

# GRITTY GREETINGS

Waco Gem and Mineral Club Monthly Newsletter

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**Remember our fallen heros and be grateful for the freedoms they secured for us!**

## **May Meeting Minutes**

Betty Gillum opened with a prayer.

We fed the "no name tag" bunny. (Proceeds go to the scholarship funds at SCFMS. Ed.)

We had a good crowd. Thanks to all for coming out!

Guests were Andy Herman and Helen Serra-Herman. They were vendors at the show. Helen is a gemstone carver and sculptor. She Writes for Rock and Gem Magazine, and another similar publication in London, England. She gave a really nice presentation after the meeting telling about her life and showing her art and how she got into gem carving. Her website is [www.gemart.com](http://www.gemart.com)

The minutes for April were approved as printed in the Gritty Greetings.

Jackie presented the treasurers report after tallying the money from the show. We took in over \$3000. Having the ability to take cards for payment really helped, and only cost \$5.48. (They do charge a tiny percentage of transactions.) If you have any questions, please call Jackie.

Upcoming shows were discussed as well as the field trip to the Mayborn Museum on May 13. They have thousands of catalogued mineral specimens, fossils and artifacts. It is a wonderful place to visit. The Mayborn would like to work with us on possibly attending classes taught by folks working on their doctoral theses.

Andy spoke. He reminded us to read the "Purpose of the Club" which is in the Gritty Greeting each month. To sum up, he said that every year at Show time, things get tense and stress levels rise in the frenzy of getting ready. We need to keep the purpose of our club in mind. All members, by joining, have agreed to uphold this purpose. We also need to remember that we are ALL volunteers, and to treat each other with respect.

Shop news:

A new location has been found and enthusiastically approved by the club members at the meeting.

It is on Northbound I35 between the Tire Store and the TigerMart / Dairy Queen in Elm Mott. It will be \$500.00 a month and includes electricity, but we will have to pay for water. A move-in date will be forthcoming. We will also be able to have our meetings there at some point in the future, and Jennifer is working on a schedule of shop hours when people can use the machines with an experienced guide.

Show report:

The Cookie Contest was won by Farrah Kelly with her double dark chocolate cookies. (They were delicious!) and the cabochon making contest was won by John Bennett, though we were told it was a VERY close race!

We closed, had snacks and then enjoyed the wonderful presentation by Helen Serra-Herman.

Stephanie

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## **The Mayborn Museum**

*By John Bennett*

Our fieldtrip to the Mayborn on the 13<sup>th</sup> was not only informative, it was a lot of fun. As this was my first trip to see the museum, I had expectations of a few rooms with stuffed armadillos and Native American artifacts. I have to say that I was pleasantly surprised. Yes, there are stuffed armadillos. Yes, there are Native American artifacts. There are also a stuffed Jackalope, a fluorescent mineral display, a model train setup to die for, and so many other things that were just too cool. The second floor was packed with interactive displays for the kids. Even the kids over 50.

The Mayborn web site says that they have almost 4000 different minerals on display. I can believe it. There were rocks in drawers. There were rocks under glass. There were rocks all over the place as well as hundreds of examples of ways that different minerals have been used through history. And there were fossils galore. The Mammoth Room was a lot of fun. Some of the group was a little nervous about walking on the glass floor over the fossils, but standing over the remains of creatures that have been extinct for ten thousand years and seeing the positions that the bones were in when they were being excavated was an experience that had me wanting to run out and start digging holes.

When we finally made it upstairs to the children's part of the museum, most of us were running from one room to the next, playing with the exhibits. Each of the rooms contains hands-on examples of similar displays. There was a weather room where you could make a tornado form or even do your own weather report complete with green-screen and live weather maps. Of particular interest was the room with a pendulum art table. I believe the subject for that room was gravity because there was also a display with pulleys and 25 pound bags of sand.

The Gift Shop was reasonably priced for most of the stuff that I saw. They have little plastic boxes of different minerals that would make a great present for introducing someone to mineral collecting. There were books for all age categories. They even had some very reasonably priced fossil replicas.

All-in-all, I had a great time and everyone that I asked said that they had fun as well. In my opinion, there aren't many better ways to spend an afternoon in Waco while only spending \$8.00 for admission.

**Notes:**

We got word that Bill Gillum underwent a successful surgery on Monday, May 22. Back home and resting the next day, he still needs our prayers and good wishes.

We need information from newer members about your birthdates. We list the birthdays and anniversaries in each issue, but have missed a few members. If your name isn't listed, please contact the editor.

