



THE ROCK RATTLER



2005-2006 Club Officers

President Edna House
949-9765

Vice-pres. John Autry
390-9200

Secretary Gail George

Treasurer Bill Hart
746-8735

Board of Directors

Joe Beasley (1)

John Quade (2)

Ike House (3)

Plus all Club Officers

Show Chairman

Bill Hart

Charlie Johns (Co-chair)

Dealer Chairman

Joe Beasley

Rock Rattler Editor

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The Ark-La-tex Gem and Mineral Society meets at 6:30pm on the 1st Tuesday of each month at the Bossier Parish History Center,

2006 Beckett St
Bossier City, La. 71111

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hi there -

In this message I would like to extend a very sincere expression of thanks to all of our officers and board members. Even though some have experienced family illness, they still have worked diligently for our club, and are doing a fantastic job.

Our members have surprised and amazed me with their willingness to come forward to give programs. The talent and knowledge that we have in the Club is appreciated very much.

Upcoming in May will be a presentation on different kinds of Opals, brought to us by Bill Hart. (For a preview, check out Bill's article in this issue of the Rockrattler. ed).

Charlie Johns is bringing some "Baker Agate", and agate from Morocco, that he has cut for show and tell. Everyone else is invited to bring their favorite item to show and tell as well.

Plans are going forward for our show in August. The South Central Federation convention will be held in conjunction with our show. The SCFMS folks have asked for help from the local club, so not only will we have additional expensed, but additional manpower needs as well. (We will help the Federation with their auction, plus have a breakfast meeting, as well as an evening banquet.) So on this note I want to mention that we will need to watch our expenditures and make wise and reasonable decisions about our money.

Our Club has worked hard to acruer the money that we have, and I would like to remind all that we have two goals: to educate, and eventually have our own club building so we can be even more effective in our educational endeavors. There are some works going on for a building, so if the opportunity arises, we need to have the money to close the deal.

I want to wish each of our special Mom's a "very happy Mothers Day".

Rock on

Edna

FIDDLER'S RIDGE CRYSTAL DIGGING SPRING FLING

Fiddler's Ridge is having a crystal digging contest with the opening of their new Bear Mountain mine on June 8-9-10, 2006. There will be prizes and trophies for first thru fifth place. Lots of other activities as well. Cost is \$100.00 for two days of digging. \$2000.00 in prize money. Contact Kathy at 870-867-2314. or www.fiddlersridgecrystals.com. or e-mail her at fecho@ipa.net Fiddlers Ridge is 7 mi. east of Mt. Ida.

MY EXPERIENCES WITH OPAL
BY
Bill Hart

When I first learned to cut Opal back in 1956, I thought there was only one type, the common, white based stone with flashes of fire. I had no idea what caused these flashes but I did know that when the stone was cut and polished, these flashes would become, like magic, the soul of the stone. Of course when I was first learning, I could only afford the "practice opal". It cost \$1.00 per ounce in 10 ounce packets.

For years that was the only type Opal I cut. In 2001 I heard of Wild Acres, a school that taught various types of stone cutting, jewelry making and other lapidary arts. I decided that I wanted to learn more about cutting Opals, and Wild Acres was the place to learn. I wanted to learn how to make a doublet or a triplet and how to cut very flat pieces of Opal.

When I arrived in North Carolina, I was introduced to the lady instructor, Mrs. Sarah Lee Boyce of North Carolina. The first 2 days we cut common Opal so she could assess our "talent" and "skill." They are not the same, I found out. I had the skill but lacked the talent to make a "bad" piece turn into a good piece. So she kept after me to "listen to the stone, let it tell you what it wants to look like". It took me the better part of a day to understand what she meant, that is, orient the stone to get the best display of color.

On the third day she was satisfied that the class had learned what she was trying to instill into us. So she started the day by passing out a piece of "Honduran Opal". This is a type that has lots of sand imbedded in it and undercuts very badly. After we "finished" our stone, she told us that she was now going to show us how to stabilize the stone before we cut another. This was my first introduction to another type of Opal. The next stone she gave us was a piece of blue stone which had different lines of material in it. This was "Peruvian Opal". It is has a "blue" color with dendrite formations and is a harder stone and cuts beautifully.

