



# Lake City Rockhound News

NORTH IDAHO MINERAL CLUB

APRIL 2010

**P.O. Box 1643 Hayden, ID 83835**

**Meeting every third Thursday of the month at 6:30 PM — Public Welcome**

**At Post Falls Senior Center, in the Dougall Room— 1215 E. 3rd. St. Post Falls, ID**

**See the NFMS web site at [www.amfed.org/nfms](http://www.amfed.org/nfms)**

**See the web site for the club at [www.northidahomineralclub.com](http://www.northidahomineralclub.com)**

## MEETING OF THE NORTH IDAHO MINERAL CLUB—MARCH 18, 2010

The March meeting of the North Idaho Mineral club was called to order at 6:30 PM by President, Warren Price. The minutes of the last meeting were approved. Treasurer, Bill Johnson presented the Treasurer's Report  
Announcements:

Neil Adams was scheduled to give a presentation on ammolite but is ill and has rescheduled for May.

Bev Bockman stated that she had an alternate presentation on Russian Gem Treasures.

Show information:

Good Eats Catering has agreed to be the food vendor at this year's show.

Old Business:

Warren reminded everyone that there is a refreshment sign-up sheet. Also, if anyone is interested in putting up a display in the club case a sign-up sheet is available.

Bev Bockman stated that she is the Federation Delegate. She also stated that there is a donated license plate available and that it will be given away in a drawing.

Warren again asked for volunteers for the show to sign-up. Help is especially needed for set-up and tear-down.

Everett Hendricks discussed the Forest Service plan to reduce the cost of the Golden Passport by 10%. He also stated that the Fairfield Ranger District is looking at making changes to the snowmobile access.

Visitors were introduced. Welcome to: Bert, Cindy, Diane, Mike, Sharon, Eric, and Cari. Susan Rekow is back from AZ. till the house sells, and we were glad to see her again. Diane was a member two years ago.

Field Trips:

Bill Johnson reported that there are several field trips coming up. Some of the trips discussed were: Saddle Mountain on April 17-18; the Federation trip to Blue Forest, May 29-30; Heather Creek and Lake Wenatchee on July 17. Other possibilities included: Emerald Creek, Central Oregon in mid-June, and Madras, Oregon.

Several members shared information on other sites that might good for finding gems. One person mentioned the Molalla River area in Oregon. Another person mentioned that he had found small garnets at the top of Greensferry Road.

A reminder that the gem and mineral show in Colville is on March 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>. Jim asked if anyone was planning to carpool.

With nothing further to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 6:50 PM

Maria McDonald, Secretary.

The following article is written by Alan Vonderohe, who is an educator, and at the time this appeared was president of the Madison Gem and Mineral Club. Since so many people have questions on this subject I felt it was worth printing in its entirety. I found it while doing an internet search. Hope you like it too.

## NORTH AMERICAN JASPERS

Alan Vonderohe  
May 2008

Just what is a jasper? Let me tell you that after researching this question for quite some time, one thing is clear: there is great confusion in the lapidary and petrology communities as to what the answer might be. Most everyone agrees that jasper is silica and has quartz in it. But then, this is true for many of the other kinds of rocks on Earth. It is also true that most everyone agrees there are taxonomical relationships among chert, flint, chalcedony, agate, and jasper. But, that is about where the consensus ends. For purposes of writing this article, we will use the taxonomy published by the United States Geological Survey and definitions drawn from various other sources.

According to USGS, chert, flint, agate, and jasper are all forms of chalcedony. Chert and flint originate primarily in sedimentary rocks and agate and jasper originate primarily in volcanic rocks (although they are not, themselves, volcanic). Chalcedony (the taxonomic parent) is a cryptocrystalline form of quartz, with some definitions calling for a smaller percentage of moganite. Agates and jaspers typically form from siliceous solutions accumulated in voids in volcanic material, often rhyolite or basalt. The voids in the surrounding material sometimes arise from trapped volcanic gases (e.g. in rhyolite) or from formation fissures (e.g. in basalt). Thus, agates and jaspers are typically found as nodules of varying size, in veins or seams of varying thickness, or as more irregular structures. Mineral impurities in chalcedony give rise to the wide variety of colors found in both agates and jaspers. Depositional, flow, and mechanical processes give rise to their sometimes incredible patterns.

So, if agates and jaspers are so closely related, what is the difference between them? Here we go with more confusion amongst us. The most consistently used distinction is that agates are more translucent and jaspers are more opaque. However, some very translucent materials are referred to as "jaspers" and some very opaque materials are referred to as "agates". Worse yet, some rhyolites (igneous) are called "jaspers" (which some purists classify as sedimentary). In any case, in the midst of all this chaos, what follows is an overview of some North American jaspers.

