

Rock Talk



May 2018



Rock Talk



May 9th Meeting Program

Dave Letasi will be presenting, "Raptors from Hell" at the May meeting. It will cover major fossil discoveries and the latest research on the raptors' behavior.

After the presentation, the machines will be available for member use. We will also have a 50/50 drawing. Snacks and beverages will be available.

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The Meeting as I Saw it



by
Dorwin Skinner
Club Vice President



I missed the last meeting due to illness and it was good to be back. The clubhouse was almost full by time I arrived, a few minutes after 6:00 PM. It seems like every meeting is just a little bit larger than the last. I think the word is getting out that we have a great social club. This month there was a silent auction for a club fundraiser. The auction tables were full of great specimens. I saw a lot of activity at the tables during the last few minutes, with people changing their bids so they would be sure to win.

Professor Mathew Pasek, from USF was our guest speaker. The subject was fulgurites. Who knew that there could be so much information about something formed by a lightning strike? After the meeting a member told me they had never heard of a fulgurite. I had heard of them, but I had no idea of how complex they could be. Many members ask Professor Pasek questions until the lights started flashing, telling

us that it was time to go home. Maybe we can have Professor Pasek back at a later date to tell us more about rocks and minerals.

Our junior member Kate brought her science fair project to our meeting. I am not sure where she was in the standings but it looked like a blue ribbon winner to me. With her interest in rocks and minerals she might be a future recipient of our college geology endowment. Our next meeting promises to be a good one and I intend to be there.

Welcome New Members

Welcome new Withlacoochee Rockhounds club members. **Michael Everitt**, Spring Hill; **Charlie and Ryan Blumhardt**, Inglis.

The Cover

The white mineral on the cover is wollastonite. The red and green minerals are garnets. This specimen was found in upstate New York.

Next Meeting, Wednesday, May 9th at the Weeki Wachee Senior Citizens Center

April Meeting Photos

Photos by Dorwin Skinner and Mike Stone



A good turnout for the meeting.



A very popular auction specimen



Conversations before the meeting begins.



Professor Pasek, telling and showing us about fulgurites.



A beautiful fulgurite specimen



Small fulgurite



Nice specimen brought to the meeting Judith Birx



Rock talk



Protoserena rib, found at the Vulcan mine by John Fusco

April Meeting Photos

Photos by Dorwin Skinner and Mike Stone



Club President Judith Birx explaining the cost of membership.



Lots of goodies.



Members checking out the silent auction tables.



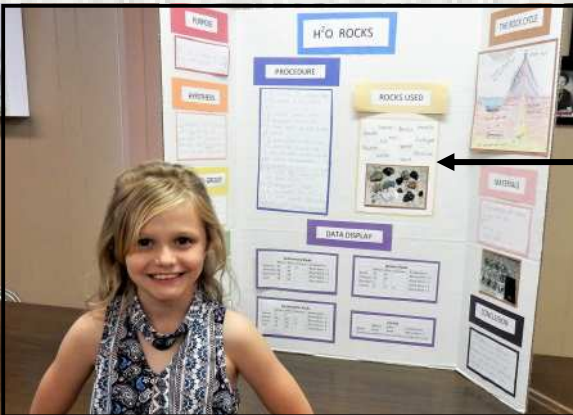
Melody wearing the first generation club tee shirt



John Fusco's Withlacoochee Rockhounds tee shirt.



How much will I pay?



Kate's school project.



Pendants made by Elaine Alford.



Katie Schmidt's crinoids.

President's Message

Judith Birx



The April meeting was another nice meeting. Our snowbirds will be soon leaving for the hot summer months. We will miss all of you. Don't forget to fly back to us in the fall. We did not have a 50/50 at the April meeting, but we did have an auction. Janet (our treasurer) tells me that we collected \$167.50. Yea! Our speaker was William PASEK. Wow what a knowledgeable man. Now he has our juices flowing and we might organize a field trip to Polk County to look for fulgurites. Wouldn't that be fun? Melodye Steverson is organizing a cabochon class. She has asked that anyone interested contact her and she will inform us about it later.

Our next club meeting will be on May 9th at 7:00 pm. Come early if you like. I would like to thank everyone who helped with the club meeting and the duties of collecting the door money, kitchen set up and tear down, assisting with the auction, including the donation of items. I hope that I didn't forget anyone! If I did, just know that all club members are thankful for your help. Keep in mind; we always need help setting up for the meeting and tearing down afterward.

