

Place: Arden
Community Club
Hall Rd
Arden, WA



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

The Panorama Prospector

January 2015

Minutes for November 16th, 2014

By Anni Sebright

The meeting was called to order by President Bruce Hurley.

The first order of business was to select a nominating committee. Bill Lupton's trusteeship ends this year. The other offices will continue with the current people, if that's the consensus.

December 16th will be our next meeting and also our Christmas party. We'll start with a short meeting at 5:30 and eat at 6 P.M. Our dinner will be a potluck with several hams being cooked as our main meat dish. A sign-up sheet was passed around, and if you didn't sign up to bring something, just bring your favorite dish to share. Bill and Sylvia Allen will provide the plates, cups and silverware. A gift exchange of no more than \$10 marked for a man, woman or child will conclude our evening, unless you have a story, poem or song you wish to share.

The raffle for the fossil book will conclude with the winning ticket being drawn at the Christmas party.

Joe is updating the membership list for the NFMS Northwest Newsletter including email addresses.

We're "in the book" (scheduled) for the Rock Show at the Colville Fairgrounds for March 6th and 7th with set up March 5th.

Sylvia spoke about a petition regarding the banning of mobile electro-magnetic warfare on tribal lands in Washington State. The petition was available for anyone to sign. Sylvia had a deadline in which to send it in.

Gene reported that the shop is up and running. Classes will be scheduled after the first of the year on the use of the equipment. There are big and small saws, a trim saw and polishers to learn about. The cost to members is \$2 per hour and \$5 for non-members.

Using the Shop

By Joseph Barreca



[Gene helping on his trim saw]

Since the weather is not conducive to finding rocks in the field, it's really nice to have our rock shop in a heated, lighted and well-equipped building. I gave the shop (and myself) a workout this week by bringing in some of the slabs I have collected over the years and making coasters to set glasses on in my winery.

This was a deliberately simple and cheap project since I have rarely produced anything of value in our shop and we have not scheduled a training session there so far. So I learned what I could the old fashioned way, by making mistakes.

The first mistake was assuming that there would be a round template for marking my slabs at the shop. We made up for this by using the bottom of a degreaser spray can. The next one was to mark the rock with a pencil. It is very hard to see. Gene ground down a brass rod into a point and that worked well.

My basic plan was to cut slices off the sides of slab until it was a round shape with a few points sticking out that could be ground down.

Remember, please, Diane Evans and Suzan Andrew in your thoughts and prayers. See you December 16th, 5:30 P.M., and we'll make merry.

Minutes for December 16, 2014

by Anni Sebright

The last meeting of 2014 was called to order by President Bruce Hurley.

The Nominating Committee, Arden Fritz and Brian Martel, presented their recommendation for the 3-year Trustee Position - Gene Fisher. Gene was unanimously voted in. Congrats, Gene.

A polisher motor has been donated, and the shop at Gene's is ready to go. About 4 people at a time can comfortably work in there. Call Gene for an appointment. Gene will be knowledgeable about the equipment and will train us as we use it.

Our annual rock show, scheduled for the first Friday and Saturday in March with set-up on Thursday, needs a catchy title. Thinking caps on!

Another thinking assignment is for field trip possibilities for 2015.

Snacks and juice for the January 20th meeting will be provided by the Bristows, Novaks and Sebrights.

The National Audubon Society Field Guide to Fossils raffle prize was won by Anni Sebright. (Yay, thank you.)

Our Christmas potluck and gift exchange followed the meeting. Jan Hurley was delighted with her gift and shared it with everyone.

See you January 20th and Happy New Year!

This worked but depended on the next step which was to grind down the points. Choosing the right grinding wheel took a minute. There are two grinding machines in the shop. The first one we looked had grits of 1200, 3600 and a flat wheel with an 8000 grit disk on it. You would spend forever trying to grind down any significant bump with these wheels. They are the final stages of a polishing project. Luckily, the other grinder had wheels starting at 80 grit and going to 600. The 80 grit is the workhorse.

I really liked the trim saw work even though it is greasy. When your rock is transparent, you can watch the glow from a tiny shower of sparks as the wheel cuts through the

rock. Every slab I had was a different kind of rock. Some were soft but more prone to cracking. The agate slabs were hard and transparent, slower to work with, but easier to make a good product. I didn't spend long on the trim saw because Gene took over.



[Joe working with the 80 grit grinding wheel.]

Grinding down the corners was just the first step. I held the slab face up so I could see the outline marked with the brass scribe. Then I turned it sideways so the edge was parallel to the grinding wheel. In both cases I needed to keep the slab moving so no flat spots or nicks would be ground into it. Finally I made some passes with the face up and then down at a 45 degree angle to the wheel and then an even steeper angle to round the edge. I repeated most of these steps on the next three wheels. So far, the coasters are not really polished, but they are ready to move on to the polisher.

