

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

June 2008

Minutes of the June Meeting

By Ginger Pitman

Our June 17 meeting was well attended including 4 visitors. Refreshments for next meeting will be provided by Harold and Jessie.

Sylvia gave the treasury report and we will have \$27 left in the scholarship fund when we give the students their funds. Steve Fox presented at Kettle Falls to Marie Smith, Diane Lentz gave the Colville one to Neil Mickelson, and Bill Allen presented the Chewelah one to Owen Biancardi. Congratulations to our winners and thank you to the presenters, it is a big event and the club should be proud of the fact that we are in a small way helping these young people, we will have to get started on next years scholarship fund raising.

The field trip to Stone Rose did not happen because of the bad weather, not a good day to gather fossils. Stone Rose is open all summer and is a great dig if your family wants to go.

The trip to Flagstaff Mt. for barite did go but it looks like it will soon be drilled, exploring for gold and may be reopened. We will not be able to go if it becomes an active mine.

Seven people went to the Sierra Mine and it is always fun to look at the private museum that Mr. Nixon has there and some large pyrite crystals and other minerals were collected.

The June 28 trip will be to Metaline for Trilobites.

July 3-6 is the Pow Wow Show and field trips at Madres, OR.

July 13 is a scheduled trip to Solo Creek for quartz crystals. Meet at Chewelah Safeway at 8:30 or at Priest River by Hyw 57 turn off at 10 AM.

July 26 is Horseshoe Mt. for quartz clusters.

Joe brought our new club sign which looks great, very readable and easy to use. Thank you Joe for the effort to get it done.

Steve gave out applications for those who would like to have a booth at the Marcus Music Fest.

Steve is working on a field trip to tour the mine at TEK Cominco at Metaline, he is looking at early Aug and if you are interested give him a call at 684-2136.

July 27-29 is our trip to Emerald Creek. It is closed on Wednesday and Thurs. (continued on Page 2)

The 68th Annual NFMS Show

By the Pitmans



[Owyhee Jasper Agate]

June 20-22-2008 was the 68th Annual NFMS Show at Ontario, OR. The show was held at the fair grounds where the Pitmans, Roses and Bockmans camped. The show was a bit spread out but some of the dealers we see at our local shows were there and it was a good event.

I think they underestimated the interest in the field trips which were rather unorganized. We did though manage to go to 7 different sites some on our own and some with the leaders from the show.

Johnie and I are grateful to Mike and Diane Rose for letting us ride with them as lots of the sites needed 4 wheel drive. Mike said he is a beginner at 4 wheeling but he did very well and his passengers did a lot of work on their "buns of steel".

The first trip was the Succor Creek leaf fossil dig; we easily found some nice pieces and one 15 inch long whole reed. We left the group and took a ride through Leslie Gulch which is a very scenic drive to Lake Owyhee. Then into Succor Creek Canyon for geodes, back to a site Rex and Mabel had shown us a couple years ago and the road up and down hasn't gotten any better. The digging was fairly easy and one hole had thunder eggs that were 4-6 inches in diameter.

The next day we joined rockhounds Jim and Ramona Peterson and we were off to find Owyhee



[Succor Creek Canyon]

Jasper in the morning. Ginger found a large chunk that was about 4 feet diameter and we spent a couple of hours reducing it to a size that we could handle. In the afternoon there was a leader who took us to what was close to the site called Hogg Canyon northeast of Weiser, Id, and it was an example of what happens when permission is not obtained, as we were confronted with an angry rancher. When we explained he became civil but the visit of the next group is very much in doubt. Some geodes and pieces of agate were collected, the wind got very strong so we gave up and headed back, that's when the rancher had the road blocked.

Sunday was a long way around trip to find Graveyard Point agates; if you go be aware there is a new car bridge over the canal not on your older maps. Agate and jasper were plentiful if you did some walking away from the road.

Our last trip was to the McBride Ridge for geodes and a spot that had some blue opal, then down the road for black petrified wood.



We saw some wild life and a curlew but we also saw an infestation of Mormon crickets a quarter mile on the highway where they had been run over so thick the roadway was greasy. A sight to see!

Founding Member Passes

We are sad to report that Gladys Porath passed away on



June 9th. Gladys and her husband Leonard along with Lenny Neyens were the founders of our club and were very active until Leonard passed away about 10 years ago. She was a very generous person and always brought the coffee to the meetings. She was a lifetime member.

