

ROCKHOUNDS HERALD

920 Yorktown Road, Dothan, AL 36301-4372

www.wiregrassrockhounds.com

September 2017

Streak: White

Sapphire

Mohs: 9.0

Words from...

The President

Club officers and a few club members met at our regular time and place on the 27th of August. We discussed the updated by-laws, dues, and other club business. I appreciate all the hard work the group has put in over the summer. We will have several things to discuss when our regular meetings resume on September 24th.

As announced in last month's newsletter, the club set up educational displays at Landmark Park during our summer break. The displays describe and provide examples of sedimentary, metamorphic and igneous rocks, and the geology of Alabama. The displays are in the center of the Interpretive Center next to the gift shop. They turned out really well so if you get a chance, go see them.

Don't forget, we will be having a speaker at our September meeting. Our business meeting will follow his talk. If you have collected any treasures over the summer bring them for Show & Tell. As usual, we will have potluck refreshments, so bring your favorite dish to share. Hope to see everyone on the 24th.

Pat

Upcoming Shows

SEP 22 – 24	Jacksonville Gem and Mineral Society	Jacksonville, FL
OCT 6 – 8	Gaston Gem, Mineral & Faceters Club	Dallas, NC
OCT 6 – 8	Central Florida Mineral and Gem Society	Orlando, FL
OCT 13 – 15	Huntsville Gem & Mineral Society	Huntsville, AL
OCT 20 – 22	Knoxville Gem and Mineral Society	Knoxville, TN
OCT 21 – 22	St. Lucie County Rock and Gem Club	Stuart, FL
OCT 21 – 22	Kanawha Rocke & Gem Club	Orlando, FL
NOV 4 – 5	Tampa Bay Mineral and Science Club	Plant City, FL
NOV 10 – 12	Mississippi Gulf Coast Gem & Mineral Society	Pascagoula, MS
NOV 17 – 19	Columbia Gem & Mineral Society	Columbia, SC
NOV 17 – 19	Cobb County Gem & Mineral Society	Marietta, GA
NOV 18 – 19	Gem & Mineral Society of the Palm Beaches	West Palm Beach, FL
NOV 18 – 19	Northern Virginia Mineral Club	Fairfax, VA
NOV 24 – 26	Mobile Rock & Gem Society	Mobile, AL
NOV 25 – 27	Roanoke Valley Mineral & Gem Society	Salem, VA

Jewelry Bench Tips by Brad Smith (www.BradSmithJewelry.com)

Prepping a New Crucible

A new melting dish or crucible must be given a protective coating of borax before its first use. Borax extends the life of the ceramic material. Once done, it generally does not have to be repeated. The procedure is straightforward. Heat the new melting dish to red with a large torch. You'll need plenty of heat. I use an acetylene/air Prest-O-Lite torch with a large #5 nozzle.

When the dish is hot, sprinkle in a half teaspoon of borax, let it melt, and spread it with a carbon rod over all of the interior surface of the dish. Add more borax if needed. Sometimes you will have to hold the dish at an angle to coat the sides up to the rim. And don't forget to coat the pouring spout itself.

Editor's Note: See all Brad's jewelry books at Amazon.com/author/BradfordSmith

Lapidary Polishing Compounds by Hal Sweeney

Here is a complete group of polishes for lapidary applications from inexpensive tumbler to the best quality gemstone polishes that bring up a bright, high shine of gems. For economy, dedicate a buff, lap pan or barrel to a particular polish and simply recharge with fresh polish as required to maintain effectiveness.

Cerium Oxide - The best gemstone polishing compound for most uses, a mixture of rare earth oxides rich in cerium oxide. Best with opal, agate, quartz, or obsidian, but not as effective with very soft material or stones that tend to undercut. For lap or tumbler, mix with water and apply the paste to your buff.