Although jaspers can be found across much of the continent, the most sought after materials are found in Mexico and the western United States, most notably eastern Oregon and southwestern Idaho. Some beautiful brecciated jaspers are found in Wyoming and California. Stefonite, from Wyoming, is a light brown or tan brecciated jasper with the fractures healed by blue agate. It cuts spectacular cabochons. Stone Canyon Jasper, found in northern California, has a base material that can be brownish yellow, red, maroon, or black. The cementing material is usually white. Stone Canyon is not overly hard and takes a glossy polish. A brilliantly red brecciated jasper is also found in northern California. This material nearly glows when wet, but when polished it takes a dull matte finish.

Thunder eggs are often thought of as containing agate, but many contain mixtures of agate and jasper (and sometimes common opal), while some contain only jasper. White Fir Springs Thunder Eggs, found in north central Oregon, are renowned for their cream, tan, yellow, and maroon jasper.

Biggs and Deschutes Jaspers are closely-related silicified volcanic muds that can contain astonishing patterns of brown, white, blue, and purple. Their patterns often resemble the rolling hills of north central Oregon where these two jaspers are found. Biggs was discovered in the early 1960's as a highway was being constructed along the Columbia River Gorge near Biggs Junction. Since, then a number of other deposits have been found and are still being mined. A sole deposit of Deschutes was found, near the confluence of the Deschutes and Columbia Rivers, soon after the Biggs discovery. Deschutes was mined by a single person until the deposit was exhausted in the 1970s. This highly-sought-after jasper is distinguished from Biggs by its more detailed, more complex, and more angular (nearly serrated) patterns. High-grade Biggs and Deschutes have a hardness of 7+ and take mirror polishes.

There are five North American rocks that are sometimes referred to as "the fine jaspers" because of their great hardness, the porcelain finishes taken by them, and, particularly, for their propensity for containing successively-embedded orbicular patterns. These jaspers are some of the most sought-after in the world. Royal Imperial Jasper is found in one location northwest of Mexico City, near Zacatecas. Its cousin, Imperial Jasper, is found much more extensively in Mexico and can also be found in the United States, notably Utah. Royal Imperial is found in chalk-encrusted nodules ranging from a few centimeters to two feet or more in diameter. It is characterized by concentric or overlapping orbicular patterns of red, pink, green, purple, blue, brown, tan, or gray. The orbs sometimes "float" in a surrounding pool of green chalcedony. Royal Imperial can contain banded patterns, that appear to overlay the orbs, or healed fissures with intrusions that penetrate the orbs. The central orbs are sometimes brecciated, with the fractures healed by clear druzy.

The other four fine jaspers are found in southeast Oregon and southwest Idaho. Blue Mountain Jasper is found in a single deposit on Blue Mountain near the Oregon-Nevada border. It is not clear to me whether the jasper is named for the mountain or the mountain is named for the jasper. This is because, although the jasper can include many different colors and patterns, it is perhaps best known for its overlapping deep blue orbs. Blue Mountain is found in nodules and has been mined by a single person since its discovery. The exact location of the deposit is known to only a few individuals.

Willow Creek jasper is found in a single deposit a few miles northwest of Boise, Idaho. This jasper is renowned for its beautiful pastel colors and patterns of billows and orbs. Colors include greens, browns, oranges, pinks, lavender, and white. Although Willow Creek patterns are most often soft and hushed, like its colors, they can include wildly jagged and irregular features. Flow and fracture patterns that clearly show mixing of colors and materials over time can often be seen. Willow Creek is found in nodules ranging in size up to a hundred pounds or more. Mining of the material is difficult and the mine is not open to the public.

Bruneau Canyon Jasper is found on two or three remote private claims on one side of the Bruneau River Canyon, to the southeast of Boise, Idaho. Bruneau is well known for its characteristic cream-colored, concentric or overlapping orbs on a background of reddish brown. However, Bruneau can also be found in black, green, and white mixes. It is typically found in nodules, but some slabs I have seen appear to have come from seams.

