

Official Bulletin of the hugach Gem & Mineral Societ

Alaska Pebble Patter Chugach Gem & Mineral Society P.O. Box 92027 Anchorage, AK. 99509-2027 http://chugachgms.org/

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ELECTED POSITIONS

PRESIDENT TREASURER Greg Durocher 337-2553 Anita Williams 345-2541 FIRST VICE PRESIDENT RECORDING SECRETARY Phillip Elrod 349-5457 Chris Teutsch 694-6586 SECOND VICE PRESIDENT CORRESPONDING SECRETARY Sheila Macias 274-2204 Nancy Danford 694-3288

APPOINTED POSITIONS

PROGRAM Andre Macias MEMBERSHIP	274-2204	PARLIAMENTARIAN Norval Kane FEDERATION LIAISON	243-4648
Bea Allen FIELD TRIP	696-4047	Tom Cooper NEWSLETTER EDITOR	262-9759
Bonnie Hepburn SUNSHINE	274-0941	Sue Hilton sueh@mtaonline.net	694-1934
Dorothy Arnold	279-3876	CLUB GREETER Melvin C. Bennett	770-2732

CHUGACH GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY maintains memberships in:
AMERICAN FEDERATION OF MINERALOGICAL SOCIETIES
NORTHWEST FEDERATION OF MINERALOGICAL SOCIETIES

CHUGACH GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY MEETINGS ARE HELD AT FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, 725 WEST 9^{TH} AVE., ANCHORAGE, AK (Enter the church from the rear parking lot, south of 8^{th} Avenue between G & H Streets.)

BUSINESS MEETING – 2nd Thursday of each month at 7:00 PM.

POTLUCK MEETING – 4th Thursday of each month at 6:30 PM.

Bring an entrée, side dish, salad, or dessert (plus serving utensil) to serve at least 5 people.

Also bring your own plate, silverware and drink.

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



Greetings, Rockhounds!

It's been almost four weeks since our last CGMS field trip (Fire Island). The leaves were multicolored and camping was not survival-mode only. Now I've already been ice-skating on the lake by my office, and the ski hills will soon be beckoning. It is not time to forget about rockhounding however, as there is the Rock & Mineral show coming up in early November, and our annual Christmas party on December 11th.

It is time to put in a plug for your trip preferences for 2009. For our Outside Adventure, we've already got the January trip to Arizona moving up quickly. What would you like to see us do in-state? You can find the list of our most recent trips at: http://chugachgms.org/fieldtrips.html. Should some of these be repeated? Do these inspire other ideas? Contact Bonnie Hepburn (or any board member) if you'd like to lead a trip or have suggestions. We'd especially like to see some new trip leaders. Any of us "old hats" would gladly mentor you with that!

Here's wishing you all an enjoyable holiday season. May visions of crystal vugs dance in your heads!

Rock on!

Greg Durocher, President

October Business Meeting

President Greg Durocher called the meeting to order at 7:40 PM on October 9th. 19 members were present, but there were no guests.

The September 2008 business meeting minutes were accepted as written.

Treasurer Anita Williams reported a total of \$66,845.24 in club accounts.

About fifteen more "thank you" letters arrived from Eagle school children, who appreciated all the school supplies that club members donated.

Upcoming field trips:

Alaska Volcano Observatory - October 15th. Contact Greg Durocher for information. gfdurocher@usgs.gov

CGMS 2008 Rock and Mineral Show at the Sheraton Anchorage Hotel, November 7th through 9th. Contact Anita Williams for information. awilliam@alaska.net

Quartzsite Rock Show with side trips – 3rd week of January 2009. Contact Tom Cooper for information. <u>alaskahornandantler@gci.net</u>

Scholarship Chair Andre Macias said that only one application was received despite Katch Bacheller giving presentations to geology classes and the Geology Club at UAA.

New Business:

Andre Macias, Sue Hilton, and Bobbie and Joe Turnbow volunteered for a nominating committee to plan for the November election of officers.

The program was a demonstration of wire wrapping by Mary Wester and beading by Sheila Macias.

