

# **THE ROCK RATTLER**



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**THE ARK-LA-TEX  
GEM AND MINERAL SOCIETY**

**PO BOX 3366  
BOSSIER CITY, LA. 71111**



**ROCKY**



How often have you heard someone say, "I just can't get a really good polish on.... I must be doing something wrong". The list of stones and polishes may just help solve that problem, and help you enjoy our hobby more.

## RECOMMENDED POLISHES

CMO = Cerium Oxide, TO = Tin Oxide, LA = Linde-A, DIA = Diamond, CHO = Chrome Oxide

ACTINOLITE	TO	LABRADORITE	TO, CHO
AGATE	CMO, TO	LAPIS-LAZULI	TO, LA, CHO
ALABASTER	TO	LIMESTONE	CMO, TO, LA, CHO
AMAZONITE	TO	LAPIDOLITE	CHO
AMBER	TO	MALACHITE	TO, LA, CHO
AMBLYGONITE	TO	MOONSTONE	TO
ANDALUCITE	TO	NEPHRITE	TO, LA, CHO
APATITE	LA, CHO	OBSIDIAN	TO, CHO
AVENTURINE	TO	ONYX	CMO, TO, CHO
AZURITE	TO, CHO	OPAL	CMO, TO
APOPHYLLITE	CHO	PERIDOT	TO, LA, DIA
ARAGONITE	CHO	PETRIFIED WOOD	CMO, TO, LA, CHO
AXINITE	CMO	PHENACITE	TO
BARITE	CHO	POLLUCITE	CMO
BENITOITE	CMO	QUARTZ	CMO, TO
BERYL	CMO, TO, DIA	RHODOCHROSITE	TO, LA, CHO
BLOODSTONE	LA	RHODONITE	CMO, LA, CHO
BRAZILIANITE	TO	RUBY	DIA
CALCITE	TO, CHO	RUTILE	LA
CASSITERITE	TO	SAPPHIRE	DIA
CELESTITE	CHO	SCAPOLITE	CMO
CEROSSITE	CHO	SCHEELITE	CHO
CHRYSOBERYL	DIA	SERPENTINE	TO, LA, CHO
CORAL	TO	SMITHSONITE	TO
CORUNDUM	DIA	SODALITE	CMO
DANBURITE	TO	SOSOLITE	CMO
DATOLITE	TO	SPINEL	TO, LA, DIA
DIOPSIDE	CHO	SPHALERITE	CHO
DIOPTASE	CMO	SPODUMENE	TO
DIORITE	CMO, TO, LA, CHO	SUNSTONE	TO
ENSTATITE	TO	THOMPSONITE	CMO
EPIDOTE	TO	TIGER EYE	CMO, TO, LA
EUCLASE	TO	TITANITE	TO
FELDSPAR	CMO, TO	TOPAZ	TO, LA, DIA
FLUORITE	TO, CHO	TOURMALINE	TO, LA, DIA
GARNET	CMO, TO, LA, DIA	TURQUOISE	CMO, TO, LA
GOLDSTONE	CMO, TO	UNIKITE	CMO
HEMATITE	CMO	VARICITE	CMO, TO, LA
HICKORYITE	LA	VESUVIANITE	CMO
HOWLITE	CMO, TO, LA, CHO	WILLIAMSITE	LA
HYPERSTHENE	TO	WONDERSTONE	TO, LA
JADITE	CMO, TO, LA, CHO	WULFENITE	CHO
JASPER	CMO, TO, LA, CHO	ZIRCON	TO
KYANITE	TO	ZIOSITE	CMO

The list is from The Puget Sounder, 9/88. via Pebble Pusher May 1989

December, 2006 Minutes

Enormous amounts of food were brought and subsequently consumed. The auction netted a total of \$576. The disposition of these funds will be decided at a future meeting, but normally they are donated to some charity or educational application.