Our jewelry class takes place on the first Tuesday of every month at 9:00 am – noon. Please check out the newsletter for updates. We made clay pendants last month, but most

of all we had a blast! The next class will be on metal stamping and will cost \$5.00 per person for materials. The class will be taught by Melodye Steverson.

I know sometimes it is hard to pin me down! Yes, its true, I am busy, as I often have a lot on my plate. So if you need something please let me know. I would like to remind everyone that the elections are in December and if you're interested in a position, now is the time to get with one of us so you learn what we do and how we do it. Just a reminder, the positions are president, vice president, treasure, secretary, and board members. If you are interested in any of those positions, find out if any positions will be open. During the last election, several people approached me at the last minute to find out if they could run. By last-minute, I mean that night. I thought it was a great show of appreciation for the club, but it is almost impossible to be prepared to run for office at that time. You can always write in a name on the ballots, but you still need to have the majority support of the club members to be elected. I am bringing this up so that there is plenty of time for you to prepare. There will be a nominating committee for the next elections as there was last year. Well, thank you all

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

What is It?

Can you identify the specimen below?



Answer in this *Rock Talk*.

Last month's "What is It?" was
Kryptonite



Hernando County, FL

Next Meeting, Wednesday May9th at the Weeki Wachee Senior Citizens Center

Secretary's Report



by
Melodye Steverson



Withlacoochee Rockhounds Monthly Meeting Minutes 4-11-2018

- The meeting was called to order by club president Judith Birx at 7:00 PM.
- We all stood for the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment of silent prayer.
- There was one new member to recognize, Mike Everitt.
- There were two guests in attendance; Matt Pasek and Jim.
- Mark Moore made a motion to accept the minutes of our March meeting as printed in the newsletter, the motion was seconded by Janet Wheeler, and the motion was passed by all members.

Old Business

- Judith Birx presented a financial report regarding membership dues that was displayed on a board. She explained how the dues were spent for each member, and why the club was losing money on each family membership. She said that the Board of Directors has been discussing a raise in membership dues and would vote on this at a future Board meeting.

New Business

- Judith Birx announced;
- There will be another field trip to Graves Mountain soon, and members are encouraged to get in touch with Lauren Bell for information.
- The Board of Directors will meet on 4-17

-18 at 6:30 PM. Members with concerns are invited to attend.

- Judith and club treasurer Janet Wheeler have re-submitted the 1023-ez form to the IRS, and are waiting for a response.
- Members need to have instruction before using the grinding/polishing machines, and the saw. If you have had no instruction and want to use the machines, please see an experienced member such as Rovie Alford, Melodye Steverson, or Roger Wheeler.
- Melodye Steverson will be teaching the next Tuesday morning jewelry class. The class will be on "Metal Stamping" and members will be making bracelets and rings. This will be held at the Senior Center on May 1st, from 9:00 AM until noon. Class fee is \$5.00 each.
- Mike Stone told the group that he had club information cards and offered them to members to hand out to people interested in our club.
- Melodye Steverson told the group that because the club tee shirts were less than perfect, ordering on Amazon.com has been discontinued until the graphics can be redone. Then the tee shirts will be again put up for sale and members be notified.
- Rovie Alford, Ralph Barber and Tony Acquaviva said the silversmithing class went well, and are planning to teach another round of classes in the fall.
- Lauren Bell told the group that there are problems with some of the mine owners in Georgia regarding mining schedules. She said to contact her if you are planning to mine in Georgia anytime soon.
- Next month's refreshments will be provided by Leslie Moore, Michele Evans, and Dorwin Skinner.
- Tommy Blackmon made a motion to ad-

journal the meeting, Mark Moore seconded, passed by all.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:22 PM.
Minutes respectfully submitted by club secretary Melodye Steverson.

Withlacoochee Rockhounds Board of Directors Meeting Minutes 4-17-18

Attending Board members; Judith Birx, Melodye Steverson, Janet Wheeler, Ralph Barber, Dorwin Skinner, and Rovie Alford.

Also in attendance; Weeki Wachee Senior Citizens Center representative Carol Hechler, and club members Elaine Alford, Ron and Linda Parks, and Lynn Walters.

