

April
2008

the BEMS Tumbler



The monthly newsletter of the **Boeing Employees' Mineralogical Society, Inc.** Seattle, Washington



*This month remember
to wish a
Happy Birthday to
Shirley Houser on April 1,
Phil Kirschner on April 2,
Debra Jurasek on April 6,
Katherine Wittick on April 8,
Dennis Swenson on April 9,
Joan Keltgen-Lo on April 13,
Barbara Woodward on April 14,
Thomas Slee on April 17,
David VanDyke on April 28,
and also remember
to wish a*



*Happy Anniversary to
Frederick A. & Delores Geraldson on April 1 (3 years),
Phil & Julianne DeLeo on April 12,
John & Tamara Carter on April 26 (3 years)*



*Next Meeting:
April 10, 2008
7:30 p.m.*

**Boeing Recreation
Activity Center**

Room B at
22649 83rd Avenue S.

Just off the Valley
Freeway (Highway 167) North
edge of Kent

The Program was not known at
press time

**First Place for Small Bulletins
in the 2007 NFMS Bulletin
Editors' Contest!**

This publication is an official bulletin of the Boeing Employees Mineralogical Society Inc. (BEMS) however, news items and editorial comment herein do not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of the BOEING COMPANY.

Except where otherwise noted, material from The Tumbler may be reprinted for non-commercial purposes, provided that the author(s) and source are acknowledged.

For commercial use, the author(s) must be contacted for permission; if no contact information is given, contact them via the editor.

Tips, suggestions, recipes and experiments printed in this newsletter are the experiences and/or opinions of the individuals submitting them. We are not responsible for their authenticity, safety, or reliability. Caution and safety should always be practiced when trying out any new idea.

When on field trips this organization uses CB Channel 7.

Keith Alan Morgan, Editor

Postal, or Email, Exchange
Bulletins are welcome.
Email preferred.

morgangraphix@yahoo.com

Officers & Directors 2008

President Malcolm Wheeler, Sr.
Vice President Mike Brimmage
Treasurer Richard Russell
Secretary Pete Williams
Director Bill Cook
Director Dick Morgan
Past President Mike Brimmage
Federation Representative Michael Blanton
Federation Representative Jerry K.F. Chilson
Mineral Council Bob & Jackie Pattie
Program Mike Brimmage
Refreshment Esther McKain
Membership Keith & Dick Morgan
Health & Welfare Carolyn Sealfon
Library Charlotte Churchill
Raffle/Display Keith & Dick Morgan
Field Trip Bill Cook
Tumbler Editor Keith Alan Morgan
Webmaster Keith Alan Morgan
Shop Operations Leslie Brooks
Shop Instructors:
 Casting Joe Poston
 Faceting Cliff Frome
 Jewelry Joe Poston
 Lapidary Dick Morgan

Club eMail address is
morgangraphix@yahoo.com

2008 BEMS Dues are \$15 flat rate Individual, Family, or Retired.

Send or deliver dues to:

Richard Russell

(or pay him at the meeting)

The object of the Society shall be to stimulate interest in the study of the earth sciences, lapidary arts and related subjects.

This Society is affiliated with the *Boeing Company*; the *American Federation of Mineralogical Societies*; the *Northwest Federation of Mineralogical Societies*; and the *Washington State Mineral Council*.

Every member of the club should be receiving a copy of the Northwest Newsletter. If you are not receiving a copy contact Dick Morgan

To get information to the Tumbler via the Internet send it to **morgangraphix@yahoo.com** Please put Tumbler and subject in the Subject Line. The deadline is the 20th of each month, (except December which varies).

The BEMS external website is <http://www.bemsonline.com>

Continental Split by Randolph E. Schmid, Associated Press (excerpted)

Volcanic rocks newly discovered in Brazil indicate that an eruption 200 million years ago produced the most widespread lava flow in Earth's history, splitting apart North America and South America, Europe, and Africa. A previously unrecognized area of lava flow covering about 965,000 square miles in the Amazon basin turns out to be related to lava flows in three continents, researchers say in the journal *Science*. The eruption occurred at the same time and had the same origin as lava flows found in North America, Africa, and Europe, said Paul Renne of the University of California at Berkeley, who led the international team that conducted the research. And, he added in an interview, an early mass extinction at the same time seems likely to have been connected to the huge magma flow.

