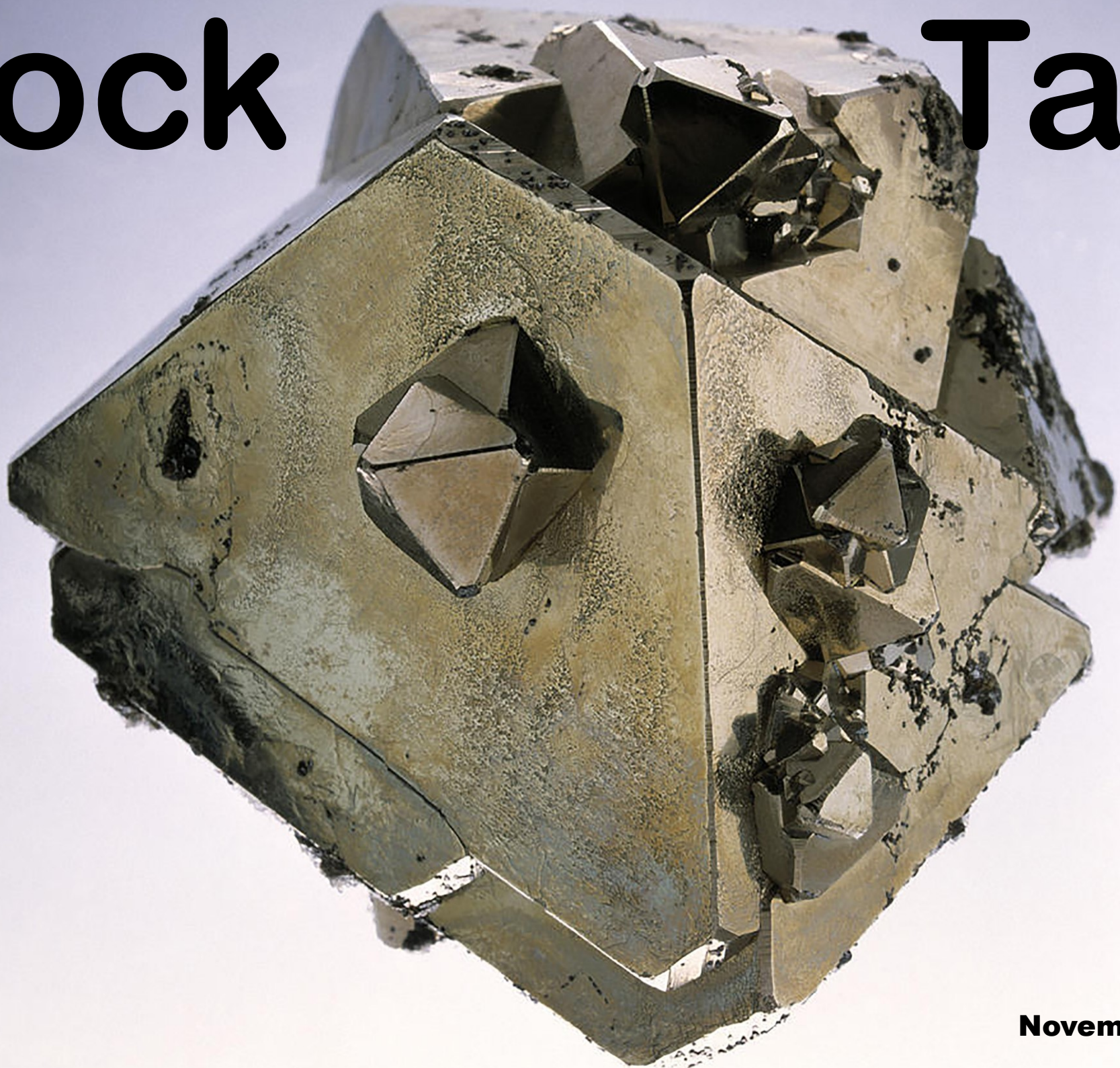


Rock

Talk



November 2020



Rock Talk



In This Issue

- From the VP
- President's Message
- Secretary's Report
- Bucket Hunt
- Resin Pendants
- Got Crystals?
- Crinoid Display
- Rock Art
- Field Stone Birdbath
- What is It?
- Chert Concretions
- From the Editor

Cover Photo Pyrite

The mineral pyrite, also known as fool's gold, is an iron sulfide with the chemical formula FeS_2 . Pyrite is the most abundant sulfide mineral.

November Club Meeting and Jewelry Class Canceled

At the October 20, 2020 Board of Directors meeting, it was decided that we would not have a November club meeting or jewelry class. The majority of Board members thought that since Florida coronavirus cases were on the rise, it would be prudent to cancel club activities for November.

Withlacoochee Rockhounds YouTube Channel

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCypD_GIEEWcl9R3TWjwd9tQ

Currently there are four videos: An introduction to the YouTube channel by Judith Birx, our club president, and three videos about fossils by club vice president, Mark Moore.

Michael Steverson our audio visual director and YouTube Channel supervisor says that we have almost fifty subscribers and would like to have at least one hundred subscribers so we can get a vanity URL that will make our channel easier for users to access.