Next time I will bring my own ear protection. It gets very noisy in the small shop, especially when the saws are running. I would also like to have a waterproof apron and probably safety goggles. A lot of water splashes off those grinding wheels. Gene has them setup with aquarium pumps to push the water onto the wheels and valves to adjust the flow.

He has also installed the new motor on the polisher, changed the oil in the saws, replaced the bearings on the small saw and installed switches for each machine and pump... In other words, Gene has done one heck of a lot of work on this place. I didn't see much in the way of dop sticks, wax etc. There are probably more supplies needed. We should do an audit to make sure the place is paying for itself and do more training!

Chips Off The Outcrop

By Bruce Hurley

Here in Stevens County so far this December, it might seem more appropriate to be thinking about building an Ark than spring field trips. However, spring will be here before we know it, and if the snowpack stays low, we will want to take trips early, before fire season. So, please begin to put some thought into where we might want to go in 2015. Several folks have asked about potential multi-day trips, which sound great, but they also require more planning, and usually further ahead. Long trips also require the right number and mix of vehicles, and the ability to cope with those unexpected “challenges” often encountered along the way. So, please think about where and how we could best spend our field time in the coming spring and summer.

Other items which we can all work on during “inclement” weather are the ideas and materials for displays at the 2015 Colville Show, March 6th and 7th. The displays seem to be getting better each year, and once you have put one together, the next one tends to be a little bit easier. In connection with display ideas, please come to the Christmas Party on December 16 with ideas for a potential theme for the 2015 show. Getting a theme early makes it easier to focus on the right kind of displays to emphasize the theme.

Johnie’s Jabber

Just thought I put a reminder in the newsletter:

Ladies and Gentlemen I’d like to call your attention to our “Main Event”! Do you realize that we only have 2 meetings before the big “Show”? So we need to come to the Jan meeting with a theme suggestion, ready to volunteer for the many jobs that need to be filled. Are you preparing to put in your cases, this indoor weather is a good time to plan. Set up day is Mar 5; many hands

make the work go fast. It seems this early show date just gets here too fast.

Field Trip to Mica Mountain 2013

Bob Bristow



[Intrepid President Bruce Hurley on Mica Mt.]

The objective of this trip was to see if Mica Mountain was still open and if it would be a good place for a Club outing. I drove, Bruce navigated, and Luci kibitzed. I was confused from the first. I thought we were going to Mica Mountain, Washington. I didn’t even know there was a Mica Mountain, Idaho. I had a couple of places mapped out on my Mica Mountain, but we drove on past it and proceeded down Hwy 95 to Potlatch Junction, took Hwy 9 east to Hwy 3 and followed it to a location about one and a half miles past Bovill. We then took a paved road north up Moose Creek. Bruce had been here many years before and found that the roads had been changed. What was the main road then was a secondary road now. Because of this, we did a little bit of sightseeing off to the west looking for Mica Mountain. We continued for many miles and saw some nice scenery, but no Mica Mountain. Finally, we came to some fresh logging and spotted someone working on an excavator. I drove over and we asked him if he knew where Mica Mountain had gone to. He replied, “I have no idea. This is my first day on the job and I’m from Northport, Washington.”

With that, we went back to the main road, got our bearings, and drove to Mica Mountain and the mine. This was a mica mine during WW2 and didn’t appear to have been used since. What we were looking for was black tourmaline (schorl). We found a lot of both tourmaline and mica and, if someone was to dig below the weathered

[Black Tourmaline]



surface, they could probably find some nice crystals of schorl. (Not all tourmaline is black and the most precious kinds have many colors in layers in one crystal.)

Emergency Beacons

By Joe Barreca

An article in the Spokesman Review last November sparked my interest in emergency location beacons. Some of our field trips take us far from cell phone coverage. It might be reasonable to carry something to handle emergencies in those locations. Here is some information on them. Personal Location Beacons (PLBs) and SPOT brands are the major types.

PLBs and SPOTs are popular products and both can be (and have been) very useful devices for backcountry emergencies, but it is important to understand their similarities and differences. First, the key similarity: Upon activation of their emergency modes, both the SPOT and PLB systems attempt to communicate with a rescue coordination center (RCC) via satellite. The RCC receives the signal, processes it and gathers as much information as possible, and then passes the notification along to the appropriate local rescue agency.

Upon activation of the emergency mode, PLBs send a 5 watt signal to the COSPAS-SARSAT satellite network on the standard emergency radio frequency of 406 MHz. For

inland emergencies in the U.S., the U.S. Air Force Rescue Coordination Center is the RCC that receives and processes the signal. Lacking any other information (i.e., GPS coordinates also transmitted), the 406 MHz signal can help the RCC locate the signal to within 2-3 miles.

