

Rock Talk

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March 2017



Rock Talk

March Club Meeting

Dave Letasi will present the March Program, "The Vulcan Mine, Everything You Ever Wanted to Know". He will explain what resources are mined and their uses. Dave will discuss the geology of the area, the mineral and rocks that are found at the mine, and the fossils so far discovered, as well as those that could be uncovered. Information will be provided about how and where

to identify your finds and Dave will show detailed photography of typical and also rare specimens. Members and guests should bring in specimens, particularly those found at the Vulcan Mine for identification.

We will also have our regular plethora of refreshments and beverages.

The Meeting as I Saw it

by

Dorwin Skinner
Club Vice President



Wow, if it keeps up we will need to have a large hall for our meetings. This was the club meeting with the largest attendance that I remember. It's nice to see the interest in our group growing. I can't believe that our snack bar has gotten that much attention from the community. This month you could have made a meal from the offerings of our members. We had a record for our 50/50 drawing and also there were several items to raffle. Instead of our usual one winner we had five lucky club members and somehow I was not one of them.

Dave Davis brought in several of his creations. Did anyone else take notice of that fishhook? It is amazing that flint and obsidian can be made into the beautiful works of art by percussion and pressure flaking. For those that had not seen knapping, Dave put on a nice demonstration. It sure didn't take him long to make a point. Dave also had a string of what he called African Glass beads. If I understood him right, they are made by wrapping crushed glass to form a mold and then firing them to melt the glass, forming a bead.

The polishing machines were all being used and social time was in full swing. All to soon Ralph called the meeting to order and that was the end of the fun and games for a short period of time. After a lengthy discussion it was agreed to raise the club dues by \$7.50 per member (starting in 2018). It's a step in the right direction to keep the club solvent. The 50/50 drawing and raffle was a huge success and we need more just like it. Maybe we need Judith to sell them all of the time. She seems to do better than anyone else. We need to make sure that we donate at the snack bar and at the polishing



Dave Davis demonstrating knapping at the meeting.

The Cover Photo

Petoskey stone, is the official state stone of Michigan. During the Devonian period, 350 million years ago, Michigan was located near the equator. The area was covered by a warm, shallow, saltwater sea, where an early coral, *Hexagonaria percarinata* thrived. Tectonic plate movement eventually placed this area north to the 45th parallel and lifted it above sea level, creating dry land formations. Eventually glacial action scraped the earth depositing these fossils across the northern Lower Peninsula, many being concentrated in the Petoskey area.

Petoskey stone is fossilized, tightly packed six-sided corallites. The center of each coral polyp was the mouth that held tentacles that reached out for food. The hexagon shape of each cell and thin lines radiating out from the dark "eye" in the center are distinguishing features unique to this fossil.

Club members, if you have a Petoskey stone, please bring it to the March meeting. We will have a stereoscopic microscope set up to examine them.

machines. When we need to change a polishing wheel it will cost around \$50 per wheel. Finally someone stepped forward with a motion to adjourn and then it was back to the snack bar for me. It was another great meeting and I am wondering how big the next one will be. As I understand it Dave Letasi will be giving a presentation on fossils that can be found at the Vulcan Mine.

February Club Meeting Photos

Photos by Dorwing Skinner and Mike Stone



Busy, busy, busy



Points made by Dave Davis



Discussing rocks



Doug, Gloria, and her wares.



Working on a cabochon



Using the Pixie machine



Linda, Dennis, and John, operating the machines.



Digging in

Tuesday Workshop

February 7, 2017

Ring Class

Article and photos by Dorwin Skinner

The wire bending class was to start at 9:00 AM and I did not want to be late, so I set my alarm. I am not an early person, as I am usually drinking my first cup of coffee at that time. In just a short period of time everyone was at the Weeki Wachee Senior Citizens Center except the instructor for the day, Melodye. Not to fear, she arrived a few moments later with a fresh cup of coffee. She made short work of getting the supplies ready and distributed to the group. With the assistance of Judith they started the process of turning a short length of copper wire into a ring. It reminded me of something that one would expect to see in the Fareast or perhaps an Egyptian design. First they had to make a ring of the proper size, add a few more bends, and then texture it with a hammer. The final step was to add a bead, and then using a wire wrapping method, attach it to the ring. I was amazed at how fast the rings could be made. In fact, there was time for the students to fashion a ring using silver wire. When it was time to leave, everyone had at least one ring to take home.

