GRITTY GREETINGS

Waco Gem and Mineral Club Monthly Newsletter

Volume 60, Issue 6, June 2019 P.O. Box 8811, Waco, TX 76714-8811

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Our next meeting is at 10:00 am on Saturday, June 1st
at The Waco Gem and Mineral Club
187 South McLennan Drive in Elm Mott, Texas

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W.G.M.C. April Meeting Minutes

WG&MC MINUTES 5/4/19

Waco gem and Mineral club Minutes not delivered!

Field trips-

Meeting Program:

Pot Luck and a Movie – 6/20/19 at 6:00 pm!!!

☺There is a sign-up sheet for providing snacks for the meetings. It is on the glass case in the clubhouse. There is still room to sign up.

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From the editor

The show is over, and was it a good one, did we all have fun and did we clear enough to support the club another year?

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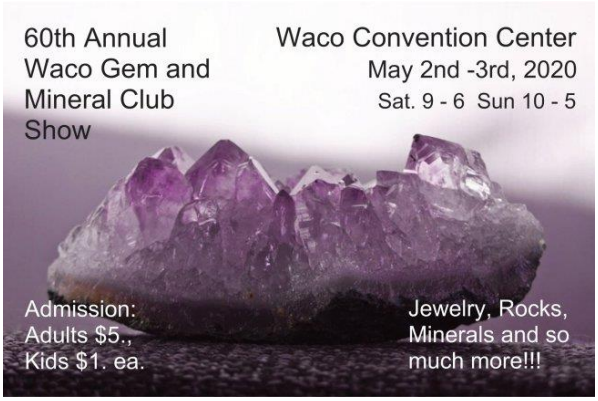
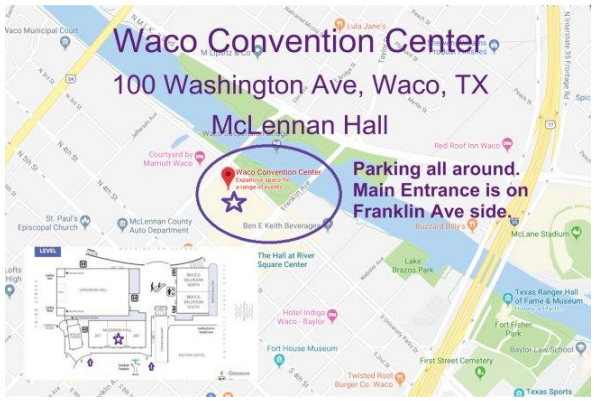
Upcoming Shows and Events

This is our new post card for advertising, front and back. If the shoppers can't find us, they really don't need to be out driving! LOL





The 60th Annual Waco Gem and Mineral Show will be held on _May 2nd and 3rd, 2020. Our event last year was met with a huge response and we expect an even bigger turnout this year!

Booth spaces are on a first come, first serve basis and we are expected to sell out quickly as we will only have a limited number of vendor spaces. As soon as we get more information on pricing, we will be posting it on our website.

If you have any questions, please email: wacogemandmineralclub@gmail.com. Visit our website for more information and to download your application. www.wacogemandmineral.org

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JUNE BIRTHSTONE:

June is one of only two months that has three birthstones associated with it, giving the lucky people born in June a choice of gemstones between pearl, alexandrite, and moonstone.

June's birthstones range from creamy-colored opalescent pearl and moonstone to the rare color-changing alexandrite. With this spectrum of price points and color options, people with June birthdays can choose a beautiful gemstone to fit any mood or budget.

PEARLS

Pearls are the only gemstones made by living creatures. Mollusks produce pearls by depositing layers of calcium carbonate around microscopic irritants that get lodged in their shells—usually not a grain of sand, as commonly believed.

While any shelled mollusk can technically make a pearl, only two groups of bivalve mollusks (or clams) use mother-of-pearl to create the iridescent "nacreous" pearls that are valued in jewelry. These rare gemstones don't require any polishing to reveal their natural luster.

Appropriately, the name "pearl" comes from the Old French *perle*, from the Latin *perna* meaning "leg," referencing the leg-of-mutton shape of an open mollusk shell. Because perfectly round, smooth natural pearls are so uncommon, the word "pearl" can refer to anything rare and valuable.

The rarest, and therefore most expensive pearls are natural pearls made in the wild. The majority of pearls sold today are cultured or farmed by implanting a grafted piece of shell (and sometimes a round bead) into pearl oysters or freshwater pearl mussels.

Pearls are very soft, ranging between 2.5 and 4.5 on the Mohs scale. They are sensitive to extreme heat and acidity; in fact, calcium carbonate is so susceptible to acid that pearls will dissolve in vinegar.

The finest pearls have a reflective luster, making them appear creamy white with an iridescent sheen that casts many colorful hues.

Cultured freshwater pearls can also be dyed yellow, green, blue, brown, pink, purple, or black.

Black pearls—which are mostly cultured because they are so rare in nature—aren't actually black but rather green, purple, blue, or silver.