Merry Christmas to all and Happy Holidays.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gail George

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#### **Heat Treating Agates**

Some agates respond well to heat-treating to restore colors. For example, many Lake Superior agates have lost their vivid reds and oranges. The structures are intact but the color has faded to almost uniform light tans and browns. Heating them restores much of their original vibrancy. Some other stones that especially benefit are Brazilian agate and Carnelian. To treat, place a layer of clean sand or kitty litter 1/2 inch deep in a Pyrex™ dish. Place a layer of rocks (slabs) in the dish. Cover thinly with sand or kitty litter. Repeat until all rocks are used. Place in oven at lowest setting (150 degrees) for two hours. This drives out the moisture that could cause the stones to explode, then raise the temperature 50 degrees every 1/2 hour until 500 degrees are reached. Leave on for two hours at 500, then turn off the oven to let cool, preferably overnight ... *NO PEEKING!* Allow container to cool completely to room temperature before opening the oven door. This process takes approximately 10 hours.

Author unknown, original source unknown, taken from Golden Spike News, Golden Spike G&MS Ogden Utah, July 2004

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Chalk absorbs sulfur from the air. Sulfur combines with your sterling silver items to cause tarnishing. The next time you store your jewelry, ( or other silver items), place some pieces of blackboard chalk with your items and seal it all up in a baggie. Ed.



**Laps For Beginners**

**By Dick Walker**

The first lap that a new faceter needs is a master lap that is true and flat. This can be either the aluminum lap supplied by most of the major manufacturers or the composite laps from Ameritool Inc. I must emphasize the statement flat and true because your master lap will dictate the accuracy of all of the cutting that you will do as long as you use it. Several types of cutting or grinding laps are available. The most common and least costly is the plated or bonded lap where the diamond is affixed to the lap with a nickel plate on a thin steel sheet. These laps are available as a topper or thin lap meant to be affixed to a master lap or already bonded to a master lap. A note is in order here; if you buy laps prebonded to a master lap, you must remember that you are pay-ing for all of those master laps to the tune of about \$25.00 each. My suggestion is to buy the toppers and use them as-is on your one master lap (without removing the wax paper covering the adhesive).

The selection of basic cutting laps is pretty straightforward. For your coarse or primary cutting lap I recommend either 260 or 320-grit. Most cutters should have a 600-grit lap to remove the scratches left by the coarser lap. Then I recommend a 1200-grit lap. This lap is recommended by many cutters, as a prepolish lap. I disagree, most of the plated laps available today tend to be very aggressive and leave a rough surface that the beginner has to work very hard to get rid of with a polishing lap. I recommend a good prepolish lap such as an Amerishine 1200 lap from Ameritool Manufacturing. This lap, once broken in, is 1200 mesh diamond in a very hard resin bond. Per the instructions that come with the lap, I recommend a little bit more aggressive method of breaking in these laps than the manufacturer, which is as follows.

Put your coarse diamond lap on the machine with your master lap to support it. Start a fast drip from your water source and bevel or round off the edge of a common red brick. Now put your coarse lap away, after washing it. Put your new *Amerishine* lap on the platen of your machine. Start the machine and set your water drip to a fast drip. Take the brick in hand and, using the beveled edge of the brick, rub it on the rotating lap using a back and forth motion. In order to abrade the entire lap, do this for a couple of minutes. Now stop the lap, turn off the water and wipe the lap off. Examine the surface. It will not be perfectly smooth but most of the surface imperfections should have been removed. If in doubt, dop up a piece of quartz or sunstone and cut a couple of facets onto it with your 600-grit lap. Now place the *Amerishine* lap onto the platen and, running a medium drip and about four or five hundred revolutions per minute, place one of your new facets onto the rotating lap and see if it becomes shiny or pre-polished. Now we are ready to deal with polishing laps.

This is a can of worms, but assume that you are starting on inexpensive material such as quartz, Oregon sunstone or glass. All of these can be polished with the same lap. It used to be that these materials could be polished with Plexiglas or Lucite laps.

However since this is usually accomplished with a good deal of cursing and cat kicking, I don't recommend either. My personal choice of the laps available is the "Wizard" lap available from the Facet Shoppe in Port Townsend, WA. It does come complete with a full set of instructions, and best of all, it's inexpensive.

All of the forgoing is based on my personal experience. The sources mentioned are real sources that I have dealt with. I do not intend to slight the other fine suppliers of similar products that are; I am sure, of equal quality.

