

GRITTY GREETINGS



Waco Gem and Mineral Club

Volume 66, Issue 7, July, 2025

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Upcoming Events

July 12 Ice Cream Social, 10 AM, Clubhouse

Contacts

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Waco Gem and Mineral Club Minutes for June 7, 2025

Roy Cooper called the meeting to order at 10:15 am.

The visitors were welcomed and introduced themselves.

No previous minutes were voted on because the previous meeting date was the WGM Annual Show.

John Hillman gave a good Treasurers Report. He mentioned that new grinding wheels were purchased for the shop. He recommended that the CD's that will need renewing will be at a 3.5 percent rate if we just leave them alone. Bob moved that we leave the CD's as is. Stephanie seconded. Motion passed by acclamation.

Committee Reports:

Program Committee: (1) Today's program will be Shop Safety as related to working with types of rocks, minerals, and using different machines. Bob will lead it. (2) July is the time for our Annual "Picnic" (Ice cream social). The group agreed that July 12 should be our next meeting time because the first Saturday this July is the 4th of July weekend. Because our typical meeting time is 10:00, the group agreed to keep that same time for the Ice Cream Social to be consistent with typical club meeting time.

Field Trip Committee: June 8th at 2:30 pm at the Williamson Co. Gem and Mineral Club, 1101 College St, Georgetown, will have a presentation by David Weinberg, PhD from UT. The topic will be "Fossils."

Show Committee: Thanks to ALL who worked so hard to make the Show happen. Weather was a factor in our less-than-expected turnout. We received ideas from the floor on ways to improve turnout for 2026.

New Business: (1) We need to seriously search for a new location for our clubhouse. Recent raise in rent, a total lack of maintenance, and a demand that we keep the grass mowed indicates that this is no longer a good place.

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Also, the landlord stated to Roy that “we should keep plenty of liability insurance in case something happened to his building.” (This was a red flag to Roy).

(2) We need to make plans to move the rest of the material from Mr. Brockington’s place in Whitney.

(Note from the Secretary: This equipment was moved from Whitney, Saturday, June 21, and is now stored in Bob’s storage building.)

(3) The 18” saw at Jim Redding’s house has been donated to the club. We really have no room here nor need for it. However, we might be able to sell our 16” saw and thus have room for the 18”.

Meeting adjourned at 11:04 am.

Bob had a wonderful power point on Shop Safety.

July birthstone: Ruby



Ruby is the red variety of the mineral corundum, colored by the element chromium. All other colors of gem-quality corundum are called sapphire, which means color is key for this royal gemstone.

Accordingly, the name “ruby” comes from rubeus, the Latin word for red. In ancient Sanskrit, ruby translated to ratnaraj, which meant “king of precious stones.” These fiery gems have been treasured throughout history for their color and vitality.

The chromium that gives ruby its red color also causes fluorescence, which makes rubies glow like a fire from within. Paradoxically, chromium is also what makes this gem scarce because it can cause cracks and fissures. Few rubies actually grow large enough to crystallize into fine quality gems, and these can bring even higher prices than diamonds.

Burma’s Mogok Valley historically produced the finest ruby material, famous for its deep blood-red color with purplish hues. These Burmese Rubies, also called Pigeon’s Blood Rubies, command a premium over brownish or orange-tinged varieties from other regions.

The Mong Hsu region of Myanmar began producing rubies in the ‘90s after discovering that heat treatment improved the color saturation. Other ruby deposits exist in Vietnam, Thailand, India, parts of the Middle East, East Africa, and even the United States.

Tough and durable, ruby measures 9 on the Mohs scale. Diamond is the only natural gemstone harder than ruby.

Ruby’s strength and red fluorescence make it valuable for applications beyond jewelry. Both natural and synthetic rubies are used in watchmaking, medical instruments, and lasers.

Brads Bench Tips

DO BEZELS SHRINK ?

The engineer in me says there's no reason a bezel should shrink when I solder it onto a base plate, but I sometimes find that the stone won't quite fit into the bezel that was perfect just before soldering.

If that ever happens to you, here's a fix that usually works for those times when there's just a minor problem. I file or sand the stone down a little around its base. For soft cabs like Turquoise, Lapis, Jet or Howelite, you can use a sanding stick. Harder cabs like jasper or agates will require a diamond file. In a pinch, a ruby nail file from the drug store will work.

There are two important things to remember when doing this. First, you can only make a minor adjustment to the stone's size. All filing or sanding has to be hidden by the bezel because it takes the polish off the stone.

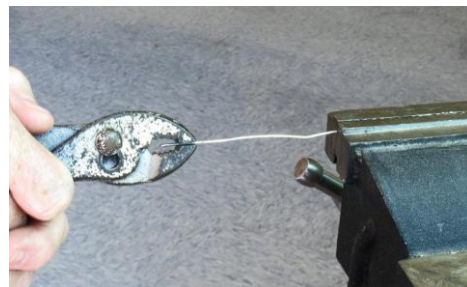
Secondly, remember to round off all sharp edges on the bottom of the stone. A sharp edge here might sit on a little extra solder at the bottom joint of your bezel. Any problem with the fit in this area might break the stone as you burnish the bezel down onto it.

STRAIGHTENING WIRE

Have you ever reached for your silver wire only to find that it's all bent up? The easiest way I've found to straighten it out is to stretch it a bit.

Simply put one end in the bench vise and grab the other end with a pair of serrated tip pliers. Then pull just enough to feel the wire stretch like a rubber band. This works best on smaller wire diameters, up to about 16 ga.

Be careful if you are trying to pull hard on a thick wire. Brace yourself in case the wire breaks or pulls out of the pliers.



<http://amazon.com/dp/B0BQ8YVLTJ>

See More of my Smart Solutions for Jewelry Making Series

Notes

The editor requests news items from any member to be included in the Gritty Greetings.

Deadline for submissions is the 20th day of the month. Contributions to the newsletter are encouraged.

Name Tags:

It is great that we feed the pig at our meetings because we don't have or have lost or forgotten our nametags to drop a dollar in the pig. The money from the pig goes toward our Scholarship program, and we really do appreciate every dollar or more. However, if you need a name tag you can purchase them at the businesses below!

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). or at Award Specialties at 431 Lake Air Dr.

Club Dues:

Annual Waco Gem and Mineral Club dues are \$12.00 for an individual membership or \$20.00 for a family membership. Please check with John Hillman if you aren't sure whether you've paid your Dues!

Shop Fees:

Lapidary Workshop fee is \$2.00 per hour. Slab Saw fee is an additional \$2.00 per hour. Class fees are always dependent upon class and instructor.

The Waco Gem and Mineral Club is a member of the South-Central Federation of Mineral Societies and the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies. Meetings are held on the first Saturday of each month (except July and September) at 10:00 a.m. at the Waco Gem and Mineral Club Clubhouse, 187 South McLennan Drive in Elm Mott, Texas. The lapidary workshop is in the clubhouse.

Our website is www.wacogemandmineral.org

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/WacoGemAndMineralClub>

Club Purpose

- 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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