

# Diggin's from Dakota



Volume 35, No. 9, November 24, 2000

## President's Message

We had an excellent meeting on Sunday, November 5 at the Masonic Center. There were 25 adults and 3 juniors in attendance. Ray Oliger gave a presentation on the Rocky Mountain Federation Meeting in Moab, Utah, and we had an excellent Club Silent Auction. Unfortunately, we had some bad news about our Show. Our Show Chairperson has resigned. Rodney Hickie has volunteered to continue in this capacity until we can find a new Show Chair.

And now let us review our schedule for next few months:

- Sunday, December 3, 2000 - This is our annual pre-Christmas Banquet. We always have this as a Brunch beginning at 12:30 PM at the Doublewood Best Western in Bismarck. The Brunch will probably cost approximately \$6.50 each. We also collect annual dues and elect Officers for the next year. We will need to have a count of attendees, so please plan ahead and let us know if your plans to attend. We are making reservations for 25, so plan ahead.

- Sunday, January 3, 2000 - This will be our new Officers first meeting. They will announce their program and make plans for

the new year of events. The meeting will begin at Early Class at 1:30 PM -- Formal Meeting at 2:00 PM.

We still need volunteers for refreshments. Part of the fun of coming to one of our meetings is to enjoy the goodies afterward. Be sure to offer your services to Carol Hickie.

The Nominating Committee has announced the officers for the year 2001. Election will be in December and Installation in January. The nominated Officers are:

President	Duane Robey
Vice President	Rodney Hickie
Treasurer	Neill Burnett
Secretary	Colleen Huber
Alt. Secretary	Kathleen Vetter
Show Chair	Open

Committee Chairs will be appointed by the new President.

Yours in Rocks,  
Your President,  
Neill C. Burnett



## About the Diggin's

Monthly Publication of  
the Central Dakota Gem &  
Mineral Society.  
PO Box 2445,  
Bismarck ND 58502.

In Association with:  
Rocky Mt. Federation of  
Mineralogical Societies and  
the American Federation of  
Mineralogical Societies.

All members are  
encouraged to submit  
articles/news items for  
publication. Material for  
the Newsletter should reach  
the editor by the 10th of  
each month.

Advertisements are  
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Newsletter. Rates are \$2  
for 1/8 page per month or  
\$20 per year.

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*Diggin's* has won several  
small bulletin competitions:

RMFMS - 1st Place, 1993  
RMFMS - 3rd Place, 1997  
RMFMS - 2nd Place, 1992  
RMFMS - 2nd Place, 1987  
AFMS - 2nd Place, 1986  
RMFMS - 4th Place, 1985

## JUNIOR ROCKHOUND CORNER What is Soapstone?

The Chinese have treasured soapstone for centuries and used it to carve their delicate figurines. The Eskimos used it to make lamps and cooking pots. In ancient Babylon it was used to make signet rings and other items of jewelry. In North America, the early pioneers used it to make laundry tubs, but this is not why it is called soapstone. The mineral gets its name because of its waxy, polished surface look and because it feels like soap.

Soapstone's main ingredients are magnesium oxide, silicon, and moisture. It is one of the softest stones, easily carved with a knife. Its color may be pearly or

bluish gray, milky white or pastel yellow. A few rare examples are a vivid apple green, some opaque, others are translucent like foggy glass.

Since early times, artists have treasured its lovely colors and soft carveable qualities. It resists all stains and corrosion.

Soapstone is classified as a metamorphic rock. Most of the world's steatite minerals are mined in North America. Soapstone and talc are found in the hills of California. There are also massive deposits in the Eastern Appalachians.

*From CHMS Newsletter, 3/00*

# About the Central Dakota Gem and Mineral Society

The Society was organized in March 1966 and serves central North Dakota. Its objectives are to:

1. Further the study of mineralogy and geology;
2. arrange field trips to collect minerals, gems and fossils;
3. assist members to improve in the art of cutting, polishing & mounting gem materials;
4. provide opportunities for exchange, purchase & exhibitions of specimens and materials; and
5. share knowledge about gems, minerals and activities of the Society with the general public.

**Meetings:** Held on the 1st Sunday of each month at the Masonic Center, 1810 Schafer Str., Bismarck, North Dakota.

November through March--meetings begin at 2:00 PM, April through October at 7:00 PM

**Visitors and guests are always welcome!**

**Early Class:** One-half hour before each meeting.

## **Annual Dues:**

Junior \$6, Single \$10, Family Membership is \$12.

