

Rock

Talk



August 2020



Rock Talk



In This Issue

- Club President's Message
- AMFS Code of Ethics
- What is It?
- A Newcomer to the Gem World
- Museum of Rocks with Faces
- Keeping Busy Creating
- The David Letasi Report
- Rock Dust...Climate Solution?
- Bench Tips
- From the Editor
- Lithium
- Rock Art

Cover Photo

The photo is of a piece of a **stromatolite** that has been cut, ground, and polished. Stromatolite means layered deposit. These deposits built up very slowly: a single, one-meter structure may be 2,000 to 3,000 years old. But the

tiny microbes that make up modern stromatolites are similar to organisms that existed 3.5 billion years ago.

Stromatolites are one reason why life evolved on this planet. Before cyanobacteria, the air was only 1% oxygen. Then, for two-billion years, photosynthesizing stromatolites pumped oxygen into the oceans (like underwater trees, before trees existed). When the ocean waters were saturated, oxygen was released into the air, and with nearly 20% concentration of oxygen in the atmosphere, life was able to flourish.

Here is interesting information on stromatolite research. <https://www.whoj.edu/oceanus/feature/what-doomed-the-stromatolites/>



Present-day stromatolites (Australia)

President's Message

Judith Birx



Hi everyone!

I hope everyone is healthy. It pains me to have to cancel the August meeting. Also we are not going to have a Board meeting or the jewelry class in August. The COVID-19 pandemic is much too prevalent, particularly in Florida. Also the Weeki Wachee Senior Citizens Center is closed until September.

On a more positive note, I was able to visit my son in Idaho in May, and while there I was able to mine at the parks and mountains in the surrounding area. But I was not able to mine for opals as planned...maybe next year.

I know that everyone is ready to get back to some kind of normal. I really want to hold a meeting and if you know me, you know how true that is. Unfortunately our numbers in the state of Florida are still rising and our county numbers are rising as well. I do not know if we will be able to have our gem show this year. We will be discussing that at the Board meeting, along with other important issues.

Please send Mike Stone (n1ve@amsat.org) pictures and stories about your lives during this

Continued on next page

The August Club Meeting Has Been Cancelled

President's Message from previous page

pandemic. It would help me fill the void of not having a meeting and lift my spirits to see all of you and the projects that you have been working on. Reaching out to some of our members would be a good idea if you get the chance.

I wish all of you well, and I hope that the fall will bring us back together, physically. Until then try to keep in touch by the newsletter and phone and emails, and let us not forget that the Facebook Pages of Ralph and Roberta are up and running with all kinds of updates, and stories.



The following are photos from my trip to Idaho last May.



I collected naturally formed hearts and found this one at Succor Creek, on the side of the road.



One of my favorite places to dig.



Agate from graveyard point



Table Rock. It is a 3.7 mile loop trail near Boise. At the top is a 60 foot tall, white cross. The hike is a 895 foot rise in elevation. Mike my son and I made it!



Some of our other finds.

More photos from Judith's trip to Idaho



Succor Creek



Graveyard Point

Withlacochee Rockhounds Receives Donation

This spring the club was contacted through our website about several pounds of rocks and slabs that we could have. Club president Judith Birx picked up the collection. Check with Judith to find out what we will be doing with this collection.



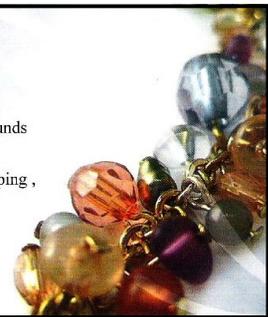
Mike found this agate. I think it's the best specimen that we found

Board of Directors Meeting
There will be no August Board meeting.

