Place: Arden
Community Club
Hall Rd
Arden, WA

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

The Panorama Prospector

September 2012

Minutes August 2012

By Ginger Pitman

What a day for the picnic! We had 53 members and five visitors. Bill Allen did a wonderful job of cooking for us and the potluck food is always good-good!

It was a special treat to see Rex and Mable at the picnic; we wish they could join us more often, wonderful old rock hounds!

Joe will lead a field trip to Flagstaff Mt, on Sept 8 meeting at the gas station in Northport at 10 AM. Barite, calcite, quartz muscovite and maybe some fluorite, some with fluorescence.

Johnie will lead a gold panning day on Sept 9, meeting at the gas station in Northport at 10 AM, and will be panning on the Columbia River.

There was a lot of wheeling and dealing in the parking lot after the picnic. I hope everyone found some good trades and treasures.

End of Minutes

The Belcher Mine

By Joseph Barreca

Few things are as embarrassing as not following your own advice and then reaping the consequences. Of course, when you have convinced a group of other explorers to follow your lead, it is even more embarrassing. The sure part of the trip was that there was a mine there. I had pictures of it before we started. The original goal was to find garnet. The assays of the minerals clearly said there was garnet there, also gold, silver and copper. The advice I missed was to research the history of the mine before you set out to visit it. I found the history in The Ore Deposits of Northeastern Washington by Howland Bancroft, a United States Geological Survey published in 1914. This handy little tome has no less than 14 pages devoted to the Belcher District

[*The adit at the No1 Tunnel of the Belcher Mine*]

and several of them devoted to the Belcher mine itself. It clearly states that the principle ores of the mine were magnetite, pyrite and pyrrhotite. It also states that the gold, silver and copper are in tiny amounts and that "Although garnet, tremolite and epidote have been developed in the strata, contact metamorphic minerals are not very abundant." So basically this was a wild goose chase as far as garnet is concerned.

The group of four explorers consisted of myself, Bob Bristow, Scott Jackson and Jerry Novak. Now Bob has a less-than-stellar record on wild goose chases, but you have to grant that in every case, including this one, he did all the driving in his own car and paid for gas. Scott was just back from a trip to Lolo Pass for smoky Quartz and probably did alright there. He also arranged this trip and deserves a lot of credit for that. Jerry is almost always up for anything (see the July 2011 issue: Expedition to Timber Mt.)

and may be getting used to catching his breath every five minutes on rock hounding field trips.

[A view of the waste dumps from above]

In the above picture, the yellow-red mounds in the center and right of the picture are waste dumps. The darker pit to the left is a caved-in stope behind an outcrop of iron minerals. This is the view we saw when we reached the top of a very long steep winding 4-wheel-drive road where the Belcher Mine begins with a shaft into the

[Scott sitting by the shaft at the top of the road]

mountain. There were a lot of mineralized rocks piled up there. Rocks thrown into the shaft echoed in water about 30 feet down. We thought the shaft was just an abandoned exploration, but it

