



**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

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

November - December 2005 President's Message

Happy holiday to all

Now that we have a bit of snow on the ground it really seems like winter has arrived. I have always enjoyed the dark and cold of winter since it gives me more of an "excuse" to work on those pesky indoor projects that always get put off. One of these projects is making sure all of my mineral and rock samples, starting with the display samples, are labeled with name and location at the very least. If I traded for it or was given it and remember the details of the transaction I'll note those too. I remember during the early years of collecting I did do all of this, but I was smug enough to think I'd never forget the what, where, when and how of my collection. Well, now it's a few tens of years later and some of the details are getting a little foggy, if I remember them at all! So when I saw the articles written by Caroline Stevens in the Alaska Miners Journal about mineral collections I thought it might be appropriate to have them reprinted here in the Pebble Patter for aspiring collectors to read and enjoy. Her articles inspired me to clean up my collection.

Caroline Stevens has been one of the reliable and frequent visitors at the annual Rock and Mineral Show, which took place the first weekend of November. Once again I wish to send kudos to all the club members who participated in making the show a success. Andres managed to get all the cases to the hotel and set up in spite of time and personnel constraints. Set-up is always a push even under the best circumstances, but everyone did well. At 5 pm visitors started coming in and we had a good flow of visitors through the evening. Saturday started promptly at 10 am and again we had a pretty constant flow of visitors throughout the day. Lots of kids got their faces painted by Sharon, our clown and face painter, and dragged their parents around getting their treasure hunt forms filled in. The Alaska Miners booth provided treasure rocks for the kids (thank you Joe and Bobbie) and samples from mines around the state. Our vendors again displayed wonderful minerals and crafts that tempted the dollars right out of people's wallets. Clean up went smoothly with plenty of help from the club. Again thanks to all who were able to participate from set-up to take down, manning the club table, being a vendor, setting up a display and just moral support. It all counts and it's all appreciated.

November's meeting was election night and fortunately all of the officers were able to serve another term. There were no nominations and no volunteers. This is not a good sign. A healthy club needs active members willing to make a commitment to serve as an officer. If everyone takes a turn, being an officer is not such a bad job. In the new bylaws we have tried to outline the duties of each officer and ask that the departing officer brief the new officer before they actually take over their office. This should make the tasks a little less daunting. It is absolutely essential that the club get new officers regularly. Change stimulates growth and movement, which every organization needs to stay healthy and vibrant.

And last but not least, our final meeting is December 8 and it is our annual Christmas potluck and gift exchange. Come, bring friends and family and enjoy the food and fun. The club will provide meat and as usual everyone bring a dish to share and eating utensils. After dinner we will have a Chinese gift exchange. If you would like to participate in the gift exchange please bring a wrapped gift of up to \$15 value.

See you at the potluck,
Anita Williams
President-elect... again.

Chugach Gem & Mineral Society Business Meeting Minutes

President Anita Williams called the 2005 meeting of the Chugach Gem & Mineral Society to order at 7:30 PM.

The evening's guest was Tracy Dressel.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Recording Secretary – Bea Allen was absent and Anita read the September business meeting minutes, which were accepted as read.

Treasurer - Linda Ewers reported a combined amount of \$45,043.95 in all our accounts.

Membership - Jean Kane reported that our current membership stood at 199.

Corresponding Secretary - Nancy Danford had two pieces of mail to report on, one from the Bureau of Land Management regarding conservation issues, and another from a company that was the current manufacturer of the gem scoop formerly made by Estwing.

Northwest Federation Liaison – No report was given by Tom Cooper.

Sunshine – There was nothing reported by Dorothy Arnold.

Newsletter – Sue Hilton stated that, as always, the Pebble Patter was in need of articles.

Website - Adeline Geldenhuys reported nothing new on the club website.

Fundraising – Andres Macias had no report.

