

THE WHITE RIVER SLUICE

A PUBLICATION OF THE WHITE RIVER ROCK GEM AND MINERAL CLUB

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Wavellite

$\text{Al}_3(\text{PO}_4)_2(\text{OH}, \text{F}) \cdot 5\text{H}_2\text{O}$

Wavellite, an aluminum phosphate mineral, is typically a green, yellow-green, yellow, brown to whitish mineral. It is orthorhombic or botryoidal or exhibits flat radial acicular crystals.

Its streak is white, hardness 3.5 to 4. It is found in a variety of locations, but our amateur prospectors typically find it in the Ouachita Mountains of Mt. Ida, Arkansas where we go to mine quartz crystal. Thin deposits of variscite are frequently discovered in areas where wavellite is found.

Because of its attractive form wavellite is considered very collectible as a mineral specimen.

Talisman Magic for Rockhounds

According to Science Fiction Writer M. E. Counselman, Rockhound Magazine, February 1980, If you're having Nightmares: "A pellet of cave onyx under the old pillow will banish those in a hurry."

White River Rock Gem and Mineral Club Next Meeting At New Location

On Wednesday May 2 at 7:00 P.M. the club will meet at the White Lake Community Education Center, 541 East Slocum Street, Whitehall, MI Directions: Take Colby St. (Bus. Rte. U.S. 31) west from U.S. 31 to Franklin St. Turn left on Franklin. Continue to Slocum Street. Cross Slocum into the West parking lot. Enter through west doors.

The Program presented by Vicki Hartung and Mike Rakovits will be slides and a discussion of Mount Ida, Quartz Crystal Collecting.

The following items will be offered for raffle at the meeting:

1. Polished Prairie Jasper and Jasp-agate Stones from South Dakota.
2. 2 Bead & Button Magazines, 2000,2001 & a Glasscraft, Inc. folder with catalog, 1999.
3. Crystal Point with attached tabby. Aprox 2 1/4" x 1 1/4".



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Call Vondie @ (231) 894-1510 for info.

UPCOMING ROCK SHOWS, ETC.

MAY 4, 5, & 6: **Kalamazoo Geological & Mineral Society Annual Show.** Fri. 4PM-8PM. Sat. 10AM-6PM Sun. 10AM-5PM
Kalamazoo County Expo. Center 2900 Lake Street, Kalamazoo, MI

MAY 19-20: **Blossomland Gem & Mineral Society Annual Show.** Sat. 9AM-6PM, Sun. Noon-6PM. Lake Michigan Catholic Elementary School, 3165 Washington Ave., St Joseph, MI

JUNE 1-3: **Stateline Gem & Mineral Society Annual Show.** Fri. Noon-6PM, Sat. 10AM-6PM, Sun. 11AM-4PM, Fulton County Fairgrounds, 8514 SR-108, Wauseon, OH

JUNE 22-24: **Lawrence County Rock Club Annual Show.** Fri. 10AM-6:30PM, Sat. 9AM-6:30 PM, Sun. 10AM-4PM, Lawrence County Fairgrounds, US Hwy. 50, Bedford, IN

JULY 14: **Flint Rock & Gem Club Rock Swap.** 9AM-5PM, Flint Rock & Gem Club Classroom, 11350 N. Saginaw Rd. Clio, MI

WHITE RIVER CLUB NEWS

Our Articles of Non-Profit Confederation are on file with the state. Our application and dues have been sent in to the Midwest Federation of Mineralogical & Geological Societies. We have secured a place at the White Lake Community Center for our monthly meetings. We have begun a youth program and need a leader for our youth. There will be a picnic at Vondie's House on July 14. Watch your newsletter for more information.

White River Rock Gem & Mineral Club Calendar

General Meetings:

Monday, June 4
Gemstone Identification
With Eric Peterson
Saturday, June 9
Field Trip to Deer Lick
Creek (Details Coming)
Saturday, July 14
Club Picnic
Monday, August 6,
Program to be announced
September 10
Everything Petoskey
with Kimmy Addison
November 5
To be announced.
by Suzanne Ritchie
December 3
To be announced.

**Membership Dues
for 2018 are \$15.00 per
individual and \$20.00 per
family membership.**

Dues may be mailed to:
Kay LeMieux
3658 Carr Road
Fruitport, MI 49415

Please include your
name(s) address, home and
cell phone number, email
address, names ages and
birthdates of children with
your check.

General Meeting April 11, 2018 Minutes

This will be the last meeting at Vondie's House. We will now meet at White Lake Community Education Center. Next Meeting will be May 2nd, with a board meeting preceding the general meeting.

Eric Peterson is working on a website. We have a draft of our bylaws and our articles of confederation have been registered so we are officially a Michigan Nonprofit Corporation.

We have applied to the Midwest Federation of Minerological & Geological Societies for membership in their organization.

We have access to the Midwest Federation Website for information on field trips, rock shows, programs and other rock hound information.

Eric Peterson reports that our new website is WhiteRiverRockGemandMineral.Weebly.com

Treasurer reports that we now have a bank account. There was a deposit of \$361.00 which came from dues and contributions. \$161.00 paid to federation for dues. \$79.00 was paid to Eric Peterson for his costs setting up the website.

Open Positions that need to be filled include Field Trip Coordinator, Youth Program Director, Two Director at Large Positions and Grant Writing Director, Event Director and Show Coordinator.

The day of the month that we meet for our general meetings will change in June. Instead of meeting on Wednesdays, we will meet on Mondays for our regular general meetings. As a general rule we will meet on the first Monday of the month, however on certain months when there is a holiday the first week of the month, we will meet the second Monday of the Month.

Future Field Trips: Deer Lick Creek near South Haven Michigan, and the Fluorite Fields near the Kentucky Illinois Border, Marion, Kentucky.

