

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

July 2007

Panorama Gem and Mineral Club Minutes for June 19, 2007

By Luci Bristow

Johnie opened the meeting at 7:00 PM. Vanita greeted everyone and asked for cookie volunteers for the next meeting. Steve Fox and Ginger Pitman volunteered. Thanks!

Steve White said "Hi". He was thanked for conducting the last meeting. Sylvia Allen was not present so no treasurer's report was given.

Diane Rose stated that the North Idaho Gem Show was well attended and was a really nice show.

Johnie announced that the club had purchased 300 pounds of rough grit for use in tumbling stones. This is available to anyone who is tumbling stones for club use.

Several members discussed their trips to Saddle Mountain for petrified wood. The dig area is well marked. Please stay within that area. They found some really nice wood.

Emerald Creek – Open Wednesday and Thursdays – closes Labor Day weekend.

Usk - Dave Pacquette will lead a trip to Usk for Blue Agate. Please meet at Safeway on June 23, 2007 at 9:00 AM if you are going.

June 29 through July 11, 2007 was the POW-WOW at Madras. Those who attended stated that it was a real fun time and are planning on going next year.

On July 21, there will be a Music Festival at the Marcus City Park. We were asked if we wanted to have a booth, or similar. It was open to all club members. After discussion, there was no consensus. Steve White introduced Joanne Soden who is a Gemologist. She presented a talk on the "Care and Feeding of Jewelry". The talk was interesting and we learned quite a number of things that we didn't know. Thank you, Joanne.

Dave Pacquette showed a crystal that a friend had faceted for him. What an eye opener! 93.8 karats!

Joe Barreca will share fossicking stories from his trip to Australia at the next meeting. The meeting closed at 9:00 PM.

Best Chance Field Trip *By Joseph Barreca*

This was a surprisingly well-attended field trip considering that we only decided to do it at the June 19th meeting. There were 11 cars waiting in the Chewelah Safeway parking lot on June 23rd at 9AM. Of course, we didn't leave on time but Dave Paquette led us right over the beautiful new Flowery Trail Road to the quarry where he

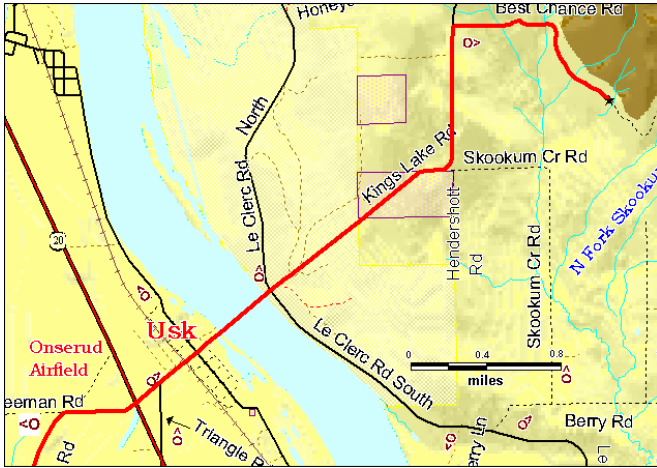


found the "agates" that started this whole thing.

The main action was at the top of a steep scree slope below the face of the cliff. The cliff is loose volcanic material rising above the glacial till on the valley floor and pushing through very old metasedimentary rocks of the Belt Supergroup. We were looking for pockets of crystallized calcite and possibly silicates that eroded out of the cliff.

Dave took the direct approach. He brought a hammer drill with a chisel bit. His professed intent was to carve steps up to some exposed veins that looked promising. I think the pieces directly in front of him were just too tempting and I have to admit he did dig out some nice ones.

As usual, the group split into the diggers and the pickers. The diggers spread out at the top of the scree slope. The pickers checked the bottom and around the general area. I think both groups did pretty



well. We might include a third group. Some kids decided to check out the top of the cliff by hiking around and across. This was a bad idea. They knocked rocks loose that rained down on the rest of us and were a genuine danger. People at the bottom of the scree slope were also in jeopardy from rolling rocks. I don't know that there is any



insurance for that kind of thing, so Beware!

