

Place: **Union Hall**
Meyers Street
Next to Campus Life
In Kettle Falls



Time: 7:00 PM
Third Tuesday
Each Month
(Jan.-Nov.)

The Panorama Prospector

September 2006

Panorama Gem and Mineral Club **Minutes for August 15, 2006** Luci Bristow

Johnie called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Vanita Novak greeted everyone and asked for volunteers for cookies and juice for next meeting. Our next meeting will be our 10th anniversary – so there is no need for cookies since we will have a cake to celebrate that event. Bill Allen volunteered to bring the juice. Luci passed out new nametags. If you did not get one, please contact her for one. Sylvia Allen gave the Treasurer's report. As of July 30 the bank balance was \$5,551.77. General Fund \$5,024.26; Scholarship Fund: \$527.51. The drawing brought in \$177.00 with the Silent Auction bringing \$14.35. We paid out \$1,000.00 in scholarships. We sold 12 tickets for the new drawing (sapphire gravel): \$12.00.

Johnie stated that Diane Lentz couldn't be our show chairman for next year due to many commitments.

Johnie and others moved our club supplies from Keith and Ann's residence to Johnie's new shop. Keith and Ann generously donated the sandwich board signs to the club. Thanks! Keith and Ann.

September 8 and 9 will be the POW WOW Club's trek to the Teanaway Area. If you would like to attend this event, please contact Chuck Prentice.

There was a general consensus that we, as a club, would not venture to Lolo Pass over the Labor Day weekend. Bob Bristow will lead a group to Jim Creek on Labor Day, September 4. He has requested that we meet in Ione at the Lion's Club Train Station at 10:00 AM.

Rex talked about soapstone. He carved an orca out of it, and was it cute! Fran Davis gave us information on caps for the club. There are several options. It was tabled until the next meeting.

Bill and Sylvia Allen showed a video on the Crazy Horse Memorial in North Dakota. It is an educational and cultural center. The video was titled "Dynamite and Dreams". It was a spectacular video. The center accepts only private donations. The inscription at the center reads, "My land is where my people lay buried." Crazy Horse. (End 9:00 PM)

Field trip to Madras Oregon **July of 2006**

By Ginger and Johnie Pitman

Ginger and I decided early this year that we would attend the "All Rockhounds POW WOW Club of America" annual show and field trips in Madras, Oregon. They have had their show at the Jefferson County Fair Grounds for over 50 years, and this one was well attended by club members. Chuck Prentice has been the president of that club for the last two years.



We left Colville on Friday June 23rd and took the scenic route by way of Seattle to visit our daughter and watch her last football game of the season, she plays linebacker and fullback for the Seattle Majestics. We left her house Sunday evening and drove back to Denny Creek Campground so that we would be ready to hike into Rock Hound Gulch early Monday morning. When we got to the campground it was full and so was the parking lot at the trailhead, seems as though everyone was trying to beat the heat by going to the mountains. Since it was Sunday some started to leave and by dark there were plenty of places to camp.

Denny Creek is located about 4 miles down the west side of Snoqualmie Pass and flows under the west bound lane of I-90. The hike into Rock Hound Gulch is about 2 miles on a very good trail until you get to a bridge that crosses the creek, that's where you leave the trail and bush whack for about a quarter of a mile staying on the east side of the creek. We were

disappointed when we got into the gulch because someone had already been there and didn't leave much for us to find. We did find a few specimens of grossular garnets (orange – brown) with calcite crystals (white) and some of them also had epidote crystals (green). The less you find the less there is to pack out, so our packs weren't very heavy on the back to camp, but we had a good day and stayed cool.

Then it was on to Madras, we arrived at the fair grounds about 2 PM on Tuesday and went to the main building to check in and get a camping spot. Of the 10 people in the room was Mike Latapie and one was Chuck Prentice, so we knew right away that we were in the right place and among friends. The grounds were busy with some thirty five dealers getting set up and club members arriving and getting ready for the field trips that start at 8 AM sharp.



