

Place: **Union Hall**  
Meyers Street  
Next to Campus Life  
In Kettle Falls



Time: 7:00 PM  
Third Tuesday  
Each Month  
(Jan.-Nov.)

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## The Panorama Prospector

### June 2006

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#### Panorama Gem and Mineral Club Minutes May, 2006

*Joe Barreca (Secretary pro tem)*

(This was a very long meeting. Come home Luci, Come home!)

Steve White told us about his visit to a fiberglass factory where they turn sand into spun glass. Steve could make digging sand sound interesting, so this was better than you might expect.

I had to open my big mouth and ask about doing a web site again. There was LOTS of discussion about this. The main concern was that too much field trip information would draw crowds and ruin some of our favorite spots. We agreed to leave the field trip information in the hands of our field trip group. To get on the field trip email list, contact Rex and Mable Barrans: [rmbarrans@turboisp.com](mailto:rmbarrans@turboisp.com). Bill Allen pointed out that you can't find out when and where the field trips are from this newsletter. Rex felt that there is no way around that because decisions from the group and from landowners don't give much lead time. In the end, we agreed to try a website. I have a preliminary design for one and may have more about it later in this newsletter.

Sylvia Allen gave a very detailed treasurer's report. We had \$4104.05 in our regular account and \$1315.56 in the scholarship account. We took in \$440.50 during the month and spent \$393.55. Income for the rock show was \$2142.78 and expenses \$1329.39 for a net profit of \$813.39. Good work Club!

Joe Barreca, (me again), mentioned that he had presented a plan to the Stevens County Historical Society for a geology display. It might involve soliciting ore samples from rock club members. Rex Barrans wants to make sure that if we do, they are authentically from designated mines. (Continued page 2)

#### Northwest Underground

*By Joe Barreca*

Besides the value of rocks and minerals that you can find in the field, some people just like searching out old mines, exploring them and living to tell about it. This month a client told me about an online interest group called Northwest Underground. You can find it on the web at:

<http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/NWUNDERGROUND/>. (Don't ask me why it is with "Finance Groups", it doesn't cost anything to join, You do get some financial advertising at the bottom of the page.) They have picture albums and stories galore about old mines in Washington, mostly on the west side, but they profess an interest in the east side. In fact, as an example, I am including one about the Montana Mine near Mazama.



(More Minutes continued from Page 1)  
 Bev Bockman reported on the Western Federation meeting and a great rock show in Kennewick. Their newsletter mailing list was lost for a while and that was an issue. Two clubs left the Federation and two more joined. They would like rock donations for their silent auction. You can give them to Bev or Bob (208) 773-5384.

Johnie Pitman presented a \$500 scholarship to the Kettle Falls senior on May 17<sup>th</sup>. There were 5 applications for a scholarship in Colville.

Many suggestions for field trips were considered. Most were too high to be accessible right now. We settled on a trip to the Young America.

Some members are planning a more extended trip for opals in Nevada, sunstones in Oregon and other specimens in California. Chuck Prentice reminds us that the annual Pow Wow Club gathering in Madras Oregon starts June 28<sup>th</sup>.

Jim Batchelor did a show and tell on opals he found near Fruitland.

Sylvia Allen relates that the Chewelah Valley Boy Scouts would like to go rock-hounding with us. We may invite them to pan for gold after August. [End of minutes].

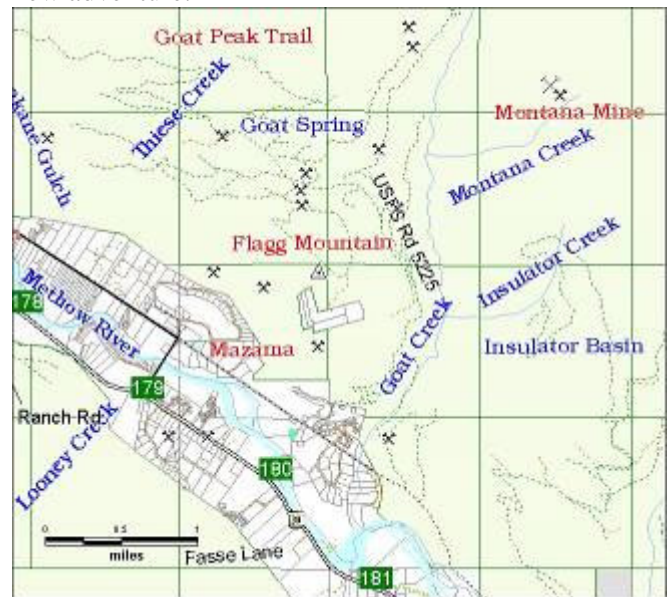


The club received a promotion for the book: The Beauty of Banded Agates, by Michael Carlson. It costs \$60 in hardcover and \$40 in soft cover. But Rock clubs get a 40% discount. This picture is from their website, [www.beautifulagates.com](http://www.beautifulagates.com). The book has 263 full color photographs on 160 pages. It might be something the club could buy, though it would probably get a lot of use on just about any coffee table.



