



The Pineywoods Rooter

Newsletter of
PINE COUNTRY GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY
of Deep East Texas

March 2016

Volume 24 Number 3

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Club Officers

President

Ann James 409-429-7444

Vice President

Mike Harvey 409-489-5175

Secretary

Wanda Page 409-384-9821

Treasurer

Linda Lang 489-3505

Membership & Publicity

Jonetta Nash 409-384-4974

Newsletter Editor

Mike Harvey 409-489-5175

harveyrocks80@yahoo.com

Member News

Ann James 409-429-7444

earthscache3@yahoo.com

President's Message

March 2016

Howdy Folks,

I am hoping that all of you have made it through the flood waters unscathed. It is a difficult time for many in southeast Texas and southwest Louisiana and as I understand some of you are aiding in the efforts. It's so wonderful that there are those of you who can extend a helping hand.

Our meeting is tomorrow, March 17th, beginning promptly at 7:00 pm. It is a "pot luck night" so bring your favorite dish to share with fellow members. The program will be presented by shop chairmen, John Nash and Mike Lang on "How to Use a Rock Saw". It is very exciting that the PCGMS has a large slab saw as well as a new trim saw. So make sure to be there to learn the basics of using the saws. We are bringing back "Show and Tell" to the meetings, so if you have something new, interesting or would just like to find out what you may have, bring that along with you. Also, for those of you that have taken classes in cabbing and wire wrapping- please bring your finished pieces. This is a great time to show your new found talents.

At the last meeting, there was some discussion about having the clubhouse/workshop opened early on the day of the meeting. I spoke with John Nash this morning and he stated that if you are interested in coming into the shop to use the saws or cabbing machine tomorrow, to please contact him via email - johnnash1937@yahoo.com or via telephone at 409-384-3974 and a designated time would be arranged.

Thank you to those of you who were able to attend the "paint party" last month. The clubhouse looks so much brighter and better through your efforts. Also, thanks goes out to Fred and Calvin Brown for the awesome display that they set out. The specimens are absolutely amazing!!!

Greatest excitement at this time - Mike Harvey, aka "Rocky Harvey" has volunteered to be editor of the bulletin, "The Pineywoods Rooter" and has created his first bulletin - Woohoo!!! Thank you, Mike, on behalf of all club members.

Hope to see many of you tomorrow.

Ann

Membership

Club Membership is open to all who are interested in the Earth Sciences and the Lapidary Arts. Dues are \$24 yearly for families, \$18 for Single Adults, and \$2 kids.

Meetings

The regular monthly meeting is held on the third Thursday of every month at 7PM in the Club Building at 110 N. Zavalla St. Jasper TX 75951

Visitors are always Welcome!

Club Purpose

Pine Country Gem & Mineral Society was formed for the purpose of encouraging interest and a better understanding of all phases of the Earth Sciences and Lapidary Arts and to promote fellowship and cooperation among members and with other groups with like interests.

Member Club Affiliation

South Central Federation of Mineralogical Societies
and
American Federation of Mineralogical Societies

Minutes of the Pine Country Gem and Mineral Society Meeting for February 2016

The PCG and MS met at the Tonahill/Nash Building, our club house, on February 18, 2016. We had eighteen members present and one visitor.

Ann James, Donna Ducote and Jonetta Nash gave reports on members who are ill. Also, Bill Anderson, a long-time member, recently passed away. Club members signed cards to be mailed.

Minutes were read and one correction was made, the spelling of Kimberly Brannon's name.

Linda Lang gave the treasurer's report. Ruth Howell made the motion to accept the report. Kimberly Brannon made the second. The motion passed.

Old Business, Committee Reports, Education: No Report

Membership and Publicity: Jonetta Nash reminded those present that dues were due in January. Dues are \$18 for one person and \$24 for a family. Membership cards will be given to members. Ann James asked that members update their email addresses.

Historian: No Report

Chamber of Commerce: Azalea Festival will be March 19, around the Courthouse Square.