From the
VP
Mark Moore

Life is very strange. All my life I've searched for a pre-paleo point made by the earliest Americans. Early on I thought that Clovis paleo points, named for a cave near Clovis New Mexico, were the earliest remnants of early mankind in the New World. But that is not necessarily so. I've searched for points in the northeast, the mid Atlantic states, the west and northwest, the south, southeast, and southwest. I've even searched in American's heartland, home of the Mississippian culture, looking for points and other lithic artifacts. I have a collection of many points from all of the above areas; from woodland, archaic, and paleo times and sites, some dated some not. I have searched in dry riverbeds in Texas and New Mexico, followed the plows and corn planters on our farm in West Virginia. I've also done scuba diving in Florida rivers,



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The November Club Meeting Has Been Canceled

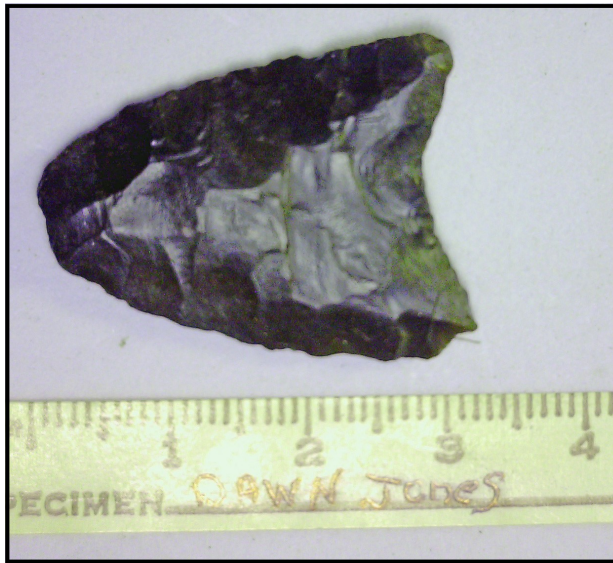
From the VP from previous page

finding points that were aged by tannic acid waters and also in crystal clear springs that produce no staining. I have collected points in all of these areas. In years past I have argued with professional archeologists that our continent was inhabited not just a few thousand, but many thousands of years ago because of the locations and depths of some the points I've found. Finally, just in the last few years, carbon fourteen and other new dating techniques have validated my arguments by dating sites back to 24,000 plus years. But still, in all this, I have never found the elusive pre-Clovis paleo point. I've seen them and traded for them, but I have never found one on my own.

Enter Dawn Jones, a delightful young lady I've known most of her life. Being good friends with her parents for many years, I watched as the precocious 12-year old Dawn paced the floor at our place in Florida, because she had to wait a couple of days for her 13th birthday so she could get her SCUBA diving card. An avid crusader, environmentalist, and protector of wildlife, even at a young age, she was always looking for, and doing something to protect and preserve our inherited natural environment. She is now a full grown woman, having kids of her own, but she still has continued her love of wildlife and the natural existence that surrounds us all. Nature is still here; if we just take time to look. Dawn is one of the rare humans that practices looking at all, while moving through life.

What has this got to do with rocks? Well, patience and I'll tell you. One day an electronic note arrived from Dawn with a photo of a point she found while doing a sea turtle nest

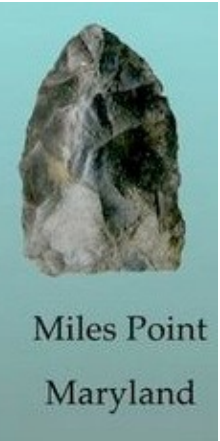
count for the DNR on the shore of the Chesapeake Bay, at the intersection of the Patuxent River in Maryland. I really had to do a double take. I couldn't believe what I was looking at. Her point looked very much like a point I had seen (but seen not found) while working for a



few days at the Cactus Hill site in Virginia many years ago. Still not believing what I was looking at, I forwarded the picture of the point to Dave Letasi and Pat Gould (Remember them from the old days when we still had club meetings and we would help you identify your mineral and fossil finds?) They concurred that the point was very old, and Dave suggested I try to get Dawn to send the point to us to be able to better research it in deeper detail. Dawn readily agreed, and in a few days it arrived. Dawn's photograph was very good but it didn't do justice to the point. Dave and I (mostly Dave) researched possible points, some of which we had seen or had researched, that had been

found at several dated sites. There were some points very similar to Dawn's and were found in a dated context. All of the dates were earlier than Cactus Hill 18,000 +/- ybp (years before present) i.e. Pre Clovis Paleo. The closest published date and point matching Dawn's was a point found at the Miles Point Maryland site (just a very few miles north of Dawn's find and also near Maryland's Chesapeake Bay shoreline) but dated with a calibrated C¹⁴ date of 21,500 ybp. Keep in mind that 21,000 years ago, the Chesapeake Bay was a small to average sized river that is now known as the Susquehanna River. The river grows larger as it winds south through New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, and finally dumping into the Atlantic, another hundred or so miles south. The Susquehanna River is more than 444 miles long today, most likely about the same length as in the past, but it was much smaller then. The Susquehanna was a fresh water river not the 30 or so ppt (parts per thousand) seawater mix of today. As the sea levels rose, the width and depth of the river increased, and today it is called the Chesapeake Bay.