(Underground continued)  
**Montana Mine Mill**

“For years I've wanted to visit the Montana Mine, In 1998 I attempted to drive down the road to Goat Creek where the old miners trail begins, but due to heavy brush and my lack of knowledge of the area at that time, I surrendered the pursuit and vowed to return. Asking around, I never got any excitement out of what lay in the hills above the small town of Mazama. One unnamed person told a group of us that it was just some old junk and the stamps of a mill. Well after seeing the write up on a local ghost town site we knew this was a place to see. So with some preparation and a crew of four, we headed off for a new adventure.



The trip started out like the previous trip, we started down the old road to Goat Creek, we soon encountered fallen trees from the previous winter, we were the first for this season to venture down the road. Parking near the creek we soon looked for the fallen log to cross Goat Creek, or I now call it, Goat River of Hell. Due to its narrow and semi deep channel and the volume of water flowing down, would make for a real nice drowning or broken everything. So up the creek a ¼ mile we found the log, a nice one at that, the road is about 90 ft above this point on a switchback, we found this out a little late. So over the log and up the hill to the ridge that now separates Goat Creek and Montana Creek. We soon hit the miners trail, and began to follow its zigzag pattern up the hill, passing a few prospect pits and finding small pieces of quartz float, the quartz had some oxide in it but we never found any carrying metallic minerals. We soon passed over 900 feet of elevation as the warm sun beat down on us and the temperature was in the mid 70's. There's not a lot of shade along this point of the trail, but after 1000 feet climb, the trail winds into a nice forested area that gets you cooler from every step.

Now Montana Creek is churning off to your right and the trail is really beginning to define itself again, and in a matter of minutes, cresting around a small grassy corner the amazing site of this large wooden structure appears out of thin air. The only word out of my mouth at that moment I believe was "WOW".

Over the years I have seemed to have missed all the last mills in Washington, like the destruction of the, Caba Texas mill, around 2001, the Alder Mine mill in 2005, the Red Shirt mill, and many more. The Montana mill is in a state of decay but will likely stand for many more years, I hope. The mill is a two stamp and contains almost all the components of operation. The jaw crusher looks as if it was ran a few days ago. The ore pile next to the crusher seemed as if you could start shoveling in ore right now. As for the structure three walls still stand tall and less than a quarter of the roof is intact, the lower wall has fallen, but in a weird way, it's nice, it allows needed light for great pictures.

The bunkhouse is around 400 feet from the mill and is a solid intact structure, roof, stairs and bed frames included. The hand carved boards on the floor are very interesting and the window frames look as if you could set panes in today. The stairs are remarkable that they are still so sturdy; the upstairs looked to be packrat free, no smells about.

Next to the bunkhouse is an old log cabin site, probably the cabin before the investor's money arrived. The local garbage pit is relatively close to the bunkhouse, and is in the true form of most garbage piles, rusted and looks like junk.

Next, we headed up 100 feet to lower workings and probably was the last tunnel worked on the property. The tailings are in two piles, the waste rock and a pile that looks to be the mineral ore. A rat hole allows you to slide down into the mine, several inches of water fills the mine for about 50ft, this is probably dry in late summer.



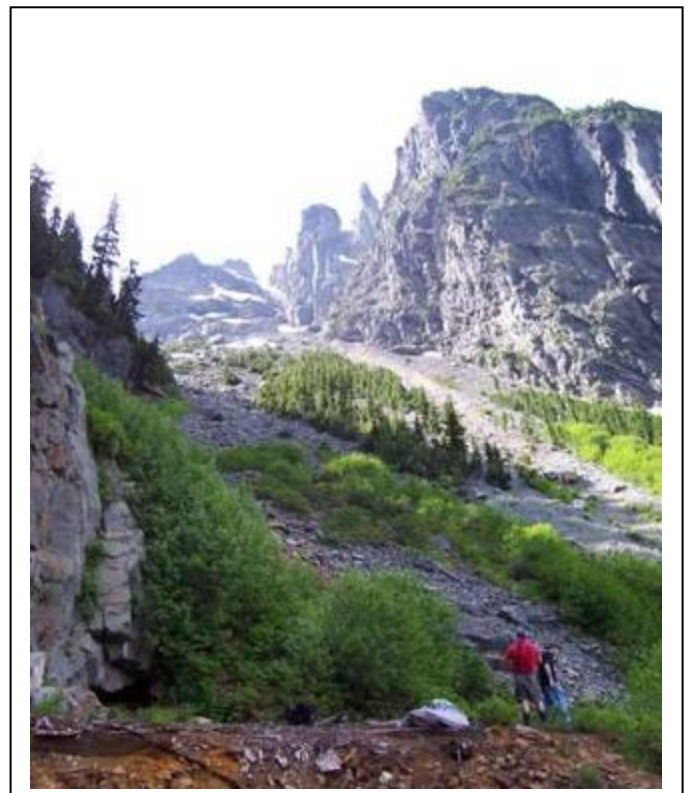
Next at about 70ft we found a pristine ore car mounted on the rails. From our examination it seems to be rusted solid to the track. At about 100+ feet we found several single and double jack drills. These tunnel were done by hand. Amazing!