Wednesday morning 8AM there were 65 to 70 vehicles lined up to caravan out to the Marston ranch to collect jasper. The collecting site is only maybe 2 acres, and consists of a pit where Mr. Marston uses a large front end loader to bring the loose rock and dirt out of the pit and spreads it on level ground and then it is a free for all to find the jasper. The large rocks (200 -300 pounds) seem to have the best variety of colors which is a mix of red, green, yellow, and white. There were plenty of smaller rocks that had good color, or you could break the big ones down to a size that could be handled and easier on the pocket book. Mike Latapie found a very nice piece and broke off a piece for himself and then he helped me break the rest into a 38 pounder that I took and a 20 pounder that was taken by someone else, thanks Mike. It was so easy collecting that it was very tempting to take more than the budget would allow, and this was only the first day and there are four more days. All rocks are \$1/pound. Ginger and I, and Mike had all that we wanted by noon so on the way back to Madras, Mike and I stopped at Richardson's ranch and spent the rest of the day digging in their thunderegg beds. We didn't find a place to dig at the "blue bed" so we went to the "moss bed" where my son and I had good luck last year. Then we went to the new bed that they call the "pony ridge bed" and there were thundereggs every where and easy to dig. In the "red bed", again, it was easy to dig and lots of eggs. Our buckets were full and our

wallets empty by the time we left Richardson's but it is always fun to look around their shop. It had been a very good day. At 7 PM a gospel band played and sang at the stage area, and was very enjoyable.



Some time in the night Wednesday night it started to rain and rained until about 2 PM. In central Oregon every drop of rain is needed but the roads get very muddy so the field trip for Thursday was canceled. We spent the day looking through the dealer's booths and talking to others about their finds. That evening at 7 PM on the stage at the fair grounds was a band that played blue grass, western and most of the older folk songs.



Friday morning 8 AM, with the same number of vehicles, maybe more, only this time we were going to Joe McDonald's ranch to look for thundereggs and petrified wood, and maybe some jasper. The road into this ranch is 8 miles of not very good dirt and dust even after yesterday's rain. At about mile 7 the area looked familiar, just across the fence were the "moss bed" and the "red bed" of Richardson's ranch. At this place you park under or behind the juniper trees then walk any direction to see what you find. You know me I like to go in a different direction and further than others, well, I didn't find much until I got back to where I could hear the thump and thud of hammers. I was a half mile from the parking area and down in a

fairly deep draw that was only about 2 feet wide at the bottom, when I found a large thunderegg. I decided I would carry it out if it would fit in my back pack, so stretching the pack to the limit it just slipped in. On the way up the draw I came across the area where several people were digging geodes that had some red agate in them but I couldn't stop with the load on my back. I had a sore spot in the middle of my back for a week from the 37 pounds of round rock pushing on my boney spine. Ginger did the smart thing and stayed around the parking area long enough to find out where to go and how to get there. They ran a shuttle (van) up to the best place to get petrified wood, about 1 mile, and some nice pieces were found.



At lunch time the McDonald family served free hamburgers, hot dogs and cold drinks. Yep! Right out there under the juniper trees. After lunch I went back down the draw and dug some of those geodes with the red agate but mine only had a pink band in the agate. An older fellow and his grandson and I were still digging and drinking cokes when everyone else had left. He wanted us to drink those pop so he didn't have to carry them back up the draw. I'm not much for warm cokes, but it was near 100 degrees so they tasted pretty good.

Friday evening when we got back to the fairgrounds we met Jan King and after showering, spent a couple of enjoyable hours going over old times. Jan was our clubs first secretary. Friday at 7 PM there was another band on stage.

Saturday morning was the same as other mornings, but a different line up, at 8 AM due to the rain out on Thursday, there was a choice of two ranches. We chose to go to Darrel Friend's ranch first, which was for thundereggs, then about noon we went to Alex McDonald's ranch for petrified wood. The digging area at the Friend's ranch was about 30 – 40 yards long and 8 – 10 feet deep, and had been worked with a cat to make easy access. Thundereggs were

every where in piles and in drums, or you could dig them from the bank. These eggs are different from most; in that most of them are hollow and the agate inside was botryoidal (looks like bubbles). They were also small; the largest ones are 3 – 4 inches in diameter.