I have a barnacled ax that came from the old original river shoreline, which is now several fathoms underwater and in the middle of the Bay just a mile or so from where Dawn found her point. The Patuxent River begins on the upper Montgomery-Frederick County, Maryland border, drifting a hundred or so miles down to the bay on a course that parallels the mighty Poto-



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The November Club Meeting has been Canceled

Withlacoochee Rockhounds

From the VP from previous page

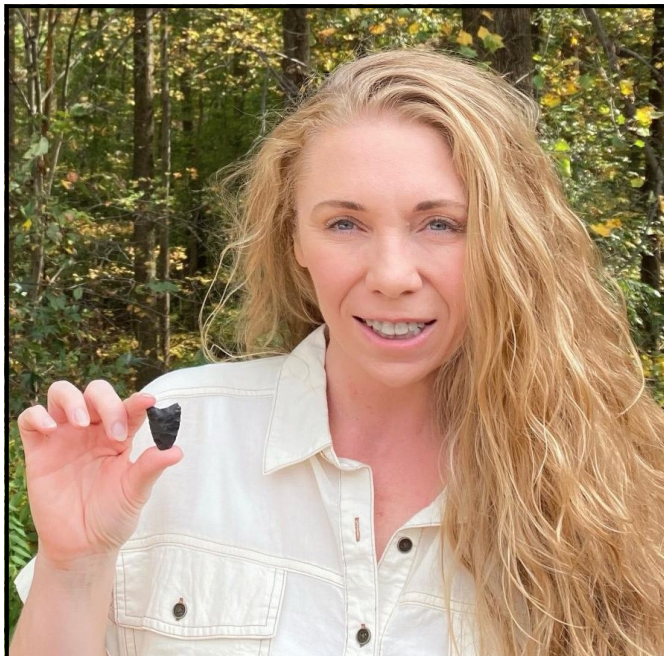
mac, but slightly to the north. The Potomac reaches into the mountains of western Maryland, originating in the Appalachian Mountains of West Virginia. Dawn's point was really on the south shore of the Patuxent, west from the Bay by a few hundred yards.

This was an ideal living environment for nomadic lifestyle hunter-gatherers. Just like the three bears; it was not too hot, not too cold...it was just right, and as an added bonus there was an abundance of food and materials necessary for their subsistence, including tool making lithic materials. Dawn's point is a form of flint, most likely washed down or carried and traded from the hills in Maryland or Pennsylvania.

The point is also very similar to points found in the south of France, known as Upper Paleolithic Solutrian points. These have dated as far back as 24,000 ybp. This gives support to Bruce Bradley and Dennis Stanford's theory of an ice bridge connecting southern Europe and the eastern US mainland thousands years before the theoretical Bering Sea-land bridge. Dawn's point was also very similar to points found in the Meadow Croft Rock Shelter in Pennsylvania and along the Ohio-Pennsylvania border known as High-Low points and date to 19,000 ybp, just a few thousand years later than the Miles Point Maryland point found several hundred miles to the east. Remember the Paleo folks had several thousand of years to travel and relocate just a few hundred miles.

Dave and I both coveted Dawn's point.

It is an extremely desirable artifact. But being the trustworthy scientists we are, so rather than it "getting lost" (Dawn would have killed me) as several of my artifacts have in years past when sending them off to universities or museums for analysis, the point was returned to Dawn along with a report about our findings, and a detail-disclosing photo. Dawn plans to donate the point to one of the repositories in the area where it was found, so that future researchers as well as any interested parties can have access to a very remarkable artifact.



Dawn and her point

Stone Spheres
Check out these stone spheres
<https://www.facebook.com/marketplace/item/737736887013124/>



Jewels by Jude

Judith Birx
Member of Withlacoochee Rockhounds
Judithbirx@hotmail.com
Natural Stone Jewelry , Wire Wrapping ,
Crystals , Beading

352-587-1702

RALPH BARBER

STONE JEWELRY
bottle wind chimes

Hernando County Farmers Market
US 19
Spring Hill Fl
352 200 6852
barbersbloomers@hotmail.com

The November Club Meeting has Been Canceled

President's Message

Judith Birx



Dear members of the Withlacoochee Rockhounds. I hope all is still well with everyone. Not much has changed since last month. There will be no club meeting in November due to the rising Covid 19 numbers in our state. Our board has voted not to have any club meetings, classes, or shows until the virus is under control, or until we can agree on a safe way to hold the meetings.

We now have a YouTube channel that we would like you all to subscribe to. I hope you will take advantage of the footage that Mark Moore has uploaded. Soon there will be a video on the channel of my mixed media class that Michael Steverson will upload. The video shows class members making resin necklaces. This was not a rock club sponsored class. I hope more of you have videos to upload, if so, please contact Michael Steverson for details.

Again I hope all of you are staying safe and are in good health.

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions, you can contact me at 352-587-1702.

Board of Directors Meeting

The November Board of Director's meeting will be on November 24th at 6:30 PM on Zoom.

Secretary's Report

by
Melodye Steverson



Withlacoochee Rockhounds Board of Directors Meeting Minutes Date 10/20/2020

Attending Board members; Judith Birx, Mark Moore, Melodye Steverson, Janet Wheeler, Ralph Barber, Mike Stone, Roberta Oldread, Ginny Steverson, and Lynn Walters. Also in attendance; member Michael Steverson.

- Board meeting started at 6:31pm and was held via the Internet on Zoom.
- Club president Judith Birx previously distributed the meeting agenda via Email.
- Motion made to approve minutes by Mark Moore and seconded by Roberta Oldread. Minutes were approved.
- Motion made to approve treasurer's report by Mark Moore and seconded by Roberta Oldread. Report approved.
- Club president Birx attended Senior Citizen's Club Board Meeting. A woman named Carol Babicz spoke about her quest to make sure all children in the area received a gift for Christmas. She is collecting food for the families of the needy children at this time. A Donation box is in the clubhouse. She will also be collecting gifts for the children, starting the first week of November. More information is posted in the clubhouse. This is a voluntary donation only, not endorsed by any club.

