, 4-wheelers and the Toyota. A lot could be said about the shelter, but what really mattered was that it worked.

Andres and Sheila threw dinner in the fire while we all indulged in a variety of beverages mostly alcoholic in nature. The dinner pulled from glowing coals was ribs, twice-baked potatoes and corn-on-the-cob. It was all very tasty and heartily devoured by a hungry crew.

The rain continued through the night with little let up until morning. Once or twice I awakened to hear the gurgling of the river. I couldn’t help but wonder if it was still in its banks. After all we were camped on a gravel bar in the middle of the flood plain. Since I was sleepy, warm and dry, I wasn’t concerned enough to go out and check the water level. I figured if the river were going to flood I’d find out soon enough. I may as well get some sleep in the meantime.

The river did rise during the night, but not enough to threaten our campsite. The rain didn’t stop Greg and Rick from getting an early start scouring the gravel bars for agates and caribou antlers. A make-do breakfast in the rain got us ready for a trip to explore the Little Nelchina headwaters. We disassembled the tarp from all of the vehicles and prepared for the trip. Fortunately the rain tapered off about the same time.

We all loaded into our respective vehicles and took off up river. There were lots of river crossings so I was perfectly happy to be last in line. At least I could see how deep the water would be. Floating downstream on a 4-wheeler was a new experience for me. Andres’ dog Merlin, fondly known as “Dipstick”, plunged into crossings ahead of him. If the dog went under Andres found a shallower place to cross. It was a darn reliable system.

It was a long trip. The distance wasn’t too bad; it was the number of stops along the way looking for agates and fossils. When we finally did make it to the headwaters we found some nice fossils stashed by an old campsite, but not much in the streams. Upon some deeper reflection I’m sure the “easy pickin’s” were all taken. The area certainly deserves much more time and footwork than we

were able to give it. It was getting late in the day so we beat a hasty retreat back to camp.

Rick, Greg, Linda and I packed up our camps and headed back out that evening (Sunday). Andres and Sheila decided to stay another night. Linda and I took off about 6 P.M. on the 4-wheeler. Rick and Greg were about 30 minutes behind in the Toyota. A day of rain had certainly changed the character of the trail. It was a mess. Every low spot was a muddy water hazard, but the 4-wheeler performed very well. We finally made it out around 9 P.M., thankfully still in daylight. Rick and Greg weren't far behind. We loaded up our gear and our rocks, had a meal at the roadhouse and made our way back to Anchorage. It was a good trip.

+==+==+==+==+==+==+==+==+==+

Wrangell Trip 2003
Part 2b by Bonnie Hepburn

Monday, May 26:

Sue, Bobbie and I awoke to cloudy skies and a light rain. We breakfasted, finished packing our gear and our lunch and were ready for our chartered jet boat tour of the lower Stikine River. Sylvia and John met us at 9 A.M. and announced that they'd lined up Jim Bailey to be our captain. Unfortunately they were having problems getting their smaller jet boat, the "Kraken", started and we would have had to take the larger one. But after a short delay, they got the Kraken cracking. So we loaded our gear and were off on the next leg of our adventure.

Our first stop was the USFS Garnet Ledge cabin to offload our gear. When we arrived, we discovered that the previous occupants had packed their gear but had not left yet. They were nowhere in sight, but had a number of 5-gallon buckets loaded with really nice looking garnets. It was very tempting, but we resisted. We would harvest our own later. Instead, I left them a note informing them that we were leaving our gear while we explored upriver and regretted that we didn't get to meet them. Then we were off again.

Just around the corner from the cabin is the mouth of the Stikine, the fastest flowing river in North America. The word STIKINE (Stik-heen) means "Great River" in the Tlingit language; it was the original gateway for the Klondike gold rush. Soon we were passing Cottonwood Island, on which, during the winter of 1897-98, was a

makeshift "tent city" for approximately 1,000 prospectors waiting for the spring thaw so they could travel up the river to the Klondike gold mining areas. How deserted it looked today.

One of the unexpected things I soon discovered on this tour was that there were a number of "float cabins" on the Stikine. Captain Jim said it was illegal to anchor one to the shoreline, but perfectly okay to anchor it offshore. Some adventurers who float the Stikine get upset at these "eyesores" and feel they should be made illegal. But they are part of the tradition of the river. And, frankly, I found them to be quaint and picturesque.

