



The Helena Mineral Society Newsletter

June 2024



Gem, Mineral, and Geological Education and Experience

A Note from the President: Hope everyone had a fun and happy fourth! It looks like we are going to have a hot summer, unfortunately that means we will not be planning many field trips into the woods. Please put on your thinking caps and find places where we can go dig in the dirt. I hope to see everyone at the club's picnic July 13th. -- Cherri

Below: Some of the damage from highgradin' and misbehavin' on the Sally Ann Claim.



In this issue: CLAIM JUMPIN', HIGHGRADIN', & GENERAL MISBEHAVIN' – Duties of Helena Mineral Society Members, Road Trip Report: Haunted Ridge Druzy Quartz, Field Trip – Annual Garnet Dig, A Mostly Useful Checklist of Fieldtrip Items, Storage Cleanout, Bad Jokes, Books of Interest to the Montana Rockhound, and much more!

Helena Mineral Society Officers:

helenamineralsociety@gmail.com

President: Cherri 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

CLAIM JUMPIN', HIGHGRADIN', & GENERAL MISBEHAVIN'

An open letter to the individuals misbehaving on the Club Claims --

Dear Claim Jumpers, Highgraders, Interlopers, and extended stay campers who are breaking Helena Mineral Society Policy, the Duties of Members Contract they signed, Montana Law, Federal Law, and in all likelihood IRS reporting requirements...

Let's be clear...we know who you are, we have pictures, we have screen shots of your social media posts, and we have documentation of you selling material from the Club claims. Please cease and desist your unlawful activities immediately. Thank you.