- The Board voted NOT to have a meeting in November. The monthly jewelry class has been canceled for November as well.
- There was a discussion concerning the small show in January we had discussed the show at the last board meeting. After considering all the pros and cons, we decided we would table the idea at this time for safety reasons. All board members were in accordance about this decision.
- Club president Birx announced that she would be running for vice president of the Senior Center Club Board of Directors. She stated that she felt she could help their board achieve its goals and it would not interfere with her presidential duties with our club.
- The Board has decided to hold our election this year by email. The details of this will be worked out at the next board meeting and will be sent out to all members.
- Club president Birx announced that we have met our commitment to our own club and the Senior Center as far as covering the 2021 dues. As previously announced, any member who paid their dues for 2020 will not have to pay dues in 2021, the Club is covering their dues. Our club is also covering any dues owed to the Senior Center for 2021.
- The Board discussed ways to regain members from 2019. Suggestions were made and will be discussed further at the next board meeting.
- Mike Stone suggested that we publish our gem show vendors' business cards in both the Rock Talk and on the club website, free of charge. This would be a perk to encourage vendors to attend our gem show. The Board voted yes. This will be implemented in 2021.
- The meeting ended at 7:38 pm.

Bucket Hunt

by Dorwin Skinner

I was lucky and made another great bucket find a few days ago. I have added a theropod egg to my collection.



In case you wonder what a theropod is, think of a dinosaur with tiny front legs and big back legs. You know, like a T-Rex. Yep, T-Rex is a species of theropod, they came in all sizes with T-Rex being in the upper end and a Micro-raptor that was the size of a crow being the smallest. The egg came from East Asia and was shipped from Taiwan. It is from the Cretaceous period that lasted from about 145 to 66 million years ago. Theropods include a large number of dinosaur species and I have not determined which species mine is from. Some theropods were thought to be the fore-runners of birds. Some had hollow bones and might have had feathers.



Dorwin's fossilized theropod egg

Resin Pendants by Roberta Oldread



I recently made all those pendants at Judith's resin class that she held at the senior center. I brought my own minerals to incorporate into the pendants. I broke them up into small pieces to fit inside the bezel frame. The wire pieces I handmade to be incorporated into the pendant as well. I used the Chakra Colors when making these pendants that are going to be Christmas gifts for family members and friends. The glassy clear substance is resin that Judith supplied for her class along with the pendant frames, of which she had a wide variety of to choose from. Fossils, small shells, tiny pieces of pyrite anything small that you could imagine could be incorporated into making any of these pendants.

Resin Pendants by Melodye Steverson



Celtic Designs by Melodye
 Ancient echos from the Celtic past brought to life in stone and metal
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Got Crystals? Gem Mining Could Be Your Full-Time Job

Some modern-day prospectors make thousands of dollars selling precious stones they dug up themselves.



Information from:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/19/style/crystals-mining-quartz-herkimer.html>
by **Alexandra Marvar**

Moonstones in Montana, amethyst and emeralds in North Carolina, garnet and quartz in upstate New York. At pay-to-dig mines around the United States, visitors can paw through piles of mine tailings to uncover crystals and gemstones on “finders, keepers” terms for as little as \$10 a day.

At Herkimer Diamond Mines in central New York, home to an especially clear and unusually hard type of quartz crystal known as the Herkimer diamond¹, a \$14 admission price includes a day of prospecting and the rental of a rock hammer. (Children under four mine for

free.)

In a typical year, one-fifth of the mine’s customers are international tourists, so when the coronavirus halted travel and delayed the start of this year’s April-to-November digging season, the mine’s proprietor Renée Scialdo Shevat worried about what the loss in revenue may do to the 40-year-old family business.

By late summer, she was more concerned with how to limit the crowds. Diggers of all ages and degrees of seriousness had begun arriving in droves. “These days, every day is like a Saturday,” Ms. Shevat said in early September.

Even before the pandemic sent people searching for road trip destinations and outdoor adventure, interest in prospecting and rockhounding (or “fossicking,” as it is called in Britain and Australia) was already ticking upward. That has prompted some mines that had long been closed, like the Ruggles Mine in Grafton, N.H., toward new life.

From 1963 to 2016, Ruggles hosted tourists and hobbyists seeking mica, aquamarine, rose quartz and other treasures in its underground chutes and caverns. (It closed in 2016 when its owner, then 90, retired.) Late last year, New York City developers snatched it up with plans to reopen it as a tourist attraction, with major upgrades.

Mine owners aren’t the only ones with bright prospects. Some entrepreneurs are finding ways to carve out new careers in gemstones, too.

For example, after having their jobs and schooling upended by the pandemic in the spring, Frank and Kyndall Stallings, 22 and 27, of Charleston, MO, pivoted to digging

for crystals.

“It all started in February, when Frank took me to the diamond mine in Arkansas for Valentine’s Day,” said Ms. Stallings, of the couple’s visit to a \$10-a-day public mine called Crater of Diamonds State Park in Murfreesboro.



Crater of Diamonds State Park

While they didn’t bring home a diamond, they did find a tiny piece of quartz. The experience was a thrill of life-changing proportions. By mid-March, Mr. Stallings’s work as a financial adviser had slowed significantly, Mrs. Stallings’s classes for a bachelor’s degree in horticulture had gone remote, and a job she had recently been offered — data entry at a hospital — never started.

