

Rock Talk

A close-up photograph of a polished agate slice. The rock displays a complex, multi-layered pattern of colors including deep reds, bright greens, creamy whites, and muted blues. The patterns are organic and wavy, with some areas showing distinct concentric bands and others showing more chaotic, mottled textures. The surface has a slight sheen, reflecting light in various spots.

March 2019



Rock Talk

March 13th Meeting Program

Linda Spaulding will be talking about specimens in her mineral and fossil collection. She will be using a PowerPoint presentation on our new 50 inch flat-screen TV. Linda will bring some of her fossils to the meet-

ing. We will also have the 50/50 drawing, door prizes, and dessert type snacks and beverages will be available.

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The Cover Photo

is a close up of a cabochon made from speckled agate, by Roberta Oldread. The stone measures 2 5/8 inch by 1 9/16 inch.



The February Meeting

by Mike Stone

Peg and I left the house just after 6:00 PM to get to the meeting early so we could set up for our presentation. We were surprised to see a nearly full parking lot. When we walked in, Lauren was at the entrance table with the sign-in sheets, the meeting money jar, 50/50 tickets, and ticket money. Ralph had a huge number of colorful polished slabs spread out on a table near the door. Rocks, minerals, and fossils of all shapes, sizes, and colors were scattered about the room on other tables. The Pixie machines were lined up and ready to be used. Doug and Lauri Rule were soldering jewelry on the end of a table. Food was set up on the rear counter, and people were bustling about in the kitchen. Several tables had been lined up end-to-end in the back of the room and were covered with rocks, fossils, and other door prizes. Our secretary, Janet, was buried in her books dealing with membership payments. Members were gathered in small groups, eating, chatting, and checking out rocks, minerals, and fossils, while Judith was handing out club membership cards to new and renewing members.

We had no time to socialize because we had to get ready for the presentation and I had

to set up the new fifty-inch television and connect it to my computer for the PowerPoint presentation. The set up was a bit difficult because I couldn't find the remote control and had to poke at the basic control buttons on the bottom of the TV to set the source to one of the HDMI inputs. If anyone knows where the remote control is, please let one of the officers know. While I was getting the TV and my computer to communicate, Peg was setting up the rocks, minerals, and fossils we brought as part of our presentation.



John checking out the polished slabs with Preston

Continued on next page

February Meeting Photos

The February meeting from page 2

Just after 7:00 PM, Judith called the business portion of the meeting to order. No one had any doubts about the start of the meeting, because the new microphone certainly works well. In fact I suspect that some of our members shut off their hearing aids. I know some were covering their ears. The 50/50 and door prizes took quite a while to dispense because of the number of prizes we had to give away.

Next was time for our presentation about our thirty-five years of rock collecting. About a third of the group gathered in front of the television and were quite attentive during the forty-five minute presentation. I was impressed with the audience's interest and enthusiasm. Many had excellent comments and questions.

By the time we finished the presentation, people were leaving, and it was time for us to pick up and head for the door. Someone left most of a twelve-inch diameter Valentine's Day chocolate chip cookie in it's covered plastic container. I didn't want it to be thrown away, so I took it home and had a nice slice of the monster-size cookie before going to bed. It was delicious. Thanks to whoever brought it to the meeting.



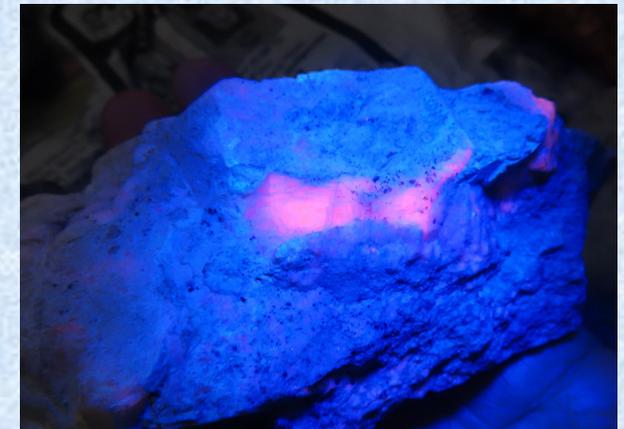
Jan at the entrance table with Eric and Dave



Club president Judith running the meeting. Behind her is the Honda motorcycle being auction off by club.



Judith and several youngsters calling out the 50/50 and door prize raffles.



A fluorescent mineral found in Afghanistan that was brought in by aa visitor.

