

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 November 2009

Panorama Gem and Mineral Club

Minutes for Oct. 20, 2009

By Ginger Pitman

Vanita did the honors of welcoming 5 guests to our meeting. The refreshments are always good and next month will be Luci and Pat.

Sylvia had sent the treasurer's report and Bill had sent the update on the show arrangements: the dealer contracts will go out by the end of Oct. Most of the business was the nomination of officers for next year.

President nominations were for Johnie Pitman who would do one more year if no one else is nominated. Vice President nominations were: Bob Bristow and Brian Martell. Sectary nomination was: Ginger Pitman. Treasurer nomination was: Sylvia Allen. New three year Trustee nominations were Harold Ingram, Daniel Lundy, Tom Scales. Bill Allen will serve as Show Chairman, he could use an apprentice to learn the steps, Joe Barreca has done a great job as newsletter editor and will (Thank goodness) continue.

Vanita Novak will graciously serve as our Hostess. Rex Barrens will do the field trips but he needs help and we can all do that. Scott Jackson and Steve Fox have lead trips this year. Any suggestions on sites to return to and new sites please put on paper and give to Rex.

Rex gave a report on the last two trips, showed his Diopside and Harold had some nice pictures. The field trips are done for the year but they are a huge part of our club so if you have any info to share please help Rex out.

The Christmas Party will be at the community room in the basement of the Colville Library on Dec 15, pot luck, 5 PM to decorate, dinner at 6 PM.

Dues for the year run from November to November so dues are now due, (\$15 per family). Johnie gave a talk on the rock hound retreat he and others attended, highly recommended.

Hearts of Stone

Story and Pictures by Joe Barreca



By the time this newsletter gets to you, the snow will have already started falling. In the spirit of the season, it was time to revisit the club rock shop and reverse the summer-long process of finding new rocks by looking into the rocks that I (and I'll bet you also) have stuffed in buckets, corners, boxes and plastic bags all over the place.

You may recognize the rock in the picture as a piece of the red marble quarry magnesite. I think that because it is so plentiful at the quarry, we may be under-valuing these rocks. On a clean break the whole surface is covered in sparkling crystal faces. That is a hard act to follow. We were wondering if the rock is hard enough to take a shine in a tumbler. A fast way to find that out is to grind down a face of the rock and see what you get.

What you get is a beautiful red-brown color with flashing crystal faces and translucent depths. It would be competitive in any collection of kitchen countertops or stone tile floors. I think it could also be carved into some intriguing shapes.

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Meeting Minutes from Page 1

November is our “Rock Auction” the money is for the scholarship fund. So bring your donation rocks and money to buy some good bargains for a good cause.

The program for the night was rock identification, the same one given early in the spring and improvement was shown. Some time later the program will be revised and you can test your new knowledge. ■

The magnesite was just the first of several samples I brought from my chaotic collection. The mystery of what is really in the hearts of stones continued as I ground down several other pieces that I have been wondering about, sometimes for years. Magnesite was one of the softer ones, hardness of 3 ½ to 4 ½ . I had another rock that came from the “Marble Quarry” mine about 30 miles out Aladdin Rd. It is white and almost clear when you grind down through the outside dirt. With a hardness of 3, marble, which is basically calcite (CaCO_3), is also easy to grind through but less likely to take a good polish. Much like the magnesite, calcite is very sparkly with crystal faces on a clean break. I didn't get all Michelangelo with it, but I can see how you could. You always see images of the famous sculptor with chisel and hammer in hand whacking out some priceless piece of art. It didn't take long working on this rock to realize that the guy must have spent ages grinding and rubbing those statues down to get shiny smooth curves. I think chiseling would have been a lark by comparison.

The next specimen was essentially quartz, (SiO_2) with a crystal hardness of 7. This piece was massive, not pure crystal. It came from Horseshoe Mt near the crystal clusters but attached to a green rock that looked hard but fractured easily. I tried sharpening a point on it, just for something different. The grinding revealed a lot of stains and inclusions. Grinding was fairly easy so it might not be hard enough to polish well.

Here is the Zen of it. The harder the stone is to work with, the more likely it is to take a nice polish. The experience is not exactly entertainment. There is a fair amount of noise.

You can't really be distracted by music or talking. It's more like meditation. You become “one with the machine”. If you press hard, the motor slows down. If you push straight in, you get a concave curve, not usually what you are looking for. If you rock the stone back and forth, you get a cylinder.



[The whole set from left to right: Magnesite, Marble, Unknown, Jasper, Jade, Jade]

Unless you have a slab or piece that has already been cut, you are exploring the rock to see where the interesting and the dull or weak spots are. You are also testing to see how hard it is and what kind of shine it will take. I found that I needed some water to rinse it in and to look closely at it fairly often. A magnifying light would help.

My next rock was some Mt Elizabeth Jasper. It is also basically quartz, but this piece was really hard. It would have helped to cut the rough parts off so I had an idea what to look for. It was also complicated with different colors and degrees of transparency, even a nodule of quartz crystal. It was interesting but I was very curious about the next specimen and eager to move on.

