



# The Rock Rattler

VOLUME: 35

NO. 04

PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY

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

PO BOX 6633  
BOSSIER CITY, LA. 71171-6633



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 the 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 Rd, 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 included programs of interest to rock hounds, information from the Rock Rattler, and jewelry making classes complete the educational objectives of the club.

From:  
ARK-LA-TEX GEM AND MINERAL  
BOX 6633  
BOSSIER CITY, LA 7117-6633

The Ark-La-Tex Gem and Mineral Society meets at 6:30 on the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of each month at the:  
Bossier Parish History Center, 2006 Beckett St. Bossier City, LA 71111

# THE ROCK RATTLER

## President's Message

Dear Fellow Rockhounds,

Thanks to Chris English, Larry Maguire, Edna House, Tom Stringfellow, Bill Hart who brought favorite rocks to last months meeting I wish others of you would please bring some for the May meeting also.

See you all at the May meeting.

Del

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**Next Meeting:** May 4, 2010

**Time:** 6:30 PM

**Location:** Bossier Parish History Center,  
2006 Beckett St.  
Bossier City, LA 71111

## UPCOMING CLASSES

### [Beginning Jewelry Making I:](#)

*One class, six hours.*

Beginning soldering and use of the metalsmith's torch. Familiarization and use of the flex shaft. We will make a bezel set stone jewelry piece in sterling silver. Materials Cost: \$60.00 (Silver, Solder, a selected cabbed stone, or one of yours).

### [Beginning wire wrapping](#)

*One class, six hours.*

Use of basic tools. We will make a wire wrapped pendant. Learn to use silver wire. Cost will be \$60 per student, cost includes wire and a 20 x 30 cab. Students will need basic tools which include : flat nose pliers;chain nose pliers and flush cutters. If you want to learn to twist wire you will need a tool for twisting also.

We have had a number of people sign up for these classes already. Please attend the May 4 meeting to obtain dates and times.

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# THE ROCK RATTLER

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April 6, 2010 Meeting Minutes

OPENED BY PRESIDENT DEL GLASNER

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO FLAG BY CHARLIE JOHNS

OPENING PRAYER BY AL SIMMS

INTRO OF VISITORS Chris English and family, Bobby Kline

OLD BUSINESS

Show Update by Charlie Johns. Brought information reference to advertising via digital billboards by Lamar. Large billboards available for \$688 for single and \$1,100 for two for one week. Recommended locations Youree Drive & Bert Kouns and Airline at Douglas. Small billboards available for \$375 for single and \$650 for two for one week.

Motion by Will House, Seconded by Tom Stringfellow to rent two large billboards for one week at the mentioned locations beginning the Monday before our Show and ending the Sunday of our Show. Pass with out objection. Tom Stringfellow suggested that this information be passed on to our vendors to show that we are increasing our advertising budget and visibility. Bossier Green demonstrations by Bill Hart. He and Charlie Johns will be setting up demonstrations and exhibits at the Bossier Green at South Bossier Community Center on morning of April 22<sup>nd</sup>.

ASEANA Festival – Del and Al updated the membership of the opportunity for participation in the ASEANA Festival on April 10<sup>th</sup> from 3pm til 7pm. Al mentioned that Lyn was scheduled to do a demo on jewelry cutting and polishing at 4:20pm. Pam Frederick mentioned that she would be there with her jewelry.

Announcement of the Jackson, MS Gem & Mineral Show at the fairgrounds on April 24-25, 2010 Announcement of Houston, TX Gem & Mineral Show on April 30-May 2' 2010.

Al informed the membership that Lyn has receive verification from the IRS that we are listed as a 502 (c) 3 charitable corporation and as such are able to accept tax deductible gifts and contributions.

Del announced that the April Field Trip to LaGrange, TX has been cancelled due to lack of interest.

NEW BUSINESS

Tom Stringfellow will be teaching classes on Beginning and Advanced Jewelry Making and Advanced Soldering Techniques. Tom expressed concern that we may need to wait to order the necessary equipment until we determine that there was indeed significant interest to hold the class. A show of hands was asked for to determine this interest. There were approximately 7 or 8 hands raised. Tom stated that he would order the equipment, which will cost approximately \$1,250.00 and will include some torches, Flex-Shafts and accessories. A sheet was passed around to determine interest and suggested day for the classes. Class cost will be \$60 for 6 hours of instruction to cover the cost of materials.

