

## 04/15/08 West side board meeting minutes

Stu called the meeting to order at 7:35 PM.

Kathy gave the treasurer's report.

The minutes of the February board meeting were m/s/p as printed in the last newsletter.

Ed Lehman reported that the even numbered sections at Saddle Mt are open to the public for the collection of petrified wood. The odd numbered sections are still in litigation so collecting is not allowed by the public.

It was reported that the locks at Walker Valley are missing once again. Stu will ask the DNR to check the gate for missing locks and he will provide the DNR with replacements.

The annual lease payment on Walker Valley is due soon.

Ed stated his desire to have someone update the map booklets with new information on collecting areas and the addition of GPS coordinates. The current version was last updated in 2004. The most common question about the map booklets is: "Is there anything new?". We still manage to sell a lot of booklets to people new to the hobby.

The next combined board meeting is on May 17 in Ellensburg. The election of new officers is the main business topic. We need a VP and trustee to serve on the West side and two trustees from the Eastside. Glenn Morita volunteered for another 3 year term as a Westside trustee. The board also needs a secretary, preferably on the Westside.

The Saddle Mt field trip sponsored by the North Idaho club originally scheduled for 5/31 and 6/1 has been moved to 5/17 and 18 to coincide with the board meeting in Ellensburg.

Meeting adjourned,

Submitted by Glenn Morita, Secretary Pro-Tem

### Dean Angstrom 1918 - 2008

Dean Angstrom, long time rockhound and former Washington State Mineral Council president passed away on March 31. For many years Dean was an active member of the Wilbur Rock Club, Spokane Rock Rollers Club, Chief Joseph Gem and Mineral Club. He will be greatly missed by all.

A celebration of his life will be held sometime in August.

### Agonizing over 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 BEMS 04/08, from Coastal Waves, 5-6-7/06; from Beach Connection, 1-2/05

### **The Nation's First Monument**

Devil's Tower... located in the grassy plains of northeastern Wyoming, was proclaimed the first national monument by Teddy Roosevelt in 1906.

The tower's summit rising 5117 feet is visible for miles and served as a guiding landmark to Indian tribesmen and early pioneers.

Down through the ages, people of all races have found a strange and primitive fascination in rocks; the Orientals see them as fanciful images; early American Indians wove legends about them. They were inspired by the huge fantastic rock column in the Bear Lodge section in the Black Hills of Wyoming—known as the Devil's Tower. The legend says:

Once upon a time, three Sioux maidens were gathering wildflowers. Along came three bears. The terrified maidens fled to a large rock nearby, but the bears pursued—scrambling up the rock with their long, sharp claws. But all was not lost—the Gods caused the rock to rise higher and higher, until in exhaustion the bears slipped and crashed to their death. What of the maidens, so high? Breathlessly, they braided their wildflowers into a long, long rope and lowered themselves down to safety.

Through the years, more than 11,000 climbers have clung to the timeworn walls. Fifty seven different routes are established for climbers. The first man to reach the summit was a local rancher who devised a wooded ladder of thirty inch pegs driven into a continuous vertical crack located between two massive columns.

George Hopkins was the first and last man to parachute to the top—where he was stranded for six days. The news hit the wire service and he received fame. Supplies were air dropped to him and the park service had to rescue him with a team of nine men.

This giant relic is composed of an unusual crystalline rock called phonolite porphyry, and began forming during the Triassic period 224 million years ago. The tower came into being as an igneous intrusion of magma below the surface of the earth, and later became exposed through erosion. During the cooling period, the uprising shape of magma cracked into almost perfectly vertical fluted columns, spaced every ten to fifteen feet around the base of the tower. The summit is not flat, but it is rounded and covered with vegetation. Visitors, driving by, are filled with awe.

from The Petrified Digest 02/08, via Carmel Valley Prospector, via Yellowstone Deposit 1/84 and others.

## **Grand Canyon May Be As Old As Dinosaurs, 40 - 50 Million Years Older Than Previously Thought**

ScienceDaily (Apr. 11, 2008) — New geological evidence indicates the Grand Canyon may be so old that dinosaurs once lumbered along its rim, according to a study by researchers from the University of Colorado at Boulder and the California Institute of Technology.

The team used a technique known as radiometric dating to show the Grand Canyon may have formed more than 55 million years ago, pushing back its assumed origins by 40 million to 50 million years. The researchers gathered evidence from rocks in the canyon and on surrounding plateaus that were deposited near sea level several hundred million years ago before the region uplifted and eroded to form the canyon.

A paper on the subject will be published in the May issue of the Geological Society of America Bulletin. CU-Boulder geological sciences Assistant Professor Rebecca Flowers, lead author and a former Caltech postdoctoral researcher, collaborated with Caltech geology Professor Brian Wernicke and Caltech geochemistry Professor Kenneth Farley on the study.

"As rocks moved to the surface in the Grand Canyon region, they cooled off," said Flowers. "The cooling history of the rocks allowed us to reconstruct the ancient topography, telling us the Grand Canyon has an older prehistory than many had thought."

The team believes an ancestral Grand Canyon developed in its eastern section about 55 million years ago, later linking with other segments that had evolved separately. "It's a complicated picture because different segments of the canyon appear to have evolved at different times and subsequently were integrated," Flowers said.

