

# ROCK-N-ROSE



THE EAST TEXAS GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



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## Upcoming Events

**Due to cancellations related to the Coronavirus outbreak, I can't give accurate information on upcoming events at this time.**

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*Header text background is courtesy of a photo from Robert Redmond.*

## President's Message

I remember looking at maps in the early 60's and seeing the apparent puzzle-like match of South America and Africa. The theory of plate tectonics was in its early stage. Today, geophysicists are answering questions we hadn't even asked then. It's a good time to be a geology buff. They are now able to peer into the sub-crustal depths of the earth's surface to "see" hidden structures. Seismic monitors and computers can read the change in the speeds of waves generated by earthquakes to create seismic tomography and build a picture of these structures. One example of this is that it is now believed that the Yellowstone magma source is due to a tear in the leading edge of the Paleo Pacific Crust that has subducted under western North America. This has resulted in the hot spot that the North American Crust has moved over leaving a string of volcanoes over the last 15 million years. Yellowstone is the most recent of these and geologically due an eruption.

David Russ



**The ETGMS Board voted to suspend all club activities through the end of April, due to the Coronavirus. They decided that it is prudent to do our part to reduce the spread of the virus, since a big part of our membership is in the age group that it is the roughest on. We will keep you up to date on the number of cases in the area, as we near the end of the month of April, and will let everyone know if May activities will stay on schedule. This means no subgroup meetings, regular monthly meeting, field trips, etc. from now until the end of April.**

## MEETING MINUTES

The East Texas Gem & Mineral Society met for its regular monthly meeting on March 2, 2020. President David Russ called the meeting to order at 6:45 pm. He saw a lot of new faces and asked for new members and guests to introduce themselves. Six new members and one junior did so. He then asked for a motion to approve the minutes as they appeared in the newsletter. Allison Kitchen made the motion, Cecil Waterhouse seconded, and the motion carried. Marcia Graham gave the Treasury report.

### Announcements:

- Jerry Sudderth brought sheets explaining the colors of petrified wood.
- Margaret Kilanski said the website has a new photo gallery for the Rock Food Table. Silent Auction items are needed so when going through your specimens, see if there are items you'd like to donate.
- Zachary Weenink said you can take out as much as you want from Mt. Ida as long as you have paid the entry fee. The World Championship Crystal Dig will be September 18-19 this year at Mt. Ida. Margaret will be cleaning quartz crystals in May, June, and July for the auction. Please donate.
- Randy Harmon went to his spot for fossils and had many to give away on the table. He also showed the Fossil Collector's Guidebook to the North Sulphur River (2001). There is a recent update. Zachary and Karl Siggelow went to Lampasas, Mason and Llano, Texas, and collected smokey quartz.
- Lapidary subgroup – Kinney Polve said the next meeting will be the 14<sup>th</sup>. New members will need to take the orientation class if they want to use the equipment. Terry Roberts said six people learned to cab in February.
- Mineral sub-group – Charles Creekmur was not there but Jerry said the subject will be feldspar. The meeting will be the 10<sup>th</sup>.
- Fossil subgroup – The meeting will be the 17<sup>th</sup> and the subject is Texas dinosaurs.
- Gemology subgroup – The meeting will be the 19<sup>th</sup> and the color grading of gemstones will be continued.
- Field trip – Fred Mahaffey said the next one will be on the 28<sup>th</sup> for surface collecting at the Midlothian Cement plant.

### Old business:

There was no old business.

### New business:

The next board meeting will be March 16 at 6:00 pm. Anyone who has an issue to discuss is welcome. With no further business to discuss, David asked for a motion to adjourn the business meeting. Zachary made the motion, Jerry seconded, and the motion carried. Door prize tickets were drawn and refreshments and visiting took place next. Terry gave the program on agates.

Submitted by  
Julia Toombs, Secretary



## We Need Your Help!

By Margaret Kilanski

Our fund-raising events are our financial lifeblood – we need them to meet our expenses and provide the many other necessities that will keep our club growing.