The next piece was one of just a few that Jim Bachelor and I managed to pound and pry off a little shelf of the stuff on Opal Mt. It was extremely hard to break, even with a hammer and chisel applied to an existing fracture. The literature says that jadeite. ($\text{Na}(\text{Al},\text{Fe}^{3+})[\text{Si}_2\text{O}_6]$), has a harness of 6. I swear this is beyond that. The color is a lighter green with clear depths. Something beautiful could come out of this one. Pressing this piece into the roughest wheel, 80 grit I think, and becoming all “one with the machine”,

The motor started to smell hot and I might have seen some smoke. It was a little hard to tell since it was cold in the club shop and it could have been my breath. (It would really help to get some firewood together for the shop and warm the place up before any extended work this winter.)

Then the motor started to speed up on its own and smoke got. I quickly turned it off. So much for the two pieces of jade. I need to think about where I want to go with them and maybe start with a trim saw anyway.

Mike Latapie was just getting back from bagging a deer and he brought out another motor that should be fairly easy to hook up to the grinder. As a big bonus, it has twin capacitors for an easy start. I encourage everyone to find the hearts of their own stones this winter and share them with us.

OREGON BEACHES

The State of Oregon is in the process of establishing two pilot projects on the Oregon coast designated as Marine Reserves. The two projects are called the Otter Rock Marine Reserve and the Redfish Rock Marine Reserve.

The proposed rules will not allow for removal of any soil, rock or fossil materials. Nor can driftwood be collected. This will end our beachcombing activities for beach agates, rocks and fossils on these two areas of the Oregon coast.

The indications are that Oregon intends to increase the number of these Marine Reserve areas in the future. The public hearings were held in October for the present two Reserves. However, public comments via email or U.S. Mail are invited. **The deadline to receive public comments is 5 pm on November 17, 2009.**

Please submit comments via email or U.S. Mail to:
Email: odfw.marinereserves@state.or.us

Please indicate "rules" in the subject line. Comments can be brief. It is the number of comments received that is of greater value than lengthy commentaries. Please let them know that you want our right to rock hunt on Oregon beaches to continue and be protected for future generations.

Virtual Rockhounding

Story by Joe Barreca, pictures from the Internet

The Northwest Federation of Mineralogical Societies, NFMS, is sponsoring another website contest for rock clubs in 2010. Looking into this, I got a lot of rules and suggestions from the administrator, Cheri George. For starters, our PGMC website gets demerits for being part of the Map Metrics website. The rules want the clubs to own their own domain name. After some email consulting and a quick visit to Secure Webs, my website host, we have a name, PanoramaGem.com that is owned by the club (\$12.50/yr), and Secure Webs has agreed to host the website for FREE! (A \$130/yr savings). They are even trying to install some expensive software for free that will help me manage the site. More on that later, as you may know, I have a heck of a time just getting the newsletter out on time, let alone creating a whole new website in a month.

So with that in the future (and hey, there is no newsletter next month so I might have some time but its Christmas and I have a family newsletter too so don't bet on it), Cheri sent some links to this years website winners. Not only is it time to check out the competition, these sites have some good stuff in them and it may be worth your time to look them up.

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Willamette Agate and Mineral Society (WAMS). The header includes the society's name and address: "Willamette Agate and Mineral Society, Inc. P.O. Box 13041 Salem, OR 97309-1041". The main content area features a "WELCOME TO WAMS" message, a "WAMS General Meeting Thursday - November 5, 2009" announcement, and a "Time to Pay 2010 Membership Dues" notice. There are also two award logos for "2009 FEB SITE AWARDS" and a "WEBMASTER" logo. The footer mentions "A Non-Profit Educational Organization" and provides contact information for the Christmas dinner.

The Willamette Agate and Mineral Society webpage: <http://www.wamsi.org/index.html> is a good start, and as it proudly displays on the home page, the winner of both the NFMS and AFMS website contest awards for 2009. So what's so

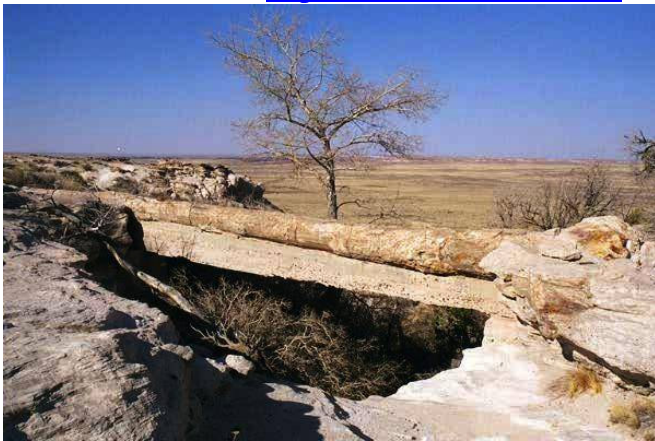
great about this site? One heck of a lot of work, that's what.

