

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 2008

Panorama Gem and Mineral Club September 16, 2008

Luci Bristow

Johnie opened the meeting at 7:00 PM. He thanked Steve for handling the previous meeting. Sylvia gave the treasurer's report. The monies for the three scholarships have been awarded. Bob Adams and Bill Allen will provide cookies for the next meeting in October. Luci will bring the juice/punch.

We talked about the items for raffle. A motion was made by Bev Bockman, seconded by Luci to sell the raffle tickets at \$1.00 a ticket. The motion carried.

Joe Barreca talked about the Fair at Colville and the booth the club had set up. We had a rather poor location but nevertheless we had lots of free tumbled rocks and that brought quite a number of people in. We also demonstrated the UV light. We did not intend to enter for a ribbon, but we did win a second place ribbon! Johnie thanked everyone who helped at the Fair.

Joe talked about his "Rocks in a Box" challenge. That effort is going very well. He has even traded rocks with a couple of clubs.

Bev Bockman thanked the club for the use of our Ring Toss for Rathdrum Days. They had a good time with the kids.

Rex talked about field trips. It seems he is the only one who showed up for the gold panning field trip to the Columbia River. Please, if you have indicated that you will attend one of the field trips and find you are unable to go, let the Field Trip Sponsor know. The field trip to Sherman Creek, which was to be led by Steve Fox, has been **cancelled**. The garnets there are very small.

Bob Bristow talked about their trip to Davis Creek and to the Sun Stone area in Oregon. They found some great "pink lady" obsidian. He brought a sample of the obsidian for show and tell. Johnie, however, showed the great big piece of obsidian that he dug at the Pink Lady.

Diane Rose talked about two events. One was a trip to a sandpaper factory where they make sandpaper with garnet grit. The factory was near Fernwood. The Bockman's and the Rose's attended a Rockhound Retreat that was held for one week, beginning the day after Labor Day, at the John Hancock Field Station located between Antelope and Fossil, Oregon. Bev talked about the
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Jim Creek

By Stephen Fox

Photos by Rex Barrans



The first Saturday of August and it looked to be shaping up as a very hot but clear day, just like last Saturday. So here I am getting into my truck to head east this time to meet up with some rockhounds in Ione. I left early enough to be at the old train station by a quarter to nine, and get out the club's banner and put it on the side of my truck. By nine fifteen I was still all alone and ready to pack it in when it struck me that I had not noticed the time we were to meet. So I called up the movie behind my eyelids and waited to see if anybody else might show up. At nine thirty here came Rex, Scott and Harold (Trusty Sidekick still being repaired). By ten we were joined by two more and we were off to get some galena and iron pyrite.

When we got to the Jim Creek mine the first thing I noticed was the huckleberries still needed another week before they were going to be ripe (priorities). It was at this time we split up, three went down and three went up. I went down to cross the creek and naturally missed the trail but found another way down (only fell once, so it was a good way down). Where this adit is, you will find mostly galena, but sometimes a little pyrite with it. I

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workshops and brought some of the things they had made. What great work! It sounds like a workshop we would all be interested in attending.

Upcoming: 28th Annual Gem, Mineral and Jewelry Show – Portland Regional. September 26–28, 2008.

www.portlandregionalgemandmineral.org for additional information.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.

dropped my sledge hammer on one rock and jumped from the smell of sulfur (I thought the devil had appeared behind me). Because of the high sulfur content of this big rock I figured there had to be some bigger galena crystals in it. I was not disappointed as I found some very good crystals within this rock. In fact this was about the only rock I needed to break up at this spot, as the pieces filled my bucket. I headed back to the truck (by another trail and only fell twice) to take a break and eat lunch, and so did everybody else.



[Steve Fox putting the sledge to good use.]

Those that went up to the mine did very well also, coming back with some nice pyrite and galena. After lunch we decided to go on up to an old test site where we found some very nice iron pyrite last year. We got to work on one large boulder, where there were a lot of nice pyrite crystals, with a hammer and chisel. After doing most of the hard work and getting nothing, others took over and easily broke off large chunks of rock covered in pyrite crystals. By and large my sledge hammer was put to good use by a couple of other folks, and they were rewarded with some nice specimens. It was time to go exploring because this area is full of old mines.

As Mike and his dad took off we were going to follow them to another road that might lead us to another mine. Scott and I were bringing up the rear following Harold and Rex. We went approximately twenty feet before Harold and Rex stopped. Rex thought he could see some workings up the slope a little ways and so we checked it out., and found nothing of consequence. Because of the time we spent, we lost our other two. We did go up another road until the brush nearly closed off the road but we did find another old mine submerged under a creek (what looked like an open pit mine, or deep shaft, that had the creek diverted into it and flooded). We did not find any talus to work but we may have been standing on it because the road may have been built on top of it.



