



The Helena Mineral Society Newsletter



Gem, Mineral, and Geological Education and Experience

March 2009

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From The Editor:

As I am sitting here writing this, it is snowing. Is it ever going to quit?

This month I will talk about Tourmaline, March's gemstone. Tourmaline belongs to the Cyclosilicate group of minerals, a complex silicate of boron and aluminum. It comes in many colors. Schorl is black, dravite is commonly brownish in color, rubellite is pink to red, indicolite is blue

and there are many more pastel colors also available.

Tourmaline is 7 to 7 ½ in hardness, but is very brittle.

Tourmalines are found in pegmatites and alluvial deposits.

The most common tourmaline found in Montana is schorl. It is very abundant. Nice specimens can be found in the Delmo Lake area pegmatites. Schorl is common as an accessory mineral in metamorphic rocks such as gneiss and schists.

By heating and cooling or by rubbing a tourmaline crystal it will become electrically charged. It will then attract dust or small pieces of paper (pyro- and piezo-electricity).

The best colored crystals are coming from Minas Gerais and Pariba, Brazil. Afghanistan, Burma, Australia, Namibia, Sri Lanka, Russia and the USA also produce nice specimens.

**Helena Mineral Society
Officers for 2007-2008**

President: Andrew Horton
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Program Chairman:
John Richardson
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Newsletter Editor: Gary Parisi

HMS is going GREEN! If you would like to opt out of receiving a printed newsletter, and view it on-line at our website,

www.helenamineralsociety.org, contact James Bruce. The minutes of the meetings will not be available on line, so, if you would like to receive them via e-mail, let James or me know.

Grab bag filling for the Mineral Show to be held at Wayne Waters house, Sat. March 28, 9:00 AM, 5485 Sahara Court. Take Greenmeadow Drive to Forestvale Road, turn East to Sahara Court.

Wire wrapping class: March 21
Advanced class, contact Phyllis Smith at 475-3127 for details.

The mineral show is fast approaching. We have 25 confirmed dealers, two new ones this year. If you work the show or just come to see it, please park a block away or in the parking garage (it is free on nights and weekends) so customers have easier access.

The field trip to Montana Tunnels mine milling operation has been moved to April 25th. Meet at the Southeast corner of Dillard's parking lot by 8:30 AM.

A list of the HMS library will be posted on-line. The list includes books, VHS videos

and DVD,s. Contact Kathy Bruce to check out titles.

Next regular meeting will be Thursday, April 9 at 7:00 PM.

If you have any material that would go in grab bags, please bring with you to the grab bag filling.

Contact Wayne Waters if you are interested in participating in the History Fair. Call him at 458-4919.



Upper left: Looking at Indian Pictographs in Hellgate Canyon, May 2008

Upper Right: The pause that refreshes. Sauerbier garnet dig, July 2007

Above: Hogback Mtn fossil trip, August 2008

Above right: Whiskey Gulch, July 2008

Pictures for newsletter are needed, I am running out of new photos.

Meetings

The Helena Mineral Society meets at the Mountain West Bank located on Montana Avenue between Aspen and Poplar. Meetings are the second Thursday of every month at 7:00 pm. There is no regular meeting for the month of December. See you there! Friends, guests, and new members are always welcome

To place a classified ad, please see me in person at one of our regular meetings or you may e-mail me (Gary) with your information at gjparisi72@yahoo.com. Ad will run in the newsletter for that month only unless specifically requested to run longer.

Pictures and Articles Needed:

If you have a picture that you want to share, please send it to me, along with a short description of the activity, where it took place, and when, and I'll put it in the newsletter. If you'd like to share your field trip adventures with those members who are unable to attend, please feel free to contribute to the newsletter. Just e-mail me your experiences, and I'll make sure they're entered. Remember, this is your newsletter, and your contributions make it better.

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