We explored some sloughs as we made our way upriver, eventually arriving at our next destination—Chief Shakes Hot Springs. As we disembarked, we encountered a State Trooper and a Forest Service ranger returning from the hot springs. They informed Jim that there was a group of young locals using the outside bathing area. Also, that the cold-water hose to the indoor tub was blocked and they were unable to fix it so the tub was really hot! Jim seemed unconcerned. He was confident that he could remedy the situation. So we hiked the short distance to the indoor tub and changed into our swimsuits while Jim unblocked the hose in less than 5 minutes. Our hero! We waited for the water to become tolerable, then had a most enjoyable soak. The tub was enclosed in an A-frame structure with insect screening so it was not like being totally inside a building. But I bet when the mosquitoes are dining, this would be the place to bathe!

Relaxed and hungry, Jim said we had two options. We could dine in the hot springs area or he could take us to a nice little beach that had lots of river rocks. Well, we are members of the CGMS, so guess which venue we chose? We arrived at the promised spot in a few moments and immediately set to devouring our lunches as we sifted through the rocks. And it wasn't raining. Rocks, food, no rain, we were in heaven.

Fortified, we decided to forego the Canadian border viewing (the usual swath of chopped down trees) and head directly to Shakes Lake to see if our fearless captain could be the first to make it to the glacier this season.

We turned at Shakes Slough and progressed towards the lake dodging the iceberg sentinels along the way. But it was the sheets of ice covering the surface that were the real issue. Jim forged ahead as if we were in a Coast Guard ice breaker.

It was quite thrilling and I thought for sure we'd be the first group to get to the lake and see Shakes Glacier. But alas, the Kraken soon picked up an obstruction in the jet unit that caused us to lose power big time. Jim tied the boat to shore and spent a fair amount of time wrestling with it, trying to figure out exactly what had gone wrong. But he had no luck. So he announced that we would be turning around and limping back down the river to the cabin. We were disappointed, but happy that our vessel wasn't totally powerless. So no views of the glacier, but the clouds parted enough for us to get some nice views of Castle Mountain, which is not commonly seen.

On the trip downstream we picked up another passenger at the research cabin we had passed earlier. Amber was a local headed back to town. Jim also swung by an interesting area that was covered with sand dunes and is noted on the topographic map as "The Desert". As we neared Garnet Ledge, we invited Jim to stay for dinner and wait for the tide to rise before attempting to limp the remaining 7 miles to town. He declined, but said that if he got stranded on the mud flats, he would walk over and join us for breakfast the next morning.

We arrived at the cabin with mixed feelings. We had had a most enjoyable tour of the Stikine. Throughout the trip, Captain Jim proved to be a capable and entertaining river boatman. He regaled us with his knowledge of the area and put up with the gentle ribbing from his three lady passengers. We wanted this camaraderie to continue, but ... the garnets were calling!!

--- to be continued next issue ---

+==+==+==+==+==+==+==+==+==+==+==+==+

CGMS Website

CGMS has a brand new website! The URL is <http://www.chugachgms.org>. The club's general information is listed, as well as the following: an updated field trip list for 2004, a membership application form, and in the near future - online issues of previous Pebble Patters. If anyone would like to see anything else posted, please notify the webmaster at webmaster@chugachgms.org.

+==+==+==+==+==+==+==+==+==+==+==+==+

Tales from the Bush
-The Trip of Lost Things-
By Joe Turnbow

Both Neil and I were ready to fly the coop on Monday morning; however, we persevered until Monday evening. Neil met me at the store. Max was already sitting patiently in the pickup bed and required only minor adjustments before we headed for the house at 6 P.M. I picked up a couple of forgotten items such as rain gear, boots, etc. Minor stuff really but convenient. Bobbie arrived just in time to bid us adieu. Look out McCarthy! Here we come!

We made great time, arriving at the milepost 103 *Follow-Me* control point an hour and a half after departing Anchorage. After a short wait, we were on the move. Fair roads and little traffic again contributed to a fast trip to Glennallen and Copper Center. Since we had to wait ten hours for the Park Service office to open at 8 A.M. we decided to tour Copper Center (i.e. visit the local drinking establishment). Since they have a scale model of the Kennecott facilities at McCarthy, it was actually an informative visit.

