

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 2010

Panorama Gem and Mineral Club Minutes for March 16th 2010

By Ginger Pitman

The last meeting before our show was well attended. We had 3 visitors and 41 members. Next meeting refreshments will be brought by Ginger and Steve. Sylvia gave the treasurer's report.

There was one more rock donation for the memorial case we will put in the show in remembrance of Joyce Dawson.

Bill Allen gave the report on the show meeting; there are 3 cases to fill, name tags to make and last minute assignments for workers. The cases and tables from the Spokane club are here.

Rita Corbaley is our fluorescent display volunteer and we learned she has been doing some archeology work with the Colville National Forest. (Go to: www.passportintime.com to learn more.) She also does paleontology at Ghost Ranch in New Mexico in the summer.

Rex gave his report on the field trips, a couple of pay-to-dig and some new sites. He asked if anyone would be interested in a tour of Lane Mt. Silica in Valley, Washington, several people indicated they would like to go there. He has been asked if the club does gold panning demonstrations and that can be arranged. Be sure to keep up on the field trips at [www. Panoramagem.com](http://www.Panoramagem.com).

We are asking members to help us out with a bigger, hopefully free, place to meet. It is nice to feel a need for a bigger place, let us know and we will check it out.

A report was given on the club shop: the 18" blade needs to be redressed or replaced. The shop hours this summer may be cut back; the idea is to collect in the summer and cut and shape in the winter.

Joe showed us his latest maps; he will have them at the show.

The program for the night, after we got it started, was a video named: Tree Stories. It is from the Northwest Federation Library. *End*

Rockshow 2010 in the Record Books

Photos and Story by Joe Barreca



[Ann Berger and a Customer at the Show]

The Panorama Gem And Mineral Club's 10th Annual Rock Show was bigger and better than ever. Bill Allen, show chairman reports that income for the club was up about 5%. All of the vendors say that they did better this year than last. They liked the mix of different vendors who complimented each other's offerings without competing too much. Our expenses were higher to rent the Grange Hall but we expect to recover that cost.



[Sherry Bamberger with her crystals]

One of the highlights were improvements to the Ultraviolet Light Cave that Bill developed last year. This year Bill added better longwave lights that he modified to concentrate the light on the specimens below them without washing light into the rest of the display. Next year he would like to acquire an even stronger light. As usual, Rita Corbaley was wonderful at surprising visitors with the inner lights of “ordinary” rocks and finding magic in the grab bags of the youngsters.

Our welcoming committee, Luci Bristow, Mable Barrans and helpers brought in more donations to our scholarship fund. The roving relief personnel were able to back up those manning booths and make it fun for everyone.



[The panning trough outside the show.]

We have a number of new members that signed up at the show. The weather cooperated, so instead of snow and rain, we had happy kids and parents outside learning to pan for gold and buying arrowheads from Dave Paquette.



[Steve Fox at the Ring Toss]

One of the big successes was Steve Fox at the silent auction and ring toss. Actually with Steve at the loudspeaker, it wasn't very silent in my booth next to the PA. But plenty of people came down from upstairs. Bev Bockman managed to inventory all of the rocks we had for sale and put reasonable prices on them. Many of us club members walked away with more rocks than we brought.



[Bob Bristow displayed this giant Ammonite]

The displays were amazing. You never know what new treasures members will bring forth from their collections. There didn't seem to be many stories associated with the stones. At least Suzan Andrews got into the spirit by just making up one.



[The Joyce Dawson Memorial Display]

The unsung heros were everyone who got there Thursday and stayed late Saturday to break down the booths and displays, pack them into trucks and trailers and clean up the whole hall. Bill wants to convey a big THANK YOU! To all of you who helped with that. And we want to give a him a big THANK YOU! For putting it all together.