With their newfound time, the Stallingses were mining nearly every day.

By mid-April, the couple had sold everything they owned on Facebook, burned everything they couldn’t sell in a bonfire, packed up their truck and hit the road to work as freelance crystal miners.

“Fifty dollars a day to dig, and if you dig really hard you find \$2,000, \$3,000, \$5,000 worth of crystals,” Mr. Stallings said, referring

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Got Crystals? From previous page

to Ron Coleman Mining, a crystal mine in Arkansas where the couple recently unearthed a “once in a lifetime” 15-pound clear quartz point, which they later sold for \$1,500

While \$5,000 days are extremely rare, the Stallingses earn a living selling specimens of gold, amazonite, pyrite, quartz, fluorite, shark teeth, and obsidian out of the back of their Toyota RAV4 and on eBay.

To keep overhead low, they are camping full-time, but expect this “tent life” phase to be just a rite of passage. Ms. Stallings recently emailed from a campsite on the Upper Peninsula in Michigan, where the couple was hunting iridescent yooperlite by UV flashlight at night. “We are just getting started and foresee huge success with this business we are building,” she wrote.

Miner Ambitions

A dedicated rockhound might, in theory, make up to \$10,000 a month selling his or her finds on the Internet. A mineral or crystal that is hand-collected at a domestic, noncommercial site may fetch several times the price of one imported from a commercial mine abroad, especially in countries where the gemstone trade is known to finance conflict and genocide. Sellers can sometimes charge even more if they capture their finds on video (and hype them on social media).

One of the kingpins of this business model is Bryan Major, a.k.a. the Crystal Collector, a shaggy-haired prospector who posted his first crystal-digging video to YouTube nine years ago.

Video after video show him brandishing an amethyst cluster the size of his torso or an aquamarine crystal the length of his forearm — not only courting potential buyers, but also lur-

ing rockhounding newcomers with what they could achieve.

To make a career of digging crystals and gemstones, a nomadic life isn’t mandatory: Patrick and Samantha Krug, 32 and 30, go rockhounding multiple times a week, a stone’s throw from their own backyard in Fonda, N.Y.

“There’s nothing like birthing a crystal that has been in the dark for 500 million years, being the first one to bring it into the light, not knowing what you have until you get it out and clean,” Mr. Krug said. He and his wife fell in love with digging Herkimer diamonds while in college at SUNY Cobleskill. (The couple goes by “Him & Herk” on Instagram.)

Two years ago, the Krugs were granted a rare privilege by a local landowner: their own Herkimer land claim, a fraction of the size of a public mine, but one they have all to themselves. They use traditional mining techniques, not power tools, the way their mentors taught them and pay a small fee — \$5 per day that they dig — to use the claim exclusively, carting their 16-pound hammers, flat steel, rakes, hoes, safety goggles and other crystal digging gear on a little wagon.

Herkimer diamonds often form in free-floating, double-terminated crystals that mean they have a point on both ends, causing them to resemble a cut diamond.

After a rain, searchers may find them sparkling all over the ground, the size of a poppy seed or a pencil eraser. Or, they may need to bust through walls of dolomitic limestone to find a pocket — an air chamber in the rock where crystals form — where one might find a “palmer” (a palm-sized Herk), or maybe one even bigger.

We can attest to the hardness of dolomitic limestone where Herkimer diamonds form. Having visited mines near Herkimer, NY, (Ace of Diamonds Mine in Middleville, NY) we



Herkimer Diamonds

found that busting through the limestone was counterproductive, unless miners plan on spending days or weeks searching for pockets of Herkimer diamonds. We had our best day in late April almost three decades ago after heavy rains. We simply walked the ground, picking up various sizes of these doubly terminated, clear quartz crystals. Many were about a quarter of an inch long, but occasionally we found imperfect crystals over an inch long, as well as crystal clear specimens in the dark gray limestone matrix. By the end of the day, we’d collected about one hundred Herkimer diamonds. editor

The clearer and cleaner edged they are, the more value Herkimer diamonds have, and good specimens are increasingly popular both for their use in healing rituals and in jewelry. (Meghan Markle wore Herkimer diamond rings, stud earrings and a bracelet to Princess Eugenie’s wedding last October.)

Despite the Herkimer diamond’s cachet, the Krugs haven’t fully cashed in. They are keeping

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Herkimer diamond (quartz crystal)



Herkimer diamonds

their operation small and holding onto most of what they find. “We’re trying to collect every formation Herkimers make,” Mr. Krug said. “If it speaks to us, we’re going to keep it.”

“Right now, we mainly only sell on social media,” Ms. Krug added. “I’d like to have a stronger personal collection before really selling them.”

Herkimer diamonds are increasingly popular both for their use in healing rituals and in jewelry.

In recent years, crystals — once relegated to the New Age fringes — have formed the

bedrock of a mainstream market. As celebrities including Katy Perry, Kylie Jenner, Kim Kardashian West, and others espoused the [assumed] healing properties of crystals and gemstones, the price of small specimens rose fivefold over the past decade. Between 2017 and 2019, U.S. demand doubled.

Some stars, like Gwyneth Paltrow and the former “Hills” stars Spencer Pratt and Heidi Montag, have spun the crystal craze into business opportunity. Mr. Pratt, in a recent interview, said the couple’s home is filled with “at least 1,000” crystals. Ms. Montag had \$27,000 worth of them placed at her bedside during the birth of the couple’s first child. In 2018, they started a web store, Pratt Daddy, which peddled hundreds of healing gemstones per week for as much as \$300 apiece.