via Breccia, 9/07; via The Glacial Groove, 5/05; from The Chisseler, 8/04



April



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
BEWARE OF THE FOOLS!		1 Board Meeting 	2 South Sound Show Planning Meeting	3	4 Faceting Class	5
6	7 Lapidary Shop	8 Lapidary Casting Jewelry	9	10 General Meeting 	11 Faceting Class	12 Mt. Baker Show
13 Mt. Baker Show	14 Lapidary Shop	15 Lapidary Casting Jewelry	16	17	18 Faceting Class	19 Lakeside Show
20 Lakeside Show	21 Lapidary Shop	22 Lapidary Casting Jewelry	23	24	25 Faceting Class	26
27	28 Lapidary Shop	29 Board Meeting 	30			

Lapidary Class Hours:.....Monday.....7:00 pm to 9:00 pm
 Lapidary Shop Hours:.....Tuesday.....9:00 am to 6:00 pm

More Field Trip info can be found on Page 9
 More Show info can be found on Page 10

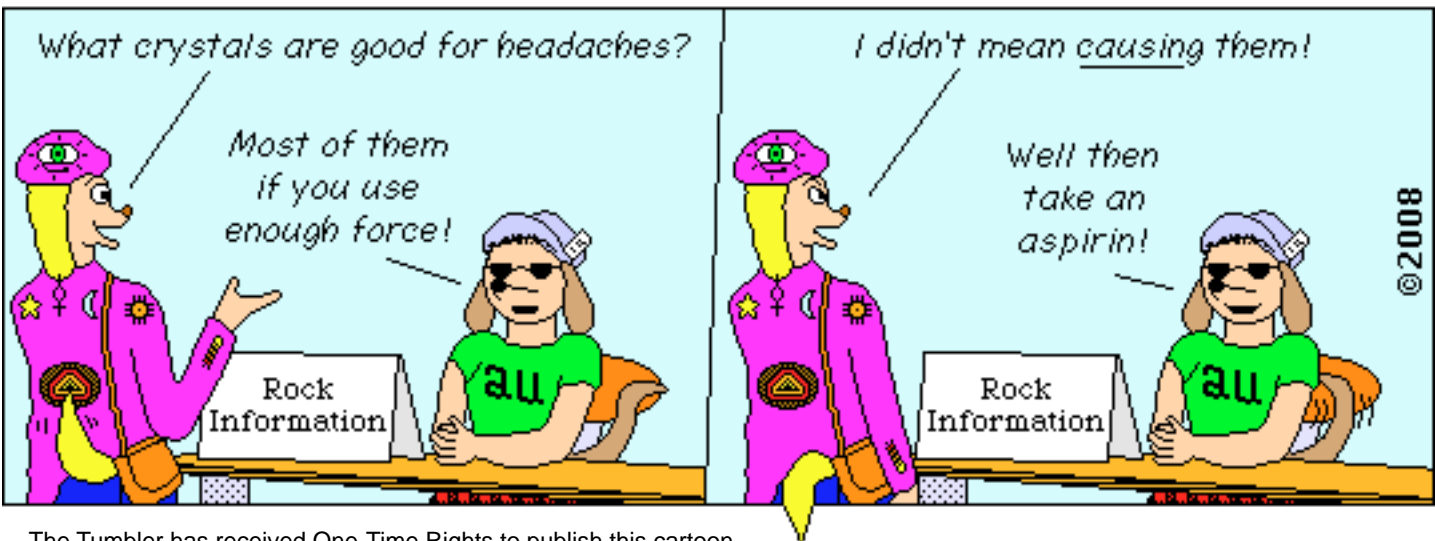
Jewelry Shop Hours:.....Tuesday.....9:00 am to 6:30 pm
 Jewelry Casting Hours:.....Tuesday.....9:00 am to 6:30 pm (Casting Information All Day)

Faceting Class Hours:.....Friday.....4:30 pm to 8:00 pm

South Sound Show Committee.....1st Wednesday.....11 am to 12 noon
 BEMS Board Meeting:.....Tuesday (9 days prior to General Meeting).....9:30 am to 10:00 am
 BEMS General Meeting:.....2nd Thursday.....7:30 pm to 10:00 pm

Son of Mr. and Mrs. Rockhound

by KAM



©2008

BEMS Board Meeting Minutes March 4, 2008



by Keith Alan Morgan, Editor

Members attending

President Malcolm Wheeler

Editor/Webmaster Keith Morgan

Shop Operations Les Brooks

Shop Instructor/Raffle Dick Morgan

Library Charlotte Churchill

Mineral Council Bob & Jackie Pattie

Field Trips Bill Cook

Guests Karin Wheeler & Pat Morgan

Meeting began at 9:50 AM. President Malcolm Wheeler presiding.