Board meeting started at 6:33 PM and was held at the Weeki Wachee Senior Citizens Center.

- Club resident Judith Birx handed out the meeting agenda and began by announcing that she and club treasurer Janet Wheeler re-submitted the 1023-ez form to the IRS, and are waiting for a response.
- She also said that she would meet club treasurer Wheeler and club secretary Steverson at the club's bank to set up the account "allowed signer" changes.
- Club president Birx asked for an update on the gem show information and stressed that all lists, suggestions and other gem show related information should be presented by June. It will all be compiled into a comprehensive file that will be duplicated and kept by several Board members to make sure the information is always available should it be needed.
- A nomination committee was discussed, as

B.O.D meeting continued on next page

B.O.D. minutes from previous page

- well as taking nominations from the floor during an election. Suggestions offered; a nomination committee will be appointed. Members who wish to be on the ballot must contact the nominating committee no later than two weeks before the election, to state their desire to run. Candidates must have been a club member for at least one year, with good meeting attendance. Candidates will be interviewed by the nominating committee to ascertain their suitability for the office. All officers' positions, plus one board of directors seat are up for election every year. This will be discussed further at the next board meeting.
- The Board discussed, and then decided to vote on the 2019 increase in membership dues. After deliberation, Rovie Alford made a motion to change the membership dues to "everyone over the age of eighteen will pay \$20.00, under age eighteen, membership dues will \$5.00 and each member will continue to pay \$1.00 at the door at club and jewelry glass meetings". This was seconded by Ralph Barber and passed by the Board. The dues increase will be brought to the membership for a vote at the October meeting, to allow time for our "Snow Bird" members to return and be present.
 - Secretary Steverson will examine the machines for wear and need for replacement parts, and will begin a search for more machines.
 - Secretary Steverson will write a welcome letter for all new members.
 - President Bix voiced a suggestion that the club needs a cordless microphone. Club secretary Steverson will check on

what is available and report back to the Board

- Rovie Alford stated that Ralph Barber, Tony Acquaviva, and he will be teaching Silversmithing classes on the last three Thursdays in October 2018, January, and March of 2019. Each student must be a paid-up member of our club, for insurance purposes.
- Rovie Alford made a motion to adjourn the Board meeting, the motion was seconded by Ralph Barber and passed by the Board members.
- The meeting adjourned at 7:30 PM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Melodye Steverson, club secretary.

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
May 1st at 9:00 AM**

Melodye Steverson will teach metal stamping. The cost of materials for this class is \$5.00.

102-Carat Flawless Diamond Breaks Sale Record



The world's most expensive diamond per carat has sold to an unnamed buyer recently.

The 102.34-carat jewel is larger in diameter than a quarter and is considered the rarest white diamond ever to be sold. It is the world's only known D-color, round, brilliant-cut diamond over 100 carats that is technically flawless, according to the Sotheby's, which put the diamond up for sale in February.

The auctioneers have not yet revealed the total price paid for the jewel, but say the deal far exceeded the previous record of \$260,252 per carat set in 2013.

That means the 102-carat jewel sold for at least \$26.63 million in total.

The previous record holder was a 118.28 carat oval diamond that sold at auction in 2013 in Hong Kong for a total of \$30.8 million.

Of the millions of diamonds the Gemological Institute of America examines each year, only a handful, if any, weigh more than 100 carats, said Tom Moses, executive vice president and chief research and laboratory officer.

"These are accidental freaks of nature really," Mr. Moses said. Miners are less likely to unearth many more diamonds of this size since no new diamond mines are in the pipeline, he said.

"All indications are that we'll see fewer of these diamonds," Mr. Moses said.

