



# The Helena Mineral Society Newsletter

## July 2024



Gem, Mineral, and Geological Education and Experience

***A Note from the President:*** Greetings to all fellow rockhounds!

I mentioned in an earlier newsletter that the club was not planning any field trips during the fire season. Well, the fire season has arrived (a Captain Obvious statement) and Lewis and Clark County commissioners have issued a Stage 1 Alert, along with BLM, Helena National Forest issuing their own versions. All of us know what that means, right? Please avoid being that human that starts a fire and burns up the countryside.

I was sick for two weeks the first part of July with a cold and missed the picnic. Did everyone get the item you bid on during the silent auction? Most importantly did you have a fun time? Take care and see you all at the August meeting! -- Cherrí

***In this issue:*** *The Annual Club Picnic, notice of a new article series that seeks your inputs on how to be a good Rockhound, Partnerships for Education – Anderson School, Montana Learning Center Geology Camp 2024, The Copper City Fossil Fieldtrip, Books of Interest to the Montana Rockhound – Lanny Ream’s Classic Guide, Three really bad rockhound vacation jokes, and much more!*



### Mark your Calendars!



Next Club Meeting – August 15, 2024, 7pm at 720 Faw Rd  
Montana Crystal Collectors Rendezvous – Bozeman, 27-29 September, 2024  
**CHRISTMAS PARTY** – December 7, 2024 at Fortress of Joy  
Club Picnic will be Sunday, July 13, 2025 at noon at the large Fairground Pavilion

### **Helena Mineral Society Officers:**

[helenamineralsociety@gmail.com](mailto:helenamineralsociety@gmail.com)

*President:* Cherrí Murphy      *Vice President:* Kim Peterson

*Secretary:* Jim Meier      *Treasurer:* Jan Smith      *Membership Chair:* Stacy Robare

*Member at Large:* Wayne Waters      *Show Chair:* Alexis McEwan

*Grab Bags:* Natalie Jordan

*Field Trip Committee:* Bob Ringler, Monte Miles, & Shawn Moore

*Claims Committee:* Ken Liston, Curt Smith, Wayne Waters, Monte Miles

*Program Committee:* Ken Liston, Curt Smith, Wayne Waters

*Event Coordinator:* Kathy Lamping

*Historian:* Kelly Wilson      *Newsletter Editors:* Sarah Hall & Jim Meier

# CLUB PICNIC & AUCTION



On July 13<sup>th</sup>, the Club held its annual picnic at the Fairgrounds. Attendance was a bit down this year but those who attended thoroughly enjoyed themselves. Although the temperature was hot enough to cause metamorphosis to occur, the food was excellent, the jokes were horrible, and the Silent Auction raised over \$300 for scholarships!





## Upcoming Article Series: How To Be A Good Hound ...Rockhound, that is!



As noted in the June issue, legal, respectful, and safe collecting is one of the focuses of our Club. The June article, “Claim Jumpin’, Highgradin’, & General Misbehavin’”, covered how not to be a good rockhound, how to violate your Club membership duties, and ultimately lose your Club membership. Starting in the fall, the Editors will present a series on how to be a good, well behaved rockhound.

In coordination with a number of federal, state, and local agencies who are kindly giving of their time, knowledge, and resources to provide information and regulations pertaining to “hobby or recreational” collecting, we will present an overview of what you need to know to collect on National Forest, BLM, State, and other lands. We will not only discuss Montana, but also a variety of different geographical regions and ecological environments around the country.

If you have specific questions on this topic you would like to have answered in the article series, or you have a particular National Forest or BLM location you would like to see covered, please send your questions to [HelenaMineralSocietyNewsletter@yahoo.com](mailto:HelenaMineralSocietyNewsletter@yahoo.com).

### Donation from Montana Learning Center!

The Club recently received a large rock donation from the Montana Learning Center. The rocks were part of the supplies in the old “geology basement”. Jan and Curt filled their van with pre-made flats in addition to what is pictured below. They also worked to get everything cleaned and into storage. Additionally there were large amounts of grits for polishing. A big thank you to Jan, Curt, and The Montana Learning Center!!