Meeting adjourned 9:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Chris Teutsch, Recording Secretary

Fire Island, Oct. 4th - 5th, 2008 By Greg Durocher

Saturday dawned gray and ominous, but the five late-season adventurers - Sue, Bonnie, Sheila, Phillip and I - were not to be dissuaded. Captain Ted and Bonnie were at the boat launch facility when Sue's crew cab pulled in with the rest of us carpoolers on board. At about 10:50, we were churning the sea en route to the west side of Fire Island. Once clear of the shelter of Point Woronzof we encountered a bit of roughness, but it wasn't bad. The colors along both sides of Cook Inlet were actually much prettier than we'd expected, and the waves weren't as bad as we'd feared. Good beginning!



After we established our "beachhead", I went to work on the latrine while a couple folks reconnoitered the area. The "peepee teepee" was donated by Norval for club trips, and once again it was very much appreciated! After searching a bit for some kind of toilet stool, I found the perfect fit a round of wood hollowed out and of the right dimensions. The crew got a big kick when they saw

it. It looked very much like it was designed for the function!



Cap'n Ted got a fire going for us right away. It was hard to tear ourselves away, but Phillip and I set out for a circum-island trek at 1:20 p.m. Walking a gravel beach makes for interesting rockhounding for a couple miles. However, the gravel robs one of their forward motion, and we soon found ourselves searching for packed sand whenever we could find it. Our hike extended over 12 miles. It took us 6 hours, but that included rockhounding, photo stops, a side trip up a steep gully, and bridge construction over a clay-slop slough to avoid a long back-track (glad neither of us slipped off!). We also stopped to

chat with a father/son set-net team from Talkeetna, whose shack was about a mile from our camp (they weren't fishing, just hanging out).



A hearty hot-dog and bean dinner was devoured after all of the sunset photos had been taken and the fire re-stoked. The campfire conversation continued as stars poked through large gaps in the cloud cover. With an endless supply of driftwood,

only fatigue could force an end to a great day. Cap'n Ted rowed his raft back to his anchored boat around midnight. I called it quits soon thereafter, and fell asleep to the sound of gentle waves and drifting campfire conversation from our night-owls.

I was the first one out of the tents before 7:30 Sunday morning. Skies were thin overcast with hints of blue. Sheila got up while I was nursing some tinder on Saturday night's coals. In short order, the fire was again the center of attention. Some of us got more enjoyment out of it while others enjoyed their slumber! Time and tide wait for no one, so we had to depart the island at around noon.

It was a very uneventful trip back to the boat ramp. This is always a good thing on the ocean! It began raining as we loaded Sue's truck. After dropping Bonnie off, the rain turned to snow as we proceeded eastward. By the time we got to Sheila's house where Phillip had his car parked, it was snowing quite hard. Andre made a huge brunch for us - eggs, bacon, sausage, biscuits & gravy. While he was cooking it up, Sheila was showing off some fantastic specimens. The time we spent there was tasty icing on a fantastic late-autumn cake!

NOTICE!

- 1. There will be a business meeting but no potluck meeting in November, as the fourth Thursday is Thanksgiving Day.
- 2. In December a Christmas party/potluck will take the place of the business meeting as well as the regular potluck meeting.
- 3. All future business meetings will begin at 7:00 PM instead of 7:30 PM.

Crystal Cave of Mexico

By Bea Allen

Near the small Mexican village of Naica, beneath a mountainous desert plateau is a large lead and silver mining operation. In April of 2000 after pumping superheated water from a thousand foot deep shaft, a cavern filled with giant crystals was discovered. The cavern was approximately as large as a football field and as tall as a two story building. Following discovery a control center was established deep within the mountain to serve as a monitoring and launching area for scientists and explorers. Only a few have been permitted

access to the cave.

In a recent National Geographic television show, three scientists and an experienced team of explorers spent a limited time studying the crystals. The temperature in the access tunnels is a steady 95 degrees. The humidity is very high and the temperature in the cavern is 113 degrees; too hot for humans to be exposed for more than a very short time, and only if using respirators and clothed in special suits with ice packs to keep their bodies and brains from dying. The explorers' condition was closely monitored at all times because of the danger, and time limits were strictly enforced.

The crystals are growing and lying every which way, many as big as telephone poles and with edges sharp enough to cause serious wounds. They are also hot to the touch and slippery with moisture, making walking and climbing among them treacherous. The cave is very wet and water is being pumped out continuously.

