

ROCK N ROSE

Volume 47 Issue 4

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April 2021



Cover Photo: Aaron Thomas

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ROCK N ROSE

THE EAST TEXAS GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

UPCOMING EVENTS

May 1 - 2, 2021

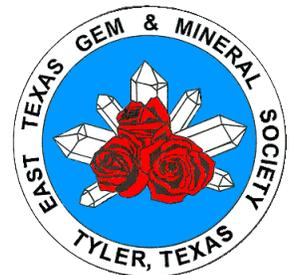
Kilgore Geekend
Downtown Kilgore
Kilgore, Texas

May 22 - 23, 2021

Tyler Gem & Mineral Show
East Texas Fair Grounds,
Building E
Tyler, Texas

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Rock-N-Rose Newsletter

231 Scott Street
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

David Russ

We have resumed monthly regular and sub-group meetings this month. The Lapidary and Fossil groups will resume in May. Turnout was very good with some new members in attendance. Beautiful Spring weather should be allowing us to get out to our favorite collecting locations. Be mindful of sudden changes in the weather, especially for those who frequent creek beds.

Encounters with poisonous snakes are possibilities as well. I will be giving a presentation on the phylogeny and identification of sharks and rays at the next Fossil sub-group meeting. Collection locales as well as chronostratigraphic information will be given. We were saddened by the loss of a long time club member recently with the death of Pete Keiser. A generous donation of \$500 has been made

to the club in Pete's name by Jeanne and Mark Heatherly.

A note of thanks and appreciation to Marcia Graham as she leaves her position of club Treasurer. She has devoted countless hours to that endeavor on the club's behalf. A big shout out to Ed Grounds who has volunteered to step into that position. Welcome to the BOD Ed.

May
1-2,
2021



ETGMS is going to participate in Kilgore Geekend
Location: S. Kilgore St. (Downtown Kilgore).

We will need volunteers to help at the booth both days.

Contact Margaret Kilanski
mlkilanski@yahoo.com

if you can volunteer or have any questions.

Kilgore Geekend combines the Geeky fun of a comic-con with the relaxed atmosphere of a community festival, bringing a family-friendly event every Spring! We are pleased to feature live music, cosplay (character dress-up), vendors, kid's activities, discussion and Q&A panels, demonstrations, and our community's talented performers for a unique, lively experience everyone can enjoy!

Kilgore Geekend proudly supports Heroic Inner Kids East Texas.

Find them on Facebook.

Hours:

Saturday, May 1 - 10am - 6pm • Sunday, May 2 - 12pm - 5pm

ETGMS Meeting Minutes

April 5, 2021

The East Texas Gem & Mineral Society met for the first meeting of the year on April 5, 2021 at the clubhouse. The meeting was called to order at 6:45pm.

President David Russ began with a few short announcements:

Door prize tickets for sale, silent auction items, special grand-prize drawing for paid members, loss of Pete Keiser, sign a sympathy card to his family, and a new member introduced himself and his two kids. David asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the last meeting as published in the newsletter. Jerry Sudderth made the motion, Rick Walker seconded, and the motion carried. Marcia Graham gave the treasury report, and her resignation was announced. David announced a friend of the Keiser family was donating \$500 to ETGMS in Pete's name.

Sub-group announcements:

- Lapidary – Terry Roberts said they would begin meeting May 8 at 2pm.
- Mineral – Charles Creekmur said they would meet April 13 at 6:30pm. The presentation will be a Tourmaline Mine.
- Fossil – David said he could start back up on May 18 at 6:30.
- Gemology – Richard Armstrong said they could get together April 15 at 6:30pm. For the first few meeting he will do a review of gem identification.
- David announced the rocks in boxes at the back of the room that anyone is welcome to take.
- David presented Rockhound of the Month certificates – Randy Harmon for February and Terry Roberts for March.
- Field trip chairperson Fred Mahaffey was not present, but there are no scheduled field trips that we know of.
- Margaret Kilanski announced that ETGMS is doing its first public event of the year in Kilgore (Geekend) on May 1 & 2. Volunteers are needed, so call Margaret.
- Keith Harmon's one-time Tyler Gem & Mineral Show at the East Texas Fair Grounds.
May 22, 2021 - 10am to 6pm • May 23, 2021 - 10am to 5pm

Randy Harmon is setting up his collection at the Lindale Library at the end of May for the summer. He will also be giving a program on July 7 at 10:30am. Get with him if you would like to display some of your items. He also said that the Naranjo Museum in Lufkin is worth a visit and he has donated some of his items there and got a tax write-off.