Programs - Greg Durocher said that programs were fairly well covered for the next several months. Those with suggestions were asked to contact Greg.

Fieldtrips - Bonnie Hepburn formed a new field trip committee for the upcoming year. Members who volunteered to help were Sheila and Andres Macias, Greg Durocher, Anita Williams, Toni Carlos, and Sue Hilton. Members were encouraged to contact the field trip committee with any ideas or suggestions.

OLD BUSINESS

Andres would be cooking a ham for the Christmas Potluck and other members were to bring their usual yummy dishes. Everyone was reminded to bring a gift for the gift exchange. The decision was made to send notices about the Christmas Party to those members who did not receive information and notices by e-mail.

Andres was given a huge thanks for putting together the rock and mineral show which was held in conjunction with the Alaska Miners Association's November convention. Prizes were awarded for displays at the show with first place going to Mary Smith for "Hard Rock Café"; second place to Sheila Macias for a display of rocks and gemstone beads; and third place to Linda Ewers for an eclectic display of items--rocks and otherwise—found on field trips. Also at the show, one mineral identification kit, eight copies of "Alaska... A Guidebook for Rockhounds", and a number of memberships were sold. A suggestion was made to get rock candy to be sold at the next rock show. Joe Turnbow offered to tumble more rocks to give out to children.

The club bylaws were voted on and accepted with the addition of the club seal placed where required. The motion was made by Greg, seconded by Joe, and approved by all.

NEW BUSINESS

As no members of the election committee were present and current officers agreed to serve for another year, voting was much simplified and our roster of office holders would have no changes.

Norval Kane suggested that the club contact the AFMS and the NFMS to see what videos might be available for the club's use.

A discussion arose concerning a building of our own. A member suggested checking with the Alaska Museum of Natural History for meeting space. Kurt said he had a piece of land with water and electricity service, on which a doublewide trailer could be placed.

Another subject of discussion was having club members provide programs for science classes.

Fur Rendezvous rock show: the location used by the club last year would be charging rent for table space this year at \$35 per day or \$90 for

all three days; however, free space was offered for five display cases. Sheila and Andres, Bobbie and Joe, and Mary Wester were all planning to have commercial tables at that location, and it was suggested that they would possibly be willing to provide information about the club and sell memberships to the public. Joe moved that the club accept the offer of free display space, Greg seconded it, and the motion passed unanimously.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Norval had a new type of gold pan on display and offered to sell it to members for \$20.00. He stated that he had been skeptical of anything being really "new" in gold pans, but also said

that he was convinced of its value when its use was demonstrated to him.

Anita showed a book that would be available in the next silent auction. A starting price of \$40 was suggested.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

There were no field trip reports.

Following a "Norvalism" and a break, the program was shown.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Danford, Recording Secretary pro tem

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Notice

The program for our January 12 meeting will be the distribution of the Wuestenfeld Collection via silent auction. Bill and Boo are selling their place

up here, and already have a fully furnished place in Indiana. Consequently, they have no room for their Alaska stuff. Bring some coin and currency and join the fun!

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Book Review

By Anita Williams
Snowball Earth by Gabrielle Walker

During a visit with Norval and Jean Kane we got around to discussing global warming and all the hysterical rhetoric that seems to get so much press these days. As an offshoot of that Norval suggested reading *Snowball Earth* and he handed me a copy. It took a while to start reading it, but once I started I have to admit to being captivated. Linda Ewers also read the book and said she learned a whole lot about geologic processes and terminology, and it was a good read.

First of all, the author did a great job of telling the story of a theory that's been around a while, the concept of a totally frozen earth, and how it came to consume the whole imagination and being of geologist Paul Hoffman. The story involves travels around the world, egos, theories and counter-theories all involved in trying to scientifically prove that the earth was a giant snowball just prior to the emergence of abundant life in the Cambrian period.

It is a good read for anyone interested in earth sciences. Here are some details on the book: ISBN 1-4000-5125-8, Three Rivers Press, 2003.

