

# GRITTY GREETINGS



## Waco Gem and Mineral Club

Volume 62, Issue 12, December, 2021

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

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**Christmas Party will begin @ 11:00 AM on Saturday, December 4th. The meal will be pot luck, with the club providing the meat. Please bring a dish to go with the meat (Ham, Turkey & BBQ). Also, if you wish to participate in the gift exchange, bring a wrapped present valued @ approximately \$20.**

### Contacts

Gritty Greetings: Waco Gem and Mineral Club Newsletter

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**Waco Gem and Mineral Club Meeting Minutes**

November 6, 2021

Roy Cooper, President, opened the meeting 10:12 am.

He welcomed a new member, David Johnson.

The minutes were approved as written in the Gritty Greetings Newsletter.

Jackie's Treasurer's Report Summary: "We're doing ok."

The Brownwood Field Trip, November 13, was announced.

Old business: Jackie was to get a new credit/debit card for the club.

New Business:

- Motion and second for Harry Senn to be the new Club Secretary.  
Motion passed.
- Motion to set a new fee schedule for the next Gem and Mineral Show:  
0-6 years, free; 7-17 years, \$3; 18+, \$5.  
Motion passed.

Note from the Treasurer: Membership Dues collected after Sept. 1, 2021 apply to the 2022 fiscal year. The dues are paid to the SCFMS Association and must be paid before Sept 1 each year.

Meeting adjourned at 10:26 am.

The field trip was a great success. Bob, Pam, Scott and Roy met with one person from Fort Worth @ Lake Brownwood. They hunted Horn Coral for approximately 4 hrs. At one stop, the coral were so thick on the surface that you literally could not step without stepping on one. Most were good quality and take a beautiful polish. As Bob said, this would be a great trip for beginners or children.

**December Birthstones , Tanzanite, 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.

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**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. sources include Thailand, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Cambodia, Canada, and the United States.

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Turquoise, admired since ancient times, is known for its distinct color, which ranges from powdery blue to greenish robin 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. Highly esteemed for its striking namesake color and its ancient history, turquoise's popularity remains timeless.

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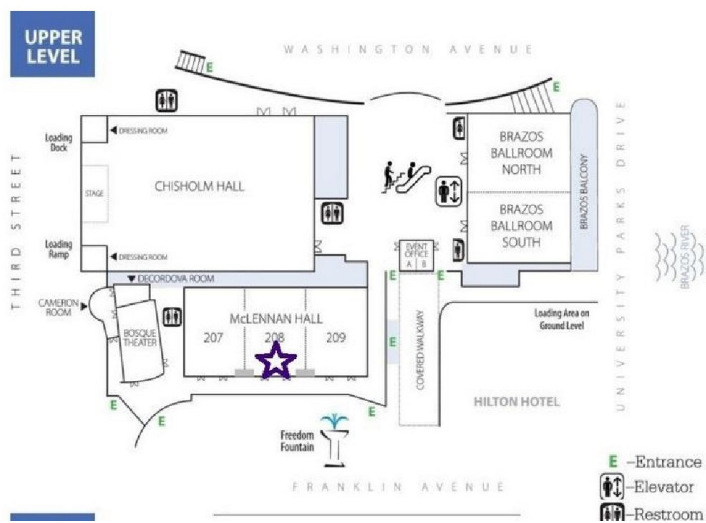
Courtesy American Gem Society - See more at: <http://www.americangemsociety.org/>



62nd Annual  
Waco Gem and  
Mineral Club

Waco Convention Center  
April 30th and May 1st  
Saturday 10 - 5 Sunday 10 -  
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Show 2022



## From Stephanie, this interesting ancient astronomical site in Peru!

[UNESCO declares Peru's Chankillo as world heritage site - CGTN](#)

### Notes

The editor requests news items from any member to be included in the Gritty Greetings.

Deadline for submissions is the 20<sup>th</sup> 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.

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>

### 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.

