

**HELL'S CANYON GEM CLUB**  
P.O. BOX 365  
LEWISTON, IDAHO 83501



**Serving the Valley for  
62 YEARS**

**PURPOSE OF HELLS CANYON GEM CLUB, INC.**

The purpose of this nonprofit, social club is to promote the rock hound hobby by providing opportunities for the collection, working and displaying of gems and minerals, as well as educational programs in the field of geology.

**MEETINGS:** 2nd Friday of each month Board Meeting 6 pm Regular Meeting 7 pm

**VISITORS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME**

**Dues:** Adult [per person] \$15.00; Junior [under 18] Free with a responsible adult membership.

**2014 BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

<b>President</b>	Steve Rand	208-791-2325	<b>1st Year Trustee</b>	Richard Peterson	208-276-7077
<b>Vice President</b>	Mel Wilks	208-301-3939	<b>1st Year Trustee</b>	Jerry Blemka	509-758-7384
<b>Secretary</b>	Marylou Northrup	208-743-6944	<b>2nd Year Trustee</b>	Betty Wilks	208-301-3939
<b>Treasurer</b>	Marilyn Sharp	509-758-4218	<b>2nd Year Trustee</b>	Torch Yates	208-743-3358
<b>Past President</b>	Linn Enger	208-746-4957	<b>Federation Director</b>	Jeremy Giard	509-758-2581
			<b>Federation Delegate</b>	Gail Giard	509-758-2581

**HELLS CANYON WEBSITE:** <http://www.hellscanyonclub.com>

**WEBMASTER:** Rick Westerholm: [hcgemclub@yahoo.com](mailto:hcgemclub@yahoo.com)

# HOW TO FIND OUR MEETING PLACE



To get to new meeting location for the Hells Canyon Club, go south on 15th Street in Clarkston. 15th turns into Scenic Way and goes up the hill. Scenic Way turns into Appleside Rd. Continue south on Appleside Rd to where it turns and becomes Reservoir Rd.

The Grange Hall is located at the junction of Reservoir Rd, 6th Avenue and 22nd Street.

Additional parking is available in the Church parking lot across 6th Avenue.



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello Rockhounds

Hope everyone is having a great year so far, here we are and it's already June where is the time going. Well it was good to see everyone last month and things are moving along, been out hunting a few rocks but nothing spectacular has been found except the ticks, so if you are out there climbing around beware they are out there. I hope everyone remembers the barbecue at Beachview park for the next meeting, bring a side dish or a dessert and we will see everyone at the park on the 13th for the picnic.

Steve

### May 9 Board Meeting

Steve Rand opened the meeting at 6:30pm

Officers present were Steve Rand, Mel Wilks, Mary Lou Northrup, Marilyn Sharp, Linn Enger, Richard Pedersen, Torch Yates, Jeremy and Gail Girard.

Minutes were approved.

Marilyn gave a treasurer's report.

Mary Lou made a motion and Torch seconded it to pay the \$38 bill for a Silent Auction banner to be used at the show in October. Motion was made, seconded & passed to pay all other bills.

The reception for the Silent Auction Banner was so good that it was decided to order two more banners, one saying Kids Corner and one for demonstrators.

Marilyn was appointed to go ahead and order the skirting for the tables that we use at the show.

The Hells Canyon Gem Club Library is now at Linn's house. It was agreed to move the library to Northrup's house but this will take a little time before it is moved and ready for people to check out books.

Gail Girard gave a federation report. One of her main points was Shirley Leeson is creating a display case of slabs of material no longer available to dig to show at all NFMS Shows. She needs members to donate slabs with name & location it was found. Look through your collections if you would like to donate. Also Rockhound of the Year nominations are due.

Meeting was adjourned.

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### Regular meeting 7pm

The Library was discussed again. It will move to Northrups house.

Is there still snow at the claim? Rick was going to drive up and see. He has since reported that one road has a washout (not passable) and the other is blocked with snow. Should be able to go through the snow road early in June.

Linn has heard nothing on the garnet claim.

Jerry Northrup made a motion, Teresa seconded it to pay \$72.75 to join the Washington State Mineral Council for another year.

Mel Wilks said he was organizing a field trip to McCann's place for fire Opals. It will be Saturday May17. Meet at Walla Walla Community College at 9:00am.

Randy Squires said he had been in Boise and talked to some rock club members down there. Their club goes on numerous field trips and invited any of us to attend with them if we like.

Gail gave a federation report. See Board meeting minutes. It was brought up to submit a bid for 2017 Federation Show. The general consensus was no.

Jerry Northrup announced a day of rock & flea market sales at Hermiston Oregon on May 18.

Lloyd Nye announced that his claim for garnet digging, close to our crystal claim, will come up for new ownership sometime this fall. Something to think about.

A field trip to China Hollow will follow the Hermiston Federation Show in August. If you are planning to attend the show, August 15,16 & 17, you might like to add an extra day or two and go on to China Hollow.

We talked about holding a Rock Fest Contest at our Christmas party this year. Main rules will follow later, but basically we will have categories: Collector of the year, Cabochon of the year, something you have purchased, Facetor of the year, project of the year. You enter your prize pieces, members who attend the party will vote on them that evening & prizes are awarded. Categories will be better explained with the rules. As you hunt rocks and make projects this year keep this contest in mind. Your efforts may make you a winner.