We were waiting on the Park Service office's doorstep bright and early. When they finally showed up it was "ATV permits have to be done through the Slana office." That took an hour!!!! Finally, we were on our way. Next stop, Strelna Creek about milepost 17 or so on the infamous Highway 10, a.k.a. the "McCarthy Road."

With all the delays, it was 11 A.M. before we had Max unloaded and everything squared away. The first three or four miles had changed very little in the last two years. Max was having a ball splashing and grinding through the mud and then slapping aside the alders once we made the hillside. I did have to rein her in every quarter-mile or so when the inverted speed bumps (i.e., drainage ditches) appeared. Then there was Clear Creek.

The trail that used to drop gently to creek level now takes an abrupt right turn and drops 15 feet to the creek, which of *course* had considerably altered its course in the last two years. Large boulders blocked Max from an easy upstream crossing and made the trail crossing doable but tough. Neil and I soon fixed the latter problem by simply restacking a few basketball-sized rocks. Max joyfully bounced across and up the far side. The remainder of the trip to Nugget Creek was pretty uneventful except

for the two marten that streaked across the trail. And we did run into a Maine tourist who said she saw a lynx on the trail.

Nugget Creek was unchanged. Better yet, the cabin was empty! We quickly transferred the camp gear from Max to the cabin before continuing our odyssey up the hill to the old copper mine.

The smooth, wide trail quickly became bumpy with tree roots and quite narrow. Max was really unhappy with the tight reign I kept. She took every opportunity to scrape tree trunks and rip leaves and trash off each passing alder. She finally went a little too far and left a sizeable portion of her roof edge in the side of a large birch that leaned across the narrow trail. Neil commented dryly, "That was a little tight, Joe!" Hm... Shortly after, we left the trees for the openness of the tundra.

I found a convenient place to pull off the trail so Max wouldn't block other travelers. After sternly cautioning Max about repeating his back flip stunt from our last visit to the mine, Neil and I started up the hill. The day was bright, hot, and still (except for the black swarm of mosquitoes draped around my head)! I now regretted my whining about a cold wet summer. A cool breeze would have been really nice!

Two years ago I was more concerned about Bobbie's imitation of a pinball as Max executed his double back flip than I was about looking around the mine. This time I took the time to carefully examine the remaining facilities before moving uphill to the top tailing pile. The top pile—about 60-70 yards farther up the hill—turned out to be the source of most if not all of the copper ore. You could still see some of the excavated vein; however, as it turned out, the best specimens were found close to the old mill. As usual, Neil managed to beat me to the best pieces.

A fresh breeze started about the time we were ready to leave so the trip back to Max wasn't quite as hot as the trip up. We piled into Max and started back to the cabin. The trail be..."Max. Max! What are you doing?!? Slow down! *#\$%&*#\$ Max! Leave that tree alone! Ok! Now you've done it. Look at your roof! What? No I don't think the tree wanted to play tag!" Geeeeze! Max can get a little intense at times!

I managed to keep Max under control (more or less) for the remainder of the trip back to the cabin. We arrived there just before 3 P.M. What could we possibly do until suppertime? Maybe see if Nugget Creek would live up to its name? It didn't!

However, we did find several neat rocks. There's lots of epidote and chlorite stained rocks and lots of amphibolites in the creek but no nuggets and very few rocks carrying the stain of copper minerals.

With sore feet and tired bodies we finally retired to the dark cabin for a meal and a well-deserved night's rest. Of course we were up and on the move by 4:30 A.M. By 5:30, we had finished breakfast and packing. All we had to do was convince Max it was time to leave. Max wasn't too keen on leaving until I mentioned river crossings and mud puddles. She fired up and almost leaped down the trail to the creek crossing.

We were zooming right along at a blazing 15 or 20 mph when, without warning, a 400 to 500 pound blond grizzly burst out of the brush on the left side of the road. Max, almost as startled as Neil and I, screeched to a halt as the north end of the southbound bear disappeared around the corner. "Good thinking, Max. Let's give his majesty a couple of minutes to recover his dignity and move away from the trail." So, we sat and discussed the bear's unusually sleek appearance before proceeding down the trail to Clear Creek.