Hostess: No Report, except a reminder that in March we will have our quarterly potluck.

Show: Ann James and Lonnie Stalsby are still in the planning stages for our annual August show.

Building: Paul James has scheduled a "paint party" for February 27 at 9:00am. "Rita" chicken will be grilled. Members are asked to bring side dishes.

Constitution and Bylaws: Kimberly Brannon reported that a meeting of the committee will be held soon.

Web Site: Linda Lang will make changes to the web site.

Shop Chairmen: John Nash and Mike Lang. A wire wrap class is scheduled for February 25 at 6:00pm. Mike Lang will be the instructor. "Open Shop" will be once a month from 3:00 to 5:30pm. February 20, 2016 will be the first date for open shop. The next date is March 17, 2016.

Activities and Field Trips: Open Committee

Program: Open Committee. Ann James suggested that members be willing to present a program.

Another subject of discussion involved the Family Fun Day, held in Lufkin the second Saturday in May. Ruth Howell, asked club members for rocks for the Fun Day. Rich Geist volunteered to furnish some of his collection. Red Lawrence volunteered to assist Ruth with activities for the Fun Day.

New Business: Fred Brown will fill one of the two new display cases. Rich Geist will consider filling the other one. The display in the local library was discussed. A new display is needed there. Members were asked to volunteer for this important display.

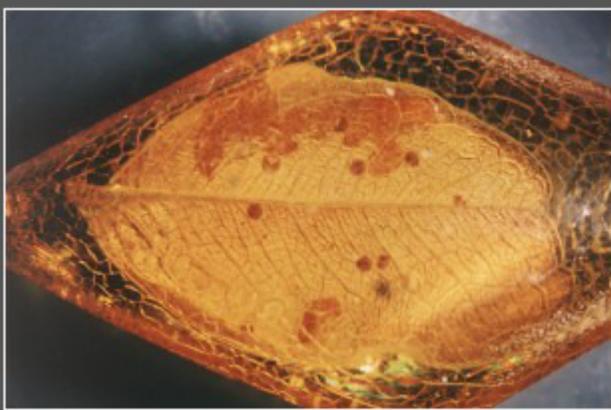
Program: Rich Geist gave a presentation of rock tumblers. He indicated that it is best to place a tumbler with 2/3 to 3/4 full of rocks that are small, medium and large. This can cut the tumbling time in half. Other interesting tips Rich suggested included the size of grit and the very important fact that we DO NOT pour the grit/water down the drain. He also told club members that water should just cover the rocks.

Drawings: The half and half was won by Wayne Marsh. Wayne also won the door prize!! A special prize, given by Rich Geist, was won by Doug Hinkle.

Auction: As usual, a lively auction was conducted by John Nash. Donated items are used by John for the auction. Money raised by this auction helps to finance our club and the activities involved.

It was MSP to close the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 9:10pm.

Submitted by Wanda Butterfield Page, Secretary

Identifying True Amber (Succinite) By Garry Platt, garry@gplatt.demon.co.uk

Some Buggy Amber Specimens

Since the screening of 'Jurassic Park' interest in the mineral amber has grown significantly. Unfortunately so has the quantity of fake amber coming on to the market. Some of these pieces have insect inclusions skillfully placed in the body of the matrix.

The British Natural History Museum recently discovered that a bee preserved in amber thought to be one of the oldest known examples of this particular species was in fact a fake and probably no more than 150 years old. (More of this bee later). Evidence of this nature; that even the best can be fooled should alert all collectors to the possibility of being misled or simply cheated.

In some cases copal, which is tree resin which has not yet fully fossilized to amber and may be anything up 3-4 million years old is described as true amber. Debate still rages about certain Kenyan deposits as to whether

they should be called copal or amber and I have heard of similar arguments concerning deposits found in South America.