**Waco Gem & Mineral Club** nametags are available at Print Mart, 202 Deb (behind AutoNation Chevrolet). Cost with a pin back is \$8.00 (with tax \$8.66), and with a magnet back is \$11.00 (\$11.91). **Dues are \$12.00 for an individual and \$20.00 for a couple.**

**Upcoming Shows and Events**

May 27 – 28 Fort Worth, TX FWG&MC

Will Rogers Memorial Center

For more information about specific times, and contact information, please investigate before you go to any of these events.

**JUNE BIRTHDAYS**

**Pearl, Alexandrite, Moonstone and Rose**

Alison Redding	7
Peggy Cooper	8
Jason Smith	10
Trytan White	13
Paula Smith	14
Linda Lowrance	27

**JUNE ANNIVERSARIES**

Doug and Jackie Dodson	19
Van and Mary Massirer	21
Noreen, Jonathan Powell	28

**Pearl**

Pearls are the only gemstones made by living creatures. Mollusks produce pearls by depositing layers of calcium carbonate around microscopic irritants that get lodged in their shells—usually not a grain of sand, as commonly believed.

While any shelled mollusk can technically make a pearl, only two groups of bivalve mollusks (or clams) use mother-of-pearl to create the iridescent "nacreous" pearls that are valued in jewelry. These rare gems don't require any polishing to reveal their natural luster.

Appropriately, the name "pearl" comes from the Old French *perle*, from the

Latin *perna* meaning "leg," referencing the leg-of-mutton shape of an open mollusk shell. Because perfectly round, smooth natural pearls are so uncommon, the word "pearl" can refer to anything rare and valuable.

The rarest, and therefore most expensive, pearls are natural pearls made in the wild. The majority of pearls sold today are cultured or farmed by implanting a grafted piece of shell (and sometimes a round bead) into pearl oysters or freshwater pearl mussels.

Pearls are very soft, ranging between 2.5 and 4.5 on the Mohs scale. They are sensitive to extreme heat and acidity; in fact, calcium carbonate is so susceptible to acid that pearls will dissolve in vinegar.

The finest pearls have a reflective luster, making them appear creamy white with an iridescent sheen that casts many colorful hues.

Cultured freshwater pearls can also be dyed yellow, green, blue, brown, pink, purple or black.

Black pearls—which are mostly cultured because they are so rare in nature—aren't actually black but rather green, purple, blue or silver.

Pearls used to be found in many parts of the world, but natural pearling is now confined to the Persian Gulf waters near Bahrain. Australia owns one of the world's last remaining pearl diving fleets, and still harvests natural pearls from the Indian Ocean.

Today, most freshwater cultured pearls come from China. South Sea pearls are cultured along the northwestern coastline of Australia, the Philippines and Indonesia.

## Alexandrite

A relatively modern gem, alexandrite was discovered in Russian emerald mines located in the Ural Mountains. Legends claim that it was discovered in 1834 on the same day that future Russian Czar Alexander II came of age, hence the name honoring him. Because this unique gemstone changed colors from green to red—the national colors of Russia—alexandrite became Imperial Russia's official gemstone.

Often described as “emerald by day, ruby by night,” alexandrite is a rare variety of the mineral chrysoberyl that changes color from bluish green in daylight to purplish red under incandescent light.

This chameleon-like behavior is the result of its uncommon chemical composition—which includes traces of chromium, the same coloring agent found in emerald. The unlikelihood of these elements combining under the right conditions makes alexandrite one of the rarest, costliest gems.

The alexandrite mined from Russia's famed deposits set the quality standard for this stone. Today, most alexandrite comes from Sri Lanka, Brazil and East Africa—generally paling in comparison to the vivid colors of Russian gems.

With a hardness of 8.5 on the Mohs scale, alexandrite is softer than [sapphire](#) and harder than [garnet](#)—the other gemstones

that can change color. However, due to its scarcity, alexandrite is more valuable than most gems, even [rubies](#) and [diamonds](#).

Associated with concentration and learning, alexandrite is believed to strengthen intuition, aid creativity and inspire imagination—bringing good omens to anyone who wears it.

## Moonstone

June's third birthstone, moonstone, was named by the Roman natural historian Pliny, who wrote that moonstone's shimmering appearance shifted with the phases of the moon.

The most common moonstone comes from the mineral adularia, named for an early mining site near Mt. Adular in Switzerland that supplied this gem. This site also birthed the term adularescence, which refers to the stone's milky glow, like moonlight floating on water.