The creek was still running hard but didn't seem much worse for the midnight rain. We climbed out of Max to stretch our legs and examine a few rocks. About the time I was going to holler at Neil, I hear, "Hey, Joe!! I found one!"— a chrysanthemum stone, of course. Sure enough, Neil had located a large specimen of the brown variety buried in the creek. "Hm... Nice! This will take a bit of work, Neil. Before we start, lets take a look at what I found."

We moved back upstream across a couple or three brush and rock piles to the center of the old stream channel. Facing us were two good-sized rocks (turns out one was 105 pounds and the other 183 pounds). Someone had removed a few small pieces of the smaller one (they were actually still sitting on an adjacent rock) and the larger rock had a couple of very evident fractures. We hadn't brought the large packs and the small piece barely fit in Neil's daypack. A couple of good whacks with Baby (an 8-pound splitting maul) convinced the larger rock to divide into pieces that were a little more manageable.

The trips (two for each of us) back to Max were a little harrowing. Something about walking through brush piles and moving rocks with a 100-pound pack. Overheated and fighting black clouds

of mosquitoes and White Socks, we decided Neil's find could wait until the next trip. Sooooo...

Max jumped the creek, found the steepest possible place to exit, then gleefully climbed up to the trail. Neil and I double-checked the various and sundry knots and cinched the seat belts tighter around our new guests. All secure! Down the trail we went. By 10 A.M. Max was back in the pickup bed and everything was stowed. Next stop, McCarthy!

The 40-plus mile drive to McCarthy was unexpectedly nice. I have never seen Highway 10 in such good condition. I have also never seen so many vehicles stacked up. This had to be a record for mid-week visitors. We finally found a parking spot close to the river. It took us about five minutes to gear up and start across the footbridge.

Surprise! No post and although they installed devices to reduce the width, Max could have driven across. Still since we were headed for the Jumbo and I didn't know the status of the trail, we decided to leave Max behind.

The next surprise was also rather pleasant. We met a young man named Moses with a chopped off Harley welded to the back end of a VW (or at least that's what it looked like). For \$5 each, he drove us up the hill to the lodge and around the corner to the cutoff for the Jumbo and Bonanza mines! So, with fresh legs and a bag full of eagerness, we charged up the road! Not too far in Neil said "This looks like the corner where the trail starts but I'm not sure."

"OK, Neil. Why don't we take a look at the next corner and then decide?"

"Good idea, Joe."

Up the road we went. About 100 yards up, we crossed under some tram cables. Neil decided the prior corner was the Jumbo trailhead. Back down the hill; up the start of a trail; then into alder hell! What trail? It took us 40 minutes to traverse 100 yards at which point we found a trail. The right trail? Nope! Turns out the nice homestead we found at the end of the trail was, like the trail, posted "NO TRESPASSING" in large, bold letters.

"OK! OK! So that wasn't the trail!"

"No problem, Neil. There's one more corner about a half mile up that matches your description. How 'bout a drink of water before we continue. Can you get the canteen off my pack?"

"What canteen, Joe?"

Uggh! I was NOT going back in there to find a 20-year old canteen! "Forget it. Let's get on up the road."

Sure enough, we arrived at that point to find a nice open trail wide enough for a D9. Well, it was open and wide for the first 50 feet then it turned a corner into alder hell! Again! However, this wasn't quite as bad as before. There actually was a trail. The alders, growing unchecked, had reduced the trail to a tunnel four feet high and one wide! By the way, did I mention that it was raining? Both of us were zipped into our rain jackets and pants. Waterproof? Ha! Waterlogged would be a better description. The first part of the trail was about three miles through uninterrupted alders. One hundred-yard section of the trail was pure bog that didn't improve until you waded across the creek.

We finally arrived at the mid-point—a tram transfer and maintenance station. Both buildings were still in super shape even with zero maintenance for the last 60 or 70 years! The barracks building had a single room that still retained glass in the window. Guess where we decided to bed down? While I was busy stripping down and wringing water from my cloths (a hopeless task), Neil asked if I had seen his bed mat.

"Neil, have you ever seen *anything* when you're bent almost double and walking with your eyes closed through an alder jungle?"