Micron Alumina - A 5-micron polishing powder developed for computer disks. It is the best polish for sea shells, pretty good for soft stones such as malachites and onyx, and excellent as a pre-polish in vibrator tumblers and laps, but not for rotary tumblers.

Aluminum Oxide MAX - Preferred by many to Linde A, this is a slightly faster and more economical rare earth polish that we call Miracle Atomic Polish.

Zirconium Oxide - A rare earth polish that is especially good for tumblers and laps. The most economical effective polish media. White and will not discolor gemstones.

Linde A - A tremendous favorite with gem cutters whether faceting or polishing cabs. Relatively expensive, you should consider polishing the stone then giving it a quick hit with Linde A to attain a super polish. Available as a powder to mix with water, or an emulsified cream with the consistency of hand lotion that does not separate in solution.

Oxalic Acid - Used for polishing carbonate-type onyx when mixed with another polish such as tin oxide. In a strong solution with water, it is used to clean iron stains from specimens, i.e., quartz. Mix with hot tap water by stirring in oxalic crystals until the water is supersaturated and will not dissolve any more. Crystals forming along the sides of the container indicate a saturated solution and should they this is a relatively mild acid, all precautions must be taken to keep it out of the eyes, mouth, etc.

(From "The Pseudomorph", 6/02 via "Stoney Statements", May 2004, via "Hound's Howl"- pg. 6 May 2006)

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Volume 57 Issue 5 (May 2017)

Pietra Paesina “Landscape Stone”



Ruin Marble Landscape – Unknown source

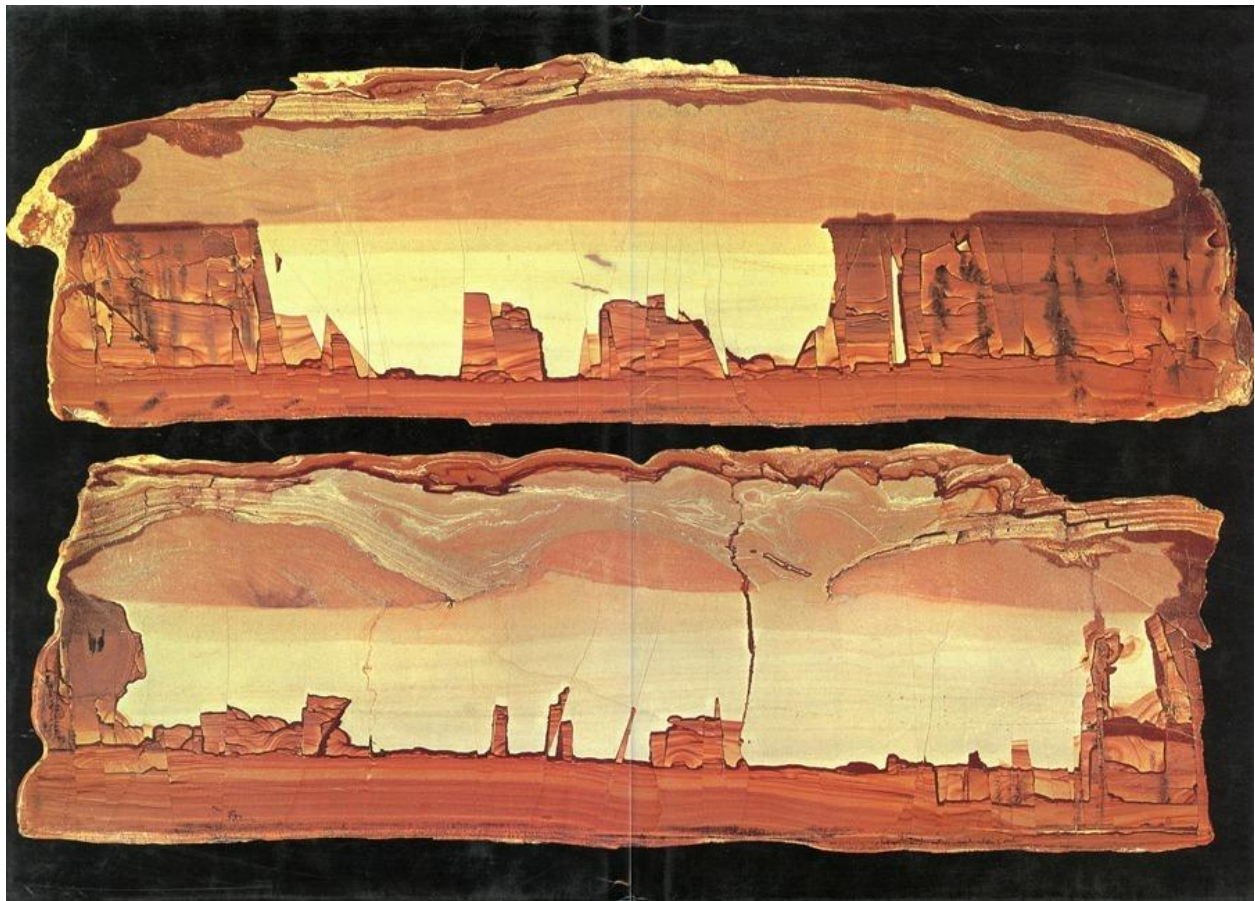
Deep within the Earth in the Northern Apennine mountains near the city of Florence, Italy and in some parts of Austria, you can find the ruins of dead cities; at least that's what Pietra Paesina looks like. Pietra Paesina or “ruin marble” is a conglomeration of silty limestone, clay and other minerals that co-mingle to form light and dark patterns that seem uncannily geometric, often giving the impression of a ruined cityscape or a mountainous landscape. Some have said it looks as though Earth has taken a snapshot of itself in rock.

