



# THE BEMS TUMBLER

OCTOBER  
2008

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

***Next Meeting:***  
***October 9, 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

**HAPPY  
HALLOWEEN!**



*This month remember  
to wish a  
Happy Birthday to*  
***Angelina Slee on October 1,***  
***Jacqueline Myers on October 1,***  
***Jack Berosik on October 5,***  
***Patrick F. Myers, Jr. on October 6,***  
***Renee Farrow on October 10,***  
***Keith Alan Morgan on October 11,***  
***Ashlea Fulmer on October 11,***  
***Mel Pagel on October 12,***  
***Mauricea Nyquist on October 14,***  
***Barbara Oxborrow on October 21,***  
***Jacob Earl on October 22,***  
***William Arundell on October 25,***  
***Gerald Edgar on October 25,***  
***Myron Hovland on October 27,***  
***Arta Gerhard on October 29,***  
***Ross Berglund on October 30,***  
***Fred Thompson on October 30,***

*and also remember  
to wish a*

*Happy Anniversary to*  
***Katherine Wittick & Wesley V. Anderson on October 19,***  
***Joel & Debra Jurasek on October 20 (29 years),***  
***Ross & Marion Berglund on October 27 (46 years),***  
***Elliott & Barbara Woodward on October 27 (43 years),***  
***Dennis E. & Debbie S. English on October 31***



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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* Scott Burch  
*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  
*Refreshment* Esther McKain  
*Membership* Keith & Dick Morgan  
*Health & Welfare* Carolyn Sealfon  
*Library* Charlotte Churchill  
*Video Library* Stephanie Jurado-Smith  
*Raffle/Display* Keith & Dick Morgan  
*Field Trip* Bill Cook  
*Tumbler Editor* Keith Alan Morgan  
*Webmaster* Keith Alan Morgan  
*Shop Operations*  
*Shop Instructors:*  
    *Casting* Joe Poston  
    *Faceting* Cliff Frome  
    *Jewelry* Joe Poston  
    *Lapidary* Dick Morgan

Club eMail address is  
**morgangraphics@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 **morgangraphics@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>

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## Cleaning Drusy Specimens

To clean and shine most drusy specimens, use Easy-Off Oven Cleaner. Spray the specimen and leave it overnight in a plastic bag or other closed container. In the morning, rinse the specimen. This also works on iron-stained Quartz.

via West Seattle Petroglyphs, 8/08; via Carny Hound, 4/08; from Tips & Chips, 3/04

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Wash fluorite specimens only in cold water.

via West Seattle Petroglyphs, 9/08; via The Rock-it, 4-5/08; via Golden Spike News



OCTOBER



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
happy halloween			1 Show Committee Meeting	2	3 Faceting Class	4 Sequim Show Money Creek Trip
5 Sequim Show	6 Lapidary Shop	7 Lapidary Casting Jewelry	8	9 General Meeting 	10 Faceting Class	11 Marysville Show
12 Marysville Show	13 Lapidary Shop	14 Home Schooler Field Trip	15	16	17 Faceting Class	18 Salmon Creek Trip
19 Salmon Creek Trip	20 Lapidary Shop	21 Lapidary Casting Jewelry	22 Show Committee Meeting	23	24 Faceting Class	25 Bellevue Show
26 Bellevue Show	27 Lapidary Shop	28 Lapidary Casting Jewelry	29	30	31 Faceting Class	

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

Show Committee Meeting:.....1st Wednesday.....11 am  
 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

Mr. and Mrs. Rockhound

by KAM



The Tumbler has received One-Time Rights to publish this cartoon

**BEMS Board Meeting Minutes September 2, 2008** by Keith Morgan, Editor

Members attending:

*President Malcolm Wheeler*

*Editor/Membership/Webmaster Keith Morgan*

*Director/Field Trips Bill Cook*

*Director/Raffle/Instructor Dick Morgan*

*Mineral Council Bob & Jackie Pattie*

*Guest Pat Morgan*

The shop needs someone who can roll the blades.

Consider buying a DVD player for meetings.

Ask for volunteers for show committees.

The home schooler field trip is in October.

Need more material & slabs for the silent auction at the show.

In October ask for volunteers for the Christmas party.

**BEMS General Meeting Minutes September 11, 2008** by Pete Williams, 2008 Secretary

Meeting called to order at 7:30 pm.

There were 6 guests and 4 new members in attendance.

Minutes were approved as written.

**Tumbler Editor's Report:** Tumbler is doing fine. A reminder was made that those who write articles will receive 6 free raffle tickets.

**Webmaster's Report:** Some pictures were added to the website.

**Treasurer's Report:** The shops are getting lots of usage and fees are being collected. The fees are used for shop maintenance. Rich will begin collect 2009 dues in October.

**Shop Reports:** The faceting classes started up again last Friday. There is a long waiting list for those interested in lessons. The lapidary shop is getting lots of usage. The club is looking for someone to volunteer for a shop operations board position.