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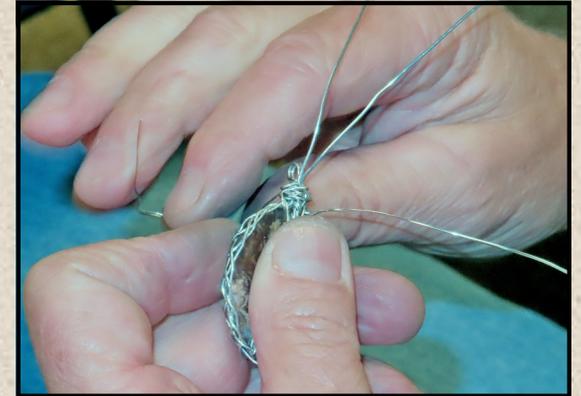
Bennett Scott

678-642-7953
bscott@scottmetalart.com

Next Meeting, Wednesday March 13th, 7:00PM at the Weeki Wachee Senior Citizens Center

Jewelry Class Photos

Mike Stone photos



President's Message

Judith Birx



Well we are off and rolling and have lots of exciting things happening this year. Lets start with the fun stuff. Lynn Walters is running an excellent Vulcan Mine field trip on the second Saturday of each month, weather permitting. The finds coming out of this local mine are awesome. Contact her for more information. Lauren Bell seems to be collecting everywhere. If you can catch her, ask her about the upcoming digs in Georgia and South Carolina. Those areas are big producers of specimens. But wait, I'm not done yet. We are drafting a scholarship for a club member for the William Holland School of Lapidary Arts and will be coming to you for your approval. The club member who receives this scholarship will attend the school and come back to teach us what they have learned. The scholarship will increase the number of available instructors, so we can continue to further the talent, skills, and knowledge of our group. This will not replace the USF endowment fund. Next is a new development for our youngsters. What is the purpose of having all this knowledge if we don't have anyone to hand it down to? One of our newest members has volunteered to develop a program specifically for our young members. I will update you as soon as I get more information.

Remember, everyone coming to the

meeting must sign in on the sign in sheet on the table by the entrance door. Guests do not have to pay a dollar at the door, but please have them sign in. The money from each club member goes directly to the Weeki Wachee Senior Citizens Club to pay for the use of the building each month. Some members' dues

Vulcan Mine Field Trip

The mine is open for digging on the second Saturday of the month, weather permitting. Our next dig will be on **March 9, 2019**. We meet at the gate to register at 8:30 AM. The address is:

Vulcan Materials Co.
16313 Ponce De Leon Blvd,
Brooksville, FL 34614
The Google Plus Code
(address shortcut): MG5R+6W

If you type the code into Google Maps it will direct you to the proper location.

Welcome New Members

Welcome new Withlacoochee Rockhounds club members: **Cheryl** and **Steve Longenecker**, Hudson; **Jason Boyd**, Spring Hill.

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

Upcoming Gem and Mineral shows

3/1/19-3/3/19 Suncoast Gem and Mineral Society, Gem, Mineral and Jewelry Show and Sale. Friday and Saturday, 10:00 AM -6:00 PM, Sunday, 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM
 Mineral Hall, 6340 126th Ave. North, Largo, FL 33773

April 12, 13, and 14, 2019

Central Florida Mineral & Gem Society Inc., a non-profit 501(C)3 educational organization, is hosting a Rock, Mineral, Gem, Jewelry & Fossil Show at the Florida National Guard Armory, 2809 S. Fern Creek Ave., Orlando, FL 32806. Show time: Fri. 1pm to 6pm, Sat. 10am to 6pm and Sun. 10am to 5pm. Vendors offering beads, minerals, gemstones, hand crafted cabochons and jewelry, fossils, artifacts, rocks, etc. Silent Auction, Door Prizes, Demonstrations, Family Activities, Scavenger Hunt. Admission: Adults \$5, Kids \$2, Scouts in uniforms free. Website: www.cfmgs.org. Contact: President Salvatore Sansone 321-278-9294 or ssfossilhunter@aol.com.