# THE ROCK RATTLER

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Larry Maguire indicated that he is willing to conduct some Wire Wrapping Classes for those interested. There was significant show of hands and a sheet passed around for those interested to indicated class preference.

Del mentioned that the May Field Trip was scheduled for the Crater of Diamonds outside of Murphysboro, AR for the Memorial Day weekend of May 30/31, 2010. He also passed around information as to motel and/or camping facilities.

## SHOW AND TELL TIME

Chris English showed numerous rocks/minerals he recovered from his mine trips in North Carolina.

Larry Maguire showed an unknown species of rock that resembled a "Brain".

Edna House showed her sphere and pointed out the various types of rock it contained.

Tom Stringfellow showed some of his arrowhead jewelry and explained how he manufactured them.

Bill Hart showed his opal displays.

Del Glasner showed and explained how he made some homemade display cases.

## ELECTION OF VICE PRESIDENT

Larry Mcguire nominated Tom Stringfellow, who declined.

Tom Stringfellow nominated Larry Mcguire, who declined.

Del Glasner nominated Richard Kelly, who accepted nomination.

Edna House nominated Pam Frederick, who accepted nomination.

Vote was held and Pam Frederick was elected as Vice President for the remainder of 2010.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT, SECONDED AND PASSED. Followed by a time of fellowship and refreshments.

Respectfully submitted,

B. G. (Al) Simms, Jr., Secretary

# THE ROCK RATTLER

## Ten Rarest Gems on Earth (6 of 10)

### 6. Grandidierite USD \$50,000/.5 Carat



This is a bluish green mineral found primarily in Madagascar & first discovered there in 1902 – so it is not a new gem. The mineral is named after French explorer and natural historian Alfred Grandidier, who among other things unearthed bones from the extinct half-ton elephant bird in Ambolisatra, Madagascar. It has also been found in large crystals from Malawi, Algeria, Ontario Canada, New York in the USA, Italy, Norway, Surinam, New Zealand and a number of other minor localities. The first, and so far only, clean faceted specimen came from Sri Lanka and was originally mistaken for a serendibite. It was subsequently purchased in May 2000. The gem shown above weighs 0.29 carats. Grandidierite is trichroic, transmitting blue, green and white light. It is very brittle & uneven with fractures producing uneven fragments

Sources: <http://listverse.com/nature/top-10-rarest-gems/>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red\\_beryl](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_beryl)

<http://www.redemerald.com>

Lyn Simms

# THE ROCK RATTLER

## Up-Coming Shows:

(Nearby)

MAY 1-2  
LUBBOCK, TX  
Lubbock G&MS  
Lubbock Civic Center

MAY 29-30  
FORT WORTH, TX  
Fort Worth G&MS  
Will Rogers Mem. Ctr

AUGUST 14-15  
BATON ROUGE, LA  
Baton Rouge G&MS  
Fraternal Order of  
Police

AUGUST 21-22  
BOSSIER CITY, LA  
Ark-La-Tex G&MS  
Bossier City Civic  
Center

AUGUST 28-29  
JASPER, TX  
Pine Country G&MS  
Events Center

For an expanded list of  
Show Dates go to:  
[www.rockngem.com](http://www.rockngem.com)

## EDUCATION

Bet You Didn't Know..... by Mary LaVigne

- 1.that coral reefs are the largest structures ever built on planet Earth by any animal, including man.
- 2.that a pearl has a life expectancy of only 100 years, or 150 at the most.
- 3.that one ounce of gold can be beaten or flattened into a sheet of 100 square feet, or drawn into a wire almost a mile long, or made into a foil that is less than five millionths of an inch thick and virtually transparent.
- 4.that your turquoise rig could change its color if you wash your hands without removing it and even become smelly if you immerse it i a dishwasher or oily liquid.
- 5.that two flints or a lint and steel will strike a spark that can be used to start a fire, but also that two quartz stones will serve the same purpose.
- 6.that some gem materials come from strange sources. One grown on trees (amber-formally tree sap). Some start as an irritant inside the shell of a mollusk (pearls) or grow in the mouths of animals (ivory). One begins as an "apartment complex" for a colony of sea creatures (coral). One comes from volcanoes and is the product of stone so hot that it melts (obsidian). One is even thought to be formed of rock which has melted after being hit by a meteorite falling from outer space.
- 7.that what determines the hardness graduation in lead pencils, which, by the way, range from 9H (hard) to 9B (extra soft) is achieved through the addition of varying amounts of clay to the graphite. Graphite is the "lead" in lead pencils.
- 8.that when held in your hand up to your ear, Sulphur sizzles and pops. This is caused by cracking inside due to the expansion caused by the heat of the hand.
- 9.that the polishing agent known as "jeweler's rouge" is made of powdered hematite?