The wire wrapping class seems to be a favorite of many, and it has been responsible for adding members to our club. Thank you Judith and Melodye. Hmmmmm, I wonder what they will make next month?



Using a torch to make a pinhead.



Judith Birx demonstrating for new Member Barbara Clark



Mark Moore and Gary Spurlock bending rings



Phillis and Jan working at just the right angle



Using a torch to make a pinhead.



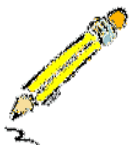
Hammering for texture



Using a torch to make a pinhead.

Secretary Report

by
Melody Steverson



Withlacoochee Rockhounds Monthly Meeting Minutes February 8, 2017

- The meeting was called to order by club president Ralph Barber at 7:22 pm.
- We all stood for the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment of silent prayer.
- There was one new member to recognize: Lauren Bell
- There were five guests in attendance: Carolyn Kelly, Gary Spurlock, John and Paula Smith and son, Charlie.
- Dave Letasi made a motion to accept the minutes of our January meeting as printed in the newsletter. Roger Wheeler seconded the motion and all members passed it.
- Club treasurer Janet Wheeler gave the treasurer's report.
- Sunshine Report: The Viking is still in poor health, but is improving. Rovie is home with food poisoning.

Old Business

- Dave Letasi announced: The sign up sheet for the Gainesville trip to the Museum of Natural Science is available. If you are going, please sign up!
- Volunteers are needed to man the club booth during the Heritage Festival. Several members offered their time and were put on the schedule.
- Members John and Patty Matzer found fossilized pig bones in Kansas and have donated them to the club.
- Judith Birx announced that she has field trip info sheets for the trip to Graves Mountain, GA. Also, there will be a short meeting for the members who plan to go on the trip, immediately after the

regular monthly meeting in March.

- Mike Stone announced that he and Peggy brought in some rocks and invited everyone to look at them. Also, he brought in club business cards and invited all members to take a few and hand them out to interested people.

New Business

- The member Elected Board of Directors had an urgent topic to be brought before the club membership.
- Our club is losing money with every meeting and every set of dues paid. The problem hasn't been addressed in the past because the profit from our annual gem show covered the loss. However, the 2016 Gem Show did not make a profit, therefore, we do not have the money to cover our monthly bills.
- Many ideas were offered, many questions were asked and answered as Board members and Officers led the discussion. Dave Letasi, Mike Stone, Dorwin Skinner and Judith Birx were the main commentators, but nearly all members voiced ideas and comments. I have attempted to note all the highlights below:
- Should membership dues be raised? The general consensus was yes, but there was much discussion regarding how much. Dave Letasi made a motion to raise the dues \$5.00 in 2018, seconded by Judith Birx. After discussion, it was agreed that the increase amount was too low. Dave increased his amount to \$7.50 for single and \$5.00 for family membership in 2018. Judith Birx seconded. After much more discussion, a vote was held; 13 yes, 12 no.
- Can we move to another meeting facility? We have equipment and heavy machines that we need to store from month-to-month and this facility allows us to do that. We could move to a cheaper or free location, but we would have to pay for storage of our equipment and would have to haul it to the meeting each month. Not feasible.
- The gem show made money in the past, what happened in 2016? We have an advertising budget of \$2,000. The person in charge of doing the advertising used \$1,700 on one ad in the Tampa Bay Times. As a result, there was not enough advertising about

the show and the general public simply didn't know about it. Also, many of the past vendors have refused to return because attendance is down. Attendance is down because of the lack of advertising. Dorwin Skinner stood and stated that the board of directors has been compiling a list of advertising opportunities and costs and welcomed any and all ideas the members have regarding getting the word out about the Gem Show. Dorwin will bring the ideas to the Board. However....