The next stone was a piece of "Boulder Opal". This stone has Opal in iron ore and is soft to cut and polish. The last day was spent making doublets and triplets.

After I returned home, as I was checking the Opal on eBay, I saw "Koroit boulder Opal", a type I did not know of. I decided to bid on a lot and won. When I received it, most of the pieces were flat and had an entirely different coloring to it. It is polished flat most of the time because the color layers are very thin. If you try to dome it, you may lose the colors. The next type I found was a type called "Brazilian Dendrite Opal". The color of the base runs from clear to a very dense yellow, and green. It makes a very unusual stone when cut to show the dendrites. It also has a variation of color in the same stone.

Since then I have found "Pink Opal", a harder stone. I have no idea why this is an Opal. It is bright pink and has brown streaks in it. I also bought a piece of "Ice Cream Opal" which is a soft stone that has a tendency to pit while being cut.

The next type I found is Louisiana Opal. It is a very different opal. It is a sandstone/quartzite with opal cement and matrix. It is very hard and unlike most opal, the less water you use the better. This stone has lots of matrix and other impurities in it and it is best to just polish as is. The colors are hard to expose and if you don't take care, you can cut through the strata very fast. This type opal shows its colors best in bright sunlight.

Since then I have seen two other types, "Green Opalite from Macedonia" and Opal from Ethiopia which has a brown base. Both places are unusual for the formation of Opal. However, I have since found out that the "Ethiopian Opal" was the original Opal. And that is where it came to be known as
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 April 2006 Minutes

An announcement that Jack Adams' son-in-law passed away was made. Our condolences go out to that family.

Pam and James Hendrix brought a number of their wire and gem trees for display. They were wonderful.

Don Talbot had a display and demonstrations of various "homemade" tools he uses in his silversmith trade. He gave several explanations of how some came to be – mainly he said they were made because he was so "cheap". Hey, if they work, what's the difference?

The scholarship parameters were discussed at length. Ike House will write up a proposal for the scholarship criteria, and then submit it to the LSU committee for their approval/suggestions. A motion was made and seconded to defer the vote on the actual approval of the criteria until the next meeting.

Bill Hart gave a Treasurer's report.

Pam was asked if she and James would be willing to give a demonstration on the gem trees. She stated will have to be after the show.

Show Business:

We have a contract with the Holiday Inn and Hampton Inn for rooms.

Post cards are being addressed and stamped to be mailed.

The budget for the show this year is approximately \$8,000.

The breakfast available both Saturday and Sunday will be \$10. The Saturday dinner will be approximately \$25.

Announcements have been sent to two magazines.

There are rumors the rates for the Bossier Civic Center are going up again next year.

Providing lunch for the dealers both Saturday and Sunday was discussed. A motion was made and seconded to create a committee of Ike House, Jack Adams and John Quade to investigate options and their costs.

Respectfully submitted, Gail George

Lapidary Tip

To identify and grind out pits in the cabochon, spray the rough cab with red enamel from an aerosol can, then grind the paint off with a light touch. Pits and lines will stand out as bright red spots, making it unnecessary to wipe the cab to see if the pits are out. This is especially helpful when grinding freeform cabs from Fire Agate.

Source: The Petrified Digest 1/99

Tip for Silversmiths

Draw your jeweler's saw through an old candle. It coats the blade and you can saw faster. Wipe a piece of chalk over your jeweler's files. It keeps metal slivers from clogging the file and you can blow them out. Avoid scratches in silver you are working on by covering it with transparent contact paper. You can mark and saw with the paper on.

Source: The Petrified Digest 1/99

These tips via the Sooner Rockologist

Is it Citrine or Topaz?

Clean the stone, then use a toothpick, put a drop of water on the table of the stone.

The water will form a high bubble on real topaz. On quartz, the water flattens out.

From The Rockhounds Record, May 2004 via Strata Gems February 2005

(continued from page 2)

"Queen of Gems". It was mined and polished for the royalty of Africa and the kingdoms of the Middle East. I have not obtained any of these types so know nothing about cutting and polishing them.