# THE ROCK RATTLER

## Knap-Ins

**APRIL 30-MAY 2. 12TH ANNUAL WATERCREEK KNAP-IN.** Yellville, **ARKANSAS**. Hosted by Wesley , Gwen, Byron and Belinda Shipman, Bob Thomas, DC Waldorf. Located 5 miles from Buffalo River, on the banks of beautiful Water Creek. Evening live music. Tomahawk throwing contest. Trade blanket. Raffle on Saturday afternoon. We are fortunate to have some of the worlds best knappers demonstrating the art of making arrowheads, tomahawks, spearpoints and Myan Eccentrics. Come join the fun, buy, sell and trade. On-site primitive camping and food service. \$5. per person registration fee. Phone 1-800-741-2022. SASE: The Shipmans, PO Box 283, Yellville, AR 72687. Bob Thomas, 705 Polk St., Cabot, AR 72023. 501-843-4936. or email: [pump1@yellville.net](mailto:pump1@yellville.net)

## HINTS & TIPS

### HINTS FOR BETTER WIRE-WRAPPING

- 1.Be patient, as in all things in life, the more you practice, the easier it becomes and the better you do.
- 2.Not all wire has to be straightened, i.e., if you are going to twist the wire, it will straighten as it twists.
- 3.Odd numbered wraps most generally look better than even numbered wraps.
- 4.Some wire-wrappers recommend using light wire to hold your pieces together. I prefer using the quilting tape.
- 5.Some wire-wrappers try to lessen their costs by using smaller gauge materials. Please don't cut costs this way as it only cheapens your work. Use as strong wire as possible in order for your work to stay together. Many designs entail a great deal of tension and require stronger wire to hold.
- 6.By using the polishing cloth to help straighten the wire, you can rid the wire of some of the residue oils left from pulling the wire.
- 7.When wrapping with the 1/2 round wire, it is best to turn the section being wrapped versus taking hold of the 1/2 round and bending it around the section. You make nicer and more even wraps, especially when making multiple wraps.
- 8.Many times a mistake (cutting the wrong wire, etc.) can be turned into a different design than first intended, so do not discard any work until you know if it is workable or not. Be flexible.
- 9.If your wrapping just seems to not be working for you, stop for a while. Take a break. Take a walk. Do those other things your mind is wondering to. A moment to stretch the body or soul seems to stretch the mind as well.
- 10.Cleaning the items after you finish in a solution of a few drops of Mr. Clean to several cups of water makes your piece sparkle. It also rids it of the minute specks of filings. Use a toothbrush to brush in those hard to reach spaces. Most stones will not be affected by the solution, but the usual caution towards opals, pearls, turquoises should be followed.
- 11.Handling and filing gold and silver can be hazardous to your health. Even though we would like to think otherwise, this caution needs to be mentioned. Goggles, masks and hand protection may be necessary to work these materials if you have problems.

## Lapidary Corner

### Picking Good Jasper - author unknown

Jasper is much more troublesome to polish than agate because many varieties are "earthy" and porous, and others contain hematite, which



is itself difficult to polish.

If you are on a field trip, a good way to test jasper is to wet it. (Do not lick it.) If it absorbs the water and dries rapidly, throw it away. It will not polish. If it stays wet and does not dry right away, keep it. It contains a high amount of chalcedony and will take a good polish. Most Jaspers polish well on leather with Linde-A, but good results can be obtained with tin oxide on either leather or felt.

Always remember that a fine sanding job is the secret of good polishing.