## **Committees:**

Program: Neill Burnett / Duane Robey  
Hospitality/Lunch: Carol Hickle / Emma Brady  
Hospital/Cards: Open  
Field Trips: Open  
Newsletter Editor: Lila Marquart  
Annual Show: Debra Martinsen  
Early Class: Harold Brady / All Members  
Greeter: Open  
Stamp Chair: Doris Hickle  
Librarian: Agnes Berg  
Publicity: Open  
Historian: Betty Mautz  
Door Count: Secretary

## **RMFMS State Director for ND:**

Ray Olinger, 516 N. 20th Str, Bismarck ND,  
701-223-4986

## Topaz - the November Birth Stone

Topaz is the birthstone of November. Blue Topaz is the anniversary gemstone for the 4th year of marriage.

For the Egyptians topaz was a very powerful amulet against harm, because they believed that topaz was a gemstone colored with the golden glow of the mighty sun god Ra. The Romans associated topaz with Jupiter, who also is the god of the sun. Legend has it that it dispels all enchantment and helps to improve eyesight.

The ancient Greeks believed that it had the power to increase strength and make its wearer invisible in times of emergency. Topaz was also said to change color in the presence of poisoned food or drink. It was said to cure insomnia, asthma, and hemorrhages.

Topaz sometimes has the amber gold of fine cognac or the blush of a peach and all the beautiful warm browns and oranges inbetween. Some rare and exceptional topaz are pale pink to a sherry red. The most famous topaz is a giant specimen set in the Portuguese Crown, the Braganza. There is also a beautiful topaz set in the Green Vault in Dresden, one of the world's important gem collections.

Color - Brown, yellow, orange, sherry, red and pink topaz is found in Brazil and Sri Lanka. Pink topaz is found in Pakistan and Russia. Today we also have blue topaz, which has a pale to medium blue color created by irradiation. Pale topaz which is enhanced to become blue is found in Brazil, Sri Lanka, Nigeria, and China. In early 1998, a new type of enhanced topaz made its appearance, the surface-enhanced topaz, with colors described as blue to greenish-blue or emerald green. Blue topaz has become a popular alternative in recent years for those who prefer faceted stones.



# Report of Trip to the Federation Show

## by Ray Olinger

Russ and I left Bismarck at about noon on Monday, the 9th of November, and drove to Deadwood, South Dakota, to spend the night and a little money!!! Tuesday, the 10th, we drove all day down through Denver and over to Grand Junction, Colorado, for the night.

Wednesday, the 11th, we drove into Moab, Utah, and checked into the Red Stone Inn, our home for the next five nights. We then drove out to the site of the show, about three miles south of town at the Spanish Trails Area where we set up the North Dakota State case and signed up for all the field trips on Thursday, Friday and Sunday. Then we left the show to do a little site seeing and ride the tramway (what a ride). From the top you can see the whole valley that Moab is in. It was okay going up, but the trip down was something else. I had to look sideways at the wall to keep from getting sick. Russ just laughed at me.

On Thursday, the 12th, we went out to the show and then left on a field trip for agates. We spent half a day and got some good pickings. Then we went back to the show, there was a lot to see and do with over 100 door prizes and about 22 dealers. They had a small, but nice, silent auction, and they also had a plastic kids swimming pool filled up with rocks from the area that you go through and pick five for one dollar. I thought it was a neat idea.

On Friday, the 13th, we went to the show and then left on a field trip for green agate with opal. We spent most of the day there. When we went back to the show, some of our Rocky Mountain Federation friends talked us into going on a dinner light-show cruise of the Colorado River (a very enjoyable cruise).

On Saturday, the 14th, we spent most of the day in meetings and then went to the Banquet that night. On Sunday the 15th, we went out to the show with the idea of going on a field trip, but there were so many people going that we decided to just stay at the show. We were glad we did, because we both won door prizes and got to visit with a lot of people. We also got in on a few bargains from the dealers and the silent auction table.