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Rock and Mineral Show 2005

By Anita Williams

Thanks to all who made the show possible and successful this year. Our cabinet displays were again a big favorite. The peoples choice awards went out to Mary Smith for first place with Hard Rock Cafe; Sheila Macias with second place with rocks and beads; and Linda Ewers, third place with her collecting display. Other displays were by Greg Durocher, Treasures of the

Wrangells; Tom Cooper, carved jade; Anita Williams, rocks and minerals; Ben Porterfield, Alaskan minerals; Museum of Natural History, dinosaurs; Norval Kane, prospecting tools; Andres Macias, fossils; fluorescent minerals from Joe Turnbow; and a cabbng demonstration by Craig Casner.

The vendors included many returns from previous years and a few new faces. Returning vendors included Alaska Horn and Antler,

Nature's Jewels, Anita Williams, Rocks by God - Wire by Mary, Alaskana Books, Alaska Opal Creations, Alaska Stone, Dreams of Zanzibar, Stars of Alaska, Walter Bennett, Wild Horse Beads, and Stewart's Photo. Three new vendors joined in the fun this year too. They were

Nature's Collectibles, Rankin Enterprises and Steve Herschbach.

If anyone has any thoughts and suggestions about making next year's show even better and more fun, talk to either Andres or me. New ideas and energy are always welcome.

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Field Trip Report

By Sheila Macias

Alfred Creek via Bellanger Pass:
A Trip We Will Never Forget.

This year we really wanted to get into Alfred Creek to see some of the fossils and agates there. The trip leaders, the fearless Andre-and-Sheila team, along with dogs Merlin and Molly, were heading in accompanied by Linda Ewers, who would be riding on the back of Andre's four-wheeler. Linda was the only volunteer with enough time to go, although Tim and Kate LeForge had gone in a day early and would meet us on the trail.

We started out late Sunday and headed for the hills with the dogs, four wheelers and more gear than necessary, as usual. We got to Sheep Mountain Lodge late, around 8:30, to see if anyone else had made it to the rendezvous point. With no one there we headed out to the parking spot, loaded up, and decided that we would shoot for the moon and go all the way to the cabin before dark. We would later regret that decision.

We got to the top of Bellanger Pass and stopped to view the four mountain ranges visible from that point: Chugach, Talkeetna, Alaska Range and the Wrangells. The view was as beautiful as I remembered it from the first time there.

We were running short of daylight so we hurried along. We made it to Bones' cabin, a miner who lives in the area, around dusk and were watching out for Tim and Kate along the way. We saw a few tents set up outside the miner's area and we found out later that one had been theirs. We did not want to stop because of the little bit of daylight left (none) so we forged on.

We came to one of the last creek crossings before the cabin, the one just after Flume Creek. It was running fast and hard. Andre decided to go for it, and made it to the other side with his front tires just as the water picked up the trailer, still attached to the four-wheeler, and pushed it

downstream until it slammed into a boulder on the edge of the creek. The trailer was full of gear and dogs; the dogs jumped out on the shore and Andre and Linda got off the four-wheeler. They worked for a half hour or more trying to get the four-wheeler the rest of the way onto the shore, while standing in the freezing water in the dark. Water was pouring in the small drain hole in the front of the trailer and making the whole load heavier. I used my headlights to give them light to work as they unloaded the trailer and reached into the water struggling to get the hitch undone.

Meanwhile, as I was on the other side of this raging river watching and trying to figure out what we were going to do, Merlin came back across to my side of the creek. He nearly washed downstream, but made it across and waited with me as we watched Linda and Andre toil with the trailer and four-wheeler. They finally got them out of the water.