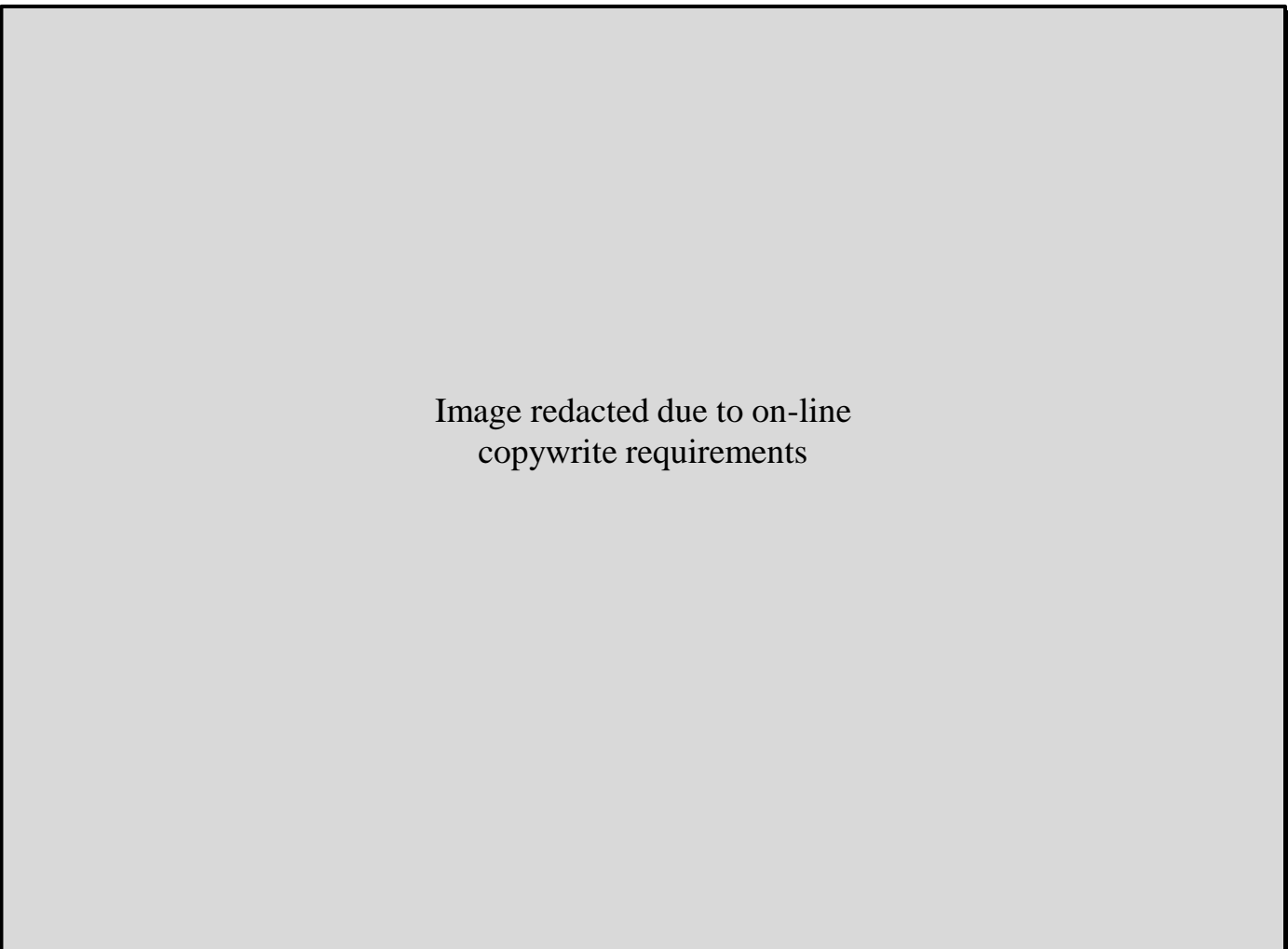
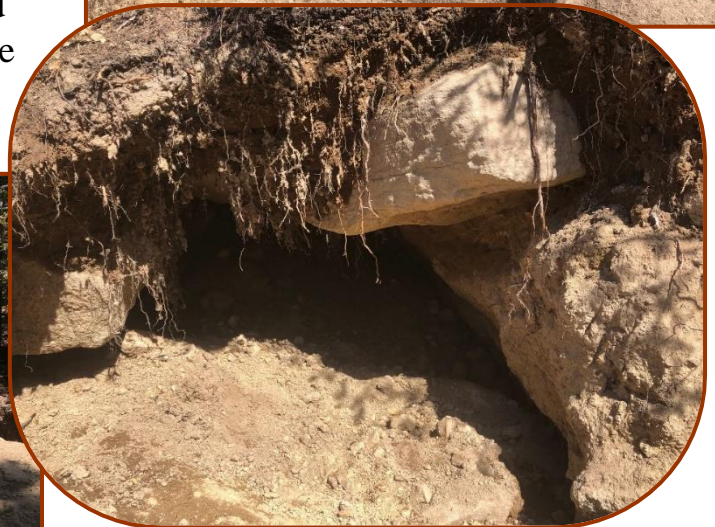


Image redacted due to on-line
copywrite requirements

Now that the fun legal notice and disclaimer is out of the way, let's get to this months article – What on earth are Claim Jumping and Highgrading? Living in Montana, we often hear these terms bandied about as a part of our history but rarely give thought to the possibility that these things are still happening today. In the pecking order of historic western criminals, claim jumpers ranked just below horse thieves and were treated accordingly – they were the lowest of the low. Although the West of the Gold Rush years was a lawless and disordered place, one thing was always true and enforced across the territories - the right of a miner to pinpoint a mining claim, file it, and hold it against all comers.

There are, fundamentally, two ways to violate this sacred right – producing and selling minerals or products from a claim held by someone else, and/or attempting to physically or legally seize land on which another party has filed a claim. The first option is known as highgrading, the second as claim jumping. And while these definitions still stand, the terms are now completely intertwined in modern jurisprudence. Both are as illegal today as they were during the founding days of our state. In addition to those two specific crimes, any and all of the following can be added to the charges depending which state you are in – Trespass, Mineral Trespass, Wrongful Abstraction of Ore by Trespass Workings, Wrongful Working of Minerals, Unauthorized Use, Wrongful Interference with Personal Property, Wrongful Conversion, Trespass and Conversion, and Willful Trespass. Another part of the fun legal wrangling is the environmental impact. Fines can be added to any or all of these charges if violations of state or federal environmental or mining laws are discovered during the investigation. And just to add insult to injury – if you used your beloved truck to get to the site or haul your ill-gotten wealth away it can be confiscated as part of the proceedings. And if you really want to have serious fun, sell the illegally acquired specimens and fail to report the income to the IRS...that is tax evasion.