A 2019 report from *The Guardian* on the rising popularity of crystals and their ethically dubious sources mused, “Would crystal consumers really be willing to pay more to guarantee safer, child labor-free mines, or a fair wage for miners?”

Brianna Cannon, a jewelry designer on Long Island, said her customers find added value in the fact that, “for the most part, we know who pulled the stone out of the ground, from where, and when.” She said items made with Herkimer diamonds are far and away her best seller for this reason. “People love to hear that we mine them ourselves, and that they naturally form so nearby,” Ms. Cannon said.

Ally Sands, the founder of Aquarian Soul, which makes crystal-infused bath and beauty products (available at stores including Urban Outfitters), also sells crystals on an individual basis, with a marketing emphasis on ethical sourcing.

“We have strong ties to each of our mineral and crystal suppliers, many of whom are small family-run businesses that gather material from their own land,” Ms. Sands, 33, wrote in a blog post last year. Her quartz, for in-

stance, comes from a family that has been collecting on their Arkansas property for five generations. The family that provides her kunzite was her neighbors in San Diego until they moved to their native Afghanistan.

Ms. Cannon and Ms. Sands both regularly attend gem shows, including the country’s largest, in Tucson, AZ, in order to make connections with freelance miners and rockhounds from whom they can source whatever they don’t dig on their own.

Among those freelancers is Ron Murray, 58, an osteopath in Seattle who mined quartz at Herkimer Diamond Mines from Memorial Day to Labor Day this year.

For his first six years digging crystals, Mr. Murray said he was “too attached” to part with anything he found. But this year, upon returning home to Seattle, he planned to keep the top 5 percent of his harvest, and sell everything else.


“Very few people can do this,” he said. “It takes stamina. It takes knowledge. It takes masochism.”

Like many others who share his passion for crystal hunting, he calls it an addiction — one propelled by the unshakable thought that the next pocket of untold treasure may open up on the next swing.

He recalled the legend of a Herkimer Mines regular who once found a flawless, water-clear, perfectly terminated Herkimer point worth \$50,000 and traded it for a \$35,000 sports car. Then there is the story of “Diamond Jim,” the retired fifth grade schoolteacher who, upon his passing, left his children with a collection of Herks worth an estimated \$1 million.

These stories just fuel the obsession, Mr. Murray said. “There are a lot of broke prospectors out there.”

1. quartz hardness 7, Herkimer diamond hardness 7.5

Information sent to us by Melodye Steverson 

Crinoid Display

by Mike Stone

After collecting crinoids in our area of Kentucky for a quarter of a century, we've accumulated several specimens. Some of the small pieces have been stored in jars that don't display very well. Peg had a glass covered box type frame hanging around and I thought it would make a nice display for small crinoid stem pieces. After going through what we had collected, I selected as many different types and sizes that I could find.

After debating about various types of adhesive material to secure the specimens to the back of the frame, I tried using mounting putty on one stem. After it set for a few minutes, I stood the frame in a vertical position to see if the adhesive would hold it in place. Within a

short time it fell off. The coarse cloth backing wasn't suitable for gripping the fossil, so more thought and experimentation was necessary.

Next removed the cloth backing and glued a piece 400-pound, cold-pressed art paper, which is quite thick and somewhat rippled. Next I sprayed the paper with a coat of gloss black paint and then a couple of coats of matt black paint. Rather than using the putty, I experimented with Goop, which comes in a tube and is a clear, sticky, viscous, semi-liquid. Using a small screwdriver, I smeared a tiny amount of Goop to the heaviest specimen to be mounted and gave the Goop a few minutes to began to set. It held well, so I immediately knew that Goop was going to work.

There are two problems with the display. The glass is very reflective and detracts from



the ability to see clearly inside the box. Non-reflective glass that is available in art framing studios can be used, but it is not cheap. The other problem is the difficulty seeing some fine details on the specimens. A strong and direct light must be used. However, since the box frame can be easily moved, it can be positioned under a light or even better in the sun.



Rock Art



**Boothville 2 Side Rock
Cairn Garden Art**
\$29.99

www.Wayfair.com

Field Stone Birdbath

by Mike Stone

About twenty years ago, during one winter I moved a very large igneous¹ fieldstone², partially covered with lichen into the basement. Using a hammer drill and an air chisel I hollowed out one side of the two hundred pound boulder. Eventually I created a birdbath that come spring was set on the edge of a flower garden for several years. When we moved to Kentucky, I put the big rock birdbath in the trailer and brought it to our new home where it is set up in our yard. The bluebirds in particular, enjoy flapping their wings and cleaning themselves in the water-filled depression. Over the years, much of the lichen has disappeared,

except for the section of rock that faces north. Apparently the strong sun and intense heat of the summer are not good for the survival of the lichen.

There are no igneous rocks in this section of Kentucky, as all local rocks are the result of an accumulation calcium carbonate de-

posits from sea life and other sedimentary formations. This unique New Hampshire fieldstone is a real oddity out here in this area of karst³ geological topography.

1. Rock formed by the cooling and solidifying of molten materials.
2. Fieldstone is a naturally occurring type of stone, which lies at or near the surface of the Earth.
3. Karst is a topography formed from the dissolution of soluble rocks such as limestone, dolomite, and gypsum. It is characterized by underground drainage systems with sinkholes and caves...



