

Place: Arden  
Community Club  
Hall Rd  
Arden, WA



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

## The Panorama Prospector

September 2014

### Panorama Gem and Mineral Club Minutes for August 19, 2014

*By Anni Sebright*

Thirty people enjoyed hot dogs, burgers and the potluck dishes at the August 19th annual picnic. Many thanks to Bill Allen for his BBQ skills, and wasn't it good to see Steve Fox again?

My apologies for my condiment error. Becky Dobbs volunteered, but I heard Luci's little voice from years past. Thanks to Becky for running home and to Kathy and Arden Fritz for stepping in with tomatoes and lettuce. My fault entirely, and I can't promise it'll be my last mistake.

Everyone is invited to the Bristow's mountaintop manse for a potluck birthday celebration for Pat Scales. (More than 40 people were in attendance.)

Reba Karvan, Jerry & Vanita Novak, Gene Fisher, and Bill & Anni Sebright will provide snacks & juice for the September 16th meeting.



[The Rock Swap at the Annual BBQ meeting]

*end*

### The Talisman Mine

*By Joe Barreca*



[Main Adit]

For the lead story this month we are thinking and going outside our usual box. In fact we are going way outside anyplace we normally go. The Talisman Mine (AKA Laurier Mine, Owl Mt Mine) is not easy to get to. For this trip I enlisted and am very grateful to Gene Fisher for bringing two ATVs. They made it possible (if not easy) to get to this mine that is 3 miles from the end of the road we parked on and 2000 feet above the town of Laurier. It is less than a mile horizontally from the town of Laurier, and in fact was one of the reasons the town grew in the first place. But the vertical distance is an issue.



[Gene and his not-so-intrepid friend Sherril]





[View down the old tram line from the Talisman]

The view in the above picture was breathtaking. You are looking down on the old mill site near the railroad where the tram line used to go. Beyond that are the Canadian and American border stations and then a large lumber mill. In the upper left hand corner is Christina Lake. Remains of the tram are in the foreground.



[Christina Lake as seen from the mine adit.]

So the view alone was worth the trip, but what a trip it was. Following my usual bad habit, I didn't read all the literature about the mine before I went (Hey really I did read a lot). The DNR report contained the following: "We recommend access by off-road vehicle with a skilled operator or on foot." Well this was the first time I have ever been on an ATV and it was a

really hairy ride. Steep inclines, mud, branches, loose rock, twists and turns... Did I mention the 2000 foot cliff? Gene was the skilled operator, but even a skilled operator should not attempt to pull a trailer up this trail. (I think Gene has it repaired by now.) Also in the DNR report – a complete map of the ATV trail down to Hwy 395... Sorry Gene about the hour's worth of Forest Service Roads getting up to the midway part of the trail. At least you will have a better map next time. (Unbelievably Gene is talking about going back up there again. Any takers?)

So by now you might be wondering why anyone would drill a 350 ft tunnel straight into what appears to be solid granite above such a steep drop. The answers: copper, lead, zinc, and minor gold, silver and tungsten. This is a "contact metamorphic deposit in amphibolites schist, which is intruded by granite." The translation is that younger hot magma tied to force its way into an old calcite seabed. A lot of metals boiled out of the interaction and deposited on the contact zone between the two rock bodies. This kind of deposit is called a "skarn".

Here is the Wikipedia entry on "skarn": **Skarns** (**tactites** in American English) are calcium-bearing [silicate](#) rocks of any age. Skarns are most often formed at the contact zone between [intrusions](#) of [granitic magma](#) bodies and [carbonate sedimentary rocks](#) such as [limestone](#) and [dolostone](#). Hot waters derived from the granitic magma are rich in silica, iron, aluminium, and magnesium. These fluids mix in the contact zone, dissolve calcium-rich carbonate rocks, and convert the host carbonate rock to skarn deposits in a [metamorphic](#) process called [metasomatism](#). The resulting [metamorphic rock](#) may consist of a very wide variety of minerals dependent largely on the original composition of the magmatic fluids and the purity of the carbonate sedimentary rocks.

