GRITTY GREETINGS

Waco Gem and Mineral Club

Volume 61, Issue 10, October, 2020 P.O. Box 8811, Waco, TX 76714-8811

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The Board of Directors of the Waco Gem and Mineral Club has decided to err on the side of caution and to NOT hold our October meeting. Hopefully we will be able to hold our November meeting on schedule. Stay safe out there.

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61st Annual Waco Gem and Mineral Show

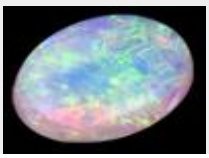
The 61st Annual Waco Gem and Mineral Show will be held on May 1 and 2, 2021. Currently, some spaces are available for vendors as there have been some cancellations.

If you have any questions, please contact **2021 Show chair Alison Redding** or email:

wacogemandmineralclub@gmail.com. Visit our website for more information and to download your application. www.wacogemandmineral.or

October Birthstones

Opal and Tourmaline



Individuals born in October get to choose between two birthstones — opal and tourmaline. Each birthstone comes in a rainbow of shades and color combinations, giving October babies a variety of options.

Between tourmaline (whose color depends on trace elements in its chemical makeup) and opal (which diffracts light to show a play of multiple colors), October's birthstones offer a full spectrum of gemstones to suit anyone's personal tastes.

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 Carinthina (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, but 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, but 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 what 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. Ancient magicians used black tourmaline as a talisman to protect against negative energy and evil forces. Today, many still believe that it can shield against radiation, pollutants, toxins, and negative thoughts.

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 (like Fire Opal and Boulder Opal) are universally recognized. Opals are often referred to by their background "body color"—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 6 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. For centuries, people have associated this precious gemstone with good luck. Though some modern superstitions claim that opals can be bad luck to anyone not born in October, this birthstone remains a popular choice.

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

Diamond hunting, anyone?

In this Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2020, photo provided by The Arkansas Department of Parks, Heritage and Tourism, is a 9.07-carat diamond found by Kevin Kinard at Crater of Diamonds State Park on Sept, 7, 2020, in Murfreesboro, Ark. (Waymon Cox / AP)

'Remarkable' 442-carat diamond found in Africa, could be worth $18M

Gem Diamonds discovered the diamond at its Letseng mine in Lesotho. (Courtesy Fox News)

(Credit: Gem Diamonds)

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Notes

This would be a better experience if club members would contribute articles, news items, anecdotes, etc.

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.

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 quartering the pig. The money from the pig goes toward our Scholarship program, and we really do appreciate every 2 bits, 4 bits, 6 bits or more. However, if you need a nametag 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 Jackie 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.

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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.