

# GRITTY GREETINGS



## Waco Gem and Mineral Club Monthly Newsletter

Volume 60, Issue 12, December 2019

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

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|                                   |     |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Table of contents.....            | 1   |
| WGMC Contacts .....               | 2   |
| Minutes/News .....                | 3   |
| Upcoming Shows and Events .....   | 4   |
| December Birthstones.....         | 5-7 |
| Tips from Brad.....               | 8-9 |
| Notes .....                       | 10  |
| Club Purpose.....                 | 11  |
| December Calendar of Events ..... | 12  |

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## W.G.M.C. November Meeting Minutes

We did not receive the minutes from last month.

As December is the time for Elections It is time to get some new blood in the Club Staff! We need the following, if not already secured, responsibilities filled!

Web Master: We need someone to volunteer the management of the website. A background with Joomla or WordPress is helpful or some past website development or management will be helpful. Be available to keep website updated in a timely manner as this is our link to everyone interested in our club.

Club email staffer: We need someone to volunteer to monitor all emails for the club. Emails come in from our website in the form of inquiries, other members or other clubs. This task also includes getting our monthly emails to the members for the Gritty Greetings, monthly/daily emails for the Annual Show, keeping track of new/old members in the contacts. Emailing other clubs to keep them informed of our calendar of events as well. The Gritty Greetings has been sent to the email staffer for proof reading and put into the correct format, then it is sent to the webmaster for upload. These need to be followed up in a timely manner.

Newsletter Staff/Editor: We need someone to volunteer to put together a newsletter for our Gritty Greetings, pertinent to each month. Get minutes put into the newsletter each month as well. This needs to be done in a timely manner to get to the webmaster.

Show Chairperson for 2021: We need someone to volunteer to be Show Chair for the 2021 year. Duties include getting a contract with chosen venue. Work with email staffer or take on task to get emails out to all potential vendors/demonstrators for the following years show. Get items for Grand Prizes, children's prizes. Keep track of all agreements for upcoming show. Keep track of all expenses for purchases for show. Maintaining the show floor plan is crucial! Keep webmaster updated with current status as it changes. Get volunteers to help with set up and break down of the shows. Having a fun personality goes a long way with this role.

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### **2020 Show discussion:**

Members are requested to bring their silent auction and Door prize items for adults and Children for the 2020 show, to the clubhouse at our monthly Meetings. We are looking for exceptional items for the 6 Grand Prizes!

Any other members that would like to help at the 2020 show please give your name and what you would help with to Alison Redding.

Gritty Greetings: Waco Gem and Mineral Club Newsletter

Volume 60, Issue 12, DECEMBER 2019

Page 3

We are still looking for Displays and demonstrators for the 2020 show.

### **Upcoming Shows and Events**



#### **Annual Holiday Luncheon!!**



Please join us Saturday December 7<sup>th</sup>, at Noon for our annual Holiday Luncheon and gift exchange. Last year was SOOO much fun and everyone participated. Great food and laughter were just what we hoped for. Graciously, Levi and Whitney Jackson will be providing the meat for our feast this year. We ask that you please bring a side dish or desert, to help.



Should you choose to participate in the gift exchange, bring a wrapped gift about \$20 +/- . Numbers will be drawn to see the order of choosing.

#### **60<sup>th</sup> Annual Waco Gem and Mineral Show**

The 60th Annual Waco Gem and Mineral Show will be held on May 1 and 2 /2020. Currently, there is just ONE space left for the show!!! WOW!!!

If you have any questions, please contact 2020 Show chair Alison Redding or email: [wacogemandmineralclub@gmail.com](mailto:wacogemandmineralclub@gmail.com). Visit our website for more information and to download your application. [www.wacogemandmineral.org](http://www.wacogemandmineral.org)

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## December birthstones: Tanzanite, Blue Zircon and Turquoise



Tanzanite is the exquisite blue-purple variety of the mineral zoisite that is only found in one part of the world. Named for its limited geographic origin in Tanzania, tanzanite has quickly risen to popularity since its relatively recent discovery.

Zoisite had been around more than a century and a half before this rare blue variety was found in 1967. Trace amounts of vanadium, mixed with extreme heat, cause the blue-purple color—which ranges from pale blue to intense ultramarine with violet undertones.

Due to pleochroism, tanzanite can display different colors when viewed from different angles. Stones must be cut properly to highlight the more attractive blue and violet hues and deemphasize the undesirable brown tones.

Most of the tanzanite on the market today is heat treated to minimize the brown colors found naturally, and to enhance the blue shades that can rival sapphire.

Tanzanite is still only found on a few square miles of land in Tanzania, near majestic Mount Kilimanjaro. Its price and availability are directly tied to mines in this region, most of which are now slowing production significantly.

Tanzanite measures 6.5 to 7 on the Mohs scale of hardness—which is not nearly as hard as the sapphire it often substitutes. Given its vulnerability to scratch during daily wear and abrasion, tanzanite is better suited for earrings and pendants than rings.

Between its deep blue color and its limited supply, tanzanite is treasured by many, even if your birthday is not in December.