Our June Club meeting will be held at Beachview Park in Clarkston for a club picnic. June 13 at 6pm. Bring salads or desserts. Hamburgers & hot dogs will be furnished.

Door prizes were given.

Show & Tell: Randy Squires showed a knife with obsidian blade and a bear's jaw for a handle. It was really a beautiful piece.

We learned more about rocks/minerals by helping Bruce Borgelt identify some of his rocks.

Meeting adjourned.

(submitted by Marylou Northrup).

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## Why Are Numbers the Shape They Are.

We use numbers all day, every day. We write them, we click them, we calculate with them and we use them to think and count. But how much do you know about the actual numbers you use? Do you know WHY the numbers look the way they do? If not, then here's why: Follow this

link--- <http://www.ba-bamail.com/content.aspx?emailid=10143>

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A little girl comes back home from school and tells her mom:  
"Mommy, today I got punished for something I didn't even do!"  
"What?! What do you mean?" Her mother says, angry, "I'm going to call your teacher right now!  
What is it you didn't do?"  
"My homework."

**WSMC FIELDTRIPS 2014 ( Will be updated—see [mineralcouncil.org](http://mineralcouncil.org) )**

The Washington State Mineral Council plans guided fieldtrips to collecting sites. Open to member clubs, and the general public. Most trips are free. Included will be Pow Wow trips (must join to go on trips). Host clubs and contact persons will be set up as I gather info. For now, go to [mineralcouncil.org](http://mineralcouncil.org) for updates, or contact Ed Lehman @ [wsmced@hotmail.com](mailto:wsmced@hotmail.com) , or home (425) 334- 6282 cel (425) 760-2786.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Host</b>	<b>Site</b>	<b>Meeting place and time</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Tools</b>
06/14	Spk	Emerald Creek	9:00 @ Emerald Creek Star Garnet Area, Idaho	Star garnet	Tweezers
06/25-29	POW	Madras, OR	8:00 @Fairgrounds	Petrified wood, agate, jasper, T-Eggs	
07/13	Spk	Lolo Pass	8:00 @ Lolo Hot Springs	Smokey quartz	Dig, Lt hard rock
07/19	Msvl	Darrington Rock Show	11:00	Travertine	Hard rock tools
08/02	Shltn	Salmon Creek	I-5 Park & ride in Toledo	Agate, petrified wood, pseudo coprolites	Wading
08/16/	NWOS	Greenwater	9:00 @ Enumclaw Ranger Station	Agate, Jasper	Dig, It hard rock
09/6-7	POW	Red Top	8:00 @ camp (W fork M fork jct) Dues, see above	Agate, geodes, jade, jasper	
09/13	NWOS	Little Naches	9:00 @ Enumclaw Ranger Station	Thunder-Eggs	Dig, It hard rock
10/04	Msvl	D.P. Mine & H.T. Creek	9:00 @ Money Creek Camp	Ore, picture Jasper	Lt hard rock, light
11/08	MtBkr	Blanchard Mt	9:00 @ I-5 240 exit gas Station	Stilpnomelane & Chert	Hard rock tool

Kit = Kitsap M & G Soc— T B D

Msvl = Marysville R & G Club - Ed Lehman [wsmced@hotmail.com](mailto:wsmced@hotmail.com) (425) 334-6282 or (425) 760-2786

MtBkr = Mount Baker R & G Club—Kris Menger @ (360) 927-0994 [kmenger@comcast.net](mailto:kmenger@comcast.net)

Elb = Ellensburg R Club—Steve Townsend—(509) 933-2236 [srtrocks@aol.com](mailto:srtrocks@aol.com)

Spk = Spokane Rock Rollers—Mike Shaw—(509) 244-8542 [mikeshawmoose@yahoo.com](mailto:mikeshawmoose@yahoo.com)

NWOS = Northwest Opal Soc—Tony Johnson—(253)863-9238

This is just a work in process. Participants please respond for corrections and updates.

Thanks, Ed **Lehman**

Check this one out!!!

## Virtual Prospector

**Virtual Prospector** is a free map interface that overlays features such as historic mines and prospects, geologic maps, water flow data, and geographic survey data over the standard Google Earth aerial imagery. One can simply fly about in the program and locate potential prospects using this data, simplifying the process of research greatly and making it easy to find new places to mine or rockhound. Virtual Prospector makes use of a large array of useful and openly available geologic and geographic datasets presented as map overlays. Data is currently sourced from the BLM, USGS, and NOAA and includes both cached KML datasets and streaming WMS mapserver network links.

**<http://www.usminer.com/tools/virtual-prospector/>**

# 2014 NFMS CALENDAR ITEMS

## The Multi-Federation Field Trip: Terry, Montana July 31, August 1, 2, 3, 2014

We are having a great response to the Terry Field trip, have been getting lots of questions and signups.

Field trip update: Come join us in this international gathering, there will be collectors from most states and from Canada. Plans are coming together from all sides. There are a few points I would like to review again so everyone will be clear on the process. When you call or e-mail telling me you will be coming, I need to know where you are from, club affiliation, how you will be staying, tent camping, RV dry camp, RV park or motel and where and full names of all attending. That is my information list so I may have estimates on numbers attending. IT IS NOT A REGISTRATION for any of the trips, and camping around the City Park is on a first come first served basis. When the park is full then we will fill the county block across the street and when that is full we can utilize two more blocks, a block away to the east. There will be showers and RR at the park plus there will be portable toilets at each of the blocks. We are making arrangements for a honey wagon Friday evening (small fee) to empty RV tanks and the Portables.

