



Alaska Pebble Patter
Chugach Gem and Mineral Society
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of the
Chugach Gem & Mineral Society

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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

July 2004

Greetings everyone,

Summer is in full swing and once again we are having outstanding weather, although I have to admit that it's been too darn hot for me. I've been seeking out shade and cool interiors during the afternoon heat. I understand that in some parts of the US folks are just taking off their jackets when the thermometer hits the mid 70's. For Alaskans that is almost cause for heat stroke, and let's not even talk about temperatures reaching the 80's.

Warm temps, blue skies and long days are a great recipe for fantastic field trips. The club is off to a great start this year, so thanks and kudos to all the trip leaders and event organizers. Keep up the good work. Thanks also to Heather for covering the meetings for me this summer. And don't forget our picnic potluck in July. See the website for more details.

Rock on,
Anita

Chugach Gem & Mineral Society
June Business Meeting Minutes

First Vice President Heather Jordan called the June 10, 2004 business meeting of the Chugach Gem and Mineral Society to order at 7:35 PM.

Several guests were present and introduced themselves. They were: Dave Petina; Bob Olson from California; Kelli Hurt; Judy and Bob Ruddock from the Flint, Michigan area; and Bruce Richter and his daughters Joanna and Christine. All were warmly welcomed.

Committee Reports:

Treasurer - Greg reported no changes in our accounts.

Membership - Jean reported 140 members with an additional 5 tonight.

Corresponding Secretary - Nancy had placed the mail before the Vice President.

Recording Secretary - Bea stated that the May minutes were in the Pebble Patter. Joe moved and Nancy seconded that the minutes be accepted as published. The motion passed.

Sunshine - Dorothy was not present but Joe reported that Fred Ward was ill.

Editor - Sue reported that the Pebble Patter was available via e-mail and had also been mailed. Copies were also available tonight.

Fieldtrips - Bea reminded everyone that the sign-up folders were on the table and the following trip was scheduled for Saturday 6/12 to Wishbone Hill and the one after was on Sunday 6/20 to pan for gold at Hope.

Special Committee Reports:

Website - Adeline said there was nothing new on the Website and reminded everyone that the address is www.chugachgms.org.

Club t-shirts - Sheila said she has been getting preliminary prices from suppliers and will need some specific direction from the club.

Old Business:

Heather asked that the t-shirts be discussed at the next meeting so that more members would have input as to color and size range and size of the club logo.

Rock exchange - Andres got letters from Australia and other places. We need to trade with the Oregon club first but he will bring the letters to the potluck meeting and if any members want to contact any of the clubs independently they may. Sheila had answered some letters, but it will be the club's decision as to which one(s) will be selected to hold an official club exchange with. Andres reminded us to bring our rocks for the exchange to the next potluck and have them in Ziploc bags with a description enclosed. You must contribute a good quality rock to receive one in the exchange.

Heather reminded us that the July potluck would be held at Russian Jack Park. The club would supply the meat. The date is July 22.

Jean reported she and Nancy were working on a new membership card for life members and will have them ready for the following business meeting on July 8.

Announcements:

Long-time members John and Sally Van Horn, who had retired and moved to the Lake Tahoe area, are moving to Kentucky for health reasons and won't be visiting us this summer. The altitude had been a problem for Sally.

Gretchen reported that the new Ocean Center in Homer is opening soon.

New Business:

Fieldtrip chairperson Bea will be gone from July 8 thru July 31 and Bobbie volunteered to take over the fieldtrip post; she will have the folders.

Gretchen spoke about the Yukon Island/Red Mountain trip and she will be hosting the Club at her Island conference center; there are bunks for about 20, but

others may camp outside. Contact Gretchen for more details about transportation to Yukon island and to Red Mountain.

Fieldtrip Reports:

Greg said the Unga Island trip was outstanding due to the transportation by a very helpful boat captain who even supplied some delicious hot meals. Everyone found great stuff and no one minded that it was rainy.

