

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 January 2010

### Minutes from the Christmas Party, Dec. 15, 2009

*By Johnie Pitman*

On our first snowy night of the season we had 32 people come to the Christmas Party. It was not an easy commute for anyone but those who came partook of great and plentiful food. Entertaining and sharing with us were Luci, Bob, Harold and Brian, Thank you. The gift exchange was fun, with lots of good gifts.

A little business for the night included; Luci's notes from the Club Equipment Committee Meeting which was held Dec. 4, Steve Fox is the chairmen of this committee. The equipment has been moved to Scott Jackson's shop only because it is warmer and roomier. The winter hours will be the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturdays 12-6 pm. Scott's address is: 1028 Old Hwy 12 Mile Rd.

The club has a display case of petrified wood in the Kettle Falls library, that case will be changed the end of Dec. If you would like to put in a display let us know, they will be glad to see your rocks and collections.

The club has forms for putting your case in the Spokane show, Mar 12-14. Their theme is "Earth Treasures". Put a case together and use it at both shows.

Applications for the rock hound retreat at John Day starting the week of Labor Day need to be sent in soon; let us know if you need one.

Bring your suggestion for a theme for our show to the Jan. meeting.

Dues are due or you will not receive our newsletter.



### A Visit with Fred Rossman

*Pictures and Story by Joseph Barreca*



Provenance is the story of a piece of art. It involves the materials, the artist, the concepts, the style and the place of origin. Without it, a ring is just a ring. A precious stone is just a pretty rock. A bead is just a bead. When I went to meet with Fred Rossman, master jeweler, sailor and old hippy, I just wanted to see how he made beads the old fashioned way. (Well not that old fashioned really as it turns out, but at least by hand.) What I came away with was a new appreciation for what makes a tiny object, sometimes of no practical value, a precious treasure that is handed down from generation to generation.

Fred makes his jewelry in a small shop, not much bigger than an average bathroom at the

rear of his house. It is an old settler's home that Fred rebuilt to be tighter and more modern. So it has its own provenance from its historical roots.

If you think about it, a jewelry shop reflects most of the technology that mankind has developed since the iron age. From torches, hammers, armor and anvils to magnifying glasses, telescopes, sextants, watches and guns, there is little in the way of technology until perhaps the age of electronics that could not be made in a jeweler's shop. And in fact, Fred prides himself on refining, cutting grinding, rolling, soldering and building all the parts of each piece of jewelry from scratch from old metal and raw stones. Each piece then is very old and at the same time very new. The stones and metal come from all over the world, but the ideas and craftsmanship are completely local. Try to find that at your neighborhood big box store.

When he gets a chance to do custom work, Fred starts with the person the piece is made for. He will think about how much physical abuse their hands get, their heritage and coloring, their personality... He wants his work to last and enhance the lives of those who own it. He wants the owner to know about the stones, the metal, the concept and the history of each piece. That marriage of humanity and nature multiplies the value of the mineral treasures we bring home from our travels many times over. For instance, he made a scrimshaw of a dolphin on the tooth of an Orca whale. Dolphins are a favorite food of Orcas. That timeless relationship is captured in not just the look but the very substance of the piece. Provenance.

So you can see, I got a lot more than I bargained for in this visit. It will take awhile to spell it all out. I'll talk about making beads to start with and move on to metals and ivory in future articles. So here is making a bead in 5 easy steps:

1. **Block the rock:** You need to start with a cube cut from a slab of rock that is the thickness of the bead you want to end up with. It's really all about the rock. It needs to be tough enough to take the abuse it is going to get in the rest of the drilling, grinding and polishing. So rocks that fracture easily, or have faults in them won't do. You are going to bring a lot of

light and depth out of this rock and it's going to take work, so be picky.



2. **Create a starting hole:** A diamond drill with a burr on the end is ideal for this. It is hard to position a hole exactly where you want it going straight down, but if you lay the burr in from the side to create a little pit in the top of the block, it will be a lot easier to drill exactly at that spot.



3. **Drill straight down:** This seems on the face of it simple and obvious, but it is the hardest part. It can take 45 minutes to plunge a drill up and down in the same hole so that the debris clears out each time. You need to wobble a little at first to open it up. If you are using a hand-held Dremel, the tool will start to heat up in your hands. Fred recommends drills that run from a flexible shaft. They are easier to hold and don't heat up as much. Only drill halfway through. Now repeat steps 2 and 3 on the other side of the block so the holes meet up but the surface is not cracked by pressure from the other side.