Margaret announced that for the month of March there were over 2,000 visitors to our website, and of those we had 3 new members. David opened the floor to further nominations for Treasurer. Ed Grounds has already volunteered. David made the motion we accept Ed, Jerry seconded, and the motion carried.

Zach Weenink made a motion to adjourn the business meeting, Karen Nance seconded, and the motion carried. The next meeting is scheduled for May 3, 2021.

Respectfully submitted by,

Shop Time

By: Terry Roberts

the ranch. When I showed it to my wife, she said it had some green color in it which I had not noticed before. I enlarged the photo of the cab to see what she was talking about and I was pleasantly surprised to see some green plumes in it along with some tan or brown plumes. You will notice a brown/red and white colored plume on the lower left side of the cab and the green plumes on the right side extending up from the bottom and perhaps up to near the top of the cab.

The last two cabs shown in three photos came from the Happy Hill area and show some banded agates that I cut from two small nodules. The photo of the first banded cab (top photo) shows some gray, white, and light blue bands surrounding a crystal quartz center and an outer area of brown moss agate. The last two photos are of the same cab with the first one showing the bands to better advantage under transmitted light and the last photo showing what it looks like under reflected light. I have since wire wrapped this cab for a friend.

A special note: I have never seen green plumes in an agate from west Texas or anywhere else for the matter. However, I have been told by some friends with a lot more experience in collecting agates from west Texas that they have found them there, but only infrequently.

I made four cabs from some of the rocks I collected on the Kokernot 06 Ranch back in January. The first photo shows a small banded agate from the Happy Hill area of the ranch. Notice the chromatography and parallax in the cab. These features are seldom found together in one agate.

The second photo shows a black plume agate from a rock I found on Agate Hill on





Becky Whisenant

It is always wonderful to come to a club meeting and see young people visiting for the first time with their parents. Parents make all the difference in kids' lives and as I thought about writing my bio for the newsletter, I realized it would be as much about my parents as me.

I am a tomboy who grew up to be a naturalist. My small-town East Texas life changed at age 8 when my dad, a preacher, announced we were going on a vacation. He laid out a map on the bed and asked my sister and me where we would like to

go. My sister piped up, "I want to see tha Alamo!"

I'll never forget the twinkle in my dad's eye and his laugh when he said, "Well, sugar, I thought we'd go a little further than that." We went almost to Montana that first time in 1965 in his Ford pickup. And what did we do along the way? We stopped at road cuts and explored BLM roads, not just to admire the view, but to touch the ground, breathe the air and, of course, look at rocks. I have a memory, clear as a snapshot, of my dad inspecting a rock he'd pulled from the

Virgin River in Zion National Park. In one of my display cabinets are three unexciting rocks that are among my most treasured because on the bottom are letters written in my dad's handwriting: SR, GNP and GT. Yeah, from the Snake River, Glacier National Park and the Grand Tetons. But we didn't dare pick up anything in the Petrified Forest. Instead, daddy read to me the conditions which allowed that to occur millions of years ago and told me how cool it was how God formed the earth. I remember mom in her sunglasses and pedal pushers

laughing with dad at the wall covered with the letters mailed in by people with guilty consciences who had picked up a piece, then sent it back.

Granted, I was born with a love of geology, but it was awakened and nurtured by my dad, a high school dropout with a GED who talked to us about the powerful “upheavals” and “cataclysms” (his words) the earth must have gone through to form such strata as we saw throughout the west. In college, I could not wait to take geology and historical geology - it was like putting together the pieces of a puzzle I had seen with my own eyes.

As I got older, I planned family trips based on geology: to the Fairburn agate beds in South Dakota, on a (rock and fossil collecting) tour down into the Utah Canyonlands with a crazy dino guy, and a “fishing” trip to the Warfield Quarry in southwestern Wyoming for fossil fish. I’ve stood on the pegmatite granite arm of Chief Crazy Horse monument and four years ago, I marked off a bucket list item when my husband and I completed the 13 mile hike up to the Burgess

Shale layer on Mt. Walcott in British Columbia to see one of the most unique, prolific and well preserved fossil beds in the world.

I now understand far more about it than my dad did, but I never lost the delight he inspired in me and I never pass up the chance to share rocks with a kid, nor the opportunity to go to a school or library and give a presentation. My goal is to pass it on.