**Library:** People continue to be good about returning books. Sign up sheets for the Boeing Rock Show are available for club members to volunteer.

**Health & Welfare:** Dan Clayton and Bob Pattie are doing well and were back at the meeting. Madelyn Mann is ill.

**Federation Report:** Every member should be getting the Federation newsletter. It does take about 2 months to start arriving. Several members indicated they were not receiving the newsletter. Mike is still collecting used stamps (no forever stamps) for donation to the Federation. Please provide to him at the club meetings.

**Field Trip Report:** The BEMS sponsored field trip to Greenwater is this weekend. The trip is being led by Eric Chilson.

**Mineral Council:** Nothing to report. The next meeting is next month.

**South Sound Show:** All but 3 vendors are fully paid up. The exact set up times for the show will be provided at the October meeting. Volunteers are needed and will get free admission. Bill Cook volunteered to coordinate the creative center. The club has 2 types of display cases available to members to show their material. Malcolm is looking for a volunteer to test the display cases.

**Old Business:** None.

**New Business:** The club is looking for a volunteer who knows how to straighten saw blades. There is a home school field trip coming up and Karen is looking for volunteers. The club is still looking for more material to be donated for the upcoming show. Members should see Dick Morgan on this.

Malcolm solicited volunteers for an elections nominating committee. Three people volunteered. Malcolm indicated he will not be running for president again.

The current club vice president had to step down for personal reasons. Scott Birch was appointed VP for the balance of the year.

A discussion was held about southern California making previous collecting sites into protected wilderness areas where rockhounding is banned. This practice is starting to spread to other states too.

The next board meeting is on 9/30.

**Program:** Ed Lehman made a presentation on minerals from Washington State.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

**Displays:**

*Karin Wheeler* - Her award winning Bethlehem Star Quilt.

*Ed Lehman* - Washington state rocks.

*Brian & Cherie Beaupain* - Sunstones from the Ridgetop Mine & the Dust Devil Mine in Oregon.

*Jerry Chilson* - Ochoco Thundereggs.

*Carl Dewey* - Barite roses.

*Eric Chilson* - Cabs & slabs.

*Alice Swartz* - Sapphires & garnets from Gem Mountain & Spokane Bar in Montana.

*Roger Glasscock* - Certificate listing him as a USFG Novice Class Faceter.

*Bill Cook* - Pictures of road trip.

*Rich Russell* - Green River petrified wood & labradorite.

*Ed Laville* - Smack'em rocks.

*Joel Jurasek* - Various cabs, hearts & petrified wood.

**Young Richard's Almanac** by Dick Morgan

They say "the more things change the more they stay the same." This is true in politics, where politicians promise change, but only increase government.

**Shop Procedure Do's And Don'ts** by Silvan Lidovitch*Trim Saw*

One of the most heavily used pieces of equipment in the shop is the TRIM SAW. Its main purpose is to cut slabs into shapes which can be used for cabochons. In the BEMS shop it is also the most abused piece of equipment. It has reached the point where blade life varies from one to four weeks. This is intolerable. Let's discuss causes and remedies for this problem--proper use of the trim saw.

*DO*

Cut only in a straight line. If a cut comes too close to the cabochon outline, stop; then restart from the opposite direction. For cabochons mark straight lines around the design. Then saw along these lines. See Figure 1.

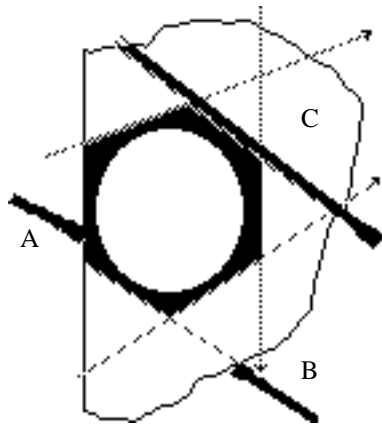


Figure 1 Saw cut direction

A = Initial cut with saw blade off-angle

B = Final cut from opposite side

C = Straight saw cut leaves oversized kerf

Dashed lines indicate saw cut direction

Cut notches, then saw or break off excess material. This is appropriate when the saw would enter the slab at a small angle (nearly parallel to the edge of the slab). See Figure 2.

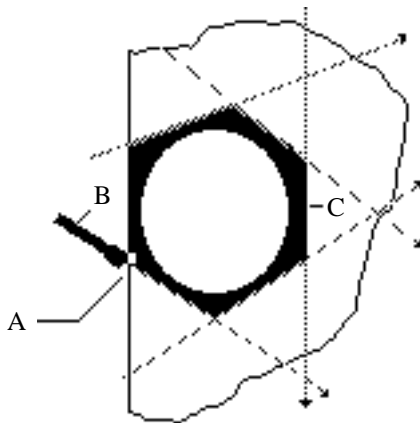


Figure 2 Use of notch when cutting at a low angle

A = Notch to allow saw blade to enter at a low angle

B = Saw blade

C = Dark material to be removed on grinders

Dashed lines are saw cutting directions

Press the slab firmly against the saw table when feeding into the saw. Occasionally relax your grip to ensure that the blade is not pushed to the side. It is very important to keep the slab running straight and true to avoid warping or stripping the saw blade.