The scientists determined that the crystals are gypsum. The cavern is located 1000 feet down in the mine on a fault line with a magma chamber directly below. The crystals formed when the 120 degree water was saturated with gypsum crystals which clung to the walls of the cavern and began growing some 500,000 years ago.

One scientist conducted an experiment in which small gypsum crystals were left submerged in a container below the surface of the hot water. At the end of 18

months the crystals were measured and found to have grown one millimeter. This growth rate enabled the accurate calculation of the giant crystals' age.

Another scientist collected a sample of fluid extracted from an inclusion in one of the giant crystals to test for any primitive bacterial life forms. There were living organisms found in the fluid. A third scientist from NASA tested a new type of spectrometer to be used in the space program to search for life forms on other planets.

Sadly, in the near future, the cavern must be reflooded to preserve the crystals and allow them to continue to grow. Even now, the temperature is cooling by 1/2 degree a year and the crystals will deteriorate if not resubmerged in the superheated water. It is not known if there are other wonders concealed within the mountain that explorers are unable to reach.

A visit to the All Russian Geological Research Institute in St. Petersburg, Russia By Jim Clough

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In September 2007, I had the opportunity to travel to St. Petersburg to visit the very first geological research institute (known now as VSEGEI) established in Russia. During 2007, this institute celebrated their 125th year of existence (1882-2007). By Imperial Decree of Tsar Alexander III, the Geological Committee or GeolCom (Геолком) was established on January 31, 1882. Several name changes later, it is now known as the A.P. Karpinsky All Russian Geological Research Institute or VSEGEI (the English transliteration of the acronym ВСЕГЕИ or Всероссийский Научно Исследовательский Геологический Институт им А.П. Карпинского).



In order for me to visit the institute, my host, Professor Tatiana Koren (graptolite expert and stratigrapher) was required to fill out 10 pages of paperwork, but she gladly did this and it was a pleasure for me to visit the institute with my colleague Boris Nikitenko (Novosibirsk Institute of Petroleum Geology and Geophysics).



Geologists and paleontologists at the institute are involved in geologic mapping, stratigraphic and oil and gas studies of sedimentary basins, and metallogenic research throughout Russia. The institute occupies an entire city block and includes a large library (over 1 million books), a Center of Isotopic Research (including a Shrimp II ion microprobe), and a museum with exhibits of more than 80,000 samples of minerals, rocks, and fossil flora and fauna.

Visitors to the museum exhibit halls are greeted by a large jade inlay map of Russia and treated to a red carpet tour of the outstanding displays of rocks, minerals and fossils.



One of the highlights of my visit to the institute was the opportunity to see the office of Alexander Petrovich Karpinsky, preserved with its original furniture. A.P. Karpinsky became famous for his prolific research in paleontology, mineralogy, and petrology in the Urals and served as GeolCom director from 1885 through 1902 and honorary director from 1905 until his death in 1936.



First Russian-made geologic map of European Russia (Western Russia) published in 1897 by GeolCom (now VSEGEI)

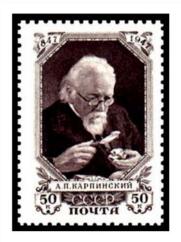
He also completed the first Russian-made geologic map of European Russia that I observed hanging on the wall in this office.

Dr. Karpinsky was instrumental in preserving scientific equipment and many invaluable records during the 1917 Revolution. He also secured an important role for the

institute under the communist regime. Today there is a medal named in his honor that is awarded for outstanding geologic research in Russia.



I left my visit to the institute with a profound and better understanding of how the profession of Geology is celebrated (even venerated) throughout Russia by the government and its people. For example, they even have a Geologists' Day in Russia (first Sunday in April), and poems are written to celebrate geologists and their works. There was even a popular board game during Soviet time named "Geology", similar to our Monopoly, in which the players discovered important mineral and oil resources for the country. This love of Geology is reflected in the attention to geologic detail throughout the institute in both its museum and research branches.





50 Kopek postage stamp honoring Karpinsky and Karpinsky medal awarded for outstanding contributions to geology.

Membership Application CHUGACH GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY, INC.

P.O. Box 92027, Anchorage, AK 99509-2027

Date	Receipt NoMembership Card No				
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Occupation			Spouse's Occupation		
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