[Steve's Pyrite crystals in quartz]

We had gone back down this road about a couple hundred feet when we came to another road that was better maintained, and so we parked our vehicles and walked down this road a ways. We found two old roads (one mining and the other a four wheeler road) that left this road to either side and so Rex took one and I took the other. We both found evidence of mining, but Rex found the mine. About this time a gentleman came along that had grown up in the area and had a great deal of knowledge about many of the old mines (my lousy memory for names strikes again). He was a great help in showing Rex and Scott the old adit. While they were making like mountain goats, Harold and I were breaking up a large iron boulder that Rex had found. We got some really nice iron pyrite crystals out of this rock. I also found a blue crystal in the middle of this which I thought might be covellite (CuS), and Rex thought I might be a little goofy. He didn't say this but the look he gave me was enough. He thought it was azurite, and he may have been a lot more right than me. As of this writing I still haven't done any testing on the crystal to be sure.

It was getting late and Harold wanted to get to the old Tiger Store before it closed, which we all thought was a good idea. Scott and I got there first, just two minutes after this nice lady closed up. She still let us in for a quick moment and I got an ice cream bar (the perfect ending to any rockhounding trip).

The weather cooperated with us again as threatening clouds only kept the temperatures on the mild side and not a drop of rain. What an outstanding day!

Phillips Ranch Maybe the Best Site in the County

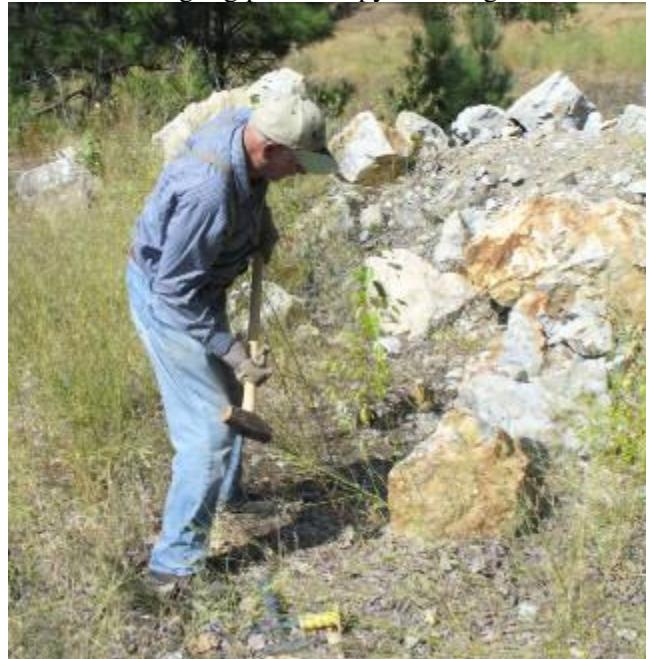
By Joe Barreca



It was a beautiful day in the neighborhood. Actually it was too beautiful, August 16th was one of the hottest days of the year. The usual suspects gathered at Harvest Foods in Kettle Falls to caravan up to a new site that John and Gloria Squires had found near Northport. I tagged along because Harold Ingram was going and he had tried a couple of times to find the Phillips Ranch Prospect, which I had described in the April 2008 newsletter (<http://www.mapmet.com/PGMC/newsletters.htm>) without success. I figured we could go there together after looking at the Squires' site.

As the caravan got closer, it looked like getting to the Phillips Ranch Prospect would be very easy since it was so close. Well, it turned out to be even easier than that, because it was the same place. The view of the Columbia (above) was wonderful. I waited eagerly to tell Harold about our good luck. And waited and waited. It turns out Harold and Rex were so far behind us that they didn't see us turn up the fairly obscure driveway on the west side of the

road just past another more obvious one with an iron gate. There is an old corral across the road from the entrance. Gloria Squires was kind enough to leave rockhounding and chase down the errant cars. Soon we were all finding big pieces of pyrite and galena.



Rex Barrans still swings a mean sledge hammer. Here he is breaking up a boulder off the ore dump next to the parking lot. Just over the pile from here is a pond formed in front of the old adit to this mine. Neither the pond nor the inundated mine looked appealing, even on this very hot day. There were plenty of other things to get excited about though.



Just up the trail from the last picture is this seep of a dried substance that looked like sulfur to me. Rex actually tasted it (Not a recommended procedure!) and determined that it was probably Epsom salt, not pure sulfur.



In the pit itself, at the end of the trail, several different veins of rock come together. Roy, in the center, is chipping out some Bor nite, Cu₅FeS₄, a kind of Iron Pyrite with copper in it that has an iridescent color. It is sometimes called Peacock Pyrite. We also found galena that has a bluish cast to it. This is probably caused by some silver mixed in with the lead. But that wasn't all.

Just to the left of Rex in the picture above, is a slope of sloughed off clay. In that clay are selenite (gypsum) crystals. I have not seen these any place else in the county. They are clear with concave pits and sharp points. Some have layers like terraces in them. (I have a spectacular piece from a rock collection we traded for from Rapid City, South Dakota, but more about that later.)

This place is on the Northport-Flat Creek Rd, about 5 miles south of the Northport Bridge. (There is a map in the April 2008 article.) The road goes about a half mile off the highway and through some wet spots but is passable with a two-wheel drive car. One down side is that although there are no signs, we have not contacted the owner as a club. Still, I don't know where else you can find so many different minerals in one spot.