Pearls used to be found in many parts of the world, but natural pearling is now confined to the Persian Gulf waters near Bahrain. Australia owns one of the world's last remaining pearl diving fleets, and still harvests natural pearls from the Indian Ocean.

Today, most freshwater cultured pearls come from China. South Sea pearls are cultured along the northwestern coastline of Australia, the Philippines, and Indonesia.

Besides being one of three birthstones for June, the pearl is also the birthstone for babies born under the signs of Gemini and Cancer, and frequently gifted on 1st, 3rd, 12th and 30th wedding anniversaries.

Pearl History

Pearls have been used as adornment for centuries—at least as far back as ancient Greece, where they believed pearls were the tears of the gods. The oldest known pearl jewelry was discovered in the sarcophagus of a Persian princess who died in 520 B.C.

Ancient Japanese folktales told that pearls were created from the tears of mythical creatures like mermaids and nymphs. Early Chinese civilizations believed that dragons carried pearls between their teeth, and the dragon must be slain to claim the pearls—which symbolized wisdom.

Other cultures associated pearls with the moon, calling them "teardrops of the moon." Hindu folklore explained that dewdrops fell from the moon into the sea, and Krishna picked one for his daughter on her wedding day.

Because natural pearls were so rare throughout history, only the richest echelon could afford them. During the Byzantine Empire, rules dictated that only the emperor was allowed to wear these treasured gemstones. Ancient Egyptians were often buried with their prized pearls.

Tudor England was known as the Pearl Age because of the stone's popularity with the upper class during the sixteenth century. Portraits showed royals wearing pearl jewelry and clothing adorned with pearls.

Pearls became more accessible in the early 1900s when the first commercial culturing of saltwater pearls began in Asia. Since the 1920s, cultured pearls have almost completely replaced natural pearls in the market—making this classic gemstone affordable for nearly any budget.
A relatively modern gemstone, alexandrite was discovered in Russian emerald mines located in the Ural Mountains. Legends claim that it was discovered in 1834 on the same day that future Russian Czar Alexander II came of age, hence the name honoring him. Because this unique gemstone changed colors from green to red—the national colors of Russia—alexandrite became Imperial Russia's official gemstone.

ALEXANDRITE

Often described as "emerald by day, ruby by night," alexandrite is a rare variety of the mineral chrysoberyl that changes color from bluish green in daylight to purplish red under incandescent light.

This chameleon-like behavior is the result of its uncommon chemical composition—which includes traces of chromium, the same coloring agent found in emerald. The unlikelihood of these elements combining under the right conditions makes alexandrite one of the rarest, costliest gemstones.

The alexandrite mined from Russia's famed deposits set the quality standard for this stone. Today, most alexandrite comes from Sri Lanka, Brazil, and East Africa—generally paling in comparison to the vivid colors of Russian gemstones.

With a hardness of 8.5 on the Mohs scale, alexandrite is softer than sapphire and harder than garnet—the other gemstones that can change color. However, due to its scarcity, alexandrite is more valuable than most gemstones, even rubies and diamonds.

Associated with concentration and learning, alexandrite is believed to strengthen intuition, aid creativity and inspire imagination—bringing good omens to anyone who wears it.

The controversial history of alexandrite dates back to Imperial Russia, where it was first discovered in emerald mines near the Tokovaya River in Russia's Ural Mountains. Its Finnish discoverer initially mistook it for emerald before realizing it changed colors under different light sources.

According to legend, this gemstone was named for Alexander II because it was discovered on the future czar's birthday in 1834. Because alexandrite's red and green hues matched Russia's military colors, it became the official gemstone of Imperial Russia's Tsardom.

Russian jewelers were fascinated by this rare color-change gemstone. George Frederick Kunz, the master gemologist at Tiffany & Co., was also fond of it, and produced a series of alexandrite rings between the late 19th and early 20th century. Alexandrite was occasionally used for jewelry in Victorian England, as well.

After Russia's mine deposits were exhausted, the popularity of alexandrite waned until new supplies were discovered in Brazil in 1987. Brazil, Sri Lanka, and East Africa are now the main sources for alexandrite, though these are not as vividly colored as the original Russian gemstones.

Because it's so scarcely available, fine-quality alexandrite is practically unaffordable to the general public. Even lower quality stones are expensive and limited in supply.

Since the 1960s, labs have grown synthetic alexandrite—not to be confused with simulated alexandrite, which is actually corundum or colored crystals infused with chromium or vanadium for color. Creating synthetic alexandrite is an expensive process, so even lab-grown gemstones can be costly.

MOONSTONE

une's third birthstone, moonstone, was named by the Roman natural historian Pliny, who wrote that moonstone's shimmery appearance shifted with the phases of the moon.

The most common moonstone comes from the mineral adularia, named for an early mining site near Mt. Adular in Switzerland that supplied this gemstone. This site also birthed the term *adularescence*, which refers to the stone's milky glow, like moonlight floating on water.

Moonstone is composed of microscopic layers of feldspar that scatter light to cause this billowy effect of adularescence. Thinner layers produce a bluish sheen and thicker layers look white. Moonstone comes in a range of colors spanning yellow, gray, green, blue, peach, and pink—sometimes displaying a star or cat's eye.