March 11, 2019

Gem Amethyst Rock Fossil Sale
 Holiday Inn St. Petersburg N/ Clearwater
 3535 Ulmerton Rd Clearwater, FL 33762
 Hotel phone:727-577-9100
 Monday March 11th – 9am – 5pm
 Admission and Parking are Free

Our Website

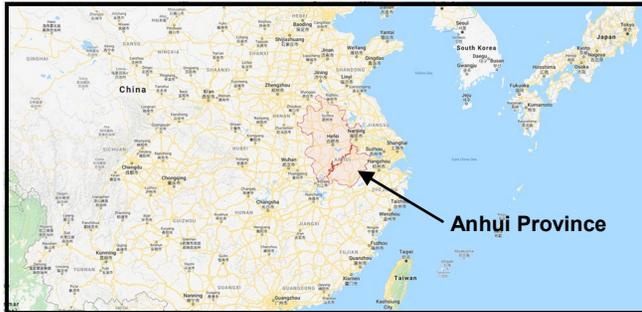
www.withlacoocheerockhounds.com

Next Meeting, Wednesday March 13th 7:00 PM at the Weeki Wachee Senior Citizens Center

White Lingbi Stones

According to Joe Janowsky

This is the third of four articles by Joe Janowsky from Wellington, Florida, about the interesting stones from China that he was selling at our club gem show on November 30, December 1, 2, 2018.



Lingbi stones come from the mountain area of Lingbi County, in the southern part of Anhui Province in China. All of the lingbi stones are considered to be among the most important types of stones for stone collectors, going far back in history. The white lingbi stone is among the rarest and most desirable stones coming from this region. They are found only in Panshi Mountain, where mining began in the early 1990's. We have recently heard that this mine is no longer active and that any new stones of this type that are being found are picked from rubble and tailings of this mine. Needless to say that the laborious process and the difficult terrain now make these stones very scarce in the Chinese stone markets.

The stone has a hardness on the Moh scale of 5 to 2.6, and is composed of calcite and other forms of limestone. The most usual form of the White Lingbi Stone has a white surface that resembles clouds or patches of snow on a mountain. The stone's white core is made of a fossilized plant material called phytolite. It appears to be wrapped by a creased black to gray outer surface that is frequently, but not always flecked



White Lingbi Stone

with raised salmon red spots that appear to look almost like flower buds. Sometimes areas of coloring from other minerals can be bound within the white patches of the stones. The stones are supposedly formed when the inner core was covered by the outer layer (granite and limestone) long after its formation. The outer layer became partially dissolved by the acidic soil in which the stone was buried. The deposits are the result of iron and copper elements in the soil that oxidized and became attached to the stone, usually but not always at the boundary of the two layers. Large specimens of these stones make beautiful desk or table pieces, as the a traditional "Scholar's Stone" and smaller examples are highly prized by Bonsai growers as "suiseki" (viewing stones) that are added to the arrangement as a point of perspective.

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our new website...

www.sfmsworkshops.org
(click here)

For questions please contact

Kristine Robertson
kristine@kmarella.com
863-640-2887

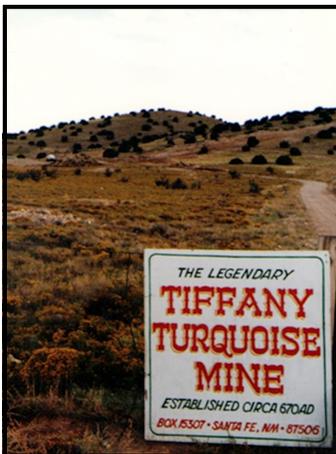


From the VP Mark Moore

Tiffany Turquoise

Sometimes getting to a mineral, rock, or gemstone that you are searching for is a good part of the fun...sometimes not, and sometimes it just happens. Such is the case in this story of finding Tiffany Turquoise. After several weeks or so working 16-hour days in the New Mexico desert, we took a

break of several days and went up to Taos. On our way back south to Socorro, accompanying Leslie and me, was my executive officer, Lieutenant colonel Len Alt, who like us, was always up for an adventure. On the trip back, Leslie wanted to stop high on Sandia Peak, just above Albuquerque to watch the afternoon storms roll across the New Mexico desert. Along with the spirit of adventure, Leslie was also looking for the spirits that come with spicy tomato juice, olives, and a bit of tabasco sauce. Since the inter-



Sign on New Mexico Highway 14 looking toward the east end of the hill under which lies the Tiffany Mine

state highway going south provides very little adventure, I decided to take the back way out of Santa Fe and down old Route 14, also known as the Turquoise Trail, which has been in existence for many hundreds of years. We were to then drive up the backside of Sandia Mountain, rather than driving down I-25 and riding the tram up the mountain.