Then it was my turn to decide what to do. I did not want Merlin and me to be separated overnight from Linda, Andre and Molly, so I found the widest spot in the creek bed and started across. I had made it almost to the middle when the force of the water turned my four-wheeler over. I pushed away so as not to be pinned under the water by the machine. I shot headfirst downstream bumping rocks and struggling the whole way to reach the shore. I passed the boulder that had stopped the trailer, and then was able to grab a beach ball-size rock and get my feet behind me. When I felt my feet catch in the rocks near the shore, I struggled to stand up and got out of the water soaked to the bone. Andre had made it to me and asked if I was okay. It took me a minute to take inventory of my parts and thoughts and to realize that I was freezing, in shock and in pain but okay.

Then the struggle turned to getting my four-wheeler, which was wheels-up in the stream with the lights on, out of the water. Andre lassoed the four-wheeler (Suzie-Q) and dragged it up on shore with his machine.

Then the problem became Merlin, who was on the other side too afraid to come back across after nearly being washed away while crossing the first time. It took 15 minutes or more to convince him to swim back. Then we were all on the same side, soaked, freezing and in the dark. We turned my four-wheeler over and pulled it down the trail. We made it to a spot wide enough to set up the tent.

So it was pitch dark, we were all soaked and freezing, and I could not function except to hold the flashlight while Andre and Linda struggled to set up the tent. Once the tent was up, I went in to take off wet clothes while they looked through the gear hoping that some clothes were still dry. Our clothes as well as our sleeping bags ended up being dry. As far as Linda's gear, she was not so lucky; her clothes and down sleeping bag were damp, though not soaked.

The spot where we set up the tent was wide enough for the tent but rocky. We did our best to lay the sleeping bags down around the rocks so we could try to get some rest after that long tough day, which, by the way, was our 16th anniversary.

The temperature got down to 25 that night. I never did stop shaking; Linda tried to get some rest with her damp clothes and bag but could not get warm. We gave her some of the extra clothes and had her get into our double king-size sleeping bags with us so we could all try to get warm. The only one dry was Molly; the rest of us had been soaked and were near hypothermia. No one got much rest; during the night the frost was building up inside the roof of the tent.

The next morning was warm and sunny; we spread everything out to dry and salvaged what food we could. Linda and I did some fossil hunting and found a few while Andre slept in. After Andre finally warmed up and got a little shuteye, we were ready to pack up and head for the cabin.

It did not take us long to get to the cabin where we settled in, did a little rockhounding, had a hot meal and got a warm night's sleep.

The next day we had to decide how to get back out to the road. We planned to take enough gear for a day trip to explore Squaw Creek trail, which we thought should be an alternate route out. We had heard that it could be a very muddy trail. We packed up for a day trip to see if we could find a way out.

The trail started out fine, but once we turned and headed into the high mountain meadows of Squaw Creek trail, we found one mudhole after another. We could tell where others had been stuck before us. In those places, we tried to get high enough up onto the slope side to be out of the soft mud. Many places we had to make our own trail, moving fallen trees and miscellaneous brush just so we could get around the knee-deep mud. It took us over three hours to get nearly to the end of the trail, when Linda came up with a great idea. She would fly in to get the rest of our gear, and we just had to make it out and to the landing strip before it got too late. We all agreed that that was the way to go rather than trying to get back in over the raging river or back through the mud.

We got out to the road about 5:30 or so, found a note and an ammonite left by Tim and Kate, whom we never did meet up with, and made it to the airfield by 6 pm. The pilot remembered Linda from another excursion that she had taken with him. He said they could be there in about 15 to 20 minutes; she would have to get to the cabin and repack the remaining gear to fit into the plane, which meant leaving quite a bit of gear there. That was fine with us; we just needed the essentials and the expensive stuff out of there. We were willing to leave all of the food and most of the basic survival gear including the two Action Packers. After about an hour and \$125.00, the plane came in to land on the field, loaded with gear tied to the wings. We unloaded the plane, loaded the truck, and headed for Anchorage. Another successful trip into the great Alaskan wilderness.

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