Zircon is an underrated gemstone that's often confused with synthetic cubic zirconia due to similar names and shared use as diamond simulants. Few people realize that zircon is a spectacular natural gemstone available in a variety of colors.

The name "zircon" likely comes from the Persian word *zargun*, meaning "gold-colored." Others trace it to the Arabic *zarkun*, meaning "vermillion." Given its wide range of colors—spanning red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and brown—both origins are plausible.

Zircon commonly occurs as brownish red, which can be popular for its earth tones. However, most gem-quality stones are heat treated until colorless, gold or blue (the most popular color). Blue zircon, in particular, is the alternative birthstone for December.

Color differences in zircon are caused by impurities, some of which (like uranium) can be slightly radioactive. These gemstones are also treated with heat to stabilize the radioactivity.

While radiation can break down zircon's crystal structure, it plays a crucial role in radiometric dating. Zircon, the oldest mineral on Earth, contains important clues about the formation of our planet.

Colorless zircon, known as Matura Diamond, displays brilliance and flashes of multicolored "fire" that can rival fine diamond. There's one key difference though: Zircon is more brittle. Though it measures 7.5 on the Mohs scale of hardness, its faceted edges can chip.

Zircon from Australia dates back 4.4 billion years. Australia still leads the world in zircon mining, producing 37 percent of the world's supply. Other sources include Thailand, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Cambodia, Canada, and the United States.

Since the Middle Ages, people have believed that zircon gemstones can induce sleep, ward off evil, and promote prosperity.



Admired since ancient times, turquoise is known for its distinct color, which ranges from powdery blue to greenish robin's egg blue. It's one of few minerals to lend its name to anything that resembles its striking color.

The word "turquoise" dates back to the 13th century, drawing from the French expression *pierre tourques*, which referenced the "Turkish stone" brought to Europe from Turkey.

Ancient Persia (now Iran) was the traditional source for sky blue turquoise gemstones. This color is often called "Persian blue" today, regardless of its origin. The Sinai Peninsula in Egypt was also an important historical source of turquoise gems.

The U.S. is now the world's largest turquoise supplier. Nevada, New Mexico, California, and Colorado have produced turquoise, but Arizona leads in production by value, as well as quality. The stone's popularity here makes it a staple in Native American jewelry.

Turquoise is found in arid regions where rainwater dissolves copper in the soil, forming colorful nodular deposits when it combines with aluminum and phosphorus. Copper contributes blue hues, while iron and chrome add a hint of green.

Some turquoise contains pieces of host rock, called matrix, which appear as dark webs or patches in the material. This can lower the stone's value, although the uniform "spiderweb" pattern of Southwestern turquoise is attractive.

Turquoise is sensitive to direct sunlight and solvents like makeup, perfume, and natural oils. The hardest turquoise only measures 6 on the Mohs scale, which made this soft gemstone popular in carved talismans throughout history. From ancient Egyptians to Persians, Aztecs and Native Americans, kings and warriors alike admired turquoise for thousands of years. It adorned everything from jewelry to ceremonial masks to weapons and bridles—granting power and protection, particularly against falls.

Highly esteemed for its striking namesake color and its ancient history, turquoise's popularity remains timeless.

Thanks to the American Gem Society for this article!

## From the bench of Bradford Smith

As a rockhound myself, I am pleased to be able to share material like this with other clubs. Hopefully the tips are of interest to your members and provide a bit of fresh content for your bulletin. I've been involved with lapidary and jewelry making in my own rock club for about twenty-three years now. It has added so much to my own life, and I have been glad to do a few things to help build membership and promote sister clubs in my area.

Wishing you and yours a happy holiday season.

Happy hammering,

- Brad

### DIVIDERS

A set of dividers is a tool I find very useful in laying out the geometry of a piece I'm making. It has two needle-like tips with an adjustment to set the spacing between them.

They can be used to transfer a measurement. Let's say you need a 7mm wide strip of sheet metal. Set the spacing between the divider tips to 7 mm on the ruler. Then lay the sheet on the bench, put one tip against the edge, and run the dividers down the edge scribing a line parallel to the edge.

Dividers can be used to mark equal segments of a line or arc. For instance, assume a line between A and B that might be straight or curved, and you want to divide it into 5 equal lengths. Set the dividers to an estimate of the distance. Starting at Point A, use the dividers to mark off five lengths along the line. If you end up short of Point B, lengthen the distance on the dividers. If you end up overshooting Point B, shorten the length of your dividers. After a few tries, the length on the dividers will be the exact distance you need to mark the 5 segments.

Dividers can let you quickly find the center of a circular disk. With one tip of the dividers at the edge of the disk, set the other tip to an estimate of where the center might be. Fix one tip of the dividers at the 3 o'clock position and scribe an arc with the other tip near the center. Do this again from the 6 o'clock, 9 o'clock, and 12 o'clock positions. The arcs at the center will form a small four-sided box, and the center of the box is at the center of the disk.









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](http://www.wacogemandmineral.org)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/WacoGemAndMineralClub>

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### 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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