In Montana there are a number of “Codes” that specifically reference these activities. Updated in 2023, Title 82 (Minerals, Oil, and Gas), Chapter 2 (Mining), Part 1 addresses the Filing of False Mining Claims. I won’t bore you with all the legal wrangling but cut to the chase which states “...shall be punished by imprisonment in the state prison for not more than 5 years, by a fine of not more than \$5,000, or by both.” Interestingly, because the trespassing add-on is actually a federal (read Bureau of Land Management or BLM) crime the monetary punishment is harsher – up to \$100,000 fine and up to 1 year in jail.



Left and Above: More of the damage from highgradin’ and misbehavin’ on the Sally Ann Claim.

Duties of Members as they pertain to claim jumpin', highgradin', & general misbehavin'.
All individuals issued a membership card, whether a single membership or under a family membership are responsible for following these rules. Members who invite guests to a claim or on a sponsored fieldtrip are responsible for the guests behavior.

Duties of Members

- a) It shall be the duty of each member to endeavor to attend each meeting of the Helena Mineral Society, Inc., to abide by the majority vote of the members and the decisions of the Board of Directors as expressed in Article III of the Articles of Incorporation.
- b) A member will respect the privacy of private property and will not enter on such property to collect specimens without the permission of the owner.
- c) A member will observe all rules and regulation applying to Federal and State lands when entering thereon to collect specimens.
- d) A member will not present himself or herself as acting for the Helena Mineral Society, Inc., unless so authorized.
- e) A member or guest shall not "undercut" or "tunnel" in excess of **one-foot from the vertical face** while attempting to recover any mineral or specimen on any Helena Mineral Society, Inc., claim or property.
- f) A member may not dig on any of the Helena Mineral Society, Inc., claims more than **three (3) consecutive days, nor more than a total of ten (10) days on any one claim during the calendar year.** A day is herein defined as the time beginning at sunrise and ending at sunset, or any portion thereof. There will be **no prospecting** between the hours of sunset to sunrise and/or the use of any artificial light. All motor driven equipment is strictly prohibited on any and all Helena Mineral Society, Inc., claims with the exception being for remediation and maintenance only.
- g) A member family may be accompanied by no more than one (1) non-member guest family while digging on the Helena Mineral Society, Inc., claims. Exceptions to this paragraph shall be by the approval of the Board of Directors. The Helena Mineral Society, Inc., claims presently consist of: The sapphire claims (Miss Beverly #1, Miss Beverly #2 & Blue Star) and the Crystal claim on Sally Ann Creek.
- h) No gem or mineral found on any Helena Mineral Society, Inc., claim may be sold in any commercial manner.
- i) A member on any Helena Mineral Society, Inc., claim shall have on his/her person a current membership card and shall display the same to any other member upon request.

Violations of these Duties and/or Rules shall be reviewed by the Board of Directors and will be cause for the withdrawal of membership of the violating member by the Helena Mineral Society, Inc.



Field Trip! Field Trip! Field Trip!



Proposed Field Trip Schedule for 2024

1. July 20, 2024 – Copper City near Wheat Montana, Toston Dam area (Fossils)
2. August 10, 2024 – Crystal Park (Quartz crystals)
3. Mining Museum and Ringing Rocks, Butte: Date TBD
4. 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.

Mark your Calendars!

REMINDER: There is no membership meeting in July...Please join us at the Club Picnic!

Club Picnic will be Saturday, July 13, 2024 at the large Fairground Pavilion

Next Club Meeting – August 15, 2024, 7pm at 720 Faw Rd

CHRISTMAS PARTY – December 7, 2024 at Fortress of Joy

CLUB PICNIC & AUCTION



Saturday July 13th at noon, we will be holding the annual Society picnic at the large pavilion at the Fairgrounds. Like previous years, this will be a potluck - Please help to make it a great picnic by bringing any of the following: lettuce, sliced tomatoes, sliced onion, ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise, pickles, bread, rolls, desserts, salads, and whatever else you love to have with sandwiches! The Society will provide lunch meats and cheeses. We will also hold a silent auction.