As I was calmly driving along narrow Route 14 at 60 plus mph, Les suddenly yelled, “STOP, STOP, STOP.”

What happened? Did I hit something? Is there a snake in the road? (A common occurrence out here). Did a dragon pass by? (For some reason there are dragon-crossing signs all along this stretch of road.)

“WHAT”, I asked, looking to see what type of disaster had befallen us. “I saw a sign for a turquoise mine”, she calmly said, as I was looking back at the road where I left a quarter inch of tire tread when trying to stop. After Len peeled himself off the back of Les’ seat, I turned the car around, not sure now if there was enough tire tread left to safely venture off the roadway. We drove through a gate onto a cow path and up a hill toward a travel trailer. The trailer was permanently affixed to the hillside just below several 100-yard-long, 30-foot-high piles of what looked like crushed stone, not gravel, but crushed stone and dust. I stopped on the dirt pathway, just beyond the piles, where the path sloped down into a narrow entrance and led into a rather dark hole toward the bowels of the hillside. Near the hole was a crudely painted sign that read, “Tiffany Mine.” Just as I was about to decide that this was not the place where I really wanted to be, Les was out of the car and heading up hill, toward the trailer where a really gruff

looking, huge bear of a man had come out onto a deck, followed by a couple of teenagers with slicked back hair right out of the 60s. Len was right behind her, so after parking the car I followed, making my way through several nosey goats that were looking for handouts. I continued, in spite of one real mean looking, dirty, horned goat that kept eyeing me. As I headed uphill toward the trailer, a peculiar smell engulfed the area. I wasn’t really sure why I was there, but Les came back down toward me followed by the Ben, two of his kids, and Len. Les and Len had already agreed that we were going to tour the mine and the cost was whatever I felt it was worth after we finished the tour. And it could be nothing if that was what we felt it was worth. To really understand the situation, one must know that Ben and his family (wife, two sons, and a daughter) lived in the 25-foot long trailer with no water or electricity, and the terrible smell was coming from Ben. Reluctantly, I decided to take the tour, which I was sort of forced to do since Les and Len were already in the mine.

Once inside the mine that had been mined by the Anastasi since about 600 AD, everyone’s eyes adjusted to the lack of sunshine, and with some light coming in from the front tunnel as well as light from a chimney hole or two, and from the illumination of my emergency hand light, we could see quite well.

The mine has a long history. It was first used as a source of much of the Los Cerrillos turquoise beads that could be found hundreds of miles up and down the Rio Grande Valley. It was later mined by several companies in the 1800s, and then by the Tiffany Company in the

Continued on next page

Tiffany Turquoise from previous page



Looking out from inside the mine entrance. This was the original entrance used in antiquity but enlarged to get 1800's equipment in and out of the mine.

first part of the 20th century until the high-grade veins of turquoise played out. Way in the back of the mine, about several hundred yards from the entrance, and off to one side in a smaller tunnel, Les found a section of Turquoise down low on the wall that somehow,



Len Alt pointing to a vein of turquoise in the back part of the mine on a small side tunnel. Dug in the 1800s since, there were no primitive tool marks on the walls.

for better than 1400 years, had escaped being mined. Len is pointing to the vein of turquoise in the picture.

Learning that we were interested in minerals, Ben contacted the mine owner and also the head of a nonprofit group that was trying to buy the mine and adjacent property. We were given permission to “mine” some of the stone from several places in the back part of the mine. Also, a lady Ben contacted, who was the head of a local non-profit group came out to tell us the story about the mine, hoping for a donation (which we gave her). She must have lived nearby because we were only in the mine for an hour or two, and as we came out...there she was. She was a paleo-archeologist from a college near Santa Fe. She came to the mine because Ben had given her my name from a business card that I had given him. I was still in my few moments of fame from Maryland’s archeological project, Project Lead Coffins, where the Department of Defense (DOD) had loaned me to work part time. The project had been written up in many archeological magazines. Surprise. She knew who I was. After a bit of discussion and after a call to a friend at the Penn State Nuclear Analysis Lab, it was decided that the three of us would return the next weekend. I was to develop a neutron activation analysis project protocol that could help her with her turquoise fingerprinting program, to try and track the turquoise from the mine throughout the southwest. And also get more turquoise for Les.

