



Rock Talk

The Official Newsletter of the Withlacoochee Rockhounds

President's Message



Musings, Updates, and More from Club President - Judith Birx

We are about to meet for the first time since this pandemic has started indoors at the Senior Center on the regular meeting date and time (March 10th, 7:00pm)!

This is both exciting and concerning at the same time!

Even though we are moving towards a new normal or at least something we can call normal for now, its important to note we are still in a Pandemic situation!

So, this is what it means to the club.

- We are still following the CDC guidelines
- Masks indoors and outdoors
- 6' feet away from each other
- Hand sanitizer will be available
- If you are sick or not feeling well, stay at home
- If you have been in contact with someone who had the COVID virus, please stay home
- If you are in the high risk category, please stay home
- **YOU ARE ATTENDING AT YOUR OWN RISK**

_This month's meeting will be presented by Mark Moore.
His presentation will be on Amber!
I, for one can not wait!
I will be bringing some of my Amber for show and tell.

This Month's Roundup of Stories

- President's Message
- Secretary's Report
- Venetian Glass Beads
- Magnetic Poles
- And much more!

Mark will have special equipment on hand with very detailed instructions for us to follow, so please make sure you pay careful attention during his presentation.

We are allowing our members to come with their items, rocks, and fossils for sale. However, there will be no selling during the presentation, indoors or outdoors.

We need to respect our presenters and our educational programs while they are being presented to our members.

If you have items for sale or are interested in buying items, come early. We are usually there around 5:30pm.

The same goes with the machines we have available to use. If you use a machine you will be expected to help clean that area up.

No sharing of food until further notice.

NO LICKING ROCKS! Lol !

Secretary's Report



Minutes and More from Club Secretary - Melodye Stevenson

Withlacoochee Rockhounds Monthly Meeting -

OUTDOORS

Date 2/21/21

Minutes

Due to the pandemic, this meeting was held outdoors in the front "yard" of the clubhouse.

The meeting was called to order by President Judith Birx at 1:20pm.

We all stood for the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment of silent prayer.

There was 1 new member to recognize; Karen Lameier
There were 2 guests in attendance; Samantha Steinmacher and Carol Babicz.

Mark Moore made a motion to accept the minutes of our meeting as printed in the newsletter, seconded by Lynn Walters. Passed by all members. Our Treasurer was not in attendance.

Old Business

The President's announcements:

President Birx announced that the monthly meeting on March 10th at 7pm, which is our original date and time, will be held inside, unless things change due to the current pandemic situation.

We will be following current CDC guidelines;

- Masks or double Masks
- Hand Sanitizer will be available
- Practice Social Distancing, stay 6' apart
- Doors will be open, if possible
- Room will be sanitized prior to the meeting
- Gloves are recommended

If you are sick do not come, or if you were in contact with someone who has tested positive for the Coronavirus, please stay home.

If you are in the high risk category, please do not come.

Please realize you are attending meetings and any activities associated with the Withlacoochee Rockhounds at your own risk.

Additionally, during our March meeting, Mark Moore will present a program on "Amber". Members are invited to bring their amber to show if they wish. Mark Moore has a special sanitizer we will be using for all the operations pertaining to his program. We'll also have gloves available, as well as hand sanitizer.

Before and after the program, the machines will be out and spaced apart by at least 6 feet.

Mark plans to have this program video taped for viewing on the club's YouTube channel.

New Business

Our Free jewelry class is canceled due to the inability to practice 6' social distancing, however, we will be trying to do a class on video and publishing it on YouTube. Others who teach can do this as well.

All members, please remember we would like to implement a new logo for our club. Send or bring in your ideas or drawings as soon as possible.

The club has a new phone number, 352-587-2714. Anyone can leave a voicemail and we will get back to the caller ASAP.

We also have a new email, info@withlacoocheerockhounds.com. Any questions or comments will be responded to as soon as possible.

