

## December 2000 Newsletter

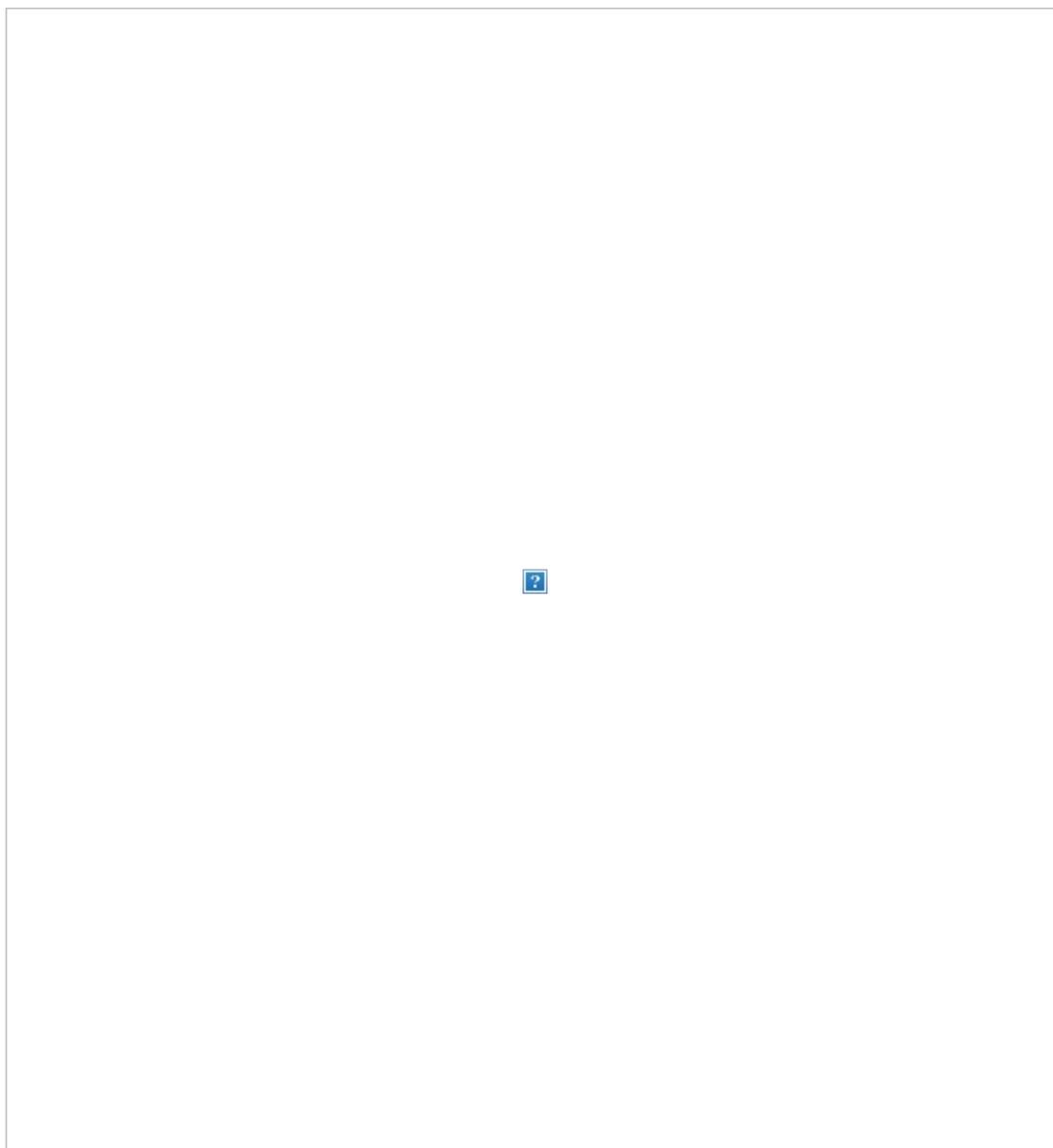
I have not received any minutes from the meeting held on November 4, but Tom Johanson provided me with a list of nominees for the 2001 officers:

**President Pat Weber**  
**VP Dave Sanders**  
**Secretary Marcy Kleckner**  
**Treasurer Kathy Earnst**

**East Side Trustees**  
**Ed Brandstoettner 01 02 03**  
**Bill Snell should be 00 01 02**  
**Dean Angstrom 01 02 032**

**West Side**  
**Vi Jones 01 02 03**  
**Dave Ekert 01 02 03**

See also the mark ups to the By-Laws changes below:



#### West side board meetings:

1/16, 2/20, 4/17, 5/15, 6/19, 7/17, 9/18, 10/16

#### General meetings:

3/24?, 8/4?, 11/3?

**The Wagonmaster annual fieldtrip planning meeting will be 1/28 at 1PM at the Everett show.**

#### Show Schedule for 2001

##### Everett show

1/27-28 10-6, 10-5

Washington National Guard Armory

2730 Oakes, Everett

##### Spokane show

3/9-11 10-7, 10-5, 10-5

Spokane International Fairgrounds

Broadway and Havana, Spokane

##### North Seattle show

3/16-17 10-6, 10-5

Lake City Community Center

12531 28th Ave NE, Seattle

#### Another Trick for Cutting Mexican Jelly Opal

When cutting Mexican jelly opal with transparent or clear (that's most of it!) base color, cut a high dome on the top side and a moderate dome on the back. The reason is two fold:

1) If you get the top and bottom domes just right, the light will refract within the stone as it does in a properly cut faceted stone. The effect will be as though light is trapped within the stone and the color will "glow" in a seemingly bottomless stone. It works with or without play of color, Try it!