- We need a member volunteer to be the head of publicity for the gem show. No one volunteered. We asked members to think about it and possibly form and/or participate in an advertising committee. Discussion to be continued during the March meeting.

There was a discussion of other forms of income for the club:

- We need signs to remind members of the one-dollar fee for use of the machines, the one-dollar fee for coffee and snacks, and the one-dollar fee per member that is required by the Weeki Wachee Senior Center for the use of the building.
 - There should be a minimum bid for items in the Chinese Auction. Many expensive items are going too cheaply.
 - New member Lauren Bell suggested we approach businesses in the area for sponsorships.
 - Dave Letasi suggested we submit a letter to Vulcan Mine Materials for the grant they award periodically.
 - All members were asked to think of ideas for income generation for the club and report at the March meeting.
 - Next month's refreshments will be provided by: This step was inadvertently skipped, so Sue Letasi, Dorwin Skinner, and Melody Steverson, have volunteered to bring refreshments for the March meeting.
 - Dennis Brown made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Linda Spaulding seconded the motion and it was passed by all.
 - The business meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm.
- Minutes respectfully submitted by Secretary Melody Steverson.*

Secretary Report continued on next page

Next Meeting, Wednesday March 8th, 7:00PM at the Weeki Wachee Senior Citizens Center

Secretary Report from page 7

**Withlacoochee Rockhounds
Board of Directors Meeting
February 22, 2017
7:00pm – 9:20pm**

Those attending: Ralph Barber (left at 8:45), Dorwin Skinner, Melody Steverson, Janet Wheeler, Roger Wheeler, Judith Birx, Dave Letasi, Rovie Alford, and Mike Stone

Club Sponsor:

- Compose official sponsor request letter – Will solidify next meeting.
- Contact sponsors to support club – suggestions:
- Compose list of potential sponsors
- Secretary sends letters and keeps records
- Sponsors will have their business names displayed in the newsletter and on the website
Sponsors will receive a letter of appreciation
- All monies go to treasurer who will deposit it into the club account

Club Address:

- The club needs an official address:
- The cost of a PO Box will be \$86.00 per year
- It will need to be located near to the club treasurer, secretary and vice president
- Dave Letasi made a motion to secure a PO Box for the club. The motion was seconded by Janet Wheeler and it was approved by the board.
- Dorwin Skinner will procure the PO box and give the receipt to the treasurer.

Gem Show:

- Gem Show Committee
- President Barber will set a time to meet with the Board and give us copies of vendor lists, contacts, and other pertinent information.

More business:

- Judith Birx brought up the suggestion that long term members should “mentor” newer members to help them bond with the club.
- Signs will be made by club secretary, Melody Steverson to remind members of the cost for using machines, and the contributions to the snack and coffee fund.

AmazonSmile:

- Mike Stone suggested that we ask club members to sign up for AmazonSmile, so the club will re-

ceive donations when members buy eligible items through Amazon. The Board will present this to the members at the next monthly meeting.

- The Board decided that the club needs a publicity officer to handle publicity and advertising for the club. Club vice president, Dorwin Skinner has taken on that position for the present.

Additional items:

- Business card size ads in the newsletter have not been paid for recently. The Board has decided to invite businesses to advertise in our newsletter and the business size advertisements will also be displayed on our website. Two prices were discussed: \$10 per month.
- Members who are overdue on their dues will be called by educational chairman Judith Birx to remind them to renew their membership.

Minutes respectfully submitted by club secretary Melody Steverson.

47th Annual Show
Suncoast Gem & Mineral Society, Inc.

March 3, 4, 5, 2017
Minnreg Building
6340 126th Avenue North
Largo, Florida 33773

Hours:
March 3rd & 4th: 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
March 5th: 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Admission - Free Parking
Donations: \$5.00/adult good for all three days.
Children under 6 FREE, Students with parents or I.D. Card \$4.00.