Small pieces of rough gem materials may be trimmed by placing a reasonably flat side on the trim saw table, gripping the material with both hands, and then gently pushing the material into the running blade. If there are no flat spots on the material, first flatten one side on the grinding wheel.

Small pebbles may be handled in the same way as small rough, but care must be taken that they do not roll or slip in your fingers. A much safer way to cut pebbles is to make a sawing jig. Drill several large holes in a piece of  $\frac{1}{2}$  or  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch plywood. Then saw slots from one edge of the wood to the edge of the holes. Place the small pebbles in each hole and fill melted paraffin around them. Wait for the wax to harden. Place the jig on the saw table and saw in straight lines through the sawn slots, the stone, and the wax. The wax can be remelted and used again.

Adjust cutting feed rate according to the hardness of the material. Feed rate must be slower when sawing hard materials because hard materials cause more friction and friction creates heat. There must be enough time for the saw blade rim to lose heat to the coolant. Larger saws that are used for cutting rough into slabs and nodules into halves cut at a slow fixed feed-rate. In our shop such blades often last nearly two years even with the hard usage we give them.

Grinding time can be reduced by sawing notches around the preform. Bring each notch close to the outline--remember, the downside of the slab will cut deeper because of the curvature of the blade, so your outline marking will be on the bottom of the cabochon blank.

If you have any doubts about how to use the equipment ask the person in charge at the shop.

*DO NOT*

Do not try to change direction during a cut. Sawing other than a straight line will warp the blade and often stall the motor. Since the motor depends on running full speed to get proper cooling, this can damage the motor as well as the blade.

Do not try to force the blade into the slab with other than a moderate pressure. This warps (dishes) the blade so that it cannot run true. A good blade will be thicker at the rim so that the saw blade can run almost unrestricted in the kerf. However, if the blade is "dished" it will rub against

the edge of the kerf causing unwanted heat and drag.

Do not use the trim saw to remove the excess material left by rough cutting with the slab saw. Trim saw blades are much thinner than “slab saw” blades. They cannot be used to cut thick or irregular pieces. If the material is too thick it tends to round the diamond rim of the blade and may also bend the blade.

Do not hold the slab so loosely that it slips and jams the blade.

Do not use irregular pressure. This tends to put the blade out-of-round, which in turn can result in excessive vibration of the slab.

Do not increase the pressure and feed rate in order to make harder material such as agate cut as fast as soft materials such as amazonite. Too much pressure forces the nickel base metal over the imbedded diamonds. Then the blade may stop cutting altogether. Symptom of too much pressure is the “mushrooming” of the cutting surface on the blade. See Figure 3

Notched diamond holding area (rim) is thicker than the support blade in order to have “clearance” in the saw kerf, however when the rim is “mushroomed” the diamond is lost and the blade cannot cut properly.

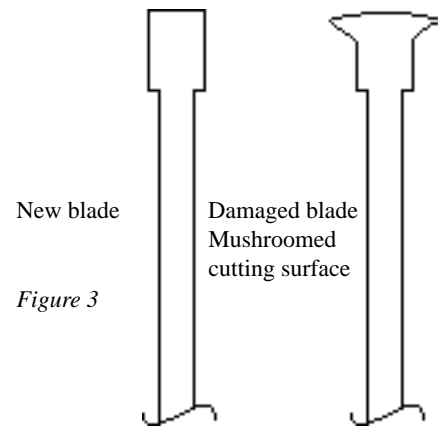


Figure 3

via The Tumbler 3/03; from Tumbler, 3/94

## Hot Prospect 40 years ago, Hot Prospector Now by Bob Swartz

(New BEMS members and neophyte rockhounds Bob and Alice Swartz give a personal account of their romantic 40th wedding anniversary celebration trip)

For over 6 months now we have been reminded by our two grown and married children and their spouses that our 40th Wedding anniversary was coming up soon and that we should be planning a trip for the two of us to celebrate and commemorate this special event. Their suggestions were such things as Hawaii, Hot Springs Resorts with Saunas and Massage Rooms, Cruises, a trip to Europe and other romantic getaways for folks “our age”. We put off the decision for some time due to other more pressing business. (Joining BEMS and attending meetings and using the Lapidary Shop facilities mostly!) We finally settled upon either a trip to Vernon BC to collect precious opal and fossils nearby — maybe even a romantic three day class on opal cutting in Vernon. A trip to Europe, OR A whirlwind tour through Eastern Washington, Idaho Panhandle and Western Montana —to check out Rock Shops, sift for sapphires in Montana and star garnets in Idaho. After further research and assessment of travel conditions and requirements to the opal mine and Bob discovering that the Dolomites were a mountain range in Europe not a place to collect minerals, we opted for the trip to Montana.

