

GRITTY GREETINGS



Waco Gem and Mineral Club

Volume 66, Issue 10, October, 2025

P.O. Box 8811, Waco, TX 76714-8811

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Upcoming Events

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| October 4 | Club meeting, 10 AM. |
| October 17-19 | Gem Capers, Austin Gem and Mineral Society |
| October 17-19 | International Gem and Jewelry Show, Houston |
| October 24-26 | Fossilmania, Glen Rose |
| November 1-2 | Fossil Fest, Round Rock |

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Contacts

| | | | |
|-----------------------|---|------------------|--|
| President | Roy Cooper 254-749-9961 coopersfarmstore@yahoo.com | Treasurer | John Hillman hillmanjohn316@gmail.com |
| Vice-President | Scott Halvorson 254-424-8829 Baylordad312@gmail.com | Secretary | Harry Senn senn.harry@yahoo.com |
| Newsletter | John Langston johnjkbear@aol.com | Website | www.wacogemandmineral.org Club email wacogemandmineralclub@gmail.com |

Waco Gem and Mineral Club Minutes for September 13, 2025

CALL TO ORDER – President Roy Cooper called the meeting to order at 10:08 am.

The visitors were welcomed.

The minutes of the previous meeting as published in Gritty Greetings were approved by acclamation.

TREASURERS REPORT: because John Tillman was at the Baylor game with representatives from the Czech Republic, his report, briefly presented to Roy, was *“The rent is paid, the water and electrical was paid, and we had no income for the month”*.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. PROGRAM COMMITTEE

1. September: Bob Boyd will give a presentation about Jade.
2. **October: “Bring Your Favorite Rocks (or rock products) for a Show and Tell”**
3. November: **Annual WGM Club Auction.** Members, Visitors, Other Clubs’ Members Welcome! It was discussed that maybe we could publish a partial list of items prior to the meeting.

B. December: Annual WGM Club Christmas Party

C. FIELD TRIP COMMITTEE – The discussion began with possibly having a field trip after the October meeting where we could go to a local farmer’s field to hunt for rocks and minerals, especially petrified wood.

Someone mentioned about going to Holland Texas for “snails” fossils hunting.

Texas Through Time Museum in Hillsboro is an idea.

There were other locations mentioned, and the persons who shared them was going to follow up by getting the owner’s permission first, then getting back to the Club with the location(s).

D. SHOW COMMITTEE – Nothing to report.

OLD BUSINESS

1. We are still looking for a new clubhouse location.
2. We were reminded that we do not have insurance on the contents in our clubhouse.
3. We still need to return to Whitney to complete digging out the rest of the donated slabs, minerals, and rocks.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Officer Nominations are open. (Secretary’s note: President and Vice President positions are open.)

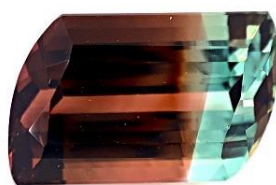
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2. Harry has resigned as Secretary, but will serve until the new one is elected. He will continue maintaining the website (because that is not an elected position.)
3. John Tillman will continue as Treasurer.
4. Officer Elections will take place during the November meeting.

ADJOURN – the meeting was adjourned at 10:38 am

PROGRAM: Bob gave a great presentation on Jade, the different places where it's found, and even how to identify jade. He had wonderful examples of the many types of jade.

October birthstones: Tourmaline and Opal



The name “**tourmaline**” comes from the Sinhalese words *tura mali*, which mean “stone of mixed colors.” As its name implies, tourmaline stands apart from other gemstones with its broad spectrum of colors in every shade of the rainbow.

Tourmaline is not one mineral, but a fairly complex group of minerals with different chemical compositions and physical properties. Certain trace elements produce distinct colors, and many resulting varieties have their own names.

Black tourmaline, known as “schorl” is rich in iron, which causes dark shades from deep brown to bluish-black. This variety makes up 95 percent of all tourmaline, though most of it isn't gemstone-quality.

Dravite or brown tourmaline is rich in magnesium, which causes colors ranging from brown to yellow. It's named for the Drave District of Carinthia (now Slovenia) where this stone is found.

Elbaite offers the widest range of gem-quality tourmaline colors, due to lithium traces combined with other coloring elements.

Rubellite or red tourmaline is caused by manganese. However, if the color becomes less vibrant under different light sources, it may be called pink tourmaline.

Indicolite or blue tourmaline can appear purplish blue or bluish green, depending on the amount of iron and titanium.

Verdelite or green tourmaline can resemble emerald. However, if its color is caused by chrome and vanadium, it's called a chrome tourmaline.

Paraíba tourmaline is a vividly colored purplish or greenish blue variety found in Paraíba, Brazil. It's the most recently discovered, and because of its desirably intense colors, it's one of the most valuable. The element copper is responsible for its vivid colors. Copper-bearing tourmaline is also found in other parts of the world such

as Mozambique and Nigeria; but only copper-bearing tourmaline from Paraíba, Brazil is called “Paraíba tourmaline.”

Achroite or colorless tourmaline is rare.

