HATROCKHOUND GAZETTE
Nov/Dec 2020

Gobble Gobble Gobble
Happy Thanksgiving
And
HO, HO, HO, Merry Christmas!!!

Well Folks, I haven't created any Gazettes since I didn't have any news. But I decided that as the year is drawing to a close, I should at least check in with all of you. I hope you have been "weathering" this less than desirable year and holding up with all the uncertainties and craziness out there. Hopefully, although we couldn't get together, you have been pursuing our hobby in some manner. Maybe you have been out hunting for rocks, maybe you have been cutting or polishing a few. Or maybe you are learning a new craft. Personally, I have managed to create around 50 gem trees. Needless to say what some people are getting for Christmas.
As we draw toward the New Year, let's hope for the ability to meet again. It looks promising for at least some time in the spring. We are still hoping to do our show in May.

In the meantime, stay safe and keep on Rockin'.

NFMS Holds Annual Zoom Meeting

On November 14th, the NFMS held its annual meeting via Zoom. Although there was no show this year, some basic business needed to be taken care of. The new officers for the coming year were elected and installed. Our long time treasurer, Lyle Vogelpohl, had resigned because of health reasons. We were fortunate enough to have a volunteer step forward and offer her services. With the board's approval we now have a new Treasurer. The folks who had been doing the Northwest Newsletter had also stated their inability to continue. Again, we had someone step forward to fill the position, so you will be getting the Newsletter on a regular basis. The Federation still has no venue for a meeting and show for next year. These are usually set a year or two in advance, so it will be crucial to get something set up soon. With all the uncertainties and cancellations it has been particularly difficult. Let's all hope for the best.
Thanks to our own Mel Lambert for attending the meeting and representing the Hatrockhounds.

A few words from Laurie Ellis, NFMS Regional Chair for Rockhound of the Year
. Howdy Hounds!
It's been a rocky year, and bad puns can only help, right? Many of you may be feeling a bit sedimentary, but you wouldn't want to take for granite any opportunity to showcase one of the gems in your club. Let's clean the slate and be a little boulder in 2021. Remember to stop and smell the rose quartz. I hope these schist puns didn't make you lose your apatite.

Mineral True or False (from Mini Miner Monthly –November 2020)

Here are some statements about minerals. Are they true or false? If they are false, write the correct statement in the space underneath the false statement. The solutions are at the end of this issue. (Let's see if we are as smart as the kids. . .)

The mineral hardness scale is also called the "Dana Hardness System." T or F

Azurite and Malachite are ore minerals of copper. T or F

Galena and Pyrite have vitreous luster. T or F

The hardest mineral is Corundum. T or F

The softest minerals are talc and graphite. T or F

Purple Quartz is called Amethyst. T or F

Yellow Quartz is called Smoky Quartz. T or F

Fluorite, Pyrite and Garnet crystallize in the Isometric System. T or F

Gypsum is used to make Plaster of Paris. T or F

Calcite and Aragonite have the same chemical formula. T or F

Muscovite is a mica mineral that splits into very thin sheets. T or F

Galena has perfect octahedral cleavage. T or F

Copper, Gold and Sulfur are called "Silicate Minerals." T or F

Barite has the highest specific gravity of all the non-metal minerals. T or F

Chalcedony is a variety of Calcite. T or F

Sphalerite is an important ore of iron. T or F

Kyanite crystals have two different hardnesses in the same crystal. T or F

Ruby red Proustite crystals will turn dark when left in sunlight. T or F

Colorful Tourmaline crystals are called Schorl. T or F

Black Tourmaline crystals are called Schorl. T or F

Crocoite is an ore of the element titanium. T or F

The mineral Vesuvianite is also known by the name of Idocrase. T or F

A drop of hydrochloric acid will fizz when it is dropped on a piece of Fluorite. T or F

Chalcopyrite is magnetic. T or F

Topaz is harder than Corundum. T or F

Sphalerite is the ore mineral of zinc. T or F

Spodumene is crushed to powder to make fine porcelain plates and cups. T or F

Kunzite is a light purple gem variety of the mineral Orthoclase Feldspar. T or F

Deep red Garnet is called Uvarovite. T or F

The dodecahedron is a crystal form in the Hexagonal Crystal System. T or F

The light purple mica mineral is called Lepidolite. T or F

Stibnite is an important ore of the metallic element, antimony. T or F

Gypsum will burn in a match flame. T or F

A hollow ball of rock material that is lined with crystals is called a Spherode. T or F

Stilbite often forms crystal groups that look like bow ties. T or F

Colorful, banded variety of Chalcedony is called Agate. T or F

Collecting minerals is by far the very best hobby that anyone could ever have, ever. T or T

Something New at Biggs Junction

By November 5, 2020 Story and Photos by Jim Landon (redacted)

A piece of mine-run rough that displays the delicate banding that makes Beers Mountain jasper.