For all those that didn't receive the latest updates, all trips to the river will be by buses. This is because of the high fire season and we do not want to cause a problem on these ranches with cars driving over everything. Fossil trips will be auto caravans.

Thursday and Friday evening we will have 2-3 programs each running 20-40 minutes long.

After discussion with several others it was decided to add a live auction on Sunday afternoon to help defer some of cost of this trip. There will be a donation jar during the weekend and if you would like to bring something nice for the auction please do. We would love to receive a variety of things from around the country. I thank you in advance. Don't forget to bring items to Buy-Sell-Trade on Sunday.

There will also be some fee areas for those who want to hunt dinosaur material besides our trips. These numbers will be posted on our next update.

\* When you arrive you will be asked to sign a liability waiver, which will be part of your trip signup. We ask that you check in at our information table for instructions and schedules, to meet your camp hosts, trip leaders (10) and a few simple rules for your camping and the trips. We want this to be a special trip for all and a safe one also.

\* Things to bring on your trip. Sun Screen, good sturdy shoes, long pants, water containers, bug spray, rock picks and a regular screw driver, collecting bags, if you have rubber boots (thigh high) bring them also, hats as this is mid summer and daytime temps could reach 90 + degrees and our nights are cool. There will be a chance in seeing a rattlesnake on the trips. I have seen *only* 3 in last 20 years, but they are in the area.

If you plan on staying at a motel or RV park for this trip and have not already made reservations, Terry is full, you will need to make reservations in Miles City or Glendive both about 30 minute drive to Terry by interstate.

Looking forward to meeting everyone

For more information contact Doug True, Field trip Chair,  
(406) 670-0506, or email [dtruefossils12@yahoo.com](mailto:dtruefossils12@yahoo.com)

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## NFMS Annual Meeting Hermiston, Oregon August 15-17, 2014

For more information contact Mike Filarski  
[stonemorlin1@netscape.net](mailto:stonemorlin1@netscape.net) or Judi Allison [jall@eotnet.net](mailto:jall@eotnet.net)

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**If it's true that we are here to help others, then what exactly are the others here for?**

**If lawyers are disbarred and clergymen defrocked, then doesn't it follow that electricians can be delighted, musicians denoted, cowboys deranged, models deposed, tree surgeons debarked, and dry cleaners depressed?**

STANDING COMMITTEES	GEM SHOW COMMITTEES
1. Bulletin Editor— Ed Shoemaker	1. Show Chairman---
2. Membership Chairman---Lon & Marilyn Sharp	2. Show Co-Chairman---
3. Juniors Chairman---Mike Horne	3. Show Treasurer---
4. Field Trip Chairman—	4. Dealer Chairman---
5. Program Chairman ---	5. Advertising Chairman---
6. Show & Tell Chairman---	6. Displays Chairman---
7. Claims Chairman---	7. Demonstrations Chairman---
8. Historian Chairman---	8. Floor Plan Chairman---
9. Library Chairman---	9. Silent Auction Chairman---
10. Sunshine Chairman---	10. Kids Corner---
11. ALAA--- (American Lands Access Association)	11. Admissions---
	12. Security---

## NFMS MEMBER CLUBS' SHOW SCHEDULE

(Partial list)

DATE & TIME	CLUB	SHOW	LOCATION
Aug. 15 Fri 10–6 Aug 16 Sat 10–6 Aug. 17 Sun 10–4	Hatrockhounds Gem and Mineral Society - <b>NFMS Annual Meeting</b>	Hermiston Conference Center 415 South Highway 395 Hermiston OR	Judi Allison <a href="mailto:jall@eotnet.net">jall@eotnet.net</a> 541 720 4950, Or Mike Filarski <a href="mailto:stonemorlin1@netscape.net">stonemorlin1@netscape.net</a> 541 571 2593, 222.hatrockhounds.org
Sept. 27 Sat 10–5 Sept. 28 Sun 10–4	Billings Gem and Mineral Club	Billings Hotel and Conv. Center 1223 Mallowney Lane Billings MT	Doug True 406 670 0506 2622 Broadwater Billings MT 59102 <a href="mailto:dtruefossils12@yahoo.com">dtruefossils12@yahoo.com</a>

- **Why isn't the number 11 pronounced onety-one?**
- **If 4 out of 5 people SUFFER from diarrhea...does that mean that one out of five enjoys it?**
- **Why do croutons come in airtight packages? Aren't they just stale bread to begin with?**
- **If people from Poland are called Poles, then why aren't people from Holland called Holes?**
- **If a pig loses its voice, is it disgruntled?**
- **Why is a person who plays the piano called a pianist, but a person who drives a race car is not called a racist?**

# BIGGS JASPER



BIGGS JASPER IS ONE OF THE PREMIER PORCELAIN PICTURE JASPERS AND IS FROM THE AREA IN AND AROUND BIGGS JUNCTION, OREGON. IT WAS FIRST USED BY INDIANS FOR TOOLS AND ARROWHEADS. IN 1937 ROAD CREWS REDISCOVERED BIGGS JASPER WHILE DOING ROAD WORK AFTER A WASHOUT REVEALED THIS BEAUTIFUL MINERAL. KNOWN FOR IT'S DETAILED MOUNTAIN SCENES IT IS ONE OF THE MOST SOUGHT AFTER PICTURE JASPERS.