Day one started with a casual mid morning breakfast at the Woodinville Cafe and then a dash for Snoqualmie Pass. First stop, Indian John Hill Rest Stop — no further explanation needed, no rocks collected. The Stuart Range was out in all its glory with the prospect of another clear and sunny day in Eastern Washington. The next stop was at Vantage where we passed up the Ginkgo Petrified Forest Interpretive Center to look around the Rock Shop just outside the gate. We had been there before but never with the same view toward prospective “slabbing and cabbing” material. We picked up a few pieces in the rock yard out back, Brazilian agate, and petrified wood mostly, we considered more but decided we had a lot of other possible places to stop to load the car over the next few days. This was particularly motivated by the stories from other more experienced BEMS members relating their “over load” trips to the Madras Pow-Wow in Oregon recently. Then it was off across Eastern Washington to Spokane for our first night at the Hampton Inn. We were there in the late afternoon and still had time to look up a couple of Rock Shops in Spokane - Irv’s Rock Shop and Munchie’s Rock Pile before they closed. Only a few small pieces tempted Alice at Munchie’s. We had lots of good conversation with the owners of Irv’s especially about their gem cutting services, a good long look at their rock bins and then off to dinner. When we got back to the Inn we quickly headed for the room like a couple of newlyweds. She looked at me, I looked at her and she said, “Do you know what I want?” I eagerly replied, “I sure do, I’ll be right back”. I dashed to the car and rushed back with the large package of rocks we had collected for the first day. Alice eagerly threw open the door to the room as she heard me coming, “Did you bring the scrub brush?” she asked. “I did” I replied and we both rushed to the bathroom sink to wash off the remaining dirt on our days collection of rocks and squeal in delight with the prospects of how they would look when cut, ground, or just displayed. And so ended the first day of our 40th Anniversary trip each of us enraptured with the rocks we had collected and laughing heartily about how we would describe this to everyone who asked “So what did you do on your anniversary trip?” We just had to share this intimate experience with all the members of BEMS, after all you might be the only folks who would understand!!!!

Day two was a leisurely trip across the Idaho Panhandle and into Montana. We drove along inspecting each rock outcrop in the distance and each road cut with renewed interest, discussing all the potential collecting material that might be there. All were noted as possibilities for future anniversary trips. Lunch was in Missoula with a quick call to our nephew PJ and his wife of one year Kate, to set up a day and time to meet while we were in the area. Then it was off to Helena. This was the first time I had *driven* across the Continental Divide since I came to Washington 41 years ago and the first time ever for Alice. Almost into Helena we spotted a sign on the left side of the road in a field “The Prospectors Shop”. A quick U turn and a right turn onto the dirt road led us about a quarter of a mile up to a home/shop. The owner was just returning from a day of fishing and said he could be open for business in 2 minutes (try that in Seattle). Bud Guthrie has every imaginable machine for finding gold in his shop, along with books, gold nuggets, and some small amount of rough slabs for sale as well as a lot of great conversation and information once you get him started. Turns out he operates his own placer gold mine about 14 miles away and had been a hard rock miner years ago. When we asked about his shop hours he told us he was open whenever he was there which is most of the time, but its best to call ahead “I like to play a lot” was his caution.

Our stay in Helena was at “The Sanders House” Bed and Breakfast (decided upon by Alice). It was a good choice as B&Bs go for me (no shared bathroom) and received an A++ rating by Alice. It was in a beautifully restored original three story home from Helena’s gold boom days in the old part of the city, with original oak woodwork, period furniture, and gracious hostess and host. We got general directions to our first sapphire prospecting spot from our hostess and headed out to see what it was all about in preparation for the next day’s “mining”. The Spokane Bar mine and Gold Fever Rock Shop is about 8 miles due east of Helena and was a quick drive. This operation has also acquired the Eldorado Bar Sapphire Mine

and has combined the “prospecting” operations at the one site. It was after 5PM when we arrived and the shop was closed but one couple remained sorting their gravel in desperation to finish before heading to their motel room and an early plane flight in the morning. Hauling a 50 pound bag of gravel on the plane for another fee didn’t seem to amuse them! One of the owners, Deb Thompson, who lives on the site, came by and opened up the shop for us long enough to give us a quick rundown on the operation, rules and opening time for the next day. On our way back out we had a great sunset view of Helena and the mountains of the Continental Divide to the west along with a herd of local Mule deer feeding in an alfalfa field at dusk.

Day three was at the Spokane Bar Sapphire Mine. We purchased two large bags of gravel, one from Spokane Bar and one from Eldorado Bar. For an optional \$10 more I elected to go up on one of the Missouri river benches on their claim and dig some of my own gravel as well. *I was forewarned that the digging there was pretty “sparse”*. I paid my \$10 and the owner Russ Thompson, gave me a map and a mule and I headed up the hill leaving Alice behind to start the process of washing and “jigging” (see explanation below) the bags of gravel we had purchased. *Not actually*, Russ’ son Cass and his son had me follow them in their truck with my car up the hill to a beautiful overlook of the Lake Hauser reservoir on the Missouri river to some shallow open pits. Alice did stay behind to “jig” gravel however.

