



The Rock Rattler

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PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY
**THE ARK-LA-TEX
GEM AND MINERAL SOCIETY**

PO 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 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 1st 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,

Our program will be on Calcite, so if you have some it would be great for show & tell.

See you all at the April meeting.

Del

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Announcements

Presidents Message	Page 1
Last Meeting Minutes	Page 2
Up-coming Knap-Ins	Page 3
Up-Coming Shows	Page 4
Education.....	Page 5

Articles

Cave of Crystals.....	Page 5
Lapidary corner.....	Page 6
Trips.....	Page 7
Contacts.....	Page 8

Next Meeting: April 5, 2011

Time: 6:30 PM

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

THE ROCK RATTLER

Ark-La-Tex Gem & Mineral Society
Meeting Minutes January 4, 2011

Called to Order – President Del Glasner

Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag – Keith Tindell ; Prayer – Al Simms

Treasurer's Report – John Autry; Rent on classroom has been paid for another year. \$22,000 in CD's \$22,000 in checking which includes \$10,000 reserved for show expense.

Old Business: Discussion of looking for another location for classes. One that will provide adequate parking, safe location, larger and less money is possible.

New Business : Field Trips- Mason, TX, approximately 100 miles out of Fredericksburg. Cost roughly \$100 per person to include lodging in a cabin and two days of rock collecting.

Alto, TX (near Wichita Falls, TX – Pyrite cubes; Murphysboro, AR – Diamond Mine

Mineral Wells, TX - Fossil hunting (Tentative date in April); Sulphur River (Below Paris, TX) – One day trip. Tentative date of March 19th weekend.

Geraldine announced the opening of her Gem & Mineral Gallery, located in the Quadrangle at 2000 East 70th Street, Shreveport. Due to open in April. 10% discount to all club members. Just show membership card.

She also plans on holding a “Science Night” for kids and a once a month study group meeting, probably on the 2nd Tuesday night.

Science Fair at Bossier Civic Center: Duane Spillman, Bill Hart and John Autry to be judges.

Discussion of the State of Louisiana Registered Agent report is due. Currently Ike House and Edna House are already registered. After brief discussion it was decided that Larry McGuire will be added as the third agent.

Classes: PMC class was postponed due to lack of people registering for the class. Tom stated that he needed at least 4 people with a maximum of 6 to conduct the class. It will be rescheduled at a later date.

Door prize drawing held Adjournment MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Del Glasner (President), John Autry (Treasurer), Philip Sanders, Al Simms (Secretary), Dwayne Spillman (Vice President), Nancy Spillman, Bill Hart (Board Member), Larry Maguire, Tom Stringfellow (Board Member), Wil House, Edna House, Ike House, Jacob Mayeaux, Geraldine Zelinsky, Keith Tindell, Anthony Thomas, Sharon Thomas, Milton Bavldree, Richard Kelley.

THE ROCK RATTLER

Thursday, April 07, 2011 to Sunday, April 10, 2011

Pedernales Knap-In - Fredericksburg, Texas

Ft. Martin Scott in Fredericksburg, Texas on April 7, 8, 9, and 10. Mark this on your calendars and plan to attend.

This is the weekend BEFORE the Niblett's Bluff Knap-in in Louisiana. By avoiding these two conflicts, we are anticipating a good turnout.

Ft. Martin Scott is located on US 290 on the eastern edge of Fredericksburg. Easy to find and good access. Fredericksburg is a destination city with lots of good shopping, German specialty restaurants, the Chester Nimitz Museum, and other attractions. Those of you who have attended previous events know the site has lots of potential.

Our Knap-in Committee intends to improve the event and increase both knapper/vendor attendance and public awareness as we continue the event that our old buddy Bill Metcalf organized several years ago.

Early Set-Up...for those vendors and folks who might arrive from out of town before Thursday, we should be able to accommodate you as usual. If you think you might arrive prior to Thursday, please send me a PaleoPlanet message so I can get a rough count.

Camping is available in the parking area for the Knap-in.

We are planning on having a semi-pot luck dinner Saturday night. Like last year, I will be providing a big pot of venison chili and another committee member will be providing a pot of beans and whatever. If anyone else wants to bring something to the table, that would be great. Everyone should bring their own plates/bowls/utensils/etc.

No charge for this, but we will accept donations to offset various expenses of the Knap-in.

Like last year, we do not anticipate having a food vendor on site for all meals. Fredericksburg has many good restaurants and fast-food places just a mile or so away to serve your hunger pangs or bring your own food and drinks.

We may have an Oooga-Booga Saturday night if we have enough candidates.

To help cover the cost of porta potties, etc. we are anticipating charging a small registration fee for all attending knappers and vendors...probably \$5 for a single day or \$10 for the 4 day event. Just like last year, we will not charge a separate vendor fee, but we hope all vendors will contribute something to our fund-raising auction.