I have been to 36 of the 48 contiguous states and probably have rock samples from them all except Illinois because we only had a layover in Chicago and I couldn’t find a rock at the Amtrack Grand Union Station. Taking the long road to Alaska is still on my list before I die and there will be a crate for rocks. Our traveling friends and family all know that food items are in danger on road trips because I will throw them out to make room for rocks. We lost everything in a house fire 12 years ago and near the top of the list of things I still mourn over is a beautiful flower blossom fossil from Douglas Pass in northwestern Colorado and a near perfect

ammonite from Lake Texoma I collected on my first field trip with the club about 22 years ago. But can you guess what I began receiving in the mail only 4 or 5 days after we lost our home and all my rocks? Yep, heavy boxes filled with rocks generously donated by friends in the club. More than once, I cried in front of the post office with a box in my lap. You never forget that kind of thing.

My first time to Tyler Library (23 years ago), I was shocked and thrilled to see a case of fossils and minerals with an invitation to visit something called East Texas Gem & Mineral Society. When I went and discovered they actually took field trips just for fun, I knew I had found my people - people whom I now call friends.

It’s more about the journey than the destination. Along the way, thanks to my mom and dad, I made many good friends, many memories and collected many rocks. And I hope it’s not over. Hope to see y’all on the trail.

Rock Hunting on the Kokernot O6 Ranch

A Rockhound's Dream

FIG 5

About five years ago, rockhounds had access to six ranches to hunt for agates, jaspers, and other minerals, as well as the occasional geode, near Alpine in West Texas. However, with the passing of ranch owners and the sale of ranches, available rock hunting sites have been limited to just one ranch, the Larremore Ranch, with enough quality agate to make the cost and effort to go there worthwhile.

In late 2020, a new ranch, the Kokernot O6 Ranch with headquarters near Fort Davis, was opened to rockhounds with the help of local geologist and rockhound, Aaron Frank Thomas. You can visit his site on Texas Rockhounds on Facebook to see the beautiful agates he has collected at various sites on this ranch.

The Kokernot O6 Ranch has been in the Kokernot family since 1837, but has dwindled in size and location from about 500,000 acres to the present day size of just under 110,000 acres. It stretches from Hwy 90 at Alpine in Brewster County to somewhere above Hwy 17 west of Fort Davis in Presidio County.

In addition to raising cattle, the ranch hosts guided hunts for Mule and Whitetail Deer and Aoudad Sheep. The ranch also garners additional income by allowing visitors on day trips to explore the canyons, valleys, and ridges in certain areas of the ranch by ATV. It was only logical that they considered rockhounds as another source of income with a minimum of oversight on their part. Yet the owners are careful to supervise these activities to prevent damage to the range and its livestock. There are mountain lions and javelina that may be encountered and both can be a

danger to the unwary tourist, hunter, or rockhound.

I was able to travel to Alpine in late January 2021 to participate in a rock hunt at two sites, Agate Hill next to Wild Rose Pass where Hwy 17 passes through the Davis Mountains and Happy Hill, which is located about 16 miles south of Agate Hill and 12 miles northeast of Alpine, as the crow flies (Fig. 1). Both sites are entered through locked gates and it is not advisable to do any unauthorized crossing of fences to get there. The ranch owners take a dim (hostile) view of any trespassing and survivors will be prosecuted.





FIG 1

Our first day was spent at Agate Hill. The drive there was over paved roads and then through a locked gate about 100 yards from the parking site at the base of the hill (actually a ridge). One of the ranch owners, James Winn, addressed our group of eager rockhounds, explaining the rules to follow and passed out green, highly visible vests to each of us to put on so they could find us easily in case of accidental injury or getting lost. He also gave everyone a handheld two-way radio for communication.

Aaron talked to the group about the local geology and then told us we may come across some Indian work sites where they had gathered rocks suitable for knapping and making other tools. We were cautioned to avoid these sites, but were allowed to take pictures. He showed me one of the sites (Fig. 2) not far from the parking site at the top of the hill. I think I found another site about 200 yards north of this site.

The entire group stayed within a half-mile of the parking area because there was so much agate to be picked over on this hill. Most of the agate was black, but contained black plumes in the clear areas. The biggest problem with the agate at this site is that it is still locked in the host rock (basalt) which is too hard to easily chip away from the agate (Fig. 3). So, everyone just looked for loose or partially buried agate on the surface.

