

# GRITTY GREETINGS



## Waco Gem and Mineral Club

Volume 66, Issue 9, September, 2025

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## Upcoming Events

**September 13**      **Club meeting, 10 AM.**

**August 30. 31**      **CERA Gem Mineral & Glass Show, Ft Worth, TX**

**August 30. 31**      **Westfest, West, TX**

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## **Contacts**

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## **Waco Gem and Mineral Club Minutes for August 2, 2025**

CALL TO ORDER – President Roy Cooper called the meeting to order 10:04 am.

### **INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME VISITORS**

APPROVE the minutes of previous: Bob moved and Kenny second, and the minutes were approved as published in Gritty Greetings.

TREASURERS REPORT – John had car trouble, but in a phone call with Roy he reported that we were “still solvent.” From the floor came the question about how did we do at the Show. Roy reported that we were about \$1,000 less than last year but that we were hindered because the Show was preceded by a week of severe bad weather.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

#### **A. PROGRAM COMMITTEE**

1. August (today): Bill Thompson, “Echinoids”
2. September: to be determined. Bob might give a presentation on “Jade.”

#### **B. FIELD TRIP COMMITTEE**

One person knew of a farmer with petrified wood. Maybe we could get permission to hunt there. The date, maybe around October, would depend on when the field is available (after harvest and before planting.)

There is the “Texas Through Time” museum in Hillsboro.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

#### **NEW CLUB LOCATION:**

We could look for a new building (300-400 sq. ft.) for shop only, and meet at the Library or other free location.

Harry reported that, as listed in the July 2025 Gritty Greetings, all sightings and locations should be sent to his email: [senn.harry@yahoo.com](mailto:senn.harry@yahoo.com). He would forward this to the appropriate person who could follow up on the information.

The Club had a previous shop in a rented storage unit.

The location should be in the Greater Waco area, or even in Robinson.

#### OUTREACH TO LOCAL SCHOOLS:

We need to remember to reach out to local schools for club partnership activities.

In the Corpus Christi Show they had a "Find the Mineral" booth for the children.

We need to prearrange for schools to bring children to the show

ADJOURN – the meeting was adjourned at 10:26 am.

PROGRAM: The program was presented by Bill Thompson from New Braunfels, Texas on "Echinoids."

He has published books on Echinoids, and is presently working on some more. A brief web search for "echinoids Bill Thompson" produced the following:

- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/101132496627000/user/100007030420915>
- "New species of fossil sea urchin named after Donald Trump" SOURCE: William Thompson, Fossil Echinoids of Texas.

<https://www.wmur.com/article/new-species-of-fossil-sea-urchin-named-after-donald-trump/8252764>

- "Fossil Echinoids of Texas - A Monograph of Fossil Sea Urchins 2016" <http://www.echinoids.com/buy-book.html>

## September birthstone: Sapphire



Sapphire, the September birthstone, has been popular since the Middle Ages and, according to folklore, will protect your loved ones from envy and harm. Medieval clergy wore sapphires to symbolize heaven, while commoners thought the gem attracted heavenly blessings. Blue sapphires range from very light to very dark greenish or violetish blue, as well as various shades of pure blue. The most prized colors are a medium to medium dark blue or slightly violetish blue. Sapphire is a variety of the gem species corundum and occurs in all colors of the rainbow. Pink, purple, green, orange, or yellow corundum are known by their color (pink sapphire, green sapphire). Ruby is the red variety of corundum.

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

# Brads Bench Tips

## TESTING FOR SILVER

Often you need to identify some of those unknown "silvery" pieces of metal in the bottom of the toolbox or some piece of old jewelry that isn't hallmarked.

Is it silver? - or is it something else?

Of course, if you need to know exactly what you have, it's best to send your metals off for refining. But inexpensive silver testing solutions can be used to help distinguish higher silver content alloys from alloys that have the same appearance but with little to no silver content, like German Silver or Nickel.

I purchased a half-ounce bottle of JSP Silver Testing Solution #GT41. It's not a rigorous analytic test, but it lets you know if you're on the right track. And it's inexpensive. Mine was only \$3.

With a fresh solution you have an instant reaction after applying it to the metal being tested. The procedure is simple - apply a small drop and watch for a color change. Note that the acid will leave a slight mark, so choose a spot that is out of the way or will be easy to polish.

If you suspect the object is silver plated, you should file a little notch somewhere inconspicuous to expose what metal is below the surface. Otherwise, all you test will be the surface plating.

Here's the reaction I got when testing various materials:

Fine silver	Red/Orange
Sterling silver	Brick Red
80% silver 20% copper	Dark red changing to gray
Brass	Yellow changing to blue
Nickel	Gray-green
Copper	Yellow changing to blue
Steel	Black
Stainless Steel	No color change

Caution - If you do any of this testing, know that you are handling a reasonably strong acid. The GT41 label says it includes nitric acid and potassium dichromate.

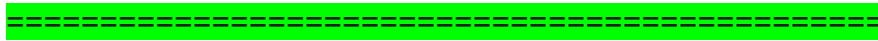
Wear safety glasses.

Do not get any testing solution on your skin.

Use a solution of baking soda and water to neutralize acid.

Wash and clean up well when you're done.

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## REMOVING SOLDER FROM A BEZEL

Sometimes when you solder a bezel to a base plate you end up with excess solder that needs to be removed before setting the stone. My choice of a tool bit for this is an "Inverse Cone" bur used in a motor tool or flexshaft.

The nice thing about this bur is that it cuts on the bottom and the side and is shaped so that there's less chance of it cutting into the bezel wall than if you used the more common cylinder bur shape. I find the 2 mm size useful for almost any bezel.

There's hundreds of different tool tips for your Dremel or Foredom. Get Brad's guide on choosing the best one for the job at [amazon.com/dp/B074LG35ZV](https://www.amazon.com/dp/B074LG35ZV)

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Is that turquoise too good to be true? Helpful hints from T.Skies Jewelry. Thanks, Stephanie.

<https://www.facebook.com/reel/1471224767221592>

## Notes

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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. Contributions to the newsletter are encouraged.

### **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 dollar in the pig. The money from the pig goes toward our Scholarship program, and we really do appreciate every dollar or more. However, if you need a name tag 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 John Hillman 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.

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