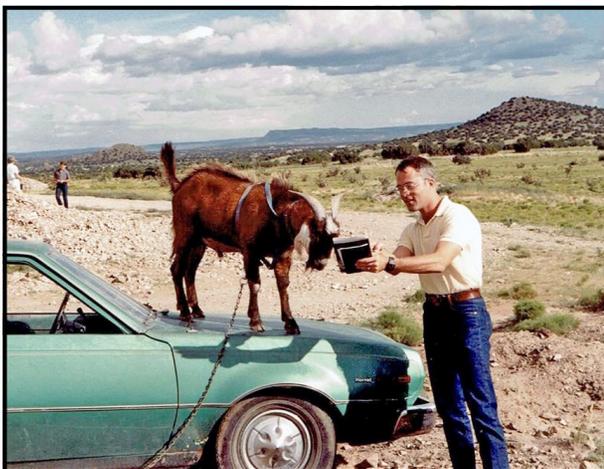
Ben told us to look through the stone piles, because there were many pieces of turquoise and stone tool implements that could be found in them. The debris was from fourteen hundred years of mining, both during primitive times

and later by American companies with power equipment. The mine owner had taken New Mexico to court when they had taken the piles from his property, without permission, to make a base for Interstate 25 ramp construction nearby. The court ordered the State to return the stone piles to his property, which they did. The piles were full of large and small pieces of turquoise that had broken into even smaller pieces during all of the moving and hauling by heavy equipment. This happened several years earlier. We were given all the stone we wanted, since there were hundreds of tons of debris in the piles, and still a large quantity of turquoise in the mine. Les and Len were immediately digging into the piles, while I was visiting with Ben. The archeologist was sitting next to me, not Ben, for an obvious reason. When I laid out what I wanted to do to develop a “fingerprint” of the turquoise, to compare it with turquoise beads made by the Anasazi, “The Ancient Ones”, as named by the Navajo that are found up and down the Rio Grande Valley. Within an hour, Les and Len had found several ancient stone axes and several pounds of relatively high-grade turquoise. There was only one problem. As they were loading their loot into our rented car, one of the goats found the stones we’d just pick up to be interesting, and decided to give Les some help. Len on the other hand, showed the goat that her footprints on the hood and trunk were not covered by our car rental insurance policy and she needed to remove herself from the car. Len didn’t consult Leslie about the sex of the goat (she raised goats at one time) and although he was top of his class at West Point and a career officer, he was a city boy and had never been on a farm. He didn’t realize that the

Continued on next page

Tiffany Turquoise from previous page

goat was a wether and not a female. As a result, the goat was insulted when Len repeatedly addressed him as a nanny. While Len was busy with the goat, Ben was showing Leslie how to push the rock debris downhill to expose more turquoise.



Len Alt explaining to a resident goat that his hoof marks on the car are not covered by the rental insurance. In the background, Ben is showing Leslie how to cause small rock slides in the debris piles uncovering more turquoise stone and ancient stone tools.

Ben made a little extra money polishing turquoise stones, while his wife and daughter worked at McDonald's in Santa Fe. Wanting to see what the finished stones would look like I helped him fire up his generator and gave him a few dollars for gas, and then we began cutting and polishing stones.

After several stones and several minutes, Ben started working on a piece of brown-green stone that was unfamiliar to us. Les found it in the back of the mine, down low at almost floor level. It was about the size of a baseball and easy to break off the wall. Turquoise is a hydrated phosphate of copper and aluminum and varies widely in physical char-



The resident mine watchman, Ben, cutting several of the turquoise stones into cabochons.



On the left Leslie's necklace cut by Ben and mounted by Raychesters in Socorro NM. On the right Mark's pendant made by a Native American cutter/silversmith.

acteristics, but is mainly a blue to green color. Cutting the stone into three pieces, Ben "sort of" polished one piece, again sort of, and he made it really clear that he wanted one of the pieces. I gave him one and put the other two in my pocket. A few months later I gave one of the remaining pieces to the Smithsonian and they couldn't identify it. So they let me name

it, "Leslieite". I took my piece to Raychesters, a jeweler in Socorro, and had him make it into a gold neckless for Leslie. This was the same jeweler that made smithsonite necklaces for Les and our two granddaughters. He wanted to recut it to make it "much prettier." But I wanted it just the way we had cut it. It is seen in the photo. We also took a larger piece of turquoise rock from the debris pile to a cutter recommended by the owner of Rio Grande Silver in Albuquerque. Back then Rio Grande Silver was much smaller and much more customer friendly. I had it stabilized, and then put into two sterling turtles, one of a Mark size, and the other a Leslie size. Both were, made by one of the local Pueblo silver-smiths. Len also had a couple of stones cut to make into jewelry for his girlfriend.

