

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

Alaska Pebble Patter  
Chugach Gem and Mineral Society  
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**CHUGACH GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY, INC.**  
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THE CHUGACH GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY, INC. maintains memberships in:  
AMERICAN FEDERATION OF MINERALOGICAL SOCIETIES  
NORTHWEST FEDERATION OF MINERALOGICAL SOCIETIES

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THE CHUGACH GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY MEETINGS ARE HELD AT  
FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
725 WEST 9<sup>TH</sup> 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!

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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

March - April 2004

There is nothing quite like springtime in Alaska. The sun is warm, the sky is clear, the days are visibly longer, pussy willows are emerging from their buds and the snow is still thigh deep in my yard. Other less pleasant harbingers of spring include bottomless potholes, huge water hazards all over town and very dirty cars. Ah, spring is wonderful. I won't go into the sub-season of Breakup....

The seasons continue to cycle and before we know it the snow will disappear and trails will dry out. Then we will all be out scouring hills and valleys for beautiful rock and mineral treasures. Of course the club wants to help our members to do just that so our field trip committee has put together an ambitious list of trips for the summer season. These are posted on the website so stay tuned for upcoming trip details. We have a variety of trips ranging from trash pick up, day trips, and weekend trips to weeklong adventures. Please plan to join at least one of our trips this summer for the fun and friendship of outdoor adventures with like-minded folks. And don't forget, if you have a neat idea for a field trip please let us know. We are always excited to find new places to explore.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the departing officers for their dedication and hard work over the past year; and of course a hearty welcome to our new and returning officers. I look forward to a fun-filled year at the CGMS helm.

Lets go break some rocks!!!  
Anita Williams

**Chugach Gem & Mineral Society**  
**Business Meeting Minutes**  
**March 11th, 2004**

President Bobbie Turnbow called the March 11, 2004 business meeting of the Chugach Gem and Mineral Society to order at 7:35 PM.

There were 8 visitors who introduced themselves. They were Jay and Mary Unsell of New Mexico; Bob Lupo, daughter Julianna, and friend Sue; Craig Casner's father Ernie and Craig's brother Kerry from Wyoming; and Bea Allen's daughter Lisa Allen from Portland, Oregon.

Craig expressed his gratitude to the club for the balloons and cards and the many members who phoned and visited him while he was in the hospital. Craig said to those of us who live alone in Alaska, the kindness and support of the club means more than words can express.

Bea thanked the club for the lovely flowers sent to her husband's memorial service and also expressed her thanks to those club members who attended the service, and for the many cards, e-mails and phone calls she received from members.

Neil announced that Joe Turnbow was unexpectedly hospitalized for gall bladder surgery and was doing okay. They were trying to decide if the gallstones would take a polish.

Bobbie reviewed the past two years of club activities over which she presided, and the club's achievements. She expressed her pleasure at being a part of the club and seeing it gain new and younger members. Those present expressed their gratitude that she had been willing to lead us. Bobbie asked that we recognize the outgoing officers with applause.

Our new officers will be:

Anita Williams, President  
 Heather Jordan, 1st Vice-President  
 Bobbie Turnbow, 2nd Vice-President  
 Greg Durocher, Treasurer  
 Jean Kane, Membership  
 Tom Cooper, NW Federation Liaison  
 Nancy Danford, Corresponding Secretary  
 Bea Allen, Recording Secretary

**Officer & Committee Reports:**

**Treasurer** - Greg reported a checking account balance of \$14,987.53; a Morgan-Stanley account balance of \$16,047.32; a Smith-Barney account balance of \$18,728.93, and a savings account balance of approximately \$1,250.39. There was a \$30 account maintenance fee for the Smith-Barney account and Greg suggested we discuss making a change.

**Membership** - Jean Kane reported a total of 167 members, a number that would decline as memberships expire until everyone renews again.

**Corresponding Secretary** - Unice was absent, and Bobbie had mail in her car to report on in April.

**Recording Secretary** - Bea stated that the February minutes were in the recent edition of the Pebble Patter.

**Federation** - Tom Cooper noted that we had one month to submit nominations for the Rockhound of the Year award. Tom reminded us to continue collecting stamps too.

**Old Business:**

**Fur Rondy** - Steve announced the winners of the Ugly Rock contest; the results were as follows:

1st prize, blue ribbon, Bobbie Turnbow;

2nd prize, red ribbon, Anita Williams;

3rd prize, white ribbon, Greg Durocher.

Steve said the public's interest in the displays was better than last year. Sheila and Andres worked their magic with the kids (old and young), and the copies of the NASA Project photo they handed to those who voted for the Ugly Rock contest were a big hit.

**Field trips** - Sheila reminded us of the March 15th field trip to Eagle River to see mineral samples. The revised lists of fieldtrips were passed out. It was noted that the Sheep Mountain trip in June was mistakenly scheduled for a week day, so the dates were changed to June 5th and 6th for those who wished to overnight. Details will be worked out in advance, see the trip leader. It was also decided

to combine the Red Mountain and Yukon Island trips in August.