Jewels by Jude

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

352-587-1702



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AFMS Code of Ethics

(<http://www.amfed.org/ethics.htm>)

- I will respect both private and public property and will do no collecting on privately owned land without the owner's permission.
- I will keep informed on all laws, regulations of rules governing collecting on public lands and will observe them.
- I will to the best of my ability, ascertain the boundary lines of property on which I plan to collect.
- I will use no firearms or blasting material in collecting areas.
- I will cause no willful damage to property of any kind - fences, signs, buildings.
- I will leave all gates as found.
- I will build fires in designated or safe places only and will be certain they are completely extinguished before leaving the area.
- I will discard no burning material - matches, cigarettes, etc.
- I will fill all excavation holes which may be dangerous to livestock.
- I will not contaminate wells, creeks or other water supply.
- I will cause no willful damage to collecting material and will take home only what I can reasonably use.
- I will practice conservation and undertake to utilize fully and well the materials I have collected and will recycle my surplus for the pleasure and benefit of others.
- I will support the rockhound project H.E.L.P. (Help Eliminate Litter Please) and will leave all collecting areas devoid of litter, regardless of how found.
- I will cooperate with field trip leaders and those in designated authority in all collecting areas.
- I will report to my club or Federation officers, Bureau of Land management or other authorities, any deposit of petrified wood or other materials on public lands which should be protected for the enjoyment of future generations for public educational and scientific purposes.
- I will appreciate and protect our heritage of natural resources.
- I will observe the "Golden Rule", will use "Good Outdoor Manners" and will at all times conduct myself in a manner which will add to the stature and Public "Image" of Rockhounds everywhere.

Use Our Website

If you don't receive an email with a link to the *Rock Talk*, you can access our website for the newsletter or up-to-date club information. Also, previous *Rock Talk* newsletters can be downloaded from our website. They have been posted from June 2016.

www.withlacoocheerockhounds.com

Mike Stone, editor/webmaster

What is It?

Can you identify the specimen below?



Answer in this *Rock Talk*.

Last month's "What is It?"

Pyrite Sun



Lepidolite, submitted by
Michelle Evens

A Newcomer to the Gem World

From <https://jewelryconnoisseur.net/>



Aquaprase is a type of chalcedony quartz with its natural color caused by chromium and nickel. There are two types: one that is blue-green and translucent and one that is a baby blue color, but changes color and has what look like clouds inside. The stone's matrix has dark brown and black inclusions, as well as whitish cloudy ones. Aquaprase has a hardness of between 7.5 and 7.75 on the Mohs scale.

In late 2012, gem dealer and explorer Yianni Melas was about to abandon his search for diamonds in an undisclosed African country when he discovered a different mineral that looked like nothing he had ever seen.

Melas, known by the nickname “Indiani Yianni,” sent samples of his find to a Swiss gem lab, which misidentified it as chrysoprase. But eventually, the Gemological Institute of America (GIA) confirmed it was a blue-green chalcedony quartz that no one had encountered before. He named it aquaprase — “aqua” for the blue sea, and “prase” for the green color.

Aquaprase is now mined by a local company in the country where Melas found it, with 40% royalties going to the government there (the country's name is being kept confidential to prevent other parties from overrunning the area).



Aquaprase in the rough found in Africa

The company sells all production to the major investor in the project, Jaipur emerald dealer Avant Chordia, who cuts and distributes the gem.

San Francisco-based jewelry designer Sam Woehrman is equally enthusiastic about aquaprase, which he first encountered when he met Melas at the 2016 Tucson Gem Show. “I bought two pieces, and have been hooked ever since,” he says. “I knew I wanted to use more of it in my designs.”

Aquaprase has what appear to be turquoise blue clouds surrounded by clear areas, as well as Paraiba [tourmaline-like] colors that are more translucent and clear. But the real beauty lies in the matrix” — the patterns throughout the gem.

The going price for aquaprase ranges from \$1.00 per carat for matrix-heavy material to \$100 per carat for gem qualities with clear color. The matrix is being cut to maximize the patterns rather than the yield — often butterfly-style for earrings.

The future use of aquaprase will be dictat-

ed by supply. As of now, it is mined in an area less than one square kilometer.



Pamela Huizenga suite of aquaprase jewelry.