4. **Round the corners:** A Flat Lap machine is a handy way to do this. You will not create little concave portions that are hard to grind out later. It does not take a lot of time and you don't need to do more than give it an overall rounded shape.
5. **Turn it on a mandrel:** This is the big trick. Fred makes his own mandrels by taking a drill bit with a slightly smaller shaft than the original hole and drilling it up to the shank in a piece of dowel.



Detach the drill and the shaft of the drill becomes your mandrel. Put the bead on it. If you stick it straight into the grinding wheel, it will just wear down the end of the bead. If you align it with the axle of the wheel, it will just clunk at the sides. But if you bring it into the wheel at an angle, the grinding wheel will turn the bead and grind off the high spots at the same time. By adjusting the angle, you can round the whole bead evenly. Run it through a series of wheels with finer and finer grit, just like a cabochon and you get a polished bead.

6. **Tumble the bead in a vibrating tumbler:** Okay, I know I said 5 steps and this is number 6. You can do just the five and it comes out faster and better, but it is almost as good and a lot easier to get the bead roughed into shape and then tumble it. You can do more this way and with a vibrating tumbler as opposed to a tumbling one, you can do it in 1/4<sup>th</sup> the time. That's the way the big boys do it.

Speaking of big boys, do you wonder how they come up with those long strings of stone beads that you can buy at rock shows, on the streets of Mexico or on the Internet? They use a ultrasonic wire drill. A what? A wire drill is a machine that plunges a wire into the bead block thousands of times per minute and automatically feeds the wire. It acts like a hammer drill clearing out the dust as it breaks tiny chips off inside the hole. These machines cost thousands of dollars and are used in commercial operations. And of course the provenance is pretty much down the tubes.

Fred made a sample bead for the club out of Bloodstone, Heliotrope. It is green with veins of red in it. It's also his birth stone. Fred is 69 but he has had only 17 birthdays. I'll let you figure that one out.



### **Pecos Diamond** *By Joseph Barreca*

At the Christmas Party I got small collection of rocks that included a "Pecos Diamond" (pictured at left). Wondering what the heck it was, I did a little research on the Internet. It is double terminated quartz, but look how unlike most quartz the 6 sides of the point come together as one. They only occur in a few places along the Pecos River valley in southeastern New Mexico. They are found in dolomite beds and come in different colors. The short rectangular sides of this specimen are unique.



## State of the Club Address

By Johnie Pitman

A review of some outstanding achievements by the club in 2009. Our annual show was very successful thanks to the efforts of Bill Allen for his leadership and all the hard work done by everyone. An outstanding addition to the show was the fluorescent booth, it was enjoyed by young and old alike, thanks to Bill again for constructing it and Rita Cordrey for explaining it to everyone.

In 2009 we also were able to give three \$500 scholarships, one each to Chewelah, Colville, and Kettle Falls high schools. This was a great accomplishment and will help three young people along their way to a higher education, thanks to everyone for supporting this program.

This year the club was also able to purchase some lapidary equipment and get it set up for club members to use. Thanks to Mike Latipi for letting us use his garage to get started and for making necessary adjustment to some of the equipment so that it is more user friendly. The equipment has now been moved to Scott Jackson's garage and is set up and ready for you to use, his address is 1028 Old Highway-12 Mile Road, Colville.

The club also went on somewhere around thirteen or fourteen field trips which were a lot of fun and hopefully everyone found rocks to take home. Thanks to Rex Barrans for planning and leading most of the field trips, and to Scott Jackson, Steve Fox and Joe Barreca for stepping up and leading the trips when Rex wasn't available.

The November "Rock Auction" was fun, thanks for the donations and purchases they are appreciated. And last but not least the Christmas Party was GREAT. The food was wonderful, the gift exchange fun, and thanks for sharing stories, lyrics, poems, and writings.

Well, enough for 2009, in 2010 we are looking for another good year. Our rock show is scheduled for March 26 and 27, the next planning meeting will be at 6:00 pm before our meeting on January 19, 2010, you are welcome to come and help. Bill Allen is the show chairman again this year and he has already been at work making arrangements. We are looking forward to more good field trips this year and need a few new places to visit this year. If you know of some sites that the club could

go let Rex Barrans or Steve Fox know so that it can be checked out and put on the list. We will try to work in some workshops on some of the lapidary skills this year, like wire wrapping and cab making as a start. Lets work together and have a lot of fun doing it in 2010.

