

THE ROCK RATTLER



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

**PO BOX 6633
BOSSIER CITY, LA. 71111**



ROCKY

—|—|—|—| PRESIDENTS MESSAGE —|—|—|—|

Greetings fellow rockhounds,

It has been a quiet month here in Haughton. We have been digging in flower beds and working other outside projects.

Our Chipalottas are active as usual in the spring with festivals, and other activities. They will be demonstrating at Benton On the Square festival on May 5th. They will be doing their usual, of demonstrating arrowhead making, and talking to people about the art.

I will be demonstrating afghan making using process called “cro-hook”. If anyone has any time that Saturday, come on up to Benton, and look at all the arts and crafts there. It is free, and starts at 9 A.M.

I would like to call your attention to the article from Gail George pointing out that volunteers are needed to help out at our show in August. I hope that everyone can participate. It is a good way to get to know everyone.

Also, we are looking for a new editor for the Rock Rattler. We are hoping that someone will be available to take over soon. Let me hear from anyone interested - Edna.house@gmail.com or Wil. (his phone number, and email in the Rock Rattler)

The May meeting program will feature Wil House, demonstrating a simple wire-wrap technique that anyone can do. If you happen to have a standard cabochon, or some long skinny arrowhead, you can use this design to make a pendant.

Till then, rock on

Edna

REFRESHMENTS FOR MAY MEETING

Cristy Holder and Elaine Smith

DOOR PRIZE FOR MAY MEETING

Eydie Lindsey

Hints and Tips

Fluorescent labels can be read in the dark by using ink made by mixing quinine and water. It glows bright blue under black light.

~From Stoney Statements, 9/03, via Chips and Chatter, 10/03. No author.

April, 2007 Minutes

We wish to welcome visitors Alan and Mary Dales, as well as Katie Rhea.

Ann Danowsky gave a program on the care and cleaning of jewelry. She had some interesting facts about cleaners from the late 1800's. Various members shared tips for preventing tarnish on silver and cleaners. Good job, Ann.

Charlie Johns has requested to be replaced in his Vice President position, but will retain his job as Show Chairman. Ann Danowsky will take over the V.P. job until end of term. Thanks again, Ann.

The Post Office Box number that has been printed on the Rock Rattler is incorrect. The correct number is 6633.

Charlie Johns has send ads for our August show to several magazines for national exposure. Two new vendors have been added this year. Joe Beasley had the masters for the new Show flyer and post card – these were passed around.

A new group was announced – The String-Alongs. This is a group interested in beading and the meetings are held on the Monday following our Club meetings. They will be held this month at Edna House's home at 6:30. Anyone interested is invited to come – all are welcome.

Dwight House spoke about the web site. Rock related videos are now available. Dwight would like to move the web site to a new server. This is a cost reduction move. A motion was made and seconded to approve this change. According to Dwight, this change will occur in a month or two.

Mary Talbot briefly described some of the things they saw on their trip to Greece. She made the jewelry, people and buildings seem to come alive with her descriptions.

Micah Adams is going to Florida for a week to a dig with several nationally known paleontologists. He will have a report and pictures for us soon.

There is a jewelry display from the Smithsonian at the Louisiana Museum at the Fairgrounds through July.

Respectfully submitted, Gail George

To All Club Members:

Our show is coming up this August. This is our primary source of fund raising for the majority of Club functions, events and educational opportunities.

In the April “Rock Rattler,” there was a sheet discussing rules for demonstrating/displaying at our show. In the fourth paragraph, volunteering for the various duties is mentioned. These needs are critical for the success of our show.

There are needs in the Club Booth, Silent Auction, Children’s Activities, selling tickets, attending the door prize booth, or just informational aid to the dealers and public. Gail will have a sign-up spread sheet beginning at the May meeting for these jobs, broken down in one hour shifts for both days the show is open.

Please be sure to sign up for as many activities as possible. If you are unable to attend the meetings, please contact Gail George (318-925-6531) and she can let you know what jobs and time slots are still open.

The Show Committee is looking forward to working closely with each of you before, during and after the August show.

Thank you for your support. Gail George

Cute Story

An elderly woman and her freckled grandson spent the day at the zoo and then waited in line with other kids to get their cheeks painted with tiger paws. “You’ve got so many freckles there’s no place to paint,” one little girl said. The little boy was very sad and his grandma knelt down next to him and said, “I love your freckles. When I was little I always wanted freckles. I think they’re beautiful! Just name me one thing that’s prettier than freckles.” The little boy thought for a moment, looked intensely into his grandma’s face and then whispered, “Wrinkles.”