We went to Alex McDonald's ranch about noon. When you get to the digging area the first thing you see are large pieces of petrified wood scattered around in the area where everyone was parked. About a hundred yards over the side of the hill, Mr. McDonald had a large backhoe that he used to dig in the pits then we could go in and look for pieces to keep. There was a lot of beautiful wood but some was not very well agatized so it wouldn't take a good polish. There was one piece that was about 10 feet long and 5 feet in diameter, we left that one for someone else.

Saturday night was the club auction to raise money to help cover expenses for the show. There were some very nice pieces, next time we will save some money for that part of the show.

Loaded with rocks and many good memories we headed for home on Sunday morning even if there was one more field trip. It was headed for Och's ranch for more thundereggs and jasper. On our way home, being that it was Sunday and they wouldn't be working, we stopped by the diatomaceous earth quarry south of George, Washington. They had covered the piles of pretty opal so we didn't get any opal but did get some diatomaceous earth.

We would recommend the Madras POW WOW for all rockhousers; the digging is easy, the price is right. The grass field where we parked is \$20/stay; there are good showers, an RV dump and a very nice RV Park right next door. Any kind of camping is OK. Mike's teardrop camper was a show piece. The show dealers are of all kinds and you can find what you want or need.

Mineral Formation Mysteries

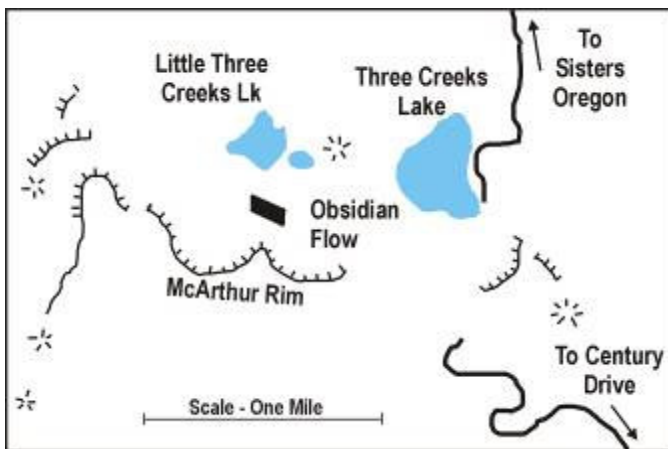
Bob Bristow

Part 1

There are a number of geology formation processes that either have no current explanation or the current explanation does not explain all of the facts. Some of the genesis explanations have been taught by geology professors for so long that to question them is considered heresy. However, having spent my life doing research and overturning long-held theories, I am not bothered in the least to question any and all explanations by eminent geologists. In fact, I kind of enjoy it! So here are some of my favorites.

Obsidian Genesis

Almost any mineralogy book will tell you that obsidian is simply rhyolite lava that has cooled so fast that crystals could not form. When I was in high school, I spent part of the summer prior to my sophomore year camped at Three Creeks Lake near Sisters, Oregon. While climbing McArthur Rim above the lake one day, I saw flashes of light about a mile away from a hump below the rim and above Little Three Creeks Lake. Upon climbing over to that point, I discovered the flashes to be coming from large pieces of obsidian. The source was a solid outcropping of obsidian at least ten feet thick. To say a ten foot thick layer of lava froze instantly boggles my mind. In fact, I flat out say that the current explanation has to be bunk.



If not by quick cooling, how does obsidian form? I don't know. However, Donald Alt, in his "Roadside Geology of Oregon" proposed that rhyolite forms glass when the lava is perfectly dry. I haven't seen this suggestion in any of his other books so he may have been beat up by geologists satisfied with the classical explanation. Wouldn't it be interesting to run some laboratory tests with man-made rhyolite in which the water content could be varied?

Growth of Large Crystals

One of the fundamentals of crystallography is thought to be that the size of a crystal is a relative measure of how long it took to form. For example, a large quartz crystal may have taken hundreds or even thousands of years to form in hot mineralized water. This may be true in some cases, but not all. In the laboratory, large quartz crystals can be made to form in two or three weeks. If it can be done in the laboratory, why can't it be done in nature? This was brought home to me by an experience growing calcite crystals. I didn't plan on it, but they grew anyway. I was actually trying to leach a chunk of calcite to expose some garnet crystals it contained. Normally, I would use hydrochloric acid to do the leaching.

