

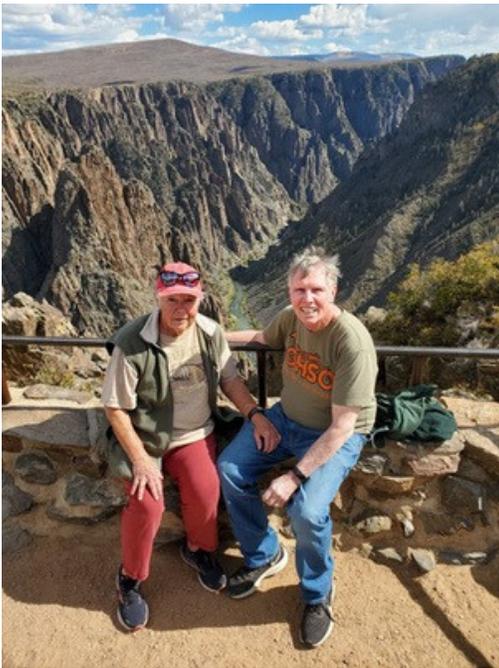
# CENTRAL OREGON ROCK COLLECTORS



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## Mike and Marty Betsch, M&M

by Tonia Smith, July 2023



*This is an interview Tonia did with Mike and Marty (M&M) in our CORC Newsletter July 2023. We are reprinting it in honor of Marty's memory.*

Mike grew up in Great Falls, Montana before entering the US Army in 1965 and served in Vietnam in the mid 1960's. He then transferred to Seattle, Washington.

Marty served in the United States Army Nurse Corps. She served during Vietnam also, but stayed stateside. She was stationed at Ft. Sam Houston, a burn center. Then transferred to the Presidio in San Francisco, where she worked in the orthopedics center. Then she went to Ft. Lewis in Washington state.

The soldiers from Vietnam would be sent to a field hospital, then a military hospital in Japan, then to one of the hospitals in the states, which is when Marty helped take care of them.

While in Ft. Lewis she ran out "circle beds". Circle beds were exactly what they name implies, circles. They allowed you to move the patient from his front side to laying straight up and down. One day her Master Sergeant noticed she was upset and asked what he could do. She told him they were out of beds. When Marty showed up for work the next day she found a new circle! The Master Sergeant had come through.

Of their military experiences, they say it was “the good, the bad and the ugly”. Marty said, while often incredibly sad, it was the best experience of her life.

Mike and Marty met in Seattle while Marty was going to the University of Washington. They married in 1970 after the war was over. They moved to Central Oregon from Walla Walla, Washington, where Mike was a radio broadcaster and Marty worked for the VA. It was April 10, 1975. Back when Bend had just under 18,000 people and the city limits was Robberson Ford. Every hunting season the main street would be clogged up with hunters.

Mike was a radio broadcaster at KBND in Bend from 1975-1981. He had a morning radio show called “Having an Affair with Blare”, they wouldn't let him use Betsch over the radio back then. Marty worked at the hospital up on the hill in Bend before St. Charles was built “out in the middle of nowhere”. A Double Tree hotel is there now. They have a lot of stories of Bend over the years.

M&M got into rock hounding when Mike retired in 2001. They enjoyed all the rock shops in the area. They had seen a lot of thunder eggs over the years and were interested in them. Terri Mills invited Mike to go to Richardson's Rock Ranch with her. From there they were hooked. They bought a 10" rock saw and kept accumulating equipment, and of course, rocks. From then on, they enjoyed going to garage sales and finding saws and other equipment.

While Terri Mills got them started, Al and Sue Leibetrau took them the rest of the way. About 20 years ago, they went to Kanuck's rock shop and asked them about a rock club. They were given Sue's number. They called and she said it was about time to get the club started again. A year later, she called them and invited them to a party at Paul Asman's. Mike went, as Marty was out of town. The next one Marty went too. Paul's “parties” were more than a mere party. They were a teaching experience. One party they learned to wire wrap, another how to make cabs. The second party M&M went to, Paul had saws running. One guy lifted the lid on a saw and ended up with oil all over him. What a great learning experience! Then Al and Sue Leibetrau got M&M excited about fluorescent minerals...once they saw the Leibetrau's museum quality collection.

The club started meeting in Redmond, in a little room in the back of Ray's Market once a month, then moved to other locations as the club grew.

They decided on Redmond meeting places as it was central to all members of Central Oregon.

Some of the initial members were Dale and Debbie Simon, Jerry and Stephanie Brown, Jan and Jules Wetzel, Al and Sue, Paul, and Roger and Jan Whiteman.