The more industrious rockhounds tried to dig up very large chunks of agate with varying degrees of success. I saw one couple dig up a 101 lb. agate boulder. Fortunately for them, they didn't have to haul it back to their truck. Aaron picked up the rock and carried it back for them. I saw another young rockhound spend three hours digging up an agate boulder that Aaron estimated to weigh about 250 lbs. I never did find out if he decided to keep the rock or just walk away from it.

The wind picked up around noon and by the end of the day, it was blowing well over 40 mph and was blowing dust all over us. James weighed everyone's rocks and we paid him and left for Alpine. He and Aaron invited a few of us to go out again the next day before we left.

The wind was still blowing hard on the second day and only three of us showed up for the rock hunt. James took us to Happy Hill, which was only about 8 miles north of Alpine on paved road, but an additional 8 miles east across the ranch on dirt roads through valleys and around ridges. This site had a different variety of agate compared to what we found the previous day at Agate Hill. There was only an occasional black rock to be found, but an abundance of yellow/gold moss agate with as occasional lavender or red moss mixed in the rock (Fig. 4). This site also produced a few small, banded agate nodules which provided a more diverse collection of agates for us to gather. As an added bonus,



FIG 3

there was more wildlife to see at this site.

On our drive around the ridges and through the valleys to Happy Hill, we came upon the body of a freshly killed coyote in the middle of the road about a quarter mile from our destination. We had no choice but to drive over the body, but since we all had high clearance vehicles, there was no damage to the coyote. James went back to examine the site to determine what had happened to the coyote. He told us later that he saw mountain lion tracks in the area and thought we had disturbed the cat before it had a chance to drag the body off the road. On our way back at the end of the day, we noticed the coyote was gone, so the mountain lion must have come back for its dinner.

We were not able to hunt for agate on Happy Hill because the wind was still gusting well over 40 mph, so we hunted in the valley on the north side of Happy Hill where it was almost calm. James told us that we were the first to hunt rocks in this area. The ground was sparsely vegetated and covered with gravel and some patches of larger rocks, most of which were agates (Fig. 5).

While walking around, I came across an area that was literally covered with the yellow/gold moss agate, as well as three large boulders composed of this agate variety. I called the husband and wife team to come over and look at this site. They were welcome to pick up some of the agates and choose a boulder to take home. The one I chose was mostly buried in the ground and I had to dig it out and lever it up onto the ground with a large pry bar I had in my vehicle. James was kind enough to pick it up, put it on his shoulder, and carry it about 100 yards to my vehicle. It weighed 115 lbs on his scale. The rocks the other couple dug up weighed 55 lbs and 170 lbs. They were able to back their pickup to the site and use an electric winch by the tailgate to pick up the biggest rock and place it in the bed. The smaller rock was easy enough to pick up by hand and load it into the pickup. Unfortunately, I was so busy digging up my rock that I forgot to take a picture of the rocks while still in place on the ground.

This site had a variety of wildlife besides the dead coyote and mountain lion, which we never

did see. James wandered around the area with his two dogs to check on the condition of the range and their cattle. He told me he encountered a skunk and porcupine, both of which he had to keep his dogs away from. He also came across a herd of javelina which started running toward him aggressively. He fired three shots over them to scare them away without any success. He finally had to shoot one of them to persuade them to leave him alone. We also saw several Mule Deer in the area.

After paying James for our rocks, we all left the area for Alpine. We all were happy with our agate hoard and wanted to come back and try different areas of the ranch. James and Aaron are careful to take all the groups to different areas of the ranch to minimize depletion of quality agates at any one site as much as possible. Given the size of the ranch and the limited number of people in each group (usually 10-20), I think good agates will be easy to find for many years to come. The ranch charges \$60/day/person and \$1.00/lb for rock that you take out. Your only limitation is the amount of rock your vehicle can carry and the size of your bank account.



FIG 4

The Gemology Group is Coming Back

**Richard D. Armstrong, Certified Master Appraiser, NAJA
AGA ASG, GIA GG, GIA GP, GIA AJP**

Just before the pandemic we had several members complete the 2nd course in our Gem Identification Program. We were going to start the practical lab portion of the program when the pandemic put a stop to it.

Last year during the pandemic it looked like my dog Ginger had a serious degenerative autoimmune disease, degenerative myelopathy, that would require my 24/7 attention to take care of her. I felt that I would not be able to continue as chair of the Gemology Group. The board was unable to find a replacement.