Dealer Contact:
Bill Schmidt
Email: sgamsgemshow@gmail.com
or 727-687-0825, 727-686-0945

Members of the Withlacoochee Rockhounds who attend the Largo gem show will receive a special discount at “Poor Boys Opals, operated by Jim and Barbara Runkle. www.poorboysopals.com. Submitted by Michele Evans

Upcoming Shows

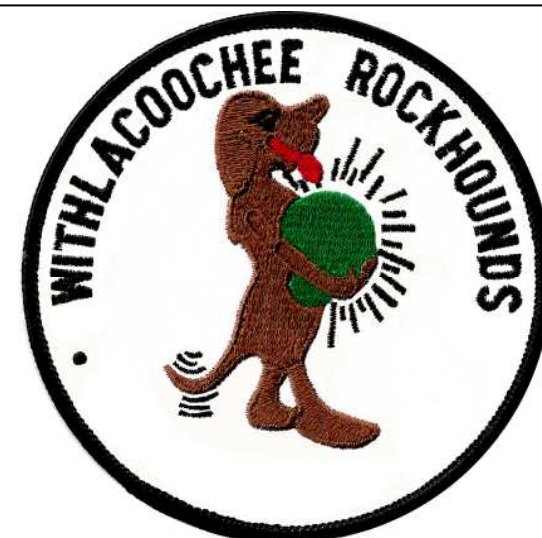
February 25, 2017 Imperial Bone Valley Gem, Mineral, & Fossil Society Lakeland, FL www.bonevalley.net
February 26, 2017 The Villages Gem & Mineral Society, The Villages, FL
www.thevillagesgemandmineralsociety.com

February 25 and 26, 2017 Mississippi and Mineral Society Jackson, MS www.missgems.org
March 3, 4, and 5 2017 Suncoast Gem and Mineral Society—47th Annual Show Minnreg Building, Largo, FL www.sgams.com

March 10, 11, and 12, 2017 Aiken-Augusta Gem, Mineral, & Fossil Show Julian Smith Casino Augusta, GA www.agam.club

March 18 and 19, 2017 Dothan Gem and Mineral Club Dothan, AL www.wiregrassrockhounds.com
March 25 and 26, 2017 Blue Grass Gem & Mineral Club Lexington Rock Gem & Jewelry Show Lexington, KY www.bggamc.homestead.com

April 22 and 23, 2017 Memphis Archaeological and Geological Society Memphis Mineral, Fossil, Jewelry Show Memphis, TN
www.theearthwideopen.com



Hernando County, FL

Education Chairman



Judith Brix



2017 Graves Mountain Field Trip

Graves Mountain
Washington Hwy.

Lincolnton, GA 30817

Rock Swap and Dig - April 28, 29, 30th

Lodging:

Elijah Clark State Park, 2959 McCormick Hwy, Lincolnton, GA 30817. Located 18 minutes from Graves Mountain. Cottage and Campground Cottages \$150 per night with a minimum a two-night stay. Rooms in the cottages sleep eight people and have a full kitchen. Many have a lake view. Great for a family or sharing with friends. 800-864-7275 or 706-359-3458.

<https://www.google.com/#q=elijah+clark+state+park+campground>

Cullars Inn, 140 Elm St. Lincolnton, GA 30817. Located 20 minutes from Graves Mountain. Rooms are \$63.76 per night with no minimum stay. The rooms have a mini refrigerator and microwave. Two queen beds per room. 706-359-6161

<http://www.thecullarsinn.com/>

Items to bring:

gloves, pick/hammer, chisel, shovel, newspaper for wrapping specimens, boots/sturdy sneakers, bags, bucket, backpacks, water, sunscreen, fly dope, hat

Specimens to collect:

rutile, kyanite, lazulite, iridescent hematite, pyrophyllite, barite, sulfur, variscite, woodhouseite, crandallite, strengite, phosphosiderite, cacoenite, blue quartz, and quartz crystals

Graves Mountain websites:

<https://www.gamineral.org/ft/commercial/ftgravesmain.html>

<http://www.wncrocks.com/resources/Collecting%20site%20graves.htm>

YouTube videos of collecting at Graves Mountain:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n57-JR4hKvg>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A0n1ZZFval8>

There is no cost to visit the mountain, however, it is customary to donate \$20.00 per person to the caretaker Clarence Norman Jr. He will have the mountain open from 8:00 AM until 6:00 PM each day. Everyone must stop at the hospitality table to sign in. There will be golf cart type four wheeled vehicles available to transport visitors who have trouble walking long distances. There will be a area in the upper parking for the rock swap and the hot food and drink vendor. Anyone wishing to contact Jr. can contact him at 706-359-1544.