Continued on page 8



Venetian Glass Beads May Be Oldest European Artifacts Found in North America

I guess they were members of the Venetian Rockhounds!

More than five centuries ago, a handful of blueberry-sized blue beads made an astonishing journey.

Crafted by glassmakers in Venice, the small spheres were carried east along Silk Road trade networks before being ferried north, into the hinterlands of Eurasia and across the Bering Strait, where they were deposited in the icy ground of northern Alaska.

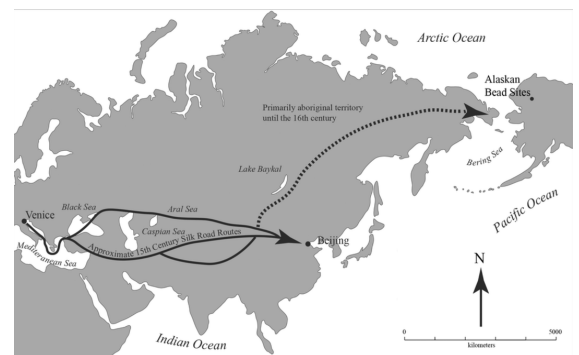


Archaeologists dug the beads up in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Now, a new study published in the journal *American Antiquity* asserts that the glass objects are among the oldest European-made items ever discovered in North America.

When the archaeologists realized how old the beads were, “we almost fell over backwards,” says Kunz in statement. “It came back saying [the plant was alive at] some time during the 1400s. It was like, Wow!”

This is an excerpted portion of the article.

[Read the entire article here at SmithsonianMag.com](https://www.smithsonianmag.com/read-the-entire-article-here-at-smithsonianmag-com)



"This is the first documented instance of the presence of indubitable European materials in prehistoric sites in the Western Hemisphere as the result of overland transport across the Eurasian continent," add the authors.

Ancient relic points to a turning point in Earth's history 42,000 years ago

So, we have this to look forward to.

The temporary breakdown of Earth's magnetic field 42,000 years ago sparked major climate shifts that led to global environmental change and mass extinctions, a new international study co-led by UNSW Sydney and the South Australian Museum shows.

This dramatic turning point in Earth's history—laced with electrical storms, widespread auroras, and cosmic radiation—was triggered by the reversal of Earth's magnetic poles and changing solar winds.



The researchers dubbed this danger period the 'Adams Transitional Geomagnetic Event', or 'Adams Event' for short—a tribute to science fiction writer Douglas Adams, who wrote in *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* that '42' was the answer to life, the universe, and everything.

"The findings were made possible with ancient New Zealand kauri trees, which have been preserved in sediments for over 40,000 years.

This is an excerpted portion of the article.

[Read the entire article here at Phys.Org](#)



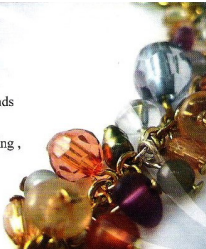
"For the first time ever, we have been able to precisely date the timing and environmental impacts of the last magnetic pole switch," says Chris Turney, a professor at UNSW Science and co-lead author of the study.

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Member of Withlacoochee Rockhounds
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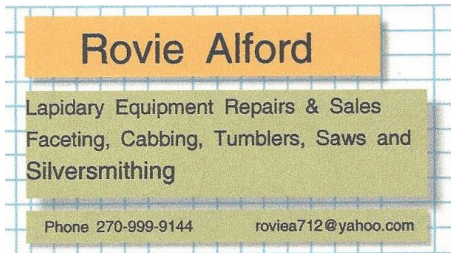
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Your Business Card Size Ad in Rock Talk

The cost for non-club members to advertise their businesses in
Rock Talk is \$10.00 per month.
Contact Michael Stevenson to set up an ad in both the newsletter and
the club website. It will benefit both
your business and our club.

If you ad has a web address, or Etsy shop address, I have linked to it.