However, I had some oxalic acid left over from cleaning crystals so I decided to use that. I brought it up to near boiling and left it overnight. The next morning I unplugged the heater and left it to cool. When I lifted the calcite rock out of the container the following morning, I knew immediately that something strange had happened. The rock was covered by 1/8-inch long needles. These were beautiful hexagonal calcite crystals that took only one day to grow. (The crystals grew because the hot solvent had become saturated with calcite ions. When the solvent cooled, it could no longer hold all of the calcite and had to deposit it somewhere.) The bottom line is that I believe that some environmental factor in addition to time must determine crystal size. What that factor could be is a mystery.

Next month: pegmatites, thundereggs, and the strange ring craters of Odessa.

Rex's Rambles Part 2

By Rex Barrans & Joe Barreca

(The story continues from the previous issue)



(June23) With the three of us in the sidekick we backtracked to Cowly, Wyoming where we took the Airport road due north past the airport. After a few miles we started seeing gravel on the banks so we stopped and began picking up agate and jasper. After filling our packs we kept on up the road to the top of Pryor Mountain. This was absolutely the worst fifteen or twenty miles of road that I or the poor Sidekick have ever made it over, with constant huge boulders to get over or around. After gaining the top of the mountain the road improved dramatically and there were huge alpine meadows for mile after mile. We soon began seeing wild horses, at first they were way off and we were careful not to spook them, but before long we found that they were so used to cars that as long as we stayed inside we could drive right past.

We found that there was a much better road that came up the west side of the mountain, we had



come up the south side , so we drove across the top of the mountain to take it . On the west slope of the mountain we encountered huge boulders of solid agate just laying out in a grassy meadow , there were not a lot of small pieces , but we did find enough to fill our packs again . Farther down the mountain on the west side we came to a sign that said ‘Big Ice Cave ‘ so we



had to stop and see it . There was an asphalted trail to it and steps that led to a landing just outside the entrance then more steps into a huge grotto . The whole floor of the cave was covered with ice which looked to be about two feet deep . On the way back to the car we discovered that the limestone along the trail was full of marine fossils . It was a long hard day and we welcomed the comfort of camp back in the city park at Lovell .

(June 24) With the three of us in the Sidekick we drove up a paved road to the landing in ‘Bighorn Canyon’ then up a gravel and dirt road to ‘ Dryhead Creek ‘ , this was our reason for coming to Lovell in the first place . We had seen ‘Dryhead Agate ‘ in the Butte Mineral and Gem show and wanted to try to find it .On the way in we met a ‘cowhand’ and asked if we would be able to get permission to collect on the private ranchland. She said “Sure. You just go down the hill there and talk to the cook and he can tell you how to get on the road down the creek”, which was our destination. Miles later we finally got sight of the ranch and gained an idea of what ‘just down the hill’ really means in this country. At the ranch we failed to find the cook, but did find the lady who owned the

ranch. She not only gave us permission , but a lot of information about where to find the agate and how to get there , and also told us about a buffalo jump that was on ‘Dryhead Creek Ranch’ property which had lots of buffalo bones at the bottom and invited us to take some as souvenirs if we wished.

We really weren’t interested in bones but we had to drive right past the jump to get to our destination with the agate so we stopped , hoping to find a skull or a horn . None were there , at least without digging , which we were not inclined to do, but I did take several bones as conversation pieces .



Dryhead Agate

We drove over a good 4 wheel drive road down the creek from ranch headquarters to the end of the road where we found abundant agate, however though it is good color and pattern I don’t believe any

of it is what was shown in the Butte show as ‘Dryhead Agate’. In getting to the collection site we came to a creek crossing , the normally 6 inches of water was about 30 inches deep due to the activities of an ambitious beaver , so we had to make a channel through the dam and wait about 20 minutes until the water was down to about floorboard level . We had a successful and interesting day.