From the *Newton Seniors’ Centre*

Submitted by Ivan Leversage via Pebble Press 5/05

(Oregon) Agates: Finding stones that sparkle

Did you know the art of agate hunting is ancient, going back as far as 4,000 B.C.? The word agate is said to derive from the Achatas River in southern Sicily, where the philosopher Pliny said the first agate was found.

Agates are chalcedony rock, translucent quartz with high silica content often formed during volcanic actions. Liquid silica fills in gas bubbles, hardens, and forms agates. Most are small, but agates of enormous size have been found.

They are especially beautiful and smooth after having gone through the polishing process in a rock tumbler. Some people prefer to leave their stones in a natural state, enjoying their rough beauty.

Agates come in all colors and make handsome jewelry. The most common are white, gray and dark blue. Light blue is considered premium, as are agates with banding and water bubbles.

Water agates are rare. They contain water and a movable bubble of air. Some resemble clamshells, bear claws and other familiar shapes. Water agates of any kind are scarce and thus, valuable to collectors.

Moonstone agate is a brilliant, clear stone, while carnelian is bright red. Ribbon agate forms colors in strata. Cloud agate is a transparent stone with dark formations through it.

The bloodstone, or heliotrope, is dark-green jasper with small, blood red blotches.

Many other varieties can also be found. Knowing where and what to look for increases your chance of finding these gems. The best time to hunt for agates is at low tide during winter, after storms have eroded the beaches. Rockhounds can be found on the beaches near Bandon's north and south jetties almost any time of the year, however, for those who choose to hunt agates in the cool season, be sure to be wary of the waves, which can be dangerous and catch unsuspecting rockhounds carrying them into the cold ocean water.

Look in the gravel beds uncovered by the ocean's waves. Sunny days are especially good because the translucent gems allow the bright light to pass through, leading your eye to the shiny treasures.

Agate books can enhance your chances for success, and can be purchased in local bookstores and gift shops. Gems of the Rogue May 2005 issue via Texas Faceter's Guild

**YOUR EDITOR IS LOOKING FOR ARTICLES
MAKE HIM HAPPY AND SEND HIM ONE FOR NEXT MONTH**

Jamie Hill's Emeralds

James K. Hill amazes everyone in 2003 with the announcement of a 1,000 carat emerald found in Hiddenite, North Carolina. However, this was no “overnight success” story. It started with summer visits as a young boy digging up rocks in his great-grandmother’s yard. Hill’s interest in finding emeralds specifically began by listening to stories told by geo-logists, miners and older residents of Hiddenite about the 63 varieties of gemstones to be found in the area. Hill learned the geology of the area and determined the conditions to produce emeralds. Hill spent years driving through Hiddenite on a backhoe asking farmers for permission to dig on their land.

Then, a once in a lifetime chance stared Hill in the face: an abandoned emerald mine came up for sale at a public auction. Without knowing how much or what quality of emeralds still could be found in the abandoned mine, Hill’s family purchased it. Then, in 1998, Hill found a vein that yielded 3,000 carats of emeralds, including two large specimens: one 70 carats, and the other 180 carats. This is when James Hill’s “prospecting” status changed to “commercial mining” status, courtesy of the U.S. government. On the bright side, investors lined up to finance future exploration and mining and Hill paid off some \$200,000 in debts.

Hill hired Dan Delea of Geophysical Survey Systems Inc. to bring in a “high-tech subterranean radar imaging” system. This technology allowed Hill to see geophysical plotting of potential emerald pockets. The plotting of one small section of the mine site revealed more than 30 potential pockets. “while you can’t see the actual emeralds, you can see pockets very clearly, and you can plot a three dimensional grid to systematically uncover them”.

Most miners are circumspect about pockets – some are rich, most are disappointing. As if to underscore that point, a new mine alongside Hill’s property has apparently yielded nothing. Hill found his first two large emerald crystals right at the opening to the pocket, just 12 feet directly beneath the spot where he had parked his backhoe during the two long years of wading through mounds of regulatory paperwork, fees, costly permits and preparing the site to meet ecological requirements as he gradually became president and CEO of North American Emerald Mines.

Hill’s first finds literally only scratched the surface. Hill had mined a mere 12 – 14 feet below the surface on one acre of land. Other emerald producing mines are reaching depths of 1,000 feet to find high quality emeralds. Hill has a long way to dig and estimates it could take 100 years to exhaust the emerald supply on the 14 acre plot he holds permits to mine.