Back to the meeting that started it all... After most people had left, Dave asked me to

check out his "agates" with the UV light. Wow! They lit up like Christmas. That's when calcite seemed a lot more likely than agate. It tends to pick up minerals that make it fluoresce under UV light. (Short and medium wavelengths – for those of you who care.) He still wants to go over and check out the whole cliff with the UV at night. (Not a club event.) That could actually be pretty cool. But later for that.

So to the left we have Dave with the power hammer. Jaroslav "Jerry" Novak found a nice piece the old-fashioned way. The rock hammer shows how big it is and how he got it out.



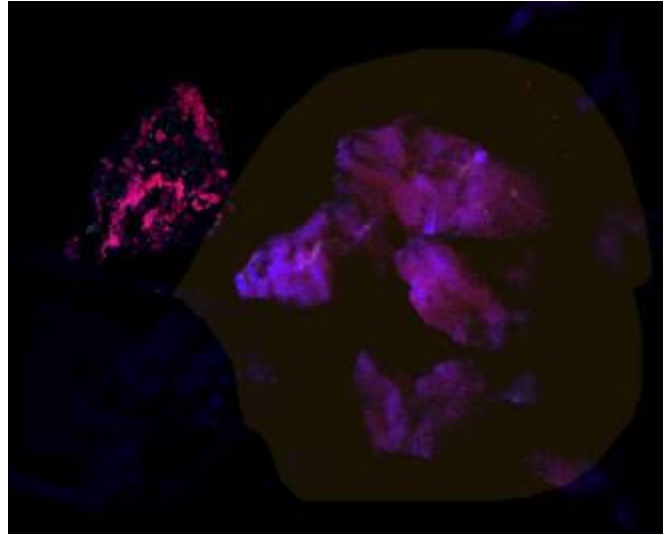
This piece is more like agate with a blue cast



to it. These do not fluoresce under UV light. The calcite casts that do fluoresce are pure white in daylight. Because they glow we need to show them with both normal and UV light so above is normal:

Notice the blue piece toward the bottom. That is the agate. The rock to the left has quartz in it and specks of black crystals that we are not sure about. There was also pyrite and some other minerals on some of the specimens. Both the calcite and the agate had a black coating around them even after they were separated from the volcanic material. Some of that coating turned out to be the brightest fluorescence of them all, including some yellows and bright reds. So check out the UV picture at right. It is still not as good as it really looks when the rocks are glowing, but you can see the outside of the rock at the top is intense. The one to the left and the blue agate don't show up at all.

(Special thanks to the lady who lent me her black sweatshirt so I could use it to block out light and show everyone what their rocks look like under UV.)



The Toowoomba Lapidary Club

By Joe Barreca



[Grinding Room at the Lapidary Club Building]

Earlier this year I was in Australia visiting friends and touring with my wife, Cheryl. I couldn't pass up the chance to check out the gems and minerals of Queensland (and eventually other states) while I was there. The first, and one of the most rewarding, was the Toowoomba Lapidary Club. I visited on one of the

two nights per week that members come in to work on stones and gems. The club itself is a building with a detached garage on a narrow alley of a street. The garage holds rock saws. Inside the building is a room with grinding wheels lining both walls. On one end is an enclosed room with special grinding wheels for gem cutting. Further into the main room of the building is a large room with enclosed cases of minerals and ornamental work such as stone butterflies. More cases of rocks line the walls and hold a small library. There are also maps and copier. There are 75 members in the club and they seem to be very active.



I had already corresponded with Beverly Radke, their Gazette Editor. She introduced me to Phillip MacKenzie, their Field Trip Officer. This club has field trips every month. Some of them are to neighboring rock shows. Others are for fossicking in the field. An upcoming one is to collect pink rhyolite, which is available in large boulders at the site near Warwick, about 50 miles away. They have field trips every month. Some are by bus. For a nominal fee of \$20, members take a bus to a favorite site or attraction. They



[Phillip MacKenzie and Rhyolite]

get more time to talk to one another that way. But the grand palooza of field trips is one that goes for a full month in July. That is the dry season down there. There are stops almost every day, but they spend an entire week at Agate Creek. This is a large area that has thunder eggs with the most spectacular agates I have ever seen. They are typically rings of contrasting bright colors, but there are many varieties.