April 2005, Columbia - Willamette Faceter's Guild *FACETS* via  
**Texas Faceters' Guild Newsletter April 2005 Volume 26, No 2**

**2006-2007 Club Officers**

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318-949-0552

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Dwight House  
[www.larockclub.com](http://www.larockclub.com)



**MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION**

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

Dues are due on October 1 of each year



**MURPHY'S OTHER LAWS....**

Light travels faster than sound. That is why some people appear bright until you hear them speak

He who laughs last, thinks slowest.

Nothing is foolproof to a sufficiently talented fool.

The 50-50-90 rule: Anytime you have a 50-50 chance of getting something right, there's a 90% probability you'll get it wrong.

If you lined up all the cars in the world end to end, someone would be stupid enough to try to pass them, five or six at a time, on a hill, in the fog.

A fine is a tax for doing wrong. A tax is a fine for doing well.

The shinbone is designed for the special purpose of finding furniture in a dark room.

If the shoe fits, get another one just like it.

The things that come to those who wait will be the things left by those who got there first.

Flashlight; a container for dead batteries.

by Lee Burleigh, (edited)

Club members, new members, face your fears. Preparing a showcase is EASY! There are a few simple rules that anyone can follow:

- 1) Decide what you have to display.
- 2) Determine what size case will be needed.
- 3) Decide what lining will best enhance the beauty of your materials.
- 4) Keep it simple.
- 5) Label everything.
- 6) Relax

Decide what you have to display. Give it a try. Don't say: (a) I don't have anything good enough. (b) I haven't had time to finish enough items for a show. (c) I haven't anything new that everyone hasn't already seen.

In a non-competitive display the items shown don't have to be our own work. Buy or borrow whatever you need to make up the display. Whatever your interest- rocks, slabs, minerals, fossils, finished jewelry, cabs, etc. - you can find these in your home, or those of your friends, relatives, neighbors, or in shops.

Share a case with another club member. As few as 5 or 10 select items can make an attractive and interesting display. Determine what size case will be needed. Most show cases are 4 feet wide and 2 feet deep. Using a yardstick and a piece of string, mark out a 4x2 foot space on a rug or table. Try out different arrangements of your display items. If you have materials that lie flat, a slant-case is fine. The front of such cases is about four inches high, the back wall about 9 inches. If you have a tall item, an upright case is indicated. Such cases are 4'x2' high. Be sure to reserve your case well in advance so both case and table space will be available.

Decide what type of lining best shows off your materials. While your materials are laid out on a table, decide on the type and color of lining. Neutral colors such as cream, beige, eggshell, and light pastels are best. Avoid bold patterns, bright colors, shiny or reflective textures. Stretch-type materials are excellent as they can be pulled tight. When measuring your case, allow about 2 inches on all edges for folding under. Allow enough material for risers and redecorating another year. Be sure the pattern or nap will all run the same way. Keep it simple. Don't overcrowd your display. Allow room for labels and your name plaque. Remember, you are displaying minerals, fossils, lapidary work, jewelry - try not to distract the viewer with unnecessary decorations.

EXCEPTION: Educational exhibits occasionally need a variety of materials - models of dinosaurs, a fossil bone, a piece of coprolite, and cabs of petrified dinosaur bone, can all be integral parts of an exhibit.

Label Everything. Use a name tag or plaque to identify your case so your friends and visitors will know whose it is. It is frustrating to see beautiful materials unnamed in a case. Every item or grouping of the same materials should be labeled with the name of the material and its source (state or nation). Use one of the reference books in the club library or talk to a club member. Labels should be uniform in size and lettering. They should be typed, if possible, for legibility. 3x5 cards make good label material. Labels should lie flat and parallel to the front of the case. Avoid "label maker" or other such tapes, which can curl in the heat.

Relax. Before you dismantle your trial table-top layout, recheck it for all the above suggestions. Is it exactly as you want it? If so, make a rough sketch showing each piece in the layout, or take a close-up snapshot, to aid in reassembling it the way you want it at the show. Prepare a kit of things to take with your case: labels, liners, paper towels, display items, glass cleaner, pins/tacks, name plaque, layout/ sketch, scissors, etc Now really, RELAX! The hard part is done. If you have more questions or need a little help, call upon an experienced club member for help and ideas.