The patterns likely formed during the Eocene epoch period around 40 to 50 million years ago. The geological conditions needed to create the unique images were rare. Immense pressure created by the movement of the Earth's crust fractured the limestone beds of an ancient sea that rose up when the African Plate collided with the European Plate. The fractures in the sedimentary stone were subsequently filled by iron and manganese hydroxide deposited as groundwater seeped up through still-forming minerals, mixing and aligning the stones into the picture-like images. The cracks were later sealed by the deposition of calcite crystals.

In addition to the architectural forms and patterns that have been created by the seeping liquids, small fossils and algae caught up in the stone appear to generate texture and results in more natural, eye-catching shapes, often resembling foliage or smoke. Color-wise, ruin marble tends to run the gamut from bleak grays and blacks to the brighter hues of oranges and reds where the iron and limestone come together.

Ruin marble was discovered in the 16th century, and since then has been much sought after by collectors around the world. During the Renaissance, the royal courts of the Medici viewed it as a precious ornament and had their Florentine artisans use the stone to decorate architectural elements and furniture. Sometimes the natural landscape in the stones were completed with painted figures, mythical creatures and objects. Many of these pieces have ended up in museums, which is still the best place to catch a glimpse of these “landscapes”.

Finding a specimen of Pietra Paesina where the veins look exactly like a ruined city is no easy task, because the pattern is hidden inside the rock and cannot be seen until you break it open. Outside of focusing on the areas around Florence where it is known to occur, finding a piece of ruin marble is just luck. And, if you do find a piece, by the time you’ve finished the cutting and polishing process the resulting stones tend to be fairly small; usually fitting in the palm of your hand. Nevertheless, Pietra Paesina is much in demand with collectors for everything from jewelry making to having a wondrous nature-created image displayed on a shelf. Depending on the complexity of the “scenes” within the rock, a palm-sized block of ruin marble, can be bought for anywhere between a hundred dollars to several thousands.