Some members have expressed interest in sharing a room with someone and carpooling. So let's get together and start planning.

Contact Judith Birx at 352-587-1702

Tuesday Workshop at the

Weeki Wachee Senior Citizens' Center

The Withlacoochee Rockhounds is giving workshops on wire wrapping (stones), chain making (jump rings) and possibly other related skill at the Weeki Wachee Senior Citizens' Center in Spring Hill. The workshops are 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*. Contact number: 352-587-1702

Weeki Wachee Senior Citizens' Center.

3357 Susan Dr.
Spring Hill FL 34606

For more information call Judith at: 352-587-1702

Welcome New Members

Welcome new Withlacoochee Rockhounds club members: **Lauren Bell** Floral City; **Barbara Clark**, Spring Hill; **Gary Spurlock**, Brooksville; **Wil Iman**, Homosassa.

What is a Boulder?

In geology, a **boulder** is a rock fragment with a size greater than 25.6 centimeters (10.1 inches). Smaller pieces are called cobbles and pebbles. While a boulder might be small enough to move or roll manually, others are extremely massive. In common usage, a boulder is too large for a person to move. Smaller boulders are usually just called rocks or stones. The word boulder is short for boulder stone, from Middle English.



A large boulder



Small boulders (rocks and stones)



Over the last year, the University of Florida's paleontology department has been working the Montbrook Fossil site near Williston Florida, where a number of extremely important fossil animal remains have been recovered. The site has produced the lower jaw of a rare bone eating dog called *Borophagus hilli*. It dates the site to the Late Miocene/Early Pliocene Period at about 4.5 to 5 million years ago.

One of our former club meeting guests and new member, Susan Swartz, recently found a rare ankle bone of a carnivore at Montbrook. The University staff will be researching it further. The rare skull of a Saber Tooth cat was recently uncovered. Only a few fragmentary skulls of Saber Tooth cats have ever been recovered from this time period in North America. The specimen can be viewed on YouTube by entering "Montbrook Fossil Site Saber Tooth Cat" on the search section or https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JSIjK5ZC_8s. If you wish to participate in this dig, you may do so. Enrollment may be found on the University of Florida website at: www.flmnh.ufl.edu/vertpaleo. This field season ends in May but will pick up again this fall. The site will soon become one of National significance.

Keep Collecting!



Machairodus jaw



Borophagus calcamium



Borophagus hilli mandible mount



Adelphailurus from Kansas

Withlacoochee Rockhounds is now on Facebook

https://www.facebook.com/withlacoocheerockhounds1/?ref=page_internal

Our website continues to change, check it out. If you find errors, omissions, or have any suggestions, let us know.

Mike Stone
n1ve@amsat.org

2017 Dues are Overdue

A reminder that the dues for 2017 club year are overdue. The 2017 membership dues form is on page thirteen in this issue of *Rock Talk*. Please fill out the form and bring it with your dues to the next meeting and give them to club treasurer Janet Wheeler. Or mail the form and your check made out to "Withlacoochee Rockhounds", Janet Wheeler, 338 Appaloosa Rd., Tarpon Springs, FL 34688.

Those who haven't renewed their membership by the end of March will be removed from the club roster.