Program: The Rec center doesn't have any DVD Players for us to show a DVD program.

Need a speaker for the program in April.

Shops: Dick reported that Monday night classes are fine.

Les reported that the bearing for the 10" saw is worn out & he discovered that they no longer make that kind of bearing. He did find a similar bearing that might work, it'll cost \$28 plus shipping & handling.

Run a list of who hasn't paid membership in the Tumbler. If haven't paid dues can't use shops.

Mineral Council: They sold \$900 worth of maps. Colored maps are \$9. They are looking for a Wagonmaster.

New Business: Dick mentioned that the Science Fair at PLU will need help. It's on Saturday, March 29.

Malcolm mentioned that Boeing will have a meeting about the Pro90 requirements before our regular meeting & he plans to attend.

A donation to the scholarship fund will be made in the name of Steve Mackey.

Meeting Adjourned at 10:50 AM.

Another Thank You From A Home Schooler

Dear Ladies & Gentlemen of the Mineralogical Society

I really enjoyed the field trip. I especially liked the fossils and I've always wanted to be an archeologist. thank you for the minerals and the petrified wood.

Sincerely, Melinda Craig

Words Of Caution by John Wright, AFMS Conservation & Legislation Chair

As I research material for my articles, I find it interesting to see who is trying to eliminate or at least restrict access to public lands. I have said in the past, a few are truly concerned about the environment and sincere in their efforts to preserve areas with special interests or appeal. Most, however, are individuals or groups with a selfish or self-serving purpose. Following the money trail used to finance opposition groups is also very interesting. It would take a book to just touch on these two areas and I often get sidetracked by the pure unadulterated sham being perpetrated on the American public by these individuals and special interest groups.

The problem we have is that our members, like most of the American public, for the most part do not understand or cannot fathom just how dedicated and well financed these special interest groups are and the gravity of what they want to do will have on our hobby and our lives. Ignorance and indifference are major assets used by these groups to dupe the public and rob them of their access to public owned lands. We have already relinquished many of our rights due to their intrusions and are paying for it in more ways than you think.

The only good thing about being seduced into allowing our access to public lands being taken away from us is that we are in good company. A lot of the supposedly intelligent members of our government, academia, legal and entertainment professions, just to name a few, are marching right along in the parade with us. Unfortunately, many of these esteemed individuals are unwitting puppets controlled by special interests, or use the propaganda espoused by these groups, for the notoriety that keeps them in the spotlight.

Many of our elected officials go out of their way to maintain the support of special interests, or avoid offending them, and our constitutional rights are conveniently being ignored. How do we fight these problems? The first thing we need to do is be informed about issues that could potentially affect us. I listed two great sources other than AFMS in my article last month for obtaining information and there are many other informative sites that can be found online. Also check out the sites of the special interest groups so that you know your competition. You might want to start with the Wildlands Project (rewilding.org) or the Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Network (Y2Y Network). While these two organizations are primarily involved in the northwest there are similar groups diligently working in other parts of the country and reviewing these sites will give you a good idea of the mind-set behind these movements.

We are also a special interest group and need to make our desires known just like our adversaries. Write and petition your elected officials. Letters to the editors and articles about your club activities published in your local newspapers can gain you recognition and support. Visit schools, put displays in your local libraries and other public facilities. In other words, let it be known that you exist, that you have rights and that you have every intention of continuing and keeping your rights for access of public owned lands.

BEMS General Meeting Minutes March 13, 2008



by Pete Williams, 2008 Secretary

Meeting called to order at 7:35

There were 3 guests in attendance.

Minutes were approved as written.

Tumbler Editor's Report: The Tumbler is doing okay. Requesting members submit articles. Submitters receive free tickets to the raffle.

Webmaster's Report: The web site is fine. Keith received another nice thank you card from one of the home school group students that attended the open house.

Treasurer's Report: Rich posted the income and expenses for 2007. There were some large non-recurring expenses in 2007. Fortunately, there was enough in savings to cover. Income for the year was \$5907 with expenses of \$8209.