Scenes from a desert landscape. Photo credit: 50watts.com



A quaint village viewed from the outskirts of town. Photo credit: www.spiritrockshop.com



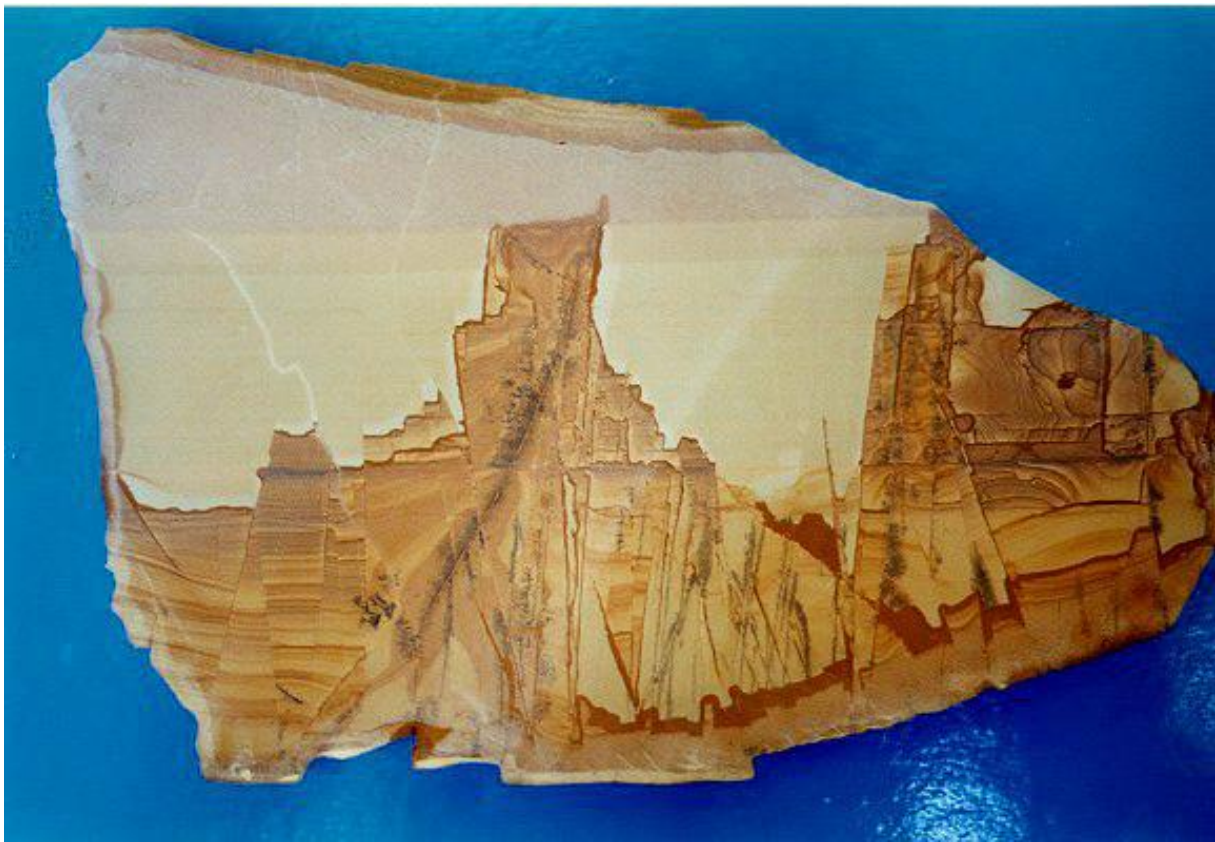
The grey polluted skyline of the Victorian industrial revolution. (Photo: [Mirtio/Public Domain](#))



A verdant valley covered with fog. Source: <https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/256634878744175656/>