From www.barrons.com

Memories of Rock Collecting...and other things

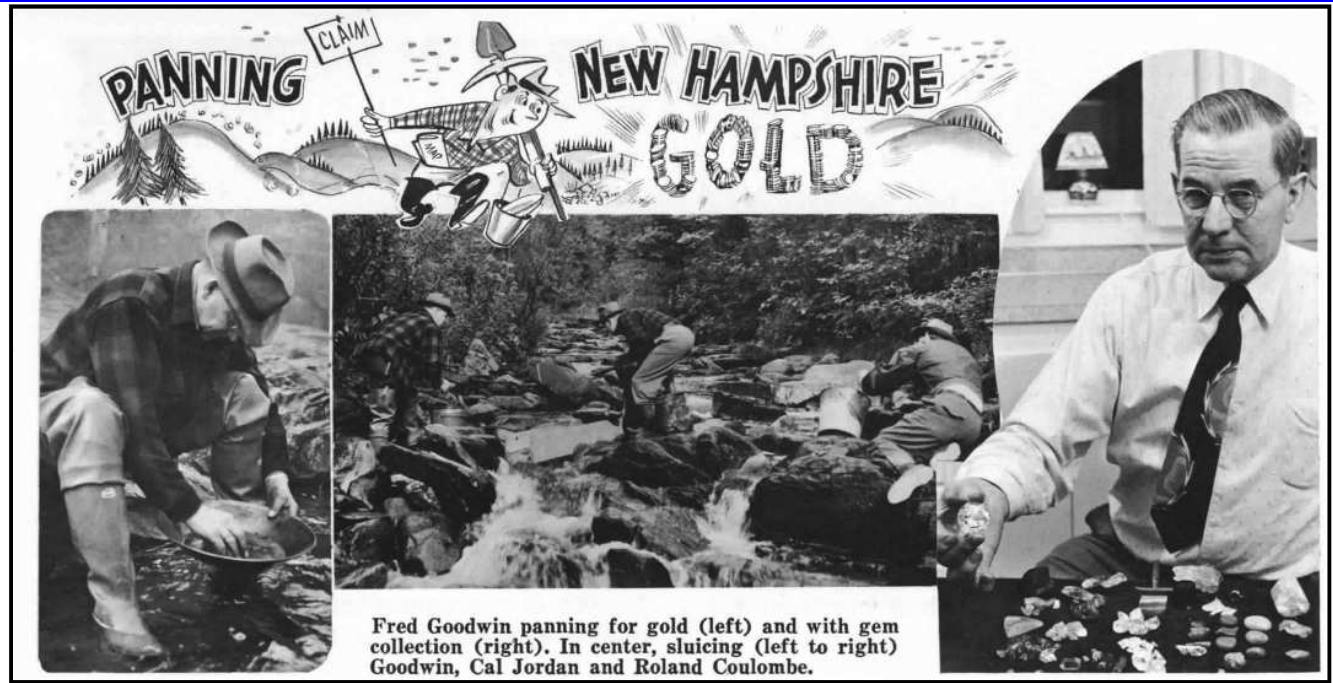
by Mike Stone

When I was a young teenager living in northern New Hampshire I knew a local character, named Fred Goodwin. Fred was someone who many folks, including my friend and I, respected because of his knowledge of local geology and topography, as well as his knowledge of rocks and minerals and more importantly, where to find them.

Here's a story about Fred Goodwin from *The Brown Bulletin* (January-February 1959)

http://berlinnhistoricalsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/The_Brown_Bulletin_V6_No11_Jan-Feb_1959.pdf

"There IS gold in Indian Stream, at the headwaters of the Connecticut River. Fred Goodwin of the Paper Lab [laboratory], amateur geologist in his spare time, proved it last summer. According to legend, there once was an Indian who panned gold in the early 1800's from Indian Stream. He was supposed to have gotten as much as \$1500 worth of the precious yellow metal every year. If the story is true, he was one smart redskin. Either that, or he got all the gold there was and left only the legend behind him to plague the curious Mr. Goodwin. It was twenty years ago when an old timer who lived in Pittsburg, N. H. told Fred about the gold in Indian Stream. Being naturally curious, Fred decided to investigate. He finally did — twenty years later with a picked crew of gold-minded miners, Roland Coulombe and Bob Whitney, both of Research, and Cal Jordan of the Onco Plant. Equipment for the week-long expedition consisted of a jeep for transportation via tote road into the remote wilderness only a few miles from the Canadian border, shovels, crowbars, pans and sluice boxes, along with



Fred Goodwin panning for gold (left) and with gem collection (right). In center, sluicing (left to right) Goodwin, Cal Jordan and Roland Coulombe.