(“Jigging” gravel is the final sorting process for obtaining sapphires from your screened gravel. It consists of giving a couple handfuls at a time a wash on a 12 inch square fine-screened frame with an up and down action in a water source. You then rock the cleaned gravel up and down into a row in the middle of the screen, then rotate and repeat both processes. Do this four times or more if you wish. This action, if done according to demonstrated technique of the professionals who have done it for a long time, moves the sapphires, which are heavier than the other stuff to the center of the screen. Place a foam pad on top of this gravel in the frame, flip it over on a sorting table and the sapphires *should* be on the top center of the gravel.)

The pits had sifting/classifier racks stationed around the perimeter and a selection of shovels and picks to choose from, along with 5 gallon plastic buckets to put your sifted gravel in. You can choose your spot within the pits but tailings must be left in places already dug out, no undercutting the banks, but beyond that have at it. The material you dig, alluvial deposits, have the usual river bar rocks, cobble, gravel and sands tightly packed together which are sifted through a quarter inch screen atop a sixteenth inch screen once it has been loosened from the pit bed with a pick. The “classifying” process is: loosen the gravel bed with the pick, wipe the sweat away so you can see, drink some water, enjoy the view, remove any large boulders, shovel the loosened material into the screen on the classifier rocker rack, sift the material through the screens in the rocker, wipe the sweat away so you can see, drink some water, enjoy the view, pick out the big rocks, make sure you don’t have the “mother of all sapphires” sitting atop your quarter inch screen, toss the remainder of the tailings from the quarter inch screen, give the lower screen an extra rocking, wipe the sweat away so you can see, drink some water and then empty the contents of the lower screen into the 5 gallon bucket for final washing and jigging down below at the shop, sit on the edge of the pit and marvel at the beautiful views. Once you complete this sequence ten or twelve times your bucket is filled. Luckily there was a slight breeze off the river and it was still only ten thirty when I started. It got up to 98 degrees that day! Filled with adrenaline and prospectors optimism (maybe it was just stupidity) I sifted two more buckets, piled all three into the car and was heading back down the hill as the next couple showed up at the pits to try their luck. I pulled in right at noon at the shop, unloaded my buckets at the “jigging” tables and noticed the look of pleasure and humor on the Russ’ face, remember I had only paid for *one* bucket. So I forked over twenty dollars more and got to work. By then Alice had already found several fairly nice sized sapphires in about half of one gravel bag and was going to shift to the other bag just to see if it was going to yield as well as the first one did. Well, after seeing her luck my adrenaline and optimism (stupidity) kicked in again and I set to work jigging the contents of the first 5 gallon bucket before having some lunch. At 1PM I was about halfway through the first bucket — I had started right after noon time. So we both broke for lunch in the shade of the only covered benches around. One guy was diligently picking through his gravel as we ate. He was from Calgary and had been there once before and enjoyed it so much he came back with his wife. He quickly admitted he never went up on the hill to sift his own?! He also left his wife at the shopping mall in Helena and came out alone - I noticed Alice pause in contemplation for a moment when he mentioned the mall, but her enthusiasm for finding sapphires quickly quelled her other desires. There were three other groups there, two daughter and father pairs, one from Texas and one from Florida, as well as a couple and their two children from Chumley, England on “Holiday”.

I finished the third bucket just before three. Then I helped Alice finish up and took our “treasure” into the shop for the owner to sort and identify. Alice had found 50 Ct. Wt. of sapphires, 12 of which were facet quality, several in the 2 plus Ct. size. In addition she had a couple of facet quality garnets. My three buckets of gravel from the “sparse” area netted us 1 small moonstone chip and *no* sapphires. Now I know what “sparse” means in Montana! All in all it was a great day and I now know I wouldn’t blame a true prospector for being a bit surly if he informed me his prospecting had been “sparse” on returns. We headed out for Butte that afternoon and were there by 5 PM. Checked into our motel, had dinner, and in true Anniversary Celebration form, sat and ogled the day’s take of sapphires, garnets and 1 moonstone — chip.

Day four began by me looking out the window of our second story motel room in Butte to gray windy skies and 40 degree temperatures. I also noticed that several mountains had been removed from the mountain range just east of Butte allowing me to see much further east toward the Continental Divide than had Lewis and Clark when they were in the area. This removal was for the copper ore and they obviously didn’t intend to put anything back in its place. We left town in 45 degree windy weather with an occasional shower. The mountains to the north toward Seeley Lake had a nice dusting of snow on them and we concentrated on that scenery rather than the mountain stubs in Butte. We passed quickly through Anaconda taking time only to get a couple sandwiches for lunch at our next destination — Gem Mountain Sapphire Mine. Once we got past the smelter smoke stack on the hill and the huge mound of slag next to the highway (at least I know where some of the Butte Mountains are if they want them back) the scenery was as idyllic as ever. There was some road work on the highway to Phillipsburg but it was mainly slicing of large cliffs to widen the road and it only served to get our rock hound juices flowing again imagining all the great specimens we were passing by on our quest for sapphires at Gem Mountain Mine.