This fieldstone birdbath has a thick growth of lichen in its north side.



Hernando County, FL

What is It?

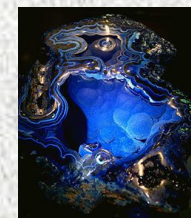
Can you identify the specimen below?



Answer in this Rock Talk.

Last month's "What is It?"

Azurite



Garnet crystals
Sent to us by Michelle Evans

Chert Concretions

by Mike Stone



An interesting chert concretion.

Last summer Peg and I rode the motorcycle into Indiana, just across the Ohio River from Kentucky, to look for a geocache that was hidden high above the north side of the river. We parked the motorcycle on the side of a narrow, but smoothly paved, hilly, and winding road. Tree cover to our south reduced the accuracy of the GPS receiver, so we weren't able to get an accurate longitude/latitude reading. After looking for about a half hour on both sides of the road, we gave up. However, while Peg was looking for the



Checking out Peg's finds on the side of the road.

geocache, she saw interesting rocks along the steep bank near where we parked. She found several chert concretions that looked very much like small sweet potatoes. We have often found similar chert concretions in Kentucky that were actually geodes filled with very nicely formed quartz crystals. Today we didn't find any geodes, but the trip wasn't all for naught, since we came home with a few interesting specimens for our collection.

Mars

The planet Mars has been quite visible evenings and early mornings for several weeks as it is as close to Earth as it will be until 2035. So this has been the time to get a good look at the reddish colored dot in the night sky. Scientists tell us that occasionally meteorites are found that originated on Mars, apparently the result of a meteor collision with the planet that spews debris high and fast enough for some of it to escape the pull of the red planet's gravitational pull. In time, some of this debris is captured by the Earth's gravitational pull and they impact our planet. Based on the mineral and chemical composition of these meteorites, apparently it is possible to determine that they originated on Mars. I suppose having a chunk of Mars in one's collection would be very desirable for rock and mineral collectors. Below is an ad for a "genuine" Mars meteorite that sold for \$40,000. *editor*

Olivine Orthopyroxene Phyrlic Shergottite

MAIN MASS of a Rare Martian Meteorite with a very low total known weight. Before cutting this meteorite only weighed 63 grams and no more pieces have ever been found. Very few collectors have a specimen of this meteorite.

Comes with a CERTIFICATE OF AUTHENTICITY and product ID card.

34.5 gram main mass end cut.

NOTE:

With the exception of this main mass, all of this meteorite has been sold or is in institutions for scientific study. A rare opportunity to own the main mass of a Martian Meteorite with a low total known weight.

OFFICIAL CLASSIFICATION:

* Northwest Africa 2046 (NWA 2046)

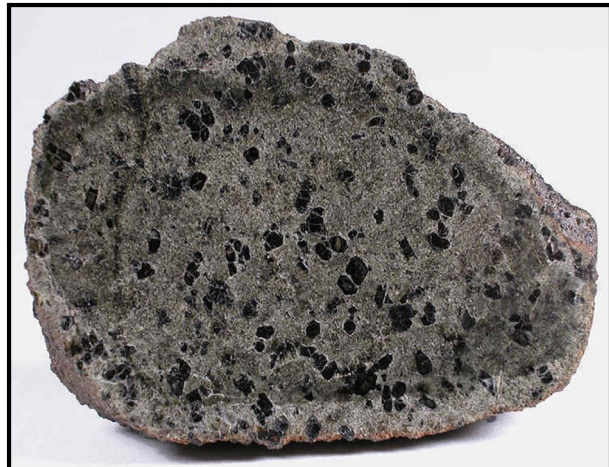
* Found in Algeria or Morocco

* September 2003

* Martian basalt - Olivine Orthopyroxene

Phyrlic Shergottite

Sold on eBay for \$40,000



Unfortunately we are entering another month where our club needs to cancel all activities due to the pandemic. It's hard to believe that

COVID-19 is still spreading, still infecting, and still killing people around the planet. But of course that is the reason why it is called a pandemic. *"A pandemic is an epidemic of an infectious disease that has spread across a large region, for instance multiple continents or worldwide, affecting a substantial number of people."*

We hope that you all are being careful and doing what you can to protect yourselves, your



From the Editor



families, your friends and fellow citizens. The sacrifices being made now will hopefully be rewarded by bringing an end to this

horrific malady.

To gladly change the subject...I was picking through a folder of old Withlacoochee Rockhound paperwork and came across an 1984 clipping from the Tampa Tribune featuring Dorothy Mortlock, then president of our club. She was grinding a puddingstone during a rock-polishing demonstration at the library of the Brooksville campus of Pasco-Hernando Community College. Does anyone in the club remember Dorothy?



Warning to Withlacoochee Rockhound Members

During the last several months, illicit requests have been sent to members of various clubs in the US, including the Withlacoochee Rockhounds, asking members to purchase gift cards that would be used as donations to various organizations. These are **SCAMS**.

Be advised that our club has **never** and will **never** ask members to buy gift cards or provide any form of monetary funds to anyone or any organization by phone call, email, or any other method of communication.

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For Sale Items

Club members can post appropriate club-related type **for sale** items in the *Rock Talk* free of charge. Contact your editors by the 25th of the month to have your items posted in the next issue.