Sam Woehrman aquaprase and diamond pendant. Sam

Information sent to us by Michael Steverson

Japan's Museum of Rocks With Faces

If you're ever in Japan, consider a trip to Chineskikan, located two hours outside Tokyo in the city of Chichibu. The peculiar museum is the only one of its kind, dedicated entirely to rocks that look like human faces. Owned and operated by Yoshiko Hayama, Chineskikan is home to some of the most spectacular stones nature has to offer, with rocks that resemble everyone from Elvis Presley to E.T. Following in her father's footsteps, Hayama is preserving the legacy of "jimmenseki," continuing the search for rocks that resemble human faces.



Elvis



Let your imagination run wild.

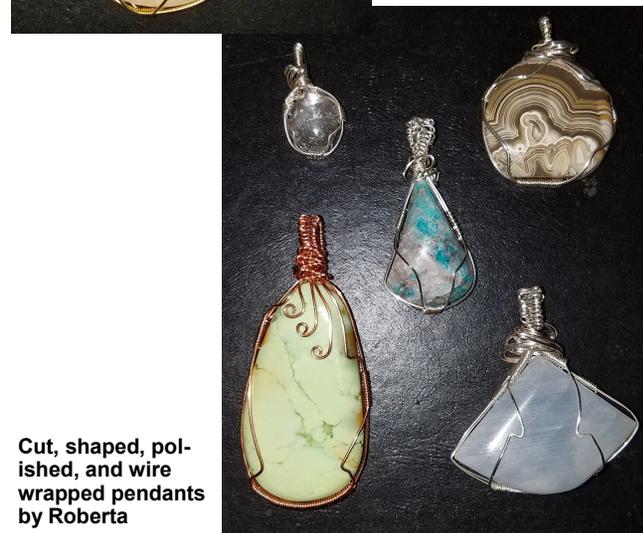
Keeping Busy Creating

Hi Withlacoochee Rockhounds club members. With the Covid virus, I have been busy in my leather shop since it all started in March. This month I took time to wire wrap specimens that I had cut, collected, or were gifted to me by friends. The three jewelry pieces pictured together are coral from Million Souls Mine in Pasco County and the five in the other photo are pieces that I cut, shaped, and polished that I either bought or were gifts to me.

I sure do miss our club meetings and classes. Stay safe and healthy. *Roberta Oldread*



Coral from the Million Souls Mine



Cut, shaped, polished, and wire wrapped pendants by Roberta



Flint blade tool pressure flakes resemble strange human like effigies

An article appeared recently at

<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kebaran>

Kebaran

reporting the occurrence of flint blade tool pressure flakes resemble strange human like effigies from a blade tradition in Jordan recovered in a gravesite. These artifacts are highly unusual and are considered an extreme rare form of human shaped artifacts of flint. I



My 11000 year old micro blade from central Syria

had the good fortune of studying over two hundred examples of these long thin micro blades from a collector and friend of mine who had been asked to identify what a Syrian artifact collector had in his possession. Unfortunately his examples were not modified to represent the human form. However utilizing examples found as surface finds are well recognized in numerous scientific articles related to the latest Upper Paleolithic tool making traditions in the Mid East.

After explaining what his finds exactly were, he kindly gave me one of his finest examples for my collection. These blades are extremely thin, very narrow in width, and are usually quite long. They are razor sharp on their lateral cutting edges. These thin extremely long blades are unique to this culture.

The example I have in my collection from this collector that I helped identify, were collected in central Syria in the 1990s. If you look at the picture of the handle knife with inset micro blades you can see how these blades were set in a wood or bone. They were sometimes fractured into sections to fit in the carved bone that could be over six inches in length. This was accomplished by setting as many as six micro blades in a series. Microscopic studies of the cutting edge striations of wear are consistent with cutting of



Effigy stylized flint blades found in a 11,000 year old grave

plant fibers. They were used for cutting wild grain plants at their stems for thrashing and they were used for cutting grass as well as for various other needs such as insulation of huts from the heat and cold, and bedding. These grains were wild early forms of barley and wheat and formed a large percentage of the calories in their diets. This increase in cultivation of wild grains led these early people to consider storing grain supplies that ultimately promoted their continual local sedentary occupation of these grain-rich habitats that were exploited in the Fertile Crescent. It is likely the blades that appear to be effigies are part of a goddess effigy cult that is believed to have been derived from Upper Paleolithic traditions that manufactured female clay, ivory and bone objects similar in outline.