Parti-colored tourmaline displays more than one color, due to chemical fluctuations during crystallization. A common color combination is green and pink. These are often cut in slices to reveal a red center surrounded by a green rim, earning the name “watermelon tourmaline.”

Tourmaline is mined in Brazil, Sri Lanka, Nigeria, Mozambique, Madagascar, Afghanistan, Pakistan and the U.S.—primarily Maine and California.

Tourmaline is desirable because of its sheer range of color options. Combined with a good hardness of 7 to 7.5 on the [Mohs scale](#), tourmaline makes very wearable birthstone jewelry.

One of this gemstone’s most impressive traits is its ability to become electrically charged through heat (pyroelectricity) and through pressure (piezoelectricity). When charged, tourmaline can act as a magnet by oscillating and by attracting or repelling particles of dust.

The name “**opal**” originates from the Greek word *opallios*, which meant “to see a change in color.” The Roman scholar Pliny used the word *opalus* when he wrote about this gemstone’s kaleidoscopic “play” of rainbow colors that could simulate shades of any stone.

Opal’s characteristic “play-of-color” was explained in the 1960s, when scientists discovered that it’s composed of microscopic silica spheres that diffract light to display various colors of the rainbow. These flashy gemstones are called “precious opals.” Those without play-of-color are “common opals.”

Dozens of opal varieties exist, but only a few, such as fire opal and boulder opal, are universally recognized. Opals are often referred to by their background “body color” of black or white.

Opal’s classic country of origin is Australia. Seasonal rains soaked the parched Outback, carrying silica deposits underground into cracks between layers of rock. When the water evaporated, these deposits formed opal. Sometimes, silica seeped into spaces around wood, seashells and skeletons, resulting in opalized fossils.

Since opal was discovered in Australia around 1850, the country has produced 95 percent of the world’s supply. Opal is also mined in Mexico, Brazil, Honduras, Ethiopia, the Czech Republic, and parts of the U.S., including Nevada and Idaho.

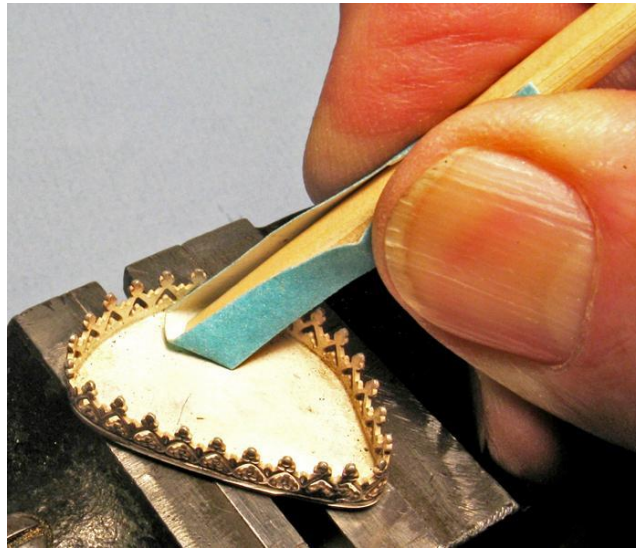
The water content of opal gems can range from three to 21 percent—usually between six and 10 in gem-quality material. This, combined with hardness of only 5.5 to 6 on the Mohs scale, makes opal a delicate gemstone that can crack or “craze” under extreme temperature, dehydration, or direct light.

Wearing opal jewelry is well worth the extra care, though. This October birthstone has remained a popular choice for centuries.

- See more at: <http://www.americangemsociety.org/>

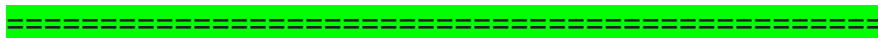
Brads Bench Tips

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Often you'll need to sand or polish an area that's impossible to reach with even a small wheel on a flexshaft. Other times it might be the bottom of a pocket or the inside-bottom corner of a box that needs to be finished. One trick for these nit-picky jobs may be left over from your last Chinese dinner - a chopstick.

I've found quite a few uses for these in the shop. Prepare the tip by simply sawing it off at a 45 degree angle. Then apply whatever abrasive grit you will need for the job or hold a strip of sandpaper around the end. Loose grit can be held onto the tip with a bit of vaseline or oil. Tripoli or rouge can be just rubbed onto the end of the chopstick.



DENTAL TOOLS

A ready source of free tools is your local dentist. Dental picks can be reworked into wax tools or straightened and sharpened to make a stylus for marking and layout. The steel in these tools is high quality, and the handles are designed for comfort.

A special note however - If you want to modify the shape of the tool, don't try to just bend it with pliers. Working this alloy of steel while it's cold will cause it to snap. Changing its shape can only be done when it's hot. I work it like a blacksmith. Prop your torch up on the bench so that you can use both hands for the work. Have a hammer and bench block ready. Heat the tip red hot, and hammer it straight or bend it with pliers.

And don't forget to ask your dentist for some of the cutting burs they throw out. These are useful for a variety of things. It's best to call a week or two before your visit and ask the dentist or hygienist to put some of these tools aside for you. It's good practice also to ask that they run them through the sterilizer for you. If that's not possible, pop them in an oven at around 250 F.

See More of my Smart Solutions for Jewelry Making at

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

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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