plenty of grub for hungry miners. The gold they searched for was to come from washing loose sands in the bottom of the stream, sands that came from Canada frozen to the undersides of the great ice sheets and deposited in this area when the ice melted and retreated. Placer mining sounds easy. It isn't. It is heavy backbreaking labor, involving much shoveling of river bottom sands where the gold is supposed to be. These sands are put into the sluice box, where a constant stream of water washes over them and carries off lighter particles, leaving the heavy sands and gold (if any) settled behind riffles. Then these sands are removed from the box, and washed again in a pan. Gradually all the sands are washed from the pan, and at the bottom, if there is any, lies the gold. The Goodwin mining expedition found gold, 10 flakes of it. 20,000 of these make an ounce worth \$35.00. Profitwise, the trip was not a success. But it was a lot of fun. Good meals from an old

wood stove in the camp, tall stories by the light of kerosene lamps, poker in the true mining camp tradition — these all made the trip a worthwhile venture. Even Bob Whitney, cameraman for the operations, didn't mind the ducking he got when he fell off a wet rock into the cold waters of Indian Stream. Are they going back for another try? Geologist Goodwin hasn't made any plans yet. He has a lot of ground still to cover in the North Country looking for semi-precious gems, or trying to locate the lost mine somewhere east of Berlin known as Uncle Ben Russell's Lead Mine, supposed to contain 60% silver. Fred has been tramping through the North Country for thirty-five years and has traded some of the semi-precious gems he found for further knowledge in geology. He has found some very fine gems — quartz, tourmaline (sic), topaz and amethyst. Some of them are on exhibition at the American Museum in New York,

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Withlacoochee Rockhounds

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whose curator has trekked along with Fred to some of the topaz pockets; also at Harvard Museum, the Boston Museum of Science, and in the Dartmouth College Collection.”

I visited the Harvard Museum in Cambridge as a youngster and saw the gigantic, foot tall smokey quartz crystal on display that was donated by Fred Goodwin. editor

While talking with Fred about where to find quartz crystals in the Berlin area, he suggested that we go to the top of a small, nearby mountain. He said there is a large pocket of clear to milky quartz crystals at the very top of the mountain. All we'd need to do was to keep walking until we reached the highest point of land. That sounded easy enough, so Francis Jordan (The son of Cal Jordan who looked for gold in Indian Stream in 1958.) and I gathered our tools, such as sledgehammers, rock hammers, and chisels, and packed our lunches. Francis carried a large canvas knapsack and I carried a much larger pack basket. We walked from our neighborhood, for about a mile to the base of the mountain. Looking toward the top we could see the Potato Patch, a small field on the side of the mountain that apparently had been used at some point to grow potatoes. We found an old road that took us to the Potato Patch and then we walked uphill through the grass, bringing us nearly half way to the top of the mountain without having to go in the woods. The remaining climb was easy, because we were in hardwoods with very little ground brush. Most of the trees were small maples, about six or eight inches in diameter, indicating that at some time in the not-to-distant past the hill had been cut off for either lumber or pulp

wood for the Brown Paper company mill, a few miles south.

Once we reached the height of land, we saw nothing but leaf-covered ground and tall, thin trees. We walked in circles, scuffing the ground with our boots, hoping to find bedrock where the pocket of crystals would be found. After several minutes we began to become discouraged. Then I saw a small patch of green moss and scuffed

my boot over it. The moss peeled away, exposing rough and weathered, gray colored bedrock. Getting on my hands and knees, I removed more moss and swept away several year's accumulation of leaves, exposing a deep hole in the ground, about one foot in diameter. We could see that the hole extended about arm's length into the ground and expanded to a couple feet across.

Using an eight-pound sledgehammer we broke open the entrance to the hole, allowing us to chip out hand-size chunks of crystal clusters. The quartz crystals varied in size from a fraction of an inch



One of the few clusters of quartz crystals that I found more than fifty years ago.



I used a pack basket similar to this one to lug rocks out of the woods!

to almost thumb size. None of the crystals were clear...most were milky in color.

We loaded our packs with several crystal clusters and headed back down the gently sloping hill toward home, promising to return to gather more crystals. However, Francis and I didn't go back to collect more crystals and the hole was left to fill in with dead leaves and debris, as the maples shed their leaves and Mother Nature did her best to remove evidence of our

crude excavation.

About thirty years later when Peg and I were visiting family in Berlin, we went back to the area and parked at the base of the mountain. The Potato Patch and access road were grown in with trees, but without much difficulty we were able to climb to the height of land in search of the crystal pocket. Of course the trees were thirty years older and therefore larger, but the mountaintop looked about the same. We searched and searched and felt around with our feet for bedrock or any evidence of the hole Francis and I left thirty years previous. But after nearly

Continued on next page

Next Meeting, May 9th, 7:00 PM at the Weeki Wachee Senior Citizens Center

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an hour we found nothing and headed back down to the vehicle empty handed. It was nice to go back, but I am sorry that we weren't successful at finding that quartz crystal pocket. The chances are slight that we will ever look for it again.