Mike Stone n1ve@amsat.org

The November Club Meeting Has Been Canceled

November Rock Talk

MR BEAR
Native American Style Jewelry
Necklaces 🐾 Chokers 🐾 Bracelets 🐾 Rings
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Wire Wraps, Crystals and
Cast Aluminum Ant Hill Sculptures

Your Favorite Specimen

We are always looking for something of interest for our club members. We're sure many club members have specimens in their collections that would be of interest to others in the club. If you would send us a digital photograph of your specimen we can publish it in the *Rock Talk*. A bit of information such as what it is, when, and where you found it would be great. If you don't have a digital camera, bring your specimen to a club meeting for others to see, and perhaps someone at the meeting could photograph it for the next issue of *Rock Talk*.

Rock Talk editors: Mike Stone and Peggy Burns
n1ve@amsat.org

Dr. Got Rox
Offering: Darryl Johns
polished stones, specimens, slabs, jewelry, fossils, shells, rough stones, and more
5109 Harbinger Rd.
Spring Hill, FL 34608
Text for Appointment
(847) 420-8705
Facebook: Dr.GotRox Email: dr.gotrox@gmail.com

KELLY JOHNSON
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239-940-9773 SPRING HILL, FL

Getting to Know You

Send us a few words about your interest(s) and/or hobby(s), whether or not they are related to rock hounding, we will print them in future issues of *Rock Talk*, and you might find that other club members have similar interests.

Club Members' Business Cards

Club members who have businesses related to any of our club activities can have the images of their business cards posted in each issue of the *Rock Talk*. This is an additional benefit of being a **Withlacoochee Rockhounds** member. You can send electronic images or an actual business card to:
n1ve@amsat.org
or
Mike Stone
4504 Kingston Dr.
Hernando Beach, FL 34607

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Withlacoochee Rockhounds
is now on Facebook
https://www.facebook.com/withlacoocheerockhounds1/?ref=page_internal



Withlacoochee Rockhounds
PO Box 5634
Spring Hill, FL 34611-5634

Withlacoochee Rockhounds

Membership Form
2021

Annual Dues: New individual member, \$20.00. Under 18 years of age, no charge. No charge for paid 2020 members who are renewing for 2021. Check if new member

Please Print Clearly

Last name _____ First Name _____ Check if under 18

Street Address: _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone Number (s) _____

Email address: _____

New members, give this completed form along with your check for dues made out to "Withlacoochee Rockhounds" to club secretary Janet Wheeler at a club meeting. Or mail the form and your check to:
Withlacoochee Rockhounds
PO Box 5634
Spring Hill, FL 34611-5634

Renewing members: No charge for 2021 membership. Please fill out form and give it to club secretary Janet Wheeler or send it to the above address.

Rock Talk

Withlacoochee Rockhounds

Our monthly club meeting is held at the
Weeki Wachee Senior Citizens Club,
3357 Susan Dr., Spring Hill, FL 34606, on
the 2nd Wednesday of each month
from 7:00 to 9:00 PM



www.withlacoocheerockhounds.com

Your Business Card Size Ad in Rock Talk

The cost for non-club members to advertise their businesses in *Rock Talk* is \$10.00 per month. Contact Mike Stone to set up an ad in both the club newsletter and our website. It will benefit both your business and our club.

Advertisers Needed

Please help us find advertisers for the *Rock Talk* and our website. The club can use the monthly income. Both the *Rock Talk* and our website have more exposure than only club members

Contact club treasure Janet Wheeler: ceecgirl@tampabay.rr.com
or send to:

Withlacoochee Rockhounds
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Spring Hill, FL 34611-5634

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Withlacoochee Rockhounds

Purpose

We are a non-profit organization whose purpose is to foster interest and promote knowledge of minerals, gems, fossils, lapidary arts, and earth sciences, through regular meetings, informative programs, workshops, and field trips. PLUS our annual gem and mineral and jewelry show. Membership is open to anyone sharing such interests.

Dues

Dues are \$20.00 annually for adults and no cost for children under 18 years of age.

Club Meeting Location and Time

Weeki Wachee Senior Citizens Center, 3357 Susan Drive in Spring Hill. The meetings are held on the second Wednesday of the month at 7:00 PM.

2020 Club Officers and Appointees

President.....	Judith Birx.....	352-587-1702.....	judithbirx@hotmail.com
Vice President.....	Mark Moore.....	352-586-9607.....	markles@bellsouth.net
Secretary.....	Melodye Steverson.....	352-683-9496.....	melodye@designsbymelodye.com
Treasurer.....	Janet Wheeler.....	727-938-3644.....	ceecgirl@tampabay.rr.com
Rock Talk Editors.....	Mike Stone / Peggy Burns.....	603-524-0468.....	n1ve@amsat.org
Club Web Master.....	Mike Stone.....	603-524-0468.....	n1ve@amsat.org
Mailing Reporter.....	Janet Wheeler.....	727-938-3644.....	ceecgirl@tampabay.rr.com
Gem Bag Coordinator.....	Gloria DuPont.....	352-848-5199.....	ddupont@tampabay.rr.com
Audio/Visual Coordinator.....	Michael Steverson.....	407-376-5570.....	highlander56@gmail.com

Board of Directors

Ralph Barber (past president)
Judith Birx (president)
Mark Moore (vice president)
Roberta Oldread (2020)
Melodye Steverson (secretary)

Ginny Steverson (2021)
Mike Stone (2021)
Lynn Walters (2021)
Janet Wheeler (treasurer)