Field Tripping the Rio Grande Valley, Texas

By The Grumpy Rockhound

In March of 2018 I went to Texas with the Grumpier-than-me Old Man and the Younger Fellow because my brother had invited us to his place. I asked him what rocks we could find in that part of Texas. He there was sand and dust and shells, but no rocks. I called Kingsley North and ordered a book for rock collecting in Texas. According to the book he was correct. The closest sites for collecting rocks were at least a hundred miles away.

After we were in Texas a day or two, I was depressed. I showed my brother the book, said we were going to check out a lake west of where he lives. The book said we could find moss agates there—bright red, and yellow ones and rarely a beautiful bright green. He said, “Oh you can’t go there. Just a couple of weeks ago the Mexican government shot two people who were riding a jet ski because they came too close to the Mexican border. (You probably didn’t hear about that on the national news!) That area isn’t considered safe.”

Dust, sand and a constant 20-30 mile an hour wind, and hot sun, how could my brother have chosen this rock forsaken place to live? I was glad to see my brother, but I was not happy having no place to look for rocks.

I read the rock hound book again, learning the place names, where rocks could be found. One day talking to a neighbor in the campground about crossing the border into Mexico I heard the name Los Ebanos. My ears pricked up. My neighbor said it was unsafe to cross there, but it was unique because they had a rope drawn ferry we should check out. He said there was a different port of entry if we wanted to go Mexico safely.

I checked the rock hound book again. Yes! Los Ebanos was a location for finding agates and petrified wood and jasper. Los Ebanos was about a hundred miles away. It is named for the trees that grow on the bank at the ferry crossing. We never saw the historic rope drawn ferry, but we found a home with about 30 cats lounging around in the sandy front yard of a typical Texan home in town. And we saw a house with two horses and a goat tethered in the side yard of a brick ranch house where bougainvillea cascaded along a fence. Then we found the abandoned railroad tracks where there were supposed to be collectible rocks. And we found the rocks--banded agates, chalcedony with inclusions, jasper, but not much petrified wood, also very few of the kind of moss agates I had pictured from the description in the rock hound book. Of course the young fellow with his good eyes found the most beautiful fortification agates.

Grumpier-than-me parked himself in his lawn chair in the shade of the Durango and poked at the ground with his cane. He tied the dog’s leashes to the hitch and to a mirror so they could crawl under the car for relief from the hot sun. I put out dog water for the dogs and a cooler beside his chair with cold drinks and egg salad sandwiches. Fortified by food he eventually wandered over to the tracks and picked up a few rocks.

In the mean time the Young Fellow had hiked a considerable distance along the tracks and I could see his pockets were bulging. Not to be out done I set out to find some rocks for my own collecting bags. We collected all afternoon and into the evening, finally heading back to Port Mansfield after sunset. We all had a few great specimens and many more decent specimens. The trouble though, was that we couldn’t justify driving that distance every day.

Along the border into Mexico the Border Patrol folks are thick as rattlesnakes in mating season. It took thirty or forty passes in various trucks cars and vans to keep track of us that day even though we stayed in one small area and our intentions were clear. Who knows though? Maybe folks come and pretend to be rock hounds while the illegals climb into their vehicles and hide under blankets and quilts or under some secret panel in the floor of the van?

It made me wonder. What if there were no property lines, no states, no countries with borders? If earth owned us instead of us trying to claim it, wouldn't we actually be free, the way we advertise in our country? Land of the free. Home of the brave. Collecting rocks sets my mind free to wander, the way my body might wander if it didn't need a passport.

Once we arrived back at camp after a long day, I looked at the map and got to thinking. The rock hound book said the kinds of stones we were after were common to the Rio Grande Valley and had been found at a couple of locations, all distant from us. But we were staying in the Rio Grande Valley which was a vast area. True, there were no rocks at our camp, but there had to be rocks somewhere closer than Los Ebanos.

We spotted a train running near the highway, and decided to check out the area near the tracks. There were rocks in the sandy banks that had been excavated on either side of the tracks and some of those rocks were agates. There were also broken pieces of rock for the rail bed, but those were a mix of basalts and rhyolites with a miscellany of other stones mixed in. We also found rocks in the tidal flats near Boca Chica where there historically had been a railroad. In the old chunks of concrete that had once been supports for the railroad there were agates, and along the ground in the sand were more stones that had come free from the concrete and among them were agates.

We went back to Los Ebanos to cover territory we had missed the previous time we searched there. It was Sunday. Border Patrol was absent. If you want to cross over into the U. S. illegally, Sunday might be the day to try it. But we were for rocks and we found more good specimens that day. We scouted out other areas up and down the tracks, and in an old parking lot adjacent to a government building, we found lots of good collectibles.

But our daily trips included the tracks between Raymondville and Harlingen where there were many road endings near the railroad with easy parking. There may have been less good specimens per equivalent area, but they tended to be unbroken and more dramatic. The day before we had to leave for a rock club field trip to Arkansas, when we should have been taking down camp, we stopped again at the highway north of Harlingen, finding more and prettier agates than before.

After we first arrived in far southeastern Texas, I had told Grumpier and the Young One that now that I had seen my brother and his place, there was no reason to return to this flat land of nothing but scrub land and dust, strong winds and scorching heat. But now we have returned home to Michigan and I am going through my buckets of agates and golden chalcedony and bright jaspers, and I almost feel Texas calling me back to its dusty hot lands where people think because they're born and raised in Texas, they're some kind of extra special. Everyone there addressed me as Ma'am. It got on my very last nerve, but Oh my Agates! Did I show you this amber one with all of the banding going every which way? Maybe we'll have to go back.

Silent Auction



Photos by: Rochelle Knoll Copyright 2018

