

MT. BAKER ROCKHOUND NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF THE MT. BAKER ROCK & GEM CLUB

Club Happenings

- **General Meeting** - There will be no December General Meeting. Instead, we will be having our annual Christmas Party on December 15, 2025, 7:00 PM, Pioneer Pavilion Community Center, 2007 Cherry St, Ferndale, Washington. Please see the gray box below for more details. Volunteers are needed for food, decorations, set-up and tear down. Email mtbakerrockclub@mtbakerrockclub.org
- **Lapidary Arts** - The lapidary room at the Bellis Fair Mall store is closed for the month of December. For information on how to sign up for classes when it reopens, please see page 4.

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Field Trips

If you are interested in leading a guided club field trip in the future, please contact Michael Langley.

There are no more WSMC Field Trips slated for 2025. There will be information on new WSMC Field Trips in early 2026.

MT BAKER ROCK & GEM CLUB CHRISTMAS PARTY

DATE: MONDAY, DECEMBER 15TH

TIME: 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM

LOCATION: FERNDALE COMMUNITY CENTER

POTLUCK:

- Main course provided – ham & chicken
- Bring side dishes (fruit/vegetable/cheese plates, salad, chips, rolls, etc.)
- Bring cookies for dessert table
- Plates, cups, cutlery provided

VOLUNTARY GIFT EXCHANGE:

- If you would like to participate, it is a bring-a-gift, take-a-gift event.
- \$10-\$15 price range, preferably rock/gem related and/or fun and useful.

Please RSVP by Dec 8th with how many will be coming: mtbakerrockclub@mtbakerrockclub.org

Annual Membership Dues

The 2026 club membership dues are now payable.

Dues can be paid by the following means:

- Club Christmas Party in December
- At Club retail store @ Bellis Fair Mall - suite 424
- By mail: PO Box 30324, Bellingham, WA 98228

If dues are not paid by December 31st, your name will not be on the 1/1/2026 roster.

Get Your Story Published

Members have the opportunity to submit ideas for inclusion in future newsletters. If you have ideas for mineral of the month, rock related jokes or quotes, rockhounding stories, rockhounding collection tips, or any other ideas, please send them to Jonathan Syltie @: jonny_on_the_rocks@yahoo.com

FUNNY FOSSILS

What did the metamorphic rock say during the test?

This is too much pressure.

Mineral of the Month: *Malachite*

Malachite is a vibrant green mineral known for its striking green color and unique banding patterns. It is a copper carbonate hydroxide mineral with the chemical formula $\text{Cu}_2\text{CO}_3(\text{OH})_2$. The mineral derives its name from the Greek word malache, meaning "mallow," due to its resemblance to the leaves of the mallow plant. This mineral typically forms in botryoidal, fibrous, or stalagmitic masses and is often found in association with other copper minerals like azurite and chrysocolla.

Physical Properties

Color	Bright green to dark green
Hardness	3.5 to 4.5 on the Mohs scale
Crystal System	Monoclinic
Luster	Adamantine to vitreous
Cleavage	Perfect on {201}, fair on {010}
Streak	Light green

Occurrence and Mining

Malachite is found worldwide, with significant deposits in:

Democratic Republic of the Congo: One of the richest sources of malachite, producing large and high-quality specimens.

Russia: The Ural Mountains were historically a primary source of malachite used in decorative arts.

Australia: Copper mines in Queensland and New South Wales yield malachite specimens.

United States: Arizona is known for producing malachite alongside other copper minerals.

Namibia, Mexico, and Morocco also have notable malachite deposits. The mining of malachite has been traced back more than 3,000 years ago to the Timna Valley in Israel.

Uses and Value

Malachite is primarily used as a decorative stone in jewelry and art. Sculptors and artisans craft malachite into vases, tabletops, and ornaments. In ancient times, malachite was ground into powder to create green pigment for paintings and cosmetics. Its low hardness makes it easy to work with, and it takes a high polish. Malachite is an important ore of copper and has been historically mined for copper extraction. It typically forms in small, botryoidal clusters (which resemble a bunch of grapes) and is rarely found in large, single pieces. Substantial, unbroken Malachite specimens are highly sought after by collectors as prices vary based on the quality and uniqueness of the piece, with unusual patterns or larger sizes commanding higher values. Care should be taken when using malachite in jewelry due to its sensitivity to heat and acids. Malachites' unique qualities, make it a stone that demands special attention, and is worth collecting.



Malachite from the Katanga Copper Belt region of the Democratic Republic of Congo. From the collection of Paul Syltje.



Malachite from the Katanga Copper Belt region of the Democratic Republic of Congo. From the collection of Paul Syltje.

Rockhound Storytime

Mount Baker Blues

By Trevor Duncan

In October, I had the opportunity to host two club field trips to Swift Creek to help others look for "Baker Blue" agates. On our first outing on October 4th, we had about ten people join us. We did the "easy" route of parking in the gravel lot at the bridge just past Swift Creek Campground, then hiked to the lake through the camp. Sadly, we were thwarted by water too deep to traverse, as the water table was still lowering, and the sand was basically quick sand. So we turned around and hiked back the half-mile to enter the water under the bridge. We ran into some club members who had arrived before us and got to searching. Everyone including seasoned hunters and newby 'hounds all left with some found treasures.