Dowsing for water

I have my doubts about someone being able to find water, by water witching or dowsing (using a divining rod). Back in the mid 70's when I was about to have a house built, I hired a fellow to dig a well with a backhoe. Before he started the well, he brought his friend to the property to dowse for water. I watched as the fellow walked across the property a few times, holding a forked apple branch horizontally with both hands. Every now and then the end of the branch would twist in his hands and point down toward the ground the ground. He would stop and slide his foot in the soil to mark the spot, and then continue dowsing. After a while he stopped and showed us where the well should be dug, saying, "There are two veins of water crossing at this point, one deeper than the other and therefore this is the best spot on the property for a well.

The backhoe dug a sixteen foot deep hole at that spot, and sure enough, two veins of water were found, one a few feet above the other. Of course it was springtime in New Hampshire when there is usually water in the ground. I expect that the dowser didn't find the only spot on the property with two veins of water. And I wonder if we'd dug anywhere else we would have found water. As it turned out, the water was of excellent quality and the well produced plenty of water until the dry season in the fall when it all but went dry. A few years later we had a two hundred and twenty foot drilled well put in.

Dowsing for minerals

Fred Goodwin said he could hold a divining rod over a map to locate minerals. He claimed that was how he was so successful at collecting minerals throughout New Hampshire and Maine. One day Fred, my father, and my uncle went into the woods in search of some type of mineral that Fred said he located on a topographical map with his divining rod. My father and uncle who were in their early seventies, were very skeptical of his ability to find anything with a divining rod, but agreed to go with him, because Fred was in his early eighties at the time and shouldn't be in the woods by himself. Back then; the only navigational aids were the sun, a compass, and a map. The three seniors headed off in the woods well away from civilization. After bushwhacking for a couple hours, Fred got tired and started stumbling and eventually he tripped and fell. That was when my father and uncle realized that they were in trouble and not only were they not going to find any minerals, they were going to have a problem getting Fred out of the woods, since there was no way that he was going to be able to walk back to the road where the car was parked. Of course there were no cell phones back then, so they had to rely on their own resources to get them out of a potentially bad situation. My uncle and father cut down two thin, tall, straight trees to make two polls for supporting Fred under his arms. Each man held up the ends of each poll with Fred being supported on his feet in the center of the poles. Eventually they managed to find their way back to the car and get Fred home. That might have been Fred's last time out in the woods, looking for rocks and minerals, as he died at age eighty-eight in 1992.



Pyritized ammonite

Flea Market Find


by Peggy Burns

We spent the morning of April 25th at the Litchfield, Kentucky Flea Market, and because it was quite cold, about 55°F, there weren't too many people shopping or vending. However, after searching around a lot of junk, I came across a box of polished stones. I asked the vender what he wanted for each stone and he quoted \$1.00 each. Then I asked what he wanted for the whole box and he said \$15.00. I did my usual thing and said \$10.00, which he took with no hesitation. As you can see, there are about fifty polished stones and gold and silver colored pendants and earring mountings, many of which I'll probably never use. I have a lot of stuff there to give away. Elaine, where were you?



Several cabs and other shaped stones. rose quartz, agates, aventurine, jasper, opal, jade, amethyst, and possibly onyx. Also a mother-of-pearl leaf carving.

Withlacoochee Rockhounds



Bench Tips
by
Brad Smith

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

Polishing Wheels

One of the steps in the finishing sequence is pre-polishing, which is between sanding and buffing. The most effective tools I've found to help with pre-polishing are the little silicone wheels used in a Foredom or Dremel. They come in several abrasive levels and several shapes. The wheels are color coded to denote their abrasive level. Different shapes (coin, knife, cylinder, point, etc.) are available to match the geometry of the area being cleaned up.

For a starter, I'd suggest a medium, a fine, and an extra fine wheel in both the coin shape and the knife-edge shape. Be sure to get a few extra mandrels so you'll



Silicon wheels for pre polishing

have one of each wheel shape mounted and ready to go.