I had Ginger DNA tested and she does not have the gene for DM. Her Vet now agrees with me that it is likely diabetic neuropathy. She has had diabetes for over 2 years. I have had her on natural supplements for the neuropathy and she has responded very well and is at least 90 percent recovered. I am now comfortable with leaving her for a few hours at a time for club and group meetings. Therefore, I have volunteered to resume chairing the Gemology Group.

We will resume meeting as soon as the board allows. Since it has been over a year we will review gem identification for the first few meetings before offering the practical lab work. We will have more on that later. The review will not be just book review as I plan to work in some hands-on practice with the tests on the gems.

Gemology Group meetings are open to everyone who is a member of the ETGMS. Meetings will be the 3rd Thursday of each month at 6:30 - 8:30 pm. If you love gems (and who doesn't) you will learn a lot at our meetings. Hope to see you there.

DUES, DUES, DUES



It's that time of year again!! To keep your membership current, your dues need to be paid as soon as possible. We encourage everyone to pay early so you don't accidentally forget and get dropped from the mailing list. Please make sure you complete the form in its entirety with contact information. Adult members are 18+. Please check if the member is an Adult or Junior. The yearly member fee is \$10 for an individual and \$20 for a family. Also, be sure to list your interests, so we can better serve our member's needs.

If you plan to mail in your dues, the club's address is on the last page of this newsletter.

EAST TEXAS GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY

MEMBER REGISTRATION FORM

Date Paid _____ Dues Paid _____ Cash _____ Check _____

Name(s) _____ Adult _____ Jr. _____
_____ Adult _____ Jr. _____
_____ Adult _____ Jr. _____
_____ Adult _____ Jr. _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____ Newsletter via email Y ___ N ___

Special Interest in Club _____

Home Phone _____ Work/Cell Phone _____

The ETGMS Board of Directors is excited to bring you some good news!!

Keith Harmon, long-time member of ETGMS and a dealer at our annual show, is sponsoring a one-time event.

Tyler Gem and Mineral Show

May 22, 2021 - 10am to 6pm • May 23, 2021 - 10am to 5pm

Admission: \$5 - Adults, \$1 - Children & Students

at East Texas Fair Grounds, Building E, in Tyler.

It will showcase the dealers that have been a part of our annual show for many years and the Rock Food Table. There will be no fluorescent room, silent auction, or Wheel & Dice games.

There WILL BE space for some display cases.

Contact Keith at keithharmon19@yahoo.com if you would like to display your treasures. Keith will need volunteer help with admittance and monitoring the Rock Food Table. Please consider how you can help and contact him at keithharmon19@yahoo.com.

Margaret Kilanski, Webmaster

GROUP MEETS

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

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

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

Gemology Group

Meets every third Thursday of the month at 6:30 - 8:30 pm

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NEWSLETTER CONTENT

Please send original articles to rockrosenewsletter@gmail.com.

Please send in a Microsoft Word format that can be edited.

The 10th of the month is the deadline.

Board minutes are not printed in the newsletter. If you would like to see a copy, contact a member of the Board.

THE EAST TEXAS GEM AND MINERAL SOCIETY

The 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

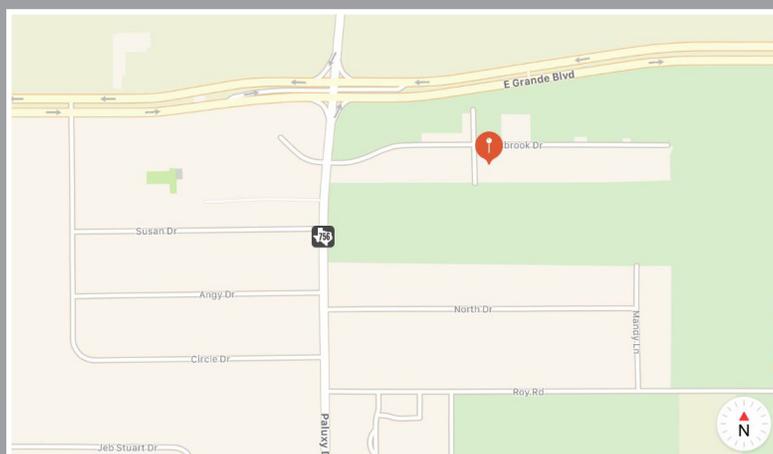
Single: \$10.00 • Family: \$20.00

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

Check us out on the web • WWW.ETGMS.ORG



CLUB ADDRESS AND TO SEND DUES

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ETGMS CLUBHOUSE

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