The Swift Creek basin at Baker Lake, a PNW rockhound paradise.



This jasp-agate stood out from the other rocks.

Two weeks later, on October 18th, we did a more challenging hunt by driving up to the Swift Creek Trailhead. This time, there were about eight of us. A couple of folks familiar with the area went off on their own excursion, while the newbs stayed closer with the group. Once again, everyone was able to bring home some Baker Blues, jasper, and other interesting rocks. Thank you to everyone who joined us. I was really expecting a lot more turnout based on all the inquiries I received leading up to the trip(s). I hope if someone reading this was on the fence, they will be brave and come with us next time. We may be Rock Hounds, but I promise... we don't bite!

10 Fun Rock & Mineral Facts

1. The major construction material of the Pyramid of Giza in Egypt is limestone, a sedimentary rock.
2. Electronics such as radios and watches are made using Quartz. Quartz maintains an accurate frequency standard, making it desirable for use in electronics.
3. Sand is one of the raw materials used in making glass. It is combined with other materials, heated at high temperatures, and forms glass when it cools.
4. It is estimated that 80% of the gold on this earth has not been discovered.
5. Minerals are pure inorganic substances, and that makes pure metals to be minerals.
6. The most expensive mineral is Jadeite. One carat of the mineral can fetch up to \$3 million.
7. The sandstone in the Southern Alps of New Zealand is the fastest eroding rock. It erodes at the rate of 2.5 millimeters per year.
8. Painite is the rarest mineral on earth. It was discovered in 1951, and in 2001 only three painite crystals were known to exist. Since then, additional discoveries have been found, most being fractured.
9. Pumice is the lightest rock on earth. Due to the rock's porous structure, it floats on water.
10. Shale is the most abundant sedimentary rock. It is about 70% of sedimentary rocks on earth.

Mt. Baker Rock & Gem Club Information

The Mt. Baker Rock & Gem Club is a member of the Northwest Federation of Mineralogical Societies and the Washington State Mineral Council. We are affiliated with the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies.

Purpose Statement: The purpose of this organization is to promote education and interest in the earth sciences (geology, rocks, minerals, gems), lapidary and related jewelry arts, and the joining together of people who share these interests. The Mt. Baker Rockhound News is the official club publication. The contents of this newsletter may be reprinted if credit is given.

Club meetings are held the third Monday of each month of the year 7:00 pm, at Pioneer Pavilion Community Center in Ferndale, Washington. The exceptions are October being the club auction and December being the Christmas party. Our annual show is held the last full weekend in March at the Pioneer Pavilion Community Center in Ferndale. Field trips are scheduled on a regular basis throughout the year, including bus trips to local shows, museums, and special exhibits. Annual Membership Dues are \$20.00 per household, payable in October to the treasurer, or dues can be sent to: Mt. Baker Rock & Gem Club, PO Box 30324, Bellingham, WA 98228.

VISITORS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!

MBRGC Officers and Volunteer Positions

2025 Elected Officers

President	Michael Langley
Vice President	Harold VanAlsburg
Treasurer	Ralph Sisco
Secretary	Trevor Duncan
Federation	Mike Marsh
Director	Bruce Wickler
Director	David Sarna
Past President	Candi Gerard

Volunteer Positions

Show Chairman	Candi Gerard
Webmaster	Todd Folsom
Newsletter Editor	Jonathan Syltie
Social Media	Trevor Duncan
Publicity	Mike Marsh
Mall Shop	Candi Gerard
Lapidary	Gordy Gerard
Kitchen	Kathy Mayock
Kitchen	Kevin Mayock
Scholarship	Todd Folsom
Mineral Council	Michael Langley
RRR	Ralph Sisco
RRR	Mike Marsh

Lapidary Arts

Club members may use the lapidary room after taking the lapidary introduction class (\$30 per person). Members will learn to use the equipment safely and also get basic instruction on how to make a cabochon. The lapidary room is open on Thursdays, from 6-8:30 PM at Space 424 of the Bellis Fair Mall in Bellingham. It will be closed for the month of December.

You must sign up and pre-pay for classes and sessions at the club's store (Bellis Fair Mall, Space 424). The fee is \$10 for 3 hours of use. There will be only four people allowed each session, so when you go to sign up it will be "first paid, first date available".

There will be a waiting list for prepaid members. If you do not show up for the time you selected, you will forfeit your \$10. The club's insurance requires that users of the lapidary room must be club members and at least 18 years old.

Large cuts on the saws will be done by one of the monitors. The class fee may include one slab cut. Other cuts will be done for a fee when time allows. Bring your own safety glasses and hearing protection.

A class on how to use a tumbler for polishing stones is held depending on interest. If you are interested in taking a tumbler class, please attend one of our meetings or send email with your name and phone number to the club's email address: admin@mtbakerrockclub.org