Website – Webmaster Adeline reported that we are up and running and the Pebble Patter can now be downloaded.

Members e-mail list - Greg reminded us that CGMS had an e-mail list for messages, and if anyone wanted to be on the list but wasn't, to get their address to Greg. It makes it easier to get last minute news out.

**New Business**

Greg noted that the Morgan-Stanley account started to charge us a service fee. He requested a motion to close the account and invest the funds elsewhere. Bobbie so moved and Nancy seconded. Steve moved to amend the previous motion to form a special committee or to call a board meeting to discuss the matter. Kurt seconded and the motion to amend passed; Bobbie's motion passed as amended. A special board meeting would be called as soon as possible.

Norval reminded us of his earlier suggestion to look into getting hardware to refit our display cases and asked how many cases we want refitted. Anita suggested 25, all present agreed.

Sunshine - Dorothy reported that the family of Paul Hecht thanked the Club.

Door prizes were awarded followed by a break.

The evening's program was a film about dinosaurs, shown by Greg.

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Bea Allen, Recording Secretary

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**Our Past President's Farewell Message**

Greetings all,

Even though the snow and cold have decided to stick around a bit longer, we all know that just by looking at the calendar there's the promise of some great rock hunting weather around the corner. Bea

and the Trip Committee have put together a list that provides just about anything for all of us. Don't know about you but my problem will be that there's just not enough time to work all of them into my schedule! One thing's for sure, I'm going to get in as many as I can.

Most of you know the official transfer of officers took place at our March business meeting. At that time the new slate of officers voted in at the November elections took charge. This is my chance to tell you how much I enjoyed "leading the pack" for my two terms. We've covered a lot of ground. The Publishing Committee got the rockhound guide updated and published. We now have a real website (chugachgms.org) that gives a bit about us, our current trip list and links to other websites. The Webmaster is always looking for things to add. We've had four small rock shows. New folks are hearing about us and best of all – we're getting some rock pups too! I can claim these as "successes" only because I was lucky enough to have them happen on my watch. Without the support of every member of the club I would have been lost from the start.

Thanks for letting me think I was in charge of something and don't forget to give your new officers the same helping hand you've given me.

bt

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**Greg's Guide to the Internet: Mineral Websites**

In the course of answering questions by the public, I've discovered some useful mineral Websites and some that are just so-so. Since your tax dollars pay for my salary, the least I can do (since so few of you stop by the office!) is to provide you with the links to these resources.

Here are the two most comprehensive sites that I've encountered:  
[http://webmineral.com/Alphabetical\\_Listing.shtml](http://webmineral.com/Alphabetical_Listing.shtml)  
<http://www.mindat.org/>

This commercial site has fewer minerals than the link above, but many more specimen photos.  
<http://mineral.galleries.com/minerals/by-name.htm>

A potpourri of links:

<http://webmineral.com/other.shtml>

<http://webmineral.com/>

There may be other good links, but for describing a mineral or finding an image, these have served me well.

Greg Durocher

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Wrangell Trip 2003  
Part 2c by Bonnie Hepburn

Monday evening, May 26:

After our jet boat captain, Jim Bailey, dropped us off at the USFS Garnet Ledge Cabin, we ventured inside the A-frame to discover that the note I had left the previous occupants had received a reply and was now lying on the table weighted down by three awesome garnets!! Our hearts stopped as we examined the surprise gift. Each was over an inch in diameter. We divided the booty and immediately bonded with our chosen gemstone. The pressure to find garnets had been greatly alleviated. Thanks to "Doug, Scott, James & Michael all from Wrangell" as their note was signed, we now had our big ones.

They also informed us that they had been "pounding garnets for 2 ½ days...The 'Ledge' is about ¼ mile up the major creek, a hose is there. Check out the garnets in the bedrock, that's where these came from." We decided to eat dinner then hike the short distance to the Ledge to see these wondrously symmetrical and faceted gemstones in their natural habitat.

The route to the garnets started out as a boardwalk then became a good trail in the rainforest. We passed a minor garnet excavation, but continued on in our search for the mother lode. We soon spied the hose...on the other side of Garnet Creek. The trail's end did not look like a reasonable place to ford. So we backtracked looking for a shallow spot. We didn't find one. But as it was getting late and we were tired from our day's outing, we decided to go back to the cabin and return the next day with renewed energy and better light to locate a reasonable crossing.

