Worth the Trip: Llano, Texas

by: Emie Steward

Photo from Wikipedia

The Texas hill country is always worth the trip for its gorgeous scenery, art galleries, and great food. If you are a gold-panning enthusiast, consider visiting Llano for its annual Golden Gem and Knap-in Rendezvous on September 28 – 30. During my recent visit, I spoke with one of the sponsors, Frank Rowell of the Enchanted Rocks and Jewelry Shop in Llano (also worth a visit for all kinds of rough, and his shop is only a short distance from a road cut where you can easily collect your own llanite—just ask him for directions). Frank said that the rendezvous is great family fun for all ages. This year they plan to have several re-enactments of gold mining, including equipment in the river, plus people in period costumes. There will also be flint knappers making arrowheads, and a metal detector competition. If you participate in the Texas Gold Panning Championship, you’ll get to compete for prizes based upon the gold you find. Frank told me that people are still finding gold in the rivers around Llano. Visit the website at [www.llanochamber.com/rendezvous](http://www.llanochamber.com/rendezvous) for more information.

Llanite, a rare type of brown granite with sky blue crystals and rusty-pink feldspar, is found nowhere else in the world except in Llano County. Llanite can be found along a highway cut nine miles north of Llano on Texas 16. The largest piece of polished Llanite in the world can be seen at the Badu House, Llano’s historic inn.

Volunteers needed

One month to go till our Annual Show. We need help! Volunteer sign-up sheets will be posted at the front table and I encourage each and every member to consider what you can do to help your club and the show.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

| AUGUST | Show meeting |
| SEPTEMBER | South Central Federation Tape |
| OCTOBER | Auction |
| NOVEMBER | Charles Finsley |
| DECEMBER | Florescence |

Club Notes by Dale Miller, member

**August Program**
August is the Show Meeting

**September Program**
Tape from the South Central Federation

**October Program**
Our 50th anniversary!! And our annual Action
Just a Thought from your President for August
by Rick Litsinger, President AGMC

Showtime is getting close. Our August meeting is “all show”. So it is most important that all members attend. For those who are new to our club, our show is the number one fund raising activity. It pays our taxes and if anything is left over goes into the general fund to help pay the other bills. We need all members to “talk up” the show at work, with friends and neighbors, and help with show preparations as needed. And there are plenty of those. If you have taken a class or have an expertise we would like you to show it off in a show case. Forms are on the president’s table. We need members to enter into competition such as silversmithing, faceting, and chain making. This is also the annual South Central Federation conference and the annual meeting of the Rolling Rock Cub. There are volunteer forms on the membership table.

The October meeting is our annual auction and our second most important fund raiser. Members donate material for the auction and then it is bid on by those attending. All are welcome. October is also going to be the clubs 50th birthday party. Nancy Leary has volunteered to chair this most important event. I am hoping for a big turnout of not only present members but past members as well. Also, October is the International Gem and Jewelry show which is the first weekend of October. Members who help cover the tables also earn the privilege to demonstrate and sell what they make. Sign up sheets will be available at the September meeting.

The 2007 directory has been published with the help of Dale Miller, Harold Hoskison, Karen Cessna and Kris Galbreath. It will be available at the August meeting. Unfortunately some names have been left off. I need to know who is not on the directory list so a addendum can be made to include those missing on the list. We currently do not have a membership chairperson. I am looking for a volunteer to fill this vital club position.

Things are going to be quite busy for the next few months and we need all the volunteer help we can get.

“Thought is the blossom; language the bud; action the fruit behind it.” Ralph Waldo Emerson

Rick Litsinger
President, Arlington Gem and Mineral Club

August Class Schedule
by Pat Vaughan

Cab Class OPEN
1st Saturday, August 4, 1-4 PM

Chainmaking OPEN
2nd Saturday, August 11, 9 AM - Noon
Instructor: Mary Owren

Glass Fusing & Enameling CLOSED
Sunday, August 12, Noon - 4 PM
Saturday, August 25, 9 AM – 1 PM
Instructor: Becky Downey

Silversmithing
Instructors: Sam Howeth/Rick Litsinger
Level 102 CLOSED
Mondays 7-10 PM

