

Minutes of the 09/16/03 West Side Board Meeting

Meeting was called to order by Stu Earnst at 7:38pm.

Prior meeting minutes approved as published.

Newsletter correction: Marti Casto phone number.

Treasurer's report read and current expense bills submitted for payment.

Old business:

The Longview Fiber letter given to Ed Lehman will have the certificate of Insurance attached and sent to Longview Fiber. This will keep Kalama open to Mineral council trips.

Walker Valley Sign committee, Bruce Himko and Vi Jones will work on sign wording and report on developments next meeting.

Email addresses are needed to send out the newsletter via email instead of mail. Save postage and get newsletter faster. Send email address to newsletter editor!

New business:

Port Angeles Home school field trip inquiry and ideas discussed. It was decided to refer them to local clubs on the peninsula.

Tulip Casino wants the council to put on rock show. We discussed possibility of Marysville and Mineral council jointly sponsoring an outdoor rock show/ fair – It was decided to get more info on what the casino had in mind and would provide before committing to such a venture. This could be a one or two day outdoor event featuring exhibits and dealers that would like to participate.

Forest Service Report: Forest Service has suspended meetings this year due to heavy fire season.

Resource Coalition Report: DNR had closed Similkameen River and all navigable rivers in WA to prospecting and dredging and ruined the Prospectors group rendezvous. Many complaints were made and Doug Sutherland, land commissioner opened them all back up again within 2 weeks.

Wagonmaster Report:

Little Naches Trip coming up Sept 27/28 weekend.

Also scouted Clear Creek Thunderegg site. Displayed samples, this is a site that is as yet undeveloped, thundereggs are agate filled – light blue to gray and gray rhyolite matrix or quartz crystal lined hollow ones.

Two other related sites- one for quartz crystals at Goodman lake is a dud. The other was gated off and we ran out of time to further scout that one.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Norma Kikkert, Secretary

Jasper or Agate: A Simple Distinction by Dave Olson

Jasper and agate are the rocks we hobbyists deal with most often in pursuit of our goals as lapidaries and collectors. Do we really understand the differences between the two? Often confusion arises when attempting to describe a specimen as either jasper or agate.

Both jasper and agate are composed of extremely fine interlocking quartz crystals called cryptocrystalline quartz. As such, they are both members of the fine-grained quartz family referred to as "chalcedony". Chalcedony occurs throughout the world in beds, bands, nodules, geodes, botryoidal masses, as a replacement of fossils, wood tissues or other minerals, and as a cementing material. It is deposited from silica-rich waters, often carrying other mineral impurities.

It is the presence of these mineral impurities which stains the micro-quartz grains to produce the wide variety of colored patterns, banding effects and inclusions that differentiate the basic "gem" forms of cryptocrystalline quartz - jasper and agate, from ordinary drab chalcedony.

So what is the difference? In general, agate is a transparent to translucent form of chalcedony in which the coloration takes the form of regular bands, rings, clouds, wispy inclusions, or distinct groups.

Agate containing straight or concentric bands is referred to a fortification agate. Moss agate contains delicate wispy or lacy inclusions of coloring minerals, often the green mineral chlorite that penetrated cracks in the silica gel matrix prior to hardening. Now they remain as fine picture-like images. Agates are usually named by employing the geographical area where it is found with a descriptive adjective, as "Friday Ranch Plume Agate".

Jasper, on the other hand, can be somewhat translucent, but it is most often opaque. The coloration of jasper is usually much darker than that of agate and is totally random with respect to pattern or distribution.

Finely divided hematite gives the color to reddish jaspers, and another iron mineral - goethite - is responsible for yellows and browns. Chlorite and nickel minerals contribute to green coloration. As with agate, jasper comes in many colors and displays an almost infinite variety of patterns. Because of these properties, it is an extremely versatile material for cabs, scenic "pictures" to be framed, and other functional and decorative purposes. It is truly the bread and butter "gem" of our hobby.

from Petrified Digest 8/03

Rocks, Gems, Minerals What's the Difference? by Martin Scarborough

What's the difference between rocks, minerals, and gems? A mineral is made of inorganic material (substances that were never alive), whose atoms are arranged in a regular pattern or crystal. Rocks are made up of one or more minerals. Most people also include clay and limestone in the rock category. Gems are a special subgroup of highly prized minerals. Gems are usually clearer, rarer, and more beautiful than other minerals. Color, luster, and hardness are also important qualities that can set gems apart from other minerals. But there is no hard and fast rule as to which minerals cut it as gems and which don't. It's mostly a matter of custom.

What's the difference between precious and semi-precious gems? Most gems can be divided into precious and semi-precious. Diamonds, emeralds, rubies, and sapphires are all considered precious gems. Most remaining gems - such as varieties of quartz (including amethyst, opal, and bloodstone) - are semi-precious.

from Gem Cutters News 11/99 via Rock Rollers 7/03

Giant Clams of the Triassic by Julia Cole

The discovery of a new family and species of giant clams revealed information about Triassic clams and the Triassic Pacific. George Stanley, a University of Montana (UM) geology professor, and Thomas Yancey, a researcher from Texas A&M University, described the giant clams, which range up to 3 feet in diameter, in the February 1999 issue of Paleontology.

In the mid-1980's, Stanley and a student discovered the saucer shaped fossils, silhouetted in white in a wall of black limestone, in a quarry of the Wallow Mountains in Oregon. Unable at the time to separate the fossils from the limestone, they transported the limestone, more than 400 pounds of rock, to UM. The similar densities of the fossils and their matrix rendered X-rays ineffective. The fossils' identities remained a mystery until two years ago, when Yancey, having the tools and the time, began removing the surrounding rock, and could see the internal morphologies of the giant clams. The researchers assigned the fossils the family name Wallowacochidae after the surrounding mountains.

The fossils had unusual wing-like extensions surrounding their central body cavities. According to the scientists, the clams used chambers inside their shell extensions to nurture and house algae. Partially translucent shells or natural fiber optics allowed light to pass through the clams' shells to the symbiotic algae.

The extinct clams lived in the Triassic period about 200 million years ago. The researchers believe that the clams' habitat was a shallow lagoon, behind coral reefs, that surrounded isolated volcanic islands like Tahiti or Fiji located in the eastern Pacific. Identical fossils were found in the Yukon and in Sonora, Mexico.

The different locations of the fossils may help geologists reconstruct the paleogeography of the Pacific during the Triassic. "I believe the clams were living in isolation around an island like the Galapagos and eventually plate tectonics brought them crashing into North America. Later fault systems moved them north and south," Stanley says.

from Geotimes 8/99 via Rockhound Special 9/03