Skarns are sometimes associated with mineable accumulations of metallic ores of iron, copper, zinc, lead, gold, and several others. In such cases these deposits are called "skarn deposits".



[Metamorphic rock with layers of magnetite, calcite and other minerals.]



## Back to the Big Iron

By Joe Barreca



[ View of the pond at the Big Iron Mine]

Speaking of skarns, members of the Panorama Gem and Mineral Club and of the Rock Rollers explored the Big Iron Mine on August 23<sup>rd</sup>. This is another skarn deposit at about the same elevation as the Talisman, but without the big drop, and with a lot of waste piles to explore. (At the Talisman the waste piles were 1000 feet down the cliff.) It was fun to have kids there. Some of them wasted no time getting wet in the pond. It is not that deep and it was a warm day even at 3700 feet.

Like the Talisman, the Big Iron has a lot of magnetite (iron), pyrite, copper, and tungsten. The tungsten part is reported to be contained in scheelite. **Natural Scheelite Chunks can be used to align all the chakras and helps in balancing your higher self with your inner self while bringing a sense of balance between both worlds."** <http://www.healingcrystals.com/> Actually, I was interested in the scheelite crystals because they glow blue under UV light. So here I was crawling around the waste piles with a black plastic bag over my head and our fully-charged

portable UV light in my hand, hoping to see some light blue rocks. I did this for quite awhile and never did find any scheelite. Reports about the mine say it is rare. Some folks from the Spokane Club came up to me while I was doing this and asked what kind of rocks they should be looking for. I didn't try to explain scheelite.

What most people pick up at the Big Iron is pyrite. There are some great pieces of it here and there. The veins in the rocks at the end of the pond (where the person in the red shirt is in this picture) are very nice but almost impossible to separate from the main body of rock. There are 10 foot high waste piles on two sides of the pond. They are better places to look for rocks you can carry away. The main opening for the mine was near the people at the end of the pond in this picture. It has collapsed and about all that is left are a set of ore cart tracks leading into it. There is also what is left of an old ore cart along the tracks.

The most predominant rock in these piles is iron ore. Much of it is magnetic ore, magnetite. With a strong magnet you can pick up almost any rusty looking rock you can find. It is a little tougher to go the other way, find a rock with enough magnetism in it to attract iron objects.

I brought my official magnetometer with me, a steel washer on the end of a piece of string. In some cases, it actually worked. What I found since is that a paper clip on the end of light string or thread is much more sensitive and sticks to rocks with only slight magnetism. If you tie the thread halfway up the paper clip so it hangs crossways, it will spin around toward a magnetic rock. Magnetic rocks are not to pretty but are fun.



[Johnie Pitman, Bruce Hurley and Scott Jackson (sitting on the tailgate) next to a waste pile.]

Another pretty rock in the area is copper. Typically you will find rocks with blue azurite stains or green malachite on them from the copper. You can also find chalcopyrite, the main copper ore. It is typically a little darker orange than iron pyrite. At the top of the gully on the south side of the deposit, sulfur has exuded out of the rocks and forms a delicate yellow foam on the surface. This sulfur is considered a contaminant in the magnetite and where it unites with iron to form pyrite, it takes away the magnetism.

The magnetite from this pit was used to process the ferromagnesite in Chewelah. 35,000 tons were shipped there between 1924 and 1937. Only about 56% of the ore was free enough of contaminants to be shipped to Chewelah. So more than 40% remains at the site.

Good concentrations of gold and silver are reported to have been found in this ore deposit, but if they really amounted to anything, it would have been much more heavily developed.

One welcome upshot of figuring out a more sensitive “magnetometer” was that I easily found magnetite at the Talisman Mine a couple of weeks later. It too was often stained with copper and had pyrite crystals in it.