Some of the pieces we found are shown in the photo along with some Anastasi beads from 700 to 1200 AD and one of the stone axes used to pound the turquoise out of the mine walls. The stone axes were used to break the turquoise into useable beads or effigy forms. In the top two rows are pieces as found in the mine and in the



Pieces of turquoise from the mine and local collectors. See story for details.

Continued on next page

Tiffany Turquoise from previous page

debris piles. The next row contains the beads made by the Anastasi in antiquity and found along the Turquoise Trail. The last row shows beads that are unattributed, but have a similar nuclear fingerprint to the known Anastasi that were donated by local folks who took an interest in the project.

There is much more to this story but it is mostly the science of NAA (Neutron Activation Analysis). Being assigned to New Mexico on and off for several years, we had many other adventures. If there is interest, talk to me and I'll write other articles on some of those trips and NAA that was used in forensics trace analysis before the days of electron spin resonance (ESR) and other current nuclear and atomic techniques. And if you are still interested, I'll have Leslie wear her neckless to the meeting after this article comes out.

As always stay safe out there.



Rock Art



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

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

Arrive Early to Our Meetings

On the nights of our club meetings (third Wednesday of the month) the Weeki Wachee Senior Citizens Center is open at 5:00 PM. The rock grinding and cutting machines are set up early so members can use the equipment before the business portion of the meeting begins at 7:00 PM. If you have jewelry, rocks, minerals, fossils or equipment to show or sell, or specimens to be identified; the best time to do so is between 5:00 PM and 7:00 PM. No equipment can be used during the business meeting or during presentations.

Jewels by Jude

Judith Birx
Member of Withlacoochee Rockhounds
Judithbirx@hotmail.com
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Secretary's Report



by
Melodye Steverson



Withlacoochee Rockhounds Board of Directors Meeting Minutes Date 2-19-19

Attending Board members; Judith Birx, Mark Moore, Melodye Steverson, Janet Wheeler, Ralph Barber, Mike Stone, and Ginny Steverson. Also in attendance: club members Leslie Moore and Rovie Alford.

- The board meeting began at 6:30 pm and was held at the Weeki Wachee Senior Citizens Center.
- Club president Judith Birx presented the agenda and began the meeting by requesting information about the senior center paperwork issue. VP Mike Moore attended the senior center board meeting and has volunteered to work with them to draft bylaws and to get their paperwork in order.
- Next on the agenda was a discussion of the criteria for eligibility for the proposed scholarship to the William Holland School of Lapidary Arts (WHS) for a club member.
- Proposed from Sept 2018 Board meeting were;
 1. Must have been a club member in good standing for the previous two years.
 2. Agree to teach four classes about their chosen subject in the twelve months fol-

lowing the course.

3. The club will pay the tuition/housing only. Transportation, lab fees, and materials will be the responsibility of the member.
4. This scholarship will be chosen by lottery.
5. Applicants must come before the Board to be approved for entry into lottery.
 - Board members agreed upon Numbers 1, 3 and 5. #2 The number and hours of classes the winner must teach is still being discussed. Directors decided against the lottery except in case of a tie.
 - Number of accumulate club volunteer hours are being considered, either teaching or volunteering in other ways. Also, a list of acceptable classes at WHS is being compiled and will be presented at the next board meeting.
 - Added to list; #6) Member's volunteer hours will be taken into consideration in decision. #7) Based on the treasury each year, a second scholarship could be awarded.
 - VP Moore stated that he would try to get additional funds to support the scholarship.
 - The matter will be finalized at the March Board meeting.
 - Our Endowment Fund at USF - Our bylaws state that we must donate eighty percent of net income from the gem show to the endowment Fund. This requirement is outdated. We should be able to donate what we feel is proper and use the rest of the gem show profits for education within our club.
 - After much discussion, the board decided to form a committee to re-write the by-

laws to include a set of standing rules that will then be brought to the Board, and after approval brought to the members for a vote.