"Hmmmmm..."

I put on some dry (almost dry anyway) clothes from my soaked and dripping pack, then crawled into the sleeping bag to warm up the two chunks of ice that looked a little like my feet. Neil improvised a bed mat by throwing a piece of plastic, some bubble-wrap, and a bag on the bedsprings. Then he decided to do a little exploring.

An hour later he was back and repeated my clothes-wringing routine. Neil was about as successful as I had been. With hopes of producing *less wet* clothes, we hung wrung but still dripping clothes from a variety of nails, wires, and furniture. After a couple of false starts, we got the camp stove fired up. A little hot food and drink made our cozy little room feel almost like home. "Good night, Neil."

A couple of hours of almost sleeping, tightly wrapped in my toasty bag thinking about the perfect rock when suddenly a loud scratching commenced followed by a "WHAM, WHAM, WHAM." What in the #*&\$ was Neil doing? The sequence was repeated several times but finally stopped about the time I was ready to investigate. "Ahhh, quiet at last!" Back to sleep!

The next morning (about 5 A.M.) Neil asked, "Did ya hear the rat?"

"I wouldn't call you a rat, Neil!"

"No, no! I mean the one in the wall!"

"Oh! All that scratching and banging!"

"Yep."

"Nope! Didn't hear a thing. Hand me my breakfast muffin!"

A quick breakfast muffin and banana and we were almost ready to go. I got both packs ready for the final hike up to the mine while Neil stuffed sleeping bags and hung them on the wall. Then, thinking of the midnight visitor, he stuffed all of our food in the camp stove bag and hung that on the wall—a good five or six feet off the floor.

"We have a few alders to walk through." Arrgggh! Not again! Well it was only about a mile before we cleared the tree line but it could've been ten! It was still raining and the alders were just as wet and despite our start with dry wool clothes, we were just as wet! However, I could finally stand up straight! Relief!

We were still a good 1000 to 1500 feet below the mine but the trail looked good. Have I ever mentioned that looks can be very deceptive? There was still a lot of snow to be crossed. That means, "Step, step, SLURPP—in to the knee!" Then there was the scree—totally saturated with water. Step, SLUSH, slip, step, SL....up, Up, UP.

Along the way, we found small but nice chunks of malachite / azurite and other copper minerals. At one point, I noticed a familiar green rock. I flipped it over and sure enough it was our friend from Clear Creek—chrysanthemum stone! This piece had a number of nickel-sized flowers. From there to the first tram tower we found several other pieces. Only 500 feet to go! HMMMMM... The rain seemed to be hitting a little harder. HMMMMM... The rain seemed to be turning white!

As we approached the top of the slope the snow was starting to cover the rocks and the temperature was beginning to drop sharply. Fifty feet from the top we ran into a deep snowdrift. By this time, my hands and feet were completely numb and I noticed that instead of squeezing water from his gloves, Neil was now breaking ice off the gloves! We reached a joint executive decision to make a quick exam of the local rocks (what we were standing on) before tucking tail and hauling it downhill!

We did find a couple of very nice pieces of chalcocite coated with malachite and azurite. Plus,

we recovered several nice calcite crystals we had stashed on the lower slopes. Our downhill journey was miraculously shorter than the uphill trip. We waded through the last screen of alder and into the cabin. On the way down we had agreed we were ready for dry clothes; meaning, of course, a retreat all the way to the truck.

I dropped my pack next to Neil's and started wrapping the delicate specimens in whatever happened to be available—bubble wrap, dirty clothes, etc. Next came my semi-dry jacket followed by sleeping bag and mat. Somehow I thought there should be more room. The pack looked like a hundred pound marshmallow stuffed into a one-pound wrapper! That was about the time Neil asked if I had packed the food bag.

"Nope. Thought you had picked it up. HMMMMM..."

A quick search of the two-story building quickly turned into a thorough search of every nook and cranny in, around, and under the building. NO FOOD BAG! Let's see... food bag... nail six feet from the floor... rat... that critter was either much bigger than we thought or much smarter, or both. It was definitely time to leave! Neil went out the back door; I left through the front.