Shop Reports: There is a large group at the Monday night lapidary class. The faceting class is doing well with 5 people on the waiting list. The bearing for the 24" saw finally arrived from a company in Reno. The saw could be ready by next Tuesday. Les cautioned members that if using the 12" or 14" Lorotone saws not to let the rocks sink below the carriage as they might hit the collar.

Library: Some people still have books out from last year and may soon be getting a postcard reminding them to return the books.

Health & Welfare: Caroline Sealton volunteered to replace Steve Mackey as the Health & Welfare chair.

Federation Report: Nothing new to report, but just a reminder about upcoming field trips.

Field Trip Report: The WSMC field trip list is available on the web site.

Mineral Council: Jaquie reported that the quarterly meeting is in Ellensburg at the end of this month. The Saddle Mountain field trip in May will be rescheduled.

South Sound Show: Malcolm found replacements for the 2 committee members that died. There are 35 dealer contracts out and \$1000 has been returned so far. Only 1 dealer has dropped out so far due to health reasons.

Old Business: Malcolm reminded everyone to pay their dues and pick up badges. Boeing Recreation has requested all clubs to issue new membership cards that contain employees BEMS id's. Members must carry this card to the meetings or have some other Boeing identification in the event that Security requests identification. Spouses of employees and associate members will also be given new identification. The front door to the building is having problems and will have to be replaced. The combination will remain the same.

New Business: A question was brought up regarding casting. Due to the high price of gold and silver, more people are using copper for casting. A new crucible will be needed for the copper to keep separate from the gold and silver. Dick mentioned that the Washington State elementary science fair will be held at PLU the first day of spring break. Since some of the teachers will be on vacation, they are asking for volunteers to help out that day. BEMS is one of the sponsors of the event.

Program: A video was shown on "Beautiful Opals: Queen of Gems."

Raffle: The special was won by Maya Smith.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00

Displays:

Charlotte Churchill - Silver casting pins & necklaces; clippings from magazines about all sorts of good stuff to make

Eric Chilson - Cabs & carnelian

Carl Dewey - Jadeite from the north fork of the Teanaway River at fork with DeRouv Creek

Dave Mackey - Hematite from Venaco, Haute Corse, France

Brian Waters - Geodes, cabochons & obsidian needles

Carolyn Sealton - Jade pillow with over 300 jade beads; 7 faceted stones

Cliff Frome - Faceted sunstone, aquamarine & morganite

Les Brooks - Intarsia, 11 pieces of various material

Ed Laville - Smack'em rocks

Not Paid Yet? by Keith Morgan, Membership

Here is the list of members who have apparently not paid for 2008. Apologies to those who did pay & are listed, sometimes miscommunication between the Treasurer & I happen.

Bruce A. Adams, Mike Amibile, Tom Appelkans, Edward Aquirre, Monte Ballard, Bob Bird, Michael Blanton, Corrine Bonsey, Jeffrey Brannan, Jerie Bremmeyer, Gary Carbon, John P. Carbon, Dan Clayton, Jane Davis, William Farrow, Curtis Finckel, Mary French, Larry Fritz, Cliff Frome, Frederick A. Geraldson, Edward Harrison, Ole J. Hopland, Thor Hopland, Ronald Houser, Stephanie Jurado-Smith, Joan Keltgen-Lo, Anne Ko, Larry Kochel, Diane Kodad, Alex Lane, Kathy Ledbetter, Janet Ludin, David Martin, Eugene Martin, Terry Martin, John McCone, Ryan Merrifield, Gene Merritt, James Montgomery, Patrick F. Myers, Jr., John W. Negley, David Michael Nelson, Vinnie Noble, Dolores Oswald, David Pierson, Don Printz, John M. Richards, Orlie Runyon, Richard Russell, Dave L. Scott, Andy Soderlan, Dick Stafford, Gerald Stickman, David W. Strahin, Anita Stramski, Krina Van Ry, Merle VanDyke, Michael D. Wall, Brian Waters, Jim Yackel.

From Atop The Rock Pile

By Malcolm Wheeler, Sr., 2008 BEMS President

April showers bring lots of flowers and gems pop out of their winter hiding spots .
 It's time to look for the* DIAMOND* in the rough in all of us.
 Let's let our actions shine forth in every facet of our lives.
 All of you are listed in my treasure box of life.
 Thank you

Young Richard's Almanac by Dick Morgan

In addition to April showers is the soaking by the IRS. In Roman times it was "Beware the ides of March!", now it's "Beware the ides of April."