## Concretions

Pictures and Story by Joseph Barreca



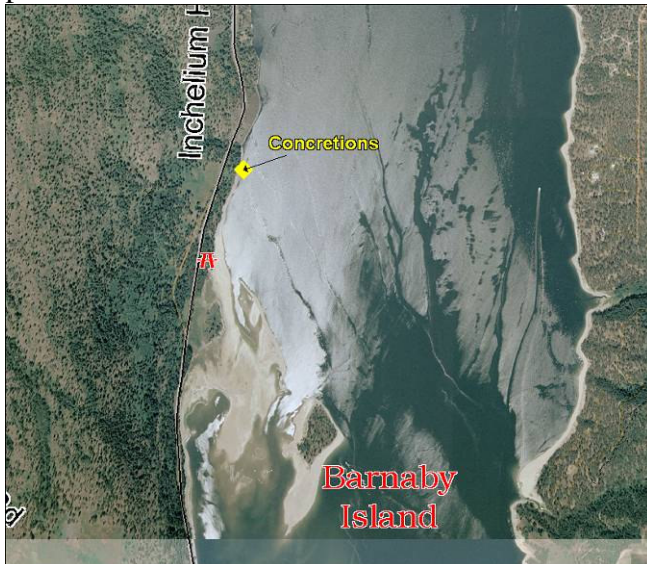
I can't believe that it has been almost four years since I went on a little expedition along the shore of Lake Roosevelt to look for concretions with my wife Cheryl and I still have not done a story on these fascinating rocks.

You can find them in many places along the lake. If you find them outside of the National Recreation Area boundary, you can keep them legally. The biggest thrill in most cases however is finding a really spectacular outcropping of them. One such outcropping is just north of Barnaby Island on the Ferry County shore. (See the map on the following page.)

In the picture at the top of this article you can see that they come in a wide variety of shapes. The rounded ones are common at the foot of the cliffs of the Sherman Creek game range. The really ragged one is from the Stevens County side closer to Rice. What they have in common is that they really are basically natural concrete. They form when limestone, which we have in abundance in Northeast Washington, is dissolved by rain water or water with a little tannic acid in it from tree roots or some other source. If the water drips or seeps into a space where it is exposed to air, it forms calcium carbonate,  $\text{CaCO}_3$ . This is what gives us stalactites and stalagmites in



limestone caves. When this happens in an environment with fine sand and clay, the calcium carbonate forms microscopic crystals that bond the sand and clay together. This is the same process that forms concrete.



[Map of the location of some concretions]

So these are not precious stones normally, though very nice ones in pure white sand can be worth a lot of money. (See the March 2006 edition of the Panorama Prospector, The Ultimate Collection, for a picture of one of these – See the following article for how you can view back issues on our new website.) They are interesting because of their fantastic shapes.



When these shapes come together in a giant formation such as the one above, they are truly spectacular. Another fun thing about them is that you can climb around on the formations. They look like they could be moving and are sometimes hard to negotiate. The best time to see them is early in the spring when the lake has been drawn down for flood control. But you can see

them at other times just by cruising along the shore in a boat. Try a run from French Point Rocks along the west side of the reservoir to Barnaby Island.

## New and Improved Club Website

By Joseph Barreca



Okay, I know I am always yammering about the club website in these newsletters, but this time it is worth talking about. This time you get a chance to talk back. The new website is at its heart a BLOG (short for web log). That means you can add comments of your own. Most pages have a comment section at the bottom. The home page is all BLOG. Click on the **comments** tag at the top of any BLOG entry to see the comments and add your own.

This new site, [PanoramaGem.com](http://PanoramaGem.com), has all of our old newsletters with indexes to the stories. It has the usual membership information, and also pictures and short introductions to some of our most notorious members, with links to stories about them in the newsletter. You could be among them, better check it out.

There is also a links page to other good sites on the Internet, including one from our very own Bob Bristow. The events calendar has the known rock shows etc. for the club. The scheduled field trips will go up there when they have actually been scheduled.

A part that took a lot of time to get going and could take up a lot of your time using is the interactive Google Map with 16 of our rocksites, pictures and links to stories about them. You can change the view to a satellite image if you want to check out the best roads going into it. You can zoom in and pan to see what is nearby. I plan to add more rocksites in the months to come.