Minutes of the 1/18/00 Westside Board Meeting

The WSMC west side board meeting was opened by Vice President Tom Johanson.

Glenn was not present tonight but hen left a message to remind people about the cut off date for the newsletter.

Kathy Earnst gave the treasurer's report.

Corrections to the last meeting minutes:

· Ed Lehman informed the board of a new club in the Chelan/Wenatchee area. They are apparently fairly active and Ed was going to see if they wanted to join the Mineral Council. More information after the Everett show.
· Name spelling for Marcy Kleckner (incorrectly spelled as Klecknener)
· Minutes stand as approved

Committee reports:

Wagonmaster
· The Marysville trip last week went well.
· The Kalama trip is looking good. Bob O'Brien will be checking into gaining access to the collecting area.
· The Wagonmasters will be having their regular meeting on the Sunday of the Everett show to finalize the Y2K Fieldtrip schedule.

Old business:

· There were more discussions about the new metal sign at Walker Valley
· The new map for Saddle Mt. is ready to be added to the map packets.

New business:

· There is a new bill before the Washington State Senate. This bill should be supported by all rockhounds and prospectors. Write to
your legislators in support of this bill. See full text of bill.

General Discussion:

· Lee Bates was up in arms about the National Road closures, Ed has paper work at home about this. When roads are closed we lose access to some of our collecting sites.
· The Forest Service doesn't listen to our clubs about proposed closures on roads, call or write the Forest Service office in your area. More meeting for public comments are coming up, there is also talk of "Forest Plans".
· Mary Foster plans to keep putting in the WSMC case at the local shows. Thanks, Mary.

Meeting adjourned

Show Schedule for 2000

West Seattle show 2/19-20 10-6, 10-5
Masonic Temple
4736 40th Ave SW
Seattle, Wa

East Kingco show 3/4-5 10-6, 10-5
Rose Hill Jr. High School
13505 NE 75th St
Redmond, Wa

Spokane Rock Roller show
3/10-12 10-7, 10-7 10-5
Spokane County Fairgrounds
Broadway & Havana
Spokane, Wa

Mt. Baker show 4/8-9 10-6, 10-5
Bloedel-Donovan Park
Alabama & Electric St.
Bellingham, Wa

Yakima show 4/15-16 10-6, 1-5
Modern Living Bldg
So. 10th & E. Nob Hill Blvd
Yakima, Wa

Washington Prospector's show 4/29-30
Monroe Fairgrounds
Monroe, Wa

Smithsonite

by Jeffrey Scovill

The Smithsonian Institution, one of the world's great museum complexes, owes its existence to a disgruntled English mineralogist. Born in 1765, James Smithson was the illegitimate son of Hugh Smithson Percy, First Duke of Northumberland, and Elizabeth Hungerford Keate Macie, a descendant of Henry VIII. James was educated at Oxford University and became a respected chemist and collector of minerals.

A member of the Royal Society at the age of 22, he traveled the world, acquiring mineral samples in his journeys. He also found the time to publish 27 scientific papers, primarily in chemistry and mineralogy. Smithson lived comfortably and supported his research and mineral collection thanks to a sizable inheritance from his mother's family.

But he evidently was unhappy with his station in life because of his illegitimacy and vowed that his name would not be forgotten, a name he could use only after his father's death. He never married and willed his entire estate to a nephew, with the understanding that if the nephew died childless, the fortune and his mineral collection would go to the then-young United States of America, a nation Smithson had not even visited. The money was to be used "to found at Washington, under the name of the Smithsonian Institution, an Establishment for the increase & diffusion of knowledge among men." In 1846, the nephew having died childless, the United States received $500,000 for this purpose as well as Smithson's vast collection of minerals.

Smithson was further immortalized when the mineral called calamine was renamed after him. Smithsonite, or zinc carbonate ($ZnCO_3$), is a secondary mineral found where zinc bearing minerals such as sphalerite (ZnS) have oxidized. Water oxidizes the minerals, releasing zinc into solution. And if this zinc-bearing solution touches limestone in its travels or contains carbon dioxide, it can produce smithsonite. This particular chemical reaction has occurred in locations as far-flung as those Smithson traveled: In Europe, deposits of smithsonite are found in Greece, Germany, and Austria; in Africa, Southwest Africa, and Northern Rhodesia; in the United States , Pennsylvania, Arkansas, Utah, New Mexico, and California. Found in dry climates, it can be mined for the zinc it contains.

Smithsonite is too soft for use as a jewelry stone, but it is harder (H. 5) than most carbonates and can be cut and polished for collections. At least 2,000 years ago, the Romans learned that by adding zinc derived from smithsonite to copper they could produce brass, a durable and bright alloy adaptable for decorative and everyday use.

Smithsonite rarely forms distinct crystals but is commonly found in botryoidal form, shaped like clusters of grapes. It would be colorless without the impurities that produce its many hues - white, gray, yellow, green ,blue-green, and brown, the latter being the most common when smithsonite appears in massive clumps. The translucent greenish-blue is most desirable to collectors not because of its rarity but because of the beauty of the color itself.

Miners often come up with descriptive nicknames for the various minerals they work with, including smithsonite. They call its massive white, honeycombed forms "dry-bone ore" and mine it for its zinc content. A yellowish lumpy for is dubbed "turkey-fat ore". Both are rather indelicate substitute monikers for a mineral named after a man hungry for the world's respect. Smithson would be gratified, however, to know that the institution he inspired is celebrating its 150th birthday this year and has won the esteem of millions.

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