There are hundreds, if not thousands of pictures of field trips, rock shows, guest lecturers, you name it. They come up quickly and are organized in groups so you can get to the ones you are interested in.

Much like our website, they have past newsletters for many years. Unlike ours, they don't have an index for each year. There are some weaknesses in the format. There is no search option and many newsletters for the 2003-4 era are not in .pdf format, the standard for all years since then.

The most valuable part of the site is called "Rock Specs". It is an eclectic collection of hints, product reviews and techniques, mostly for lapidary and jewelry, but for many other things. They have been gleaned from other publications, meetings, conversations and websites over the years. Each one is documented and linked to other websites if appropriate. Creating something like this would be a lot of work for one person, but it appears to be a collection of submissions by many members over many years. (So what are we waiting for?)

The WAMSI website had a good collection of links to other rockhound-related websites. I followed this one to <http://www.orerockon.com/>



It has CDs with detailed rockhounding maps for all of Oregon, Washington and other places for \$55. It also has photo tours that included this picture of a bridge made from a solid piece of petrified log. It is called the Rainbow Bridge and is in Arizona's Petrified Forest National Monument.

Another website with useful stuff, but not nearly as wonderful as the first, is The Kitsap Mineral Society site, <http://www.kmgs.org/>.



They have this cool logo. There is a lot of space devoted to their rock show, the dealers, pictures of previous shows, etc. This could be a good idea for us to use in promoting our show. After all who is more likely to come to a good rock show than other rockhounds?

They also have a calendar of upcoming events and pictures of their field trips. They only do a couple each year apparently. Even with a pretty good web connection, their photos loaded slowly but it is a good bunch with youngsters.

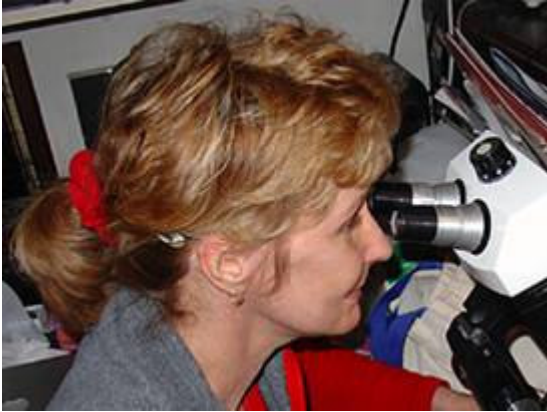


They also have a library, newsletters, links to other clubs, maps to their meeting places and membership information. This site won second place in the NFMS website contest.

Cheri also suggested the site for the Rock and Arrowhead Club of Kalamath Falls, <http://www.klamathrockclub.org/>. This site is under construction and seems to have been in the same state since 7/5/2009. But if you are going that way, they have some nice maps for collecting in Southeast Oregon and an interesting video showing a huge sunstone being faceted into an 81 carat masterpiece.

As long as we are looking at websites, Johnie Pitman suggested one that offers a fairly

complete course in gemology, <http://www.bwsmigel.info/>. Barbara Smigel, a professor at the College of Southern Nevada built it. You can sign up for the whole course with homework, tests, grades etc. or just go through the lesson pages. They have lots of material. She suggests some books for further reading.



The lesson pages also have great pictures of all kinds of gems. So even if you don't want to grind your way into the new year down at the club workshop, you can learn a lot right at home without even getting dirty or cold.

So these are just a few of the many websites out there that we could emulate or link to when building our own. I think the key is that the best ones take a lot of work by the webmaster and more than that, they benefit greatly from a lot of contributions by the members. There are two basic ways that you can help in this process. The first is to email cool links, pictures, stories etc. to the old webmaster (same as the old newsletter editor, joe.barreca@gmail.com). The second is to form a little committee to talk about how we should go about this. Of course that means you are willing to help go about it. But that is what having a club is all about. If we all thought we were already the world's greatest rockhounds, we would not need a club at all. If you are interested in either one of these things, contact me and let's get going.



Fossilized Coral from www.bwsmigel.info



Joe's Soap Box

I've learned recently that I am likely to have a lot more duties in 2010. Stevens County is receiving a Preserve America grant to create an Internet archive of historical materials from all over Stevens County. I wrote the grant and expect to be very busy with it. For this and many other reasons, I need to start delegating a lot of the work that goes into this newsletter. I have some people in mind and I will contact them individually.

Rex has requested a lot more help in the field trip department. Nothing drives a mapping guy like myself as crazy as seeing all of these interesting places out there on maps that I am working on that might make good field trips and not knowing what they are really like. Not all of them would make reasonable field trips. We need some people who want to scout out new field trip locations. We need suggestions on places to check out. I already have a list going. If other folks out there have their own lists going, let's compare lists and start to methodically check them out in the relative safety and hopefully good company of a club scouting party.

It's great to have a newsletter with color pictures. Please think about contributing pictures of places you go rockhounding, museums, workshops etc. to the newsletter and in many cases to the website (digital or paper, everything works).