This culture was contemporary to the religious site of Gobekli Tepe in Southern Turkey. This site is in direct line with these artifacts that

Continued on next page



Stone effigy found at Gobekli Tepe

are considered part of a large Upper Paleolithic tradition that emerged from the late Aurignacian flint blade tool makers and became the later Kebaran and Natufian cultures of approximately 13,000 years ago using smaller blade tools. These artifact point effigies are somewhat later in time, around 11,000 years ago and would be a later phase of that population called the Lavent tradition, and would be contemporary to the occupation of Gobekli Tepe site to the northern range of these micro blade artifacts distribution. This phase of ancient culture was the last phase of hunter-gatherers in the Mid East that morphed into the first agriculturalists and the founders of sedentary villages. The site at Gobekli Tepe is becoming to be recognized as the very beginning of an earliest spiritual religious center and the very beginning of a civilized cultural center.



Stone blades found at Gobekli Tepe

occur from northern Jordan through central Syria and south central Turkey. The site is unique with large monolithic lime rock pillars decorated with carved animal figures.

These lithic materials are found as outcroppings from the Cretaceous Period and fossil fish remains are well known and collected from these deposits in Jordan. The flints from these deposits were collected by middle through late upper Paleolithic period and the Mesolithic Period people roughly 600,000 to as recently as 3000 years ago.

The artifacts found in Jordan are from a burial complex and are dated to the same time period as Gobekli Tepe was occupied. They

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

KELLY JOHNSON

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Hernando County, FL

Rock Dust Could Be Farming's Next Climate Solution

The process, called enhanced weathering, could remove two billion tons of CO₂ from the air while fertilizing soil

From <https://www.smithsonmag.com>

Enhanced weathering is a term being used to describe certain efforts by humans to combat the effects of surplus amounts of carbon dioxide (CO₂) and the resulting overheating of our planet.

Spreading lime to sweeten soil to enhance the growth of particular plants has been going on for many years. The process of using carbonates in farming is now being considered to reduce the accumulated CO₂ from our atmosphere.



Spreading lime on a crop field.

The word "lime" refers to products derived from burnt (calcined) limestone, such as quicklime and hydrated lime. Limestone is a naturally occurring and abundant sedimentary rock consisting of high levels of calcium and/or magnesium carbonate, and/or dolomite (calcium and magnesium carbonate), along with small amounts of other minerals. It is extracted from quarries and underground mines all over the world. <https://www.graymont.com/>

If enhanced weathering, were to be employed around the world, scientists estimate two billion tons of carbon dioxide could be removed from the atmosphere each year.

Enhanced weathering essentially speeds up natural processes of erosion and chemical reactions using introduced minerals. During the process, rocks are crushed

and transported to farmland, where they are spread over a large area once a year. When it rains, water dissolves carbonate materials in the dust. This cycle causes carbon dioxide to be pulled from the atmosphere into the solution, forming bicarbonate ions. Over time, these ions are washed into the ocean and form carbonate minerals, trapping the carbon for at least 100,000 years.

To meet the guidelines in the [United Nations Climate Change Paris Agreement](#), some scientists claim at least ten gigatons of CO₂ must be extracted from the atmosphere each year, the authors write. If the global

surface temperature were to cross 3.6 Fahrenheit above preindustrial levels, scientists warn that the effects would be irreversible.

According to some scientist, we have passed the safe level of greenhouse gases. Cutting fossil fuel emissions is crucial, but we must also extract atmospheric CO₂ with safe, secure, and scalable carbon dioxide removal strategies to bend the global CO₂ curve and limit future climate change."

Spreading rock dust on half the farmland in the U.S. would cost \$176 per ton of carbon and \$225 annually per American. That's pricey compared to clean energy solutions that directly cut emissions. Solar farms, for instance, cost less than \$40 per ton of emissions cut.