We soon came to the intersection of the vein, here the tunnel is drifted to the right and the left. The left side is about

20ft and the right drift is an estimated 60ft. Here you can see the vein in the ceiling and find some ore samples on the floor. The tunnel appears to be very solid and very little rock is found on the floor. I thought it was really nice to see such a nice ore car sitting in the mine, it was really unexpected.

From here we head up to the next mine, located to the left and about 90 ft higher, a surface tram can be located near this mine going down to the mill, you will also find a large pile of ore in these areas. The mine here is completely sloughed over and looks as if it will stay that way forever. Near this location you will find the remains of a log structure. Cabin? We did not locate the third tunnel which is located higher on the hill. Over all, this hike is well worth the effort of about 3 hours up and 4 quarts of fluids, not to mention the sore knees. I would not recommend this as a mid summer hike due to the extreme heat and the likelihood of rattle snakes. Add time to the finding of the log and resting, and this trip could take 6 or more hours. This mine is one of the best preserved sites in Washington so let's please keep it that way and take care of it. The explorers on this hike where Jef, Spencer, Todd, and Chris. Thanks to all for their help with another great adventure.” Chris

This is an example of what you can find at NW Underground. You can also visit their web site at <http://www.geocities.com/nwue/site/> and order their books. Joining and digging through the files on the Yahoo Site however is a much better source of information. (Below: Mystery Mine site Monte Cristo)



# We Got the Blues on Grouse Creek Rd

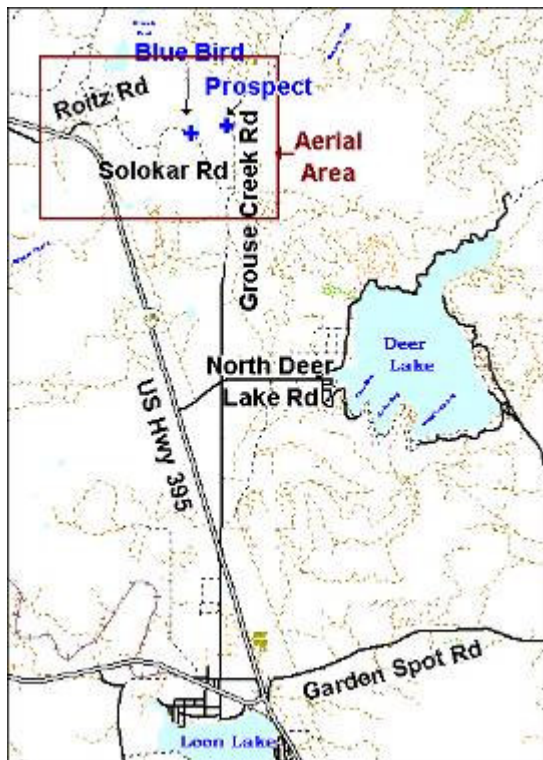
By Joseph Barreca

With visions of little carved figures in my head, I wanted to find some malachite in Stevens County. Since there are hundreds of old copper mines in the county, that didn't seem like such a stretch. Turns out that it is more difficult than just driving up to some old mine and picking up some high-quality green malachite. A man injured himself in a 60 foot fall exploring the United Copper mine a few months ago. Most mines are played-out, sloughed-in or just plain off limits. What malachite can be found is not big, pure or hard. Finding the darker blue azurite is even harder and the highly prized chrysocolla is pretty much out-of-reach. So I was glad to have some help from Bob and Luci Bristow in finding what we did. These are darn nice garden and shelf rocks, and were not too hard or dangerous to find.



The two places we looked are not far apart and just north of Loon Lake. I have heard different versions of their names. The DNR calls them the "Loon Lake Blue Bell" and the "Suzan Copper Prospect." They are just off Solokar and Grouse Creek county roads. Turn at Roitz Rd.

The Blue Bird had a small ore body that played out. They left behind some pretty big tailings piles where you can still find pieces of green malachite. Down below is an active beaver pond. It is interesting to



see how the beaver made a dam without plugging up the culvert under the road. The May Flies were thick while we were there. They don't bite, but Cheryl had to brush them off my back. Bob pointed out that big rocks usually roll to the bottom of the pile. This means that in order to get at them, you need to move the smaller gravel first. Little green rocks popped out at you everywhere, but bigger ones are going to take some work. (Forest Capital took it over from Boise.)



Look for this green gate on the East side of Solokar Rd a little over 1/2 mile from where it joins Grouse Creek. You will have to park here and walk in about 200 yards. The tailings piles are on the North side of the road and go back into the woods.



The "Suzan Copper Prospect" was never really a mine, though Bob says they had some tunnels there. It is caved in now. There is a small pull off just north of the big field on the west side of Grouse Creek Rd. You can see the rock outcrops under the trees. Park there and walk to the far side of the outcrop. Some nice specimens have been found here with both the green malachite and blue azurite stains



on white quartz. Again, you will need to do some digging. This is a small pocket, so don't be greedy. Bob almost didn't let me write about it. There is bound to be a better dig somewhere else nearby, but for now, it is a little blue bird of happiness.