When tumbling softer, hard to polish material, don't start with the coarse grit. Start with the second grit and go one grit finer than the #3 grit used on agates. In polishing, fill the tumbler  $\frac{3}{4}$  to  $\frac{7}{8}$  full (if not using pellets) so the stones will roll and not fall. This way you do not have the stones beating the polish off the ends. Also, cerium oxide will polish better than regular tumbler polishing agents. It does not take very much cerium to do this job, about  $\frac{1}{2}$  as much as the regular tumble polish. The RockCollector 12/09

**Keeping Ivory in Light**—Don't put ivory in the dark! It is one substance that needs light. If it has started to yellow, take half a lemon and rub it in some salt. Then rub it over the ivory object. The lemon will work on the yellow discoloration. After it is dry, dampen a soft cloth with lukewarm water, and rub the ivory.

All via 12/09 The RockCollector via Pick & Pack



## Lapidary Corner

### FIRE AGATE CUTTING & POLISHING INFORMATION Inside Every Fire Agate Is A Hidden Treasure...

Unfortunately A lot Of Stones Are Destroyed By Cutters That Are Unfamiliar With The Nature And

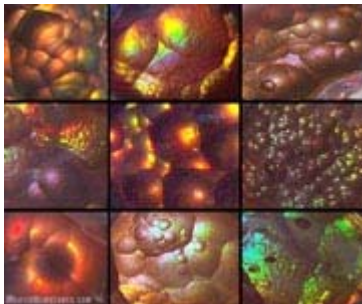


Formation Of Fire Agate.

**Always Look For The Hidden Potential, The Treasure Is Waiting For You...**

**Fire Agate can be intimidating to the professional and amateur cutter alike.** Fire agate ranging in color from clear to dark brown and the layers of the iron oxide minerals limonite or goethite that interact with white light to create the "fire" or iridescence. There is usually a milky translucent chalcedony that marks the stone's top. The characteristics of rough fire agate can vary considerably, depending on the mine and source material.

**Fire agate is deposited in botryoidal form, meaning the structure resembles bunches of grapes, commonly called 'bubbles' or 'bubbly'.** Most pieces of fire agate rough are twisted and deposited in a variety of angles. This creates a challenge for gem cutters because the sought after color layers follow highly irregular contours in the underlying brown agate. The art of cutting fire agate lies in finding the brightest, best-colored layer and following its contours wherever they lead and not cut through the iridescent layer itself. Sometimes a slip in cutting reveals an even better color layer, but more often, the stone is completely ruined. With one light pass of a diamond grinder you can lose an entire layer of fire, so patience is a must



The 'bubbles' in fire agate vary tremendously in size, from almost microscopic to single large bubbles that can be in the 15mm range or larger, and in some rare cases, a lot larger. Generally speaking, the kind of rough displaying larger "bubbles" is best suited for cutting on standard lapidary equipment, because these shapes are easier to work on flat grinding and sanding surfaces. Fire agate with intricately contoured, irregular or 'bubbly' color can only adequately be shaped using gem carving techniques. Standard lapidary equipment is suitable for cutting most types of fire agate, be careful and take the time to carefully study how each stone is laid out by mother nature.

## Lapidary Corner

Most lapidarists prefer to cut directly from rough specimens, but occasionally [excellent window polished material](#) is available at reasonable prices. Naturally you pay a premium for someone else's knowledge and labor in doing the main work for you. Most window polished specimens often don't make good material to cut through, and only small stones can be cut from what remains of the pre-polished window.

**The gemmy layers vary in thickness, with the brightest and best layer often at the point between the chalcedony and the brown agate material.** Sometimes these layers are only a 1000th of an inch thick, and they are best cut by leaving a slight amount of clear chalcedony over the top as protection if possible. If you sand right down to the color layer, there is a good chance that sanding and polishing can destroy it.

**In better quality rough, the color layers are arranged successively so that cutting through one layer reveals another.** Or there may be multiple bands of layers ranging from very thin to reasonably thick. The gamble is deciding which is the brightest and most desirable color layer and to make it the top of your stone. Color layers usually run in succession from bronze to gold to red and then green, with the rarer blues and purple colors to follow (if they exist). With some multicolor agate there is a 2nd layer of even stronger colors, but it is a gamble to venture past the original layers of fire in hopes of a second more colorful layer.

**CUTTING:** Wet and inspect your rough under magnification in bright sunlight. Look it over as closely as possible. If you can see through the chalcedony, try to find flashes that indicate color layers. Don't be disappointed if you don't see any color, it may still be there but you'll have to work harder to get to it. Next, carefully examine the edges of the brown agate at various angles in the light, searching for layers or flashes of color.