Kinky Geological Facts

1. Mountains are caused by the collision of Earth's slow moving surface plates.
2. Earth's plates move at about the same speed as the growth of the length of your hair.
3. Fission power of the radioactive elements in Earth allows and causes volcanoes, earthquakes, and mountains. Without fission power, the Earth would be all solid and geologically dead.
4. Barite roses in Oklahoma and the three-state Joplin, Missouri lead/zinc area are known worldwide. They are described in foreign language mineral books.
5. In Oklahoma, three miles of ocean sediments were laid down, then one and a half miles of the sediment has eroded away leaving one and a half miles of ocean sediment covering Oklahoma.
6. The deepest "trench" of sediment in the world is in Oklahoma.
7. Granites in Oklahoma are two billion years old.
8. Dirt is loose (not consolidated) because rain washes away any cement that might bind it into a consolidated rock.
9. Sand in the Arkansas River came from the Rocky Mountains. If you examine the sand under a magnifier you will find pink blocky fragment of feldspar mixed in with the quartz sand. The feldspar and sand are the remains of Rocky Mountain granites. You will also find black magnetic magnetite.
10. Dirt is new... only a few hundred or few thousand years old. In rock years, that is like a baby less than a month old.
11. Meteor Crater in Arizona is the largest fresh crater in the world - about 35,000 years old.
12. The oldest and youngest large basalt floods or plateaus are in the United States. Oldest is near Lake Michigan, youngest is in states of Washington and Oregon.
13. The Great Flood described in the Bible occurred about 4500 BC when the Mediterranean Sea broke through and spilled over near Istanbul in Turkey in to the area known as the Black Sea. Before the break and spill, the area was a much smaller fresh water lake.
14. At one time people thought the Earth was only 6,000 years old, according to the Bible. We now know the age is 4.7 billion years.
15. When the dinosaurs were alive, they could look out and see the Rocky Mountains...those mountains were there even in dinosaur times.
16. Birds are descended from the dinosaur...so not all of the dinosaurs died. Every time you eat chicken, you are eating a dinosaur.
17. Dinosaur were big, hot-blooded and numerous... people are some of the largest animals on earth, hot blooded and numerous. People are the "new" dinosaur. It is called parallel evolution. Two independent creatures can evolve towards the same character.
18. 42% of Canada overlies permafrost.
19. In Siberia permafrost is more than 1.5 km thick.
20. Cat litter is made of bentonite, a kind of clay found in large quantities in the state of Wyoming.
21. The oldest known mineral is zircon in sedimentary rock in Australia... 4.3 billions years old.
22. Where do mineral names come from? 45% are named after people (goethite), 23% are named for their locations of discovery (vesuvianite), 14% are named for their chemical composition (chromite), 8% are named for their physical properties (orthoclase), 10% are combinations and oddities (peristerite, tantalite)
23. Only 10% of species of life show up in the fossil record. Fossilization is rare, so the other 90% of the species we have no fossils of.

Sources: The Oxford Companion to the Earth, and Science News and others.

via Breccia, 2/08; via AFMS Newsletter, 12/07- 1/08; via the T-Town Rockhound, 12/07; compiled by Chris Fite of the Tulsa rock club, 10/07

Agonizing Agates by Guy DiTorrice

It's a well-known nugget that 'if you really want to hide something, put it out in plain sight.' This line is used most often by spouses and domestic partners who take great joy in helping their mates find something for which they are looking.

My wife takes a unique pleasure in the agonizing minutes I spend trying to remember exactly where I put my favorite beach hat or rock gloves... only to hear the (expletive deleted) commentary when I find them on the dash of my Jeep. The dogs have learned just to stay out of my way while I rummage for whatever, no doubt worried that someday I'll forget where I put their dinner.

I share these established moments of truth to place into proper perspective the often foot-plodding search for Oregon beach agates. Yes, yes, I know - YOU find them all the time. And, you always find the really BIG ones. Yes, you have jars and baskets FILLED with them at home.

So... what...

"So what?!?" You may ask.

Why, these are THE world famous, internationally renowned OREGON beach agates. They're the nicest ones in the whole, wide world. They have the best color. They have the greatest patterns. There's nothing like them in the whole wide world!

Okay - a moment of slight exaggeration and literary hyperbole (look it up).

People from all over the world walk OUR beaches to find elusive whole sand dollars as well as AGATES.

Make sure it's understood - the former are the skeletal remains of a once-living creature, the latter simply a rock,

But, what a rock! Today I will share some solid tips from one of the 'locals' to tell you how to capture the best. That is, if you don't already believe you know the following.