Field Trip to the Stonerose Fossil Center

Pictures and story by Joseph Barreca



The Panorama Gem and Mineral Club had not scheduled a trip to the Stonerose fossil site in many years until April 11th this year. That may be somewhat of a mystery in itself since Stonerose is the foremost rockhounding site in all of Northeast Washington. It is known around the world for its unique Eocene fossils. There is a modest charge, \$6 for adults and \$4 for children. Children under 5 are free. Seniors (Let's face it. A lot of us are seniors.) are \$4. The club got an even better deal. We could have as many members as we brought for \$30. Fifteen of us took this trip, so we paid \$2 each. Another good part was that we were able to go before the season officially begins. This means that the site had been prepped for this year's digs, but had not been picked over yet. The combination of moisture freezing in the winter and thawing in the spring loosens up the layers so that many rocks just fall apart revealing their fossils.

I think the hang-up for many people had been that the site only allows you to take 3 fossils each, and sometimes they take your best specimens for research, leaving you a very nice thank you on paper and your name in the scientific record. Hundreds of different kinds of leaves, seeds, flowers, insects, fish and other kinds of fossils have been collected at the site. The center stores up to 10 examples of each. But over the years they have collected so many samples that the chances that you will find one

that they actually are still interested in are very rare indeed.

Travis Wellman welcomed our group to the center. We had to log each family into their database of visitors, but there were lots of fossils and rocks to look at while we were waiting. They trade fossils with many other places, so their display cases were full of many kinds of rocks and fossils. They also sell rocks of all kinds at very reasonable prices. Travis showed us that besides fossils, we could expect to find little iron sulfite (pyrite) concretions, worm tracks, weird mineral stains and conglomerated lake bottom. The latter has hundreds of fossils pressed into one layer and is actually quite a find. You can keep samples of all these other finds without affecting your fossil count.



[Lake bottom fossil slab]

An advantage of visiting with a passel of kids is that they each qualify for three fossils. We arrived with the Duane and Sherrie Dinan family who brought 8 children in 2 cars. That sets them up for over 30 fossils by themselves. I donated several to their collections and was happy to see them put to good use. Really the fun is in discovering them in the first place.



[Shannon Miller working over the pile]

Another unexpected asset was Shannon Miller. She is a Stonerose board member and really knew what she was doing. She brought several flat cardboard boxes to put her specimens in, a good idea to start with, and maybe even better if you can bring stiff wooden or plastic boxes. She did so well that her slabs were a bit much for the cardboard boxes. One of her first moves was to comb through the debris slope to see if any fossils just popped out after the spring



[Fossils and concretions found on the slope] thaw. I tried that and soon had a small collection going myself. Her next move was to dig through the big piles that looked like they were made of discarded pieces. What she found was a large rock composed of many layers. You want to look for the well-defined layers, since they have the best specimens. She spent the rest of her time carefully splitting apart those layers by starting a crack with a chisel and hammer and then working it out carefully around the whole rock. If you try to pry a layer from just one spot, it will often break through the layers creating a lens-shaped piece that makes breaking out more layers very difficult. The result was that she had many big complete leaves and even a couple of mayfly impressions showing.

A third hint was that she didn't try to work every fossil out of each rock. She brought the slabs back to the center where they can work on them with finer chisels, a firm carpeted bench and techniques that reveal the hidden impressions. One thing Travis told us at the beginning is that when they are first broken out fossil impressions are fragile and can easily smear. It's best to let them dry in the air for fifteen minutes or so before touching them.

One technique learned not from Miller but from PGMG geologist Steve Fox is to always bring a big hammer. The thin layers of rock where the best fossils are found sometimes have a thick layer of more amorphous sandstone above or below them that makes it hard to extract the thin layers. It still has organic matter in it, but it is more like veins of coal or even petrified wood than identifiable fossils. I used the big hammer and a fairly big chisel to clear that layer from above the flat layers. That took some effort. Shannon lent me a brush to clean up the finer dirt. When I had a shelf of layered rock to work with, I started opening up those layers with a smaller hammer and a smaller chisel. Almost immediately I found a shelf of the conglomerated lake bottom with some nice impressions on it. It took some work to bring that out in one, (well really two pieces). And you hate to leave wondering what else is just past the point that it broke off in the cliff. But you only get so many samples and need to leave some fun for someone else so I called it a day and took my collection back to the center. Travis cleaned and enlarged some of the pieces. Then he identified each one with a number from a list that they give you. So now I have a Sassafras leaf, some Dawn Redwoods and other things from 50 million years ago.