In early May of 2020, during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in the U.S., I received a message from Don inviting me to check out a new mine being developed in the area by a man named Jay Carlson. It seems the man assumed a management position for both Don's China Hollow operation and this new locality near Rufus Oregon he named Beers Mountain.

The Beers Mountain Mine is on private property and access is only allowed with Jay present. After driving a short distance, we topped out at the mine where Jay had opened a small area he had been exploring. As soon as we left our vehicles, we were buffeted by the 40-plus mile-per-hour wind that rocked Mobie, my great white whale truck, back and forth. The wind turbines on the Washington side of the river were going flat out. Without governors to control their speed, they for sure would have blown themselves apart.

Although this locality was known to the old-timers, it had not been explored for decades. Jay took me to an area he had been working, so I could get a look at the jasper seam and the material he had been digging. There were chunks of jasper lying all over the place. The rain that had fallen in the area recently had washed the dirt off the exposed material, making it easy to spot. It was an incredible sight to behold. I was surprised to see that the jasper and agate seam at this locality was only capped by a few feet of weathered volcanic rock. At other Biggs jasper localities I've visited, hundreds of feet of tough basalt usually cover the seams, providing only cross-sections of jasper exposure, making digging access both difficult and expensive. Jay had used a CAT to remove the basalt layer down to the jasper seam. Upon contact, the jasper's surface was a dark rusty red to orange, indicating the presence of iron oxide. The actual jasper layer varied in thickness from several inches to over two feet.

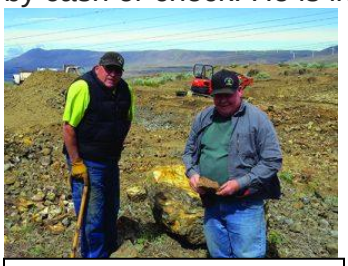
Jay has been using a small track hoe to work the jasper layer. It was breaking out in chunks of varying sizes, with the larger pieces weighing several hundred pounds. Like the Biggs jasper that I have seen at other quarries in the area, the Beers Mountain material appeared as thinly banded layers of mud later buried and "cooked" by encroaching red hot basalt. What makes this jasper unique when compared to other types of Biggs is its color and delicate banding. Color wise it somewhat resembles Deschutes jasper but is generally more orange. The patterning on this material is unique, however. Whereas the other types of Biggs jasper tend to have larger and more open patterns with wider bedding lines, the Beers Mountain jasper reminded me of high quality thinly banded slate. On some of the pieces, black dendrites were also showing.

There is also some evidence that after the mud had been silicified, it fractured, which shifted the patterns, and it re-healed. The nature of the mud was such that once it hardened, its fine-grained texture matched high-end porcelain-type jaspers. Jay told me that after each day of mining, he loads the jasper dug that day into a dump truck and hauls it out of the mine to a safe location for sorting and processing. He also said the site would be reclaimed after he has finished mining.

Looking Ahead

I asked Jay what his plans were for the quarry and was happy to hear that he is planning on hosting rock clubs at China Hollow and Beers Mountain as well as having material sent to processors for creating spheres, beads, and other objects. He added that he would like to offer multiple options to clubs, such as a two-deposit one-day dig, visiting China Hollow in the morning, and Beers Mountain in the afternoon. China Hollow has two active quarries, with each having a different kind of material to collect. Another option would be to visit China Hollow one day and then Beers Mountain the second. A third option is to collect at one or

the other. Jay said rock from either locality would be sold by the pound and that collectors can pay either by cash or check. He is interested in hosting club groups rather than individuals or families.



Don Hilderbrand (left) and Jay Carlson (right) standing in the open pit Jay has excavated

After we finished our quarry tour, Jay took Kerry and me over to his house in Rufus. At the time, he was finishing a place to cut rock using a drag saw that once belonged to Don. The two men are also designing another drag saw to use in cutting boulders from both the Beers Mountain quarry and China Hollow.

We also visited Don's home in the middle of the wheat field country between Rufus and Wasco. During this visit, we saw Don't personal collection. The spheres in his collection, made by Johnny Richardson, of Richardson's Rock Ranch, are amazing. The last stop of our visit was Don's shop in Wasco, which included the set-up of a cutting room featuring rock saws of various sizes. It looks like Don and Jay have big plans for the future.