*From Rocky Review via KGeMS Newsletter 7/00 via Rolling Rock Jan. 03*



LAMENT OF A FRUSTRATED EDITOR  
by George "Chic" Cihacek  
Editor, *Loup Scoop*

I've threatened, coaxed, begged and pleaded  
To try to get articles I needed  
To fill space on a page or two  
In this bulletin we print for you.  
But in spite of all of my requests  
And all of my earnest behests,  
When deadline comes, I'm in a flurry  
To gather material in a hurry.  
I scan each exchange with eagle eye  
To find an article or two which I  
Hope would of great interest be  
To rockhounds just like you and me.  
In desperation I choose a few  
And hope that what I've picked will do.  
But if you think your bulletin is lacking  
And you'd like to send your editor packing,  
Send me the things you want in print,  
A long article or just a hint.  
Remember, this is your newsletter  
And you can help to make it better.

SOME OF THESE DAYS  
by E. W.

I'm going out with you, some of these days,  
Some of these days I'll do it.  
I've often thought of hunting rocks  
And I'm looking forward to it.  
Oh! I can't come yet, I've got to work.  
But someday, by and by,  
When I have the time to spare  
We'll go collecting, you and I.

Poor sincere hardworking fellow,  
In a short time he was dead....  
And the only rock he collected  
Now towers above his head.

So friend, if you want to go rocking,  
Than that's what you'd better do.  
Old Father Time collects people,  
And he may have his eyes upon you!

A TREASURER'S DREAM  
Author unknown

I fell asleep the other night  
And while I had my snooze,  
I dreamed each member stepped right up  
And promptly paid his dues.  
But when I found 'twas but a dream  
I nearly threw a fit!  
It's up to you to make it true:  
Suggestion — Please remit!

THE ROCKHOUND  
by Ernie Hopfinger

My back is tired, my hands are sore.  
I'm digging slower than before.  
At first I'm kneeling, then I sit,  
I begin to think it's time to quit.

From up the hill there comes a cry.  
A new-found rock is held up high.  
Whose back is tired? Whose hands are sore?  
I'm digging faster than before!

THE LURE OF ROCKS  
by Jack Terwilliger

My gems from the mountains and rivers,  
From the beaches, the deserts, the seas,  
All remind of my need for the questing  
For more answers to life's mysteries.

Each one has revealed a secret  
Held in rocks for ages of years,  
Each one has yielded a beauty  
So needed to soften life's tears.

If only for moments in passing,  
Each viewer can then realize  
That each rock lying there in life's pathway  
May hold gems for a pilgrim to prize.

**History Lesson 101:** When the white man discovered this country, Indians were running it...there were no taxes. No debts, and the women did most of the work. All the Indian men did was hunt and fish as much as they wanted, whenever they wanted!

Here's the real kicker. The white man was dumb enough to think that he could improve on a system like that!!!!  
Golden Spike News 11/01

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**SOLDERING:**

GOLD SOLDER ( Requires special solders to match karat material being soldered)

SILVER SOLDER Melting Point

HARD	1425 F
MEDIUM	1390 F
EASY	1325 F
“EASY FLO”	1270 F

SOLDERING “RULES”

Work must be clean	Joints have good tight fit
Flux properly applied	Heat work evenly
Solder flow	Not too much solder
Proper flame	Steam vents

TORCHES:

Propane canister	Natural gas and compressed air
Acetylene and atmospheric air	Oxy-acetylene ( oxygen and acetylene)

SOLDERING BLOCKS:

Charcoal	Fire brick
Ceramic and synthetic	Wire mesh

FLUXES:

Borax mixed with water  
 “Handy Flux” (a commercial flux in paste form)  
 Boric acid and alcohol  
 Prips flux (commercially available, or can be easily home made.  
 Good for Preventing fire scale)

PICKLE SOLUTION

Used to clean up work after soldering. An acid based material, and must be carefully handled

FLAME TYPES:-

Neutral	Sharp point, gentle hiss, medium blue color
Reducing	Bushy, pulsing flame, deep blue color.
Oxidizing	Thin cone, angry hiss, pale lavender

FIRE SCALE:

Deposit of cupric oxide  
 How to avoid:  
 Use ‘hit and run’ technique  
 Avoid prolonged heating  
 Use big enough flame  
 Use enough flux  
 Don’t overheat

## UPCOMING SHOWS

## JANUARY:

- 1- Ada, Ok.  
 20-21 Fredericksburg, TX.  
 24-25 Tyler, Tx.  
 24-28 Quartzite, Arizona

## FEBRUARY

- 3-4 Panama City, Fl.  
 24-25 Jackson, Miss.  
 24-25 Pasadena, Tx.