The thicker coin shapes are particularly handy. Cylinder shapes are nice for doing the inside of rings, and knife-edge shapes quickly clean up the solder joint around the outside base of your bezels.

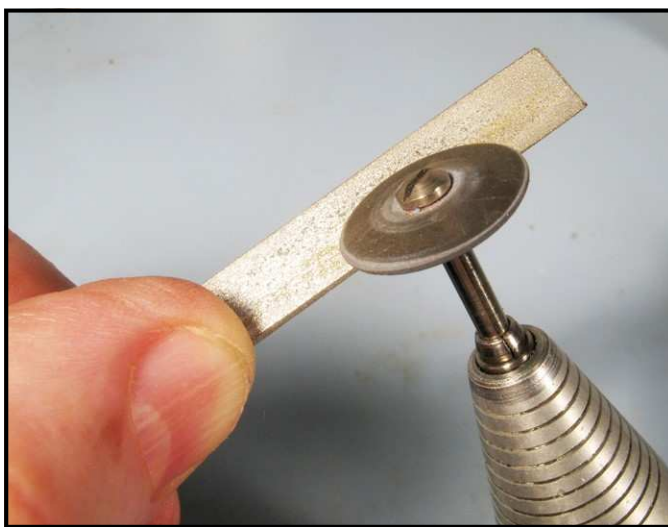
Most jewelry catalogs carry these wheels, but often the color codes don't match between different manufacturers.

Reshaping Silicone Wheels

Silicone polishing wheels in the Dremel or Foredom are a great time saver, but after using them a bit, they often need to be reshaped. This is particularly true with the knife-edge wheels.

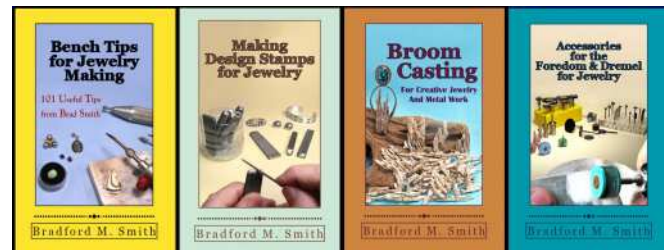
The natural thought is to grab one of your files and hold it up against the rotating wheel to reshape it. But this creates a problem. The grinding grit in the silicone wheel is much harder than steel, so you end up grinding down the teeth of your file.

The best way to reshape your polishing wheels is to use a diamond file or a separating disk. If you don't have one and must use a steel



Cleaning a silicon wheel with a diamond file

file, I sacrifice the area of the file that is closest to the handle. That's an area that is not used in normal bench work.



Learn New Jewelry Skills With Brad's
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Withlacoochee Rockhounds
is now on Facebook

https://www.facebook.com/withlacooccheerockhounds1/?ref=page_internal



Our Website

www.withlacooccheerockhounds.com

Withlacoochee Rockhounds

Our official mailing address is:

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

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Sinkholes, Chert, Flint, and Fossils



Trees are growing in and around the largest sinkholes in the field. Many smaller and newer sinkholes dot the field. The pond is manmade and collects water running down the hill in the foreground.

by Mike Stone

We are back in Kentucky for the summer. Instead of palm trees, salt grass, Gulf water, and mudflats, we are in cow and horse country, where lots of corn, soybeans, wheat, hay, and tobacco are grown. Like Florida, much of Kentucky is a karst geological area. Which means that the bedrock is water-soluble limestone. Over millions of years water has been dissolving the bedrock, forming sinkholes and caves. Remember the collapse of the floor of a building in the Corvette Museum in Bowling Green, Kentucky? It is possible that the



Peg checking out a recently (few years) sinkhole.

caves in our area (northern central Kentucky) are connected to the Mammoth Cave system forty miles to our south.

Because most of the runoff finds its way into the ground through sinkholes, there are no rivers or lakes close to where we live. Often rainwater will form ponds in depressions that were once sinkholes, but have become sealed and now can hold water. In some cases, natural and manmade ponds are used by farmers to water their cattle

and horses. At times the bottom of some ponds will begin leaking water into limestone voids and caves below, eventually draining the pond.

Across the road from our house, large corn/soybean fields are dotted with sinkholes (most have trees growing around them). Some are a few hundred feet across and hundreds of years old. Others that have recently formed and are only a foot or so in diameter. Sinkholes in the fields vary in depth from a foot to two (newly formed) to forty or fifty feet.