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but Roses have set up a tour of the commercial mining project for July 30 if you want to go you need a hard hat (if you can) and call Roses at 208-667-8591.

Chuck Prentice has some equipment for sale: an 8" Genie, a trim saw and Lapcraft if interested call 509-684-7979.

Johnie and Warren gave a short talk about their trip to get sunstones and opal and Davis Creek obsidian. The trip was hampered by rain and cold weather but still they got some rocks and had fun.

Our program was given by Sylvia and Bill about their trip to Hawaii and a show on the volcanoes. Some facts I didn't know and I had not thought of; such as the smell that comes off of the flowing lava, guess it is pretty bad. Still I'd like to see it! Thank you for the first half of the program, we'll look forward to the second half

Rock Field Trips for July:

July-Sunday 13 , Solo Creek , Quartz Crystals ,any car , tools - shovel, pick , bar , lots of digging in mixed kinds of soils . Meet at Chewelah Safeway parking at 8:30 AM , or at Priest River by the Highway 57 turn off at 10 AM.

July-Sat. , 26--Horshoe Mt. , Quartz Crystal clusters , possibly others, cars with good clearance , tools-hammer ,chisels , bar . Ext. Ladder, ropes , and lights could be useful if you are strong and brave enough To venture into the

Zella M mine, but unless you REALLY know what you are doing don't try it. Meet at Junction at the old Blue Couger at Curlew at 10 AM.

July ,27 through 29 Emerald Creek Call or see Dianne Rose for information on camping etc. . (208-667-8591) Check With other members for ride sharing.

August -Sat. 2--Jim Creek, Galena , Pyrite , cars with good clearance ,tools- hammers and chisels . Meet at The rail road station in Ione at 10 AM.

The Sierra Mine

By Joseph Barreca

Pictures by Ray Stoddard



On June 14th, the club field trip to the Sierra Mine brought us some interesting rocks and an even more interesting visit with Ron Nixon, the current owner and past superintendent of the milling operation at the mine. (Ron is on the left in the red shirt in the picture above.) Payroll records for the mine are in a thick ledger on top of the apple boxes. A large rock, partly in the shadow of the boxes, is solid Galena, lead ore. The mine was primarily a lead and zinc operation.

The most interesting rocks were probably pyrite. The tailings contained some of the most well-developed pyrite crystals I have seen in the area. There were also some white rocks with a bold layer of solid gold showing. It turned out that these were rocks Ron had painted with some gold spray paint to add a little more interest to the hunt.

The Sierra Mine, also known as the Gold Field mine, has its own rich history. Ron had an article about how Wyatt Earp and his brother owned an interest in the mine and came out to visit it. They also decided they had a right to the Dominion Gold Mine, a mainstay of the early town of Colville, and took it over at gunpoint for a few days when they came through.



Ron's wife passed away years ago in an auto accident. She fell asleep driving back from an art show. (Ron is an accomplished clay sculpture, well-known in the area.) The accident happened only a mile or so from home. She was following Ron home and when her headlights disappeared, he went back to find that she had driven off the road into a tree. She had made Ron promise not to sell her car, so it still sits in the dry waste pond.

She collected antiques over the years, and Ron set up a building that was once the assay shack for the mine as a small cottage where the fictitious "Gramma" once lived. Gramma's cottage is a wonderful little museum now with an extensive collection of china, household items, quilts, magazines etc from the first part of the 20th century. Ron is willing to let people tour the museum if they call ahead.



How to Identify Rocks in the Field

By Steven Fox

The best, fastest and easiest way to identify any mineral in the field is to ask the geologist standing next to you. If he/she can't identify said mineral, then you are stuck. Throw said worthless chunk of rock away, or if it's pretty, keep it and you can call it anything you want.

Generally we rockhounds do not have ready access to a geologist, mineralogist, petrologist, or any other 'ist' that has an encyclopedic knowledge of rocks and minerals between their ears. What we have is our own limited knowledge, a gritty determination to ferret out the best minerals for our collections, a four wheel drive, a hammer, and an uncanny ability to get lost. Therefore I would like to suggest a few things to take along with you in order to help you make the best guess of what you have found.