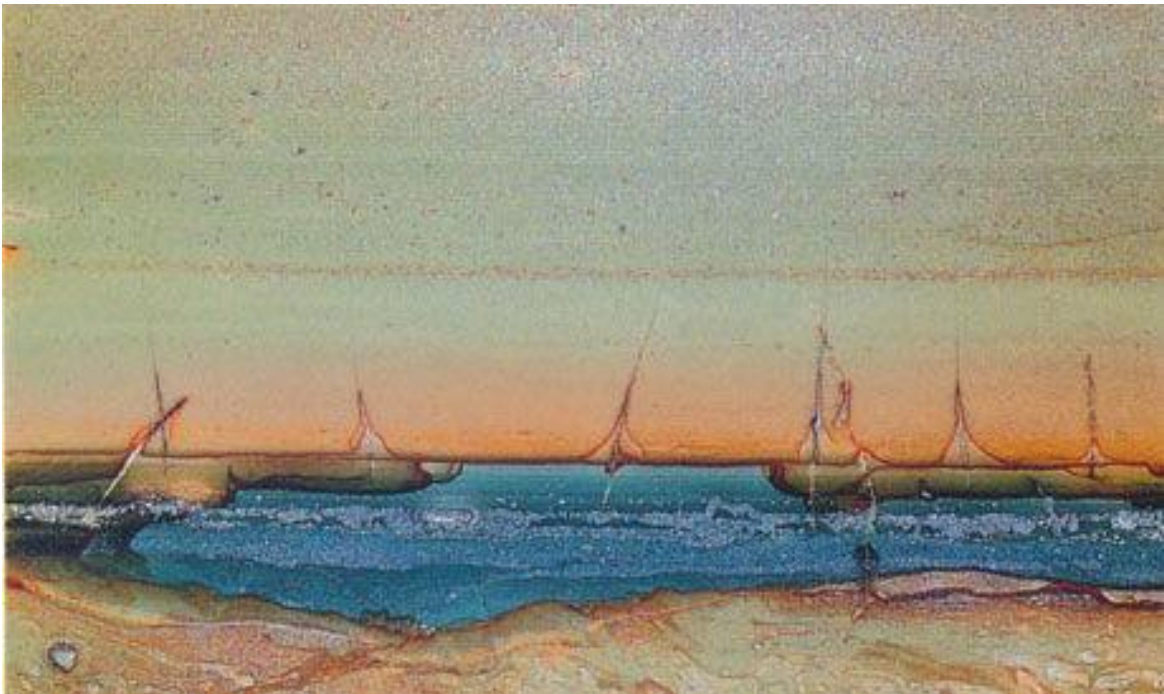
A city in flames. Photo credit: [Sailko/Wikimedia](#)



An imposing citadel. Source: <https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/256634878744175656/>



Coastal rock formations. Source: <https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/256634878744175656/>



A boat-filled harbor. Source: <https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/256634878744175656/>



An ocean. Source: <https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/256634878744175656/>



