The Rock Rattler

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THE ARK-LA-TEX GEM AND MINERAL SOCIETY

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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 71111

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

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President's Message

Dear Fellow Rockhounds,

I would like to welcome new members Cris England and Family, Kira & Billy Higginbotham.
Our shop time with other members Slicing and polishing our found rocks was most enjoyable the last few Thursday nights. Now that we have cut up all our newly found rocks we need to get out and find some more. Looking forward to the next field trip.

Del Glasner

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Next Meeting: Tuesday June 7, 2011
Time: 6:30 –9:00 PM

Location: Bossier Parish History Center,
2006 Beckett St.
Bossier City, LA 71111
Program: William Holland School of Lapidary Arts

http://www.lapidaryschool.org/

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May 3, 2011
Minutes of the General Meeting

Called to Order - President Del Glasner

Meeting opened with Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and a Opening Prayer

- **Old Business:**

New Business

- Cris England and Familyof Shreveport applied for membership in Ark-La-Tex Gem and mineral Society.
- Cinn Nut Guy wants to be a dealer in our show. This was ok'd by the membership.
- Dwain Spillman said that the program for next month will be on The William Hollan School.
- John Autry has some club vest patches for sale @ $8.00 each.
- Members signed up to use the classroom on Thursday nights this month.
- Members signed up for carpool on the field trip to La Grange, Tx
- Geraldine made a motion for the board to review the by-laws to possibly allow members to be a dealer in the show. Board member Lynn Sims agreed the board should discuss.

Program

Door prizes drawing was held and prizes collected.

Motion for Adjournment made, seconded and passed.

Respectfully submitted,
Del Glasner

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La Grange, Tx Field Trip

Trip Crew

Rita on the Ranch

Max finds a Dino

Catahoula Formation Rocks

Big Brown Eyes looking up at me

Cool and Dry Creekbed

Authors Finds

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Members at work in theClassroom Work Shop

Judy's Opalized Wood From the LaGrange, Tx Fieldtrip

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Helpful Hints

Sanding Disks

One of the flexshaft tools that save a lot of time is the snap-on sanding disk. Ordinarily, you'd think of placing the disk on the mandrel with the grit side facing away from your hand, but notice that you end up with your elbow up in the air. Instead, try flipping the disk so that the grit side is towards your hand. It's a much more comfortable pose because the elbow is down near your side, and it gives you a better view of what you're sanding. (from rock trails,March,2011)

Tumbling Tip.

On the polishing run, Instead of using Tin Oxide, try using One cup of Spick and Span for six pounds of rock for a brighter look.

Websites that may be helpful.

DISPLAY CASES FOR SALE
http://indianriverdisplay.com/

http://www.bluegrasscase.com/

Poems

A poem for the news letter:
Dreaming of places, I have been out yonder
picking up stones that glisten with wonder
adding some grit, beads and soap
unlocking more beauty I really hope
sharing with my new friends by the pound
living the life of a true rockhound.

another one:
I bleed jasper, agate and wood
quit my job and look for it, I would
be so happy, words cant explain
bucket after bucket, again and again

I just wrote them while sitting here.....They may stink.

Antony Thomas

Our Up-Coming Show:

Aug. 13 - 14
BATON ROUGE, LA
Baton Rouge G&MS
Fraternal Order of Police

Aug 20-21—BOSSIER CITY, LOUISIANA: Annual show; Ark-La-Tex Gem & Mineral Society; Bossier Civic Center, 620 Benton Rd.; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; adults $4, students $1, children under 6 free; door prizes, youth activities, demonstrations, exhibits; contact Charles Johns, 9314 Overlook Dr., Shreveport, LA 71118, (318) 687-4929; e-mail: cwsejohns@bellsouth.net; Web site: www.larockclub.com

Aug. 27 - 28
JASPER, TX
Pine Country G&MS
Events Ctr.

Sep. 03 - 04
ARLINGTON, TX
Arlington G&MS
Arlington Conv. Ctr.

Sep. 03 - 04
DENISON, TX
Texoma Rockhounds
Denison Senior Ctr.

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OPALS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA?

Did you know opals are being found in British Columbia (B.C)? That's right, in B.C., precious opal is being found after 10,000 years of glaciation and countless snowfall. Each year the site where this opal is found is under snow for ten months.

The area where the opal is found is 6,000 ft up in the Whitesail Mountains of Northwest B.C. The opal claim is located approximately 90 air miles south of Houston, B.C. and access is by helicopter and is on e of a very few alpine locations in the world where precious opal can be found.

The type of opal found ranges from nodules similar to Mexican material, thin seams in matrix that resemble Queensland boulder opal and matrix opal that looks like Honduran opal crossed with dinosaur bone. The precious opal matrix material represents the biggest volume of production at present. Although some of the host volcanic material will take a good polish, sadly the majority of the matrix material produced so far has been too soft for daily wear and requires stabilizing. After stabilizing, the matrix material exhibits good color and is suitable for spheres, carvings and jewelry grade cabs.

Permanent snowpack covers much of the alpine terrain and safely trenching or extracting material is quite difficult. The first trench made proved to be an excavate and tumble method of mining. A flat bench 100 years below stopped the boulders on their downward journey. Can you imagine what the experience of tumbling stove-sized boulders weighing hundreds of pounds down onto a flat must be like? Pieces that survive the tumble are given the sledge and chisel treatment and reduced to gravel piles. While many bright precious opal specimens are found, the action of freezing and thawing has fractured most of the near surface material. As trenching progressed into the slope the uphill wall became hazardous and digging had to be abandoned.