There are a number of simple tests which can be carried out on amber to check its authenticity. I have listed here all the basic methods I have come across. More sophisticated and complex tests are possible but they require access to laboratory equipment. These more complex tests include: Refraction Index, Precise Specific Gravity and Melting Point.

When examining a specimen you should try at least 3 of the following methods detailed here. If the item in question fails any one of the tests, it could well mean the piece is not true amber.

HARDNESS

Amber has a hardness on Mohs scale in the region of 2 - 3. Using appropriate scratch sticks it should be reasonably straightforward to test the sample under question.

HOT NEEDLE

Heat a needle point in a flame until glowing red and then push the point into the sample for testing. With copal the needle melts the material quicker than amber and emits a light fragrant odor. Amber when tested does not melt as quickly as the copal and emits sooty fumes.

SOLUBILITY

Copal will dissolve in acetone. This test can be done by dispensing the acetone from an eye dropper onto a clean surface of the test specimen. Place one drop on the surface of the test piece and allow to evaporate, then place a second drop on the same area. Copal will become tacky, amber will remain unaffected by contact with acetone.

UV LIGHT

Copal under a short-wave UV light shows hardly any color change. Amber fluoresces a pale shade of blue.

FRICTION

Rub the specimen vigorously on a soft cloth. True amber may emit a faint resinous fragrance but copal may actually begin to soften and the surface become sticky. Amber will also become heavily charged with static electricity and will easily pick up small pieces of loose paper.

TASTE

This test was introduced to me by an antique trader who specialized in amber beads. She explained that one of the most reliable tests she used was to taste the amber specimen after washing it in mild soapy water and then plain water. While she could make no distinction between copal and amber, she could easily identify plastics and other common substitutes because of their unpleasant or chemical taste. Amber has hardly any taste at all. As a method for identification I have not seen this procedure recorded elsewhere. I can vouch for its effectiveness as a non-destructive method of differentiating between amber and certain other substances often misleadingly labeled amber.

FLOTATION (Specific Gravity)

Mix 23gms of standard table salt with 200ml of luke warm water. Stir until completely dissolved. Amber should float in such a mixture and some copals together with various plastics sink.

INCLUSIONS

Infrequently amber contains Flora or Fauna inclusions. Correctly identifying the trapped Insect or plant should be an excellent indicator of a piece's authenticity. Most inclusions from ancient amber are of species which are now extinct or significantly changed.

POLARIZED LIGHT

Place the suspect piece of amber between two sheets of polarizing glass or plastic. (Kokin Filter Systems which sell lens accessories for cameras sell such products). Rotate one of the polarizing lenses slowly through 360 degrees. In the body of the amber a display of rainbow colors should cycle through the transparent parts of the material. This is due to interference patterns being induced in the polarized light because of the internal strains and stresses within the amber itself. My general experience with this method is that genuine amber and copal always show these color changes, whereas some acrylics, polymers and certain plastics do not. Amber which has been drilled and then later filled with a contemporary inclusion and resin also reveals its self via the clear disruption of the color display. Essentially; an amber piece which does not show interference patterns is unlikely to be true amber.

Now back to the bee I mentioned earlier. I am afraid that only the eighth and ninth tests would have identified this particular fake. The item consisted of a block of true amber into which had been drilled a hole large enough to

receive the dead bee. Resin which had been melted was then poured back over the insect, encasing it in an apparently genuine amber prison.

Anyone wishing to find out more about amber in general or these test methods specifically would do well to consult one of three books currently available on amber, they are:

Life In Amber; George O. Poinar, Jr.; Stanford University Press; ISBN: 0-8047-2001-0.

Amber - The Golden Gem of the Ages; Patty C. Rice; The Kosciuszko Foundation, Inc.; ISBN: 0-917-00720-5.

Amber - Window to the Past; David Grimaldi; Harry N Abrams; ISBN: 0-8109-1966-4.

(This article was found at Bob's Rock Shop at rockhounds.com)

How to Wire Wrap a Bead



Step 1 Cut 20cm length jewelry wire. Bend one side of the wire and form a right-angle.