We had been to Gem Mountain a year before — that was part of the incentive to create another trip to Montana plus it’s just plain beautiful there, rocks and sapphires or not! The set up is slightly different than at Spokane Bar. It is what I would call, more tourist friendly, not better, just less of a mom and pop operation. You go to the shop and purchase tickets for three and a half gallon buckets of gravel. The well lit shop has some gems on display, snacks and books for sale and jewelry for sale, as well as a staff to help sort and assess your finds of the day. The gravel jigging area consists of a metal flume situated at about 4 feet high to wash your gravel in rather than some iron bath tubs scattered around the jigging area as at Spokane Bar. This has several advantages, first it’s easier on the back, and second the local dogs don’t hop into the wash trough to cool off as they do at Spokane Bar. Neither of which really matters much once you find a sapphire or two — all common sense is lost. There are several young college age boys in the jigging area who are very helpful and well versed in the jigging technique and can get you on course quickly including

providing tweezers and a canister for your sapphires. Just hand one of them a ticket, pick out your bucket of gravel and they will even carry the bucket to your sorting table and help you start the jiggling process. They drop by occasionally to see if they can help you out or if you need anything and can answer any questions about the mine you might have. Of course all this helps their tip jar revenue atop the concrete barriers that contain the sapphire gravel which they shovel into the buckets. There were 40 to 50 people there jiggling for sapphires, even a school bus full of kids from one of the local Native American Schools. The sapphires seemed to be more plentiful and more varied in color (pinks, reds, yellows as well as the usual blue and blue greens) than at Spokane Bar, but not nearly as many larger ones. We collected over 100 Ct. Wt. total, but none as large as the largest at Spokane Bar. One young girl did find one over 5 Ct. Wt. that was facetable that day however. Heat treating is often an optional thing for increased clarity and color at Spokane Bar, but almost always a must for Gem Mountain Sapphires. When we started it was raining and cold but cleared off quickly and was a very comfortable sunny day by 11 AM. We had to wrap up a little early here so we could meet our nephew and his wife in Missoula for dinner. We managed to get through all but two tickets worth of gravel we had purchased, so we dumped those two buckets into our own 5 gallon bucket and loaded it into the car next to the rocks we had collected so far for future sifting/jiggling.

We made a quick stop on our way to Missoula in Phillipsburg at the Sapphire Gallery. This is a very nice Gallery/Jewelry store with sapphire gravel bags from their own mining claims available as well as full service heat treatment, gemologists and jewelers. Since it was our 40th Anniversary we decided that Alice deserved a memento of our trip and celebration so we bought her a faceted ruby (not from Montana) at which point she admitted she had been hoping to find one while we were jiggling. As the lady at the counter who helped us reminded us, she did find it, it was just lying in this glass display case, not in the gravel. The owner of this Gallery also owns the Chocolate and Candy store next door, which was very convenient since we received a \$10 gift certificate for chocolate there as part of our ruby purchase. So it was off to the chocolate store after the Gallery. You know, you can buy a whole lot more pounds of rocks with ten dollars than you can chocolate, but I have never licked a rock that tasted as good as that semi-sweet chocolate did!

Then it was off to dinner with Kate and PJ and then a good night's sleep and looking forward to a less energy consuming 5th day. We did the obligatory Anniversary Trip sapphire ogling before going to bed but restrained ourselves from jiggling the sapphire gravel we had in the car in the motel bathroom.

Day five we slept in a bit since travel was our only thing on the agenda and we had yet to finalize that as well. We had originally thought we would drive to St. Maries, Idaho or thereabouts to a motel and spend the sixth day prospecting for Idaho Star Garnets at Emerald Creek. It turns out they are closed on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Waiting until Friday would have meant pushing the return trip to one day across Washington with no time to check a couple of places so we decided to do this on our next trip. Instead we took Highway 12 out of Missoula over Lolo Pass to Lewiston, Idaho. This was a beautiful trip with a stop at the Pass at the Information Center. Although it was raining for most of the trip up it started to clear about halfway down the Lochsa River Valley. We made a stop at the active USFS Fire Lookout resupply station to look around. They still horse pack supplies from here into several Fire Lookouts each year and have a lot of historic photos of the original station and log bunk houses which are still there and in great condition. The Info. Center is one of the log cabins and upon entering we were received with a friendly greeting from three folks sitting at a table playing hearts next to a wood burning stove. All that lighted the place was two kerosene lamps on the counter. The rain was pelting the roof but everything was warm and snug in their office and Info. Center. We ate lunch in Lowell (population 23), the waitress said that wasn't correct—several people had died or moved out. Once we hit the confluence with the Clearwater River the temptation was too great and river bar exploration took up some time on the rest of the trip to Lewiston. No rocks collected, more time needed!