## [THE HISTORY OF BIGGS JASPER, DESCHUTES PICTURE JASPER, OREGON.](#)



THIS IS A BONAFIDE CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF BIGGS JASPERS AND SOME OF THE RESPECTED AND HONORABLE MINERS INVOLVED.

BIGGS PICTURE JASPER AND THE DISCOVERY THEREOF PLAYED A VITAL ROLE IN THE EVOLUTION OF THE LAPIDARY FIELD. MANY A LAPIDARIST WOULD NOT BE INVOLVED WITH THIS FINE HOBBY IF IT HAD NOT BEEN FOR THEIR AWE STRUCK INSPIRATION IN SEEING A POLISHED SLAB OR CAB OF BIGGS PICTURE JASPER...NO OTHER JASPER CREATED SUCH A "GOLD RUSH OF EXCITEMENT," AS DID THE BIGGS JASPER DISCOVERY OF 1964. IT IS ENGRAINED IN MY MIND LIKE IT WAS LAST SUMMER...

I WAS JUST A TOE HEAD. I REMEMBER MY DAD TALKING WITH SOME OTHER ROCKHOUNDERS/MINERS ABOUT HOW THAT COUNTRY AROUND BIGGS JUNCTION WAS MADE UP

OF BASALT, RATTLESNAKES AND SAGE BRUSH, WITH SPORADIC DEPOSITS OF AGATE...WHO WOULD HAVE EVER THOUGHT SUCH A BEAUTIFUL JASPER LAYED BENEATH THE SURFACE OF THIS RUGGED DESERT.

THE BIGGS JASPER DISCOVERY CHANGED THE LIVES OF A LOT OF PEOPLE AS YOU WILL SEE IN THE FOLLOWING PAGES...I RECALL THE EXCITEMENT WITHIN MY DAD WHEN HE FIRST SAW A SLAB OF BIGGS JASPER, HE WAS HOOKED FROM THAT MOMENT ON!!!! EVERYONE WAS FACINATED BY HOW THE SCENES IN THE JASPER REFLECTED SO MUCH THE TERRAIN FROM WHENCE IT CAME.

LIKE ALL JASPERS, BIGGS HAS VARIETY. ANY LAPIDARIST KNOWS ABOUT THE MOST RARE, BLUE SKY BIGGS AND BLUE BIGGS JASPER THAT DEMANDS PRICES OF 100.00 PLUS PER LB. THE OLD BIGGS IS ANOTHER VARIETY, BLACK BIGGS, RUFUS BIGGS, WHICH HAS A HIGHER MANGANESE CONTENT BUT TAKES A GLOSSY FINISH. IT IS THE LAYERED VARIETY OF BIGGS, THAT REALLY SETS IT APART FROM THE TRADITIONAL BIGGS. ONE HAS TO CUT WITH THE STRATA TO GET THE BEST PICTURE.

THE PURPLE BIGGS ALSO CAME OUT OF RUFUS...THERE EXIST A LOT OF FLAVORS IN THE RUFUS BIGGS BUT PERHAPS ONE OF THE MOST EXCITING IS THE RUFUS BLUE BIGGS. IT MAY VERY WELL BE ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISCOVERIES IN LAPIDARY HISTORY. IT IS CERTAINLY DESERVING ENOUGH TO INCLUDE AN ENTIRE ARTICLE...THERES ALSO LACE BIGGS WHICH IS THE MOST PLENTIFUL. NEVER HAS BEEN A STABLE MARKET, EXCEPT FOR LANDSCAPE ROCK AND OCCASIONALLY SOME THAT IS CAB WORTHY, AS THE SLABS JUST DON'T HAVE THE PATTERN FOR GOOD CABS...THE WASHINGTON BIGGS IS SO MUCH LIKE BIGGS JCT BIGGS THAT ONE CAN HARDLY TELL THE DIFFERENCE....

FULTON CANYON BIGGS, WHICH IS A COUPLE MILES WEST OF BIGGS JCT. COMES IN BIG BOULDERS AND SOME BEAUTIFUL PIECES HAVE BEEN MINED FROM THOSE QUARRIES BUT THERE ARE A LOT OF PROBLEMS WITH PITTING.. I HAVE TO NOTE HERE THAT JUST ANOTHER MILE WEST FROM FULTON IS THE FAMOUS DESCHUTES DEPOSIT..HOW IS IT THAT THE QUALITY OF THE BIGGS WORSENER AS ONE WENT FURTHER WEST THEN BEHOLD: THE CREAM OF THE CROP-DESCHUTES JASPER!!!!!!