2) Polishing the back of the opal helps the stone to last longer. A polished surface tends to retard water loss from the opal over time. A rough surface has many times the surface area per given dimension than a polished surface, this increasing the potential for physical and chemical interaction.

from Mag 7 by Paul Boni in Lapidary digest #189, 12/26/98. via Rock Chips 12/00

#### Fire Obsidian

Did you know that a chunk of black fire obsidian you have just might have gold sheen, fire or moon glow in it if you orient it correctly?

Take it out into the sunshine and try to locate a spot that shows something more than just black. If yours has a rind or film on it, take a small chip off here and there. Then wet the piece and turn it slowly in all directions so the sun will reflect any unusual coloring.

If you are fortunate enough to find color, orient it by using the Sinkankas method of a single lightbulb over your head so the light just grazes your forehead. Mark your piece and saw it.

Check before sawing each time to make sure that you are keeping the color on top. Fire obsidian can be so colorful that you will think you are looking at black opal.

from FrGl Nugget, via Petrified Digest 12/00

#### Micromounting

Here are ten top reasons to get into micromounting. For those who are unfamiliar with this term, micromounting is the study of minerals that require magnification for best appreciation. Micromounters generally use low-power (10x-60x) binocular microscopes, and mount the specimens in micromount boxes which are about 20mm on edge, with a proper label.

1. Storage - While you probably can't fit a thousand micromounts on the head of a pin, you can sure fit them in a small box under your bed, making micromounting ideal for apartment dwellers or anyone who has heard the immortal phrase, "Get those rocks out of here!"

2. Easy Collecting - Field collecting superb 10cm crystals of a rare mineral isn't particularly easy, but the micromounter can find something of interest almost anywhere.

3. **Perfection** - Micro crystals are perfectly formed and undamaged far more often than cabinet specimens. They are the peak of aesthetics.

4. **Variety** - There's only a few hundred minerals out there that come in nice big crystals and almost no new species are found in sizeable crystals. Go to any mineral show and what do you see - table after table of aquamarine, quartz, fluorite, boring indeed. Micromounters work with far more species than hand specimen collectors and far more rarities. It's where the real mineralogy is.

5. **Low Prices** - The average price of a micromount is \$3. Really expensive ones are \$20. The initial expense of a good scope and proper light is pretty steep, but after that you're set.

6. **No Fakes** - When a lot of money is changing hands for a fine cabinet piece, one has to be wary that the specimen hasn't been altered or faked in some way. Faking micromounts is not only extremely rare, it's nearly impossible, as a microscope easily reveals glue where it shouldn't be.

7. **Cheap Shipping** - sending 100 micromounts to Europe is far more affordable than 100 cabinet pieces.

8. **Discovery** - A large part of what drives field collectors is the thrill of discovery. The micromounter doesn't have the constraints of a field season - no matter what the weather is like, he can pull some rocks out of storage, trim them down, and find fantastic crystal-filled vugs never before seen by man. It's a year round hobby.

9. **Weird and Wonderful** - The micromounter sees things that aren't even imagined by "macro collectors". Things like spiral millerite crystals, Sweet Home rhodochrosite rhombs with moving bubble inclusions, or minerals like rutile, pyrite, and boulangerite in ring crystals, to name a few of the bizarre things seen by the micromounter.

10. **Free Stuff** - Last time you went to your average garden variety mineral show, did they have tables filled with fine cabinet specimens free for the taking? At micromount symposia, give away tables loaded with interesting stuff are standard practice. Micromounters are a generous lot!

from NY Mineralogical club,  
via Petrified Digest 10/00

### **Petrified Wood and Limb Casts**

By Garvin Carlson

Petrified wood is one of the more common rocks collected by rockhounds while casts are less common. Man has always been fascinated by wood that has been turned to stone. Petrified wood can be found in almost all of the states. Different colors and different varieties of trees make collected petrified wood very interesting. Some rockhounds have specialized in the botanical identification of the different woods that are found and have developed keys for other rockhounds to identify their's.

The petrification process proceeds very slowly. Logs, stumps, limbs, roots or whole trees may be petrified. The wood must be buried by either volcanic eruptions or flood to shut out the oxygen that would decompose the wood. The mineral laden water seeps into the wood and the slow petrification process begins. The mineral molecules slowly replace the wood molecules so that the cell structure of the wood is exactly duplicated by the minerals carries by the water. An examination with a microscope will show the petrified wood structure very similar to an actual wood sample of the same variety of tree. Agatized and opalized are the more desirable varieties of petrified wood.

Limb casts are formed differently from petrified wood. The wood part is generally buried in hot volcanic mud flows or pumice. As the rock cools and hardens a cast is formed around the wood which either burns out or rots. At a later stage most commonly agate fills the cast. The agate then will have the outside impression of the wood, but can have any pattern on the inside. Well known limb cast collecting areas are near Prineville, Oregon, Reservoir and Jackpot, Nevada.

from Openline 3/96, via Skagit Gems 11/00

### **What is a Phantom?**

A phantom crystal is actually a crystal within a crystal. The makeup of one phantom must be the same as the one that encloses it. There may be more than one inside a single crystal.

The usual explanation of phantoms is intermittent growth - growing for a while, and then stopping. For a period the crystal is exposed, and a very small amount of a foreign matter (dust, etc.) falls on the surface. The conditions then change, and the crystal starts to grow again with the possibility of this happening several times. The result is a crystal that appears to have one or more crystals enclosed within it.

Sometimes phantoms are oriented the same as the enclosing crystal; at other times they are not. In clear crystals, such a quartz, the enclosed crystal appears shadowy and faint, and therefore we have the name

**“phantom”. The difference between phantom and an inclusion is that the inclusion must be a different mineral species.**

**from Grindings, via Petrified Digest 10/00**