Our main income sources are annual membership dues, annual show attendance, vendor fees, silent auctions and raffles; monthly meeting silent auctions and raffles; annual club auction; and arts and crafts fairs.

Yes, we are fortunate to have money in the bank and as building/property owners we need to keep funds in reserve for the usual building and appliance maintenance, repairs, and replacements. We have many projects in the planning stages that will improve our utilization and usability of the clubhouse and overall club experience:

- build classrooms for each of the subgroups
- complete set up of display room
- complete set up of big meeting room
- equipment for subgroups labs
- parking lot
- alarm system

Lots of our regular chores are being taken care of by members, which keeps our costs down. (Please consider volunteering for one of these if you can)

- bush & tree trimming
- lawn mowing
- sweeping, mopping, cleaning tables, chairs and bathrooms

Our auctions and raffles are fun for members and nonmembers alike and over the years have generated thousands of dollars for the club.

We need your help providing the materials for our auctions and raffles.

We need your rock related donations of:

- Artwork
- Natural pieces – minerals, fossils, gemstones, crystals etc.
- Polished pieces – minerals, fossils, gemstones, crystals etc.
- Slabs
- Cabs
- Cut gemstones
- etc...

No item is too small to donate! We can give you a tax deduction receipt.

When you're out collecting, please consider picking up extra good pieces to donate to the club and keep us in mind if you have extra pieces in your mineral collection. Let me know if you have any items that need to be cleaned. I'm going to be doing some quartz and fluorite cleanings this summer.

If you have any questions, please contact any Board member or Kinney Polve - Show Chairman.

Thank you in advance for your support!!

## A Rockhound Goes to School

by Becky Whisenant

Forget it's a cliché; it is completely true that the future lies in the young. If you want to be a bridge between influencing the future and cherishing the past, do not miss an opportunity to spend time with the kids. You may get to pass something on.

With this thought in mind, I offer my time and modest knowledge of geology and rocks to local educators. The sole purpose of the five or so assorted boxes of carefully wrapped mineral specimens, fossils, rocks and artifacts which reside in my closet is education.

When called upon, I pull out the boxes, the lights, a mag glass, visual aids and my flash drive loaded with a carefully prepared PowerPoint. I coordinated with the teacher a few weeks ahead about the day, time, grade level and number of students.

The audience on February 25<sup>th</sup> was six classes of 178 sixth graders fresh out of a unit on earth science, which emphasized Tectonic Plate theory, landforms, types of rocks and the forces which affect them all. My purpose was three-fold: expound on the unit objectives, plant a seed of delight and curiosity in their minds, and have a good time talking about something I love. I will take any excuse to discuss the coolness factor of rocks.

School waits for no one. On the appointed day, I hit the ground running, arrived early, organized my table full of samples and setup my PowerPoint to be ready when the first excited crowd arrived. Of course, the flash drive did not sync until halfway through the first class. Improv is the name of the game.

*Continued on page 4*

As the day progressed, the flow became smoother and gained momentum. Time did not allow for an in-depth discussion of the aquifer under the Llano Estacado; we were not able to examine each different crystal for its unique structure; and someone missed out on holding the insect in amber. Hang onto that thought; we'll try to get it next time.

That little classroom bulged with fidgeting bodies and occasionally echoed with oohs and aahs, alternating with engrossed silence. Reprimands were kept to a minimum and distractions countered only as necessary.

It's really not about hammering home bullet points or definitions. Crowd control and group behavior modification can be done at another time. A little chaos is allowed here, because the takeaway is not the ability to recite a body of knowledge. The goal here is to let everybody get their hands on something real and gritty (and maybe even poopy) and see how many attention spans you can hold long enough to plant some seeds of wondering. So that, long after you are gone and they are grown, the memory of that unusual "rock lady" and the stuff she brought to science class will make somebody want to know more.