Level 201 OPEN
Wednesdays, 7-10 PM
Open to those that have completed 103

Level 301 OPEN
Fridays 7-10 PM
Open to those that have completed 202

Silversmiting Lab OPEN

Silversmithing
Instructors: Sam Howeth/Rick Litsinger
Level 102 CLOSED
Mondays 7-10 PM

Level 201 OPEN
Wednesdays, 7-10 PM
Open to those that have completed 103

Level 301 OPEN
Fridays 7-10 PM
Open to those that have completed 202

Silversmiting Lab OPEN

Silver Embossed Buttons OPEN to Silversmithing Students
Sunday, August 19, 1-4 PM
Instructor: Sam Howeth

Wax Carving Lab
Thursdays 7-9 PM

Faceting Classes will resume in September.
## August 2007
### AGMC Classes and Meeting Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sunday</th>
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|        |        |         | Silversmithing **Lab Open**  
**201 Open**  
7 - 10 pm | **Lab Open**  
Wax Carving Lab  
7p – 9p | **Lab Open**  
Silversmithing **301 OPEN**  
7 - 10 pm | **Lab Open**  
9am-Noon  
Juniors  
9a – Noon  
Cab Class  
Open 1 - 4 pm |
| 5      | 6      | 7       | 8         | 9        | 10     | 11       |
|        | Silversmithing **102 CLOSED**  
7 - 10 pm | **Regular Meeting**  
7:30:00 PM | **Lab Open**  
Silversmithing **201 Open**  
7 - 10 pm | **Lab Open**  
Wax Carving Lab  
7p – 9p | **Lab Open**  
Silversmithing **301 OPEN**  
7 - 10 pm | **Lab Open**  
9am-Noon  
**Chainmaking**  
Open 9 am – noon |
| 12     | 13     | 14      | 15        | 16       | 17     | 18       |
| Glass Fusing & Enameling  
**FULL**  
Noon – 4p | Silversmithing **102 CLOSED**  
7 - 10 pm | **Lab Open**  
Silversmithing **201 Open**  
7 - 10 pm | **Lab Open**  
Wax Carving Lab  
7p – 9p | **Lab Open**  
Silversmithing **301 OPEN**  
7 - 10 pm | Silversmithing **Lab Open**  
8a – Noon  
**Lab Open**  
9am-Noon |
| 19     | 20     | 21      | 22        | 23       | 24     | 25       |
| Silver Embossed Buttons  
1p – 4p  
Open to Silversmithing Students | Silversmithing **102 CLOSED**  
7 - 10 pm | Free Tuesday  
7-9p  
for Members | **Lab Open**  
Silversmithing **201 Open**  
7 - 10 pm | **Lab Open**  
Wax Carving Lab  
7p – 9p | **Lab Open**  
Silversmithing **301 OPEN**  
7 - 10 pm  
**DEADLINE FOR SEPT. NEWSLETTER** | **Lab Open**  
9am-Noon  
Glass Fusing & Enameling  
**FULL**  
9am-1pm |
| 26     | 27     | 28      | 29        | 30       |        | 30       |
|        |        | Silversmithing **102 CLOSED**  
7 - 10 pm | **Lab Open**  
Silversmithing **201 Open**  
7 - 10 pm | **Lab Open**  
Wax Carving Lab  
7p – 9p | ***Faceting resume in September*** | **3** |
From our WebMaster:

We have a new yahoo group for the club, it is called The Gem Club. It does require you to create a free yahoo account if you do not have one but now members can post swaps, exchange tips and information, view galleries, and have access to a calendar that automatically updates major events like the monthly meetings and free Tuesdays.

Its address is http://groups.yahoo.com/group/thegemclub/

The old site www.tses.org will cease to exist as of August of 2007, which is of course this month. We will not be renewing the domain name, so please take this time to make sure all your references and computer settings are changed from tses.org to the new agemclub.org, this includes bookmarks and email addresses. This will be our primary domain name from here on out.

A PURIFIER OF SILVER
Submitted by: Sharon Perdasofpy

Malachi 3:3 says: "He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver."

This verse puzzled some women in a Bible study and they wondered what this statement meant about the character and nature of God.

One of the women offered to find out the process of refining silver and get back to the group at their next Bible study.