Joe reported that the Whitehorse trip was as good as the previous ones but the Keno-Mayo areas were more touristy now and there was some snow. They were met at Whitehorse by Judy and Bob Ruddock from Michigan who joined the trip and came on into Anchorage.

Bea reported that 10 people had turned out for the Sheep Mountain fossil trip and the finds weren't so good but the weather was fantastic and all had fun. Several new members took part, including a couple from Fairbanks.

Door prizes were given and Heather called for a break and reminded us to sign up for trips. The program that was scheduled was delayed due to technical problems but Bonnie hoped to show her pictures from Unga and Sand Point at the following meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Bea Allen, Recording Secretary

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Unga Island
By Joe Turnbow

The same year I joined the club, CGMS members went to Unga returning with great rocks and better stories. That started the fires burning. Late last year Neil and I put our heads together and decided it was once again Unga's time. We picked a date (13

May) then in March, started trying to find a Sand Point boat for lease. Just when it looked like it wasn't going to happen, John Galvan turns up. Not only does he have a suitable boat but he's also a rockhound!!! Look out Unga!!!

Well almost. First, we have to get permission from the Unga Corp to visit the island. After several extended phone calls and e-mails, I finally contacted the CEO. A lengthy discussion ended with his saying he'd have to talk to the board but didn't see any problems.

May 11th Neil received a call from a harried John Galvan. Someone stirred up a hornet's nest and half of the Sand Point population is up in arms and yelling at John about our trip. Several more extended phone calls from Neil, Greg, and myself appeared to calm everyone down and... IT'S TIME TO PACK!!!!

Bobbie and I tried to bring order to the ceiling-high stack of gear in the living room. Somehow it had to fit into four bags! That done, I began to feel guilty about the amount of stuff we packed. The guilt lasted all the way to the airport where I saw how much the rest of the crew had packed!!! Good Lord! Are we moving to Unga or just going on a field trip? That feeling intensified as we passed bag after bag into the hold on John's boat. Oh well, we're finally under way. Only two hours smooth sailing away from heaven!

"Hey, Joe! Wanna see some sea lions?" John asks.

"Hell no! I just want to...umphffff!" "Hey watch where you're g... OUCH!" Geeze, we've got rocks waiting on us and these people want to be tourists!!!

"OK! OK! I'll come see the... WOW! Did ya see that monster dive in the water? He didn't even splash!" Well maybe a little sight seeing along the way is OK. "Are there any more of those, John?"

Finally, after a few more encounters of the animal kind, we pull into Delarof Bay. Beautiful! And it only gets better! The Unga tribal Chief (also named John) had come along to show us Unga Corp's brand new cabin and to tell us we were welcomed to use it while in Delarof. That meant no wet tent to pack up. Yes!!! Time to unload!

I anxiously hopped out of the skiff to help beach the skiff and unload. (Oh yes, we had to have two skiffs to handle all the gear 18 people carry!!!) Hmmmmmm... What's that cold feeling around my toes? Oh, I see. Ten inch boots, 20 inches of water! Go figure! Oh well, I need to thoroughly test the new boots anyway.

Most of the crew wanted to camp outside. Bobbie, on the other hand, promptly claimed one of the two small bedrooms. Nancy, Dwight, and Jerika snagged the other while Phil sort of settled in the middle of the living room. The Apollo Mine would have to wait for low tide tomorrow morning; today, we comb the beach.

We found thousands of agates, tons of beach glass, millions of bright (and we hope empty) seashells, and two long, black, cigar shaped cylinders which turned out to be old graphite battery terminals. (The numbers may be slightly overstated. I'm pretty sure there were only a few hundred thousand shells.) Ah! So much fun!

I was in bed by 9 PM and awake before 1 AM waiting for dawn. About 5:30AM, I finally heard someone move and almost flew out of the sleeping bag. It took less than five minutes of fumbling around in the dark to get dressed.

"I'm ready!! Where's everyone else? What do ya mean you're making coffee?!? It's time to go!" Hurry up and wait!