First: Some research resources. Make sure you secure a copy of the Rufus Cate field guide "Agates of the Oregon Coast," published in 1977. It's out-of-print but often found online or in used bookstores. Fits in your back pocket, with color photos of dry and wet rocks to help you distinguish between just plain rocks and agates.

OMSI publishes the Dean McMullen guide entitled "Oregon Under Foot," with photos and information on rocks from all around the state, with a small section on beach agates. The benefit of this book is it covers more territory and it includes maps with site notations.

Second: Forget what you've heard about agates all over Agate Beach in Newport. Thanks to local erosion and decades of dredge-dumping in the area, the sand is winning the game complete with the 90-degree rerouting of a nearby creek.

Third: If anyone told you that all agates are clear and white, they were locals looking to keep you focused on less than 10% of what's really out there. While the base mineral recipe for agate is crystallized quartz made from silicon dioxide, minerals provide a rainbow palette of agate colors.

Fourth: Location. Location. Location. Every sandy beach in Oregon will yield collectible agates, though I'm partial to the north and central coast. You may not know it, but you're walking over agates on sandy Oregon beaches all the time. Winter storms move sand off the beach, exposing grand expanses of gravel bars, but most people hunting the summer when sand tops off the rock and hides the best finds. You'll do very well in and around creek beds as well as in tide pools in rocky areas where sand and rock get rolled in during storms.

Fifth: Be safe. Winter is the best time to go looking, but focus on hitting open beaches during low tides. Avoid standing on logs and other debris. Remember that climbing rocks pose a "slip and slide," risk, usually when one least expects it. And, never, never, never turn your back to the ocean. If you disregard this warning, you would not be the first person to learn why we call them "sneaker waves."

When the weather is calm and the beaches are dry, look for smooth-surfaced rocks with a fairly dull sheen to them. Dabbing them with a wet cloth will let you see what the rock will look like after it's been tumbled and polished. Remember to look for the widest range of color.

While combing an exposed gravel bar north of Seal Rock last year, I was stopped by a couple who were looking for agates. I showed them a couple of blues, reds and clears from my pocket. They held them. They looked at them. Then one of them said, "We just can't seem to find these," at which point I told them to look under their shoes. One of them was standing on a three-inch diameter 'blue' (which is actually closer to gray in color). Being a nice Oregonian, I let them keep it.

via Coastal Waves, 5-6-7/06; from Beach Connection, 1-2/05

Book Review by Roger Merk, San Diego Mineral & Gem Society Librarian

A Journey With Colour: A History of South Australian Opal 1840-2005

Len Cram has completed his epic four-volume set on the history of Australian opals with the final issue titled, *A Journey With Colour: A History Of South Australian Opal 1840-2005*. Affectionately known by opal lovers as the "Opal Apostle," Len has compiled a complete history of opal in Australia using many of the original Government reports, newspaper articles and personal interviews with the miners to give life to a work of over a quarter million words. Each of the volumes also contains superb color plates and original black and white photos to illustrate the text. This volume is 368 pages, with 1,400 photographs in an 8.5" x 11.75" format.

Over half this work is dedicated to the opal fields of Coober Pedy, starting with the initial discovery in 1840 and finishing with a 2005 perspective on this productive region. Chapters are also devoted to Andamooka, Mintabie, Lambina, and Stuart Creek. Completing this work are two chapters, the first on the Minor Opal Diggings and the second on Western Australian Opal, with a very helpful glossary at the end.

Reading through the book, I was transported to the opal discovery by vicariously becoming a miner from the original diaries of these finds. The text is engaging and gives one the sense of the landscape, hardships and lack of water that plagued the original miners. In fact, many of the original discoverers gave up the opal finds to pursue the lucrative gold fields. I highly recommend this work for the opal book collector as the best work on Australian opals by an order of magnitude. The \$150 price being asked now is probably quite inexpensive when one notes the \$800-\$1000 or more being asked for the first volume. At this time, the run of 1,500 copies was down to 72 copies left with the author. Copies should be available from several dealers including the author at Tucson this year.