ON THE NEXT PAGE...COLLECTING CHECKLIST

An exhaustive, handy, printable checklist for when you are legally and politely collecting rocks, minerals, and fossils on the Club Claims or any of the hundreds of fabulous locations around our state. This covers a very wide variety of collecting venues – not everything on this list is required for every location. Research locations then adapt it for the site you are headed to. (Plagiarized partly from Reggie Rose, CRMS/FOM-Midwest)

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SAFETY THOUGHT – It is always better to collect with a partner or in a group but always, always leave your planned itinerary, collecting location, and estimated return time with a family member or trusted friend!

A Rockhounds Checklist of Mostly Useful Items for a Collecting Daytrip

☐ HARDWARE

- ☐ Rock Hammer
- ☐ Stone Chisels
- ☐ Wedges
- ☐ Pry/Crowbar – large prying
- ☐ Flat Screwdriver – small prying
- ☐ Shovel – full sized
- ☐ Shovel – small
- ☐ Screens/Sifter
- ☐ Spray Bottle
- ☐ Water Jugs (filled) for rinsing rocks
- ☐ Whisk Broom – hand size
- ☐ Brush/Poly Scrubber
- ☐ Storage, Large – crates/flats
- ☐ Containers, Small – egg cartons, pill bottles, etc.
- ☐ Sharpie/Marking Pen for Labeling
- ☐ Tweezers/Chopsticks
- ☐ Pocket Knife/Leatherman
- ☐ Machete
- ☐ Plastic wrap
- ☐ Bubble Wrap/Padding
- ☐ Paper Towels/Newspaper

☐ SOFTWARE

- ☐ Backpack
- ☐ First Aid Kit
- ☐ Waterproof Pouch/Ziplock Bags
- ☐ Toilet Paper
- ☐ Insect Repellent
- ☐ Anti-Itch cream/Calamine Lotion
- ☐ Sting Kit
- ☐ Sunscreen
- ☐ Sunglasses
- ☐ Hat – sun
- ☐ Hat - warm
- ☐ Hardhat – ANSI Z89.1 Standard
- ☐ Sturdy, Full-length Pants
- ☐ Protective Long-Sleeve Shirt
- ☐ Rain Gear – Jacket/poncho/pants
- ☐ Fleece/Warm Layers
- ☐ Reflective Safety Vest
- ☐ Signaling Device – Mirror/Whistle/Flares
- ☐ Leather/Work Gloves
- ☐ Scarf/Gator
- ☐ Safety Glasses

- ☐ Sturdy Boots – some locations require steel toed
- ☐ Knee Pads
- ☐ Shin Guards
- ☐ Kneeling Pad/Sit Pad
- ☐ Ear Plugs
- ☐ Towel
- ☐ Washcloth
- ☐ Soap
- ☐ Hand Sanitizer
- ☐ Cleaning Wipes
- ☐ Spare Eyeglasses/Contact Lenses
- ☐ Headlamp
- ☐ UV Light

☐ CAR

- ☐ Registration/Insurance
- ☐ Directions
- ☐ Roadmaps/Atlas/Gazetteer
- ☐ GPS
- ☐ Flashlight
- ☐ Extra Batteries
- ☐ Spare Key/Fob
- ☐ Roadside Assistance Card/Info
- ☐ Blanket/Tarp
- ☐ Tire Chocks

☐ PICNIC

- ☐ Drinking Water
- ☐ Thermos
- ☐ Cooler/Ice Packs
- ☐ Food/Snacks
- ☐ Can Opener
- ☐ Napkins/Paper Towels
- ☐ Trash Bags
- ☐ Utensils

☐ MISCELLANEOUS

- ☐ For the club claims – BRING YOUR MEMBERSHIP CARD!
- ☐ MSHA Certificate (if required)
- ☐ Cell Phone & Cell Phone Charger
- ☐ Camera
- ☐ Wallet/Purse
- ☐ Notebook
- ☐ Pen/Pencil
- ☐ More Drinking Water