Advertisers Are Needed

Please help us find advertisers for the Rock Talk and our website.

The monthly income from these ads is beneficial to the club.

Both the Rock Talk and our website have more exposure than only club members.

Contact club treasurer Janet Wheeler: ceecgirl@tampabay.rr.com or
send to:

Withlacoochee Rockhounds
PO Box 5634 Spring Hill, FL 34611-5634

Ancient Celtic Torcs

In ancient Celtic cultures, torcs were a common form of jewelery and were made from bronze, copper, silver, and gold.

Torcs were not just exquisite works of Celtic art but also identified the wearer's status and perhaps were believed to have spiritual properties.

Depictions of gods and Celtic warriors in ancient art often show these figures wearing a torc around their necks.

Many surviving torcs have been found in shallow pits, most likely put there for a ritual purpose as a votive offering or simply for safekeeping, and, with some weighing over a kilo (2.2 lbs) in gold, they were certainly a handy and sometimes highly decorative form of portable wealth

Torcs (sometimes spelt torques, from the Latin) were meant to be worn around the neck and wrist and have been found across Celtic Europe from Iberia to Bohemia. They were not, however, unique to Celtic cultures despite their strong association with this form of jewelery. Torcs were worn by men, women, and probably children, too.

Celtic torcs were made using metals such as gold, silver, copper, iron, and bronze. They are formed either with smooth, hollow, or twisted bands.

Several bands could be twisted around themselves or spiralled around a core of iron or even wood.

This is an excerpted portion of the article.

[Read the entire article here at Ancient.Eu](#)



Torcs likely had a spiritual symbolism, and it is perhaps for this reason depictions in art of Celtic gods often show them wearing or holding torcs.

Withlacoochee Rockhounds

Membership Form 2021

Annual Dues: New individual member, \$25.00. Under 18 years of age, \$5.00. No charge for paid 2020 members who are renewing for 2021. Returning members from 2019, \$20.00 (\$5.00 discount) for 2021 membership

☐

Check if returning member

☐

Check if current member
with change of information

☐

Check if new member

☐

Check if under 18

Please Print Clearly

Last name

First Name

Street Address:

City

State

ZIP

Phone Number (s)

Email address:

You may now fill in the fields on this form if you are viewing it on your computer or tablet.
Each field may be clicked on and then you may type in your information.
You will still need to print out the form, but your added information should show on the

Give this completed form along with your check for dues made out to "Withlacoochee Rockhounds" to club secretary Janet Wheeler at a club meeting. Or mail the form and your check to:

**Withlacoochee Rockhounds
PO Box 5634
Spring Hill, FL 34611-5634**

Renewing 2020 members : No charge for 2021 membership. Please fill out form and give it to club secretary Janet Wheeler or send it to the above address.

2021

The Central Florida Sportsman's Expo will be at Tom Varn Park on March 20th and 21st from 9-5.
The Weeki Wachee Senior Center has been given a free booth to inform the public of all the different clubs at the center.
Judith Birx will be representing the Withlacoochee Rockhounds and the Senior Center to the public and could use help manning the booth. If you can help, please call to let me know.

Lynn is looking into a field trip that will give us private access to the Peace River.
This will provide all supplies, and cost \$60.00 per person or less if we have more than 8 attendees.
She will inform us of her progress.
We will announce any Field Trip that is being planned.
Several suggestions were discussed and all will be considered.

Dave Davis made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Roberta Oldread seconded, passed by all.

Meeting was adjourned at 1:45pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Secretary Melodye Steverson.

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Withlacoochee Rockhounds

Our monthly club meeting is held at the Weeki Wachee Senior Citizens Club, 3357 Susan Dr., Spring Hill, FL 34606, on the 2nd Wednesday of each month from 7:00 to 9:00 PM

www.withlacoocheerockhounds.com



of
Hernando County

**Your Business Card Size Ad
in Rock Talk**

The cost for non-club members to advertise their businesses in Rock Talk is \$10.00 per month. Contact Michael Steverson to set up an ad in both the newsletter and the club website. It will benefit both your business and our club.