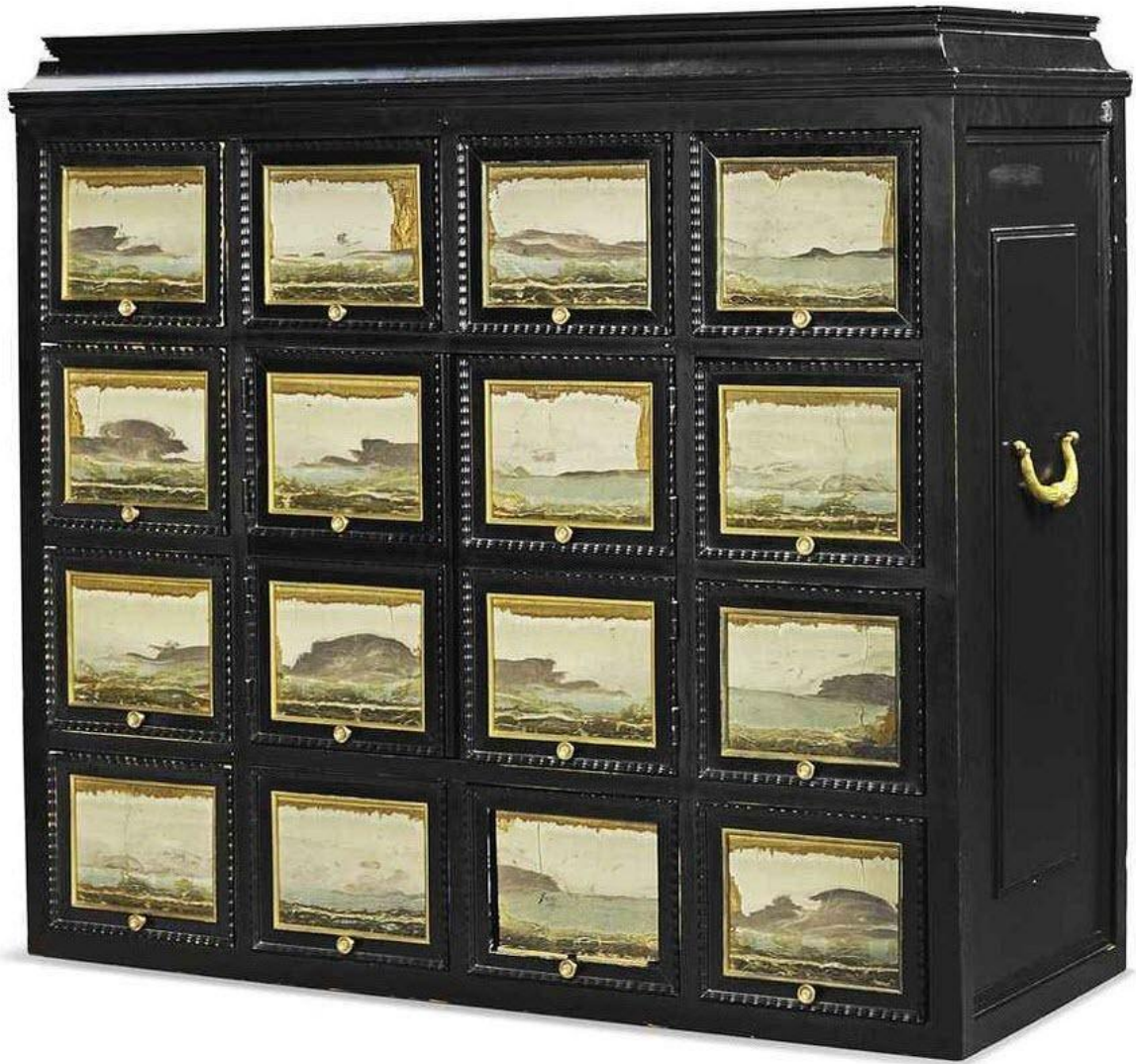
A Chinese landscape. Source: <https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/256634878744175656/>



Framed composition. Source: <https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/256634878744175656/>



Framed landscape. Source: <https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/256634878744175656/>



A 17th-18th century wooden cabinet embedded with block of ruin marble. Photo credit: www.christies.com

Sources:

<http://www.amusingplanet.com/2016/09/pietra-paesina-stones-that-resemble.html>

<http://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/the-rare-stone-whose-markings-resemble-city-skylines>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ruin_marble

<http://www.dataisnature.com/?p=2035>

<https://www.google.com/search?q=Pietra+Paesina&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwim9qGJhKPWAhWLIQKHTWgCXsQsAQIJQ&biw=1920&bih=945#imgrc=>

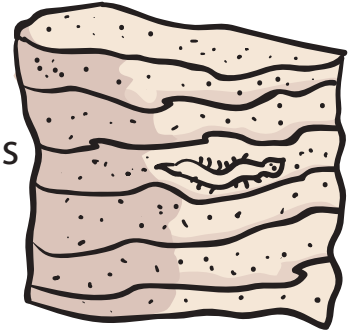
TYPES OF ROCKS

Did you know there are different types of rocks?

Sedimentary Rock

This type of rock is made out of sand, shells, pebbles and other materials. Together, these particles are "sediment". Slowly the sediment gathers up in layers. Over time it turns into rock! Fossils are usually found in this type of rock.

