



# The Helena Mineral Society Newsletter



Gem, Mineral, and Geological Education and Experience

October 2009

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## **From The Editor:**

**Rhodochrosite, from the Greek, *rhodo*, for “rose” and *chrosis*, “a coloring”, in reference to the rose-red hue.**

**Hardness is 3.5 to 4 and weight is 3.4 to 3.6, varying on composition. Chemistry is manganese carbonate.**

**Optical properties are translucent to transparent. It is usually some shade of red, from pale pink to deep pink and sometimes almost red. Rhodochrosite also occurs in grayish, brownish and greenish colors.**

**Fine transparent crystals are usually faceted and highly sought after by collectors. The largest faceted rhodochrosite weighs in at 59.65 carats and is in a private collection.**

**Rhodochrosite occurs in hydrothermal silver, lead, zinc and copper ore veins, and is usually associated with other carbonates and with fluorite, barite, quartz and sulfides.**

**The finest crystals occur in ore veins in Colorado. Fine pink translucent crystals occur in abundance in the Alice and other mines in Butte, MT. Other locations are Peru, Germany, Romania, Yugoslavia and Argentina.**

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

**President: Andrew Horton**  
227-2615 [andrew@mt.net](mailto:andrew@mt.net)

**Vice-president: Kathy Bruce**  
443-1175

**Secretary: Justine Jam**

**Membership Chairman**  
**James Bruce**  
443-1175 [JBruce4@aol.com](mailto:JBruce4@aol.com)

**Treasurer: Sherry Reynolds**  
933-8798

**Member-at-Large: Norm Smith**  
475-3127

**Historian: Phyllis Smith**

**Field Trip Chairman:**  
**Martin Landry**  
[mlandry121@yahoo.com](mailto:mlandry121@yahoo.com)  
431-8081

**Show Chairman: Gary Parisi**  
442-1226

**Program Chairman:**  
**John Richardson**  
422-0978

**Newsletter Editor: Gary Parisi**  
[gjparisi72@yahoo.com](mailto:gjparisi72@yahoo.com)

[www.helenamineralsociety.org](http://www.helenamineralsociety.org)

There will be a late field trip to the Alta Mine on October 24, weather permitting. Meet at Dillard's parking lot at 10:30 AM. A high clearance 4 wheel drive vehicle is a must. Minerals to collect- silver, galena and rhodochrosite.

Phyllis Smith will be having a wire wrapping class on October 24. Call for more details. 475-3127

A Program Chairperson is needed! If you would like to take on this position, call Andy Horton.

HMS's annual Christmas party will be held Dec. 12, 2009 at the Hannaford Steet Church. Dinner at 6:00 PM. This is a potluck, so, bring your favorite dish to share. Show up early to view and bid on silent auction items. Volunteers are needed to cook two turkeys. HMS will provide plates, cups, utensils and napkins. Live auction to follow dinner.

Contracts for the 2010 HMS show have been sent. Dates for the show are April 16, 17 and 18, 2010.

HMS has gone green. You can help by viewing the newsletter on-line at the HMS website, (address in the box to the left), and by giving James Bruce and the editor your email address so meeting minutes can be

emailed to you.

## Article by Ann Hudson

-1As members of the Helena Mineral Society many of us are collectors. Our collections take on many forms, from fossils to cabochons, research samples to polished slabs, faceted gems and mineral specimens. Since a common purpose of societies is to share knowledge and enthusiasm with like minded people, I thought it would be interesting to share our members mineral, fossil and rock collections in the newsletter. Since I'm relatively new and don't know many folks in the club, I'll start with myself:

I have been collecting rocks and minerals since I was a little kid. My grandfather liked to polish rocks so my earliest collections were comprised of colorful agates taped inside old See's candy boxes. Over the years my folks used to encourage my interest in minerals by stopping at all the roadside rock shops as we traveled around my home state of Colorado. On occasion we stopped to hunt for rocks including a stop at Ruby Mountain, located at the foot of the famous Mount Antero aquamarine locale. There I gleefully collected what I later learned were garnets in rhyolite. Probably the highlight of my early collecting years was a trip with my folks to the Denver mineral show where I acquired some better mineral specimens, many of which are still in my collection today.

There was a lapse in my involvement in minerals between childhood and college, but my interest resurfaced while studying geology at the University of Colorado. My masters thesis was on the Boulder County tungsten deposits so I spent many a happy day hanging around old mine dumps looking for ferberite, hubnerite and scheelite.... followed by many tedious months doing microprobe and fluid inclusion analysis. Despite an inherent scientific interest, I really just like pretty minerals! As luck would have it, my partner is from Tucson so I soon found myself at the Tucson shows in February....and boy, do they have pretty minerals!

The focus of my current collection is geometric form and aesthetics. The fun for me is to find great euhedral crystals on matrix or in association with other minerals. I recently purchased some nice glass cases and finally have my collection on display.

Let me take a moment to tell you about some of the more interesting specimens in my collection. I really love the hematites after magnetite from Patagonia. These other-worldly specimens remind me of Star Trek, probably a Klingon vessel (could I sound any more nerdy here?). I love fluorites because they are relatively cheap and are generally very showy. I've always had a thing for aquamarine and tourmaline and have some decent specimens. Quartz is a mineral that although chemically common, should never be overlooked in terms of great aesthetics. I scored some cool smoky alligator quartz from Minas Gerias, Brazil, but have been pining away for a gwindle. Unfortunately, my budget will probably never allow for that! My keystone sample is a foot long nearly flawless Chinese stibnite. The thing that makes the search for minerals from dealers such a challenge for me is my comparatively low budget, but that is also what makes it more fun!

I love going out and looking for minerals on-site, although I must admit I never have found anything like the stuff in shows. Still, I have found some interesting diopside, tremolite and magnetite in Colorado, some nice quartz and even a cool gypsum with included copper crystals. My dream is to be out rock hounding and break into some great pocket full of euhedral crystals of...well, of just about anything!

I am looking forward to getting to know other mineral enthusiasts. Please drop me a line if you would be willing to show me your collection for future articles, or would just like to go out for some good ol' fashioned rock hounding. Feel free to contact me at [wileyah@yahoo.com](mailto:wileyah@yahoo.com)

If you have an article or story about anything mineral related, send it to the editor and it will be published in the newsletter.

Next regular meeting is November 12, 2009

## 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](mailto: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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Helena Mineral Society, Inc.  
PO Box 736  
Helena, Montana 59624

