



# LAKE CITY ROCKHOUND NEWS

NORTH IDAHO MINERAL CLUB, INC

P.O. BOX 1643, HAYDEN, ID. 83835

**SEPTEMBER 2015**

**MEETING AT LAKE CITY CENTER 1916 LAKEWOOD DRIVE 667-4628—IN LIBRARY  
6 PM TO 8 PM, THIRD THURSDAY OF MONTH—VISITORS AND GUESTS WELCOME**

See [www.northidahomineralclub.com](http://www.northidahomineralclub.com)

**REGULAR MEETING—OCTOBER 15, 2015 6-8 pm**

**PROGRAM ON THE “BADLANDS”**

**REFRESHMENTS—DIANE ROSE AND BEV B.**

**SILENT AUCTION— AND SCHOLARSHIP DRAWING**

**(NEXT DRAWING IN DECEMBER.) BUY YOUR TICKETS TODAY**

EVERETT AND ERNA HEADRICK HAVE BEEN ACTIVE MEMBERS OF OUR CLUB FOR MANY YEARS, AND WE REGRET TO INFORM YOU THAT ERNA PASSED AWAY EARLY ON OCT. 6, 2015. She was unable to recover from the insult of a fractured hip. HER MEMORIAL SERVICE WILL BE **SUNDAY, OCTOBER 11 AT 2 PM AT YATES FUNERAL HOME, 373 E . Hayden Ave in Hayden, ID.**

NIMC MIINUTES—9-17-15. Meeting called to order by President Dale Ruperd at 6 PM Following the flag salute, guests were introduced. Attending this evening were Kyle Forman and Ken Bailey. The treasurers report by Carl Chapin was heard and moved and seconded by Bob Riley and Bruce Holmes.

OLD BUSINESS: Final Cabochon class will be this Sunday. The quarterly Scholarship Drawing was held. Congratulations to all the winners.

NEW BUSINESS: James Finckbone reported on his recent trip to Bathtub Mountain to look for Staurolites (Fairy Crosses) in host rock. He will provide us with a written report. (appears later in the newsletter BB)

Bev B. reported that Bill Richards (NIC Geology instructor) will be making his decisions about “worthy scholarship awardees” after the close of the first semester of school. They will have interviews with Bill and the scholarship foundation.

Reminder was announced to watch the OUTDOOR IDAHO broadcast on Sept. 24 at 8 PM and repeated on Sunday the 27th at 7 PM. (Mike Burton taped it for future viewing.)

The meeting was adjourned for the program and silent auction. Bill does such a wonderful job of setting this up for every meeting! Diane Rose, Secretary.

Lake City Rockhound News— OCTOBER 2015

"THE CLUELESS ROCKHOUND VISITS BATHTUB MOUNTAIN" (2011)

[ONE OF A VERY SHORT ONGOING SERIES .... J

A year ago a prominent gem dealer brought up the odd idea of how easily he might secure lots of staurolite twinned crystals, said to be found at a remote site in southeastern Shoshone County, Idaho. The means of reaching that place on "Bathtub Mountain" seemed unclear, but a couple months ago I located instructions in a text, Rockhounding Idaho (1)

The author wisely warned that the site might need to be visited only during August through early September with 4WO vehicles. Of course The Clueless Rockhound would disregard such warnings ....

The instructions for travel into the Forest Service-maintained graveled roads were easy enough to at least get one into the general locale. The trip via Idaho 456 from Wallace to Avery over Moon Pass was fine, and challenging as always. The 7 tunnels and half-dozen bridges, all one-lane of course, especially added to that. Not a wise place for MP3 players or other audio-video distractions. Even rubber-necking at the displays of spring and summer wildflowers can be dangerous. An exceptionally snowy winter meant more washouts and road edge peril on 456; far worse down on the roads below 10 FS 50.