Morrisonite (sometimes referred to as "King of the Jaspers") is found on five adjacent and / overlapping claims, half-way up the east side of the Owyhee River Canyon, northwest of Jordan Valley, Oregon. The Owyhee River Canyon is rich with deposits of well-known jaspers and agates. In fact, the Wild Horse, Owyhee, and Rocky Butte Jasper mines are all within three miles of one another in this area. Morrisonite is the most sought-after of them all. It is found primarily in seams and can contain almost any mix of colors, with patterns ranging from soft, consistent gradations, to overlapping billows and orbs, to unexplainable bolts of lightning mixed up with what looks like fractured and pieced together pictures of landscapes, seascapes, storms, people, animals, and places other than Planet Earth. This material is so beautiful, astonishing, and enticing that many myths and much lore have arisen around it. For example, it is true that the jasper is named after Jim Morrison, but it is not true that this is the same Jim Morrison who founded the Doors and wrote "Light My Fire". Both of these Jim Morrisons were into beautiful hard rock, but only one of them had anything to do with lapidary. It is also true that no Morrisonite has been mined since 1996, but this is not because it is mined out. No parking lot has been built over the deposit. And there is no prohibition to mining of Morrisonite because the Owyhee River has been designated as wild and scenic. If you want to know why Morrisonite has not been mined since 1996, come to the membership meeting at 7:00pm in Weeks Hall on Tuesday, June 24.

AND we may never know the answer to this question because this article appeared in May of 2008, and the only copy of the club bulletin titled "THE AGATEER" that I could find was for April 2008. I tried to e-mail Mr. Vonderohe but might try his phone number this weekend.

**I will bring samples of all these jaspers to the meeting if anyone is interested in actually viewing them in connection with this article. I do not have time to look up pictures this month. Bev**

**Program on April 15, will be presented by Dean Younge**

**"GOLD MINES OF ALASKA"**

**Next meeting will start at 6:30 PM, April 15**

**I just received my latest bulletin from the Washington Mineral Council and it contains so much important information about field trips, Saddle Mountain, etc. that I may send it to all of you who are on my e-mail list, along with this newsletter. You don't have to download it unless you want to. We currently do not have representation on the council but anyone can go to the general meetings, which happen in Ellensburg. The discussion about BLM and access to collecting areas should be of interest to all of you who plan to go there this year. (I decided to supply the info to those who ask me for it —Bill will have it too) BB**

**Tri-federation field trip to the Blue Forest Area in Wyoming  
On Memorial Day Weekend—May 29 –31, 2010**

Directions to this dig site are as listed (by Doug True in the NFMS Newsletter). “I will only give directions to the turn off from County Rd. 8. The reason for this is there are a number of people who always have to get there first or will come in and park in the middle of the road or an area that would not be appropriate for laying out the parking area. When people arrive at this point there will be markers giving directions to the dig area and to the camp area if different from the dig site. Details are still being worked out with the BLM. If you are coming from the east: From Farson, WY. go east 21.3 miles on Wyoming 28 to Sweetwater County Road 8, turn right and go north 11.3 miles. On the right will be a dirt road. At this point follow the markers we will have set out for you.

If you are coming from the west on I-80 take exit west of Green River to Wyoming 372, drive 27 miles north and turn right on Wyoming 28—drive 6.7 miles to County Road 8, turn left and drive 11.3 miles.

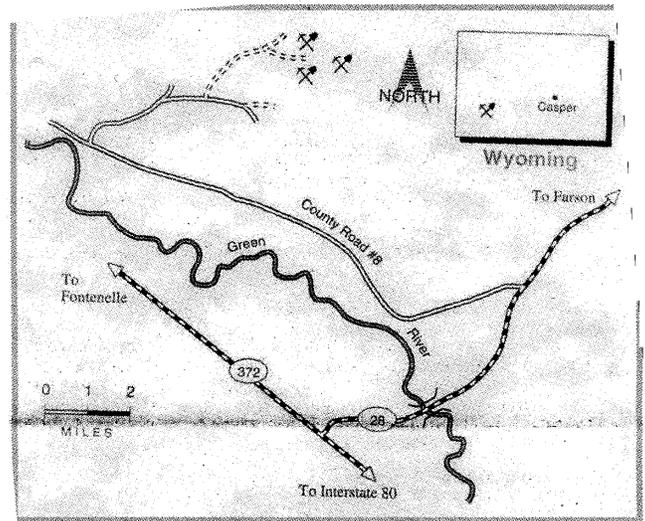
Check your Wyoming map and find Farson and Green river and work from these locations. There are a number of items being discussed with the BLM at this point and will be updated as we get closer to dig time. There might even be some special instructions when you arrive.”

Thanks: Doug True, Field Trip chairman  
e-mail: dtruefossils@yahoo.com

**Judi Alison, who is the 2nd V.P. of the Northwest Federation** has a good message in her article in the April 2010 issue—(which I HOPE you all receive—let Bill or me know if you do not)

She says, “..... as rockhounds we should all be able to understand...active participation. ....We can't find rocks just sitting on our duff. Unless, of course, you happen to be that lucky one who sits down for a break and happens upon the biggest find of the day. ....my point is that we have to be willing to do things to have something happen. So if you are wanting to receive something from membership, simply being a member will not make things happen for you. You have to be willing to give of yourself to receive the best benefit.

