

Place:
Arden Community Hall
636 Hall Rd
Arden, WA



Club Meetings:
Third Tuesday of The
Month at 6:00PM

The Panorama Prospector

September 2022

PANORAMA GEM AND MINERAL CLUB

Minutes of the Aug 16, 2022 Meeting

President: Sheila Stratton opened the meeting at 6:00 pm, welcoming everyone including new members. A quick session covering club business was conducted followed by the club's annual potluck. After the potluck, some members participated in a rock and mineral tailgate.

Thank you to our cooks and all members wonderful dishes.



Yes! You CAN Drive to the Top of Calispell Peak

By Bob Bristow

Linda wanted to pick huckleberries, preferably on the road up to Calispell Peak. Two years ago, I had an artificial knee implant. My sister Dawn came up from Clarkston to take care of me while my future wife (Linda) was out of town. When Linda got back, my sister decided to stay a few days and get to know her future sister-in-law. Get to know each other they did! My sister always liked to tease me, and Linda joined right in. After a couple of weeks of torment, they decided to let me go out in the mountains. I selected Calispell Peak. I had been to the top of Calispell during a rock hunting trip 45 years ago and had found some nice crystals of beryl. I had also been near the top about 25 years ago and found most of the easy pickings of beryl crystals had been picked. However, I wanted Linda and Dawn to see the top. It is the highest point in the Pend Oreille Range, and you can see in every direction.

That was two years ago and I took them up Tacoma Creek past the Air Force Survival Training headquarters. The road we took is maintained on to Hwy 20 near Heritage Lake. The road branching off to Calispell Peak is something else. The first few miles aren't too bad because there has been some recent logging. As the road approaches the peak, it gets steeper and much rougher. What makes it so rough are the rocks. There are no water bars and the steep roads have turned into streambeds. All rocks smaller than five or six inches have been washed down the riverbed. (That is, roadbed.) Rocks a foot

or more in diameter are not uncommon and I had to constantly maneuver around them. It wasn't long before my new knee was giving me trouble and I said I would have to let one of them drive. Neither of them wanted to touch the steering wheel, so I pulled over and got out to look for minerals in the streambed, or rather roadbed. I wasn't surprised the road was so bad. Someone had told me it was not possible to drive to the top anymore. There were ripe huckleberries beside the road and Linda and Dawn got out to pick some. They were soon whooping and shouting about how good the berries were. About then, a couple of four-wheelers came down the road. They stopped to chat and I told them I wanted to get to the top of Calispell. They told us it couldn't be done, that the road was impassible up ahead. They had wanted to get to the top, but gave up because they couldn't get over the rocks, even with their ATV's. They assured us that we couldn't possibly get around some of the rocks. The girls said that was fine, all they really cared about were huckleberries and they had gotten about a quart each. After starting down, I decided I couldn't drive any further and told Linda she would have to do it. She did fine. With her driving, the car sounded much better. There was none of that squealing I had heard when we passed near a drop-off.

Now back to this week. Linda said, "Let's go back to the road up to Calispell Peak, and stop where we picked huckleberries two years ago." I said fine, but let's approach from a different direction. I wanted to see if we could still get there by using old logging roads that branch off from Tower Road up Burnt Valley from Chewelah. Twenty-five years ago, I had made it, but it was by driving over and around logs. We took that route and now there is a good road all the way over to the road from Tacoma Creek. We checked the distance so we could return if we found some good huckleberries. At 3.6 miles from Tower Road, there were some good berries, but it looked like they would need about another two weeks for them to finish ripening. About a mile further, we were skirting what we thought was Little Calispell Peak and found that the road runs right through a pegmatite. (It is at least a half a mile in diameter.) We searched along several stretches, but found only one very small crystal of beryl. Later we found on

the topographic map that we were on Fourth of July Mountain. This was disappointing since the state minerals report had this to say: "Name: Calispell Peak. Location: About 1 mile S. of Calispell Peak, probably in NE1/4 sec. 28, (34-42E). Descr: Small hill on ridge is made up of massive quartz containing beryl as abundant small crystals. One crystal is several feet in length and 4 or 5 in. in diameter."