TO WHOM DO WE OWE CREDIT FOR THE DISCOVERY? THE FIRST TO EVER MAKE USE OF BIGGS JASPER WAS THE NATIVE AMERICANS THAT LIVED ON THE COLUMBIA. NO WHITE MAN CAN EVER CLAIM THIS CREDIT....THERE ARE SEVERAL OLD MINES THAT THEY DUG UP ON A MOUNTAIN OFF HIGHWAY 97, I HAVE SEEN ARROWHEADS THAT HAVE BEEN FOUND ON THE RIVER MADE FROM BIGGS JASPER...SINCE THEN NUMEROUS OLD NATIVE AMERICAN QUARRIES HAVE BEEN LOCATED WHERE THEY MINED DOLPHITE, AND BIGGS COFFEE AGATE FOR THEIR GEM POINTS AND BIGGS JASPER FOR THEIR KNIVES AND SCRAPERS....IT WOULD BE 100 YEARS BEFORE MAN WOULD ONCE AGAIN DISCOVER THE MAGIC OF THIS JASPER...

ISAMI TSUBOTA AKA SAMMI HAS ONE OF THE OLDEST RUNNING BIGGS MINE STILL IN PRODUCTION. HE PURCHASED QUITE A BIT OF LAND IN AND AROUND BIGGS JCT. BACK IN 1937.... SAMMI WAS ABLE TO GIVE ME SOME FIRST HAND ACCOUNTS OF THE FAMOUS BIGGS JASPER DISCOVERY. IN HIS OWN WORDS: "IT WAS IN 1964 THAT A ROAD CREW WAS CONSTRUCTING I-84 AND THEY, "THE CREW," WERE STAYING AT MY MOTEL AND RV PARK. BIGGS WAS NOT DISCOVERED BY THE ROAD CREW WHILE CONSTRUCTIING THE FREEWAY LIKE MANY HAVE COME TO BELIEVE."

AS SAMMI EXPLAINED: "A GREAT FLOOD CAME AND DESTROYED THE CANYONS FROM THE JOHN DAY RIVER DRAINAGE, THE RUFUS DRAINAGE AND BIGGS JUNCTION DRAINAGE. BIGGS JUNCTION WAS TOTALLY MAROONED WITH NO WAY IN OR OUT, EXCEPT BY AIR. THE STATE RELIEF WOULD BRING IN BOLONY AND BREAD." IT WAS AROUND CHRISTMAS EVE AND WE HAD 75 PEOPLE STRANDED AT MY MOTEL..."

LUCKILY THE ROAD CREW WAS ALREADY THERE WORKING ON I-84 AND THEY WENT TO WORK RE-BUILDING THE WASHED OUT BRIDGES. SAMMI NOTED THAT THE FLOOD HAD WASHED OUT THESE UNUSUAL LOOKING BOULDERS THAT WERE SCATTERED ABOUT. HE COULDN'T FIGURE OUT WHY ALL THE FUSS OVER THESE ROCKS. HIS WIFE WAS BECOMING ANGRY AT THE ROAD CREW AS THEY WOULD GATHER THESE ROCKS UP AND PILE THEM NEXT TO THEIR MOTEL AND RV PARK. SHE TOLD SAMMI TO TELL THEM FELLOWS TO BE SURE AND TAKE THEM ROCKS OUT WHEN THEY LEFT. SAMMI LAUGHED WHEN SHE SAID THAT, BETTER THAT THAN CRY. LIKE HE SAID NOW, THERE WERE



BOULDERS OF BLUE BIGGS AND HERE HE WAS TELLING THEM WORKERS THEY BETTER NOT LEAVE THEM ROCKS!!!! SAMMI SHOOK HIS HEAD AND LAUGHED AND SAID "IF ONLY I HAD KNOWN."

THE FLOOD HAD DESTROYED THE OLD HIGHWAY 97 THAT CAME IN FROM THE SOUTH AND THE ROAD CREW TACKLED THAT AFTER THE BRIDGES WERE COMPLETED. IT WAS THEN THAT ROCKHOUNDS WERE ABLE TO SEE THE HUGE EXPOSED DEPOSITS OF BIGGS JASPER. THE FLOOD WATERS HAD WASHED THE DIRT AWAY THAT HAD CONCEALED THEIR HIDDEN BEAUTY FOR MILLIONS OF YEARS. ROCKHOUNDS WOULD GET THE BIGGS FROM THE ROAD CREWS, SOME ROAD WORKERS BECAME ROCKHOUNDS THEMSELVES...BY THEN THERE WAS A CHAOTIC RUSH TO GET THIS JASPER AS IT WAS GAINING INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION..

IT WASN'T UNTIL SAMMI MET UP WITH A ROCKHOUND BY THE NAME OF HOOT ELKINS. HOOT SOON BECAME WIDELY KNOWN FOR DISCOVERING THE DESCHUTES PICTURE JASPER DEPOSIT...HE SHOWED SAMMI A SLAB OF BIGGS JASPER AND SAMMI FELL IN LOVE WITH THE JASPER AND WAS AN INSTANT ROCK HOUND!!!! THEN HE WAS OUT GATHERING UP THE WASHED OUT BOULDERS. SOON HE HAD A FULL SCALE ROCK SHOP RUNNING AND WAS MARKETING THE JASPER. HOOT WAS FROM PRINEVILLE, AS WAS SHIRTS QUANT. SHIRTS WAS WORKING IN DUFUR OREGON FOR A LOGGING COMPANY AND HE HEARD ABOUT IT FROM SOME ROAD WORKERS IN A LOCAL CAFE. SOON BIGGS JASPER WOULD BRING TOGETHER THESE MEN WHO BECAME LIFELONG FRIENDS AS THEY MET IN THE BIGGS DIGS. HOWARD DOLPH, SHIRTS QUANT, HOOT ELKINS, ISAMI SABOTA, FRED DORMIER, MR. BEERS AND MANY OTHERS. I LOOK AT THESE MEN AS THE KINGS OF BIGGS JASPER. AS HOWARD DOLPH PUT IT,"WE WOULD STAY ALL NIGHT IN OUR HOLES, BECAUSE IF WE LEFT IT SOMEONE ELSE WOULD JUMP IN," SO A BROTHERHOOD WAS FORMED AND THEY WATCHED EACH OTHERS BACKS. THEY WOULD DIG 24-7 TAKING TURNS AND MOST HONORABLY DIVIDING THEIR FINDS....

