

MT. BAKER ROCKHOUND NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF THE MT. BAKER ROCK & GEM CLUB

Club Happenings

- **General Meeting** - January 19, 2026, 7:00 PM, Pioneer Pavilion Community Center, 2007 Cherry St, Ferndale, Washington.
Show and tell: Fossils
- **Lapidary Arts** - Thursdays, 6-8:30 PM, lapidary room is open to anyone qualified to use the equipment. Sign up and prepay for classes/sessions at the club's store (Bellis Fair Mall, Space 424)
- Todd Folsom and Ralph Sisco were recently awarded *Lifetime Membership Awards*. See page 4 for more information.

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Lapidary Classes and More...

We have some fun classes coming up at the store at Bellis Fair Mall. To sign up for the classes please visit the store at the mall and pre-pay to reserve your spot. Space is limited in all classes!

Rock Tumbling: Monday January 12th 5:00 - 8:00pm. Learn all the ins and outs of rock tumbling! Cost is \$20.

Lapidary Introduction: Tuesday, January 13th starting at 6pm. Learn how to use our lapidary machines. This class qualifies you to use the machines on open lapidary nights. Cost is \$30.

Wire Wrapping: Monday, January 26th 5:00 - 8:00 pm. Learn how to wire wrap your rocks and cabochons. Please bring your favorite cabochon to wrap during the class. Cost is \$20.

The lapidary room at the store at Bellis Fair is open again! Thursday Nights at 6:00 - 8:30pm. Space is limited and it is best to reserve your space in the store. Members only and you must have completed the Lapidary Introduction Class.

We are also looking for one or two people who might be interested in running the open rooms on some Thursdays of the Month. If you would like to volunteer to do this, contact Bruce by text at 360-322-9485.

Do you want to sell Items at the Mall? We have space for one new endeavor! We are also looking for someone who is willing to volunteer on Saturdays and in exchange will get one prime shelf in the store! If you are interested please drop in to the store and let them know or call Candi at 360-366-0121.

Field Trips

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

There are no current WSMC Field Trips. There will be information on 2026 WSMC Field Trips coming soon.

FUNNY FOSSILS

What happens when you keep reading geology jokes in your free time?

You know that you have really hit rock bottom.

Mineral of the Month: *Asbestos*

Asbestos is a group of six naturally occurring fibrous minerals known for their heat resistance and strength. It has been widely used in construction and manufacturing due to its insulating properties. It is a fibrous silicate that is a metamorphic conversion from serpentine. When cut and polished it creates a beautiful, iridescent sheen that is very attractive. Asbestos is a known carcinogen, linked to serious health issues, so obviously special care should be taken when working with this mineral.

Asbestos was commonly used in various products, including insulation materials, roofing shingles, floor tiles, and automotive parts (like brakes). Naturally occurring asbestos can be found in various locations throughout the world including the United States, Russia, Kazakhstan, and Russia.



Asbestos specimen mixed with other metamorphic minerals. Western Australia. From the collection of Paul Syltie.

Rockhound *Storytime*

Blue Forest Petrified Wood

By Jonathan Syltie

One of my favorite places to rockhound is the Blue Forest petrified wood site in southwestern Wyoming. I have been to this location two times with my dad, and had a blast both times. It is high desert collecting, so it can get quite hot during the day and a bit chilly at night. There are campsites nearby. The collection site location can easily be found by doing a quick internet search.

The Blue Forest petrified wood collection site has been around for many many years as evidenced by the abundant holes you will encounter. Finding the wood specimens can be



A nice chunk of petrified wood from the Blue Forest area of Wyoming, after I cleaned it up back at camp.

a bit tricky. Some people choose to further explore current holes, but I found the best way to find the stuff is by using a metal probe. My dad made his from old trunk supports from a 1970's Oldsmobile car, and then welded on a handle. At the site, you probe areas of undug dirt. Once you get a "hit", you probe again close by to see if you get another, and continue until you think you have a credible piece of wood underground.

Some specimens are a foot underground, and others can be four feet down. After you think you have found a piece, you can commence to digging. Shovels and picks come in handy. It is hard work, but can be well worth it. A lot of the time, when you start to unearth a log, it will seem way bigger than it ends up being due to a hard crust that is often surrounding the wood. After a lot of hard work and dirt moving, you will uncover your prize. Sometimes it ends up being an under-formed dud, but oftentimes, the end result is quite amazing. I recommend checking out the Blue Forest Collection site at some point in your life.



Unearthing two logs at the Blue Forest dig site, southwestern Wyoming.

Washington Rock & Gem Show Dates

February 2026

14-15—OAK HARBOR, WASHINGTON: Annual show; Whidbey Island Gem Club; Oak Harbor Senior Center, 51 SE Jerome St., Oak Harbor, WA; Sat. 9-5, Sun. 9-5. Email: vick_o_rama@hotmail.com

March 2026

7-8—ISSAQUAH, WASHINGTON: Annual show; East KingCo Rock & Gem Club; Pickering Barn 1730 - 10th Ave. NW, Issaquah, WA; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; Admission: \$1 for adults, free for kids 12 and under; 30 Gem, Jewelry and Mineral Dealers, Gem and Mineral Displays, Stone Sculpture Exhibit, What's My Rock - Bring your rocks to identify, Door Prizes, Silent Auction, Kids' Activities; Email: eastkingco@gmail.com; Website: www.eastkingco.org