While we were out of our car exploring the road cut in the pegmatite, a car stopped with two men who were also looking for beryl. At least someone had told them to look for a pegmatite along that road. They said they hadn't seen a pegmatite, but would continue looking. Before I could tell them they were standing on a pegmatite, another car came along and the first car left. That next car wasn't looking for rocks, but they stopped to see if we needed help. Near the far end of the pegmatite, there was an area above the road that had been dug up some years ago. It looked like an exploratory dig, probably looking for beryl.

In about another mile from the end of the pegmatite on Fourth of July Mountain we did skirt Little Calispell Peak. Unfortunately, there was no bedrock showing, only glacial till. We did find an old road that goes up on Little Calispell Peak, but it looked to be only passible to a two-wheeler bike.

We went on and found the road from Tacoma Creek that climbed Calispell Peak. We were able to navigate it with our Toyota RAV4, but a two-wheel drive car would definitely be stuck. The going was very slow. Figure 1 shows a typical piece of roadbed.



Figure 1. Road to Top of Calispell Peak

The speedometer registered no speed at all. As we neared the top, we pulled off the “road” and onto a new stretch that the four-wheelers were using. It was better going since it hadn’t yet become a streambed. Just then, Linda cried, “There’s a truck passing us!” Sure enough, there was a small Toyota pickup down in the streambed bouncing up and down on the big rocks. We met him and his girlfriend at the top. His girlfriend took the Figure 2 picture of Linda and me looking southeast toward Usk.



Figure 2. Looking SE at the Top of Calispell Peak

Figure 3 is a view looking north.



Figure 3. Looking North from Top of Calispell Peak

Figure 4 shows some of the antenna buildings at the top. Linda says next time, leave her at the bottom of

Calispell Peak. I don’t know why. It isn’t more than 3000 feet below the road to the first level spot.



Figure 4. Buildings at Top of Peak

We found one rock that is relatively rare: plumose mica. This is muscovite mica that forms in scales, rather than in books.

We did run into some more people before we got back to the Tower Road. There were two pickups and a Jeep with people in lawn chairs sitting in the road. They had parked the pickups on each side of the road and gave us frowns as we barely squeezed between.

We saw a large area of massive quartz on the southeast slope of Calispell Peak and about 1000 feet above its base. I wonder if that could be the location of all that beryl listed in the State mineral report? Probably not. The quartz we saw was only about one-half mile from the top of Calispell. Also, another report indicated the pegmatite with the beryl was on Little Calispell Peak.

Gemstones Lying Everywhere

By Lynne Calvert

In April 2020, Roger and I met up with his cousin and wife (Steve and Dana) in Las Vegas. They live in the Los Angeles area and like casinos. They get lucky – quite often. Moreover, they like to RV camp for free at the casino. Steve would rather sit in a casino and make money than look for “dusty old rocks.” Steve is an animated person and is very entertaining with his personality. We aren’t the gambling types and prefer not to be around so many people during the COVID 19 Pandemic.

After three days it was time to move on before luck ran out and the casino decided we camped too long. Our clue was hearing loud piped music in their speakers in the parking all night long. We headed towards Plush, Oregon. Steve did not want to take his RV on any dirt roads. (He has gone camping with us before – Ha!) Plush is off the beaten path. The main road into town is paved but turns into gravel on the other end of town. Steve was not going to take his RV any further. We found a place to pull off the road in town, secured their bicycles inside their RV and drove our vehicle onto the dirt road. We were looking for the public parking and free prospecting for Oregon sunstones. After driving several miles, we realized we had to be going the wrong way and backtracked to an intersection with no signs. We turned left and the road had less gravel and more dirt and ruts. We were relieved when we started seeing signs on our right depicting claim sites. On our right was a small mining operation with conveyer belt and a few people working. The public park was ahead on the right.