Step 2 Use [round nose plier](#) to make a simple loop.

Step 3 String a bead.

Step 4 Bend the other side of the wire and form a right-angle.

Tip: Reserve a bead's length space for wire wrapping later.

Step 5 Make a simple loop.

Step 6 Continue to wrap the loops until it comes to your desired length.

Step 7 Wrapping the wire around the bead.

Step 8 Wrap loops of the [jewelry wire](#) until it reaches to the simple loop in the beginning.

Step 9 Cut the extra jewelry wire.

Step 10 Congratulations, you've successfully made a wire wrapped bead.

(Anonymous Source on the Web)



**I FOUND AZURITE!!
I FOUND AZURITE!!
I'M RICH, I'M RICH!!**



Quartz by Any Other Name Is Still Quartz

By Beth Heesacker of Clackamette Mineral and Gem (CMGC) in Oregon City, Oregon

Quartz crystals fascinate me. I wanted to know more about them and thought that I would share my findings as I research this wonderful crystal. This is the first part of a multi-part report. Most of the information is summarized from the website www.quartzpage.de which also has much more detail and scientific data if you wish to know more.



PURE QUARTZ

Quartz has many forms and comes in many colors. It is also the foundation for many other forms of lapidary materials such as agate, jasper and petrified wood. It is a very simple compound of silicon and oxygen called silicon dioxide, SiO_2 . The earth's crust is about 12% quartz with most of it contained in granite. Pure quartz is used in the manufacturing of glass, ceramics, and computer components. It has a hardness of 6.5-7.



AMETHYST

If the quartz crystal is pure it is colorless. If it contains impurities it can be purple (amethyst), yellow (citrine), pink (rose), blue, milky or smoky. These crystals are called macrocrystalline since the crystals can be seen by the naked eye. These can also come in many forms such as scepter, artichoke, cactus, etc.

If the crystals are too small and dense to be seen by the naked eye it is called microcrystalline or cryptocrystalline. These are divided into 2 types: fibrous such as agate, carnelian, onyx and chrysoprase or grainy such as chert, flint, and jasper. The differences between these two types can only be seen in thin slices under a microscope.



CITRINE

Whether the crystals formed are macro or micro sized depends on temperature and concentration of the silica molecules.

Temperatures above 150C and low concentrations of silica with favor the formation of the macro crystals.

Quartz can be found in veins filling a crack in a host rock that was formed during fold, shattering or cooling of the host rock. The silica "brine" will fill the crack and on cooling form the crystals. If the brine cools quickly milky quartz will form and as the cooling slows the crystals will be less milky or even clear. During cooling and shrinkage of the quartz vein pockets may occur where individual crystals can form.



SMOKY QUARTZ



MILKY QUARTZ



QUARTZ GEODE

Sometimes during volcanic eruptions solidifying magma releases hot fluids containing dissolved minerals flow into fracture cracks and cool forming quartz pockets with other crystallized minerals grown in with them.

During metamorphosis rocks can release fluids which will cool into veins of crystals. Veins formed by solidifying magma or by metamorphosis are called pegmatites. During the cooling process pockets can form where individual crystals may grow.

Sedimentary rocks such as limestone or dolomite can dissolve or form cracks where pockets of quartz crystals can grow. Gas cavities in magma can also become the home for quartz crystal growths. Mexican coconuts and thunder eggs are two kinds of these forms.

Collecting Micrometeorites

Jet Propulsion Laboratory Public Education Office

"Shooting stars" are not, of course, really stars. They are actually small bits of rock and metal that collide with Earth's upper atmosphere and, because of friction, burn up. On rare occasions, man made satellites and spacecraft parts fall into the atmosphere and burn up the same way.

The flash of light from this incineration is correctly called a meteor. A meteor is formed when an object, usually the size of a marble or a piece of popcorn, hits the atmosphere at an altitude of 80 to 100 kilometers. The air at that height is very thin but the objects are moving at tens of thousands of kilometers per hour. The friction causes the meteor to heat up and glow.