The bibliography for Len Cram includes the following 16 postcard-covered works containing incredible colored pictures:

Beautiful Australian Opals,
Beautiful Lightning Ridge: Home of the World Famous Black Opal,
Beautiful Australian Opals: A Field Guide,
Beautiful Lightning Ridge: Special Collector's Edition,
Beautiful Opals: Australia's National Gem Opals,
Beautiful Opals of the Desert,
Beautiful Yowah, Black Gate & Koroit,
Beautiful Lightning Ridge & History,
Beautiful Opals, Queen of Gems,
Beautiful Opals: Australia's National Gem: Special Collector's Edition,
Beautiful Opals: Australia 's National Gem: Special 2000 Commemorative Edition,
Beautiful Lightning Ridge: 100 Years of the World's Most Famous Black Opal Field,
Beautiful Coober Pedy: Home of the Desert Opal,
Beautiful Boulder Opal: The Exquisite Gem,
Beautiful Lightning Ridge: Special Edition, and
Beautiful Australian Opals: A Buying Guide.

He has also published *A Perpetual Calendar: The Australian Opal Calendar*, with 8 pages including 5 full pages of color; several CD ROMs and some of the above publications in Japanese: and the following major books:

A Journey with Colour; A history of Queensland Opal, 1869-1979
A Journey with Colour; A history of White Cliffs Opal, 1889-1999
A Journey with Colour; A history of Lightning Ridge Opal, 1873-2003

from Pegmatite, 11/06

Selecting Lapidary Material by Robert Morriss

This month I want to talk about material we convert from ugly rocks to brilliant stones. First, let us all understand that nearly all rockhounds go through three stages in collecting. The First Stage, as beginners, involves collecting - a little of this and a little of that - until we concentrate our interest on one type of material, such as agate. Then the second stage kicks in and there is no such thing as having too much material. It is sad to see a rockhound in the depths of Stage Two, collecting vast amounts of anything and everything with no thought as to quality. I've been there, and it's habit forming. I well remember the giddy delight of closing a deal for TWO TONS of Rio Grande agate, and the disappointment of having to share the deal with two other club members at the insistence of my better half. After culling and separating, I only got a half ton for myself. - Sad!

But with time and experience (coupled with no more storage space) comes-reality, and the rockhound evolves into Stage Three, collecting only good quality material. I am glad to say I have made the transition and have no interest in acquiring any more piles of material just for the sake of having piles of material. (Yeah, right!)

Seriously, the point in this: if we are going to expend great effort and time to learn the lapidary arts; acquire the proper equipment and then labor to bring forth a product that is worth our efforts, why should we start with any less than the best material we can afford? I am not suggesting that we learn to cab on \$20 per pound material. But it takes no less effort to cut a poor quality material into a well finished blah cab than it does to produce a stunner cab from the "too expensive" you see on the dealer's table. The blah cab will be approved by the viewer as "a beautiful finish" or some such comment, but it will end up on the back of the workbench as not pretty enough to set in a finding. The stunner cab, however, will rest in a suitable silver setting and be displayed for years to come. The trick is, of course, picking the good material out of the piles of not so good material.

What do you look for? (I thought you'd never ask.) Well, first look for the visual impact features (color, pattern, etc.) that are attractive to you. Be picky. Remind yourself that you can't buy it all. (Of course, if you are picking it up in the field, all bets are off and you are only restricted by the load limit on your vehicle.)

Field Trips

The club or clubs sponsoring the field trips are shown in italics. When known I have listed a phone number and contact person for each sponsoring club below the listed trips. If you are not a member of the sponsoring club, you should phone and ask permission to go on their field trip.

Some trips have fees to non club members, so they can be a day member, and be covered under club insurance. The usual fee is \$.50 a day.

Information from the Washington State Mineral Council webpage (<http://www.mineralcouncil.org>).

April 12 *North West Rockies - Racehorse Creek - Fossils, mushrooms* - Will need digging & light hard rock tools - Meet at 9 am at Nugents Corner IGA
Ed Lehman (425) 334-6282 or wsmced@hotmail.com
Kathy Ernst (360) 856-0588 or earnstkk@comcast.net

April 19 & 20 *Pow Wow Club - Saddle Mountain & Diatom pits - Petrified wood & opal* - Will need digging tools - Meet at Boat access south of Matawa
Rocky McCall (360) 629-2515 or rm711@tgi.net
Pauline Miller 360-658-8091

Really look at the material. Does the red plume agate that shows up at twenty feet have enough space around the plumes to allow cutting a cab with a clear border, or do all the plumes run together, overlapping here and there? Are the colors consistent across the slab, or do they fade at the edges? Form an image of a cab outline and mentally slide it around over that slab to see if the patterns can be divided into discrete "pictures". Keep in mind the size of the desired product, as some patterns in stone require larger cabs to display the full pattern, while other patterns may work better on small items. Note the pattern on both sides of a slab to see if it is consistent through the slab thickness.