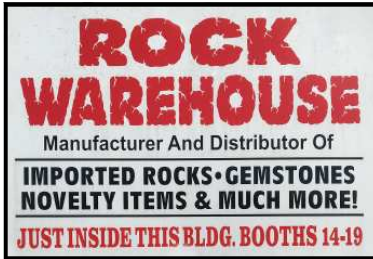


Rock Warehouse

by Mike Stone

During the February club meeting, Roger and Janet Wheeler told me about the Oldsmar Flea Market, the home of the Rock Warehouse. A few days later, we had an opportunity to drive south to Oldsmar, which is located just northwest of Tampa. The GPS created a route using US 19 for much of the distance, but I chose Route 1 (Little Road), then to Trinity Road, to avoid heavy traffic. The GPS eventually adjusted the route and directed us into the large parking lot, not far from the rows of narrow flea market buildings.

After parking, we headed inside the closest building (A) and began



Peggy among the crates of rocks.



Mike and Peggy checking out the rocks.

walking through the aisles, one after the other and through the buildings one after another. Since we are seasoned flea marketers, there wasn't much for sale that we hadn't come across numerous times in the eleven winters that

we've been living in Florida.

This is what the Oldsmar Flea Market website says about the vendors.

Collectors find rare stamps, coins and cards; craftsmen sell hand made furniture and toys; one vendor sells nothing but socks; there's a booth with reading glasses, a huge stall with only sunglasses; there's luggage tools, sports equipment, baked goods, groceries, carpet, toys... the list is endless.

Their description doesn't do justice to the variety of vendors that occupy the seventy or so buildings, with some are set up adjacent to the buildings outside.

Eventually as we neared the end of the twenty-acre flea market we found the Rock Warehouse on aisle (I). At first glance we saw a multitude of gaudy rock-covered crosses covering most of the walls. But when our gazes settled on the huge crates of rocks, piles of minerals, and counters covered with shaped and polished rocks, minerals, and fossils, we knew we'd been spending some time, and possibly some money.

Many of the rocks and minerals are sold by weight, with the prices varying from \$3.50 a pound to \$17.50 a pound. Many of the boulder size chunks are quite heavy, so be prepared to dig into your wallet if you want to lug one home. As a rock club member you will be offered up to a twenty percent discount on purchases. We looked and handled a variety of rocks and minerals such as obsidian, various colors of calcite, rough tiger's eye, jasper, rose quartz, white quartz, aventurine, and many that we couldn't identify.

I gave one of the clerks at the Rock Warehouse a Withlacoochee Rockhounds business card, and he told me that Dave Davis and Kelly Johnson are frequent customers. Our purchases were a couple of pieces of rough tigers eye and a fist-size piece of polished fossiliferous limestone.

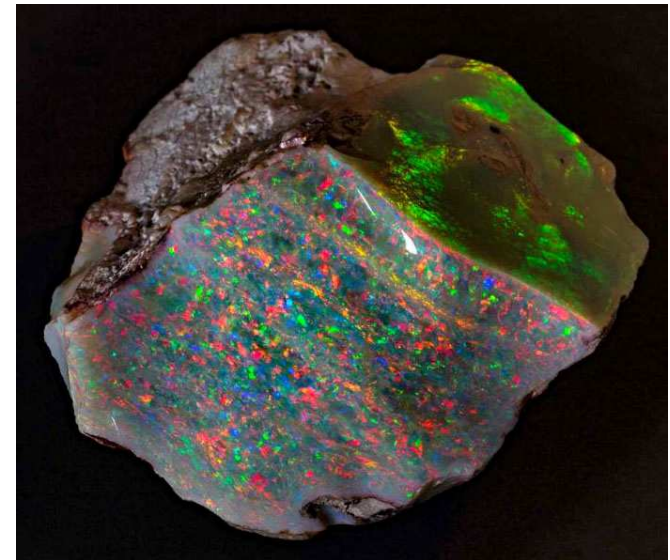
The Oldsmar Flea Market is open from 9:00 AM until 5:00 PM Saturday and Sunday According to the Rock Warehouse representative, they are open Tuesdays.

Matt Stone

Rare \$675,000 Opal Permanently on Display

Opals are highly colored, semi-precious stones, formed in silica deposits and found in arid regions.

