

# Spokane Bar Sapphire Mine & Gold Fever Rock Shop

December 21, 2004 Newsletter

Dear Friends!

Howling Chinook winds portend impending weather changes. We have just a few more days of sapphire mining here at the Spokane Bar Sapphire Mine near Helena, Montana before winterizing the pump at the lake. We are scurrying inside, cleaning and rearranging, just like critters in a den getting ready for winter to strike! Cass separated a batch of gold from the black sands. The El Dorado has proved to be a treasure trove of gold bearing sands, a by-product of sapphire mining. Small sapphires and gravel spill out, falling through the trommel screens. We sack this gravel to sell in our Hobby Box and Elf Box, pint sized, 4x4 inch box of sapphire gravel.

Mike tried thawing the six-inch water line down at the beach. He worked on it for 45 minutes. The trommel finally started up. Our three layered jackets attempt to stop the stinging wind. Eagles soar over Cactus Hill, waiting for lunch. Deb stopped at the beach to check out the waves. No ice on the lake – yet!! Clouds are hovering over the ridge blocking out the surrounding mountains. Snow blankets the high roads to the other mine. A trip to the El Dorado sapphire mine will wait until spring. A daily check of the Internet weather site weighs our decision to mine or not to mine. We have gone beyond our last year's calendar mark for mining and are still arguing whether this is the longest mining run ever.



Christmas orders for sapphire gravel continue to come in and go out! You can still order at [www.sapphiremine.com](http://www.sapphiremine.com) or call 1-877-344-4367 (also 1-877-Dig Gems). It's late to get on time for Christmas but the holidays are not over. Winter just started the 21<sup>st</sup> and everyone needs some hobby to do inside –right? For those of you waiting for after Christmas to order sapphire gravel Monster Mines – remember our special for one FREE Elf Box continues until December 31<sup>st</sup> for any Monster Mine order.

Nick from Florida writes: *"Hi Deb...I thought you'd like to see cooked and faceted sapphires from the Mine...This was the result of our findings since about 6 months ago. It takes a while to get the rough cooked and then faceted. After seeing these as the "fruits of our mining" experiences, it is well worth it! These stones range in carat weight from .25 to less than .05carat. There are blue, green, yellow and pink represented. Nature is sure wonderfully represented at The Spokane."*



(More excerpts from Deb's trip to Florida working with FEMA to help hurricane victims.)

*...into the jumbled hurricane affected terrain of Florida, the description by Steve from memory follows: "The north side of Fort Pierce, on US Highway 1, north of the causeway to Hutcheson Island, then north of the NEXT causeway to another Island..". Deb remembers it was several trailer spaces to the South, closest to the highway. There were rather*

*void spaces in the park as twisted metal trailer frames were shoved to the front of the trailer park lot next to heaps of debris.*

*Carefully walking between the once cozy trailer park, littered with shreds of personal belongings, Judy picked up a disposable camera. We wondered who belonged to the camera. It must have belonged to the people in that trailer space. The spaces, no longer symmetrical but strewn with bent and twisted metal frames, partial appliances and steps leading to nowhere, plus clothing and toys sticking out of the dirt. Several camp tents were outside the few remaining trailers that were no longer habitable. The park's swimming pool was littered with debris, broken tree limbs, palmetto fans. Signs at the office had paint peeled away, broken, faded and dilapidated.*

*Brushing off the dirt, Judy and Deb traded thoughts about the disposable camera – maybe it was the last photos taken by the family before the third or maybe the fourth hurricane. Their lives must have affected in a major way, forced from their home.*

*After returning to Montana and Idaho, we developed the film from the camera found at the demolished trailer park. Family photos of kids and happy times were on the film. No storm pictures were on the camera. One photo was a child holding up a poster that reads “My Year of Pictures in Mrs. Ricotta’s 4-Year Class”.*

*Demolished buildings on both sides of the highway, missing street signs, strewn debris and piles of destroyed appliances, bedding, clothing, sheetrock, and twisted trailers, made identification of the location difficult. All three of us, Deb, Judy and Steve were working as housing inspectors with Parson Brinckerhoff, contractors with FEMA. We documented damages to dwellings and heard first-hand stories from the hurricane victims but could not find all the assigned contacts. We wonder if the owners could be found so we can deliver their family photos to them. The park was either the Country Cove Mobile Home Community at 4055 N US 1 in Fort Pierce or Cypress Bay Mobile Home Park, 6545 N. US 1 in Fort Pierce... Florida Park photos will be posted on our website soon if anyone can help identify.*

Cass or Deb will take your calls at 1-877-Dig Gems or order online at [www.sapphiremine.com](http://www.sapphiremine.com) . Thanks for your terrific response and continued interest in mining sapphire gravel at home. Recent photos will be posted on our website.

Sincerely,  
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