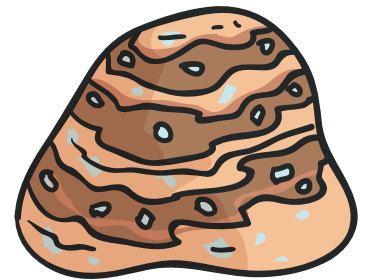
Can you think of a place where this type of rock can be found?



Metamorphic Rock

This type of rock is made beneath the surface of the earth. It has ribbon-like layers, caused by the heat. Some of these rocks have shiny crystals on them.

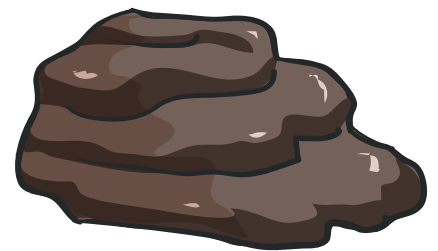
Can you think of a place where this type of rock can be found?



Igneous Rock

This type of rock is made from the lava of a volcano. Deep inside the earth, rocks are melted and become magma. When magma comes out of the volcano, it is called lava. If the lava cools quickly, it will make a smooth and shiny rock. If the lava cools slowly, it will form a rock with tiny holes and gas bubbles in it.

Can you think of a place where this type of rock can be found?



MATCH THE ROCKS

Can you identify the 3 main types of rocks?
Sedimentary, Metamorphic and Igneous

Draw a line to connect the attribute to the correct rock type.

These rocks have small, shiny, or sparkly crystals.

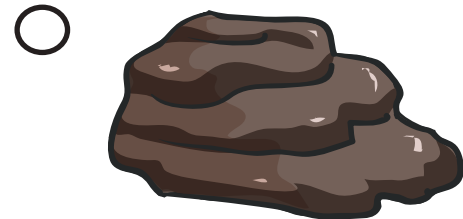
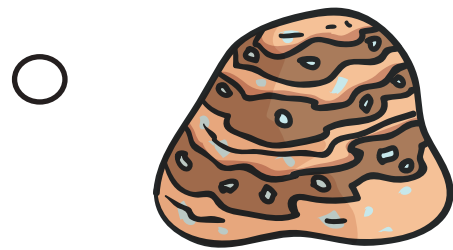
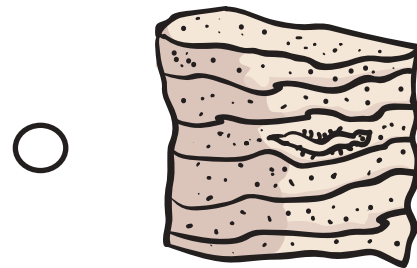
These rocks have fossils or imprints of leaves, shells or insects.

Some of these rocks may have holes like swiss cheese.

Some of these rocks are not rough but smooth and shiny like glass.

These rocks have ribbon like layers.

In these rocks you may see individual stones pebbles or sand grains.



Who What Where When Why How

September Birthdays

No current members were born in September

Random Rock Facts

Determining whether a mineral reacts when placed within a magnetic field can help in identifying it. Several minerals have a strong attraction (ferromagnetism). Several others have a weak attraction (paramagnetism), but one mineral—Bismuth—is actually repelled by a magnetic field (diamagnetism). Similarly, a single variety of one mineral generates a (weak) magnetic field of its own, that being Lodestone, a variety of Magnetite found in only a few places around the world.

After being heated, however, there are still other minerals which may be attracted to a magnetic field due to combined sulfur or oxygen ions freeing themselves from the iron contained within.