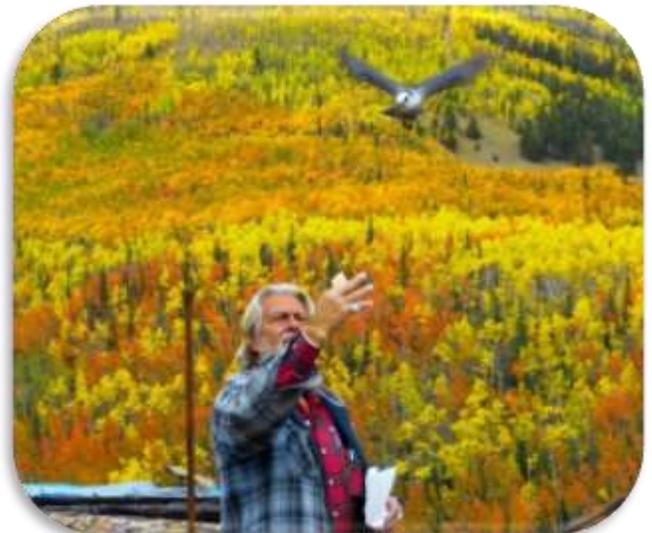
Your mission, should you decide to accept it, is to enter the fray. Arm yourself with some rocks, some minerals, some fossils. Brush up on your knowledge or just take a script. The kids don't care. They do care that you came.

*(From the author: Keith Harmon got me started speaking to kids about 12 or 13 years ago when he gave me several boxes, some notes and told the teachers at Chapel Hill Elementary someone named Becky would be taking his place for the geology talk that year. I loved it and have since built my own collection – with Keith's help – for that purpose. The script has been revised and is adaptable to fit the need. Have rocks, will travel. Try it – you'll like it.)*

## The Last Chance Mine

By Pete Keiser

If by chance you're going to Colorado this summer you may want to go to Creede where a friend of mine, Jack Morris, reopened the Last Chance Mine for guided underground tours last year. The mine is in an extremely scenic area around 10,500' and has a number of the old mine buildings intact, or rebuilt. The mountain rock is very stable rhyolite with numerous amethyst veins still running through it. There are a number of vertical stopes in the mine where the silver, galena, and sphalerite ore were concentrated. The mine is constantly inspected by the Colorado Bureau of Mines for safety. There are no elevators there like a number of other mine tours in Colorado, so it's just a matter of walking straight in. Jack also has a museum with antiques found in the mountain and around the property and has built cabins where people can spend the night if they wish. You can find amethyst in the tailings and he has a big pile of amethyst for people who want to cut and polish their own. He also sells cut and polished amethyst and jewelry from the mine, as well as a variety of other minerals and T-shirts. Jack called me a few days before Christmas to let me know he was going to work on opening three additional tunnels and increase the parking area starting this spring. If you are interested in an adventure in a beautiful location and need a job, Jack is always looking for good people to help.



If you're interested and want to communicate with Jack or view photos, check out [www.lastchancemine.com](http://www.lastchancemine.com). At this time the site has "Closed for the Season" on it due to the winter snows this time of year. If you decide to go, you may want to contact me for additional information about the area and other sights worth seeing. Terry Roberts, Becky Whisenant, and Colleen Hayes were at the mine a few years ago before a lot of the improvements were made.

Creede itself is a small town, but is a fantastic place to visit. There are lots of nice shops, restaurants, some motels, B&Bs and camping areas, a repertory theater, an underground mining museum, one gas station, no stop lights, and the locals are extremely friendly. The valley where Creede is located is the largest volcanic caldera in the world and the headwaters of the Rio Grande River. For about 10 years, I would spend the month of September there when the aspens would change color and most of the tourists were gone. Parts of the movie "The Lone Ranger" were filmed in Creede.