Larger objects do not burn up completely. Surviving fragments fall through the atmosphere and land on Earth. Once one of these objects lands it is called a meteorite. Most meteorites fall into Earth's oceans. Meteorites can be either rock, metal (nickel and iron), or a mixture of both. Stony meteorites are difficult to identify. Stones outnumber metals, but metallic meteorites are easier to find.

Rarely are chunks of metal found lying about. A metal detector can be used to search for metallic meteorites. Dry barren areas where there is little vegetation to cover up the ground and turn over the soil are the best areas to look. Dry lake beds are good places to search since wind can blow dust off of the surface leaving the meteorites exposed. Many meteorites are found on the Antarctic ice sheet.

There is an easy way to collect meteorites, but we must be satisfied with finding small metal ones. They are actually microscopic and are known as micrometeorites. Tons of these fall on Earth each day. To collect micrometeorites you need to find a place where they can become concentrated.

The drains of a house or building are excellent collection sites since rainwater can wash particles off of an entire roof and collect them at the drain spout. Tile roofs are best since they drain very well and do not produce many other sorts of particles or debris.

To find the metallic micrometeorites, collect and dry some of the material from a deep bowl at the base of the drain spout. After removing leaves and other debris, place the remaining material on a piece of paper and place a magnet under the paper. Tilt and tap the paper so that all of the non-metallic particles fall off. Many of the remaining metallic particles are pieces of space dust!

To examine them, place the paper under a microscope. High power will be required to see them clearly. Although most of the particles are not from space, the micrometeorites will show signs of their fiery trip through the atmosphere. They will be rounded and may have small pits on their surfaces.

Much of what you are observing are particles that date from the formation of the solar system around 4.6 billion years ago! They are the debris remaining from the raw materials that formed into the nine known planets and the asteroids. Most particles have been broken off or ground down from larger objects.

HOW DEDICATED A ROCKHOUND ARE YOU??

You may be a Rockhound if three of the following traits pertain to you. But, If ten or more traits apply, you are advised to seek professional help immediately!

- The sign on the side of the road says "Falling Rock" and you pull over to wait.
- The severe sunburn acquired on your last vacation was a one inch wide strip of skin at the gap between the tail of your shirt and the top of your pants.
- When you lick a dirty rock you found on the shoulder of the road to show off the wonderful colors, without stopping to realize that you should be changing your flat tire.
- You wash your rocks at the same time you take a shower.
- You sob uncontrollably watching "How the West was Won" at the part where the farmers are clearing rocks and casting them off.
- You bring a catchers mitt and a hand lens to a rock fight.
- Your spouse asks how the soup tastes and you reply, "variable color, greasy surface, low specific gravity, texture smooth with bits of ductile material."
- Someone talks about cleavage and you don't think about women.
- The USGS calls to tell you they've discovered a gravitational anomaly centered on your house and to ask if you might know the reason why.
- Your family puts the birthday candles on a slab of amethyst instead of cake.
- A truck throws a rock into your windshield and you examine the rock first.
- Considering the purchase of a spectacular specimen at a mineral show, you wonder if all three of your kids really need to attend college.
- You can pronounce the word "molybdenite" correctly on the first try.
- You think the primary function of road cuts is tourist attractions.
- You associate the word "hard" with a value on the Mohs scale instead of "work".
- The rock pile in your garage is taller than you are.
- The local university's geology department requests permission to hold field trips in your back yard.
- There's more amethyst in your aquarium than fish.
- Your wife constantly asks you to move flats of rocks out of the tub so she could take a bath.
- You've ever spent more than ten dollars for a book about rocks.
- The polished slab on your bola tie is six inches in diameter.
- You find yourself compelled to examine individual rocks in driveway gravel.

Happy Digging!! Mike "Rocky" Harvey.....