# Partnerships For Education

The Helena Mineral Society's motto is "Gem, Mineral, and Geological Education and Experience." While the scholarships the Club funds obviously have a lasting impact, it is the personal touch – members volunteering their time and knowledge – that really brings our mission to life. Whether it is leading a fieldtrip, taking the time on a fieldtrip to answer a new members questions about exactly what on earth we are supposed to do to find rocks, or helping teach one of the geology lab experiences for young students at Montana Learning Center (MLC), the impact this can have to foster not only an interest in science, but an interest specifically in geology, is wonderful. Three of our members, Jan, Curt, and Gary, helped with a cut and polish class for 25 kids from Anderson School – on this page and the next are a selection of the thank you notes the students sent. The pictures on these pages are from the Geology Camp MLC ran this summer which Curt and Jan also helped with.

Dear Jan,

Thank you so much for all the help you gave us during our polishing our thunder egg geodes. It was really cool to hear what your favorite part of your job was. It was also really cool to just experience something like that. It is definitely something I never thought of doing, but once I did it I just loved the experience of it. Our class definitely had tons of fun and still is talking about it.

Thank you again,

Jessie

Jessie

Dear Curt, thank you for helping me polish the agates. It was so cool to see the different designs the rocks can have. I really enjoyed staying in the camp. The view was so beautiful and it was so mesmerizing to see all of the amazing nature. I have my polished thunder egg as decor in my room. I really enjoyed having something to bring back home so I will remember this awesome experience for the rest of my life. Thank you so much for everything you did to make this trip so memorable!

Dear Gary,

Thank you for the amazing experience. Polishing the thunder eggs were so much fun. You were super helpful when my rock was cracked. My favorite part was comparing a polished to an unpolished agate. Mine is laying next to my bed.

Sincerely,

Dear Gary,

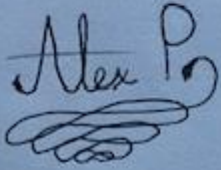
Thank you for helping with the Thunderegg polishing, and thank you for taking time out of your day to work with our class. I am very grateful that we got to use the machinery that polishes the rocks. It was very intriguing and I will definitely remember that part of the trip. I really enjoyed the process, and I love the outcome. I have my thunder egg sitting on my dresser. After the whole class was done we all showed off our own rocks, we were very proud.



Dear Gary,

Thank you so much for the opportunity to polish thunder eggs! It was a pleasure to do it for the first time! Thanks for all the help operating the machinery, and answering all of the questions we had. It was probably the highlight of our trip up to Canyon Ferry Lake.

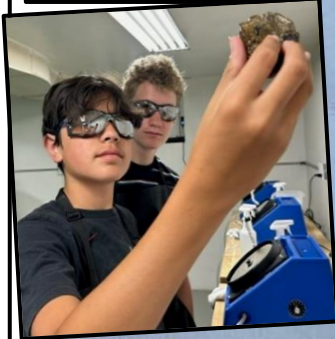
Sincerely,



Dear Jan,

Thank you so much for volunteering your time to help us polish thunder eggs at canyon ferry. The experience was really fun and super educational! It was fun to get to bring home an awesome agate that I could say I polished (under your guidance, of course)! I really enjoyed picking out a stone we wanted and getting to go through all of the different steps that make agates so shiny. Thanks for being so patient and helpful throughout the whole process! The agate I polished is really pretty and I'll definitely add it to my small collection of rocks and minerals at home!

Thanks again!

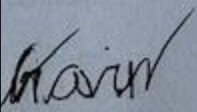


Dear Mr Curt

Thank you for helping us polish our rocks. It was a lot of fun and had a really cool end product. You are so kind and a lot of help, without you I wouldn't have been able to do it. The Thunder Eggs are so cool, I gave it to my mom and she loved it. It was such a cool experience and I hope to be able to do it again. Thank you so much. I had so much fun.



Sincerely,



Dear Jan,

Thank you so much for helping us polish rocks and taking time out of your day to help us polish rocks. I learned so much from polishing rocks and like how to be patient when your polishing and how long cutting these rocks takes. When I got back home from Helena I put the polished rock in my window sill and it looks really cool. Once again thank you so much for all that you did and how much you helped us polish the thunder eggs.

Dear Curt,

Thank you so much for giving us the opportunity to learn about agates and how to polish them correctly. It felt like a once in a lifetime chance to be able to participate in this activity. It was amazing to get to go through the steps and learn about everything and how it's done. Not only were the steps amazing but also the rock turned out amazing too. Thank you so much again!