OK, having selected material that has the visual POW you want, check it for the mechanical properties that are necessary for a good cab. First, look for cracks. Wet the slab, wipe it off and look closely; the cracks should show up in the light reflected from the surface. If you can "see" the cab between the cracks, the material may still be acceptable and you can use the cracks as a bargaining tool. Look for indications of a hard material; glassy cut or broken surfaces, no pits or pores, sharp edges, etc. Hardness is relative, of course, as some of the classic cutting material is much softer than others. What you want to avoid are materials like chalky turquoise or anything with a soft matrix that will be included in a finished cab. If you are selecting material in the field, look for the same solid condition and knock off a corner to check for hardness and color. Check for zones of weakness, such as soft spots in the fibers of tigereye or pietersite, or in the matrix of spiderweb turquoise. I have been known to whip out a pocket knife to check the hardness of unknown material, although I try not to let the wife see this. She thinks it's impolite. With slabs, check the thickness. Thin slabs can be used for small cabs. If this is what you are cutting, the thin slab is not a problem.

Finally, consider the asking price. The professional dealer in cutting rough will see far more material in a year than most of us will see in a lifetime, and they know the relative values. There are occasional exceptions, but "you get what you pay for" is not an idle cliché. If you see what appears to be equivalent material on two tables at a show, and the prices are quite different, go back and study the cheaper material. You will likely be able to find the reason for the "bargain". If you can't, go talk to the dealer with the more expensive stuff. He will be able to point out the difference. If he can't you may have found a deal at the other table.

If this article has steered you away from the Stage Two mentality, I have actually saved you money. When you acquire only material that you really will cut, you will spend less time and money and get better results, and you won't be paying rental on a storage building. Once you have truly entered the Stage Three mental condition, I know you will have the same questions in your mind as all the other converts. That is, "what do I do with all this other junk I've got"? Simple... find someone that's still in Stage Two.

via West Seattle Petroglyphs, 11-12/07; via The Glacial Drifter, 9/05; via The Rockhound Gazette, 5/05; via The Roadrunner 2/05; from The Stone Chipper, 2/03

I do try and keep a travel tube of Neosporin in a sandwich bag (the tubes always leak when hot), I also try and keep a bottle of merthiolate in the 1st aid canister. I use a metal can for first aid stuff. The basic first aid single or double latch metal container; I put scissors in the kit, but I rarely find them when I need them. If the box gets too much sun and keeps cooking, then paint it white.

A space blanket is always a good idea to cover items in your car, especially keeping one in the first aid kit, but I think you would be better served by covering the items with a surplus wool blanket(s). They may not reflect, but they'll insulate and protect. Uncovering the shady side to let heat vent while you drive from place to place helps somewhat. Plus you can always use them to buffer items and keep things upright and they're incredibly cheap.

via The Kyana Gemscoop, 8/07; from Rockhound list server



Shows

April 12 & 13: Saturday 10 am - 6 pm; Sunday 10 am - 5 pm

Mt. Baker Rock and Gem Club,
47th Annual Mt. Baker Rock and Gem Show
Bloedel-Donovan Park Community Center
2214 Electric Ave.
Bellingham, WA

April 19 & 20: Saturday 10 am - 6 pm; Sunday 10 am - 5 pm

Lakeside Gem & Mineral Club, Annual Show
Benton-Franklin Fairgrounds, Building #1
10th & Chemical Dr.
Kennewick, WA



Internet Addresses

Peregrine Rocks & Trading Post
<http://www.peregrine-rocks.com/>
from Breccia, 2/08

Fake Minerals.com: Exposing Mineral Fakes, Frauds & Forgeries
<http://www.fakeminerals.com/>

Agates Anonymous
<http://www.agatesanonymous.com/>

The Vug
<http://www.the-vug.com/>

Mineral Auctions
<http://www.mineralauctions.com/>

CK Minerals, Australian seller
<http://www.ckminerals.com.au/>

Fossil Cartel
<http://www.fossilcartel.com/index.php>

Glendale Community College Earth Science Image Archive
<http://www.gc.maricopa.edu/earthsci/imagearchive/index.htm>

Evolving Earth Foundation
<http://www.evolvingearth.org/>