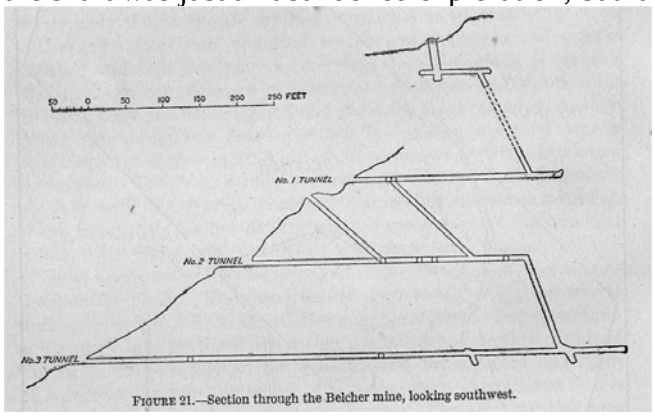


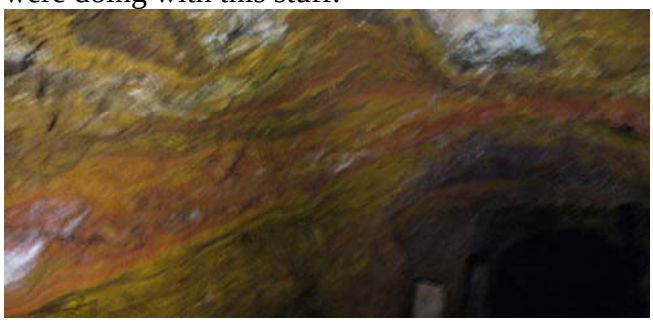
FIGURE 21.—Section through the Belcher mine, looking southwest.

actually led to a tunnel that followed the vein through the entire mine. It is at the top right of this diagram of the mine (which we didn't have with us.) There were 4000 feet of tunnels in this mine in 1910. The Belcher District itself was claimed in 1906 and covers 140 square miles including areas 5 miles to the east of the Kettle Crest. The mine descends 450 feet underground and they trammed the ore out to the waste dumps in the top picture and then down an inclined railway to a narrow gage railway that went all the way down Lambert Creek to the main railroad.

So the situation was, if we wanted to poke around in the waste dumps and this iron mineral outcrop, we had to work our way through trees downed in a forest fire and bushes grown up through them. Scott has a bum leg so that trip was out of the question for him. So Scott and Bob looked around the top of the mountain while Jerry and I worked our way down to the pumps and back up again. This was no walk in the park.

Geologically the minerals in this mine and several other mines in the district, were created when a bubble of hot magma tried to rise to the surface through old rocks from the ocean-floor: argillite, limestone and dolomite in the Eocene Period, 18 million years ago. The magma didn't make it to the surface but heated and twisted the rock around it driving iron and sulfur compounds into the skarn contact between the old limestone and new granite that magma forms when it cools in place. Jerry and I climbed down between them.

The hill you are looking at in the top picture is limestone. The ground I was standing on when I took this picture was mostly monzonite porphyry, a common granite. Exploring the mineralized iron sulfides that oozed out between the two was something only a geo-nerd could love. When Jerry and I got down to the 100 year-old waste dumps the smell of sulfur was still very strong. We were trying to figure out what they were doing with this stuff.



[Inside the Number 2 Tunnel of the Belcher]

This picture inside the tunnel tells a story I couldn't figure out on the site. The red and

yellow vein of soft rock was all around the darker rock of the tunnel. They were going for the darker stuff with the magnetite and related minerals. The red and yellow stuff was just waste. They were shipping the magnetite to the Granby Copper Smelter in Grand Forks BC and to the Trail Smelter to use as flux. Flux serves a lot of purposes in the smelting process. It captures impurities, makes the target metal flow more easily and separates the target mineral from its host compounds. Then it ends up as slag.

[Open Pit of the Copper Key Mine]

Over the hill from the Belcher we caught a look at this giant open pit. The water in the bottom is bright blue and shows up in a Google Map shaped like a blue rubber ducky. There was copper in the ore, but that was not the target mineral. It was used as flux like the ore from the Belcher. We tried to visit that site but it is controlled by Kinross Mining. If we had made arrangements and watched a 20 minute safety film, we might have been able to go up there, but we were not prepared for that, maybe another day.

Speaking of other days, on the way out we figured out that there probably is a road going to the waste dumps. We could have driven right there! It looked like just an old logging road on our way up. There was a lot of exercise and some great views going in the way we did, but it wasn't much fun for Bob and Scott and was pretty hard on Jerry and me.

I did make it home with some magnetite. I picked it up just for the sample of pyrite in it. But a magnet snapped right to it when I started testing my samples. Even more fun than that, is that magnetite is magnetic all by itself. It is not as strong as a regular magnet, but it will pick up paper clips and other light iron objects. If I went back, I would try to find more magnetite.