The park allows dry camping for free. There isn’t much in amenities except a couple of vault toilets and picnic benches with covers overhead since there isn’t a tree in sight. We drove past the camping area and parked just off the dirt road. We donned our hats and retrieved our classifiers. Armed with water bottles we began to kick around some dirt to figure out where we should dig. It was not long, and we were picking up gemstones lying just under the surface nearly everywhere we searched.



Steve was not impressed with the stones and thought they were not worthwhile. We stayed a few hours. It wasn’t until we were leaving that Steve realized people had staked claims and other people were paying to use the mining equipment and conveyer belt to separate their buckets of dirt. His interest was piqued, and he got excited. Searching online he read aloud about Oregon sunstones and their value.



Although they are not the most beautiful stone and are not highly valuable, Roger showed him there are places to go where you can pick up gemstones. He wasn't just making it up. We drove back to their RV and drove on paved roads until night fell. We found a wide spot in the road - to camp for free, of course. It was a staging area for road paving equipment. The wind was howling so much Dana worried the RV would flip over. The next morning, we got up and looked out across the road at a lake with a submarine moored on it! At first, I thought it was just the contour of a dock. The binoculars clearly showed it was a submarine. It was so random to see this, miles away from any ocean and in a small lake. I'd rather be surprised at our unexpected finds than sit in a casino.

Northeast Washington Fair Display

Thank You to our members who contributed to the display at this year's fair. We had a larger cabinet than last year which allowed us to expand our display.

The fair coordinators said our display was very popular with fair goers. The coordinators also said

they would like us to look into expanding our display and moving us to a more prominent position in the crafts section to draw fair goers into this area.

If you have any ideas to improve this display and show more of our members interests and collections your inputs would be very appreciated.



Membership Dues:

\$20.00 per household per year is due to the club Treasurer Frank Stratton on the third Tuesday of November for regular members. Dues can also be sent to: Panorama Gem and Mineral Club c/o Johnie Pitman, 701 B Williams Lake Rd, Colville, WA 991114.

Webpage: <http://panoramagem.com/>

Facebook Group: [Panorama Gem & Mineral Club](#)

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).

A Quick Note from The Editor

It is a pleasure to note we are back in full swing. All meetings and outings are back to normal. Thanks to all for their support and participation during the pandemic.

On another note, we are always looking for newsletter inputs from our members. If you have an idea for an article, please forward it to Jimrocks@recycledhistory.com

Refreshment Schedule for 2022

Last names that begin with the letters posted bring refreshments for that month

January – N, O, P
February – Q, R, S, T
March – W, A, B, C
April – D, E, F, G
May – H, I, J
June – K, L, M
July – N, O, P
August – Club Picnic
September – Q, R, S, T
October – W, A, B, C
November – D, E, F, G
December – Christmas Party

Panorama Gem and Mineral Club: Organizational Chart

Officers

President:	Sheila Stratton	skstratton@hotmail.com	509-207-8506
Vice-President:	Bob Bristow	bristow71@outlook.com	509-935-4375
Secretary:	Glynis Hull	gghull@comcast.net	
Treasurer:	Frank Stratton	frstratton@outlook.com	509-207-8503
Trustee 1:	Jim Peters	jimnbetty17@gmail.com	509-992-6921
Trustee 2:	Scott Jackson	free2rockhound@yahoo.com	509-680-4896
Trustee 3:	Greg Cozza	troller@hotmail.com	509-710-0375

Committee Chairs

Program Coordinator:	Sheila Stratton	skstratton@hotmail.com	509-207-8506
Hospitality:	Betty Peters	jimnbetty17@gmail.com	509-992-6921
Historian:			
Newsletter:	Jim Retzer	jimrocks@recycledhistory.com	509-738-2503
Show Chair	Johnie Pitman	jgpitman@outlook.com	509-684-8887