A half hour later, I'm out of patience and strolling up the beach in the predawn light. Things were going great until I stopped to adjust my pack and discovered enough light to see agates. It wasn't long until Neal,

Greg, and Phil caught up and I had to quit picking up agates. By the time we crossed the creek at the end of a small tidal lagoon, I was warming up. It got a lot warmer as we sprinted (Greg sprinted, I struggled to keep up and still look manly) up the road toward the Apollo.

My first glimpse of the mine was of the head frame standing on a pile of tailings. That was followed in rapid succession by a bridge, trailer house, and a small shack overflowing with cores!! Wanna guess where I headed? Neil headed uphill to the head frame, Greg headed for the trailer, and I shot straight at the nice cylindrical rocks!!! I mentally tagged a couple of nice specimen for later pick up then climbed the hill for a quick conference with Neil, Greg, and Phil. Greg suggested a visit to a shaft higher up the slope. With no obvious road, Greg suggested looking across a small creek. That led us to a collapsed building where Phil promptly demonstrated the accepted method of falling through rotted wood into the creek. Like a cartoon scene with Wiley Coyote, I rapidly and safely tiptoed across the building with holes and cracks chasing close behind. Guess that'll show Phil!!

All that effort brought Phil and me to the base of a series of water, mud, and muskeg covered platforms marching up the little gully. With a "Don't step on the brown spots, Phil," I leaped into action. Tippy toe, jump, step, run, squish... Arrrrrrggggggggggggggggg.

"It's not fair? Ya'll should be stuck in here as well! What do ya mean, I'm heavier!?!? Weight has nothing to do with it!!! Lord, why do I always have to put up with these little guys! #@(*&\$*&0vj08#(!!!! stupid mud! Lord that stinks!!!"

Finally, a nice dry hill covered with tailings appeared out of the mess of swamp and alder. We found the mineshaft at the top. Both Greg and Neil made a beeline off to the right while Phil went left. Not to be left behind I followed the Unga veterans. The chase ended in a large depression filled

with thousands of feet of core that, at one time, had to be worth millions of dollars. Now the cores were lying everywhere almost disguising the originally tidy rows of core trays. Many of the cores had degraded to clay and mud. Others were broken and scattered. The "indestructible" plastic core trays disintegrated at a touch.

With several nice pieces in the pack it was time to move back down to the main level and pick up the ones I had mentally tagged. Then it was back up the road to a cut we had visited briefly on the way in. Turns out the cut led to the original Apollo, most of which has collapsed. The area is packed with quartz crystal pockets and veins. In one spot adjacent to the old mine, a rather large pocket was topped by some spectacular zoned minerals. Alternating bands of galena, pyrite, and quartz laced and curled their way down the cliff face. A quick look in the pocket showed me two things--large quartz crystals and a space so small I couldn't even swing a hammer.

"Neil, we need to enlarge the entrance a bit."

"Here's the hammer and chisel, Joe."

Hmmmm... Looks more like a tinker toy to me. Wish I'd brought Baby along! What the heck!

For the next hour or two the merry sounds of hammer on steel reverberated through the hills with the occasional painful cry of a broken rock (or the chisel holder). Soon Neil could almost sit in the hole and I had plenty of room to swing the hammer.

Meanwhile, Dwight and Carol Coppock headed up to the new Apollo with their metal detector and Harvey was kicking around the old mine shaft. Back at camp, Dwight Smith's family took off for the old Unga town site and agate beach. They were followed closely by Anita, Shelia, Diana, and Linda. Bobbie, Carmel, and Shari brought up the rear.

Notes on the other half of the crew (Bobbie): Oh Boy! I get to add my 2 cents worth! Touring the Unga ghost town was a bit leery. Of course, we all peeked into the windows and doors trying to imagine what it was like to live in this community. Many of the buildings standing five years ago are now piles of lumber. I think it was in better shape as a 1-horse town than a wild cattle herd town. You know how those cattle are ... no respect for humanity. Most of us enjoyed our stroll through Unga's history and then moved quickly to the beach. GOTTA FIND THOSE AGATES, GLASS, and MARBLES. A stroll over the next hill got us more agates than we ever dreamed of. Combing the beach in front of Unga provided the glass and marbles. I don't think any of us were left wanting. All of us spent a fantastic day exploring without a care in the world. Absolutely loving every minute of it and dreaming about the next trip before THIS trip was finished.