## **Pollyanna**

by  
**Bob Bristow**

I had been to this deposit several years before and so knew exactly how to get there. (Or so I thought!) You simply drive off the highway down into the wash at the bottom of the canyon, drive up the streambed for about seven and a half miles, climb out of the canyon on an old miner’s road and there you are. However, this time it was different. After eight miles, there was still no miner’s road and no sign anyone had ever gone this way. I had to admit I was lost in the middle of the desert that runs along the border between Arizona and New Mexico.

The first time Luci and I had visited the Pollyanna, we were in a rental car that did a great job of grading the wash that served as a road to the mine. We did have some trouble finding the right canyon to drive up. Driving up and down the highway that paralleled the Arizona border, we saw a man working in his garage. I pulled in and

asked him if he knew where the road to the Pollyanna Mine was located. He said, “I don’t go by road names, I go by people names. Who lives on that road?” I replied, “I don’t know. I’ve never been in this part of Arizona before.” “You must know *someone* on it!” he insisted. He was serious. He had grown up nearby and couldn’t fathom anyone not knowing people who lived in the area. He did give me hint, however, He said that it was probably such and such a canyon. Sometimes people were crazy enough to drive up the streambed.



Figure 1. The Pollyanna Mine

Luci and I really weren’t prepared to drive cross-county. I had had a meeting at Atlantic City and caught a flight home that stopped at Albuquerque. I rented a little Ford Pinto and took Luci on a prospecting outing. The car was low-slung and we smoothed out the “road” by grinding off the high spots with the bottom of the car. (My sister-in-law has said that she expects the rental car companies to send out a notice not to rent a car to certain people; like her brother-in-law.)

We found the canyon and right at 7.5 miles, found the old mine road leading up from the wash. After a short distance on the old road we spotted the head-frame of the old fluorite mine across a small streambed as shown in the first figure. Since it was hot, I left Luci in the car and walked down the hill to the mine. There was a tailing dump just above the streambed. There were many pieces of green and colorless gemmy fluorite all through the tailings (grey hump in Figure 1). As I was filling my pack, I noticed a bee buzzing around my head.



I shooed him away and went on collecting. Soon, there were a number of bees and they were right in my face. I grew up in an area where there were yellow jacket nests every few feet at the end of a hot summer and I instinctively reacted. A few feet away, there were bushes, mostly greasewood, but some much taller. I ran through the brush which normally stopped any bees following me. This time, it only slowed them down. As soon as I got through the brush they caught up with me. They went for my face and I used my cap to swat them. They then went for my bald head. I eventually killed the half dozen or so that were chasing me and went back to the car.

*(end of part one – more next month)*

(The following article is adapted from the Wenatchee World ) October 18, 2013.)

## **The Potato Patch Nugget**

*By Rob Repin*



On Oct. 6, Mike Gorbley and his mining partners Andy Herndon, Gurtis Dorr and Sam Price, dug up two extraordinary pieces of gold from a patch of ground in the Swauk mining district near the town of Liberty that for 140 years, among the miners of the area, has been affectionately referred to as the potato patch. While metal detecting a newly exposed area of bedrock under the ancient river channel that once flowed through the district, Andy, having already picked out a half ounce and a quarter ounce nugget, suddenly got an "odd" signal from his detector. "It's a low high" he said, referring to the sound in his earphones. Normally the detector he was using would sound off with a definitive high to low tone when passed over a piece of gold, distinguishing the gold from the many high iron content "hot rocks" around the gold. But this one

was different. It was a very strong signal, but it was different. "I don't know how a big chunk of steel got into virgin ground but that's what it sounds like," said Andy bending over to scrape away a little more dirt and gravel from over his target. If there was any doubt in Andy's mind or the minds of any of us who were watching, that doubt vanished as they witnessed the bulging of Andy's eyes, the dropping of his jaw, and the dancing jig that followed. The potato-sized chunk of dirty, iron stained gold that had lain hidden from the light of day in a shallow bedrock depression, under 20 feet of overburden, for the last million and a half years, was suddenly in the grip of Andy's hand and he was a happy man! Apparently that 16 1/4-ounce "spud" was just too big to give off a "normal" signal to Andy's detector. After much excitement and high fives all around over to the panning tub we all went to watch Mike clean that baby up...