The vital info as to which bridge to turn south onto from eastbound 50 was only discernable from the text; FS 509 was not marked on the bridge anywhere. It was following the instructions via the longer route past Mammoth Lakes Campgrounds which nearly derailed getting up to the site; there were several tons of snow over the road in a couple shaded spots

near the campgrounds. Yes, minivans without chains and studded tires tend to get stuck .... Others anxious to get the damned thing out of their way graciously pitched in and pushed the Kia uphill slightly and let the journey continue, briefly. A front right tire was now flat, and had to be changed, with only the most basic tools at hand. A fellow heading up to the same general area was crucial to complete the journey to the "Snow Peak" site, as he hooked up the tow rope this clueless one had in the back and pulled at least 2 trees partially off the road, using his modified VW bug no less!! More spots of snow and fallen branches made continuing the last couple miles even more risky. It's a shocking realization that one has possibly been the first rock collector of the new season fool enough to venture to such a remote area! The one refreshing compensation was that the site was virtually free of human litter. Even Jay Silver Heels couldn't cry up there.

Romaine (ibid.) does cite GPS coordinates; of course this Clueless One doesn't have a GPS unit; so he safely remained on the horse lovers trail descending east for over 600 yards, well past the suggested main area.

Just about 25 yards from the road-side parking is a strange uplift of rock, clearly metamorphosed to schist-like form, perhaps four by six yards by eight yards in height. It's left from the horse trail by about ten yards. Most probably this unusual formation and a mostly vegetation-barren area about ten yards downhill was the spot to dig, and I did take a modest sampling from there, but really spotted no twinned crystals. The tiny garnets embedded in mica bearing schist were plentiful, so no doubt a few larger garnets, albeit almandine in species like their cousins to the west at Emerald Creek, can be found in this area by extended-screening and digging. These garnets were under 1 millimeter to perhaps 3mm in diameter, most quite orange-red.

Travel past the designated area proved impossible for the day, as another tree likely weighing over five-hundred pounds blocked the Forest Service road just around a left turn uphill from the Snow peak parking area. It would lead further NE and may offer substantial additional collecting opportunities.

Rocks found at the site which still require testing and confirmation of identity include a not plentiful but meaningful quantity reddish rock, often in layered pieces 30-40mm thick, seemingly coarse-grained orange-red; slightly bluish-gray rock with characteristics of both kyanite and quartzite. It has a grainy-look in some directions, but not too much obvious cleavage. The "grayish schist" already referred to, which is not particularly tough.....and an orange-reddish material .which may be the staurolite. (to be continued when some further identification on these rocks is possible).

(1) Rockhounding Idaho, Garret Romaine, 2010 Helena, MT: Falcon Guides, pp 46, 51-2.

"Return to Bathtub Mountain" (not the Disney version) 2015

In wetter times, circa mid July 2011, I ventured far south of the St. Joe River in lower Shoshone County. My van was actually high-centered in over two feet of snow, helped off by some fellow travelers eager to move on.

No snow to be found in mid-August 2015. Late to venture out as usual, the route 456 through Wallace up to Moon Pass then down to Avery at State Route 50 was slow, to avoid stirring up dust. 22 miles eastward to the turnoff, then even more slowly my Kia traversed by the 'short cut' route starting with F.S. Road 509. That route ran about 68 miles from my home in Osburn, 10, and took over 3 hours. This time, other rockhounds had come before me; no one had been up there for much of 2011. A charming older lady rockhound located a small nearly perfect doubled staurolite an hour ahead of my dusty arrival at 'Snow Peak' Forest Service Trail #100.

[back in mid-2011 'The Clueless Rockhound Visits Bathtub Mountain' appeared in the NIMC Newsletter, apologies for any repetition]

The site I returned to had indeed been the correct locale for the fabled staurolite crystals. The strange formation I even suggested to be a batholith or uplift appears almost as strange now-as if a giant placed three roughly hewn triangular rocks atop each. Again, it was okay exercise but futile as a rock-hounding experience to pursue the horse trail downwards to the south-east. The action is to head for that uplift with a rock hammer, collecting bag and perhaps even a battery-powered saw to conquer the dull gray schist with thousands of staurolites and little almandine garnets embedded therein.

About 15 yards to the southeast of the uplift is yet another, flatter occurrence of the schist, though it seemed less enriched of staurolite, perhaps beginning to show the ravages of innumerable visitors.

The staurolite crystals are often partial, twinned maybe 5% of the time. Their fibrous brown to near black color has a strong contrast with the lighter crumbling schist. Pieces of reddish quartzite are found in the Snow Peak area. It's possible that kyanite and smaller garnets can be found loose in the area, though I found no identifiable staurolite pieces loose along the trail.

Mindat.org features photos of a cross-section of schist piece with a fine twinned crystal when Google is referenced for staurolite-that piece was from Bathtub Mountain.

