

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

### March 2009

#### Minutes for Feb 17 2009

*By Luci Bristow*

Steve White opened the meeting at 7:00 PM. President Johnie and Ginger are still in Arizona. Sylvia Allen gave the treasurer's report.

Cookies for March 17, 2009 Meeting: Suzan Andrew, Luci Bristow and Bob Adams.

The long and short wave black light was again discussed. Several individuals thought it would be a great idea for the Club to purchase a long/short wave black light for the next item for raffle at Club meetings. A motion was made by Bill Allen and seconded by Vanita Novak to purchase a long/short wave black light for the Club raffle. The motion passed.

The Door Prize items were discussed. Luci Bristow made a motion, seconded by Steve Fox, to purchase the items brought in by Brian for our door prizes. The motion passed.

The equivalent items in the catalog were pretty much the same price. The items are Septarian nodule bookends, eggs, amethyst clusters, selenite roses. They were on display at the meeting.

Bob Bristow talked about their trip to Arizona. They had a good time with Johnie and Ginger, Chuck and Mary Callen, Donna and Larry (Ginger's sister and husband) and Sharon and husband (Ginger and Donna's cousin) and Diane and Mike Rose. They brought back approximately 200 pounds of rocks! When the car hit a bump – it went bang! as you can well imagine!

Rex Barrens talked about his e-mail in regards to proposed field trips. Please respond to his e-mails so he knows if they are getting to you. Many field trips were discussed. A number of individuals would like to have a few field trips on a Sunday – which we can certainly do. Some of the proposed trips are as follows: Deer Trail Monitor, Best Chance Quarry, Solo Creek, No Name Lake, McGraff Quarry, Red Marble, Keystone, Phillips Ranch Mine, Edna Mine, Meadow Creek, Franson Peak, Sherman Creek, and others. Please let Rex know if you are interested in any of these. A list was also provided in last month's newsletter.

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#### Burro Creek and Beyond

*By Johnie and Ginger Pitman*



It is great fun to rock hound in the winter but you have to go south to do it. We met Bob and Luci Bristow near Wickenburg, AZ and on a cloudy day we went looking for geodes again. We only brought home two and doubt that they are very good, they tend to be mostly rhyolite with very little agate. We had brought along my sister and husband for their first time rock hounding trip. They had a good time so all was not lost.

Later in the week we meet Bob and Luci near Bouse and they brought along first timers Chuck and Mary Cullen. North out of Bouse about 30+ miles is a hematite and copper mine with surrounding digs that we explored on a bright sunny day; beautiful colors. A short trip into the adit was ok until Bob realized he was walking on a carpet of cholla spines. Only one or two got thru the side of the boot but it took some doing to get them off the bottom of the boots.

One day was spent with all the above characters as we met Mike and Diane at the turn off to Burro Creek and after 14 miles of up; down and around on pretty good dirt road we were at a spot where the whole ground was covered with a white and red agate, sometimes this deposit is called pastolite but I can't find that term in any of my books so the spelling may not be correct.

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It was announced that the POW WOW Club of America would be doing several field trips. If you are interested, you may call Rex Barrens or Pauline Miller at 360-658-8091 or Rocky McCall at 360-629-2515.

After intermission we saw a film on Wire Wrapping. Thank you, Bev, for providing this very interesting film. We should all be able to go right out and do that! It was great!

See you on March 17 at 6:00 PM.

### Meeting Notes from Show Meeting

Show Chairman Bill Allen opened the meeting at 6 PM. The following items were discussed:

Advertising - Sylvia Allen and Diane Lentz are taking care of this task.

Building - The Grange has been rented.

Wheel of Fortune - Rex Barrens and Scott Jackson

Grab Bags - Rex and Mabel Barrens

Ring Toss - Ray Stoddard

Door Prizes - Materials were brought in by Brian for possible purchase by the Club for the Door Prizes. (See Meeting Minutes)

Display Cases - There are 24 display cases - 7 remain available.

Hospitality - Mabel Barrens and Luci Bristow

Tickets - Mabel Barrens and Luci Bristow

Snacks on Set-up Day - March 26 - Vanity Novak

Display Case Liners - Vanita is working on new liners for some of the cases. She is in need of fabric. If you have extra in solid colors, you might want to talk to her. If none is available from members - she will purchase the fabric and the Club will reimburse her.

Black Light Display - Bill Allen is making a walk-through Black Light demonstration.