Every club has something that every member can do. You don't have to be particularly talented. It may just be bringing the treats one time that you contribute, but you will have taken an active part. ....we usually get nothing for nothing, so if you want something (continued next box)



be willing to give a little of yourself to get it. And enjoy the fruits of your labor...great friendships lots of fun and maybe a special find. Happy rockhounding. Hope to see you at the mid-year meeting.”

There was a good turnout for the March meeting, and the substitute program, "Russian Gem Treasures" seemed to be well received. We were really sorry for the illness that prevented Neal Adams from coming to present the Ammolite program, but he has agreed to try again next month.

We welcome **Sharon and Mike Johnson** who live in Rathdrum. If you are keeping an address list of current members, please add them. P.O.Box 8, Rathdrum ID. 83858 . Cell 818-4689 Bert Seward has also joined the club. His address is 6640 Colfax Street, Coeur d' Alene, ID 83815 . Guests were Cindy Palmer, Diane Lee, Cari Thrapp of Spokane Valley, and Jay and Aidan Hassell of C d'A bb/ed

**Thanks everyone who did such a great job helping out at the Rock rollers show.**

Warren spent an entire day on Thursday helping the dealers get situated and manning the loading doors, Joan Gundlach looked like she was enjoying helping at the silent auction, Sharon Johnson was in position at the treasure dig, Everett put in most of three days demonstrating PMC, Rob Moser (who is also a member of the rock Rollers) demonstrated faceting as well as helping with set-up, Dennis Hicks helped with the floor plan and getting the vendors in place, Pam was in charge of name tags and hospitality and obtaining the chicken for the Thursday night pot-luck. Of course, I was around and about. Mostly helped with skirting. Several of the Colville club members were helping also. It is really nice to see the cooperation between clubs at these events, and the hard work done to just help out! BB/ed

**LAKESIDE GEM AND MINERAL SHOW—ALSO HOSTING THE NFMS MID-YEAR MEETING Apr.17 & 18**

If anyone would like to attend the show at Kennewick—which is always enjoyable and well done—let us know at the next meeting. You might be able to car-pool with some members who are already going. This show is always a good one with beautiful displays and an outstanding fluorescent room. If you want to you can sit in on the meeting -(you don't have to stay for the whole thing) of the Northwest Federation and get to see the people belonging to the names you see in the Northwest Newsletter. Every time I say that I sincerely hope that many of you are reading it!!!

Please look at our web site—give Mike Burton any suggestions that you have.

Look up the new Rock Rollers web site—www.rockrollers.org It is in active development

Don't forget www.panoramagem.com The Panorama Gem and Mineral Club site

**OFFICERS FOR 2010**

- Warren Price—President
- James Finckbone—Vice Pres.
- Secretary - Maria McDonald
- Treasurer — Bill Johnson
- Federation director—Everett Headrick
- Federation Delegate—Beverly Bockman
- WSMC Delegate—Open

**Committees for 2010**

- Hospitality – Sherla Francis
- Field Trips—Bill Johnson
- Membership- Bill Johnson
- **Show Chairman-2010 Warren Price**
- Newsletter Editor—Bev Bockman ARTICLES WELCOME
- Program Chairman-Bev Bockman AND CLUB MEMBERS PLEASE !!!!!~
- Webmaster—Michael Burton

*Lake City Rockhound News*

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**Save ALL your cancelled stamps for cancer re-search-bring to meeting, and give to Everett H.**

**CLUB WEB SITE**

***www.northidahomineralclub.com***

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THE NORTHWEST FEDERATION OF MINERALOGICAL SOCIETIES  
  
WASHINGTON STATE MINERAL COUNCIL

**2010 Rock and Gem Shows in WA., OR. , ID. & MT**

**APRIL 17-18 YAKIMA ROCK AND MINERAL CLUB— WA.**

**APRIL 17-18 LAKESIDE GEM AND MINERAL-KENNEWICK, WA**

**April 24-25 GRAYS HARBOR CLUB—ELMA, WA**

**MAY 1- 2 WEST SEATTLE ROCK CLUB-SEATTLE**

**MAY 8-9 BOZEMAN Gem and Mineral—FAIRGROUNDS**

**MAY 15-16,BITTERROOT CLUB-HAMILTON, MT**

**MAY 15-16 HATROCKHOUNDS-HERMISTON, OR.**

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