

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

April 2006

Panorama Gem and Mineral Club Minutes for March 21, 2006 *Luci Bristow*

The show meeting was called to order by President Johnie at 6:00 PM. It appears that everything is in place and ready for the Show. We need to be available for set-up and take-down.

The regular meeting began at 7:10 PM. Mabel welcomed everyone. Mike Latapie and Mabel are cookies bearers for the next meeting.

Steve and Mike went to see the pyrite dig. It was covered with snow but still somewhat accessible. So the field trip is still on. Please meet at the Colville Safeway at 10:00 AM on March 26, 2006.

The field trip to Saddle Mountain on April 8 and 9 was discussed. No action at this time.

Sylvia gave the Treasurer's Report. Good work, Sylvia!

The Scholarship requirements and applications were presented to the Kettle Falls and Colville High Schools. They will be back in May.

It was mentioned that we would possibly have 350 students at the Show on Friday. LTC is providing wheel chairs for people who need them and will be delivered at 12:00 noon on Friday.

The Rock Rollers thanked us for our support of their show. Bob and Bev said they felt that this was the best show yet for the Rock Rollers. Bev mentioned that because of the renovation of the Fairgrounds building, the rent will probably be more next year.

Joe Barreca read a tidbit on "Governmentium". It was very funny! Copies were requested. (See page 5)

Bob Bristow gave a talk about "Rock Hound Gulch" and Denny Mountain. It was interesting and informative. Thanks Bob!

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 PM

From Slabs to Cabs

While the rest of us were frittering away our time at the rock show talking, Bev Bockman was busy making cabochons (cabs). I thought it would be a good time to learn more about this popular lapidary hobby and frittered away some of her time too. I asked her what she would tell someone who wanted to start making cabs. She replied that they should get professional help.

Don't take this the wrong way. She meant that it's a good idea to take a class or two so you



can get the technique down and find out if you are cut out for cabs. Bev took a course at a community college. +There are mistakes you can make and learning from someone

else's is easier, faster and less expensive.

A lot of us have started out with a collection of rocks, many of which we know would be very interesting if cut into slabs. The next step is usually to buy a rock saw. If you want to polish your slabs, a Vibrolap will do the job. A vibrolap rubs the face of a slab in grit. Finer and finer grits make a finished polish. They can cost from \$500 to \$1000 new, or \$400 or less used. You can also use the new vibrating "tumblers" to accomplish nearly the same thing.

When you begin to look closely at the slabs, you see especially nice colors, swirls, scenes etc that you want show off.



Vibrolap

This is where cabochons come in. They are a great way to show off almost any rock that is hard enough to take a polish. But they don't come easy. You need to gear up some more. Sheets with patterns cut in different sizes and shapes allow you to target the nicest parts. Double-sided patterns are best because they allow you to see the pattern from either side, after you scribe it with a sharpie pen or an aluminum or brass point. The color of the rock will help you choose. Then you need a little 4" to 6" trim saw. After cutting the corners away from the target shape, you will need to grind the edges down to your scribed outline.



Grinding is what it is all about. Before you can get a grip on a trimmed rock, you need some of lapidary's secret sauce. Dop wax is a combination of beeswax and shellac that you can buy at lapidary supply outlets. It is temperature sensitive. Typically, wooden dowels are dipped in the melted wax and stuck to the back of each future cab. Harder rocks may need higher

temperature wax. Sensitive rocks, such as opal, need cooler wax. The wax holds fast while you grind at room temperature. But it releases easily when frozen. (Cabs on dowels are lined up on the back of this tray.)

Back to the grind... For this you need a cabbing unit. These machines cost \$1400 to \$2000 new. The good part is they last for years and years. Diamond Pacific is a good brand. A typical machine will have 6 to 8 wheels, each with diamond grits of decreasing roughness. On the end is a polishing disk. There is a tray under the disks for water or oil and a little pump that lubricates the rock. You grind the cab down to it's basic shape on the roughest wheels. Move on to smoother wheels to avoid cutting gouges or making flat spots.

It takes time, patience, experience and attention to do the job right. A large cabochon, 1 1/2" to 2" can take two hours to make. Smaller sizes can be done in 45 minutes. After they are polished, no further coatings are needed. You can mount them in ready-made mounts or take up wire-wrapping to get the look you want. You will need to polish the back too for transparent pieces.

One of the best ways to get a jump on the hobby is to find a collection of rocks and equipment at an auction or through a classified ad. Many of the nicest specimens are hard to find

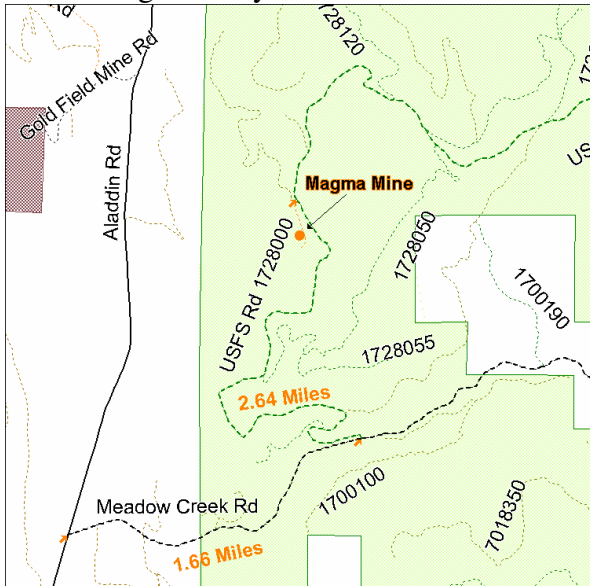


now. This hobby will not make you a lot of money. A large cabochon belt buckle or broach may sell for \$35. What you get is a chance to see and bring out the best in each piece. You also learn about rocks from all over the world. Most are found in exactly that form in only one place. Cabbing brings out the best in each stone and the person who makes it so.