Upon our departure, Jay and Don gave me a few chunks of the Beers Mountain material to cut when I got home. I discovered a few things when cutting it. The jasper is hard, fracture free, and has a definite texture that runs parallel to the bedding plane. When it is cut perpendicular to the bedding plane, the pattern tends to show very thin lines that resemble sheets of paper, in a repeated manner. The best pattern I found occurs when I cut parallel to the bedding plane. The pattern is much tighter than any other kinds of Biggs jasper I have worked with in the past.

Another characteristic that makes it completely different from any of the other kinds of Biggs jasper is the area in the core of the slab that is charcoal gray with a different pattern from the rest of the slab. When Don wheeled the slab out of his shop strapped to a dolly, my heart skipped a beat, and when he poured water on it, that simple act took my breath away. There was no doubt that rock was going home with me.

I plan to use a MK 1503 rock polishing kit I recently ordered to polish the slab.

To learn more and discuss a possible club trip to China Hollow, Beers Mountain, or both, Jay can be contacted at shermancountyrocks@gmail.com.

(The Lakeside Club did a fieldtrip there. I haven't seen the material. I think it was a bit pricey -$5.00 a pound, but maybe worth it. One would certainly want to highgrade! – Judi)

Mineral True or False: Answers

The mineral hardness scale is also called the "Dana Hardness System." T or F False. It is the "Mohs' Hardness Scale."

Azurite and Malachite are ore minerals of copper. T or F True

Galena and Pyrite have vitreous luster. T or F False. They have metallic luster.

The hardest mineral is Corundum. T or F False. Diamond is the hardest mineral.

The softest minerals are talc and graphite. T or F True

Purple Quartz is called Amethyst. T or F True

Yellow Quartz is called Smoky Quartz. T or F False. It is called Citrine Quartz.

Fluorite, Pyrite and Garnet crystallize in the Isometric System. T or F True. Also known as the Cubic Crystal System.

Gypsum is used to make Plaster of Paris. T or F True.

Calcite and Aragonite have the same chemical formula. T or F True. But they have different crystal forms.

Muscovite is a mica mineral that splits into very thin sheets. T or F True.

Galena has perfect octahedral cleavage. T or F False. It has perfect cubic system.

Copper, Gold and Sulfur are called "Silicate Minerals." T or F False. They are called Native Elements.

Barite has the highest specific gravity of all the non-metal minerals. T or F True.

Chalcedony is a variety of Calcite. T or F False. It is a variety of Quartz.

Sphalerite is an important ore of iron. T or F False. It is an ore of zinc.

Kyanite crystals have two different hardnesses in the same crystal. T or F True. This is the only mineral that has one hardness when measured in one direction and a different hardness when measured in a different direction.
Ruby red Proustite crystals will turn dark when left in sunlight. T or F True. As a result, red Proustite crystals must be stored in the dark
Colorful Tourmaline crystals are called Schorl. T or F False. It is called Elbaite.
Black Tourmaline crystals are called Schorl. T or F True!
Crocoite is an ore of the element titanium. T or F False. It is an ore of chromium.
The mineral Vesuvianite is also known by the name of Idocrase. T or F True.
A drop of hydrochloric acid will fizz when it is dropped on a piece of Fluorite. T or F False. The acid test is used to identify Calcite, not Fluorite.
Chalcopyrite is magnetic. T or F False. Magnetite and Lodestone are magnetic. Pyrrhotite is weakly magnetic, too.
Topaz is harder than Corundum. T or F False. Corundum is harder than Topaz.
Sphalerite is the ore mineral of zinc. T or F True.
Spodumene is crushed to powder to make fine porcelain plates and cups. T or F True.
Kunzite is a light purple gem variety of the mineral Orthoclase Feldspar. T or F False. It is a gem variety of Spodumene.
Deep red Garnet is called Uvarovite. T or F False. It is called Almandine.
The dodecahedron is a crystal form in the Hexagonal Crystal System. T or F False. It is a form in the Cubic or Isometric Crystal System.
The light purple mica mineral is called Lepidolite. T or F True
Stibnite is an important ore of the metallic element, antimony. T or F True
Gypsum will burn in a match flame. T or F False. Sulfur will burn in a match flame. And when it does, it smells like rotten eggs
A hollow ball of rock material that is lined with crystals is called a Spherode. T or F False. It is called a Geode.
Stilbite often forms crystal groups that look like bow ties. T or F True
Colorful, banded variety of Chalcedony is called Agate. T or F True.
Collecting minerals is by far the very best hobby that anyone could ever have, ever. T or T True. Very, very, very True. What more can we say?!