First, pick a mineral collecting site that you want to explore, and take someone that knows how to get there or will at least bring the beverages. Have an idea of what is there and read about the minerals that you are looking for. But always be on the lookout for those few minerals that you might stumble over that you did not expect to find. Known collecting sites such as old mines, fee digs, and non-fee digs usually will have some written materials that explain about the main minerals in the area. It's the little known minerals in the area that will stump you the most, and be the prize of the day.

You will need a good field guide. I suggest the national Audubon Society Field Guide to Rocks and Minerals, because that is the one that I use. There are other field guides that are very good and easy to use, and are easily available at your local Barnes and Noble. All the best ones have color pictures of the perfect mineral specimens that will not look like anything that you are looking at, because it seems to be an unwritten rule that what you have in your hand will not be a very perfect specimen, and will not look like anything in the book. But at least the field guide will give you an idea of what you may have, and some field marks to go by.

A jeweler's loop is a must, with at least a ten power lens in order to see any small crystals or other features necessary to identify a mineral such as a cleavage or streak. This is your field microscope and eventually you will wind up carrying this everywhere you go.

A Mohs' Hardness Scale kit is necessary to figure out your mineral's hardness. The scale goes from 1 (talc; which everything scratches and scratches

nothing) to ten (diamond; which nothing scratches and scratches everything). But not everybody wants to haul around ten different minerals to scratch everything they pick up, so some things you can use are listed here with the relative hardness of each. A fingernail has a hardness of about 2-2.5 (a good way to ruin a manicure), a copper penny (not these new sandwich types, but a good old copper penny) is about a 3, a good pocketknife is about a 5-5.5, a steel nail is about a 6 in hardness, and a piece of unglazed porcelain is about a 7 in hardness. If the unglazed porcelain does not scratch your mineral, you may be looking at a gemstone.



Unglazed porcelain is needed for that all important streak test. This will tell you the true color of a mineral. As an example: chalcopyrite has a greenish black streak, but marcasite has a greenish to brownish streak. Both minerals have similar crystal habits and color so many people will mistake marcasite for chalcopyrite. Hardness and streak will help you to tell them apart. Most gems will streak white, if at all. Topaz, corundum, and diamond will just put grooves in your porcelain.

A weak form of acid will come in handy if you are in limestone country. All forms of calcium carbonate (calcite, smithsonite, and dolomite) will effervesce in weak hydrochloric acid (white vinegar can be substituted for HCL and is safer to pack around).

Now if you don't want to pack all of the above or you just plain forgot it all (my main excuse), try to remember the buddy that I mentioned. Make sure he/she is at least a geologist, or brings a lot of adult beverages.



Trilobites near Metaline Falls

By Joseph Barreca



It was a hot day already by 10 AM and there were four other cars with no-too-happy drivers waiting for me in the parking lot of the old gas station/ rock shop in Metaline Falls. I had a pretty good excuse for being late having something to do with the Tiger Store Museum where Hwy 20 meets Hwy 31, but that's history.

Rex and Greg in the lead car headed out on Lehigh Hill road going south from Metaline Falls and zipped right by the turnoff to Lime Quarry Rd that leads to the trilobites. As it turned out, that was a good thing. Rex asked a lady for directions (See men can ask for directions – particularly when they get lost leading a line of cars). She not only knew the way, she volunteered to lead us there. So we turned around on Lehigh Road and went East and then North on Robarge N Rd (see map). She left us there where Robarge N Rd meets Lime Quarry Rd. A little ways up from the intersection is a locked gate. Rex had the key and soon we were winding our way up the rough gravel rd to the quarry. The “good thing” part is that there is another locked gate where Lime Quarry Rd turns off Lehigh Hill Rd and if we had turned up there at first, we probably would not have had the right key. I certainly didn't when I left the quarry ahead of the crowd, found myself on the wrong side of that gate and had to turn around and go back up to Robarge to get back on the main roads.

Rex's favorite place in the Quarry is along the West side cliffs while you are driving in past the cottonwood trees. The first picture shows dedicated rock hounds picking apart slabs in the shade of those trees. My favorite place is an outcrop on the same cliff but in the middle of the quarry.



[Landon picking trilobites off a big hot rock]



This slab has three larger trilobites on the right side. Not as obvious at this range are several smaller trilobites on the left side of the slab. These may not seem too impressive, but they are 7 times as old as the fossils at Stone Rose, and were among the most developed life forms of the Cambrian era.