On Monday, the 16th, we drove up to Kemmer, Wyoming, via Salt Lake City, to see if we could dig for fish fossils. No luck as it was too wet, so we drove over to Rock Springs, Wyoming, to spend the night. On Tuesday, the 17th, we drive through Wyoming and stopped at the Little Bighorn National battlefield by Harding, Montana, and then drove up to Miles City, Montana, to spend the night.

On Wednesday, the 18th, we went down to the Yellowstone River in Miles City to look for Montana agate (not much luck), so we headed for good old Bismarck!!! We got home at about three in the afternoon.

## Financial 2000 Show Report

### Income

Dealers	\$1120.00
Donations	435.00
Silent Auction	171.96
Cookie Bar Donations	101.96
Grab Bags	61.00
Dealers Breakfast	53.00
Interest from Checking	2.54
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$1945.48</b>

### Expenses

Advertising (radio and newspaper)	\$ 663.50
Dealers Breakfast	47.30
Supplies (covers, ribbons, coffee bar)	279.57
Stamps and Supplies	100.00
Mandan Community Center	1175.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 2265.37</b>

Net Profit/Loss	- 319.89
11/5/00 Checking Account Balance:	\$733.44

## You are What you Eat

This simple statement is proving to be very true in the fossil world. Dr. John M. Harris, Chief Curator of Paleontology at the L.A. Natural History Museum and Professor Thure Cerling of the Univ. of Utah Geochemistry Department are employing stable carbon stored in fossil teeth to reveal what extinct animals were eating.

Why is it important to know what camels were eating seven million years ago? The answer helps us to understand how the earth's environment and climate may have changed.

There are two distinct groups of plants that are eaten by animals. The first group includes trees, shrubs, and grasses that grow in cool climates, like corn and Kentucky bluegrass. These plants take up carbon during photosynthesis and store it as carbon3 or C3. The second group of plants are warm-weather grasses that grow in areas with summer rains, i.e. wheat and crabgrass. These heat-loving grasses store carbon4 or C4. When an animal eats either type of plant their body chemistry is affected and a permanent record is stored in the animal's tooth enamel.

*(Excerpt from an article by Keri Dearborn, original source unknown, via The PEGMATITE 6/00)*

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### DECEMBER 2000

12/3 - 12:30 PM Pre-Christmas Banquet, Central Dakota Gem & Mineral Club, Doublewood Inn, Bismarck, North Dakota

### JANUARY 2000

1/3 - 1:30 PM Regular Meeting of the Central Dakota Gem & Mineral Club, Masonic Center, Bismarck, North Dakota

## RMFMS 2001 Annual Show Scheduled

The next meeting the the Rocky Mountain Federal is scheduled:

### **A Gem Dandy Show**

**Friday June 8 through Sunday, June 10, 2001  
Yucca Center, 5002 S. Richardson  
Roswell, New Mexico**

They plan over 100 exhibits, Wheel of Fortune, Door Prizes, Minerals, Silent Auction, Fluorescent Display, Field Trips, Gift Ideas, Fossils, Gems, Jewelry.

Note: The September and October 2000 Central Dakota Gem & Mineral Society meeting minutes were not available for publication at the time this newsletter went to press.

Diggin's from Dakota  
Central Dakota Gem and Mineral Society  
PO Box 2445, Bismarck ND 58502-2445

## Chrysoprase is Regaining Popularity

Chrysoprase is an apple-green form of chalcedony (a form of quartz) that was a much-sought-after ornamental stone during the Middle Ages. At one time it was found only in Poland, and was so valued that the Medici family and Frederick the Great offered rewards in hope that someone would unearth a deposit. Chrysoprase mined in Poland was of a quality that was and still is the standard to which all other deposits discovered in subsequent years have been compared.

Chalcedony is a fine-grained variety of quartz and harder than other varieties such as amethyst, citrine, or rock crystal. The structure of chrysoprase is more dense than other forms of chalcedony, and thus less likely to accept dye. The green color results from nickel oxide. Greenish-yellow or darker shades of green are also chrysoprase.

Chrysoprase is generally found in veins, the thickness of which varies from a few millimeters to forty or fifty millimeters. At its best it is as beautiful as any imperial jade. Even those who have cut both jade and chrysoprase have to study a cabochon carefully in order to distinguish between the two gems.

Nowadays, the best quality rough is mined in Australia. It is however, also found in Tulare County California, Oregon, Ural Mountains of Russia, Poland, Brazil and Africa.



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