

## Spokane Bar Sapphire Mine & Gold Fever Rock Shop

December 13, 2004

Dear Friends,

Two hours of morning calm rein - before raging winds of December check our mining resolve. The required determination sparks debate while Mike and Cass operate the trommel in 16 degree weather. We haven't complained yet about snow storms - there is still time!

Internet and phone orders (1-877-344-4367) for freshly mined bags of sapphire gravel concentrate come in daily. The Spokane Bar Sapphire Mine and Gold Fever Rock Shop open year around, ship bags of concentrates, gem kits and sapphire jewelry around the world. Recent orders to Peru, Chile, Japan and Hawaii shipped early to avoid the Christmas rush. *AARP Modern Maturity* magazine confirmed an article written by Sondra Farrell, a writer for the *LA Times*, about sapphire mining will be published in the March/April edition.



Customers have emailed photos of recent finds. Large spessartite garnets were found in an Eldorado Monster Mine weighing over five carats each. Some of the darker garnets can be difficult to spot unless you use a light table. A customer showed me a six carat finished blue sapphire in a ring that they found in an Elf Box last Christmas. We love to see the finished work!



Sapphire and gold mining - a Montana adventure - one of the few remaining places a person can mine sapphires with hands-on mining activities. Spokane Bar Sapphire Mine, ten miles east of Helena, Montana, has several digging sites where sapphires, garnets, topaz and gold nuggets can all be mined (print flyer with map at [www.sapphiremine.com](http://www.sapphiremine.com)). The virgin digging site is an old alluvial gravel pit, about four feet deep to bedrock. Additional pits can be seen with a depth of 20-50 feet. The Cactus Hill Pit is the top terrace of six known terraces from an ancient river system. From the top of the hill, other terraces are visible up and down the Missouri River. The only known dykes where the sapphires were formed can be viewed in an up-river source about 3-5 miles from this deposit. River worn boulders are deposited in layers over the top of shale bedrock. The exposed bedrock has ripples and worn pockets showing evidence of water wear. Heavier minerals settled near bedrock as the water and gravel were in a fluid state. A thin layer of shale can

be seen near the surface. This anomaly is called “float” by geologists. When miners say “there is gold in the grass roots” the reason is freezing and thawing that has heaved heavier minerals towards the surface. Large minerals of sapphire and topaz have been found in this top layer. A 14 carat sapphire was recently found in the digs. As winter strengthens and the ground freezes, the digging pit is dormant until spring. We did have an enthused digger dig out a three foot snow drift to fill his bucket with iced gravel. Generally, it is better to wait for summer for sapphire digging. Gravel can be purchased to mine at home, shipped UPS, without the snow and ice.

The half gallons of gem gravel in the Premium Gem Kits continue to sell fast as well as the pint sized Gem Kits in advance of the Christmas holiday. Sapphire gravel brings the family together for an exciting adventure-a box of rocks for every occasion! The Elf Box, gift sized box of sapphire gravel, is included in regular Spokane Bar Monster Mine, Guaranteed Spokane Bar Monster Mine and El Dorado Monster Mine orders through December 31st. Additional Elf Boxes can be ordered separately at [www.sapphiremine.com](http://www.sapphiremine.com).



Sincerely,

Deb and Russ Thompson and staff at the Spokane Bar Sapphire Mine

**1-877-dig gems** [www.sapphiremine.com](http://www.sapphiremine.com) [sales@sapphiremine.com](mailto:sales@sapphiremine.com)

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