Sources: “Emerald City: Hiddenite Holds Buried Treasure”, 2/30/01, Gaston Gazette, “Hiddenite Treasures”, 10/99, Professional Jeweler “Emerald City, NC”, 4/02, Professional Jeweler, “New Emerald Find in Hiddenite, NC”, 2/4/02, GIA Gems & Gemology, “North Carolina’s Emerald Man Hits Paydirt”, 1/17/02, Jewelers Circular Keystone, “Man Makes Gem of a Discovery: Huge North Carolina Emerald Could be Worth \$1 Million”, Knight Ridder 10/99, Gemstone Forecaster Winter ’99 KMID-TV Channel 2, Midland/ Odessa ~*From Midland Gem & Mineral Society Newsletter, 12/03, Author not stated via The Stone Chipper 1/04*

Geodes versus Vugs

By Cecil Goss

We all know what a geode is – a roughly spherical hollow rock lined with crystals. A vug is a roughly spherical cavity lined with crystals. (Note from editor of *The Show Me Geode*: Vugs also come in many non-spherical shapes.) But did you know the real difference in the structure between the two?

A geode has an outer shell or rind (like a melon) composed of chalcedony, which is harder than the host rock in which the geode formed. When the host rock weathers away, the geode is preserved intact due to its hard shell.

Vugs do not have the protective rinds that geodes possess. The crystals found in vugs are formed within a cavity in the host rock, but unlike geode crystals, they are attached to the host rock itself. Therefore, vug crystals are destroyed when the host rock weathers through the cavity.

When weathering exposes a cavity and (if) a rockhound happens to see it, the vug can be chiseled out. If an inch or two of the host rock is left around the cavity, the vug can be removed undamaged.

The geodes and vugs I am writing about are found within a radius of about 70 miles from Keokuk, Iowa, which includes portions of Illinois and Missouri. The rock in which they are found is a yellowish-brown to blue-gray dolomite shale of the Mississippian age (325 to 345 million years ago).

~From Palomar Gem Bulletin 3/96, via MWF Newsletter 4/02, The Show Me Geode 4/02, The Tumbler 11/02, The Rockytier, 12/04 via The Stone Chipper 3/05

Hints and Tips

Dinosaur bone is handled much like agate, sanded to 600 grit on silicon carbide and polished on hard felt with tin oxide. It is then finished with black rouge on a muslin buff. The muslin buff can clean out the tin oxide that remains between the bone cells, and the black rouge applies a stain to the tin oxide that remains behind.

~By Roger Parian, *From Pick & Shovel, via The Stone Chipper Jan 04*

Fisherman's Friend: Beaders – crimp split shot sinkers on your line to keep beads from slipping off tiger tail while you take a break from your work.

~From Trish Little in the *Palomar Gem, 3/02 via The Stone Chipper Jan 05 Lapidary Journal 4/04.*

SOME SALTY SAYINGS

Salt is an essential element of survival for animals, humans and some plants. It is made up of two components: 40% sodium (Na) and 60% chloride (Cl), which are bound together by a magnetic force (an ionic bond) that cannot be broken by water or heat or time. While much has been written about the origins, uses and history of salt, here are a few “salty sayings” that you may have heard from time to time and wondered from where they came.

- “Worth his salt” is rooted in salt’s history as valued commodity, often used as currency, trade for goods, services, and even slaves.
- “above or below the salt”. This originated with salt cellars, the delicate, tiny bowls that the wealthy place on their tables to hold salt. Where one sat in relation to the salt cellar spoke to his social status among those gathered.
- “Salt of the earth”, meaning essential to life and yet humble. From the Bible, Mathew 5:13.
- To take something “with a grain of salt”. This phrase has been around nearly as long as salt, according to the Web site WWW.ASKJEEVES.COM. It means to view something with skepticism and shows up as early as A. D. 77, when salt poison that had to be taken with a grain of salt to be effective.
- “Someone forgot to salt the popcorn”, said when referring to someone who is boring.
- “He was not salted at birth”, an Asian saying rooted in the custom of salting babies at birth. A dull child is said to be one upon who this ritual was not performed at birth.
- “To be untrue to salt”, an Iranian phrase we might all do well to understand these days. To be disloyal or ungrateful on Iran is to be untrue to salt.