That week the woman called a silversmith and made an appointment to watch him at work. She didn't mention anything about the reason for her interest beyond her curiosity about the process of refining silver.

As she watched the silversmith, he held a piece of silver over the fire and let it heat up. He explained that in refining the silver, one needed to hold the silver in

(Continued on page 6)
JASPER, TEXAS
FIELD TRIP REPORT
By Brian Bowles

The DPS hosted a field trip to Jasper, Texas on Saturday, July 7. We invited the Arlington GMS, Dallas GMS, Fort Worth GMS, and the Texoma Rockhounds to join us. We also had members from the Central Texas Paleo Society and the DeRidder GMS (Louisiana) attending. Ron Ducote, our Jasper guide, brought along some members of the Pine Country Gem and Mineral Society (PCGMS) also. Everyone certainly enjoyed the trip. We had 34 attendees including Ron and his wife, Donna. Thank you for leading us, Ron and Donna.

We met at the McDonalds in Jasper at 9:00 a.m. and left at about 9:15 a.m. for the private property, about 10 miles north of Jasper, that Ron has permission to hunt. Unfortunately, this property is being sold, and we may not have access to it next year. We took advantage of this possible last opportunity to find all the petrified wood we wanted and were able to carry out in the three hours of hunting allotted us. The wood was very plentiful in the creek flowing with cool, clear, and shallow water, and the mid summer heat was tempered by the shade of numerous pine and other trees shading the creek. We went to a new creek this year and over the last several years have hunted in three creeks on this massive property. After three hours most of us were ready to quit. The walk into and out of the creek and back to our vehicles was long, so if someone carried a lot of wood from the creek repeatedly it was quite arduous. We suffered no known casualties, however. Some hunters found all the wood by surface hunting and others dug into the sand and banks of the creek. All sizes, shapes, and kinds of wood were found. We found some less plentiful palm wood too.

The following is quoted from Ron Ducote’s report to the PCGMS:
"Usually, pictures are taken after we get all of our wood, so if you don't recognize some of our members, it's because they are clean and dry."

It rained the day before and it looked like we might have to cancel the trip, but the sun came out and we had a good dose of sun and humidity. We called it quits about 1pm and again, you know a rockhound is having fun when he is wet and dirty and we had lots of happy rockhounds."

The following people attended the trip (affiliations in parentheses): Brad Tanas (DPS, DGMS); John McCraw, Jr. (DPS, DGMS); Rocky Manning (DPS); Jeannie Fulton (DPS, Texoma Rockhounds); Riley Schuth (DPS, Texoma Rockhounds); Evelyn Tyssen (DPS, DGMS); Carolyn Young (DGMS); Dave Greenburg (DGMS); Jeremy, Seth, and Pat Horvath (DGMS); Lisa and James Tirey-Butler (DGMS); Willis and Kevin Knight (AGMS); Gary and Tanner Moore (DeRidder GMS); Ron and Donna Ducote (PCGMS); Roger and Wanda Page (PCGMS); Rich Geist ((PCGMS); Tom

Picture from http://www.statefossils.com/tx/txstone.html
FOLKLORE
By Jeremy Debhros

Topaz receives its name from the Isle of Topazos, where it was first said to be found. The lore of the topaz is sometimes confused with that of the peridot, as both were once known as topaz. Most of the familiar blue topaz on the market today is actually irradiated white topaz.

Interestingly most of the lore concerning topaz involves the yellow variety, causing issue as during the medieval ages topaz was a loose term for many clear yellow stones, so it is more difficult to sort out which stone they are referring to. The soft glow of the yellow topaz was said to be masked by day but easier to observe at night, so according to legend the miners would search out the stones at dusk and mark the space to return during the daytime to collect them. Topaz was said to be a charm against sorcery and to increase the intelligence of those that wear it.

The most amusing bit of information on this stone comes from its reported ability to cool things down. It used to be believed that if one were to throw a topaz into a kettle of boiling water, it would deprive it of heat and stop it from boiling. It was supposed to cool tempers and break fevers; perhaps this is because the more common white topaz, like quartz, appeared to be permanently frozen ice to our ancestors.

