

**From:** Jacobs, Jake PAB:EX  
**Sent:** Wed, April 5, 2006 2:23 PM  
**Subject:** Add to MEMPR Media Watch - April 5 - Mining

**Rare quartz crystal taking a shine to the Cowichan Valley? Cowichan News Leader, April 5 2006**

**Aaron Bichard**

Listening to Melissa Parks speak, it's easy to see why she has a sparkle in her eye. For the past five weeks, Parks and her partner Brian Townsend have been finding what they believe to be Herkimer diamonds on the side of Mt. Tzhouhalem, 500-million-year-old pieces of quartz thought to have never before been found on Vancouver Island and rarely in Canada. "It's absolutely amazing," Parks said, admitting she has discovered more than 1,000. "I don't know what to do with them. I'm so excited. I just want to keep them all and look at them." Parks and Townsend were walking through the shale beds on the mountainside looking for fossils when a glint of light caught Parks' eye. "The first one was just sitting on top, so I picked it up," she said. "All I had to do was clean it up and it looked beautiful." The Herkimer diamonds, named after Herkimer, New York where they were first discovered, are quartz crystals formed when silica-rich liquid became trapped in rock pockets an estimated 500-million years ago. The 18-faced, double terminated quartz are not true diamonds, but their transparency mimics the precious stones. Gilles LeBrun of the Victoria Lapidary and Mineral Society saw the crystals during a recent rock show in the capital and was immediately intrigued. "I've been looking for gems and collecting rocks of Vancouver Island for 26 years and have never seen anything like this," LeBrun said. "There's no other quartz like it. I never expected there would be quartz in shale." Similar crystals have been discovered in Oaxaca, Mexico, and a healthy business has evolved around them. The crystals are sold as jewelry and some claim they effectively release energy blockages, enhance dream recollection and increase energy levels in people. David Lefebure, Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources chief geologist, said without seeing the crystals, he can't verify if they are a type of quartz similar to the Herkimer diamonds. "The thing that's always exciting about geology and prospecting is there's still so much to be discovered," Lefebure said. "There's been lots of different types of quartz crystals found in different places in B.C. so I'm not surprised to hear of a new discovery. "But from what I understand the quartz called Herkimer diamonds is pretty rare." Lefebure said information can be found by examining fluids that are sometimes trapped in the crystals, but it is an expensive procedure. "I'd have to give credit to (Parks') powers of observation in finding these," he said. "Observation is key to being a successful prospector."

**Planning to restart Afton copper mine continues - CHNL - April 5, 2006 - 7:30 a.m.**

Excitement to pass along today in the B.C. mining sector - the planning continuing to restart the old Afton copper mine near Kamloops. Our Brett Muneer [sp?] now with the details from this week's Kamloops exploration group conference.

**Brett Muneer:** Doug Fulcher is the president of Abacus Mining and Exploration Corp. He says the company is anxious to push the site back into production.

**Doug Fulcher:** We need to see development happen now. Metal prices are high. We want to see [this] project advance while metals are high. We think by securing that infrastructure we can see development happening in the next two to three years.

**Muneer:** Fulcher says Abacus bought the property from Teck Cominco four years ago and its infrastructure in 2005. He says the company plans extensive drilling this year to pave the way for a feasibility study in 2007, with production starting shortly after.

Jake Jacobs