Al was the treasurer and used his own bank account. Jerry, Stephanie and Sue did the programs. Jules took them on field trips. This was back when Madras and Prineville had their rock shows combined.

One of the early field trips Jules took them to what was the Buchanan Ranch. They were used to only 2-3 vehicles showing up but several clubs went to the Buchanan Ranch the same day. About 50 vehicles showed up so they all had to jump in with someone else. M&M rode in the back of someone's truck. Marty got the biggest score that day...a 6 inch, pink thunder egg. It even fluoresces under UV light.

The club is made up of "wonderful people, and each with different talents". Don Ross could fix anything. He took them gold panning once in a freezing river. Larry McDonald had a shop at his place in Crooked River Ranch where he made his own lapidary equipment. They taught M&M to always "label it", what and where it is found. A gemologist rented a car seating about 15 people and took them around the area showing them the gemology. One member was a website creator and said no one would find the club as there was no website. She created the first club website and helped the club grow exponentially to where we are now...one of the largest rocks clubs in the state. Today the club is made up of hundreds of many wonderful talented people of all age groups. M&M said there has always been a "wealth of knowledge within the club. There is always someone you can ask for help."

M&M love cutting and polishing Arizona Rainbow Petrified wood and their favorite rocks are Oregon home grown Thundereggs. Hampton Petrified wood and obsidian from Glass Buttes are ranked highly too. Like all rock hounders they started with nary a rock to their name and now their yard is FULL of rocks. If only fluorescent rocks were as easy to find...

*We will miss you Marty!*



Mike and Marty are Lifetime Honorary Members of CORC

# Our Next Club Meeting

March 18, 2026

We are looking forward to exciting adventures on our field trips this year, including exploring new places and revisiting old favorites.

Our upcoming meetings will feature speakers who are sure to spark your curiosity and broaden your understanding.

To join CORC or renew your membership please visit  
([corockcollectors.com](http://corockcollectors.com))

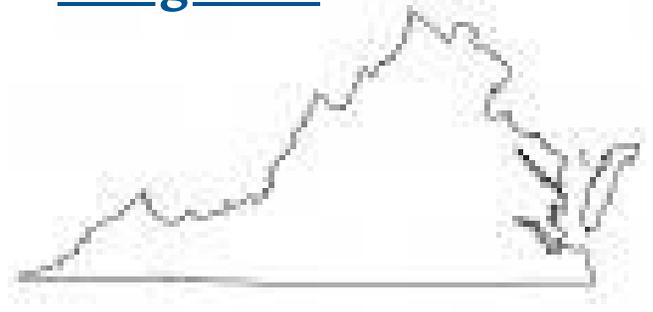


# STATE BY STATE

## ROCKS, GEMS,

## MINERALS

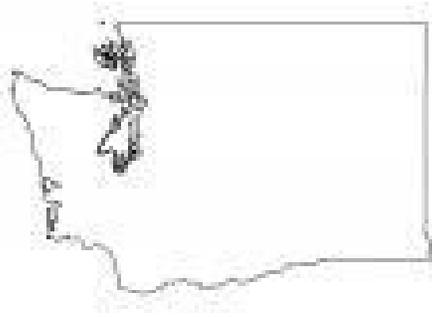
### Virginia



State Rock: Nelsonite



Nelsonite refers to two distinct things: a unique igneous rock rich in ilmenite and apatite, found in Virginia and designated its state rock, and a brand of high-performance wood stabilizer used to protect wood from moisture and warping. The rock is a valuable source of titanium, while the commercial product penetrates wood to create a durable, moisture-resistant finish, used in furniture, millwork, and more.



### Washington

State Gem: Petrified Wood

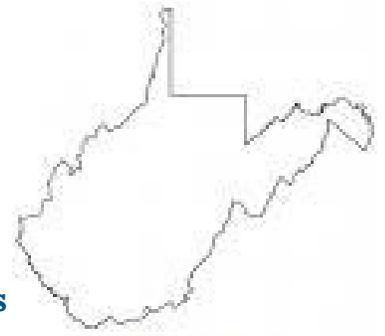
Petrified wood is fossilized wood where organic material is replaced by minerals (like silica, agate, opal) over millions of years, turning it into stone while preserving intricate cellular structures, often with vibrant colors from impurities like iron or manganese, and found globally in places like Petrified Forest National Park. This permineralization process requires rapid burial in sediment (like mud or volcanic ash) to cut off oxygen, preventing decay, allowing mineral-rich water to seep in and crystallize, creating detailed stone replicas of the original wood.