At the Apollo, Greg and Harvey had taken turns banging at the rock with Neil and me. Everybody except me put on helmets and lights and visited the end of the tunnel (I was too busy sorting, packing rocks, and beating at the cliff face).

With full packs, Neil and I headed back leaving the rest contentedly hammering away at various outcrops.

Arriving at the lagoon, I discovered the ankle-deep crossing at the outlet was now at least knee-deep. I dropped the pack and was thinking of exploring the area when Neil walked by and directly into the water. I watched carefully.

"Getting a bit deep, ain't it?"

"Nah. Just up to the knees."

Let's see. Knee-high on Neil equals mid-calf on me. I might be able to cross without water slopping over the boot tops. I shouldered the pack which seemed heaven for its five minute rest on the sand. Hmmmm...

"OK, Neil. I'll give it a sh...
 AHHHHHHRJWEJKWH*(#\$(#&\$@#*!!!!
 That water is cold!!!" So much for dry feet!

Just over two miles back to the cabin. Now as for this pack... It was a comfortable 70 or 80 pounds at the mine. However, it appears to be gaining weight in direct portion to the number of steps I take and in indirect proportion with the hardness of the beach. Maybe the rock is absorbing moisture or something. Let's see now... Multiply by distance, carry the excess, add the beach finds, and divide by... Yep, this pack is going to weigh 379 pounds by the time I reach the cabin!!!

Believe me! It felt every bit that heavy as I collapsed on the front porch. We rested a bit then checked on the rest of the crew. We had split into thirds (more or less) for the day with one group heading for the Apollo, one for Unga and Agate Beach and the third working beaches close to the cabin. I had decided it was about time to check out Agate Beach when Bobbie hobbles up to the porch looking like the loser in a mud-wrestling contest. I casually mentioned that she might want to wash her boots in the creek before coming in. You'd think I'd know better after 36 years!!! After staking me to a verbal anthill, she calmly turned and washed at the mud for the SECOND time.

Not ten minutes later, John's skiff came around the point with the remainder of the Unga crew (those that chose to not tackle the 'slightly' muddy hill trail). When they arrived at the cabin, John and his newly shanghaied deck hand (Calvin) were carrying at least 20 pounds of halibut fillets and a large salmon fillet plus a big chunk of smoked salmon. What can I say? Too much rain accompanied by too much good food made more rockhounding seem out of place for the afternoon!!! We were, by the way, very considerate. The last person back to the camp had two pieces of fish waiting (but only because the rest of us were too full to eat any more!!!!).

Greg, recognizing my weakened state, made me the official Saturday alarm clock with a designated 6:00 AM alarm. Knowing the flack to come, I was very punctual. I ran the first person (Greg) out of bed at exactly 6:00 AM before wandering from tent to tent saving the cabin for last. I finally checked the escape path, tightened my belt, stuck my chest out, and bearded the dragon in her den.

"Hey Babe! It's time to get up!"

"(*#&\$*&^#@!)(c nJIou!! Just five more minutes!!!!!!!!!"

Hmmmm... First time I've heard that one. I'll have to look up the meaning when we get home.

In any case, I survived the vicious verbal attacks and kept away from those with a ready stock of discardable rocks long enough for John to show up at 9:00. By that time, everyone was packed and standing on the beach. An hour later we slipped out of Delarof Bay on a 4-hour transit to the Petrified Forest at the opposite end of the island. A couple of hours out we listened to the area forecast. Ouch!! Rain, rain, and more rain accompanied by liberal amounts of wind! The winds Saturday night were supposed to approach 35 knots! For Sunday, the winds were supposed to drop to about 25 knots but the direction shifted so they would be blowing directly onto the petrified forest beach.

A quick conversation with John shifted our camping location from the petrified forest beach to a beach about four miles around a point from the wood. That should protect us from the beach swell and make departure much easier!