[submitted by James Finckbone, NI Mineral Club & Rock Rollers of Spokane]



STAUROLITE EXAMPLE

DID YOU KNOW?—That the first recorded use of turquoise dates back to 5000BC in Mesopotamia where people used the gemstone to make beads?

That because of the hardness of jade, it has been used for many cultural things like hammers, fish hooks and stone axes?

That Platinum is so rare that two million pounds of ore may contain only one pound of metal?

That the first geologist on the moon was HarrisonSchmitt who was pat of Apollo 17 mission? From rock samples he collected, scientists have been able to learn many things about the moon.

Via The Nugget 12/03, Golden Spike 7/04, Magic Valley Gem News 9/04

FLUORESCENCE OF BLUE GEMS

Kyanite—weak red in long wave UV

Benitoite—chalky blue in short wavew

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#### FLUORESCENCE OF BLUE GEMS

- Kyanite—weak red in long wave UV
- Benitoite—chalky blue in short wave UV
- Apatite—blue to light blue in both long and short wave UV
- Scapolite—inert to strong pink to yellow under both
- Lazulitae, Euclase, Aquamarine—none

#### SIZE CATEGORIES FOR MINERALS—

- Thumb nail: up to 1.25 inches in size
- Miniature; up to 2 inches
- Small Cabinet Specimens; from 2 to 5 inches
- Large Cabinet specimens: over 5 inches

Via the Pegmatite 2/05, Rockhound Record 12/02

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO THOSE WITH BIRTHDAYS IN OCTOBER!

Opal derives its name from the Roman word opalus, a Latinized version of the older Sanskrit upala, meaning "precious stone." Opal is hardened silica gel, and usually contains 5 to 10 % water in submicroscopic pores. Its structure varies from essentially amorphous to partially crystalline. Precious opal is the least crystalline form of the mineral, consisting of a regular arrangement of tiny, transparent, silica spheres with water in the intervening spaces.

Opal is very widespread. In its pure form it is essentially colorless. The vast majority is common or "potch" opal is opaque, dull yellows and reds imparted by iron oxides, or black from manganese oxides and organic carbon. Opal is deposited at low temperatures from silica-bearing, circulating waters. It is found as nodules, stalactitic masses, veinlets, and encrustations in most kinds of rocks. It is especially abundant in areas of hot-spring activity. It is commonly found as fossilized wood, where it preserves the wood's external appearance and cellular structure. Fossil bones and seashells have been discovered in Australia replaced by precious opal.

Precious opals can form only in undisturbed space within another rock that is capable of holding a clean solution of silica from which water is slowly removed over a long period-perhaps thousands of years. The silica spheres slowly settle out of solution and arrange themselves into an orderly three-dimensional formation. Unless the spheres are regularly arranged and of the correct size, there is no color play, which is caused by the diffraction of light through the spheres; opal is, in effect, a diffraction grating. The larger the spheres, the greater the range of color. All precious opal is probably relatively young in geological terms, since precious opal cannot withstand the heat and pressure of burial and metamorphism.

Today, the chief producer of precious opal is Australia, where it was discovered in 1887, with deposits in South Australia, Queensland, and New South Wales. In Australia, opal is found in sedimentary rocks such as sandstone and ironstone. The Lightning Ridge field in New South Wales, Australia, produces the rare and prized black opal, with a very dark gray or glue to black body-color and a superb color play.

Much smaller amounts of precious opal come from India, New Zealand, Honduras, and the western United States. The other form of gem opal is called fire opal. The transparent, intensely colored opal in red, orange, or yellow also shows flashes of color.

Precious opals are usually finished en cabochon because their color play shows best on smoothly rounded surfaces; fire opals are normally facet-cut. Unlike most other gemstones, opal may crack or lose its color if it dries. Thin slices of precious opal are often either glued to a thicker quartz base or sandwiched between layers of quartz, both giving the appearance of a denser, more valuable stone. Black stones, such as obsidian, are sometimes used as the backing for doublets or triplets, giving the appearance of rare black opal.

Properties: Group-Silicates-tectosilicates Hardness-5-6 (from Umpqua Gem 10/07)



### 2015 OFFICERS OF NORTH IDAHO MINERAL CLUB, INC.

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### SHOW CHAIR 2016 ???