A man came into the club the night I was there and calmly unpacked a \$3000 microscope with a \$500 light and a case with a dozen or so

micromounts. Tom Taylor soon had a small collection of members standing around waiting to see his specimens. Having seen pictures of micromounts, I thought I knew what they were all about. This microscope however changed everything. It had a very nice fine adjustment that let you virtually dive into the tiny geodes and see small clusters of crystals from the bottom to the top. Most of the specimens had more than one kind of crystal. Some were clear cubic Thompsonite, others had little black spikes and fans of crystals mixed in. One had perfectly clear red garnets imbedded in quartz. Tom became interested in small rocks he found while “tipping rubbish” at the local dump which has since closed. When they asked permission to bring the club there, Queensland bureaucrats insisted on a 200 million dollar insurance policy, hard hats etc. Queensland has a lot of volcanic rock, rare for Australia. The tiny crystals are often in small vugs in this rock. They eventually worked out a field trip but it wasn't nearly as much fun as scrounging around for tiny treasures at the end of a run to the dump.

Tom definitely caught the bug though and sees tiny rocks of interest while doing the yard work or walking around town. The fact is, there are great rocks, but probably, even more critically, gems, all over Australia, but particularly in Queensland and New South Wales. Within a day's drive of Toowoomba, there are places named, Emerald, Rubynvale and Sapphire. Besides the month-long field trip, Phillip arranges other trips, for instance they hired a bus to go fossicking for opals. They were probably boulder opal in Queensland.



Another note that may be of interest to local rockhounds is that members of the Toowoomba Club may want to trade for rocks we find in our part of the world. Their collection included Montana agate, Oregon geodes, sunstones, etc.

You can work on your stones for \$3.00/nite in their club facilities. This includes not just a huge rock saw and many grinders, but also the faceting equipment with guidance from an expert. I didn't even go into that room. It is closed off from the rest of the building to allow for better concentration.

One of the things that struck me about fossicking in Australia is that most of the gems and precious stones that you find need a lot of expert work before they attain their true value. Having a club with a lot of equipment puts the tools and the expertise in the same place for a fraction of the cost of owning your own. Also you can't underestimate the extra enjoyment of being able to share your treasures with each other as you develop them from raw material.

The (Not So) Lucky 21

By Joseph Barreca

Okay. I wasn't going to bring this up, but there is still some room left in this newsletter and I don't want anyone to get the idea that all rock trips are the sweet piece-of-cake kind like that in the Best Chance story. So here is one of those rock-trip-from-hell stories that you could avoid **by SENDING ME MORE STORIES of your own** to put in this newsletter.



On Saturday June 30 my daughter April and I tracked down the Big Lick Trail. It follows the North Fork of St Peter's Creek into the heart of the Tonasket Mt fire of two or three years ago. With some better trail data from the Forest Service and some better experience with locating places using Forest Service descriptions (since April works for them) than I had

last year when I sent a friend on this wild-goose chase, we went right up Aeneas Creek to the trailhead. It became immediately obvious that they have never bothered to re-establish this trail after the fire. Hundreds of burnt trees lie across or along it. At one point we were following rock cairns from one place to the next while picking our way through the downed trees. Soon after that, we lost the trail all together. We went on dead reckoning till we crossed a stream and picked up an old road on the other side that lead to a GPS position where I expected to find evidence of an old uranium mine, the Lucky 21. We spent a couple hours trying to locate the actual mine without real success. I was carrying a UV light to find florescent minerals.



[The portable instant dark room in action]

One good result is that a little gizmo, that I whipped up out of heavy-duty garbage bags and duct tape, provided excellent darkness for checking rocks with the UV Light. It is now packed in with the light for the enjoyment of all. (Warning: it gets stuffy pretty fast in there.) We did find rocks with some color to them but nothing spectacular. It would have helped if I had researched my minerals a little better and seen that the particular forms of uranium in this mine were not necessarily fluorescent. We did find some rocks with parts that had a bright green fluorescence. Some of that was organic matter, but some was not. If I only had a Geiger counter... The rocks we kept were highly mineralized.

We also found an old miner's shack packed with pack rats. Then we followed an old road along the creek bottom (overgrown and not on my maps) out to where we had to climb straight up a steep hill to intercept the trail. Packing some rocks, the heavy lead battery for the UV light and my rock hammer, it was a lot of work. but I feel like I am in much better shape now and have a much better understanding of USFS maps and my mining maps. There is always some kind of up side... Some are steeper than others.