Over the years, South Australia has undergone perfect conditions for forming opals and a magnificent softball size fire opal found "down under" is on display at the South Australian Museum. It is being shown in public for the first time since its discovery in 1946. The gem has been named "Fire of Australia" and is the largest known piece of high-grade opal in the world, according to the museum. It is about the size of softball, weighs 998 grams (2.2 pounds), and displays all the colors of the spectrum. The opal is unique because of its high quality and large size. It throws off much red color, which is one of the indications of a highly valuable piece of opal."



An example of an uncut fire opal.

Southern Australia produces more than ninety percent of the world's precious opal. The seam where it was found was part of a larger seam of opal that ran underground. The owner of the mine polished two sides of the Fire of Australia and they recognized that it was a significant discovery and wanted to show the quality of the opal. Normally a large piece of opal doesn't get polished, it gets cut up for jewelry and then it is polished.

Rockhounds Install Ceiling Tiles

Tuesday morning on February 20th, five Withlacoochee Rockhounds met at the Weeki Wachee Senior Citizens Center to replace several of the ceiling tiles that have become stained, cracked, sagged, and yellowed over years. The old tiles were of the light-weight and somewhat flexible variety. The new tiles were much heavier, stiff, and quite easily broken as we all learned very quickly. After about two hours of climbing on ladders and standing on tables and chairs, we'd replaced a few boxes of tiles.

There are still six boxes (35 tiles) that need to be replaced. Let Linda or Ron Parks know if you are willing and able to help.



L to Right, Mike Stone, Linda Parks, Phyllis Ables, and Rolvie Alford



Acetylene tanks, sizes NC and B, \$50 each



Oxyacetylene welding outfit, including tanks, regulators and micro torch, \$175

For Sale

Contact

Rovie Alford
270-999-9144

roviea712@yahoo.com

- Raytech cabbing machine with tilting adjustable table from flat to 90 degrees, \$125
- Six inch Raytech slab saw, like new, \$375
- Grit and polish available for all tumblers.
- Lortone 6 inch Expando drums for cabbing \$20 each.
- Lortone 8 inch Expando drums for cabbing \$25 each



Rotary tumblers, both single and dual barrels, \$45 to \$95 each

2) Mini Sonic vibrator tumblers, four-pound barrels, \$150 each

Desirable features are combined in the versatile Ray-Tilt I 6" gem maker



Two ten inch slab saws, \$300 each.

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

Club Dues Discussion

Because of an oversight in both the motion and subsequent voting about raising club dues at the February meeting, we will be discussing our income, expenses, and dues structure during the April. Depending on the result of the discussion we might conduct another vote to raise the club dues starting in 2018.

A Reminder

Club members, bring your ideas for publicity for the gem show and give them to club vice president, Dorwin Skinner, who is our new publicity officer.

Withlacoochee Rockhounds



Bench Tips

by
Brad Smith



Bench Tips for Jewelry Making and Broom Cast-

Bench Shears

When cutting sheet metal, it is quicker and easier to use a set of shop shears as compared to using a handsaw. The cut is not as precise, but often you don't need much accuracy. Shears will easily cut up to 24-gauge sheet, and some will cut 22 or even 20 gauge.

Current prices for shears run from \$13 - \$22 in jewelry catalogs, and the Joyce Chen scissors recommended on some jewelry blogs run more than \$20. But we found a cheaper alternative at the 99 Cent Store, where gardening utility scissors were only \$1.07.

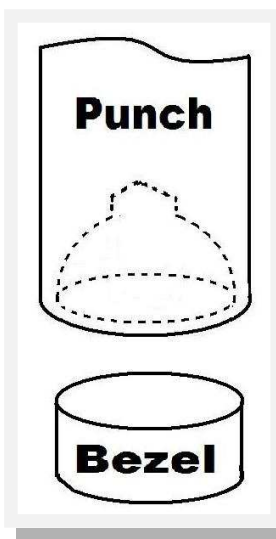
I buy a half dozen of them at a time for use in my jewelry classes. They are great for cutting bezels, trimming around a bezel cup, and cutting a piece off a larger sheet.