He stated that there is a long and short wave black light available by catalog for \$119.00.

Several people wanted them and asked Sylvia to order from the catalog. (See Meeting Minutes for further action on this item.) Rita will again be our Conductress for the demonstration.

Demonstrators - There will be several demonstrators. Chuck Prentiss will demonstrate Knapping - Dave Pacquette will demonstrate Gold Panning and his equipment. It is possible that Bev Bockman will either demonstrate faceting or cabbing if room can be found to do so.

Set-up and Takedown - We will need all the help we can get to do this task. The High School students will be coming in to help.

NEXT SHOW MEETING IS MARCH 17, 2009 AT 6:00 PM. Thanks everyone for bringing this event together!

Each year the Club borrows many display cases and tables from the Rock Rollers. Their show is March 13, 14 and 15. They will need help from us in doing this. They will be setting up on March 10, 11 and 12. If you can help, please call Leigh Klettke at 509-688-4915. ([klettkes@juno.com](mailto:klettkes@juno.com)). We will be needing help to load Chuck's trailer with these items after their show for our show. Please, if you can help, be there. Thanks!

The girls had the job of picking up 40 lbs of the small stuff just right for tumbling without having to do much breaking. Johnie is getting picky, we easily got the job done while the guys explored.

It was time to leave that group and head to Maricopa to meet my sister again. From there we went twice to Forth of July Butte and the Chimney area west of Arlington about 25 miles, looking for fortified agate which we found some nice pieces but mostly small. On the night we left Arizona we had a hot dog and marsh mellow roast around the camp fire and headed north the next day. Stopped near Tonopah Nevada and picked up some more agate; there was lots of it and we will want to do that again when the weather is warmer, looked promising for lots of different colors and petrified wood.

We hope you got a chance to go to the sunshine and relax a bit this winter and we'll see you on the trail some time soon.



**Bob Bristow and Chuck Cullen at mine.**

## The Solo Creek quartz Crystal Dig

(Article adapted from the March 2009 newsletter of the North Idaho Mineral Club)

The U.S. Forest Service is considering the adoption of a management program for the Upper Solo Quartz Crystal dig site located on the Priest Lake Ranger District. The proposed action would set management guidelines for the site to protect resources and improve safety conditions...

Those of you who have been there, know that the site has some safety problems and these proposed regulations do not seem over-the-top. Of course we may find that enforcement is more than what we need.

These are the proposed new rules:

1. Digging is allowed only within the marked boundaries.
2. No commercial digging.
3. No diversion of water on site. This includes the creek, and groundwater. Digging is prohibited if groundwater is encountered
4. No digging within 20 feet of the existing creek.
5. No placement of any soil in the existing creek or 20 foot buffer area.
6. Only hand tools may be used
7. Digging sites cannot be reserved except by active use. Active use includes leaving tools in a hole overnight if camping in the local area or during a lunch break
8. Safe digging practices must be followed:  
No tunneling: Do not dig under a tree or its roots: Excavations must not have overhanging banks or vertical walls greater than four feet in height
9. Occupying an unsafe hole is prohibited (see No 8 above).
10. The digging site is closed to overnight camping.
11. All garbage must be packed out.
12. Dogs must be on a leash or otherwise tethered and under control.
13. The digging area is closed between sunset and sunrise.
14. The site will be open from May 1 through October 30, weather permitting



I came across this article in one of my exchange bulletins from 2007 - Article is copywrited but permission is given to reprint it in other newsletters. Originally printed in 1999

### BIGGS PICTURE JASPER, A LEGACY IS BORN By Dale Rhode

Biggs Picture jasper and the discovery thereof played a vital role in the evolution of the lapidary field. Many a lapidarist would not be involved with this fine hobby if it had not been for their awe struck inspiration in seeing a polished slab or cab of Biggs picture jasper ... no other jasper created such a "gold rush of excitement," as did the Biggs jasper discovery of 1964. It is engrained in my mind like it was last summer ... I was just a tow head. I remember my dad talking with some other rockhounds/miners about how that country around Biggs Junction was made up of basalt, rattlesnakes and sage brush, with sporadic deposits of agate ... who would have ever thought such beautiful jasper lay beneath the surface of this rugged desert.

The Biggs Jasper discovery changed the lives of a lot of people as you will see in the following pages .. I recall the excitement within my dad when he first saw a slab of Biggs jasper, he was hooked from that moment on!!! Everyone was fascinated by how the scenes in the jasper reflected so much the terrain from whence it came. From the time I ground out my first cab of Biggs picture jasper, I too have been drawn to its beauty.