**Sign on to the internet at [www.rockngem.com/showdates.asp](http://www.rockngem.com/showdates.asp) for a complete listing of shows, contacts, addresses, etc.**

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## SHOP TIPS:

## Changing the color of Agate

The art of changing the color of agate isn't new. The Romans soaked agate in ferric sulphate for an extended period of time and then heated it to produce carnelian. Onyx was produced by soaking stones in olive oil or sugar for several weeks at a moderate temperature. They then washed and soaked them in a dilute solution of sulfuric acid. Today, German and Brazilian miners and lapidarists use the same methods. Author unknown, Source: The Ammonite, Western Dakota G&M 4/03 via Rockhound record

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When grinding and polishing obsidian, always work the stone from the center out. Otherwise, the grinding wheel and sanding belts will pick up tiny bits of glass and they will scratch the stone. Original source unknown, via "Breccia", Santa Clara Valley Gem & Mineral Society 11/03

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## Poisonous Malachite

Did you know that malachite is very poisonous in its raw state? Never lick the material to see the color. Don't even repeatedly lick you finger and apply. When you grind, wipe the contaminated oil off your skin right away. If you smoke, and the taste becomes very sweet, you are absorbing the malachite dust. The copper oxide dust is mixing with the moisture in your mouth and reacting to the tar in the tobacco, turning it into saccharine. Needless to say, you should take some immediate steps to stop the inhalation.

From Amador Nugget 7/00 via Grant County Beacon 8/03 Rockhound Record12/03

## The Story of Montana Agate

It has always been a mystery how the peculiar little scenes got inside a rock as hard as agate. It is the claim of geologists that the spots were caused by infinitely minute seams of fissures in the softer parts of the rock being filled with metallic oxides when the world was young. These oxides made four different colors that form various combinations of colors when blended together, or appear in single colors in each rock.

The red color is oxide of iron. The black is oxide of manganese. The green is oxide of copper. The blue is oxide of nickel. This theory has been elaborated by the help of high-powered microscopes that show the tracings of little canals closed so the naked eye could not detect it, but the oxides remained, staining the rock in wonderful designs. The fern-like and branch effects of the trees, grass, and shrubbery, come from the fact that the tiny canals branched out in various subdivisions forming smaller canals from a common center, and in addition to these canals, the rock became flawed through shrinkage while passing through a period of evaporation which, according to scientists, has taken more than 3 million years to reduce the stone to the hardness of 7 points on the Moh's scale.

These canals and flaws have been perfectly healed by soft silicate formations of which the stone is a part, and the evaporation has caused the oxides to take on such forms as are seen on the window after a frosty night.

Technically, Montana agate is known as "Dendritic" agate, and the moss spots are called "dendrites." It is the third hardest stone in the world, and is cut only with a diamond saw. There can never be two pieces alike even though cut from the same stone.

*Author Unknown, from The Rockster News, 12/94-2/95 via Rollin-Rock Feb.03*

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### DROP OF WATER TEST FOR TOPAZ

Quartz and topaz are not easy to separate by eye, and are sometimes impossible when the quartz is a true topaz colour. There is a big difference in price between the two and anyone describing quartz as "topaz" however innocently, may well be in trouble. Topaz is quite a different mineral, which is harder than quartz. Because of this, a drop of water will not spread on topaz but will on quartz. Clean the stone as effectively as possible with a cloth or handkerchief to remove all trace of grease. It must be dry before the test. Then place a spot of clean water on it with a thin glass or metal rod. On stones with the hardness of less than 7 on the Mohs scale, the water is dispersed. On harder stones it will remain a globule. The harder the stone, the more rounded will be the globule.

**Caryhound 1/02, via North West Lapidary and Mineral Soc. 7-8/05**

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

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.