- Gem Show - President Birx stated that our 2018 gem show chairman will not hold the position for the 2019 gem show. She asked Board members to scout for another chairperson.
- President Birx will call members who have not paid their dues.
- Mike Stone asked if we should continue pay seventy five dollars a year for our website to be a secure site. Michael Steverson stated (via phone call) that since we don't sell items, or take sensitive data on the site, we don't really need it. However, the Board decided to maintain a secure site, as non-secure sites can discourage some people from visiting the site.
- We will announce in newsletters that we open the doors at 5:00 pm on monthly meeting nights and if anyone signs up to use the machines, they will be available. Mark Moore and Dave Letasi will be available early on club meeting nights to identify stones and answer questions.
- Since we have had an over abundance of donations for the door prizes each month, it takes up a lot of time. We will now limit the number of items for each raffle. Additional items will be saved, to be used during the annual gem show.
- Mike Stone made a motion to have the club cover the one-dollar clubhouse fee for our January party night. The motion was made and then seconded by Mark Moore, and

Minutes continued on next page

Next Meeting, Wednesday March 13th, 7:00 PM at the Weeki Wachee Senior Citizens Center

Minutes

- approved by all.
- Ginny Steverson made a motion to adjourn the meeting. It was seconded by Ralph Barber, and passed by all.

The meeting adjourned at 8:08 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Secretary Melodye Steverson.

Board of Directors Meeting
 The next Board meeting will be held at the Weeki Wachee Senior Center at 6:30 PM on March 20, 2019

**Withlacoochee Rockhounds
 Monthly Meeting Minutes
 2-13-19**

The meeting was called to order by club president, Judith Birx at 7:04 pm.

- We all stood for the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment of silence.
- There were two new members to recognize: Victoria MacIntire and Preston Manter.
- There were two guests in attendance: Joe Gagliano and Ray McKinney.
- Mark Moore made a motion to accept the minutes of our January meeting as printed in the newsletter. The motion was seconded by Jan Gathj and passed by all members.
- Club treasurer Janet Wheeler gave the Treasurer's Report.
- Old Business
- President Judith Birx, announced that a gem show committee needs to be formed, and asked for a member to volunteer to be the chairman. She said there were a few issues to be addressed and we need

the time to work them out to produce the best show possible.

- President Birx reminded members that dues are past due and need to be paid now.
- Judith recognized Carol Hechler, who told the group that the motorcycle that had been donated to the Weeki Wachee Senior Citizens Center had been sold. The money had paid off the roofing loan and what was left had been put into the building maintenance fund.
- President Birx announced that another beginner's silversmithing course will start March 14th and be held one a week for three weeks total.
- New Business
- Lynn Walters said that the next Vulcan Mine field trip will be on the 2nd Saturday of March. Be there at 8:30 am to sign in. Attendees have been making great finds! Kids are welcome.
- Lauren Bell stated that digs are coming up; Jackson Crossroads in March and Graves Mountain in April.
- There is a Knapp-in at Silver Springs State Park on February 16 and 17 from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm.
- Heritage Day is on Saturday, February 16th in Brooksville, near the Historic Depot.
- Linda Spaulding addressed the membership to ask for someone to teach/instruct kids at meetings. We have many junior members and we need to give them attention at their level. Victoria McIntire volunteered.
- President Birx reminded members about the board of directors meeting on February 19th, as well as the monthly jewelry class on March 5th. All are welcome.
- Club vice President Mark Moore referred to his articles in the newsletter and told members to email him if they have any questions

or would like more information regarding the subject. Articles coming up in future newsletter; amber and turquoise.

- Next month's refreshments will be provided by Elaine Alford, Angela Bennett, and Lynn Walters.
- Dave Davis made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Bill Spaulding seconded the motion and it was passed by all.

The meeting adjourned at 7:29 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by club secretary Melodye Steverson.

What is It?
 Can you identify the specimen below?



Answer in this Rock Talk.

Last month's "What is It?"



Autunite

Turquoise

KELLY JOHNSON 
MINERALS*FOSSILS*CABOCHONS
FLINTKNAPPED STONE BLADE KNIVES
 buy / sell / trade retail / wholesale
...Yes I buy collections, lapidary equipment, etc...
 email: KellyMineralsFossils@aol.com
 facebook: Kelly minerals fossils
 239-940-9773 SPRING HILL, FL

Lauren M Bell
 Artist/Owner
 Facebook.com/MadHouseMindWorks
 www.MadHouseMindWorks.etsy.com

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Rovie Alford

Lapidary Equipment Repairs & Sales
 Faceting, Cabbing, Tumblers, Saws and
 Silversmithing

Phone 270-999-9144 roviea712@yahoo.com

Show Us Your Stuff
 We're always looking for information for the *Rock Talk*. Club members would enjoy seeing other members' rock cutting and polishing equipment, display cabinets, projects, and favorite specimens. Take a photo and send it to your editors along with a description and we will be glad to include it in our newsletter.
Mike Stone
n1ve@amsat.org