Source: <http://www.minerals.net/>

Meeting Information

Time: 2:00 PM
Date: Fourth Sunday of each month (except June, July and August)
Place: Fellowship Hall – Tabernacle United Methodist Church
4205 S. Brannon Stand Road
Dothan, AL

Officers

President – Pat LeDuc
334-806-5626

Vice President – Garry Shirah
334-671-4192

Secretary – Bruce Fizzell
334-577-4353

Treasurer – Diane Rodenhizer
334-447-3610

Bulletin Editor – Joan Blackwell
334-503-0308
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334-806-5626

Membership Chair – Diane Rodenhizer
334-447-3610

Show Chair – Jeff DeRoche
334-673-3554

Field Trips Chair – Garry Shirah
334-671-4192

Hospitality Chair – Vacant

Club Hostess – Vacant

Club Liaison – Garry Shirah
334-671-4192

Website: www.wiregrassrockhounds.com

Objectives

To stimulate interest in lapidary, earth science and, when necessary, other related fields.

To sponsor an educational program within the membership to increase the knowledge of its members in the properties, identifications and evaluations of rocks, minerals, fossils and other related subjects.

To cooperate and aid in the solution of its members' problems encountered in the Club's objectives.

To cooperate with other mineralogical and geological clubs and societies.

To arrange and conduct field trips to facilitate the collection of minerals.

To provide opportunity for exchange and exhibition of specimens and materials.

To conduct its affairs without profit and to refrain from using its assets for pecuniary benefit of any individual or group.

Classified Ads

Looking for an item to round out your rock collection?

Got a specimen, tool or handicraft for sale or trade?

Submit the pertinent details to me by the 10th of each month and your inclinations will be made known to the membership in the next bulletin.

N. J. Blackwell
28 Lakeview Trail, Apt. C
Daleville, AL 36322
Phone: 334-503-0308
Email: Tfavorite7@aol.com

Annual Dues

Single \$15
Family \$20

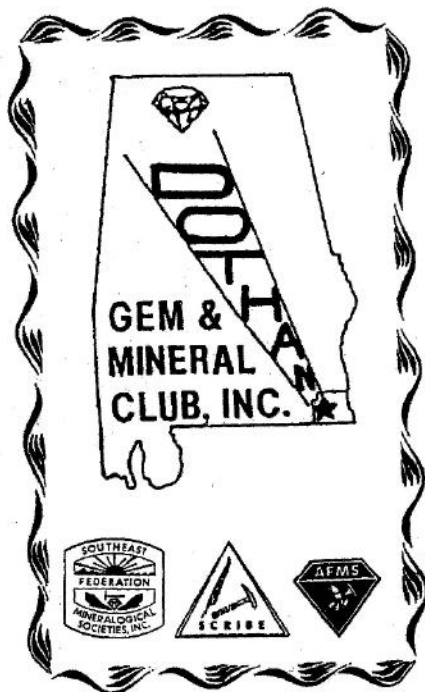
Refreshments

SEP 24 – Potluck Refreshments

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Daleville, AL 36322

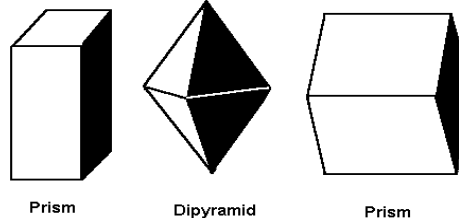
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Where you might hear...

In the orthorhombic crystal system—one of six crystal systems—there are three axes, all of which meet at 90° to each other. However, all the axes are different lengths. Orthorhombic system minerals include andalusite, celestite, chrysoberyl (including alexandrite), cordierite, iolite, danburite, zoisite, tanzanite, thulite, enstatite, hemimorphite, fibrolite/sillimanite, olivine, hypersthene, peridot, sulfur, and topaz – each of which form in one of these three basic shapes:

Orthorhombic System



Prism

Dipyramid

Prism

Source: https://www.gemsociety.org/article/mineral-habits/#The_Isometric_System
What are Crystal Systems and Mineral Habits? by Donald Clark, CSM IMG
Used with permission from Michael Martinez.

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