



GRITTY GREETINGS

Waco Gem and Mineral Club

Volume 67, Issue 3, March, 2026

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Upcoming Events

March 7 Monthly meeting at clubhouse, 10 AM. Bring some or all of the goodies you found on our field trip on February 7!

February 28-March 1 Clear Lake Gem and Mineral Show

March 7-8 Gulf Coast Gem and Mineral Show, Robstown

May 2-3 Waco Gem and Mineral Show

Contacts

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February 7, 2026

Waco Gem and Mineral Club

Meeting Minutes

1. Registration
2. Roy C. called the meeting to order.
3. Introduced and welcomed visitors:

A new guest, Lindsey introduced herself. She is very interested in learning to make (cabbing and silversmithing) traditional southwestern jewelry.

4. Collection for the scholarship fund – all members remembered their name tags.

Donations also accepted. For new members – name tags can be ordered at Printmart 202 Deb, or Award Specialties 431 Lake Air Dr.

5. Accepted Minutes of previous meeting.

6. Treasurers Report presented by John H.

John described the treasurers report as a normal January. In addition to rent (\$700) we paid water & electric bills as well as sales tax for 2025. We received expected income from CD investments. Roy reminded the group that venter income for the show would come in March and April with show income in May.

Contact John if you have any questions.

7. Committee Reports:

A. Show committee:

(1) Roy C. has ordered the new postcards/flyers for the show, they are due February 17 2026. He also mentioned that we need to start planning for ways to advertise the show.

(2) Linda H. and Amanda K. volunteered to set up a table/area with fun activities for kids. Two suggestions, painting cast fossils and a sand box to search for fossils were mentioned. They are looking for volunteers to assist the days of the show.

(3) Kathy A. briefed about a Central Texas Girl Scout scavenger hunt initiative planned the first day of the show Saturday 2 May. She solicited help in designing the scavenger hunt.

B. Field Trip Committee:

Suggestions were:

* John H. mentioned a future field trip to a family members ranch

* Bob B. mentioned going to Brownwood to collect horn coral fossils in preparation for the show.

C. School Initiative: Amanda K. indicated we are approved by the Superintendent to work with Robinson ISD Schools.

8. Old business:

* Roy discussed meeting our annual safety training requirement (due in June) through a brief on how to conduct a safe and respectful field trip for specimen collection.

9. New business:

*Kathy A. mentioned initial contact with Creative Waco, a non-profit organization chartered to assist other art and creative non-profit organizations. John H. offered to assist.

10. No other business.

11. Meeting was Adjourned.

A very interesting program was presented by Bob Boyd about Agate Formation.

Many members departed for a planned club field trip near Mt. Calm, Texas to look for petrified wood and other stones and minerals.

March birthstones: aquamarine and bloodstone



The serenely colored aquamarine invokes the tranquility of its namesake, the sea. In fact, the name **aquamarine** is derived from the Latin word aqua, meaning water, and marina, meaning the sea.

- Color & Clarity: Ranges from pale sky-blue to deep oceanic tones. Deeper colors, especially in larger stones, increase value. This gemstone is mined mainly in Brazil, but it is also found in Nigeria, Madagascar, Zambia, Pakistan, and Mozambique.
- History & Lore: Mohs hardness of 7.5–8; part of the beryl family (sharing its lineage with emerald, morganite)
- Jewelry Usage: Commonly cut in emerald, oval, and pear shapes; often used in rings, pendants, and earrings
- Care & Treatment: Often heat-treated to enhance blue tones; safe for ultrasonic and steam cleaning unless fracture-filled

The second birthstone for March is **bloodstone**, a dark-green gemstone flecked with vivid red spots of iron oxide. Generally found embedded in rocks or in riverbeds as pebbles, primary sources for this gemstone are India, Brazil, and Australia.

- Appearance: Dark green with bright red iron oxide spots; also called heliotrope
- Symbolism: Associated with vitality, protection, and ancient healing powers
- Origins: Found in India, Brazil, Australia; typically cut as cabochons or beads
- Durability: As a quartz variety, it's suitable for everyday jewelry (Mohs ~7)

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

Bench Tips

BENCH SHEARS

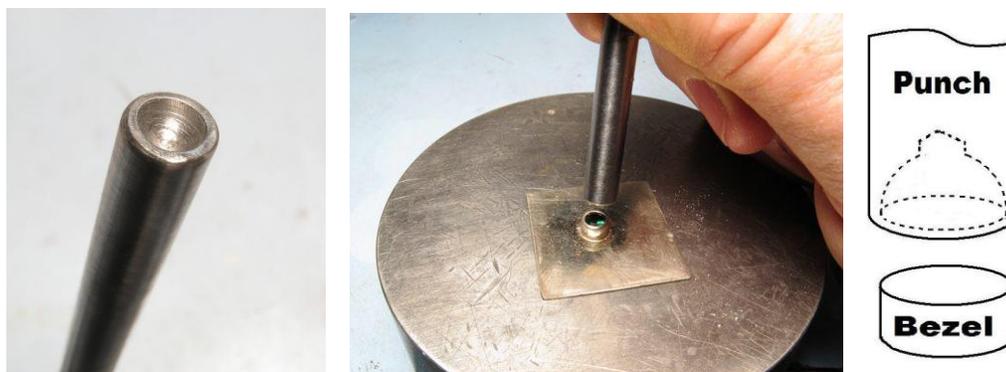


When cutting sheet metal, it's quicker and easier to use a set of shop shears as compared with using a hand saw. The cut is not as precise, but many times you don't need that. Shears will easily cut up to 24 gauge sheet, and some will cut 22 or even 20 gauge.

Current prices for shears run from \$13 - \$36 in jewelry catalogs, and the Joyce Chen scissors recommended on some jewelry blogs run more than \$20. But I found cheaper alternatives at the 99 Cent Store for use in my classes. They're great for cutting bezels, trimming around a bezel cup and cutting a piece off a larger sheet.

BEZEL CLOSER

A bezel closer is a steel punch that makes quick work out of pushing the metal down over a round stone and burnishing it. It works with regular bezels, with tube settings, and with prong settings. Stones can be set in as little as 30 seconds.



The working end is a concave cavity that fits over the bezel or prong setting and is pushed and twisted to capture the stone. Sets can be purchased but are expensive and contain many sizes you will probably never use. If all you need is one or two sizes, here's how you can make them yourself.

Find a round steel rod or bolt a little larger in diameter than your bezel cup or prong setting. Cut a 5 inch length. File both ends flat. Locate the center of one end, centerpunch a divot, and drill a small pilot hole about 5 mm deep. Remember to use a little oil as lubricant when cutting steel.

Select a ball bur a bit larger than the bezel. Enlarge the pilot hole to a full hemispherical cavity. Test for proper fit with your bezel. Bezel should first contact the cavity about a third of the way in. When the size is correct, polish the cavity using Zam on a length of chopstick in your flexshaft. If the tool is not polished, it will leave scratches on your bezel or prongs.

When using the tool, the first step is to capture the stone correctly. I usually work by hand and push the punch straight down over the bezel or prongs. This causes the metal to start bending over the stone. The next step is to inspect the stone with a lens to be sure it is staying level. Repeat until the stone is seated on its bearing and can't move anymore.

Finally, force the metal down onto the stone uniformly all the way around. While this can be done by hand, I often gently tap the punch with a hammer. Finish by twisting the bezel back and forth to burnish the top of the bezel.

**See More of my Smart Solutions
for Jewelry Making at**

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



Field Trip Pictures from Erik Royal Farm, Watt, TX

Pics by Kathy Aydt



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.