From another very steep site, boulders the size of automobiles were sent skidding down 600 feet of snowfield. This type of opal mining is not for the faint of heart.

Prospecting for precious opal in an alpine environment presents peculiar challenges and conditions. Strongly rooted shrubs and bushes are an alpine prospector's best friend, but gloves, walking sticks and kneepads all have a respected place in the backpack. The many permanent snowfields in this pristine environment provide fresh water and a highway system. Refrigeration is never a problem. Sunshine melts the snow at an incredible rate of 2 feet per day.

Wildlife abounds in the area wolves, mountain goats, marmots, ptarmigan are common sights. A hugh grizzly is seldom seen and does not bother the miners. Frequent southern visitors to the mountains are the beautiful ruby red and emerald green rufus hummingbirds. As they follow the blooming alpine flowers north, they often buzz the miners, attracted by brightly colored headgear and backpacks.

Access of the mining area is by helicopter so hand tools are heavily used. Portable gas powered saws and drills are also used. A small excavator weighing 850 lbs was successfully flown in and was a big help in extracting the precious opal and removing overburden. Having only about 30 days annually to hunt, find and dig precious opal in these alpine conditions make speed imperative. Due to the payload and time limitations, the best boulders were high graded and trimmed with approximately 800 pounds of mine-run for the net load. The 30 day season ended with a snowstorm.

British Columbia has a wealth of mineral resources but due to the rugged terrain and weather much of the province has remained unexplored or prospected. The occurrence of precious opal deposits in B.C. is relatively unknown, but recent discoveries are about to change that. Singular specimens have been found from the southern Okanogan area up to northwest B. C. Two other properties, notable Firestorm Opal of Burns Lake and Okanogan Opal of Vernon B. C. have produced beautiful specimen and jewelry grade material. These volcanic hosted precious opal deposits indicate that closer inspection of all common opal and agate areas may yield further discoveries and significant attention is warranted.

Submitted by Lorraine Polonis excerpt of an article by Randy Lord – from http://bovagems.com/eclectic/login

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THE ROLE OF AMATEURS IN ARCHAEOLOGY

by
Michael Rusnak
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Stow, Ohio 44224

The recent Peopling of the Americas Seminar offered a unique opportunity to discuss issues with nationally recognized archaeologists. I asked some of the guest speakers about how they perceived the role of amateurs in archaeology and what experiences they had with them. I spoke with three who viewed the use of amateurs as an important partnership. They offered their perspectives on amateurs, as well as some comments from their own experiences on the contributions that amateurs have to make.

Doug Owsley of the Smithsonian explained that he maintains a small group of amateurs that regularly work with him on most important projects. He pointed out that these people often pay their own expenses, and they have become experienced in such areas as soils and fieldwork. He noted that one of his amateurs was featured in the Discovery Channel documentary on the finding and recovery of the CSS Hunley, the confederate submarine. He added that he "has a high regard for the avocational people that he works with and his experiences have always been positive."

Michael Gramly, who organized the American Society for Amateur Archaeology, seemed to have a genuine appreciation for the contributions that amateurs can make. He pointed to his own experience. "I have been an amateur myself and have been surrounded by them for 48 years. All of my fieldwork has been performed with amateurs." He added that he also uses "amateurs of proven dedication to perform some lab work." Gramly compared excavations done with amateurs to those done without. He noted, "I have been a guest participant on many field projects where amateurs had a token presence only. These particular digs (academic or professional digs) were not my own; I did learn a great deal from them — but no more than I have learned on my own digs shoulder to shoulder with amateurs."

Gramly added that amateurs can perform other invaluable tasks for archaeology as well. He pointed out that even the simple act of reading and discussing site reports on archeological discoveries furthers the science. He commented that, "Once the report has appeared, amateurs (team members) are invaluable in spreading the word about its availability. An unread report is of no value to anyone."

He believes that "Without amateurs there would be no scientific archaeology – and certainly no one to read the reports that must appear if archaeological endeavors are to be regarded as science!"

James Chatters, who first examined the Kennewick Man remains, offered both some insight into the consequences of not working cooperatively with amateurs as well as some advice. Chatters stated that "In a state like Ohio where much of the land is in private hands, the only way that professionals can find out about sites is by people keeping their eyes open. Not working closely with amateurs does three things. First, you alienate the community. Second, you drive people to do irresponsible things. Plus, you lose a lot of knowledge." He called for those in archaeology to work together, adding that "An attitude of elitism is not productive, and it is short sighted. It drives people away." Chatters added a final comment on the issue, declaring "I started out as an amateur."

In his presentation to the ASO meeting, Chatters provided an illustration of how an attitude of openness to amateurs can pay off. He noted that after the published discovery of Kennewick Man, a local resident came forward and brought him a stemmed lance point that he had found a few years before while walking the Columbia River shoreline. It turned out that the stemmed point was found within a few feet of where Kennewick Man was found. Chatters commented that the stemmed point "was a very significant contribution to the study of Kennewick Man, because it was likely the type of point that his people were using."

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