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Contact club treasure Janet Wheeler: ceecgirl@tampabay.rr.com
or send to: Withlacoochee Rockhounds
PO Box 5634
Spring Hill, FL 34611-5634

Withlacoochee Rockhounds

Purpose

We are a non-profit organization whose purpose is to foster interest and promote knowledge of minerals, gems, fossils, lapidary arts, and earth sciences, through regular meetings, informative programs, workshops, and field trips. PLUS our annual gem and mineral and jewelry show. Membership is open to anyone sharing such interests.

Dues

Dues are \$20.00 annually for adults and no cost for children under 18 years of age.

Club Meeting Location and Time

Weeki Wachee Senior Citizens Center, 3357 Susan Drive in Spring Hill. The meetings are held on the second Wednesday of the month at 7:00 PM.

2020 Club Officers and Appointees

President.....	Judith Birx.....	352-587-1702.....	judithbirx@hotmail.com
Vice President.....	Mark Moore.....	352-586-9607.....	markles@bellsouth.net
Secretary.....	Melodye Steverson.....	352-683-9496.....	melodye@designsbymelodye.com
Treasurer.....	Janet Wheeler.....	727-938-3644.....	ceecgirl@tampabay.rr.com
Rock Talk Editor	Michael Steverson	407-376-5570	highlander56@gmail.com
Club Web Master	Michael Steverson	407-376-5570	highlander56@gmail.com
Mailing Reporter.....	Janet Wheeler.....	727-938-3644.....	ceecgirl@tampabay.rr.com
Gem Bag Coordinator.....	Gloria DuPont.....	352-848-5199.....	ddupont@tampabay.rr.com
Audio/Visual Coordinator.....	Michael Steverson.....	407-376-5570.....	highlander56@gmail.com

Board of Directors

Ralph Barber (past president)	Ginny Steverson (2021)
Judith Birx (president)	Michael Steverson (2021 appointed)
Mark Moore (vice president)	Lynn Walters (2021)
Roberta Oldread (2020)	Janet Wheeler (treasurer)
Melodye Steverson (secretary)	

Withlacoochee Rockhounds Board of Directors

Meeting Minutes

Date 2/15/2021

Attending Board members; Judith Birx, Mark Moore, Melodye Steverson, Janet Wheeler, Ralph Barber, Roberta Oldread, Ginny Steverson, Lynn Walters and Michael Steverson.

Board meeting started at 6:45pm and was held via the Internet on Zoom.

Mark Moore made a motion to accept the minutes of our March meeting as printed in the newsletter, seconded by Ginny Steverson. Passed.

President Judith Birx had distributed the meeting agenda via Email.

OLD BUSINESS

Roberta Oldread stated there had been no official report regarding the 2021 election results.

These minutes will stand as the official statement.

The Official results of the 2021 Withlacoochee Rockhounds Election of Officers and Board of Directors are as follows:

Elected Officers

President – Judith Birx

Vice President – Mark Moore

Secretary – Melodye Steverson

Treasurer – Janet Wheeler

Officers and Past Presidents are also Board members.

Elected Board of Directors

Ralph Barber - Past President

Lynn Walters

Roberta Oldread

Ginny Steverson

Michael Steverson – Presidential Appointee

President Birx asked Michael Steverson if the club had purchased the approved 1 year subscription to ZOOM for internet meetings. He stated he had not because the club hadn't gotten a debit card yet.

Treasurer Wheeler stated that she had ordered the debit card and it was on the way.

President Birx then asked Michael if the club had paid for the Google accounts he recently implemented for the club. He stated that the Google accounts that he used were free.

President Birx asked if all was ready for the March meeting to be held indoors.