14-15—SEATTLE, WASHINGTON: Annual show; North Seattle Lapidary & Mineral Club; Crown Hill Center, 9250 14th Ave NE, Seattle, WA; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; Free; Displays, junior activities, dealers, demonstrations, door prizes; contact Susan Gardner; Email: sgardner3@mindspring.com; Website: www.northseattlerockclub.org

20-22—PUYALLUP, WASHINGTON: Wholesale and retail show; Gem Faire; Washington State Fair Event Center, 110 9th Ave. SW; Fri. 12-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; General admission \$7, Free admission for children under 12 years old; Fine jewelry, precious & semi-precious gemstones, millions of beads, crystals, gold & silver, unique gifts from around the world & much more at manufacturer's prices. Buy directly from the importers & wholesalers. Jewelry repair & cleaning while you shop. Free parking; contact Yooy Nelson, (503) 252-8300; Email: info@gemfaire.com; Website: www.gemfaire.com

28-29—FERNDALE, WASHINGTON: 64th Annual show; Mount Baker Rock & Gem Club; Pioneer Pavillion Community Center, 2007 Cherry Street, Ferndale, WA; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; Rocks, minerals, fossils, gems, jewelry, demos, dealers, exhibits, door prizes, raffle, on-going silent auction, club sales, food service, activities for kids, and more! Website: www.mtbakerrockclub.org

April 2026

24-26—YAKIMA, WASHINGTON: 63rd Parade of Gems; Yakima Rock & Mineral Club; Central Washington-State Fair Park, Modern Living Building, 1301 South Fair Avenue, Yakima, WA; Fri. 10-4, Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-4; Admission: Adult 7\$, Student \$2, Under 12 free; Vendors, raffle, door prizes, silent auction, kid activities, demonstrations, gold panning; Website: www.yakimarockclub.com

25-26—SEATTLE, WASHINGTON: 58th Annual show; West Seattle Rock Club; Alki Masonic Temple, 4736 40th Ave. SW, Seattle, WA; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; Free; Vendors, Demonstrators, silent auction, activities for kids; Website: www.westseattlerockclub.org

May 2026

2-3—MONROE, WASHINGTON: Annual show; Everett Rock & Gem Club; Evergreen State Fairgrounds, 14405 179th Ave SE, Weikel Event Center; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; All ages welcome. Free admission, free parking; Rocks, gems, jewelry, Displays, kids activities, demonstrations, silent auction; contact Candra Burkhardt, (425) 772-3326; Email: Secretary@everettrockclub.com; Website: www.everettrockclub.com

June 2026

27-28—KENT, WASHINGTON: Annual show; Cascade Mineralogical Society; Kent Commons, 525 4th Ave N; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; Free; Vendors from all over the Pacific Northwest, activities for kids, door prizes, silent auction, and raffle for amazing prizes. Demonstrations, mineral specimens, rough rock, cabochons, jewelry, beads, and metaphysical specimens. Something for everyone; contact Noelle Barnes, (206) 914-0514; Email: noelleb@outlook.com; Website: www.cascademineralsociety.org

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	Tawnya Soine-Crowe
Federation	Mike Marsh
Director	Bruce Wickler
Director	David Sarna
Past President	Candi Gerard

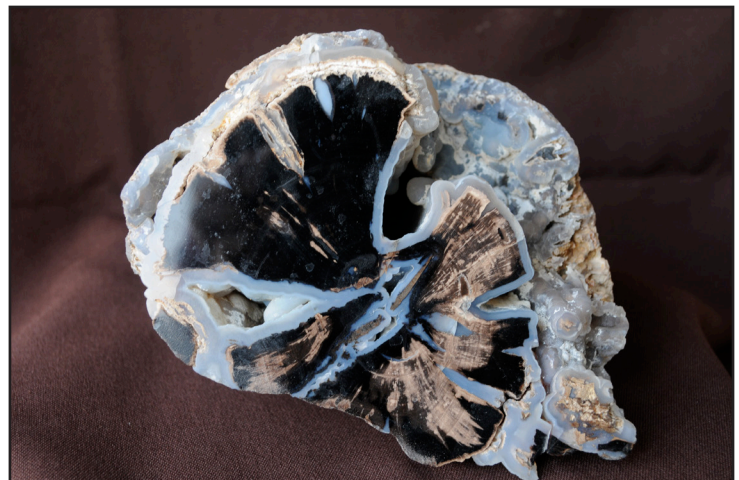
Volunteer Positions

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

Lifetime Membership Achievement Awards

Two club members, Todd Folsom and Ralph Sisco, were awarded Lifetime Membership Achievement Awards near the end of last year. Todd is currently the Club Webmaster and Liaison with the WWU Scholarship Program. Previously he was the Club Librarian. Todd has been an active volunteer with the Annual Show and has done presentations at monthly meetings regarding local field trips. Ralph is currently the Club Treasurer. Previously he has been the Club Vice President and Board Member. Ralph also has been active in the Annual Show as a vendor, and is also a founding member of the Club's retail store at the mall. He has also co-chaired the Rock Rendezvous sale for the past three years. We appreciate Todd and Ralph's contributions to the Club.

Rock Photo Corner



A nice specimen of Blue Forest petrified wood from southwestern Wyoming. From the collection of Paul Syltie.