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**THE OREGON STOOP: POSE OF THE AGATE HUNTERS**(via *Gems of the Rogue* 3/09, via *Umpqua Gem* 4/09)

Some costal natives call it the Oregon Stoop. Many people spend hours doing it at the ocean's edge, searching with the intensity you would expect from someone who has lost a contact lens.

Yet the treasures they seek are not man-made—rather it is the craft work of nature, unique shapes and colors of rocks, sea fossils and wood. They are like hunters homing in for the strike, these agate seekers, looking for the prize stone which is different than any other in their collection.

Along the Twenty Miracle Miles there is an endless supply of agates, and hunting is particularly good in the Newport-Agate Beach area. The reason for this is quite simple: the Oregon coast is rocky by nature, therefore the last thing there will be a shortage of around here is rocks.

March is one of the primmest of times to search for agates because the turbulent waves send the small stones up to the shore to rest. Agates are put in the same class as gemstones, and are comprised of a variety of quartz formed in rock cavities or left by the decay of vegetable and animal matter. Agate is composed of oxygen and silicon, and usually is comprised of oxides and metals which give it its colors.

Perhaps the most precious of all are water agates, which usually contain water and a moveable water bubble. They have been found in various shapes, including clams and bear claws, but water agates of any kind will usually make an experienced agate hunter forget about all of the other colored rocks in his agate sack.

In addition to stones, there is agatized wood, which is found in many colors. Jasper is an opaque quartz made up of iron oxide, clay and many impurities and is found in many colors of brown, red, yellow, green and any combination of these colors.

When hunting for agates, the first consideration is for your own safety. Experienced agate seekers know that you never stoop with your back to the ocean!! Doing this is an open invitation to be carried away by the unpredictable and sometimes very strong undercurrents. **Always stoop facing the ocean** to avoid waves from sneaking up on you.

Once you've mastered the stoop, the next step is to search the beaches for loose gravel on top of the sand. The stones are usually concentrated in this gravel. Most agates are translucent, and configurations can be seen inside of them when held to sunlight.

The best time to begin the hunt is when the tide is outgoing because the gravel has been recently agitated and the stones are usually quite plentiful. The mild winters of the Oregon coast also help agate hunters search for the stones in relative comfort.

There are many types of agates, all with their own unique names. Moonstone Agate is a brilliant clear stone; Carnelian, a bright red, transparent stone; Ribbon agate, colors formed in stripes; and Moss agates both containing mineral crystals and crystallization of color matter, are just a few of the types to be found.

Oregon leads the nation in the number of agate cutting centers located here.

No tools are needed for agate hunters, although a strong back and keen eye are considered to be major assets.

**PLUME AGATE SHOP TIP:** Try something new—Pick out a good grade of white plume agate —slice thinner than usual, but thick enough to bevel. Then cut slabs of black jasper or jade as thin as possible. Boil slabs to remove all oil. Epoxy the jasper to the underside of the white plume agate Press together; rub slightly to get out the bubbles: weight down or clamp together till dry. Mark and cut in the same way as your regular cabs. These are really stunningly beautiful.

Without geometry, life is pointless. //// A chicken crossing the road is poultry in motion.////With her marriage she got a new name and a dress.////When two egotists meet it's an I for an I.////You feel stuck with your debt if you can't budget.////Corduroy pillows are making headlines.//// Energizer Bunny arrested—charged with battery.//// Practice safe eating—always use condiments.////He had a photographic memory that was never developed.//// I used to work in a blanket factory but it folded.//// A gossip is someone with a great sense of rumor. (And that's all folks!!!!!!)

NORTH IDAHO MINERAL CLUB, INC.

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THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF MINERALOGICAL SOCIETIES

THE NORTHWEST FEDERATION OF MINERALOGICAL SOCIETIES

S.C.R.I.B.E.

AMERICAN LANDS ACCESS ASSOCIATION



# 2015 ROCK AND GEM SHOWS IN WA, OR, ID, AND MT.

OCTOBER 17 & 18 HELL'S CANYON GEM CLUB LEWISTON, ID.

OCTOBER 17-18 HATROCKHOUNDS GEM & MIN—HERMISTON, OR.

OCTOBER 24-25 CLACKAMETTE MIN. AND GEM CLUB—CANBY, OR.

OCT. 24-25 BELLEVUE ROCK CLUB—BELLEVUE, WA