By 2:00 PM, camp was set and the skiff had dropped us next to the petrified forest. Bobbie and I quickly discussed our goals as everyone headed straight for the nearest piece of petrified wood. I looked around for Neil. He was some distance ahead and moving fast.

OK! He obviously knows where the best stuff is!! I took off after him. It only took two miles to catch up. Then I found out he was just trying to get his feet warm! We moved on at a slightly slower pace and started tagging specimens for pickup on our return. By 4:00 PM we, together with Sheila and Diana, were about four and a half miles from our pickup point and still looking for the perfect specimen. That's when I found a piece that had to go home. It turned out to be 73 pounds of petrified wood and agate.

Here's where I have to admit to a massively "senior moment." I had brought a small shoulder bag for collecting rather than my backpack because I hadn't anticipated moving so far from the pickup point. I couldn't move this piece without a pack! So, when all else fails... Beg!

"Ah... Ummmm... Neil, could I borrow your pack? I'll bring it straight back."

"Sure! Let me help you get that in the pack."

I shouldered the bag then asked Shelia to put the little 10-pounder (I found it under the big guy) in the pack. As I walked back to the pickup point, I collected all of the previously tagged items I could fit in the shoulder bag. Just as I was beginning to wonder how much further I could go, I looked up and saw Bobbie and Carmel.

"Hey, Bobbie! HELP!!! Think you can manage this shoulder bag?"

"OK. Help me get it on."

Feeling a hundred pounds lighter, I told Bobbie I had to hurry so I could get the pack back to Neil. I got about 30 or 40 yards down the beach and was stepping up on a flat piece of wood when two things happened almost simultaneously. The left shoulder strap broke and something snapped in my left foot. Both snaps were audible and I'm still not sure which was cause and which effect. Unfortunately, the

immediate effect was to slow me down. I'd made the first three miles in an hour. The last mile and a half took another hour with the help of a makeshift crutch.

After unloading at the pickup point, I limped back up the beach with Bobbie's daypack. (I figured that would do Neil more good than a 1-strap pack.) I hobbled into Neil and Shelia about a mile from the pickup. True to form, Neil had fabricated a makeshift pack from pieces of net and rope. Oh well! Can't go back with an empty pack!

Both skiffs arrived at 7:00 PM. Everyone seemed to be making multiple trips from the beach to the skiff. The one I was loading kept settling on the sand despite the rising tide (something to do with too many rocks or something). To compensate, we kept pushing it further off the beach. Our efforts seemed futile. We'd move back a little or to the side a little but remained grounded. Finally, Greg jumped back in. With Greg at the bow, me poling on the starboard, and someone else on the port, we finally made deeper water. Greg reboarded while I and my unknown portside partner continued to pole the skiff into deeper water.

Back in camp, I got Bobbie settled in the tent but was too restless to quit for the day. I grabbed one of the grit bags I was using for packing and found a log to sit on while I poured water out of the boots and wrung the socks until they at least quit dripping. Then with bag and crutch, I hobbled slowly down the beach with the wind and rain at my back.

Maybe the light was just right, or my concentration was extra good, or maybe the rocks were talking. Whatever it was, I was finding pieces of tube agate and jasper at almost every step. I could see a dime-sized agate at 50 to 60 feet. It was incredibly peaceful (not to mention fun)--until I realized that 1) I had over 30 pounds of rock; 2) I was almost a mile from camp; and 3) I had to walk back against a screaming wind and horizontal rain!!!

On the bight side, Greg had built a huge bonfire that definitely warmed the spirit if not the body. I had the fire to myself for a time then Greg and Shari wondered back from some beach combing. They talked for a bit before turning in. Not long after Harvey and Phil came in from the tube agate cliffs. Harvey had scored a beautiful 4-inch, hollow tube!!

Despite great company and a warm spirit, the wind was blowing a lot harder so I took my cold body to the tent. The 35 knots felt and probably was closer to 50 knots. The tents shook and rattled alarmingly--so much so that I was afraid my 30-pound sack of agates would blow away. They obviously needed to be in the tent!!!