IN DOING MY RESEARCH I CAME ACROSS AN ARTICLE WRITTEN IN THE LAPIDARY JOURNAL IN 1968 AND WAS STUNNED TO READ THIS EXCERPT..."BIGGS JASPER, A SILICIFIED CLAY, AND PLEASE, LET US NOT CALL THIS MATERIAL A JASPER, NO MATTER WHAT ITS TEXTURE OR COLORING. DUE TO CHANGES IN ITS COMPOSITION AND LACK OF SUFFICIENT SILICA IN SOME OF ITS AREAS, THIS BEAUTIFUL PICTURE ROCK WILL NEVER QUITE MAKE THE GRADE AS TOP-QUALITY CABACHON MATERIAL." WOW!!!! WITH ALL DUE RESPECT, EVIDENTLY THE WRITER UNDERESTIMATED THIS FINE ROCK AS SOME OF THE FINEST CABACHONS IN MUSEUMS TODAY CAME FROM BIGGS JUNCTION... IS IT SILIFIED CLAY? THAT DISCUSSION CAME UP ONE AFTERNOON WHILE VISITING WITH HOWARD DOLPH. HE LAUGHED AND SAID "LET ME SHOW YOU SOMETHING," HE TOOK ME TO HIS MUSEUM AND I WAS AWE STRUCK TO SEE A SLICED CHUNK OF BIGGS WITH A FISH FOSSIL IN IT-SO ONE CAN CERTAINLY SAY IT IS SILIFIED MUD/CLAY BECAUSE IF IT WAS VOLCANIC THE FISH WOULD HAVE BEEN DUSTED.....

HOWARD DOLPH, GOD REST HIS SOUL, WAS ONE OF THE FIRST TO GET IN ON THE BIGGS DIGS. THE INITIAL GROUP WAS 25 TO 30 ROCKHOUNDS AND IT SOON GREW TO HUNDREDS. SO MUCH SO THAT THE ROAD CREW WAS HAVING A HARD TIME DOING THEIR WORK FOR FEAR OF KILLING A HOUNDER. SO THE SUPERVISOR DEMANDED ALL ROCKHOUNDS LEAVE THE AREA!!! SOMEONE COMPLAINED TO THEN GOVERNOR McCALL WHO THEN INTERJECTED AND ALLOWED THE ROCKHOUNDS ACCESS TO GET AS MUCH OF THIS FACINATING ROCK OUT AS POSSIBLE BEFORE THE ROAD WAS PAVED...IT WAS A MAD RUSH. TEX ROSS OF HERMISTON TOLD ME HE WILL NEVER FORGET THIS ONE FELLA IN AN OLE RANCHERO THAT HAD SO MUCH BIGGS IN THE BACK THAT EVERY LITTLE BUMP AND THE BOTTOM WOULD DRAG!!! SHIRTS AND SON BILL QUANT WOULD GO DOWN AND LOAD UP TOO. MY MEMORY IS SO VAUGUE THAT ALL I CAN REALLY RECALL IS PEOPLE SCATTERED ALL OVER WITH PICKS AND SHOVELS AND LOTS OF DUST AS THE DESERT SANDS QUICKLY DRIED. SO IT IS REALLY HONORABLE OF THEN GOVERNOR McCALL TO ALLOW THAT FOR THE PEOPLE. THATS ONE FACT THAT VERY VERY FEW PEOPLE KNEW ABOUT THE HISTORY OF BIGGS JASPER.

HOWARD ROCKHOUNDED HARD AND CUT BIGGS CONSTANTLY FOR DECADES..HE RAN A ROCK SHOP FOR YEARS AND SOLD WHAT HE HAD DUG AND TOOK ON ROCKS FROM THE BEERS FAMILY ON CONSIGNMENT...HE LIVED IN MADRAS WHEN THE PRIDAY BEDS WERE DISCOVERED BEFORE MOVING TO RUFUS. I ASKED HIM WHY HE LEFT MADRAS AND HE CHUCKLED AND SAID HE COULDN'T STAND THE GOSSIPY FOLKS IN THAT COUNTRY AND ENJOYED THE COLUMBIA RIVER.

HOWARD WAS A WEALTH OF INFORMATION ON THE HISTORY OF BIGGS JASPER.

DOLPH LEFT MYSELF AND MANY PEOPLE WISER ON EVERY ASPECT OF BIGGS JASPER AND THE HISTORY OF THE COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE.