*Photo top right – On the left is Pete Keiser standing with Jack Morris. The photo was taken during the exploration to reopen the mine to the public. Photo right – Pictured is the Amethyst vein in the mine wall.*

*Photos by Pete Keiser and courtesy of Last Chance Mine.*



### MINEROLOGY GROUP

We had 10 members present for the March 10th program on Feldspars. We enjoyed a lot of questions and group discussion. We elected to do a Fluorite program for the April 14th meeting. Charles Creekmur

### LAPIDARY/JEWELRY GROUP

Approximately 14 members attended the March meeting of the Lapidary/Jewelry Group to hear about how to do lost-wax casting with silver and gold. New members of the club, Ken Needham and his wife, Mary, came to the meeting. Ken presented a detailed and informative lecture on vacuum casting of jewelry using wax impressions of various objects. He also explained the different pitfalls that the novice may encounter and made recommendations on how to correct or avoid them. He showed the group some of the many different kinds of commercially available wax figures that can be used in case someone didn't or couldn't create one themselves. He also showed how to create the cast and then load it into a bell jar where a vacuum pump would evacuate the air causing the liquid gold or silver (or another metal) to invade the cast and take on the shape of the desired object. He also explained how to do another form of lost-wax casting where the liquid metal is introduced into the cast by centrifugal force. Ken said he preferred to use the vacuum method. Ken also showed the group some items that he made using this method.

The group was very attentive and asked Ken numerous questions about the art. Ken spent at least one hour answering questions and providing examples of how to avoid copyright infringement when using existing objects when creating wax molds to use in casting. He also regaled the group with stories of his adventures in Colorado where he and his wife spend their summers and sell their creations.

David, another new member, then showed the group a piece of granite countertop that he wanted to do something artistic with and asked the group for suggestions. Several members came up with ideas that he hopes to use in the future. Terry then showed the group 15 agate cabs and two tumble-polished slabs that he had completed. The group left the meeting at 5:00pm and all agreed that they had a very enjoyable afternoon.

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the April meeting is cancelled. We will let everyone know if the meeting will be held at a later date.

### Cabochon Making Classes

Six members of the ETGMS took a cabochon making class at the club workshop on Saturday, February 22. The class was taught in two sessions since the club only has three cabbing machines. Terry taught each class the basic safety techniques in using the machines to protect themselves from accidental injury, as well to protect the machines and diamond wheels from accidental damage which shortens the life of the equipment. Terry furnished the preforms for the class to practice their cab making techniques. Each class finished their cabs within two hours and took home a nice agate cab that they were deservedly proud of. Terry Roberts

On March 7, I gave the Cabochon Making Class to five more members, a few of them aren't pictured. Kinney Polve

*Photos are by Terry Roberts and Kinney Polve*





**Lonestar Gemological Laboratory, LLC**  
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 Professional – Ethical – Independent  
 (903) 426-7859

[info@lonestargemlab.com](mailto:info@lonestargemlab.com)      [www.lonestargemlab.com](http://www.lonestargemlab.com)

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**Lapidary/Jewelry Group** – Meets on the second Saturday of each month at 2:00 pm, except December and January. Terry Roberts leads this group. Contact Terry to have your name added to the email. [terry.roberts45@yahoo.com](mailto:terry.roberts45@yahoo.com)

**Mineral Group** – Meets every second Tuesday of each month at 6:30 pm. Charles Creekmur heads up the group. Contact Charles to have your name added to the email. - [calcite65@gmail.com](mailto:calcite65@gmail.com)

**Fossil Group** – Meets every third Tuesday of the month at 6:30 pm. David Russ heads up the group. Contact David to have your name added to the email. [dbruss50@gmail.com](mailto:dbruss50@gmail.com)

**Gemology Group** Meets every third Thursday of each month at 6:30 pm. The group is led by Richard Armstrong. Contact Richard to have your name added to the email. [keltfire@msn.com](mailto:keltfire@msn.com)

**NEWSLETTER CONTENT:** Please send any original info or articles to be included in the newsletter to the editor at the address or email listed below by the 10th of the month. If you need an issue dealt with quickly, don't hesitate to call. **AFMS & SCFMS Newsletters will be emailed to members, as to not duplicate that information here, unless it needs to be repeated.** Board meeting minutes are not published in the newsletter. If you would like to see a copy, contact an officer on the Board. The information in this newsletter may be reproduced for nonprofit use, as long as credit is given to the source.