[Jerry Novak standing on the waste dump]

All of this begs the question, is there really a garnet mine in the Kettle Range? The mine we didn't try to find is on the east side of Midnight Mountain. You approach it from Albian Hill road. There are no roads or visible signs of mining at the designated coordinates. All the information I have says is that the main product was "abrasives". This usually means garnet, but not necessarily crystals, maybe just massive garnet. So finding anything there is a huge gamble. Next time I'll do more homework.

Frogskin Agate

Here is our prize from the AFMS drawing.

Prize #5: RAINIER FROGSKIN AGATE specimen is an agate found in central Washington State. This could be wire-wrapped or displayed on a stand. It is polished and measures 3x3x31/2" Donated by: Lauren Williams, AFMS President Value $150.00

Johnie's Jabber

By Johnie Pitman

ROCKS, Rocks, rocks, BIG ones, little ones we have 'em. In the last two weeks the club has received a rock collection from Shirley Knapp Stirling and her brother, the collection had belonged to their parents, and a fraction of Rex and Mable Barrans sizable collection. The Knapp collection has some mineral samples, a few agates, an apitite crystal, some fossils and they included some old blue quart jars, a 3 gallon Red Wing crock, and a box of blue electrical insulators. I have not gone through some of Rexs collection yet, but from the list included in each box there are both smokey and clear quartz crystals, fossils, thulite, agate, and many other mineral specimens too numerous to mention. Rex had labeled almost all of his rocks and each is wrapped, a sheet is included in each box that has the name and location for each specimen. Thanks to these donations and a few others we now have a pickup load for the November auction. Mariam Clark and Olivia Anderson also donated a very nice 10" saw with a good blade to the club. Our auction looks great!

The field trip to Flagstaff mountain for barite was very interesting, Roger Olsen lead the trip and was very informative about the mine and about barite. Everyone got some good specimens of barite and other minerals.

The gold panning trip to the Columbia River was fun but we found very little gold, just couldn't find the right spot to dig. Contrary to Steve Fox's theory that it never rains on a rockhounding field trip, it rained. Better luck next time!!!

At the September meeting I will appoint a 3 member nominating committee to contact members about serving as officers for next year. They will report to the Club at the November meeting. So consider serving on that committee or as an officer for 2013. This procedure is according to our bylaws.

This months program is a short film titled "Trees of Stone", which is about Gingko petrified forest at Vantage WA, and another short film on gold mining at the Buckhorn mine which is operated by Kinross Gold Corporation. The mine is located north of Republic, WA.

According to the AFMS Endowment Fund the club won a 3" frogskin agate in their drawing, but we haven't been contacted.

A Dark Day of Gold Panning

Here is the intrepid crew from the club who went gold panning north of Northport on September 9th. They included: Johnie Pitman, Gene Meyer, Larry Engle, Dennis and Jamie Dahlke, Bill and Anni Sebright and Chuck. They were well-equipped and the water was low. But finding a pocket of black sand with good gold flakes in it was not so easy.

Here's Bill Sebright pannng on the rocks. Below Larry Engle scoops up some clean water to see clearly to the bottom of his pan.

As the day got later, the clouds rolled in and by the time they had all the equipment rounded up and back to the cars there was thunder, lightning and rain to deal with. But I'll bet you don't hear much complaining. A bad day of gold panning is better than a good day of almost anything else.

BenchTips

by Brad Smith

(Editor's note: Brad sent us these tips out of the blue, well out of the Internet actually. You won't find me coming up with much enlightenment from the shop, so I'm glad to see these. If you like them, I'll ask him for more.)

PICKLE PROBLEMS

Dropping a hot item into the pickle after soldering causes a hiss that sends small droplets of the acid pickle into the air. This will rust your nearby tools and can't be all that good to breathe either. My solution is to use a coffee cup of water next to my solder block to quench the piece before dropping it in the pickle.

Also, a hot pickle pot gives off fumes that bother me in my home workshop. I get around that by using my pickle cold. I mix it a little stronger than I do with a hot pot so that it works about as quickly. I keep it in a large-mouth peanut butter bottle and cap it off whenever I'm done using it.