# **Partnerships For Education...continued**

## **Montana Learning Center Geology Camp 2024**



The photos on the previous two pages, as well as this page, are from the Geology Camp run by the Montana Learning Center (MLC) this summer. The kids, and our fabulous Club volunteers, spent one day of the weeklong camp up at the Sally Ann Claim. Everyone had a blast. This is one of the programs our scholarship donations allow kids to attend. This summer, 112 full day or overnight campers are participating in geology-themed programs at MLC, and overall, MLC is hosting 450+ campers in 26 different science camps. Thanks to Wayne for escorting the campers, and Jan, Curt, and Ryan for the pictures, which are used with MLC permission. A big thank you to the volunteers!

If you are inspired to help with Club educational or outreach activities please reach out to any of the volunteers mentioned or any of the Club board members!





# Field Trip! Field Trip! Field Trip!



## Proposed Field Trip Schedule for 2024

1. August 10, 2024 – Crystal Park (Quartz crystals)
2. Mining Museum and Ringing Rocks, Butte: Date TBD
3. Bynum Dinosaur Museum: Date TBD

Thank you to our Field Trip Committee for putting together this list. Additional details and meet-up instructions are provided below and will be sent out via e-mail to confirm the plan prior to each trip. If you have any questions, concerns, or additional Field Trip ideas please feel free to contact Bob Ringler at 431-3364.

## Copper City Fossil Hunting!

On July 20<sup>th</sup> a small but intrepid group of fossil lovers set out to find evidence of alien life...OK, maybe not exactly alien life, but ancient life under the sea at the very least. All reports and photographic evidence indicate that fun was had by all. Many thanks to Bob Ringler for the photos on this page and the next.



# Copper City Fossil Hunting...continued!





## Helena Mineral Society Meetings



The Helena Mineral Society meets at  
Fortress of Joy – 720 Faw Rd, Helena, MT 59601

**Next Meeting – August 15, 2024 at 7 pm**

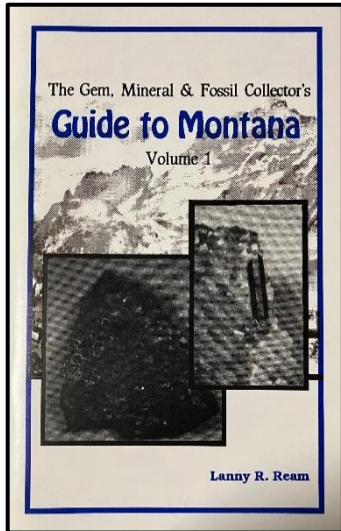
Friends, guests, and new members are always welcome!



### **Books of interest to the Montana Rockhound**



Lanny Ream's classic collecting guide to Montana has stood the test of time. Sadly, no volume two was ever published. But that does not diminish the information available in this little pamphlet. Although no longer in publication, it is usually available used. Lanny covers 21 different collecting localities – eight fossils or petrified wood, and 18 mineral sites. And before someone says we editors can't do math, several sites offer both fossils and minerals. Over 2/3 of the sites are an easy daytrip from Helena. As always, double check current access requirements, fire conditions, and claim status before venturing out to collect.



### **You might be a rock hound if ...**

You think road cuts are built as tourist attractions...

You describe your vacations by the rocks you brought home...or

Baggage handlers at the airport know you by name and refuse to help with your luggage.



## Helena Mineral Society Contact Information

**Mailing Address:** Helena Mineral Society, Inc.  
PO Box 736  
Helena, MT 59624

**General Information and Questions:** [helenamineralsociety@gmail.com](mailto:helenamineralsociety@gmail.com)

**Gem and Mineral Show:** [HelenaMineralShow@gmail.com](mailto:HelenaMineralShow@gmail.com)

**Newsletter Submissions:** [HelenaMineralSocietyNewsletter@yahoo.com](mailto:HelenaMineralSocietyNewsletter@yahoo.com)

**Website Submissions:** [HelenaMineralSocietyWebsite@yahoo.com](mailto:HelenaMineralSocietyWebsite@yahoo.com)

Submission Guidelines – Please ensure that pictures submitted are in jpg format and documents are submitted as pdf files. E-mail subject line should include your full name and the topic – for example “Sarah Hall – Montana Agate Pictures”. Only current Club members in good standing may make submissions to the Newsletter and Website.



**HelenaMineralSociety**