Cadet, Missouri & Magnet Cove, Arkansas

Pictures courtesy of Kim Peterson

Text plagiarized from Haunted Ridge pamphlet and Kim's Club talk



At the June 13, 2024 Membership meeting, Kim Peterson presented on her recent trip to Haunted Ridge Rocks for Druzy Quartz near Cadet, Missouri, and Brookite with Smoky Quartz near Magnet Cove, Arkansas. Along with her daughter and grandkids they collected at several sites within the boundaries of the Haunted Ridge Druzy Quartz Mine. The collecting was tons of fun but the seven hours of power washing that followed was perhaps not quite as fascinating. That said the results were fabulous – several distinct colorations can be found at different locations –

the brown includes limonite and hematite, and the yellow is likely citrine but, at the mine, is referred to as “root beer” Quartz. The crystals are found on an agate base.

Anyone interested in collecting at Haunted Ridge can contact the owners:
Greg (314-401-9836)
or
Judy (573-631-1886).





While seeking Brookite in Arkansas, Kim met up with Bryan Major, The Crystal Collector, and his adorable pooch, Matrix. Her parents joined the fun, helping with the excavations. Her father gets the “good sport” award as it should be noted that he is not a fan of either heat or rocks (evidence of his delight is provided in the photos). The crystals come in very interesting formations but getting the evil red clay off of the specimens is quite a challenge. The specimens pictured are partially cleaned.



Notes from the June Club Meeting...

- Kim Peterson presented on her recent road trip to collect in Missouri and Arkansas.
- Discussion was held regarding paying fees and reimbursements to speakers who travel to present at club meetings. Curt provided a detailed sheet explaining the proposal. After in depth discussion the members voted to accept the proposal. The Club is hoping to bring in special speakers roughly three or four times per year to augment the speakers available locally.
- UV lights have been ordered. They will be available for purchase (\$20) at the picnic
- An honorarium for active committee leads and board members was discussed and passed – these individuals will receive one free year of membership at whatever level they already are signed up for.
- The Club was offered the opportunity to purchase 55 gallon drums of Yogo Sapphire scraps. The members voted to explore purchasing two barrels of the material considering it a unique opportunity that should not be passed up. Gene will follow up regarding the purchase.
- Extensive discussion was held regarding what to do with the extra funds the Club has saved. Per the membership votes –
 - The scholarship at Montana Tech in Butte will be raised to \$3,000 per year.
 - The scholarship for Montana Learning Center will be raised to \$4,000 per year.
 - Work has begun on the format for the teacher mini-grants (\$500 to \$3,000). Details will be presented at a future membership meeting
- A reminder – there is no membership meeting in July because of the Club Picnic July 13th.
- **IMPORTANT NOTE** – If you still have yellow mineral society vests from the mineral show or other volunteer activities please return them to the club. The newly purchased vests are shared assets within the club and cannot be kept by individual members. If you would like to have one specifically for your exclusive use we can discuss another purchase of the vests using private funds at a future membership meeting.