Colors: Clear, Yellow, Blue, red
Region: Africa, Brazil, China, Mexico, Pakistan, Russia, and the USA
Composition: Al₂(F, OH)₂SiO₄
Hardness: 8

The woman thought about God holding us in such a hot spot; then she thought again about the verse that says: "He sits as a refiner and purifier of silver." She asked the silversmith if it was true that he had to sit there in front of the fire the whole time the silver was being refined.

The man answered that yes, he not only had to sit there holding the silver, but he had to keep his eyes on the silver the entire time it was in the fire. If the silver was left a moment too long in the flames, it would be destroyed.

The woman was silent for a moment. Then she asked the silversmith, "How do you know when the silver is fully refined?"

He smiled at her and answered "Oh, that's easy, when I see my image in it."

If today you are feeling the heat of the fire, remember that God has His eye on you and will keep watching you until He sees His image in you.

Pass this on. This very moment, someone needs to know that God is watching over them.

And, whatever they're going through, they'll be a better person in the end.

"Life is a coin. You can spend it any way you wish, but you can only spend it once."
Broom Straw Casting
As reported by: Emie Stewart

On a recent Thursday evening, several club members gathered for an informal workshop on broom straw casting. This method, which involves pouring molten metal over the previously-soaked, natural straw of a bristle broom, produces very interesting, organically-shaped castings which can then be used either as accents to pieces, or as the centerpiece itself.

The process is fairly straightforward, but should be done outside or in a well-ventilated area. First, soak a natural-bristle broom in water overnight (this is to prevent the straw from igniting when the metal is poured over it). A whisk broom works great; if the broom has a handle, you will have to cut it off. Second, secure the soaked broom in a standing position, with the ends of the bristles pointing upward, in a fire-proof container. We used c-clamps, bricks, and a metal bucket. You may want to use wire to tightly bind the bristles into a circular clump. Have another bucket of water nearby for quenching. Third, melt the metal in a crucible. We used ½ ounce of sterling and MAPP gas. (Be extremely aware of where you are pointing the torch—the flame is very hot!) Toss a bit of borax flux onto the metal as it begins to melt. Keep the entire crucible warm by circulating the flame, and do not let the metal boil. When the metal begins to spin and is molten, you are ready to pour. Keeping the flame on the pouring area of the crucible, pour all the metal into the broom straw. You will probably have a puff of smoke from the straw. Fourth, turn off the flame, and set the torch and crucible on a fire-proof surface. Fifth, remove the broom from the metal bucket and submerge it in the quenching bucket. Be careful, as the metal in the straw is still very hot. When the metal has cooled, which takes a few minutes, take the broom to a flat working surface and pick out the castings. There will usually be multiple castings. Weigh the castings to ensure that you have found all of the sterling you started with. Some may have fallen into the buckets.

To finish the castings, file away any sharp edges, pickle, and tumble with stainless steel shot. The resulting castings can be soldered to other pieces, or you can solder a bail or other connector to them to make a wearable piece of jewelry such as in the photos below.

This workshop was a result of the article written in the May issue of Lapidary Journal/Jewelry Artist Magazine. For more detailed instructions please visit their website at: http://www.lapidaryjournal.com/feature/
The Hound’s Tale Newsletter August 2007

Club Mission:
The objectives of the Arlington Gem and Mineral Club shall be to educate the public in the study of the earth sciences, lapidary arts, designer jewelry and all related fields.

Yearly Enrollment recommended donation:
Initial Adult Enrollment $35.00 (includes $5.00 badge)
Adult Renewals $30.00 per calendar year
Junior Members $3.50 per calendar year

Activities take place at:
Arlington Gem and Mineral Club
1408 Gibbins Road, Arlington, TX 76011
Phone 817-277-2286
Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 986
Arlington, TX 76004
E-mail Address:
editor@agemclub.com or
webmaster@agemclub.com
World Wide Web Home Page:
http://www.agemclub.com

Business Meeting on 1st Tuesday at 7:30 PM
Board Meeting on the last Tuesday of each month at 7 PM.

The Hound’s Tale
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Arlington Gem and Mineral Club
(formerly Texas School of Earth Sciences)
P.O. Box 986
Arlington, TX 76004
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