

SKAGIT GEMS

Official Publication of the Skagit Rock and Gem Club
Serving Skagit County WA Since 1961

November 2020
Volume 60, Issue 9

*****I asked Candi and Gordy, vendors at our annual show, to give us an update since we aren't having our gem show this year. Please consider supporting them this holiday season and visit their shop 1371 Paradise Rd. Ferndale. It's easy to get to, right off I-5. Their website: candisjewelry.com**

Hello to All Rockhounds,

Many are wondering what has been going on with our gallery since 2020. As you know there have not been any shows lately. Not to worry, we are open Fridays and Saturdays with masks and social distancing. Gordy has been cutting and polishing rocks from his stash - and mine.

He has plenty of incredible merchandise left that he purchased in Tucson earlier this year. It is all on sale.

When the lockdown hit, I decided that I would not waste time watching tv, so I came out in my shop and made a piece of jewelry every day. This went on for about a month. Then it was every week. I am running out of places to put it, so it is on sale too.

We are hoping 2021 will bring more shows back, and we can make it to Tucson for more goodies. We miss doing shows and seeing all our friends from other clubs! Have a great Fall and Holiday Season.

Candi & Gordy Gerard

Candi's Jewelry & Gifts



Chrysocolla

Chrysocolla itself is a copper silicate and on its own is an unusual material, not really a mineral more a silica gel which has hardened over time. It is often formed with other minerals such as chalcedony, turquoise, malachite or quartz which makes for interesting colors and patterns and makes it hard enough to be used as a gemstone.

Chrysocolla is made up of Oxygen, Copper, Silica, Aluminum and Hydrogen. This combining of different materials occurs during formation.

Chrysocolla is a secondary mineral of copper, meaning it was formed when copper minerals were changed by other chemicals. This usually happens when water containing carbon dioxide seeps through the copper leeching the various chemicals with it until they gather in cracks and fissures and harden.

This basic material is usually mixed up with other minerals such as quartz, chalcedony, malachite, turquoise, azurite, often two or three types so its chemical composition is difficult to determine.

Varieties Include:

- Eilat Stone - A greenish blue version of Chrysocolla with naturally added turquoise and malachite mined in southern Israel.
- Stellarite - A light blue gemstone made up of Chrysocolla and Quartz, sometimes simply called Chrysocolla Quartz.



Eilat

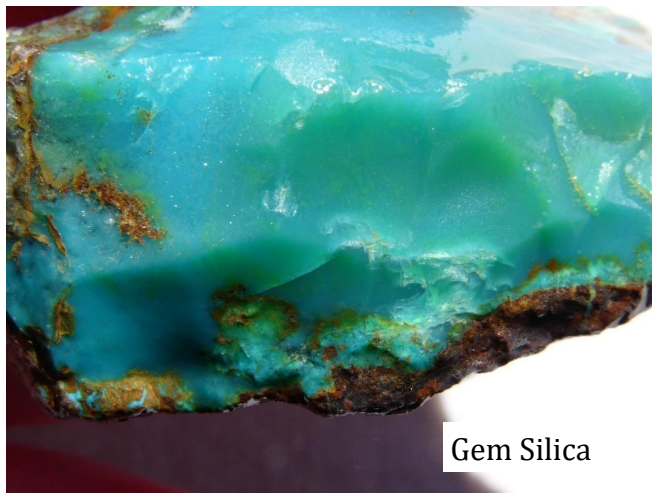


Stellarite

- Parrot Wing – a mix of Chrysocolla and Jasper which is a greenish brown color.
- Gem Silica – This is sometimes called Chrysocolla Chalcedony and is a rare and valuable gemstone but not really part of the Chrysocolla family just colored by the same copper mineral.



Parrot Wing



Gem Silica

Chrysocolla is what we call a cryptocrystalline material which, like agate, jasper, carnelian and onyx to name but a few is made up of microscopic crystals, too small to see with the naked eye. These types of gemstones tends to be opaque and are made up of a mixture of material giving them interesting color patterns and a rocky appearance.

In contrast we have macrocrystallines such as quartz, amethyst and citrine which have large crystals, tend to be translucent or transparent and are a bit harder.

Chrysocolla occurs throughout the world with significant producers including the USA and Mexico in North America, Chile and Peru in South America, Australia, Russia and, probably most famously and historically, in Israel.

Chrysocolla has been in use by man for thousands of years and got its name around 300 BC when the Ancient Greek philosopher and botanist, Theophrastus, noticed its resemblance to a borax based material which was used as a flux for welding gold pieces – Chryso (gold) colla (glue).

Chrysocolla is rated at 2 - 4 on Mohs hardness scale which is quite low among gemstones so a great deal of care should be taken if making into jewelry. Protective settings are a must and rings and bracelets are likely to be chipped or broken eventually. Storing them separately from other harder gemstones will save them from potential damage, too. Chrysocolla is especially sensitive to acids and solvents as well as high heat so clean them gently with a soft brush in luke warm soapy water and dry with a cloth.