The SPOT system uses a higher frequency (1610 MHz) to communicate with its RCC, which is operated by Globalstar (a NASDAQ-listed for-profit company). The SPOT does have a GPS, but does not transmit a homing signal on 121.5 MHz. While the 5 watt 406 MHz signal used by PLBs can be used to get an approximate location (within 2-3 miles), the SPOT's 1610 MHz signal is transmitted at weaker power and cannot be used for an approximate position. Therefore, in emergency communication, the SPOT relies solely upon the GPS for transmitting location information.

The SPOT must have a line-of-sight to the sky both to acquire position with the GPS and to send a message to satellites. This reduces their coverage as compared to the PLB. (In light forest they might work, but in heavy forest in a deep canyon they may not.) It is possible that a SPOT might send a distress alert without a location, or with an inaccurate location, illustrating the importance of leaving trip itinerary information with a trusted emergency contact known by SPOT's RCC.

While the SPOT has reduced coverage compared with PLBs, there are other things to consider that make it useful to have. The SPOT can be used to send "OK" messages to your trusted contact. This keeps folks at home assured of your well-being and location. It can also mitigate some coverage concerns because you can send "OK" messages in good locations and if a problem happens where you cannot send a message, then after a time (like overnight) your trusted contact can initiate an (albeit delayed) emergency response. If you are prepared to stay overnight, as you should be, then this is a reasonable outcome. Your previous "OK" messages can be used by searchers as a "last known location" to start a search for you. The "OK" message feature also allows the SPOT to be tested at home and in the field at various locations. This can build confidence that the SPOT will work when you need it to. Deep forest situations can be tested. The SPOT batteries are

simple lithium-ion designs that are user-replaceable, so spare batteries can be carried. The SPOT 1 can be configured to send a "Request Assistance" (aka "Help") message that is distinct from the "Emergency Response" (aka "911") message (the SPOT 2 has this as a devoted feature). The "Request Assistance" message is useful in that it conveys enough of the nature of the situation that a full emergency response is *not* required. It is good for getting a little help via a trusted friend or an outfitter rather than launch a full rescue response. From a rescue standpoint, any communication that can convey the nature of the emergency can help define an appropriate rescue response. Features like "OK" messages, field-testing and "Request Assistance" messages that augment the typical "Emergency Response" message are useful attributes. (The above information is from the Rocky Mountain Rescue Group website. More information is available there. These devices cost from \$150 to \$300.)

Lolo Pass Crystal Area Closed

Of note in a newsletter from the American Lands Access Association, ALAA, is that the Forest Service has closed the Lolo Pass Crystal Digging area in order to remedy unauthorized digging that has left deep tunnels with no support and other dangerous situations. The ALAA is working with the Forest Service to find a common solution to this issue, one of many caused by the reckless actions of a few rockhounds.

ALAA is working on similar situations in other areas and looking for volunteers to help monitoring of greedy and careless activity. They are also discovering areas of construction and other development where nothing will be harmed by some enthusiastic rockhounding.

The newsletter also told the story of tradeoffs in attachments to the "Defense Bill" that authorized new wilderness in Montana and several new parks. In total these were not a huge loss but ALAA is wary of this practice. The whole newsletter will be downloadable from our website.

Christmas Party a Little Wild

By Joe Barreca



[Who gave Jan Hurley that Silly String?]

The Christmas party had lots of presents, lots of food and lots of fun this year. Thanks to everyone who contributed! And yes, we did clean everything up before we left.

Mad Scramble for Amber in Russia



[People braved stormy seas to collect Amber]

A severe storm in the Baltic Sea left a Russian beach covered with pieces of amber. Locals rushed to gather the amber from the shoreline in the town of Pionersky, in the Kaliningrad region, despite freezing cold conditions. Some donned wetsuits and waded into the sea with nets while others scoured the beach, picking through blackened seaweed. "Town residents and tourists were picking up small and medium-sized pieces of amber from seaweed and sand from dawn till dusk"... "Even pensioners forgot their ailments and age and scratched the frozen soil with sticks like babies in a sandpit." It also coincided with Orthodox Christmas Eve. (A link to the original story is on our website.)

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

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).

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Stuff to Think About

The annual Rock Show is coming up on March 6th with setup on March 5th. That is two meetings away. We need a **THEME**. Please come with suggestions to the meeting.

Winter is (technically) half over. We need to ideas for field trips in the coming year. Some of the suggestions have been for overnight expeditions. They will take more advanced planning.

SAGO

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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.

Panorama Gem and Mineral Club: Organizational Chart

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