Once in Lewiston the rock shop hunt was on. We found Golden Arts on Snake River Avenue and spent several hours there. Bud at the Prospector's Shop in Helena had said there was a good place there, just had a hard time remembering the name. He was right, Chuck and Virginia have a beautiful shop and gallery on one side of the driveway and their home on the other side overlooking the Snake River. They have Lapidary work shops on either side and a pile of rough rocks to rummage through outside the door to one of the shops. Chuck has been at this for 42 years he says and is one of the most organized people I have ever seen in this business. Chuck provided a great demonstration of his cabochon grinding technique on his custom built grinding and polishing set up and showed me some of his preferred procedures. He also identified all the rough we picked out to purchase with lower prices as the poundage went up of course, and gave us a nice tour of his setup along with a computer tour of his latest endeavor—600 digital photos of indigenous species of butterflies of the area. Had we had more time they would have gladly spent more time with us talking rock and lapidary work. If you ever get to Lewiston look them up. Golden Arts—208 746 1506, [www.minerals-n-more.com](http://www.minerals-n-more.com).

We headed to the motel, one we had stayed in once before when Pullman was full for a football game. The drill was the same as always now, check in, unload the suit cases onto the dolly, include the treasures we collected and head for the room. Only thing was this time I had a 5 gallon bucket Chuck had given us full of rocks to bring in, lucky for me it was only "nearly" full, and so I stuffed my jacket in the top. Now all I would have to do if any one asked is explain why I was bringing 5 gallons of sliced dill pickles with a coat stuffed in them to our room. No one asked although the young lady at the desk looked at me with a "strange old folks" look and wrote me off with no questions. We waited until after dinner to sort through our finds of the day no washing was necessary. We retired for the evening convinced we had found the best of all specimens for our now' expanding collection.

Day six was another day to travel with no real specific plans except to make it to Yakima. We headed for Walla Walla, mainly because I hadn't been there since my Air Force days but also because I thought just maybe we would run into some possible rock shops or collecting possibilities on the way. No such luck, but good scenery all the way to Pasco. Lunch in Pasco and onward through Richland to Yakima to begin the rock shop hunt again. This time it was Beeman's on the old Yakima River Canyon Road. We hoped to get to visit when we got into town but a telephone call told us that he is only open on Fridays and Saturdays. No problem we would check it out first thing Friday morning on our way to Umptanum Canyon. We could lounge around Yakima for a few hours, have a leisurely dinner, watch some TV, or better still look at our rocks and sapphires again and just relax—what more could you ask for on a 40th Anniversary Trip. So ended day six.

Day seven last day of the trip. Up at 8AM, breakfast, and off to Beeman's on our way to Ellensburg. We arrived at his driveway which has a very small sign indicating there is a rock shop and lapidary shop there. The large collection of big petrified wood rounds lining the driveway to the shop are a dead giveaway for anyone interested in rocks and probably would catch their attention long before any sign anyway. We turned in, but the gate was closed and a nice little sign indicated they were open on Friday and Saturday but *only* from 11 AM to 5 PM. Some information we neglected to retrieve during the phone call the day before. So off to Umptanum Canyon to check out the wildlife viewing area there and the possibilities for agate and wood on the other side of the river by crossing the cable bridge. I scouted the creek bed, the river bar and the sage brush but again much more time was needed. It was already too hot for any self respecting wildlife to show. It looks like yet another place to explore on

## 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>).

**October 4** *North West Rockies - Money Creek - Ore, picture jasper* - Will need digging & light hard rock tools - Meet at 9 am at Money Creek Camp  
*Ed Lehman (425) 334-6282 or wsmced@hotmail.com*  
*Kathy Ernst (360) 856-0588 or earnstkk@comcast.net*

**October 18 & 19** *Washington Agate Club - Salmon Creek - Agate, jasper, coprolite* - Will need digging tools - Meet at 9 am at I5 exit 63 Park & Ride  
*Mike Messenger (360) 456-6930 or wams1939@comcast.net*

another day, weekend, or week. Good camping sites right there and motels less than 30 minutes away. It also looks like there will be a nice fishing resort just down river by this time next year. Maybe they would give a reduced price for a float trip down to the Rosa Dam to check out the inaccessible gravel bars for agate, jasper and wood on the way!! Food for thought.

Now it was almost 11 AM, so we backtracked to Beeman's and by the time we got there he was open. Yet another well organized Lapidary shop with plenty of supplies for the jewelry maker, prospector/rockhound. He also has a nice supply of some rough, but he is slowly trying to diminish all of his inventory with a goal of retiring "someday" so it's getting smaller. The bins for the rough are all catalogued and stacked in a separate storage area for your viewing. After nearly 1500 miles of traveling and a large part of it in Montana, I picked up some Montana Agate right here in Washington! Then it was off to Ellensburg for lunch and an exploratory stop off Highway 97 at First Creek to see what that place is all about. I walked the road to the creek bridge, backtracked to the left turn and walked another mile or so on the yarding road. picked up my first wild turkey feather and some pieces of cream colored Jasper? Ok, maybe its chert. What's that matter its rock! Definitely another place to come back to and spend a day or two.