Bezel Closer

A bezel closer is a steel punch that makes quick work out of pushing the metal down and over a round stone and then burnishing it. The working end is a concave cavity that fits over your bezel or prong setting and is pushed and twisted to capture the stone. Sets can be purchased but are expensive and contain many sizes you will probably never use. If all you need is one or two sizes, here's how you can make them yourself.

Find a good quality, round steel rod a little larger in diameter than your bezel cup or prong set-



ting. Cut a 5 inch length. File both ends flat. Locate the center of one end, center punch a divot, and drill a small pilot hole about 5 mm deep. Remember to use a little oil as lubricant when cutting steel.

Select a ball bur a bit smaller than the steel rod but slightly larger than the bezel. Enlarge the pilot hole to a full hemispherical cavity. Test for proper fit with your bezel. Bezel should first contact the cavity about a third of the way in. When the size is correct, polish the cavity using Zam on a length of chopstick in your flexshaft. If the tool is not polished, it will leave scratches on your bezel or prongs.

When using the tool, the first step is to capture the stone correctly. I usually work by hand and push the punch straight down over the bezel or prongs. This causes the metal to start bending over the stone. Next, I inspect it with a lens to be sure the stone remains level. This is repeated until the stone is seated on its bearing and doesn't move.

Next you want to force the metal down onto the stone uniformly all the way around. While this can be done by hand, I often gently tap the punch with a hammer. Finally, burnish the bezel by twisting the punch around.



See all Brad's jewelry books at
[Amazon.com/author/bradfordsmith](https://www.amazon.com/author/bradfordsmith)



What is It?

Can you identify the specimen below?



Answer in next month's *Rock Talk*.

Last Month's "What is It?" was
"a pyrite crystal"



Next Meeting, Wednesday March 8th, 7:00 PM at the Weeki Wachee Senior Citizens Center

Withlacoochee Rockhounds

Membership Dues Form, 2017

Please complete the form and bring it with you to the December or January Withlacoochee Rockhound meeting. Attach your membership dues to the form.

Annual Dues: \$15.00 for an individual member or \$25.00 for a family

Please Print

Primary Member

Last name _____ First Name _____

Renewing members check here if no change in information below.

Additional family members:

Last name _____ First Name _____

Last name _____ First Name _____

Last name _____ First Name _____

Last name _____ First Name _____

Street Address: _____

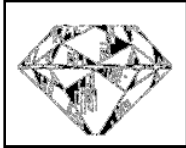
City: _____ State: _____ ZIP _____

Phone Number(s): _____

Email Address: _____

Please give this completed form along with your check for dues made out to "Withlacoochee Rockhounds" to club secretary Janet Wheeler at the club meeting. Or mail the form and your check to Janet Wheeler 338 Appaloosa Rd. Tarpon Springs, FL 34688

Rock Talk



His Nibs

Diamonds and Jewelry
Insurance Appraisals
Gemstone Identification
Professional Repairs

Jerry Johnson, G.G.
Graduate Gemologist-GIA
(352) 573-0830

12470 Spring Hill Drive
Spring Hill, FL 34609

Hours: By Appointment Only

5-15

Your Business Card Size Ad in Rock Talk

The cost to advertise your 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.

RALPH BARBER

STONE JEWELRY
bottle wind chimes

Hernando County Farmers Market
US 19
Spring Hill Fl
352.200.6852
barbersbloomers@hotmail.com

4-15

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 \$25.00 annually for a family and \$15.00 annually for a single member

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.

2017 Club Officers

President.....	Ralph Barber.....	352-200-6852.....	barbersbloomers@hotmail.com
Vice President.....	Dorwin Skinner.....	352-610-9422.....	twoantiques2@yahoo.com
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
Program Coordinator.....	Melodye Steverson.....	352-683-9496.....	melodye@designsbymelodye.com
Education Chairman.....	Judith Bix.....	352-587-1702.....	judithbix@hotmail.com
Publicity Officer.....	Dorwin Skinner.....	352-610-9422.....	twoantiques2@yahoo.com

Board of Directors: Rovie Alford, Ralph Barber, Judith Bix, Dave Letasi, Melodye Steverson, Dorwin Skinner, Mike Stone, Janet Wheeler