Soon we were back over to the excavation site. The excavator was fired up. The rest of the bedrock was cleared of its river rock covering, and Andy was detecting again. After about 10 minutes of no hits, Andy got that look on his face, reached down, picked up and held out for all to see another very large rock. Then started laughing. After being called a "wise guy" and several other choice superlatives, he went chuckling back to detecting. A few minutes later only a few feet from where the 16-ouncer was found, he was heard to say, "It's a low high again." The look on his face seemed genuine, but we weren't falling for that again. We needed convincing and he was forced to exclaim, "I'm not kidding!" And he wasn't. In his hand was a second 13-ounce "potato" of a nugget.

Late that Sunday night after the excitement had died down and everyone else had gone home, Mike and I sat down for a game of cribbage. I knew I was going to lose that game. But I didn't care. This was his day. As we were discussing the day's events, I said, "It's really not the gold, is it Mike?" Knowing exactly what I meant, he looked at me and calmly replied, "I don't give a damn about the gold. It's the finding of the gold that matters."

### Membership Dues:

**\$15.00 per household per year is due to the club**  
**Treasurer** Johnie Pitman (address below) on the third Tuesday of November for regular members.

Webpage: [www.panoramagem.com](http://www.panoramagem.com)

Contact: Bruce Hurley, President, 509-413-2768.

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).

### Rock-Hounding/Fossil Collecting on Forest Service Land (From the Colville Forest Service website)

In most areas "Rock hounding" does not require special permission or fee payment when done as recreation, and is consistent with local management objectives...

Forest visitors are welcome to pick up mineral specimens, rock samples, invertebrate fossil casts and molds, geodes, or other earth oddities, and to pan for gold using hand tools in areas open to mineral entry. (Except around administrative offices.)

### Martell's Rock Shop

2 Baxter Lane  
Kettle Falls, WA 99141  
509-738-3041  
509-675-0390  
[bkmartell@hotmail.com](mailto:bkmartell@hotmail.com)



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**Mineral Identification  
Mineral/Mine Locations**

**Bristow Enterprises**  
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This newsletter is published by the Panorama Gem and Mineral Club. Editor: Joe Barreca, 509-738-6255, [joe.barreca@gmail.com](mailto:joe.barreca@gmail.com).

### Panorama Gem and Mineral Club: Organizational Chart

<b>Officers:</b>			
President:	Bruce Hurley	10617 W. Lakeside Lane, Nine Mile Falls, WA 99026	509-413-2768
Vice-President:	Bob Bristow	PO Box 1165; 2567 Mud Lake Rd. Chewelah WA 99109	935-4375
Secretary:	Anni Sebright	POB 293, Clayton, WA 99110	509-276-2693
Treasurer:	Johnie Pitman	701 B Williams Lake Rd, Colville, WA 99114	684-8887
Trustee 1:	Bill Lupton	2530 Six Mile Rd	509-935-6198
Trustee 2:	Bill Sebright	POB 293, Clayton, WA 99110	509-276-2693
Trustee 3:	Becky Dobbs	968 Phillpott Rd, Colville, WA 99114	
<b>Committee Chairs</b>			
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
Club Shop:	Scott Jackson	1028 Old Hwy 12 Mile Rd, Colville, WA 99114	684-6371
Historian:	Carol Price	PO Box 77, Laurier, WA 99146	684-2857
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Show Chair	Bill Allen	2633 Highline Rd, Chewelah, WA 99109	935-8779, 936-2446