Not being satisfied with just the one site, Harold Ingram and I explored a road to the Tom Thumb mine on the other side of Klondike Mt. The fossil vein is supposed to run through there too and there is some BLM land nearby that is not private. But after plowing through some mud and snow in 4 wheel drive and crossing water-bar ditches that seemed to be getting deeper and deeper and closer and closer to the new muffler on my Subaru, I decided to leave that for another day and another rig.

We did stop just east of mile marker 313 on Highway 20 to look at a shaft of the old California Mine that had been filled in by the road crew. There is a dike of soapstone running up the cliff. We picked up some fairly solid pieces (many were fractured) that were light blue and mottled green. With a little bonus load in the car, we motored home with the feeling of a very rewarding day.

Picture Rhyolite Adventure

Story by Bob Bristow

Picture by Joe Barreca



[Rhyolite Slab from Steve Fox Collection]

We had come to what looked like a major impasse. Our directions said to drive down 7th Street in T or C (Truth or Consequences), and then go through the “Whistle,” first making sure our car would fit. (Truth or Consequences is located on the Rio Grande about 100 miles south of Albuquerque.) The “Whistle” is a corrugated culvert going under Highway 25 and is 10 to 12 feet in diameter. We could see that ATV’s had been going through, but our SUV would have a tough time. In addition, the drop from the end of 7th Street into the arroyo was steep with a final vertical two-foot drop into sand. Tom and I talked it over and concluded the probability of success was below the critical threshold (We would probably get stuck!) and we decided to try something else. We had a satellite image that showed a road under the freeway about a mile further north. We located this road and sailed under the freeway on a very rutted but wide road. Once through, we still had to find the deposit. The directions said, “Go straight ahead to the west toward the hill with the antennas.” However, we were in another arroyo and the only hill was straight ahead, but in a northerly direction. In about a mile, the road led to the T or C cemetery and a little hill with the city’s water tank. There was an antenna, but it was only about 20 feet high. We headed back toward town with the feeling that this was another outing that just wasn’t going to work out.

However, just before the freeway, we saw a secondary road heading toward the Whistle. In less than five minutes we were looking at the other side of the whistle and wondering why anyone would suggest we should go through it when a perfectly good road was available. Anyway, we were now through the Whistle, but still had a problem. We couldn’t see any hill to

the West. We had two choices, follow a secondary road to the SW or go straight from the Whistle to the NW. We went NW and soon found ourselves in an active shooting range. There were people shooting in all directions including in the direction we wanted to go. We ignored the looks on the shooter’s faces and plunged on through the range. Unfortunately, the road ended at the farthest targets. It again looked like our goal was out of reach. I really don’t like letting a little thing like not being able to find the deposit get in my way. I still ignored the people shooting down the arroyo toward us and climbed out of the canyon. On top of the ridge, the bitter cold wind was blowing so hard that I had to take my hat off and hang on to it. However, I could now see a hill to the west with antennas on it. Great, but how to get there? We decided to try the road to the SW. We bundled Tom and Pat into our little SUV and headed down the road. After some deep sand and a couple more arroyos, we came out on the apron at the foot of the first mountain and found the road leading to the antennas. The whole mountain was made of beautiful rhyolite. The rhyolite was so hard that it sounded like glass when hit and broke with conchoidal fracture. At the foot of the road leading up to the first antenna was a pile of rock from some dump truck that people had been digging through. Most of the mountain consisted of tan rhyolite with straight bands with various colors, but some in the dump had swirls that would make great cabs.

As is often the case, if you keep trying, you can turn a rotten day into one that ends with a pile of beautiful gems. This was how our day ended as we hurried on to our next adventure.

Upcoming Events April and May

April 25 Field Trip to Phillips Ranch Mine. Pyrite, Galena, Selenite
May 2 Field Trip to Saddle Mt. Petrified Wood.
May 16 Adams Mt., Quartz Crystal, Epidote, Molybdenum.
May 18 Regular 3rd Tuesday Meeting in Kettle Falls @ 7PM

For Sale: Arizona Petrified Wood, Fossilized Coral, miscellaneous rock collection. Call Bill Jaeger, 684-3926.