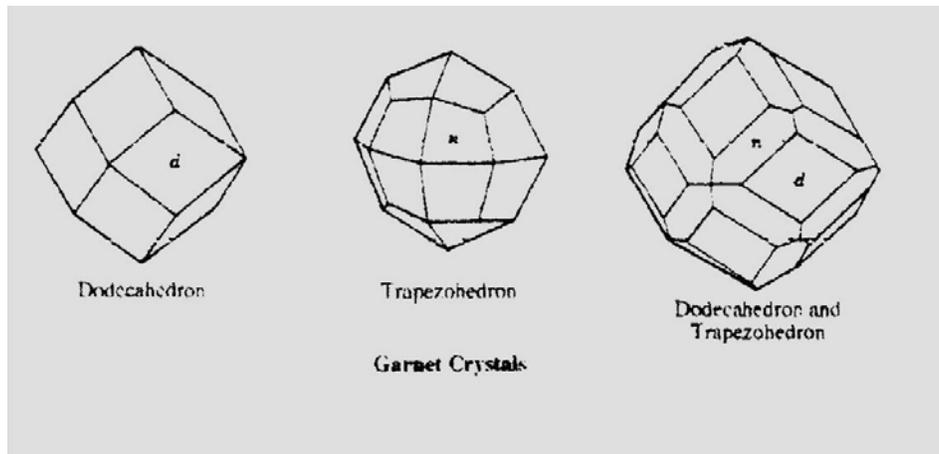
The Garnet Ledge Cabin is unusually light inside for an A-frame because it was built with large Plexiglas panels on two sides. There are two single bunks (one with a trundle) in the main area and lots of additional sleeping space in the loft. A woodstove provides the heat and the USFS provides the wood. The outhouse, like many I noted on this trip, was equipped with a car deodorizer. This must be a Southeast Alaska tradition; I've not encountered it anywhere else. They are reasonably effective.

Tuesday May 27:

After a quick breakfast, we headed back to the Ledge. This time we easily found the route down the creek bank to a good crossing spot. It's amazing what a little more light reveals. We quickly reached the other side and made the short climb to the rockhounding area. Seeing the bedrock "littered" with embedded Wrangell garnets was a sight to behold!!

We immediately went to work trying to persuade the bedrock to release its treasures intact. This proved to be a challenge. The garnets just kept breaking. Or if we were lucky enough to get one to pop out, we immediately lost it in the nearby tailings. I finally decided that the best way for the inexperienced to harvest garnets was to look in the rubble for ones that erosion or other hapless "garneteers" had released and lost. This wasn't the way to get the big ones, but I was quite successful in locating some nice medium-sized specimens.

Though we had a little rain and a few mosquitoes, we were in "rockhound heaven". We were finally "face-to-facet" with the legendary Wrangell garnets. These garnets, composed of iron, aluminum and silica, are of the almandine variety. Almandine garnets are most commonly formed during moderate to extensive metamorphism of argillaceous (fine-grained mud and silt) sediments. Almandine molecules align themselves into a compact isometric arrangement in the form of a dodecahedron or trapezohedron. Often, both crystal forms are expressed on the same gemstone. This results in the beautiful 36-faceted structure commonly seen in Wrangell garnets. The smaller garnets tend to be clearer and less fractured than the larger ones. But the larger ones have "heft appeal".



In the early 1900's, the Wrangell garnet locality was owned by several women who formed the Alaska Garnet Mining and Manufacturing Company (AGM&M) and mined the garnets for gemstones; however, imperfections within the crystals limited their desirability as gemstones. It has been said that this was the first business in Alaska wholly owned by women.

Eventually ownership of the site transferred to Fred G. Hanford. In 1962, Mr. Hanford deeded the garnet ledge to the Southeastern Alaska Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America "for only so long as the said grantee...shall use the land for Scouting purposes and shall permit the children of Wrangell to take garnets therefrom in reasonable quantities." While adults must accompany the children mining the ledge, it is the children who "own" the site and have free use. Wrangell youngsters have made a tradition of meeting cruise ship and Alaska Marine Highway ferry passengers with garnets they have collected for sale.

We had paid the reasonable \$10 fee to harvest garnets for our personal use and spent the day getting more than our money's worth of garnets. We took our booty back to the cabin and performed triage on the front porch. At the end of the day, we were exhausted and excited about our treasures.

Since none of us were able to find or chip out a garnet greater than or equal in size to the ones given to us, we once again expressed thanks for our unknown benefactors.

Wednesday May 28:

After breakfast, we started packing our gear for the return trip. But, needless to say, the call of the wild garnets was pulling us towards the Ledge again. We still had a few hours before our scheduled pick up, so we made one final pass at the collecting site to acquire just a few more specimens.

When John arrived to pick us up we could hardly contain our excitement about the "big ones" that we got without even lifting a hammer. We had gleaned enough information from the cabin log and the garnet note that John was able to identify our benefactors as two fathers and their sons. One of these was Doug Schwartz, the owner of a gift shop near John and Sylvia's kiosk at the harbor. We quickly stowed our gear and garnets in the "Kraken", bid farewell to our temporary home, and looked forward to a potential meeting with Doug, lunch at a Wrangell café, and an exploration of Petroglyph Beach.

--- To be continued next issue ---