**Slide Lecture and Signing
With Geologist Author Bruce Bjornstad**
October 7th at REI in Spokane, 7 PM
1125 N. Monroe St, (509) -9900

Bruce Bjornstad will be speaking about the Ice Age Floods from his book, On the Trail of the Ice Age Floods. Free and open to the public.

Ellensburg Agate and Bead Shop

By Joe Barreca

Late in September I had occasion to stop at the Ellensburg Agate and Bead Shop, 210 S Main St, Ellensburg. (509) 925-4998. It has a large selection of raw rocks, jewelry and beads. I talked with the owner, Steve Townsend and traded for a small piece of Ellensburg Blue Agate. This is a really interesting rock for reasons beyond what is described below. But let's star with this article on their web site, ellensburgagateandbead.com.

"Found only in the Northwest corner of the Lower Kittitas Valley, near Ellensburg, Washington is the unique stone known throughout America as the Ellensburg Blue Agate. What makes it unique and much sought after? The answer to this question can be summed up in several words: scarcity, color range, variety, hardness and adaptability to a variety of settings."

The scarcity of the stone is such that less than one to two pieces of cutting material in an eight-hour search of the rugged hills and fields where it occurs, is considered an excellent days find. Almost all of the land where Ellensburg Blues are to be found is posted private, or leased land and, as such, is closed to rock hunters except by special permission of the local rancher.

The color of the Ellensburg Blue ranges from the light, sky blue through a cornflower blue to an almost purple royal blue. Clouds, striations (streaks), or bands may occur in the stone and graduate from nearly opaque to transparent. The hardness of any stone is measured on the Mohs scale of 1 to 10. One being talc and ten being diamond. Using this measurement, the Ellensburg Blue will test out at 7.5 to 8.5 on the scale.

Because of its singular qualities and limited quantity, the Ellensburg Blue has been reclassified by Forbes Magazine and many geologists to be a precious gem, and the third rarest stone in the world."



The interesting part to me, after looking over Steve Townsend's collection that he is finishing and making jewelry from, is that they look just like the blue agates that we can find at the Best Chance site (article in July 07 Panorama Prospector). (Jerry Novak's Agate shown here.)



Another tidbit that I picked up from Steve concerns the giant piece of petrified wood shown in this picture from the March 2008 newsletter. Their club, The Rock Wolves, also found this piece on Saddle Mt abandoned by someone who could not get it loaded in a truck. Their club harnessed several 4 wheel drive vehicles to drag it out of the canyon. But it got bogged down in the process. They had wanted to donate it to the Burke Museum in Seattle. When they came back with more equipment, someone had rolled it back down to the bottom. The next time they were up there, someone with something like a giant tow truck had loaded it and it disappeared. There are court cases ongoing over jurisdiction of mineral rights in this area. So that's the news from Ellensburg...

Rocks-In-A-Box Revisited

By Joseph Barreca

The Rocks-in-a-Box Challenge issued by our club in the April 2008 Panorama Prospector has taken on a life of its own. We asked other clubs to exchange collections of their local rocks for our collection. The article went out not only in this newsletter but in several regional and national publications. Our collection is very specific with standard packaging in a clear compartmentalized box. It has a booklet, Kettle Country Treasure Maps, that goes with it and contains articles, maps, GPS points etc. for finding the specimens in the box. Several members of the club have helped put it together.

Johnie Pitman contributed fluorite and barite crystals. Rex Barrans contributed fossils, Epidote, some quartz and a few other things including cutting down slabs with trilobites in them so they would fit in the compartments. Special thanks goes to Dave Paquette, who gave us gold nuggets and dust right out of his gold pan in little vials for each collection plus some bog opal. I kicked in pieces of pyrite, concretions, common opal and several other things, including the guide book.

Well, on an organizational index, the challengers have not been very regimented. But for what they lack in standardization, they have made it up in trumps with generosity. The new standard seems to be "everything you can cram into one of those priority mailing boxes under 20 lb. limit" These boxes ship for a flat \$9.80 to anywhere in the world. If you are lucky, people put rocks in plastic bags with a piece of paper saying what it is and where it came from. We have two exchanges on hand right now and a couple more in the works.



[Pink Dolomite from Arkansas]

The Spring River Gem & Mineral Club in Cherokee Village, Arkansas was the first to respond. They included several samples of Pink Dolomite Crystals. This one has flecks of pyrite too. There were a lot of other samples in their collection including sharks teeth and geodes from Utah.

Sylvia Allen suggested that I write to the Western Dakota Gem & Mineral Society. They responded with a big box with Ammonites and several other fossils, some agates, a map, issues of their newsletter and about 400 (I am not kidding on this.) pictures from their rock show and field trips.

One sample in their territory that they did not include was Fairburn Agate. Evidently there has been a new discovery of this rare agate, recently thought to be wiped out. But they did include a nice couple pictures of them and some articles.



A couple more clubs are working on exchanges. Sales of the collection locally have paid the postage and cost of the boxes. So far it has been a lot of fun. I'm trying to figure out how to best present these at our next rock show.