Early each spring we use Peg's Mule to explore the fields to check out sinkholes and also to see

what we can find for rocks and fossils that were exposed over the winter. Recently we stopped at a relatively new sinkhole and saw that in a year it has enlarged quite a bit. I presume that since the fields are in a flat valley, soil from the higher elevations around it has washed in and has been collecting for years, building the soil to a depth of forty to fifty feet. We live on a hill overlooking these fields, and there are places on our property where there is no soil; limestone bedrock is visible on the surface.

As we were exploring the field, we came across a washout where runoff from the hill across the road is funneled into a culvert and directed into the field where it finds its way deep underground. Here the heavy flow of water has exposed chunks of chert, varying from fist to breadbox size. It hadn't rained in several days,



Peg standing on the edge of the washout.

so the sticky red, Kentucky mud had dried into a concrete like material. So we didn't have to deal with muddy shoes as we sometimes have in the past. Peg found a very nice chert bi-valve fossil and semi spherical piece of oolitic limestone containing very small fossilized tubes. I sent photos to Dave Letasi to identify. This is his response:

Withlacoochee Rockhounds



“Chert is a fine-grained sedimentary rock, composed of microcrystalline or cryptocrystalline silica. Depending on its origin, it can contain either microfossils, small macrofossils, or both.” Wikipedia

“You have an example of Syringopora. They are a type of tabulate tube coral found throughout the mid west. They are middle Paleozoic in age, probably Devonian Period. Pull up fossil tabulate coral and Devonian geological deposits in KY on the Internet for more information.” Dave



One of many large pieces of chert from the runoff gully.



A very nice chert bi-valve fossil.



The back side of the above piece of chert. Notice the roughness, irregularity, depressions and reddish color; the same color as the local soil.

There is sometimes confusion between chert and flint. Most of my reading indicates that they are identical in structure, but some authorities distinguish the difference based on how chert and flint are formed, while others say the difference simply their color. Many consider flint a type of chert and others use the terms flint and chert interchangeably. Chert (flint) is a sedimentary rock made up of microscopic bits of quartz that over time have become compressed and forced together to form rock. These rocks are popular among knappers, as they form a hard, sharp edge when chipped, and make effective weapons and implements. Flint or chert is also used to start fires because they create sparks when they impact one another with a glancing blow.

This is how a spark is produced:

1. Use high-carbon steel, which is about 98 percent iron and 2 percent carbon (a hard, relatively brittle steel). A file will work well.
2. Strike a sharp edge of the flint a glancing blow with the high carbon steel.
3. Very tiny particles of fresh iron will fly from the steel.
4. Upon contact with oxygen in the air, the surfaces of the iron particles spontaneously ignite and give off heat as they oxidize (rust) In other words when they combine with oxygen.
5. Because the surface area of each iron particle is so large compared to their volume, the particles quickly heat up and glow red hot, thus become sparks.

Information from www.survivalTopics.com

A UTV ride through open fields in Kentucky is a great way to find rocks, minerals, fossils, and Indian arrowheads. Just ride slowly, look for areas of no vegetation, and leave no stone unturned.



We also both picked up several interesting shaped and textured chunks of chert for our collection and/or for use on our stone-walls.

Withlacoochee Rockhounds

Membership Form

2018

Complete this form and bring it with you to the Withlacoochee Rockhound meeting.
Attach your membership dues to this form.

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

Please Print Clearly

Primary Member

Last name

First Name

Renewing members check here if no change in information below.

Additional family members:

Last name

First Name

Check if under 18

Last name

First Name

Check if under 18

Last name

First Name

Check if under 18

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 the 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 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.



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

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.

2018 Club Officers

President.....	Judith Birx.....	352-587-1702.....	judithbirx@hotmail.com
Vice President.....	Kelly Johnson.....	352-688-9399.....	KellyMineralsFossils@aol.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
Gem Bag Coordinator.....	Gloria DuPont.....	352-848-5199.....	ddupont@tampabay.rr.com

Board of Directors

Rovie Alford (2018)
Ralph Barber (past president)
Judith Birx (president)
Linda Spaulding (2020)

Melodye Steverson (secretary)
Dorwin Skinner (2020)
Mike Stone (2019)
Janet Wheeler (treasurer)