Sources: “Salt: A World History” by Mark Kurlansky”; Salt and Pepper” by Michele Anne Jordan. via Vox Rox Feb.2005

Mother-of-Pearl

by “*The Old Rockhound*”

When last you dined at your favorite Chinese restaurant, did you by any chance have clams-on-the-half-shell or clams in black bean sauce? If so, you may have handled some very interesting material for jewelry making.

Yup, the Old Rockbound knows where to find his rough Mother-of-Pearl!!! Many shellfish can be used for obtaining the opalescent and iridescent delight known as Mother-of-Pearl, and the clams served in your favorite Chinese haunt is on the list!

If you ask the waiter, it has been my experience that he will put the shells from your plate into a PLASTIC bag, (your car will tell on you for weeks if you try to take them home in a paper “doggie bag,” as one, to-be-unnamed, Dummy did!)

Do NOT take them into the house! Leave them lying on concrete in some sunny spot away from the house proper, where the ants and nature can do their work on them. (The attachment muscle will need to be removed, which the ants take care of in about three weeks). All odor is gone by then, too.

When they are clean and have no smell to them, they are ready to be taken into the shop to be cut into the desired pieces. Actually, “cut” may be incorrect here, because the shells are quite brittle, and if one uses any force whatsoever putting them through the saw, they will break! So, it seems to be easier to grind them gently to size. You may find it hard to believe, but the easiest grinding just might be done on the side of your saw blade! That quarter-of-an-inch band on the side rim of a diamond saw blade works wonders with a very minimum of pressure.

The cabbing machine also works well. Just don’t start with your rough wheel, (80 or 100 or 120 or whatever). Instead, start off trying the 320 or 400 wheel. It is much easier to control the speed of cutting. If you study the shell carefully, there will be several areas that are flat enough to yield decent sized pieces. Have good light and mark carefully.

Once you have cut or ground the Mother-of-Pearl to the desired shapes, it can be polished easily with a little cerium oxide or finer compound. The off side really does not need to be polished, because it will not show in most settings. Save the smaller pieces and the unusual shapes, and they can be set in an epoxy bed to make distinctive and unique mosaics, or to fill in smaller spaces around other stones in making some jewelry.

A good rockhound looks anyplace where material can be found. So be on the alert when next you go out to eat!

*Author given only as “The Old Rockhound,” from Tomoka Coquina 6/03
via The Rollin Rock 4/05*

A Little Bit About Chrysocolla

Chrysocolla is a minor ore of copper and is also used as an ornamental stone. The name is derived from the Greek word Chryso for gold and Kolla for glue in reference to a similar looking material that was used in soldering gold. The popularity of using chrysocolla as a gem material was not widespread until a long time later.

Professional mineralogists thought of chrysocolla as a pretty blue copper ore. They identified it as a somewhat brittle, hydrous silicate of copper or a secondary mineral formed by the action of air and water on primary copper deposits. To rockhounds today, chrysocolla is that beautiful blue agate-like material best suited for turning into gems and jewelry. Actually, gem grade chrysocolla is a copper stained chalcedony that was probably formed by percolating waters that picked up silica and copper, and then deposited it in seams and fissures. In Arizona, it was valued as a gemstone for many years. The old Dominican Mine at Globe had started as a silver producer, but later turned out to be a very rich copper mine, and produced some of the finest gem chrysocolla. Tiffany's of New York bought a large quantity of this blue material to cut into gemstones.

This was at the turn of the 20th century. In other mines in Arizona, large deposits of chrysocolla were found, but unfortunately were sent to the crushers and on to the leaching plants for recovery of the copper contents. Many rockhounds and miners found they could sell the "blue rock" for money, and the operators of the mine had to place guards about the areas. Any employee picking up chrysocolla was fired on the spot. Nevertheless, a lot of chrysocolla found its way to the market.

*from Petrified Digest, 1995, via The Pebble Trails 10/04,
via Washington State Mineral Council 10/04 via The Rollin Rock
4/05*

Tidbit

Many pieces of petrified wood, especially from the Northwest, have a center that looks like wood, but with a layer of either chalcedony or pumice between the center and the outside. This indicates that the tree was green when it was buried in the hot ash. The water in the green wood evaporated, making the wood shrink. The outside was made into a cast by the heat, so the area left between the wood and cast filled with chalcedony making, often, a beautiful piece of petrified wood.

~From Rockhound Gazette via The Stone Chipper Feb. 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

FROM:
ARK-LA-TEX GEM AND MINERAL
BOX 6633
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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.