Gotta pay for those porta-potties somehow!!!

We will provide additional information on PaleoPlanet as it becomes available or necessary. Please pass this information along to all of your knapper friends. Questions? ronfieseler@gmail.com

THE ROCK RATTLER

Up-Coming Shows:

(Nearby)

April 9—LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS: Annual swap; Central Arkansas Gem, Mineral & Geology Society; Sat. 9-5; Burns Park, Elder Johnson Pavilion, I-40 exit 150 (Military Dr.) north, take the first road to the west; free admission; rocks, minerals, fossils; contact Mike Austen, (501) 868-4553; e-mail: steelpony@aol.com

May 21-22—MURFREESBORO, ARKANSAS: Retail show; Crater of Diamonds State Park; Diamond Discovery Center, 209 State Park Rd.; Sat. 8:30-4:30, Sun. 8:30-4:30; free admission; wire wrapping demonstrations, rock and mineral identification, diamond hunting (adults \$7, children \$4); contact Margi Jenks, 209 State Park Rd., Murfreesboro, AR 71958, (870) 285-3116; e-mail: margaret.jenks@arkansas.gov; Web site: www.craterofdiamondsstatepark.com

May 28-29—FORT WORTH, TEXAS: 60th annual show, "Marvelous Minerals"; Fort Worth Gem & Mineral Club; Will Rogers Memorial Center, 3401 W. Lancaster; Sat. 9-6, Sun. 10-5; adults \$5, seniors and students \$4, ages 16 and under free; more than 25 dealers, exhibits, kids' games, door prizes, grand prize, silent auction; contact Steve Hilliard, PO Box 418, Decatur, TX 76234, (817) 925-5760; e-mail: fwgmc@embarqmail.com; Web site: www.fortworthgemandmineralclub.org

For an expanded list of Show Dates go to:
www.rockngem.com

THE ROCK RATTLER

Cave of Crystals discovered in Chihuahua may be largest ever

What may be the largest crystals on earth and a unique treasure of nature are hidden far beneath the Sierra Madre in Chihuahua.

Juan Sanchez and his brother, Pedro, were blasting a new tunnel in the Naica Mine when they discovered a narrow opening in the tunnel. This was not an uncommon occurrence for miners to come across during blasting. They often open such fissures hoping to find a cavity filled with gypsum crystals that can be removed and sold to collectors.

The Sanchez brothers were not at all prepared for what they had discovered. Stepping inside the hellish heat and steam of the cavern, they saw 30 to 50-foot columns of giant crystals that were four to six feet in diameter. Most of the crystals were attached to the ceiling, walls and floor, but some seemed to be floating in the steam cavern defying gravity, in spite of their enormous size and weight.

Juan cautiously made his exit as Pedro rushed to inform Robert Gonzales, Engineer and Manager of the Naica Mine.

Gonzales immediately rerouted the tunnel to avoid any damage to the cavern and sent for proper equipment to outfit the men who inspected the site.

The heat in the cavern remains at 150 degrees Fahrenheit with humidity at 100% in an enclosed room 24 feet in diameter.

During the inspection, a second room, larger than the first, crystals of incredible dimensions were found. They are estimated to weigh in excess of 10 tons and filled the room chamber from floor to ceiling. The clarity and translucent gold highlights sparkled in the miners lights as they stood in awe, feeling small and vulnerable in such harsh conditions and incredible beauty.

The crystal caverns were found in the same limestone formations where silver, zinc and lead are mined. The caves were probably dissolved by the hydrothermal fluids which deposited the metals and gypsum that crystallized during waning stages of mineralization. The giant crystals were grown quickly in the liquid filled room heated by a bed of lava three miles below. The "Cave of Crystal" as it has been named was totally enclosed in bedrock 1,000 feet below the Sierra Madre range.

More explorations are underway as Naica mining engineers follow the Naica Fault line, making preparations to open these incredible finds to the public.

The challenge of making the caves safe for tourists is going to take time and preparation, according to Carlos Lazcano, Eco-Tourism Director of the Chihuahua Department of Tourism.

Lazcano and Richard Fisher, a professional photographer and international guide for "Wilderness Research Expeditions" were the first two non-miners to enter the caverns. They have made numerous trips into the harsh environment to research and photograph the spectacular find. "There is a narrow window of opportunity to do the job and get out," said Fisher. "A human can only function in this environment for a few minutes before passing out."

Claud Chabert, a reputable speleologist from France, who is internationally known as a caving expert accompanied Fisher on an exploration of the Naica Mine. He commented to Fisher that mother nature must have become delirious and lost control over what is for her, "normal" in regards to the "Cave of Crystals."