By morning, the wind was mostly gone and the rain was back to a light mist. I was up at 6:00 AM (just a couple of minutes behind Neil) for a stroll along the beach. I wasn't looking for rocks this morning but still managed to pick up almost 20 pounds of agate. By the time we returned, everyone was up and most of the tents were packed. Loading the skiff was much easier than the previous evening!

The trip back to Sand Point was almost anticlimactic. We were all tired and wet and ready for dry clothes and a warm meal. John arranged transportation to the airport for those unfortunate souls who couldn't stay longer, Shari, Dwight and his family, and Harvey. Some of the others had reservations at either the hotel or the B&B. That left eight of us looking for a place to put up a tent. John, hearing our plans, volunteered his shop (and indoor plumbing) for the night.

Say no more! The shop was great!! While Neil and Joe cleaned and weighed gear and rocks, Anita, Linda, Shelia, and Diana applied their gardening skills to John's yard. Linda and I took turns splitting firewood. Of course, I should have left things alone, since I managed to separate the maul head from the handle.

Then Anita and crew took off for some rockhounding and found nice zeolites while Greg, Dwight, and Phil tried gold panning. All were successful. In fact, I was so impressed with some of the zeolites the ladies brought in I had to visit the quarry the next morning after visiting the post office. Bad idea!!! I should've visited the quarry first. There was an ample supply of great zeolites (naturalite?? and apophyllite). Luckily I beat Greg to the quarry!

I've gone on a lot of great field trips in the last three or four years. None of them can compare with this one. And I've never known a guide/cook/boat captain that was even in the same league as John Galvan. Many thanks for a wonderful trip!!

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Almost Prospecting The Kenai

By Greg Durocher

Weston and I had quite the adventure on Saturday, July 3rd. We had planned to get to a remote valley in the Kenai Mountains to go prospecting. The 7 miles in weren't too bad for 45-pound packs, as the trail was hard-pack. However the next 1.5 miles of bushwhacking through the alders and frequent backward slipping on the smooth, dry grass of a very steep mountain persuaded us that the route wasn't going to work. We were exhausted and still had only made it halfway up the hill when common sense caught up with us. We decided to bag it and try another time from a different route.

Wanting to avoid as much alder thrashing as possible, we scoped out the best route we could find from above, and proceeded back down. Our first course-change was a momma moose eyeballing us and not flinching. That's a sure sign that baby was nearby and she was to be given wide berth. Our new course threw us back into a herbaceous hell of alders and devils club. We finally found some down trending clearings, and the remainder of the trek

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION
CHUGACH GEM AND MINERAL SOCIETY, INC.
P.O. Box 92027, Anchorage, AK 99509-2027

Date _____ Receipt No. _____ Membership Card No. _____

- Individual \$15 Lifetime – Individual \$150 Bulletin Only \$10
- Family \$20 Lifetime – Family \$200
- New Membership Membership Renewal

Last Name First Name Spouse's Name

Mailing Address City State Zip

Home Phone Work Phone Spouse's Work Phone

Occupation Spouse's Occupation

Would you like to receive the club's newsletter, the "Pebble Patter," by e-mail? Yes or No

E-mail address

Release of Liability

In applying for membership in the Chugach Gem & Mineral Society, Inc. (CGMS), each applicant agrees to abide by the rules adopted by CGMS. The applicant acknowledges that there are risks associated with all CGMS activities – including but not limited to travel, acts of God, natural and manmade hazards – and agrees to hold CGMS, its officers, and membership harmless for any injuries sustained while engaged in these activities.

I have read and understand the Release of Liability.

Printed Name Signature Date

Printed Name Signature Date

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FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, 725 WEST 9TH AVE., ANCHORAGE, AK
(Enter the church from the rear parking lot.)

BUSINESS MEETING – 7:30 p.m. — 2nd Thursday of each month.
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Also bring your own plate, silverware and drink. Most importantly, bring a rock to show!