After discussion regarding the CDC regulations and safety suggestions, it was decided that all was ready for a safe meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion:

Should the monthly club jewelry class be canceled until we can meet safely? Board consensus was yes.

However, President Birx and Roberta Oldread talked about doing a teaching video to be available on the club's YouTube Channel. President Birx is considering the idea.

President Birx asked Michael Steverson about the Google updates he has implemented for the club.

He explained, the club's official phone number is 352-587-2714 and will go a recorded greeting where the caller can leave a message, which will notify him. He will then forward the notification to the President and/or the Secretary and they will see that the call is handled. This number will be on all official access points for the club. The official email address for the club is info@withlacoocheerockhounds.com.

Again, this will be delivered to Michael and he will send it along to be handled.

Continued on page 11



Bench Tips from Brad Smith

Brad Smith's *Bench Tips* are a monthly feature of Rock Talk

SHARP KNIVES FOR CUTTING MOLDS

Cutting molds is easier and more precise with a sharp blade. A new *Xacto* blade is sufficient for cutting RTV molds, but is usually not sharp enough for vulcanized rubber. For that, it's best to use scalpel blades available from most jewelry supply companies. The #11 blade is triangle shaped, and the #12 is hawksbill shaped. I find the hawksbill is particularly nice for cutting the registration keys of the mold.



USE YOUR THUMB

When using multiple bits in a Foredom, we often have to deal with several different shaft sizes - the usual 3/32 inch burs, the larger 1/8 inch shafts sizes and of course the many different sizes of drills.

For some reason I really dislike having to turn the key multiple times to open or close the jaws of the handpiece chuck.

So I have two ways to speed up that task.

For opening up the jaws, I just remember "four", the number of turns I have to make to open the chuck just enough from the 3/32 bur shaft size to the larger 1/8 bur shaft size.

For closing the jaws around a smaller shaft, there's a neat trick. Hold the new bit in the center of the open jaws of the chuck, put your thumb lightly onto the outer toothed collar of the chuck, and gently start up the Foredom.

As the chuck turns, it will naturally tighten the jaws around the bur shaft or the drill bit. Then all you have to do is a final tightening with the key.



Learn New Skills with Brad's "How To Do It" Books

[Amazon.com/author/bradfordsmith](https://www.amazon.com/author/bradfordsmith)

President Birx asked if we should advertise in the Scene now that we are meeting again at the regular times.
The consensus is yes, we should, but we should wait until we can have at least 2 regular meetings in a row. President Birx will look into it.

President Birx asked Roberta Oldread and Lynn Walters for Field Trip updates.
Roberta has a trip in mind and is set to go when the pandemic situation clears up.
Lynn is planning a Field Trip which will be on private land in the vicinity of the Peace River.
She is looking at others, however she feels that our waiver/consent form must be updated.
She will forward it to Michael to update the form as discussed.

Ralph Barber, Gem Show Committee Chair reported that we have the show dates on hold at the venue and are good to proceed.

VP Mark Moore will present a program on “Amber” for the March monthly meeting. He asks that members that have amber, please bring it to show.

President Birx stated that she will be representing our club at the Central Florida Sportsman's Expo on March 20th & 21st, 2021 in Tom Varn Park. The Weeki Wachee Senior Center was given a free booth and the clubs that meet at the center are encouraged to man the booth to promote the center and the clubs that meet there. She will need some help getting together some material on a poster board to promote our club. She will be handing out flyers for our club and our Gem Show. She will ask the members for help at the booth for those days.