Check us out on the web: [WWW.ETGMS.ORG](http://WWW.ETGMS.ORG)

### THE EAST TEXAS GEM AND MINERAL SOCIETY

**Purpose of the East Texas Gem & Mineral Society:** Is to promote; the study of Geology, fossils and the Lapidary Arts. The public is always invited to attend regular monthly club meetings.

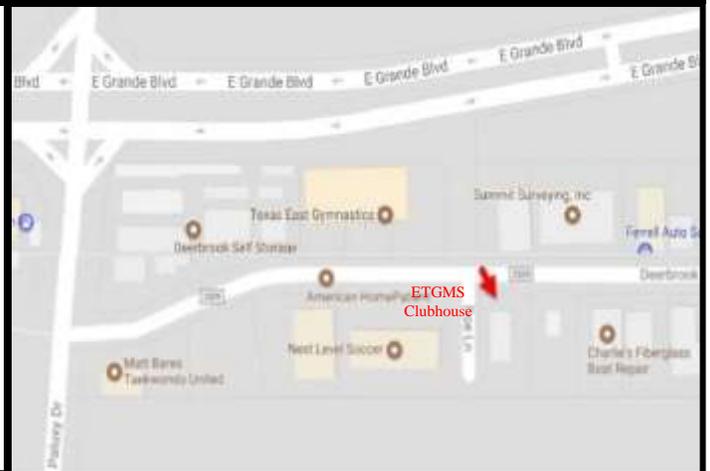
#### ANNUAL DUES:

Single: \$10.00 - Family: \$20.00

#### MONTHLY MEETING:

**WHEN:** First Monday of the month unless it's a holiday, then the second Monday, at 6:45 p.m.

**WHERE:** ETGMS Clubhouse, 2015 Deerbrook Drive, Tyler, Texas



PRESIDENT:  
903-714-3330

David Russ  
[dbruss50@gmail.com](mailto:dbruss50@gmail.com)

WEBMASTER:  
971-219-3362

Margaret Kilanski  
[mlkilanski@yahoo.com](mailto:mlkilanski@yahoo.com)

VICE PRESIDENT:  
903-881-5108

Terry Roberts  
[terry.roberts45@yahoo.com](mailto:terry.roberts45@yahoo.com)

EDITOR:  
903-646-3189

Kinney Polve  
[rocknrosenewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:rocknrosenewsletter@gmail.com)

TREASURER:  
903-312-4800

Marcia Graham  
[marciagraham123@yahoo.com](mailto:marciagraham123@yahoo.com)

SHOW SCHOOL  
CHAIRPERSON:

David Russ  
[dbruss50@gmail.com](mailto:dbruss50@gmail.com)

SECRETARY:  
903-882-5809

Julia Toombs  
[jltoombs@suddenlink.net](mailto:jltoombs@suddenlink.net)

FIELD TRIP  
CHAIRMAN:

Fred Mahaffey  
[frederickmahaffey@gmail.com](mailto:frederickmahaffey@gmail.com)

CHAIRMAN SHOW:  
903-646-3189

Kinney Polve  
[kpolve@gmail.com](mailto:kpolve@gmail.com)

### CLUB ADDRESS AND TO SEND DUES

East Texas Gem & Mineral Society  
P. O. BOX 132532  
Tyler, TX 75713-2532



Rock-N-Rose Newsletter  
8665 County Road 373D  
Henderson, Texas 75654

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