By then it was nearly 3PM and we needed to get home. Driving down 97 from Ellensburg was no problem at about 1 PM but getting back on and heading down 97A toward Cle Elum at 3PM on the Friday before Labor Day weekend was another matter. I was quickly reminded how nice it was to be retired and able to travel when others can't! We made it to I-90 after discovering that the Rock Shop in Cle Elum no longer exists, and headed West while everyone else, it seems, was headed East for the long weekend. We had practically no traffic until we hit Issaquah and then I was rudely reminded why folks love Eastern Washington and points East to Montana. We made it home in another hour. Thus ended the 40 Anniversary Trip for the neophyte rockhounds. Now we can cut up, grind and polish to our hearts content until our 50th celebration. Well with a few trips in between to check out all the places we didn't manage to spend enough time at this time or even get to. This stuff is addictive and at our age just as exciting as what we did 40 years ago on our honeymoon trip. Don't ask, We won't tell!

### Requirements For Club Officers

1. Must have good eye sight and be able to distinguish a mountain from a mole hill at fifty paces.
2. Must have a tough hide to be able to fend off back biters.
3. Must have an adjustable hearing aid in order to tune out loud arguments, yet be able to hear the slightest rumblings of club unrest.
4. Must have a flexible time table.
5. Must have a complete set of fingernails to chew during meetings.
6. Past Presidents: Must have poor memory, and never begin a sentence with "When I Was President."  
via Quarry Quips, 8/98; via Diggins' From Dakota, 6/98; via others; from The Burro Express, 4/98

### Cheap Tumbling

This is my inexpensive and labor free way of tumbling. Directions are for a 12 # barrel, reduce quantities for smaller barrel.

Fill barrel 3/4 + full of rock, add only 1/3 # of 60 - 90 grit, and a 3 finger pinch of dry laundry soap, almost cover rock with water, and run 2 or 3 weeks (the theory of only 1/3 # grit is in 2 or 3 weeks it breaks down from coarse to medium to fine). After the time period, rinse well, and note there will be no sign of grit, only slurry.

After cleaning rock and barrel, replace rock, add 3/4 margarine tub of diatomaceous earth (straight out of pits - anything in it will be too soft to damage agate or jasper), add 3 finger pinch of dry laundry soap, cover with water, and run 2 + weeks. Clean and rinse rock and barrel. In barrel, put 2 or 3 tablespoons Cascade dish washer compound, fill 1/4 barrel with hot tap water to dissolve Cascade, put rocks back in barrel, and add hot water till it covers rock. Set on counter and agitate occasionally (this will remove white film from diatoms, and won't leave spots). In 1/2 hour remove rocks, and rinse with hot water, and let dry. This will work with most agate and jasper, but you may have that occasional stone that you aren't satisfied with you may want to recycle in your next run.

via West Seattle Petroglyphs, 9/08; via Evergreen Rock Club Newsletter, 5/08; from Stone Age News, 4/08

Remove the sludge from saw coolant by filtering the coolant through large brown paper bags. Because there will be a loss of volume you must add new oil.

via West Seattle Petroglyphs, 9/08; via The Rock-it, 4-5/08; via Golden Spike News



# Shows

***October 3 - 5:*** Friday & Saturday 10 am - 6 pm; Sunday 10 am - 3 pm  
**Clallam Co., Gem & Mineral Society, *Earth's Treasures***  
 The Carrol C. Kendall Boys & Girls Club  
 400 West Fir Street  
 Sequim, WA

***October 11 & 12:*** Saturday & Sunday 10 am - 5 pm  
**Marysville Rock & Gem Club, *33rd Rocktoberfest Show***  
 Marysville Jr. High School Cafeteria  
 7th Street & State Ave.  
 Marysville, WA

***October 25 & 26:*** 10 am - 5 pm  
**Bellevue Rock Club, *Annual Show***  
 Vasa Park  
 3560 West Lake Sammamish Blvd. SE  
 Bellevue, WA

***October 25 & 26:*** Saturday 9 am - 6 pm; Sunday 10 am - 5 pm  
**Clackamette Mineral and Gem Club, *Earth's Hidden Treasures 2008***  
 Clackamas County Fairgrounds Pavilion  
 694 NE. 4th Ave  
 Canby, Oregon



## Internet Addresses

Washington Jade  
<http://www.washingtonjade.com>  
 from Rocky Trails, 9/08



Alpha Micromounts - seller  
<http://www.alphamicromounts.com/>

Dakota Matrix Minerals - seller  
<http://www.dakotamatrix.com/>

Simkev Micromounts - seller  
<http://www.simkevmicromounts.com/>

Nature Of The Northwest Geology  
<http://www.naturenw.org/geology.htm>

Hinkle's Rock Shop - seller  
<http://www.oregonthundereggs.com/index.html>

Langs Fossils - seller  
<http://www.langsfossils.com/>

The Missing Link - seller  
<http://www.themissinglink.biz/>

Graptolite & Pterobranchs  
<http://www.graptolite.net/>

