Request for E-mail Addresses

In this day and age of the widespread use of the computer and internet (I refuse to call it the information highway) many of us have and use e-mail to keep in touch with friends and family.

The Council asks that all clubs and club representatives send us (gmorita@seanet.com) your e-mail addresses in order for the Council to inform the clubs of important issues and news as rapidly as possible.

Many times in the past there we have gotten news have about public hearings of interest to rockhounds but were unable to get the word out in a timely manner. The monthly newsletter is a good resource but is not a very rapid means of communication.

So please. please, please, send us your e-mail addresses.

Meeting Calendar
for 2002
West side board meetings:
1/15, 2/19, 4/16, 5/21, 6/18, 7/16, 9/17, 10/15

General meetings:
Ellensburg: 3/30, 11/2
@ 9:30AM
29 Pines campground:
8/3 @ 6PM

January 15, 2002
Westside Meeting Agenda

President Opening of Meeting
Treasurer's Report
Committee Reports
Wagonmaster - Ed Lehman
Old Business
New Business
Open Comments
Adjourn

Please Update Your Mailing Lists

This note is directed at those newsletters that send me (WSMC editor in chief, head cook and bottlewasher) their club bulletin. Please update your mailing list so that my correct address is in your database. The correct address is:

Glenn Morita
12419 4th Ave West #5105
Everett, WA 98204

I really do appreciate receiving your bulletins

Starfish Uses Calcite Lenses

A recent issue (11/01) of Photonics magazine carried an article describing the use of calcite lenses in certain types of starfish. The starfish known as brittle stars live in the deep ocean where there is very little light and have been around for over 500 million years.

The single crystal calcite spheres form arrays of micro-lenses in the brittle stars dorsal arm plates. These lenses are believed to enable the brittle star to detect the presence of a predator or refuge on the sea floor.

Calcite exhibits the property known as birefringence or double refraction such a large degree that it is used in the classroom to demonstrate

the effect. Many school children have their first experience with the optical properties of minerals in this way. What the scientists find amazing is that the brittle star has somehow managed to orient the calcite crystals in the only direction where there is no birefringence.

The micro lenses also perform better than what theory would predict. To quote the scientists: "We can find very interesting, very complicated designs to optical problems in biological systems. The micro lenses are almost perfect optical elements, on a micron scale, which is beyond our current technology."

It just goes to show that we can even learn new things from such simple life forms as starfish.

Glenn Morita

Drop of Water Test for Topaz

Quartz and topaz are not easy to separate by eye, and are sometimes impossible when the quartz is a true topaz color. There is a big difference in price between the two and anyone describing quartz as "topaz", how ever innocently, may well be in trouble.

Topaz is quite a different mineral, which is harder than quartz. Because of this, a drop of water will not spread on topaz but will spread on quartz. Clean the stone as effectively as possible with a cloth or handkerchief to remove all trace of grease. It must be dry before the test. Then place a spot of clean water on it with a thin glass or metal rod.

On stones with a hardness of less than 7 on the Mohs scale, the water is dispersed. Oh harder stones it will remain a globule. The harder the stone the more rounded will be the globule.

from Rock Chipper
via Rock Chip Reporter 11/97
via West Seattle Petroglyphs 5/01
via Stone Age News 11/01

Saddle Mountain Field Trip

On October 20th for the second time this year, Ginkgo and Chelan Club members gathered at Hydro Park #1 for a field trip to Saddle Mountain. Rich and Darlene Sink who brought along Lewis and Cindy Leonard to join in on the fun represented the Chelan Club. Rich also brought with him two large crystal filled geodes for show and tell that he had recently dug up at Red Top. Th largest geode weighed about 26 pounds. The members of the Ginkgo Club that arrived at the park were Stan Soderbom, Lois Jean Day, my wife Cindy, and of course me. After a few rock stories were told we headed out in three truckloads for Matawa to meet up with Chris Roberts and her father LeRoy from Quincy.

About a half-hour drive from Matawa we were on our way up the "roller coaster road" which leads to the digging site. Once on top it was simply a matter of picking a spot and digging. Stan Soderbom became the rockhound king of the day. The rest of us were doing well, but Stan had perfected finding the really big pieces of petrified wood.

After a few hours of digging, Ron and Amy Ballinger as well as James and Jan Engley joined us on the hill. We decided, after some discussion to try another spot. Ron and Amy went to retrieve Maxine, Sally, and her grandson Seb who had just arrived from across from us at the "outhouse" location. The second spot we chose was by the lookout towers. Here we split into two groups, one on the hill, and one on a flatter area. Throughout the entire trip, Cindy kept and on us with her video camera. The weather we perfect, the view astronomical, and the digging superb. We were all in rockhound heaven, and headed home with full buckets of petrified wood.
Gary Bratt
from The Petrified Digest
Nov/Dec 2001

Wagonmaster Planning Meeting

The pre-planning meeting for the 2002 collecting season will be held at Ed's home on January 12, 2002 at 10AM.

Annual Wagonmaster Field Trip Meeting

The annual Wagonmaster Field Trip meeting will be held at the Everett show on Sunday, January 27, 2002 at 1PM. All interested parties are welcome to attend.