The ancient sandstone in the canyon walls contains grains of a phosphate mineral known as apatite -- hosting trace amounts of the radioactive elements uranium and thorium -- which expel helium atoms as they decay, she said. An abundance of the three elements, paired with temperature information from Earth's interior, provided the team a clock of sorts to calculate when the apatite grains were embedded in rock a mile deep -- the approximate depth of the canyon today -- and when they cooled as they neared Earth's surface as a result of erosion.

Apatite samples from the bottom of the Upper Granite Gorge region of the Grand Canyon yield similar dates as samples collected on the nearby plateau, said Caltech's Wernicke. "Because both canyon and plateau samples resided at nearly the same depth beneath the Earth's surface 55 million years ago, a canyon of about the same dimensions of today may have existed at least that far back, and possibly as far back as the time of dinosaurs at the end of the Cretaceous period 65 million years ago."

One of the most surprising results from the study is the evidence showing the adjacent plateaus around the Grand Canyon may have eroded away as swiftly as the Grand Canyon itself, each dropping a mile or more, said Flowers. Small streams on the plateaus appear to have been just as effective at stripping away rock as the ancient Colorado River was at carving the massive canyon.

"If you stand on the rim of the Grand Canyon today, the bottom of the ancestral canyon would have sat over your head, incised into rocks that have since been eroded away," said Flowers. The ancestral Colorado River was likely running in the opposite direction millions of years ago, she said.

When the canyon was formed, it probably looked like a much deeper version of present-day Zion Canyon, which cuts through strata of the Mesozoic era dating from about 250 million to 65 million years ago, Wernicke said. From 28 million to 15 million years ago, a pulse of erosion deepened the already-formed canyon and also scoured surrounding plateaus, stripping off the Mesozoic strata to reveal the Paleozoic rocks visible today, he said.

The prevailing belief is that the canyon was incised by an ancient river about six million years ago as the surrounding plateau began rising from sea level to the current elevation of about 7,000 feet. The new scenario described in the GSA Bulletin by Flowers and her colleagues is consistent with recent evidence by other geologists using radiometric dating techniques indicating the Grand Canyon is significantly older than scientists had long believed.

### **BC Wagonmasters Announce Field Trips for 2008**

**March 15 ( Saturday )** Harrison Lake fossils.

Up the west side of Harrison Lake are some clam and belemnite fossils available for collecting. The clam fossils are plentiful, and are just about "all-you-can-carry".....belemnites not so plentiful.

Tools are usual clothing, hammers, and larger boulder cracking hammers, and chisels if you have them to bring. Bring a lunch/snack and your camera!

Meeting place is the parking lot of the Sasquatch Inn at 9:00AM.

This is on Highway #7 at the town of Harrison Mills. This is west of Agassiz. \*\*\*DO NOT GO TO THE TOWN OF HARRISON LAKE\*\*\* The Sasquatch Inn is precisely at the exit to the Hemlock Valley Ski area.

If you don't know how to find this, please consult a map!

The location is some 30+ KM off of the main highway on gravel backroads, fully passable by cars. Please have ample fuel, and some snacks & beverages.

The leader for this trip is Gord Pinder from Maple Ridge club, 604-870-4779

**April 27th Nicomen Plateau,**

Shaw Springs area: Located between Lytton, and Spences Bridge.

This area is many square miles of volcanic area with agates sprinkled around. Bring your hammer, cracking hammer, squirt bottle, food, and appropriate clothing & footwear. Again, all vehicles should have no trouble navigating the backroads, and some people camp out in the area.

The meeting place is the Lytton Esso on highway #1, at 10:00AM

The leader for this trip is David Hunter, 604-826-5303

As always, the trips may be changed, or due to weather or road conditions may be cancelled at the last minute. Please check the BC Lapidary Society web site for updates!

**Summer Camp**

Stuart River Campgrounds,  
Fort St. James, BC  
August 3 - 8, 2008

Fort St. James is located on the south-eastern shore of Stuart Lake, at the head of the Stuart River, 160 kilometres northwest of Prince George on Highway 27, off Highway 16 just west of Vanderhoof. One of the province's oldest communities, it originated as a trading post, established in 1806 by Simon Fraser for the North West Company. In 1821 it was taken over by the Hudson's Bay Company...

**Tail-Gate Sale:**

Last September we organized a Tail-Gate sale, originally planned to be held at the parking lot of the Hastings Community Center. Due to the Vancouver Civic Strike, the Hastings Community Center was closed.....so, I moved the Tail-Gate sale to a Burnaby community center, which just happened to be having their own Tail-Gate sale anywhere....

We had about 14 club members bring items out for the Tail-Gate sale, and we assisted in filling 41 of the 42 dealer spaces at the center. A big thank you to everyone who brought out items to sell! I'm calling this a success for a first time event, and I will organize another one for either the spring of 2008, or again in September, maybe both! I apologize if anyone missed the event due to the change of location.

As it turns out, the logistics of using the Burnaby center might work out in our favor. They have multiple events like this each year, and they asked us to participate in their "craft" oriented sale. They provided some people to bring out tables, and they managed the parking lot security and directing of traffic. The center had a food vendor , plus washrooms, handy for both the buyers, and the vendors!

More info to follow.