THERE ARE MANY OLD-TIMERS THAT WERE IN ON THE FIRST BIGGS DIGS. KOP KOPCINSKI OF MITCHELL WAS ONE OF THE FIRST TO EVER PUT BIGGS JASPER TO A SAW, SHIRTS QUANT OF PRINEVILLE DUG TONS OF IT, HOOT ELKINS, DUG BOTH THE BIGGS AND DESCHUTES PICTURE JASPER— HOOT WAS A LONER, LIKED TO DIG ALONE. SHIRTS WAS THE SAME WAY. I ASKED IF THEY HAD EVER DUG TOGETHER AND MARCY SAID STRANGLEY THEIR PATHS NEVER CROSSED ON THE SAME HOLE. THEY BOTH HAD A RESPECT AND KNEW OF EACH OTHER. THEY JUST DUG ALONE MOST OF THE TIME NOT OUT OF GREED BUT FOR THE PURE SERENITY OF IT.

BIGGS JASPER USED TO BE CONFINED TO THE NORTHERN PART OF THE “ROCKHOUNDERS TRIANGLE,” FROM BIGGS SOUTH TO WASCO, THEN NORTH TO RUFUS AND WEST BACK TO BIGGS. SINCE THIS WRITING A NEW DISCOVERY HAS BEEN MADE AT TYGH VALLEY, SOME 25 MILES S.W. AS THE CROW FLIES...IT WAS ALSO DUG ON THE WASHINGTON SIDE OF THE RIVER FOR YEARS UNTIL THE CORPS AND RAILROAD SHUT DOWN THE DIGS....

BIGGS JASPER WILL ALWAYS PLAY A MAJOR ROLE IN THE LAPIDARY WORLD AND IT HAS BEEN MY PLEASURE TO SHARE WITH YOU THE STORIES OF THOSE THAT ARE WORTHY OF BEING NOTED HERE...WE NOW OWN OUR OWN BIGGS JASPER MINE AND I GLADLY WELCOME FOLKS TO COME AND DIG, JUST DROP ME AN EMAIL FOR INSTRUCTIONS...

Update 05-26-06: I spoke with Isami today on the phone. He was proud to tell me he is 91 years old. He sounded like he has recovered well from his stroke. He certainly still has his sense of humor as I asked him how he felt, he said (Good enough to still get myself in trouble) LOL. One of the most honorable men I have met in the Rock Business.

We talked for a good long time. I reminded him that he is still the King of Biggs Jasper and always will be. Chapmens Rockshop in California bought out just about all the Biggs he has mined over the last 43 years. Tom Maravelous from Quartzsite spent a week just cleaning up where the front end loader had filled two belly dumps full. Tom got approx 12 fifty-five gallon drums of scrap and landscape Biggs, avg weight 500 Lbs per barrel and he still left at least 1,000 Lbs.

Isami and The Late Great Howard Dolph kept Biggs Jasper affordable. Isami sold Biggs at \$1 a Lb. Howard, \$3 to \$5 a Lb. Now its hard to find it for less than \$10 to \$20 a Lb. Howard and Isami will always be synonymous with Biggs Jasper. Two Fine, Honorable Men!!!

They got some fantastic Biggs out. I told him he is to humble, that he is well deserving of his title. But in talking to him I listened to a man of peace within himself. I realized that was his best medicine is the fact that he can find humor in anything and remain calm. He doesn't let stress interfere with his life. He doesn't care how many rocks he dug just that it was all good and fun. Never one to become a legend in his own mind. We can all learn something from that with our accomplishments in this life.

I pray I get to see him again before he goes to Paradise. I told him he has to make it to 100, he laughed and said (well that would be nice....I guess haha, buuut I dunno if I will be doing that or not.)

It was one of those phone calls where one says goodbye 5 or 6 times before actually hanging up. Each time one of us would get sidetracked. Isami was so anxious to hear about Mitchell and the Ochocos. I could hear the excitement in his voice to come and get rocks. I will take him some surprises. God Speed Isami you are indeed The King Of Biggs Jasper

08-09-06— THERE ARE TWO PITS IN THE BIGGS JCT AREA THAT ARE RIGHT ON THE CITY LIMITS LINE. TONS OF GOOD BIGGS WAS MINED FROM THAT PIT. NOW THE STATE TAKES WHAT IS CALLED RIFF RAFT ROCK FROM IT AND ITS USED IN THE COLUMBIA RIVER FOR VARIOUS PROJECTS. ALL THE BIGGS THEY COME ACROSSED IS SET TO THE SIDE AND THERES SOME MASSIVE BOULDERS THERE, AT LEAST THE LAST TIME ISAMI TOOK ME THERE, THERE WAS... THE PICTURE SHOWS ISAMI WITH TWO ROCKHOUNDS HE TOOK ON A DIG. BIGGS JCT IS CLEARLY IN THE BACKGROUND, CHECK OUT THE HUGE PILE OF OVER BURDEN, THAT WAS ONE DEEP PIT!!! A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS. OVER THE YEARS ISAMI WOULD HAVE A HARD TIME GUESSING JUST HOW MANY HUNDREDS OF ROCKHOUNDS HE HAS TAKEN DIGGING IN THOSE PITS AND HIS FULTON CANYON PITS. CHECK IT OUT THE NEXT TIME YOU ARE IN BIGGS, IT IS WELL WORTH STOPPING BY AND CHATTING WITH ISAMI. HE WAS THERE FROM BEFORE THE GREAT BIGGS DISCOVERY, AND

LIVED RIGHT THRU IT HE IS OVER 90 YEARS OLD, HIS MEMORY IS FADING SOMEWHAT BUT NOT HIS HONORABLE CHARACTER.