SUMMER 2024

Beyond the Big Sky

PUBLIC OBSERVING NIGHTS

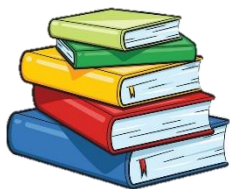
MONTHLY FROM
JUNE-AUGUST

START TIMES BASED ON SUNSET
OBSERVING IS WEATHER DEPENDENT

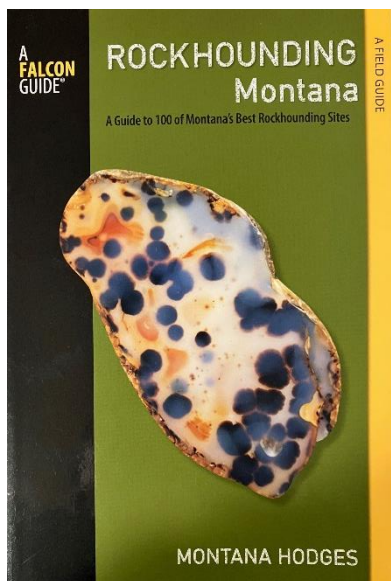
COST: \$25 ADULTS
\$15 KIDS

GUEST SPEAKER FOLLOWED BY OBSERVING
12 YEARS OR OLDER • SPACE IS LIMITED

LEARN MORE OR SIGN UP AT MONTANALEARNING.ORG

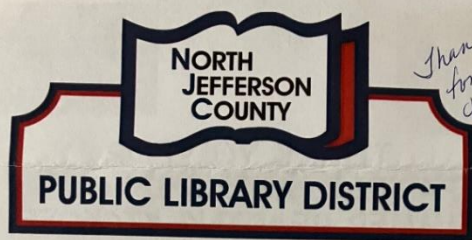


Books of interest to the Montana Rockhound



Most recently updated in 2015, Falcon Guides' Rockhounding Montana is a foundational part of any resource collection on public and commercial sites to collect in our state. There are several older editions – some site information has changed as well as some access information. Please be sure you confirm your information before you set out. The guide also describes numerous little-known areas. For the novice it provides handy “how to’s” for collecting specimens and includes maps and directions to each location. For the accomplished rockhound it can provide ideas for yet another fabulous weekend digging for treasures – it contains 100 localities. For those inclined to venture further afield, Falcon’s Rockhounding Guides are available for 20 states and districts.

Below – Thank you note received from the North Jefferson County Library for our help with their Summer Reading Kickoff Event. Community engagement and educational outreach about rocks, minerals, fossils, and geology are a fundamental part of our Club’s mission.



*Thank you
for donating
the books as
well as
participating
in our
event.*

THANK

THANK YOU FOR
BEING PART OF
OUR EVENT

YOU



**THANK YOU FOR
PARTICIPATING IN OUR
SUMMER READING KICKOFF.**

**EVERYONE ENJOYED
LEARNING ABOUT THE
ACTIVITIES YOU OFFER.**

**THE KIDS BECAME EXCITED
ABOUT BIRDS, CLIMBING,
SCIENCE, ROCKS, SPACE
AND MORE.**

**THANK YOU FROM THE
NORTH JEFFERSON COUNTY
LIBRARIES**



Field Trip! – The Annual Garnet Hunt



On Sunday, June 23, 2024 an intrepid group of Mineral Society members and friends set out from Helena to work the garnet site near Ruby Reservoir the Club has kindly been granted access to for a number of years. Despite the heat, much fun was had by all who came out and the paydirt was certainly piling up. For those who went on this years trip (or folks who went on previous trips)... once you have selected the specimens you wish to keep yourself, please donate your remaining paydirt to the Club for use in the Garnet Dig setup during the Mineral Show and other outreach events. You do not need to fully sort it – several members have jigs to do that work.

~ ~ ~

Inset photo shows the very nice sized garnet that Cherri found – it's the largest she has ever found at the site.



Cleanin', Arrangin', and General Organizin'

A huge thank you to all who worked on the storage units this past weekend. There is always sorting to be done and, in addition, the collection the Club recently acquired from Kalispell needed to be cleaned and sorted. Given how the containers seem to multiply it makes this editor wonder exactly what the fossils are doing while the doors are locked.



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

The Club Picnic replaces our July membership meeting.

Friends, guests, and new members
are always welcome!



You might be a fossil hound if you laugh at these...



Paleontologists are celebrating the
finding of the largest dinosaur tibia in
recorded history.
It's a real shin-dig!

What do you call a dinosaur
with an extensive vocabulary?
A thesaurus

How do paleontologists ensure their
work is environmentally friendly?
They use recycled dinosaurs!

How does a paleontologist
make coffee? With a little bit of
sedimentary brew!

Why were the paleontologists kissing?
They were carbon dating

Helena Mineral Society Contact Information

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

General Information and Questions: helenamineralsociety@gmail.com

Gem and Mineral Show: HelenaMineralShow@gmail.com

Newsletter Submissions: HelenaMineralSocietyNewsletter@yahoo.com

Website Submissions: 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