The finest classical moonstones—colorlessly transparent with a blue shimmer—come from Sri Lanka. Since these sources of high-quality blue moonstones have essentially been mined out, prices have risen sharply.

Moonstones are also found in India, Australia, Myanmar, Madagascar, and the United States. Indian gemstones—which are brown, green, or orange in color—are more abundant and affordably priced than their classical blue counterparts.

This beautiful gemstone's weakness is its relatively low hardness of 6 on the Mohs scale, making it prone to stress cracking and cleaving. Care is required with moonstone jewelry like rings or bracelets; brooches and pendants are preferred.

Moonstone has been used as a beautiful adornment and a powerful talisman since ancient civilizations. The Romans admired it, believing it was formed from moonbeams. Both the Romans and the Greeks associated moonstone with their lunar deities.

The Roman natural historian, Pliny, coined the name of this gemstone when he wrote that moonstone's shimmery appearance shifted with the phases of the moon—a belief that held until well after the sixteenth century.

Hindu mythology also told that moonstone was made from the moon's ethereal light. Legend portrayed it as a sacred and magical "dream stone" that could bring beautiful dreams at night.

Florida adopted moonstone as its official state gemstone in 1970 to commemorate the Apollo 11 moon landing and other spaceflights that launched from Florida—even though moonstone is not naturally found in Florida or on the moon.

Valued for centuries, moonstone is still popular and accessible today. It's the preferred June birthstone, over pearl and alexandrite, in parts of the world like Germany and Scandinavia.

Many thanks to the American Gem Society for this article on April's Gem Stone

From the bench of Bradford Smith

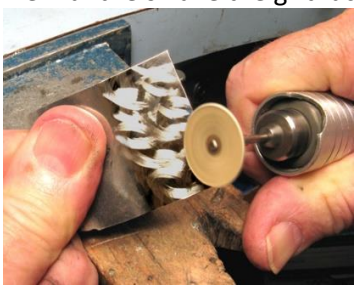
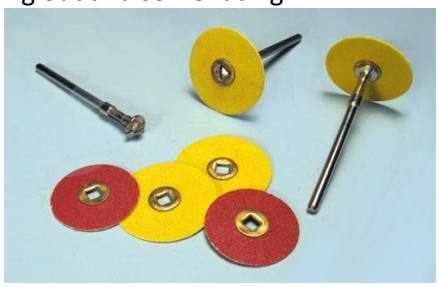
Be More Productive With Brad's "How To" Books
Amazon.com/author/bradfordsmith

SANDING DISKS

One of my favorite flexshaft tools that saves a lot of time is the snap-on sanding disk. I mainly use the medium and fine grits but sometimes like the very fine ones sold for working with platinum.

Ordinarily, you'd think of placing the disk on the mandrel with the grit side facing away from your hand, but notice that you end up with your elbow up in the air. Instead, try flipping the disk so that the grit side is towards your hand. It's a much more comfortable position because the elbow is down near your side, and it lets me hold the work up close where I have a better view of what I'm sanding.

I use these snap-on disks so frequently that I keep multiple mandrels with different grits already mounted in the bur stand. Some mandrels have the grit facing out and some facing in.

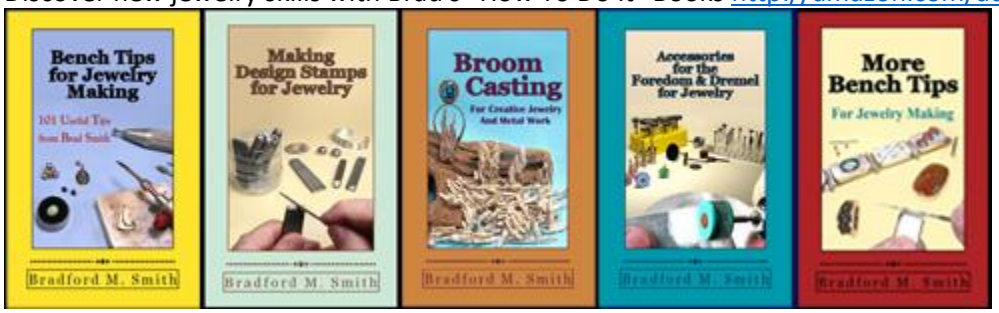




EASIER PRONG SETTING

When setting stones in a prong mount, the tool is less likely to slip off the prong if you grind a groove into its face or rough up the face a bit with sandpaper. Some folks prefer a prong pusher for doing this, and others like a set of pliers.

The easiest way to create a slot on the pusher is with a file, and the easiest way to create a slot on one jaw of your pliers is with a cutoff wheel. Then do a rough polish on the slot with a medium grit, knife-edge silicone wheel.

Discover new jewelry skills with Brad's "How To Do It" Books http://amazon.com/author/bradfordsmith



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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 located in the clubhouse.

Our website is 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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June Calendar of Events

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
						WGMC Meeting 10:00 am
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	**20**	21	22
				Pot luck & Movie 6:00 pm		
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						