Back in 1987, Sammi was able to give me some first hand accounts of the famous Biggs jasper discovery. In his own words: "it was in 1964 that a road crew was constructing I-84 and they," the crew, "were staying at my motel and RV park. Biggs was not discovered by the road crew while constructing the freeway like many have come to believe." As Sammi explained: "a great flood came and destroyed the canyons from the John Day River drainage, the Rufus drainage and Biggs Junction drainage. Biggs Junction was totally marooned with no way in or out, except by air. The state relief would bring in baloney and bread." It was around Christmas Eve and we had 75 people stranded at my motel ... " luckily the road crew was already there working on I-84 and they went to work re-building the washed out bridges.

Sammi noted that the flood had washed out these unusual looking boulders that were scattered about. He couldn't figure out why all the fuss over these rocks. His wife was becoming angry at the road crew as they would gather these rocks up and pile them next to their motel and RV park. She told Sammi to tell them fellows to be sure and take them rocks out when they left. Sammi laughed when he said that, "better than cry". Like he said now, there were boulders of blue Biggs and here he was telling the workers they better not leave them rocks!!!! Sammi shook his head and laughed and said "if only I had known." It wasn't until later that Sammi met up with a rockhound by the name of Hoot Elkins. Hoot soon became widely known for discovering the Deschutes picture jasper deposit. .. he showed

Sammi a slab of Biggs jasper and Sammi fell in love with the jasper and was an instant rock hound!!!! Then he was out gathering up the washed out boulders. Soon he had a full scale rock shop running and was marketing the jasper. The flood had destroyed the old highway 97 that came in from the south and the road crew tackled that after the bridges were completed. It was then that rock-hounds were able to see the huge exposed deposits of Biggs jasper. The flood waters had washed the dirt away that had concealed their hidden beauty for millions of years.

Rockhounds would get the Biggs from the road crews. Some road workers became rockhounds themselves ... by then there was a chaotic rush to get this jasper as it was gaining international attention ... In doing my research I came across an article written in the Lapidary Journal in 1968 and was stunned to read this excerpt ... "Biggs jasper, a silicified clay, and please, let us not call this material a jasper, no matter what its texture or coloring. Due to changes in its composition and lack of sufficient silica in some of its areas, this beautiful picture rock will never quite make the grade as top-quality cabochon material." Wow!!!! Evidently the writer didn't do his homework as some of the finest cabochons in museums today came from Biggs Junction.



[picture shows saws Sammi had at the shop]

Is it silicified clay? That discussion came up one afternoon while visiting with Howard Dolph. He laughed and said "let me show you something," he took me to his museum and I was awe struck to see a sliced chunk of Biggs with a

fish fossil in it - so one can certainly say it is silicified mud/ clay because if it was volcanic-the fish would have been dusted.

Howard Dolph, God rest his soul, was one of the first to get in on the Biggs digs. Some make false claims, but they just can't fill those boots. Howard mined hard and cut Biggs constantly for decades ... He also fished for salmon off the ramps at Celilo Falls right next to the Native Americans, before the dams covered the falls. Howard was a wealth of information on the history of Biggs jasper. Dolph left me wiser on every aspect of Biggs jasper and the history of the Columbia River gorge. There are many old-timers that were in on the first Biggs digs. Kop Kopcinski of Mitchell was one of the first to ever put Biggs jasper to a saw. Shirts Quant of Prineville dug tons of it – Hoot Elkins, dug both the Biggs and Deschutes picture jasper - and sadly there are some that are not worthy to list here because of their past, and continued dishonorable conduct.

Biggs jasper used to be confined to the north half of "the rockhounds' triangle," from Biggs south to Wasco, then north to Rufus and west back to Biggs. Since this writing (1999) a new discovery has been made at Tygh Valley, some 25 miles S.W. as the crow flies . It was also dug on the Washington side of the river for years until the corps and railroad shut down the digs. Biggs jasper will always play a major role in the lapidary world and it has been my pleasure to share with you the stories of those that are worthy of being noted here. We now own our own Biggs jasper mine and I gladly welcome folks to come and dig, just drop me an email for instructions.

**The History of Biggs Picture Jasper** is copyright protected, 1999. Reprinted with permission of the author.

You can buy Biggs Jasper from the Author at his Ebay Store. Rhodes Cabbin and Gems –