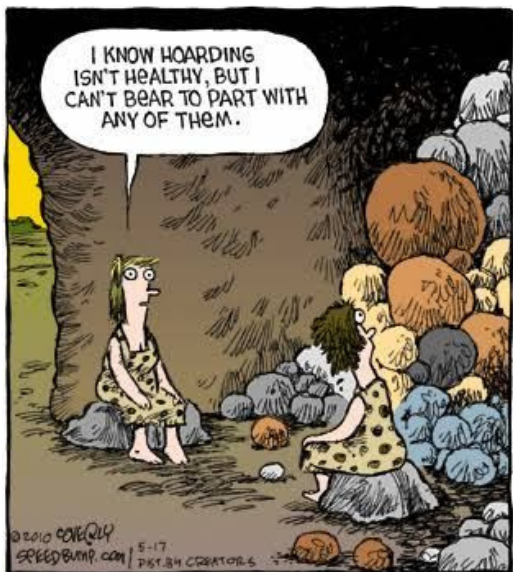
She also informed the Board that she received a report from USF regarding the club's Endowment Fund that was set up many years ago to provide scholarships for geology students.
It was suggested that we ask the students that are awarded the scholarship funds to present a program for our club. That will be addressed later in the year, after the pandemic restrictions loosen.

President Birx stated she had been informed by the Weeki Wachee Senior Center Board that there is no alcohol allowed on the premises. This includes anyone renting the venue for a celebration.

Michael Steverson stated that he would be re-doing and updating the club's flyers and handouts.

Our next Board meeting will be on 3/16 at 6:30pm, on ZOOM.
VP Mark Moore made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Roberta Oldread seconded, passed.
The meeting ended at 8:11pm.

Respectfully submitted by Secretary Melodye Steverson



We'll be on our way in no time Agnes
You unload the rocks and I'll change the tire

by Bill Mittlebeeler via Dust & Grit 2/00
via Golden Spike News 4/00



From The Editor

Hello to all Withlacoochee Rockhounds

It is I, your friendly neighborhood editor again.

As you may have seen, *Bench Tips* is back! I was able to get updates from Brad Smith in time for this month's newsletter. So, look for it each month now.

If you would like to place a business card ad in the newsletter, please feel free to contact me, and we'll get you added to next available issue.

Additionally, if any of you have not received your newsletter or are not receiving my e-mail blasts (meetings, rock sales, etc.), *please* check your spam folder. If you still are not receiving them, please contact me and let's make sure I have your correct e-mail address.

As noted in last month's Rock Talk, I have created for the club a Google My Business account. Doing this, when someone searches for "lapidary clubs near me", or "rockhounds near me", we will come up in their search. Now that this is live, if you would, please search for "Withlacoochee Rockhounds", and when you see our listing to the right side of the page in Google, please use the "Write a Review" link and give the club a good review. It helps with search engine results. Which means more people find us, and we hopefully acquire new members. It's a win-win!

Also remember, we now have a GoogleVoice Phone number. It will ring to a voicemail, and selected club members will respond to the voicemails. This is another way for people to find out about us.

That phone number is 352.587.2714. I have it on the website and it will be on other areas soon.

Our club is being updated and getting better every day, so it's about time we updated our logo / mascot. If you have any ideas for a new one, please let it be known. Draw it out, or get with someone who can draw it for you, and bring it to our meeting. If you can't make a meeting, let a Board member know and we'll pick it up from you to add to the entries.

There isn't a deadline right now, but we need a new illustration representing our club as soon as possible. The "artist" selected will be presented with a very special collectible rock!

Our Board would like our members to come up with suggestions for Programs to be presented at our monthly meetings. What would you like to see? What would you like to learn? What would you like to know? Is there something you'd like to teach or present? You can help our club expand it's educational repertoire. We'd love to hear from you all.

Contact any Board member or bring your written suggestions to a meeting.

Rock On!!!

Warning to Withlacoochee Rockhound Members

During the last several months, illicit requests have been sent to members of various clubs in the US, including the Withlacoochee Rockhounds, asking members to purchase gift cards that would be used as donations to various organizations.

These are SCAMS.

Be advised that our club has never and will never ask members to buy gift cards or provide any form of monetary funds to anyone or any organization by phone call, email, or any other method of communication.