Tuesday Workshop
at the
Weeki Wachee Senior Citizens' Center
 Withlacoochee Rockhounds is giving workshops on wire wrapping (stones), chain making (jump rings) and possibly other related skills at the Weeki Wachee Senior Citizens' Center in Spring Hill. The workshops are normally on the **first Tuesday of the month from 9:00 AM until 12:00 noon**. The cost per workshop is \$1.00. To participate in the workshops, one must be a member of the *Withlacoochee Rockhounds*, which covers dues to the *Weeki Wachee Citizens Club*.
Weeki Wachee Senior Citizens' Center.
3357 Susan Dr.
Spring Hill FL 34606
 For more information call Judith at: 352-587-1702

Next Workshop
March 5th at 9:00 AM—12:00 PM

The instructor will be Melodye Steverson.
Check our website for more information
www.withlacoocheerockhounds.com

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

March Silversmithing Class
 Our club will be offering another basic silversmithing class on March 14, 21, and 28 (Thursdays) at 5-9 PM at the Weeki Wachee Senior Citizens Club
 The cost for the class is \$40 (material and supplies). Maximum enrollment is eight.
 Contact:
Rovie Alford
Phone: 270-000-9144
Email: roviea712@yahoo.com

Dues are Overdue
 The club year runs from January 1st to January 1st, so it's time to sign up for the next club year. Janet, our treasurer, will be accepting membership forms and payments at the club meetings, or you can send the form and your check to:
Withlacoochee Rockhounds
PO Box 5634
Spring Hill, FL, 34611-5634

Withlacoochee Rockhounds



Bench Tips
by
Brad Smith

Bench Tips for Jewelry Making and Broom Casting for Creative Jewelry are available on Amazon

Protecting Finished Surfaces

I figure that any accidental scratch I make on a piece means about 15 minutes of extra sanding and polishing. So after finishing major surfaces I typically cover them with masking tape to avoid any scratches when doing final work like clean-ups and setting of stones. The blue masking tape used by painters, works particularly well because it doesn't leave a sticky residue.



Use painter's tape to protect surfaces.

Make a Texture Hammer

An inexpensive hammer can be easily turned into a great texturing tool by grinding a pattern of narrow lines into its face.

The tool I like to use to grind the pattern is a thin separating disc in a Foredom or Dremel. Be sure to hold the hammer and separating disc steady as you carve, and wear those safety glasses to protect your eyes.

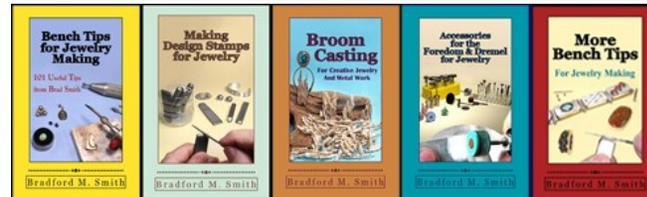
For the pattern to work well, a major part of the face needs to be ground away leaving only small areas of high points. That way the high points will have enough force to emboss the pattern into your sheet metal. My preference is to use small ball peen or cross peen hammers. They are quite inexpensive from tool dealers at swap meets and rock and mineral shows. There is no reason to buy an expensive hammer to experiment with creating your own textures.

And BTW, if you don't like the first pattern you create, simply file or grind it off and try again.

This is just one of the many tips in the new book, "More Bench Tips for Jewelry Making" See a sample chapter at <https://amzn.to/2KCygh4>



Hold the hammer and grinding tool firmly.



Learn New Jewelry Skills With Brad's
How-To-Do-It Books
[Amazon.com/author/bradsmith](https://www.amazon.com/author/bradsmith)

RALPH BARBER

STONE JEWELRY
bottle wind chimes

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

Next Meeting, Wednesday February 13th, 7:00 PM at the Weeki Wachee Senior Citizens Center

Withlacoochee Rockhounds

Membership Form

Annual Dues: Individual member, \$20. 00. Under 18 years of age, \$5.00.
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:

**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**

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



of
Hernando County

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
PO Box 5634
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 \$5.00 annually 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.

2019 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)
Linda Spaulding (2020)
Melodye Steverson (secretary)

Ginny Steverson (2021)
Mike Stone (2019)
Lynn Walters (2021)
Janet Wheeler (treasurer)