There are many ways to cut Opal. You can simply cut a standard shape taken from a template. If you have a large enough piece, with color all the way through it, this is fine. But most Opal has gotten too expensive for me to afford the larger stones. So to make the best stone from small pieces, learn to "listen to the stone". Start cutting on a 220 disk or belt, using lots of water and going very slow. Take the time to look at the stone every few minutes, both wet and dry. This will give you more of a sense of what the stone is "trying to tell you". You will most likely have a stone that is free formed but you will have the "best" stone you can get from the piece.

The Rock Rattler is a monthly publication of the Ark-La-Tex Gem and Mineral Society located in Bossier City/Shreveport, Louisiana. The society is affiliated with the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies (AFMS) and the South Central Federation of Mineralogical Societies (SCFMS). Permission is given to reproduce this document all or in part with proper credit given. Articles with no byline are by the editor.

The Ark-La-Tex Gem and Mineral Society is a nonprofit educational organization devoted to promoting interest in the various earth sciences, particularly the art of lapidaries and their related fields. Informational speeches presented at area schools and the presentation of awards and cash prizes at the Public School Earth Science Fair are two of the ways the society achieves its goals. Another contribution to the community is the annual show, held at the Bossier Civic Center, 620 Benton Road, in Bossier City. This "Jewelry, Gem, & Mineral Show" functions as a fund raiser for our group and a venue for the demonstrations of gold and silver casting, jewelry making, bead stringing, faceting, cabochon making, and flint-knapping (the art of flaking stone tools such as arrowheads). The monthly meetings (including programs of interest to rockhounds), information from the Rock Rattler, and jewelry making classes through Bossier Parish Community College complete the educational objectives of the club.

DOOR PRIZES TO BE PROVIDED BY:

- BILL HART -- FEBRUARY**
- OKLEY DAVIS -- MARCH**
- DON TALBOT -- APRIL**
- JOHN QUADE -- MAY**
- RED FLUITT -- JUNE**
- IKE HOUSE -----JULY**

UPCOMING SHOWS

MAY:

- 6-7 WACO, TEXAS**
- 27-28 FORT WORTH, TEXAS**

JUNE:

- 16-18 COLORADO SPRINGS, CO.**
- 2-4 PENSACOLA, FLA.**

JULY:

- 1-2 Lake Ozark, Mo.**
- 8-9 Bossier City Civic Center - Bead show**
- 14-16 Houston International Gem and Jewelry show**

CLASSIFIED ADS

WANTED: AGATE, BLOODSTONE, JASPER OR ANY OTHER EXOTIC STONE SLABS SUITABLE FOR FLINT KNAPPING. DIG THROUGH YOUR OLD SLAB BOX, AND CONTACT ME AT "wihouse@bellsouth.net" or call me at 318-949-9765 Wil House

For Sale - Modern arrowheads, and other biface points. Good quality points, from various materials. Would also consider trade of points for quality knapping material. Wil House (see above to contact)

Remember, want ads may be placed in the Rock Rattler by club members, and may include rock related items. (relation can be very loosely made)

REFRESHMENT SCHEDULE

- FEBRUARY-----JOHNAUTRY**
- APRIL-----DON TALBOT**
- MAY-----DAVID HOWARD**
- JUNE-----THE STEWARTS**
- JULY-----IKE HOUSE**
- AUGUST----**
- SEPTEMBER---PAM HENDRIX**
- NOVEMBER---**

Note: March, October and December are special meetings, and "normal" refreshments will not be provided. Volunteers for open months are requested

ARK-LA-TEX GEM AND MINERAL MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

- Individual Membership \$15.00 per year
- Couple Membership \$20.00 per year
- Family Membership \$25.00 per year

Mail to:
 Ark-La-Tex Gem and Mineral Society
 P.O. Box 6633
 Bossier City, La. 71111

Name(s).....

Address.....

Renewal?.....Phone(s).....Email.....

Membership option (check one) Individual:..... Couple:..... Family:.....