Thanks to Melodye Steverson for the interesting article. This is the third article that has recently been sent to us about using "rock" to remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. The problem as I see it is the amount of carbon dioxide that would be created by burning petroleum to mine, transport, and spread the rock. And the carbon dioxide created when powering the equipment that makes the material that makes the equipment to dig, transport, and spread the rock. I wonder if the total carbon dioxide change would be a washout? editor

Rovie Alford

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Withlacoochee Rockhounds



Bench Tips by Brad Smith



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

Straightening Wire

Have you ever pulled out silver wire only to find that it is all bent up? The easiest way I've found to straighten it out is to stretch it a bit.

Simply put one end in the vise and grab the other end with a pair of serrated tip pliers. Then pull just enough to feel the wire stretch like a rubber band. This works best on smaller wire diameters, up to about 16 gauge.

Be careful if you are trying to pull hard on a thick wire. Brace yourself in case the wire breaks or pulls out of the pliers.



Pulling to straighten a bent wire

Do Bezels Shrink?

The engineer in me says there is no reason that a bezel should shrink when I

solder it onto a baseplate, but I sometimes find that the stone won't quite fit into the bezel that was a perfect fit just before soldering.

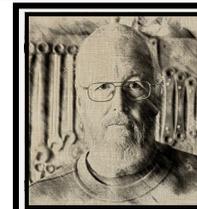
If that ever happens to you, here's a fix that usually works for those times when there is just a minor problem. I file or sand the stone down a little around its base. For soft cabs like turquoise, lapis, jet or howelite, you can use a sanding stick. Harder cabs like jasper or agates will require a diamond file. In a pinch, a ruby nail file from the drugstore will work.

There are two important things to remember when doing this. First, you can only make a minor adjustment to the size of the stone, and all filing or sanding has to be hidden by the bezel because it takes the polish off the stone.

Secondly, remember to round off all sharp edges on the bottom of the stone. A sharp edge here might sit on a little extra solder in the bottom joint of your bezel. Just a little bump can put enough stress on the stone to risk breakage when you burnish the bezel down over the stone.



Learn New Jewelry Skills With Brad's
How-To-Do-It Books



From the Editor

Email Scam Warning

Members of several clubs are being approached through email messages fictitiously posing as a club officer and asking members to purchase gift cards as a donation. The following is an email that was sent to me.

*Hello Mike,
How are you today? I need your Assistance, are you available? I'm out of town. Can you please handle this for me on behalf of the Society. Withlacoochee Rockhounds, Inc. need Gift cards for donation to Veterans Hospice care unit across the community. Kindly confirm if you can help out.
Judith Birx
President.*

Please keep in mind that no one in our club will contact any club member asking for them to purchase anything as a donation. Simply delete the email or put it in your junk folder.

August Club Meeting Cancelled

Lithium



Lithium

Most people in the civilized world know that **lithium** (Li) is used for making rechargeable batteries. This metallic element is extracted from various ores such as **lepidolite** and **spodumene**. Chances are that many Withlacoochee Rockhounds have specimens of lepidolite and spodumene in their collections.



Lepidolite



Spodumene

Lithium is also extracted from salt water. There is only one mine in North America doing so, and it is in Utah. Watch the video below to learn about the process.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dppG8YIGlqI>
editor

Rock Art



Peggy Burns

May Rock Talk

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Your Favorite Specimen

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

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

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

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Getting to Know You

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

Club Members' Business Cards

Club members who have businesses related to any of our club activities can have the images of their business cards posted in each issue of the *Rock Talk*. This is an additional benefit of being a **Withlacoochee Rockhounds** member. You can send electronic images or an actual business card to:

n1ve@amsat.org
or
Mike Stone
4504 Kingston Dr.
Hernando Beach, FL 34607

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


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

Withlacoochee Rockhounds

Membership Form

Annual Dues: Individual member, \$20. 00. Under 18 years of age, no charge.
Check if new member

Please Print Clearly

Last name _____ First Name _____ Check if under 18

Street Address: _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone Number (s) _____

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**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:**
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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
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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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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 no cost for children under 18 years of age.

Club Meeting Location and Time

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

2020 Club Officers and Appointees

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

Board of Directors

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

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