Some rough comes without the chalcedony "cap", so it's easier to evaluate. But usually the first step in cutting is to eliminate the chalcedony. If it's thick, some careful trim-sawing can save a lot of grinding. **But never cut into the dark agate layer!** Removing this "cap" is hard work, tough on equipment and sometimes fruitless: lots of good looking rough turns out to be your basic garden rock. But there's no way to tell for sure until enough of the cap material has been reduced to allow any colors from underneath to be seen.

Direct sunshine makes it possible to do some very accurate grinding; indoor lighting, including quartz halogen floodlights, despite their intensity usually lie about the location and brightness of color planes within the rough. Being able to really see what you're doing is the single most important factor in cutting this stone.

It's the nature of most fire agate cabs to require some contouring to follow the color layers, and flat grinding wheels are designed to cut convex or flat surfaces. One of the toughest jobs is to grind into the chalcedony crevices and valleys between the larger individual bubbles areas. Unless you decide to invest in specialized diamond wheels shaped for this job, the only way I know to do it is to use the edge of the grinding wheel. Begin grinding one hillside first, then change to the other edge of the wheel to do the opposite one. You'll discover that, with care, the face of the wheel does all the work and the edge gets very little wear.

## Lapidary Corner

**How most miners work around this problem...**

**CAUTION:** But this type of cutting can be very dangerous as well. The wheel can grab the piece of rough (and your fingers). Work very cautiously, bearing in mind also that putting pressure on the edges of most standard diamond wheels can quickly ruin the wheel. Work carefully, and never use excessive pressure.



When grinding has proceeded far enough that vague brown shapes can be seen through the chalcedony, iridescence should be visible as well. Grind a little, sand and inspect carefully in good light sunlight. Repeat until the desired fire colors are fully revealed. The color layers are thicker on top of the bubbles and thin down on the slopes and edges, so do most of your initial sanding on the top.

### YOUR FIRE AGATE TELLS YOU HOW IT SHOULD BE CUT



Don't try to force it into any particular shape - if you are uncomfortable with anything but symmetrical shapes or intend to cut only calibrated sizes for standard mountings, you may find fire agate very frustrating. It doesn't adapt easily to this style of cutting unless you don't mind wasting a lot of color and being satisfied with what some call "brown-edges" or "deadspots"; a pool of shimmering fire surrounded by an ugly dead area of plain brown agate. Sometimes this style of cutting is unavoidable, but if you let the patch of bright color define the edges of the finished stone, you will end up with a much more pleasing and higher value stone.

Have the patience and courage to stick with the sanding. There is no feeling more exciting than having a boring bronze stone suddenly start showing amazing colors of green, purple and blue, mixed together with reds, yellows and oranges.

**Sometimes you win, but more often you lose...** if you have reason to suspect that multiple or brighter color layers could be present in the underlying layers it is well worth the gamble. You usually end up with more boring or golden stones than you ever wanted anyway, so sometimes it is better to try for the reds and greens and purples!

**FREEHANDING:** This technique is used by our 'pulidor' (polisher) and many of the old timers as well, that don't believe in dopping sticks and rarely use grinders. Use the same light touch that you would use on opal, allowing you to remove only the smallest amount of material at a time, so that you don't grind through a fire layer.

Some people have asked why our stones look so good and they cannot reproduce this quality with the rough they purchase from us. You have to get rid of those machines and polish your agates by hand. Our miners start off using 150 or 180 grit paper and finish with 2500 to 3000 grit and a polishing powder. Use lots of water and only working in bright sunlight so you can work the layers to their optimum. Most miners don't even believe in using dop sticks, they want to always feel the stone in their hands, it gives them more control.

# THE ROCK RATTLER

For Sale Items By Member - anyone interested that they can call me at 318-469-8524 Thanks. Larry



Covington Expando Can Maker \$800



14" Covington Arch saw \$200



Covington Sphere Maker



Rock tumbler - 2 Double sided cans \$500



Star 4 Station Polishing Unit \$450



Star Diamond Saw \$325



Texas Rock 10" Saw \$275



Star Diamond Vibrator 10" Table \$175



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# THE ROCK RATTLER

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Publicity	Lee Boudreaux	318-741-0074	
Field Trip	Richard Kelley	318-747-2073	