MANY A ROCKHOUND HAS DONE FEE DIGS WITH ISAMI AND BOUGHT HIS \$1 A LB BIGGS JASPER FROM THE OLD PILE THAT USED TO BE BEHIND HIS HOUSE. HE HAD AN INCREDIBLE ROCK SHOP THERE WITH SIX SAWS, ACTUALLY SEVEN COUNTING THE DRAG SAW IN HIS SERVICE STATION. THREE 24" SAWS THAT I BOUGHT. TWO 30" SAWS AND I THINK AN 18", MAYBE THAT ONE WAS A 24" ALSO. THE THREE I BOUGHT, ONE WAS A HIGHLAND PARK AND THE OTHER TWO WERE HYDRAULICS. TWO EBAYERS BOUGHT THE OTHER TWO 24" SAWS FROM ISAMI AND I KEPT ONE HYDRAULIC. ISAMI SAID WHEN HE CRANKED EVERYTHING UP THERE WAS NO SITTING DOWN!!! I CAN BELIEVE THAT.

EVERYTHING IN (THE HISTORY OF BIGGS JASPER) IS AN AUTHENTICATED HISTORICAL ACCOUNT BACKED UP BY MINERS THAT WERE THERE, PICTURES AND DOCUMENTS. I HAVE WORKED VERY HARD THE LAST 7 YEARS ON THIS WRITING. I DID NOT MENTION EVERYONE THAT WAS INVOLVED, JUST THE MAJOR PLAYERS. IN PROTECTING THE INTEGRITY OF THIS ARTICLE I REFUSE TO ENGAGE IN BASHING OR ANY OTHER DISHONORABLE CONDUCT.

UPDATE: I MUST PAY TRIBUTE TO HOOT ELKIN WHO HAD BEEN SUCH AN INFLUENCE TO SO MANY BACK IN THE 60'S AND 70'S. HE VENTURED FAR AND WIDE ALONG THE COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE LOCATING DEPOSITS OF JASPER. HE DISCOVERED THE DESCHUTES DEPOSIT AT THE DESCHUTES RIVER MOUTH, ON THE EAST SLOPE.

JUDY ELKINS, HOOT'S DAUGHTER, WHO OWNS "ELKINS GEM STONES" IN PRINEVILLE OREGON. SHE EXPLAINED THAT HER DAD HAD FIRST FOUND WHERE NATIVE AMERICAN'S HAD BEEN DIGGING A PIT ON THE DESCHUTES DEPOSIT. HE GAINED PERMISSION FROM THEN LANDOWNERS, THE MILLER RANCH, AND BEGAN DIGGING. HOOT FOUND THE ANCIENT ROCK HAMMERS LEFT BY AMERICA'S FIRST ROCKHOUNDS IN A 15 FT PIT, AFTER EXPLORING THE PIT HE FOUND THE ROCK THEY HAD BEEN CHIPPING ON. IT WAS A HUGH BOULDER OF PRIZED DESCHUTES JASPER! THE DESCHUTES MINE IS UP ON A HILL THAT OVERLOOKS THE COLUMBIA. IT IS PHENOMANAL IN THAT IN THE THOUSANDS OF ACRES IN THERE, JUST THAT ONE LITTLE SPOT OF MAYBE 5 ACRES HAD DESCHUTES PICTURE JASPER! MR. ELKINS GAINED FAME AS HIS NEW JASPER DISCOVERY HIT THE MARKETS. AFTER A FEW YEARS OF MINING, THE DEPOSIT TAPPED OUT. HOOT SPENT THE NEXT COUPLE YEARS TRYING IN VAIN TO PICK THE DEPOSIT UP AGAIN AND NO LUCK SO HE SHUT IT DOWN. THE DESCHUTES JASPER WAS MINED OUT. MANY JUST WOULDN'T BELIEVE THAT IN THAT LITTLE 5 ACRE AREA WAS THE ONLY DESCHUTES. SO OTHER PROSPECTORS MADE NUMEROUS FAILED ATTEMPTS AT LOCATING ANOTHER DESCHUTES DEPOSIT UP AND DOWN THE COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE.

IT IS VERY POSSIBLE THAT WHAT IS ON THE MARKET NOW IS ALL THERE IS.

ONE CAN ONLY DREAM OF WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO MAKE SUCH A FANTASTIC DISCOVERY! I CAN ONLY IMAGINE HOOT'S EXCITEMENT WHEN HE STARTED SLABBING THE BEAUTIFUL JASPER, A ROCKHOUNDER'S DREAM.

WHEN TRAVELING ON I-84 IF ONE LOOKS HARD ENOUGH YOU CAN STILL SEE REMANANTS OF THE OLD MINE ON THE EAST SLOPE OF THE DESCHUTES CANYON. THE STATE HAS PRETTY WELL TAKEN OVER MUCH OF THE PROPERTY.

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**Check out this link to Dale's Kaleidoscope Jasper!!!**

[http://stores.ebay.com/THE-KALEIDOSCOPE-JASPER-MINES?\\_trksid=p2047675.l2563](http://stores.ebay.com/THE-KALEIDOSCOPE-JASPER-MINES?_trksid=p2047675.l2563)