Chabert, at the age of 60, is perhaps one of the most experienced speleologists in the business. In his career he has explored over 10,000 caves all over the planet. He is the author of the *Atlas of Great Caves of the World*. Chabert told Fisher that he has never seen anything close to what they were seeing for the first time in the newly discovered and virtually unexplored "Cave of Crystals"

Fisher said he attempted to take photographs, but his hands were slippery with perspiration and the camera was soaked with the moisture of the cave, making it hard to hold the camera. "It was so incredible but we were forced to return to the ramp. We were in there only about two minutes. When we reached the ramp the air seemed fresh and breathing was easier. As we reached the mine tunnel, we even felt cold, although the temperature was still high," he said.

Editors Note: There was a photograph of a kneeling man with seven visible gigantic crystals above him disappearing into the gloom above, with photo showing a vertical height of about 15-18 feet. The quality was so bad that I decided not to use it. I will try to bring it to the April meeting.

One of the workers who pushed his limit during an attempt to take crystals for profit entered the cavern without notifying anyone. Taking plastic bags filled with fresh air, he tempted fate in hopes of extending the length of time he could remain in the cavern. Squeezing through a narrow opening he must have ruptured his air bags as he exerted himself, and trying to extract a crystal, he succumbed to the heat and humidity as he rapidly dehydrated and suffocated to death. His body was later discovered by authorized personnel. Gonzales told Fisher and Chabert, "When he was found he was already cooked."

Readers who have followed stories about the Tarahumara Indians will recognize the name of Rick Fisher. He is the humanitarian who established "Wilderness Research Expeditions" of the Copper Canyons and made it possible for grain and beans to be delivered to the remote locations where the starving Indians reside. There is more information available about the "Cave of Crystals," in a new revised edition of *Mexico's Copper Canyon 2001*.

Lapidary Corner

BOOKS

Also from the internet....

For those of you who have not discovered this "gem" yet. If you are into determinative mineralogy, it is a "must have" book. It was just published by Min Rec, is 260+ pages, covers chemical techniques, optical techniques, the lot... Has appendices on how to build your own Specific Gravity balance, Polarizing Microscope, Dichroscope, Spindle Stage, 2 different flavors of Goniometers, and more. Comes with a CD of useful software like Min Search and others.

Mineral Identification: A Practical Guide for the Amateur Mineralogist
by Donald B. Peck

<http://www.minrec.org/bookdetail.asp?id=48>

It is, What it is

Staggering around, talking to myself

Issues of life placed up on a shelf

Beauty unfolds as I stare at the ground

History comes alive with the joy I have found

1000s of years have passed on by

since this tree reached up to the sky

Petrified now, appears like a stone

this speci"Mine" has found a new home

From a Tombstone in Wyoming

Source unknown

"Remember me as you pass by,
As you were once, so once was I.
As am now, someday you'll be,
So prepare to follow me."

(A PostScript was added by someone who
couldn't leave well enough alone.)

"To follow you is not my intent,
because I don't know
which way you went."

—from *Butler County Senior Newsletter* 4/01
via *Quarry Quips* 5/01



Anyone for a field trip to Arkansas???

3.92-Carat Stone Found at Diamond Park

MURFREESBORO, Ark. (Oct. 23) Eric Blake, 32, of Appleton, Wis., spotted the stone along a trail at the Crater of Diamonds State Park when he set down a 70-pound bucket of mud that he was carrying to a wash basin. "I put the bucket down to switch hands. I looked down and there it was," Blake said.

Blake found a 1.49-carat stone Monday. The larger one is big enough to fashion into jewelry but Blake hadn't decided whether he will have it placed into a setting. "I only found it an hour ago," he said.

Blake, a carpenter, said his grandfather had taken him to the state park about 15 years ago and that he returns two to three times a year. "We usually find something," he said.

Man nearly tosses 4.38-carat diamond

MURFREESBORO, Ark. - Chad Johnson has found about 80 diamonds at Crater of Diamonds State Park, but on Monday he nearly threw away his largest find yet. A cube-shaped rock plucked out of his sifters turned out to be a 4.38-carat, tea-colored diamond. Johnson, 36, made the dig Saturday at the park and left his equipment in a locker. When he came back Monday morning, he made the discovery.

Crater of Diamonds State Park, which opened in 1972, is the world's only diamond-producing site open to the public, and visitors can keep the gems they unearth. The largest diamond found at the park since being bought by the state, was the 16.37-carat Amarillo Starlight, a white diamond found in 1975.

Johnson's find is the second-largest diamond uncovered at the park this year. In June, a Louisiana man found a 4.8-carat stone.

From Palm Beach G&M Society Nov 2007 newsletter

THE ROCK RATTLER

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