Supplies: <http://www.alpha-supply.com>

Mission to the Magma

It was the Sunday before the 6th Annual Panorama Gem and Mineral Club Rock Show, theme “Fools Gold (Pyrite),” and we were long on fools and short on gold. So a hardy crew left the Safeway parking lot at 10 in the morning, intent on fixing the situation. Steve White and Mike Latapie had scoped out the site the week before. It was 4 wheel drive on mud and snow. They almost turned back. But they didn’t and brought home a couple buckets of that flaky pyrite we wanted to give away to kids at the rock show.



The Magma Mine is on Meadow Creek Rd, 20 miles out of Colville on Aladdin Route. From there, drive up Meadow Creek 1.66 miles and turn left onto Forest Service Road 1728. Another 2.64 miles and you can pull over and park. The road to the mine is grown over with trees and you will need to walk 1/4 mile or go straight over the side of the main road and down to the old road. The easiest way is to start down a road blocked by some big boulders:



Then stay to the left following the path between the trees. You can see the old mine building below the road when you get to it.



On the upper side of the road, the original adit into the mine has caved in. For safety and kid-safe reasons, this is a good thing. But it would be interesting

to explore. The Magma was developed in 1927. The metals mined included: copper, lead, molybdenum, tungsten. The minerals it contained are: calcite, epidote, galena, grossular, molybdenite, pyrite, scheelite, sphalerite and tremolite.

The tailings pile is where the fun is now. We hadn’t been there more than a minute or two before Rex Barrans found a large rock glittering with pyrite.



You can see it here are the base of his pack. The snow was still melting and wherever there were bare rocks, there was pyrite. When you dig below the surface, the rocks are

covered in dirt and harder to examine. You might want some water or a brush to

clean them. We did find some molybdenum, but nothing too precious. Even the soil was full of shiny pyrite. It’s a great site for kids and old fools, if not for gold.

6th Annual Rock Show Draws the Crowds



Ann Berger's table at the Rock Show

There was a lot going on at the rock show this year. Out front, Dave Paquette was showing kids how to pan for gold, and adults too. He also had a large display of mineral finds he has made in the area as well as his dredging unit.

One you signed up for the door prizes and got in the front door, dealer displays stretched from wall to wall. They ranged from already mounted gems and minerals to raw slabs, tumbled rocks and finished jewelry.



Not to be outdone, the club's displays downstairs were great. I was especially impressed with the displays from the Pend Oreille Rock and Gem Club. I don't think you could have fit any more rocks in there and still seen them.



They also put up a display from the Pend Oreille mine that included several varieties of lead ore.



This display by Susan Andrew was eclectic but very colorful. A particularly nice part was that everything was labeled.

Rex's maps and local minerals got a mention in the Statesman Examiner. The wheel of fortune was running pretty much non-stop the first day. Silent auctions and door prizes were going on. Chuck Prentice was knapping and Bev Bockman was cabing. Here is a picture of Johnie



Pitman's round rocks. Like this article, it barely fit in the space allotted.

Geologic Map of North America

On April 4th, local geologist, Bill Swartz, gave a presentation on the *Geologic Map of North America*. Eighteen years in the making.

“This is the first such map to use the geological equivalents of molecular genetics: radiologic dating, geo-magnetism and plate tectonic theory.” So writes Bill Swartz in his description of this map which is displayed on the rear wall of the Colville Public Library.

Bill’s talk ranged over the 200 year history of geologic mapping. It dates back to money Sir Joseph Banks gave to the British surveyor, William (Strata) Smith to map the layers of ammonites, coal and sedimentary rock as they emerged across the whole of



Bill holding an aledade, used for field mapping.

England. Smith’s life is the subject of the popular book by Simon Winchester, [The Map that Changed the World](#), a very good read for anyone who wants to understand the roots of geologic science. Bill managed to include antidotes on: Ferdinand V. Hayden, who first used symbols for strikes and dips in a continental scale geologic map; Luna B. Leopold, an earth scientist widely considered the nation’s top expert on how rivers shape the land; and John Wesley Powell, the first person to lead an expedition down the uncharted portion of the Colorado River in 1869.

Trying to understand a world where some of the oldest rocks (4.2 billion years old) are found in northern Canada and some of the youngest are emerging in the middles of the oceans, where they only survive for less than 200 million years before being pushed back into the mantle is difficult at best. Appreciating the myriad scientific techniques and intense collaboration needed to do geology is the most that can be retained from such a short lecture.



The discussion of the map itself ranged far and wide. You should take a look before it’s gone.

Governmentium

A major research institution (MRI) has recently announced the discovery of the heaviest chemical element yet known to science. The new element has been tentatively named Governmentium. Governmentium has 1 neutron, 12 assistant neutrons, 75 deputy neutrons, and 224 assistant deputy neutrons, giving it an atomic mass of 312. These 312 particles are held together by forces called morons, which are surrounded by vast quantities of lepton-like particles called peons. Since governmentium has no electrons, it is inert. However, it can be detected as it impedes every reaction with which it comes into contact. A minute amount of governmentium causes one reaction to take over four days to complete when it would normally take less than a second. Governmentium has a normal half-life of three years; it does not decay, but instead undergoes a reorganization in which a portion of the assistant neutrons and deputy neutrons exchange places. In fact, governmentium’s mass will actually increase over time, since each reorganization will cause some morons to become neutrons, forming isodopes.

This characteristic of moron-promotion leads some scientists to speculate that governmentium is formed whenever morons reach a certain quantity in concentration. This hypothetical quantity is referred to as Critical Morass.

(As promised, here is the article on Governmentium. The only reference I could find was to jokeaday.com)