# West Virginia

## State Gem: Fossil Coral

A coral fossil is the preserved, mineralized skeleton of an ancient coral, formed when the hard calcium carbonate structure of the coral is replaced by minerals over millions of years, capturing its intricate honeycomb or radial patterns in rock, commonly found in sedimentary rocks like limestone from periods like the Silurian or Devonian, and can range from common fragments to rare, gemstone-like agatized forms.



## State Rock: Bituminous Coal



Bituminous coal, or "soft coal," is a widely used, medium-rank black coal with high heat value, used for electricity generation and steelmaking, characterized by a shiny luster, layered texture, and 45-86% carbon content. Formed from lignite under heat and pressure, it's abundant, black to dark brown, and contains bitumen, making it versatile but also releasing sulfur dioxide when burned.

# Wisconsin

## State Mineral: Galena

Galena is the primary ore of lead, a shiny, dense, gray sulfide mineral (PbS) that forms cubic crystals, prized since ancient times for its lead and often significant silver content, used in batteries, paints, and historically in early radios, requiring careful handling due to lead toxicity. It's also a famous historic town in Illinois, known for its well-preserved 19th-century architecture, particularly associated with Ulysses S. Grant.



## State Rock: Red Granite

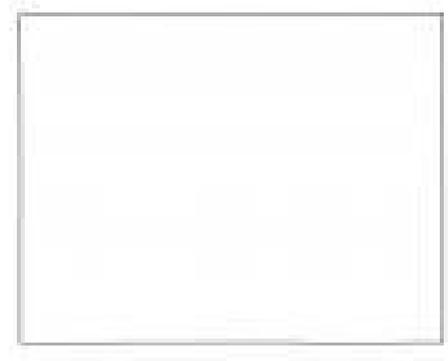


Red granite is a striking igneous rock prized for its vibrant red, pink, or reddish-brown hues, derived from high potassium feldspar or iron oxide content, used for durable and luxurious countertops, flooring, and decorative aggregates in landscaping, offering strength and heat resistance for kitchens and high-end projects.

## Wyoming

### State Gemstone: Jade

Jade is a precious gemstone, an umbrella term for two distinct minerals, nephrite and jadeite, revered for millennia, especially in China, symbolizing wisdom, purity, and longevity, used for tools, ornaments, and ritual objects, and appearing in various colors, though famously green. It also refers to the English singer Jade Thirlwall (from Little Mix) and the JADE software platform for agent systems.



### *References:*

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[thegemlibrary.com](http://thegemlibrary.com) [duckduckgo.com](http://duckduckgo.com) [sciway.net](http://sciway.net)

# ANNOUNCEMENTS



**Come Visit the Garden &  
Gift Shop**

**Museum/Garden/Gift Shop Hours:  
Winter Hours  
Friday, Saturday, Sunday 10-3**

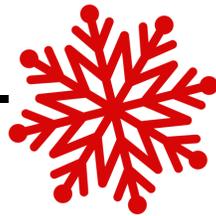
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(541) 954-8234**



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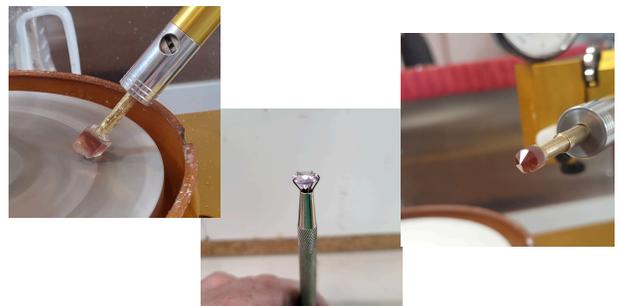


**Faceting and Cabbing**

**Dale B. Barrett, lives in Redmond, is  
offering to cut and facet stones for CORC  
members at a very affordable price.**

**Contact Dale @ 541-694-0325  
or**

**Email: Commandchief68@gmail.com**



## 2025 CORC Board Members

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## MEMBERSHIP

**Renew ONLINE at the  
CORC website**  
(corockcollectors.com)

**Renew by MAIL or IN PERSON.**  
Print the membership form from the CORC  
website and mail it to:  
Central Oregon Rock Collectors (CORC)  
4817 SW Volcano Ave  
Redmond, OR 97756  
or bring it to the next meeting or field trip.

**Annual membership dues are:**

\$20 for individuals,  
\$25 for household  
and \$5 for juniors.

(Note: Junior memberships are for minors  
who are accompanied by a club member  
from a different household.  
e.g. Grandparents, aunts, uncles)



### Contact Us

**Email:** corc.rocks@gmail.com

**Mailing Address:**

4817 SW Volcano Ave  
Redmond, OR 97756

**Meeting Address:** 3800 SE  
Airport Way, Bldg 3, "The Annex",  
Redmond, OR 97756