<Firescale discolors jewelry.

USE A SPRAY BOTTLE

Those little spray bottles you can find at the drug store are great for firescale preventors and debubbling solutions. A quick firescale preventor is liquid flux, and a homemade debubbling solution is a little Dawn liquid in rubbing alcohol.

BROKEN DRILLS

Have you ever broken a drill bit off in a hole? Sometimes you can grab it with pliers, but other times the steel piece is below the surface in the hole.

If this happens, you can usually dissolve the steel in a solution of alum.

Alum is typically available from a food store or a drug store. Use about a teaspoon per cup of warm water. Submerge your piece so that the partially drilled hole is facing up to let the bubbles float free and not
block the hole.

MODIFY TOOLS FOR PRONG SETTING

When setting stones in a prong mount, avoid slipping by grinding a groove in the face of your prong pusher or one jaw of your flat-nose pliers. The easiest way to cut the slot on the pusher is with a file., and the easiest way to cut the slot on your pliers is with a cutoff wheel in the Foredom or Dremel rotary tool.

< This is a Prong Pusher, used to bend prongs from a setting around a stone to fasten the stone in place.

Membership Dues:

$15.00 per **household** per year is due to the club Treasurer Sylvia Allen (see below) on the third Tuesday of November for regular members.

Webpage: www.panoramagem.com

Contact: Johnie Pitman, President, 509 684 8887.

We**, The Panorama Gem and Mineral Club**, are a multi-faceted group of mineral-minded people. Our proud members include some real gems, a few fossils, and even some diamonds in the rough. A few have lost some of their marbles, but they know where to get more! A few need to polish their coordination because they are always tumbling! And some are miners who use the "silver pick" as their tool of choice! It should be crystal clear, that we all enjoy this unique conglomeration and above all else we strive to **HAVE FUN.** And we never throw stones (away).

The Last Field Trip

Scott Jackson called to tell us that he is leading a field trip to Horseshoe Mt to find quartz crystals on Sunday September 3oth.

Meet up at the gas station (Texaco?) south of Republic and north of where Hwy 21 turns south at 10AM. (It has a log cabin style main building and store.) The road into the site is 4 wheel, but 2 wheel up the main road and a short walk in. Bring hammers and chisels and maybe shovels etc.

This newsletter is published by the Panorama Gem and Mineral Club. Editor: Joe Barreca, 509-738-6255, joe.barreca@gmail.com .

Panorama Gem and Mineral Club: Organizational Chart

Officers:			
President:	Johnie Pitman	701 B Williams Lake Rd, Colville, WA 99114	684-8887
Vice-President:	Bob Bristow	PO Box 1165; 2567 Mudd Lake Rd. Chewelah WA 99109	935-4375
Secretary:	Ginger Pitman	701 B Williams Lake Rd, Colville, WA 99114	684-8887
Treasurer:	Sylvia Allen	2633 Highline Rd, Chewelah, WA 99109	935-8779
Trustee 1:	Scott Jackson	1028 Old Hwy 12 Mile Rd, Colville, WA 99114	684-6371
Trustee 2:	Bruce Hurley	10617 W. Lakeside Lane, Nine Mile Falls, WA 99026	509-413-2768
Trustee 3:	Daniel Lundy	1035 Haller Creek Rd. Addy, WA	685-5870
Committee Chairs			
Program Coordinator:	Bev Bockman	1750 N Havichur Loop, Post Falls, ID 83854	208-773-5384
Hospitality:	Luci Bristow	PO Box 1165; 2567 Mudd Lake Rd. Chewelah WA 99109	509-935-4375
Field Trips:			
Librarian:	Ruth Ross	750 N Lincoln, # 6, Colville, WA 99114	684-4925
Historian:	Carol Price	PO Box 77, Laurier, WA 99146	684-2857
Newsletter:	Joseph Barreca	2109 Hwy 25 South, Kettle Falls, WA 99141	738-6155
Show Chair	Bill Allen	2633 Highline Rd, Chewelah, WA 99109	935-8779, 936-2446