Moonstone is composed of microscopic layers of feldspar that scatter light to cause this billowy effect of adularescence. Thinner layers produce a bluish sheen and thicker layers look white. Moonstone comes in a range of colors spanning yellow, gray, green, blue, peach and pink—sometimes displaying a star or cat's eye.

The finest classical moonstones—colorlessly transparent with a blue shimmer—come from Sri Lanka. Since these sources of high-quality blue moonstones have essentially been mined out, prices have risen sharply.

Moonstones are also found in India, Australia, Myanmar, Madagascar and the United States. Indian gemstones—which are brown, green or orange in color—are more abundant and affordably priced than their classical blue counterparts.

This beautiful gemstone's weakness is its relatively low hardness of 6 on the Mohs scale, making it prone to stress cracking and

cleaving. Care is required with moonstone jewelry like rings or bracelets; brooches and pendants are preferred.

As its name implies, moonstone is closely associated with lunar mystery and magic. Its calming, balancing energies can supposedly attune to natural biological rhythms. Moonstone acts as the ultimate fertility crystal by sparking passion in new lovers and reuniting old ones.

Also known as the Traveler's Stone, it's believed to protect travelers at night. Moonstone is used to treat insomnia and sleepwalking, encourage sound sleep and create beneficial dreams.

<http://www.americangemsociety.org>

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### Bench Tips

by Brad Smith

See all Brad's jewelry books at  
[Amazon.com/author/bradfordsmith](http://Amazon.com/author/bradfordsmith)

#### DRILL PRESS VISE

A drill press vise is a versatile tool to hold a workpiece securely and in precise alignment. It reduces the risks of working with high power motors, use of larger drill bits, and higher heat generated in the operation. The vise can be clamped to the drill press table if needed and is quite handy for use at the bench to hold things for sawing or riveting.

You can find them at stores that carry machine tool supplies. My feeling is that the best ones are made from steel. In particular, I like the ones with V grooves cut into the jaw plates. That lets me hold a punch straight upright or hold a rod horizontal. To find a supplier, search on "drill press vise" at sites like [micromark.com](http://micromark.com), [mscdirect.com/enco](http://mscdirect.com/enco), [smallparts.com](http://smallparts.com), [grizzly.com](http://grizzly.com), [sears.com](http://sears.com)

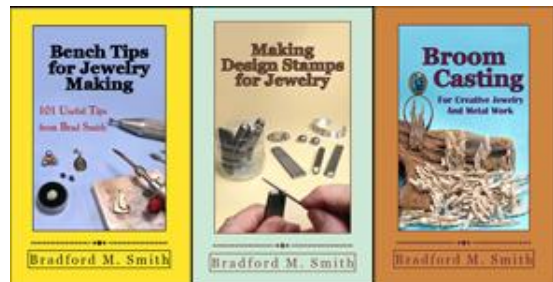


#### DENTAL GOLD

You might think that a couple pieces of dental gold would be valuable, but if you only have a small amount, it can be a problem. Sending it to a refiner is expensive for small amounts of metal.

I made the mistake of thinking I could melt it and roll out my own sheet. However, the trace metals that dental gold contains make it a good material in your mouth cause it to crack if you try to forge it or roll it out as a sheet. It ruined my whole ingot.

So what to do with a couple gold crowns? A reasonable alternative is to try incorporating the metal into your jewelry. If you have enough material to do a casting, that's probably the best use for dental gold. If you're not into casting, try melting it on a solder pad and while molten, divide it into small pieces with your solder pick. Then re-flow each piece to make little gold balls for use as accents on your designs. The balls can also be planished a bit to make small discs or struck with a design stamp to add texture.



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Next meeting, Monday, June 5<sup>th</sup>, at the Arboretum.

The Waco Gem and Mineral Club is a member of the South Central Federation of Mineral Societies; American Federation of Mineralogical Societies. Meetings are held on the first Monday of each month (except July and September) at 7:00 p.m. at the Carleen Bright Arboretum, 9001 Bosque Blvd. in Woodway. The workshop is located at 2521 N. Robinson Highway in Waco. Our website is [www.wacogemandmineral.org](http://www.wacogemandmineral.org). FaceBook: <https://www.facebook.com/WacoGemAndMineralClub>

**Purpose of the Club—**

- To bring about a close association of those persons interested in earth science and lapidary arts
- To increase and disseminate knowledge about rocks, minerals, fossils, Indian artifacts and other geological materials
- To encourage lapidary art and the collection and exhibition of rocks, minerals, fossils and artifacts
- To conduct field trips, meetings, lectures, displays and an annual show for the edification of the public
- To cooperate with educational and scientific institutions and other groups in increasing knowledge and popular interest.



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