Back in the alders! At least this time we were headed downhill so the transit was a little easier. Less than ten minutes down the trail Neil found his bed mat (but not my canteen!). We were back on the main road in about an hour. Another 30 minutes saw us at our starting point. Neil wanted to take the back way to the Kennicott Lodge (a *shortcut*) while I favored the traditional route (about a mile).

"Ok, Neil. Do we have to go through any alders?"

"Just a couple..."

"Say no more! Last one to the lodge buys lunch! Bye!"

With that, I turned right and started walking. I arrived at the lodge about 20 minutes later but didn't see Neil. I thought he was probably inside. I started to dump the pack (it was starting to feel a little heavy) when I noticed a couple of scantily clad young women approaching. Doing the manly thing, I sucked in the gut, stuck out the chest, and damn near broke something taking the pack off without trembling!

Success! Now where the heck was Neil? Well... Neil's shortcut wasn't. HA! Arriving at the creek crossing, he found it washed out. Crossing

required a LOT of climbing, not to mention effort. Then he ran into a couple of additional detours. By the time he arrived at the lodge, I was finishing my glass of tea. Neil, being a good and honest person, honored the wager and bought lunch. Then it was back to the truck.

We wasted no time throwing our packs at the truck and getting into some dry clothes. Then it was down the road...

"Joe, did you toss my bed mat in?"

"Nope. I thought you threw it in with Max."

Hit the brakes; back to the parking lot. Guess what? Yep! No mat! We reversed our course (again) and headed for Chitina and Glennallen. We made it to Glennallen without a flat tire and in time to buy a new mat. Then we discussed our next adventure over a hot supper.

There were two possibilities—Nabesna pegmatites or Tok rhodonite. We decided to try for the rhodonite and come back to Nabesna if we still had time.

The rhodonite location was sort of misplaced when the state changed the Tok highway but we had an idea of the general location. When the highway was *improved*, the state bypassed a 16-mile loop. We agreed to enter at the bottom end and look for a dry creek next to a log lodge. The first couple of miles of the loop were good asphalt highway. Then I spotted two large piles of gravel blocking most of the road. There was just enough room for me to squeeze by on the right. The road was still in great condition and I was thinking this was going to be an easy trip. That's when Murphy stepped up to the plate. Alders and willows started encroaching on the road and the road itself started to look like a roller coaster with ups and downs and side-to-side dips. And the alders got closer... I centered the truck over the still clearly visible double yellow line, dropping my speed down to 15-20 mph. And the alders got closer... Suddenly, a birch leaned across the road. Would Max clear? Yes! Bless her missing heart; she only scraped some small branches and several buckets of leaves off the grasping birch!

And the alders got closer... By now the road was narrower than the truck. I was plowing my way through the alders. A barely perceptible dirt track opened on the left; then suddenly a large ditch (a washout) cut the road! We backed up a little and I got out and walked down the dirt track which turned out to be a detour around the ditch. Once past the detour, the alders finally began to pull back a little. I was just about ready to declare victory when a really large birch leaped forth to block our path. I pulled so far to the left that I was driving over alders next to a deep ditch that should have been a shoulder. "Please, Max! Duck!"

Yes! We were suddenly back on a wide smooth road crossing a small bridge over a dry creek. And yes! There was a large log cabin and several other buildings! We had found our starting point. But neither of us felt like setting up a tent so we opted for a Tok motel. We were only two miles from the highway! Nice clear, wide road all the way! We had spent almost two hours traveling 14 miles. Lesson learned!

We were back at the starting point by 7 A.M. Max was ready for some action but the terrain wasn't ready for Max. So, Neil and I proceeded up the creek on foot. It wasn't long before deadfalls forced us out of the creek. It was also decision time. None of the ridges matched the description we had. The best apparent fit was across the creek, but the ridge above us could also fit. Which way? After flipping a coin, Neil led the way across the creek and into the burl national forest! Every spruce tree in sight had at least a couple of burls and most were an almost solid string of burls from root to tip. Unfortunately, this was the find of the day. The rhodonite managed to escape detection.

We returned to the truck with a dead spruce covered with burls and a sign (picked up in the creek) that said "Bad road proceed at your own risk!" We assayed our resources; balanced those against our various aches and bruises; then decided Anchorage sounded like the place to be.

Home again! Time for the 3-R's—recuperation, research, re-planning!