<https://www.gemselect.com/english/gem-info/chrysocolla/chrysocolla-info.php>

THE THREE C'S OF COLLECTION MAINTENANCE

by Rick Kennedy

While we are going through this unprecedented time, many of us find ourselves at home with more spare time than we are used to. Perhaps a good use of this time would be to spend it on our rock, mineral and gemstone collections. If your specimens are in drawers or on display, a bit of maintenance is never a bad thing. The three "C's" of collection maintenance are clean, curate, and catalogue.

Clean: Most of our items have been on display or in a drawer for many years, they may just have a bit of dust, or they may be undergoing chemical alteration. For many specimens, a simple blow with "canned air" that people use to blow dust off of their computer keyboards is enough. For others, water with gentle brushing or a gentle spray from a water. "Needle Gun" will do the trick. Check any sulfide rocks/ minerals (Pyrite and Marcasite are the worst offenders) for strong smells of Sulphur. That is a sign that the minerals are suffering from chemical degradation. Depending on the level of degradation, the specimen may be salvaged or may need to be disposed of.

Curate: Do your specimens have labels? You may know quite a bit about the rocks you have, but others don't. All of your specimens should have labels. Now is a good time to check your labels for accuracy or to make labels for specimens that don't have them. For materials from the USA, labels usually follow this format: Mineral or Rock name - Precise location (Mine name or anything that defines the most accurate locality info) - County - State

For material whose origin is outside the USA, the first two lines should be the same, from there one has to improvise as all countries are organized differently into counties, states, provinces, prefectures, regions, departments, etc. Online sources like Mindat are very helpful to obtain the most precise locality information.

Catalogue: Once you have all of the information that would go on a label, create a catalogue so that you have both a handy list and a way to cross reference the specimens in your collection. It is best to do this on a computer in a spreadsheet program like Excel, but you can use even the simplest of word processing pro-grams or even write it out by hand if you want to be "Old School". I organize my spreadsheet with the following headers: Catalogue number – Rock or mineral species name – Location – How acquired – Comments. Here would be an example: #1001 – Quartz, variety Scepter – FH Claim, HJ, Washoe Co., NV – Self collected – Dug in May, 2016. If you want to, you can also add a picture of your specimen! When you are done, you will know your specimens better, you will have a database of what you have and maybe even come up with more ideas for at home or at show displays once the world gets back to normal. Enjoy!

(via The Tumbler, July 2020; via Breccia, April 2020)



VISITORS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!

Meetings are on the FIRST Saturday of the month (except for Jan, July and Dec) at 10:00 am at the Mount Vernon Community (Senior) Center
1401 Cleveland St. Mount Vernon WA 98273

- The purpose of this non-profit earth society shall be to stimulate interest in the study of geology, lapidary, and the collection of geological specimens
- We are 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.
- Dues are \$15.00 per year for adults and \$7.50 for those under age 16
- Visit our website: skagitrockandgem.com
- Email: skagitrockandgem@gmail.com

2020 Officers

President	• Wes Frank 360-757-6276
Vice President	• Greg Hochmuht 360-223-5453
Treasurer	• David Britten 360-755-0741
Secretary	• Linda Keltz 360-424-6525
Fed. Director	• Virgil Keltz 360-424-6525
Bulletin Editor	• Debbie Frank 360-853-6883
Past President	• Eric Self 360-840-8342

Committees

Annual Show Chair-Eric Self
Facilities/Field Trips- Dave Britten
Greeter-Linda Keltz
Scholarship-Noni Avery & Linda Keltz
Publicity-Frank Isca
Stamps-Virgil Keltz
Sunshine- Noni Avery
Swap-Vandenburgs



Membership Dues

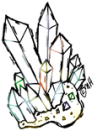
We realize that we are not holding meetings right now so please pay dues as you are able. Everyone will still receive the newsletter as usual.

The club's year runs from September to August.

Payment can be sent to Dave Britten or

PO BOX 244 Mt. Vernon 98273

Dues are: \$15.00/ yr for adults \$7.50/yr age 16 and younger



Skagit Rock and Gem Club
Debbie Frank, Editor
20379 Aliston Ln.
Burlington WA 98233

Last Field Trip in 2020

November 21st

The Darrington Rock Club is hosting a trip to Blanchard Hill in Alger for Dalmatian Stone. Meet at the I-5 Exit 240 Gas Mart 9:00am.

Bring hard rock tools and pry bars.

Contact Ed Lehman for more info
wsmced@hotmail.com or 425-334-6282 or
425-760-2786



Note from the Editor---

One of my favorite things is our club xmas party and I will miss playing our swap game this year.

In lieu of that, let's do a gift exchange. I have some members signed up already. I will draw names and then you can mail or deliver the gift and you will receive one in turn. Please let me know if you would like to participate by November 15th. ---Debbie, my # on pg 5.

