



Rock Talk

The Official Newsletter of the Withlacoochee Rockhounds

President's Message



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

Happy New Year!!!

I hope this year finds you in better health!

Let me start with our Gem show! It was a success!

Thanks to you (our members)! We made lots of money and had lots of fun!

We already have members excited to start on next year's show. Can you believe it? Several members have already expressed wanting to chair the committee. Can't wait to see how it works out for this year!

It is January and that means we have a party planned for our next meeting (1/12th).

We will have food from Publix and some drinks as well! (no Alcohol).

Bring a wrapped rock-related gift so you can play rock bingo!

It will be fun!!!

The meeting starts at 7 pm and it will be short so that we can party!

It is January so the means dues are due!

This year we have decided to wave the \$10.00 membership fee for the Withlacoochee Rockhound membership.

However, we have to pay the senior center a fee for using the building. That fee is \$25.00 per person over the age of 18, per year. This fee will ensure us the use of the building and any classes or clubs of your choice.

This is due Now! If you need a membership form please take one from the front table or print one from the website or newsletter!

It doesn't look like this virus is ever going to leave us. So everyone needs to take care of themselves. Let's practice good healthy standards! Remember that you are attending this meeting and every event associated with the Withlacoochee Rockhounds is at your risk and welfare.

This Month's Roundup of Stories

- President's Message
- Secretary's Report
- Gold Jewelry from Bronze Age
- British Teen Discovers Axe
- Mammoth Ivory Pendant
- Bench Tips
- 2022 Club Dues Explained

If you are not comfortable with the surroundings, please consider not coming at that time. Also if you are ill or have been around someone who is, please consider not coming.

Janice is our new VP! She is also the new program director. I know she will have lots of fun programs for us! Say Hello and offer her some of those great ideas you all have!

Lauren is a new director on our board! She has taken over the free Jewelry class once a month! Tell her your ideas on what you are interested in learning!

Let's not forget the William Holland Scholarship! We will have applications on the table!

I think I have filled you with enough thought and Joy!

**Happy New Year!
Judith Birx**

Secretary's Report

Minutes and More from Club Secretary - Melodye Steverson

Withlacoochee Rockhounds Monthly Meeting

Date 12-8-21

Minutes

The meeting was called to order by President Judith Birx at 7 pm.

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

There were no new members to recognize.

There were no guests in attendance.

Michele Evans made a motion to accept the minutes of our November meeting as printed in the newsletter, Roberta Oldread seconded. Passed by all members.

Old Business

President Birx began her announcements by re-stating that our meetings will continue to be held under CDC guidelines:

- Masks are now required, even if you are vaccinated
- We are not requiring you show us a vaccine card to enter the building
- Use of hand sanitizer is advised
- Practice social distancing
- Room will be sanitized
- Gloves recommended when handling money

The state is not requiring you to wear a mask, however, we are following the CDC guidelines.

If you are sick, please leave. Or if you were in contact with someone who has tested positive for the Corona Virus, please leave. If you are in the high-risk category, please consider not coming.

You are attending meetings and all activities associated with the Withlacoochee Rockhounds at your own risk.

Next for discussion was the Annual Holiday Party. It will be held on January 12th, starting at 7 PM. This year, our party will be catered to rather than having a pot-luck.

The Board is gathering information from various restaurants and will make a decision soon. We will be playing our Rock Bingo and we ask that any member who wants to play bring a wrapped rock-related gift so everyone can have a gift to take home.

There is a new rule this year: **If you have only one gift, it cannot be taken from you during the "Yankee Swap" portion of the bingo game.** We will go over the rules with you the night of the party.

President Birx continued the meeting by announcing that the Senior Center had raised their dues for 2022 to \$25 per member, up from \$15 per member in 2021. Rather than have our club membership go up an extra \$10 per person, the Board decided to pay our members' \$10 club fee for 2022.

Thereby, keeping your membership dues for 2022 at \$25 per member.

The Board decided that we would use some of the money we earned from the Gem Show to pay our members' dues this year to keep it from going up to \$35 each.

Board members Lynn Walters and Roberta Oldread reported on their experiences with the Gem Show and told everyone how successful it was.

Lynn Walters reported that the Vulcan Mine is still closed due to safety issues. She said hopefully it will be open in early 2022. She also said Jackson Crossroads Mine has agreed to open for a minimum of 20 people to come up and dig for amethysts. Peace River will be open soon and Graves Mountain will be open in April.

We then proceeded to the Annual Election of Officers and Board Members for 2022. Ballots were handed out and after being filled out, were collected and counted by Secretary Steverson.

Results are as follows: Judith Birx, President; Janice Wojcik, Vice President; Melodye Steverson, Secretary; Janet Wheeler, Treasurer. Board of Directors members are: Lynn Walters, Roberta Oldread, Lauren Bell, Michael Steverson, and Ralph Barber. Congratulations to all!

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Secretary Melodye Steverson.

Withlacoochee Rockhounds Board of Directors

Meeting Minutes

Date 12-21-21

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

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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

Israeli researchers find a Roman-era golden ring with an early Christian symbol for Jesus inscribed in its gemstone

Imagine the skill required to do this

The thick octagonal gold ring with its green gemstone bore the figure of the "Good Shepherd" in the form of a young shepherd boy in a tunic with a ram or sheep across his shoulders.

The ring was found among a trove of third-century Roman coins, as well as a bronze eagle figurine, bells to ward off evil spirits, pottery, and a Roman pantomimus figurine in a comic mask, the Israel Antiquities Authority said in a statement.

A red gemstone with a carving of a lyre was also found in the relatively shallow waters, as well as remains of the wooden hull of the ship, the authority said.

Caesarea was the local capital of the Roman empire in the third century, and its port was a key hub for Rome's activity, according to Helena Sokolov, a curator at the IAA's coin department who researched the Good Shepherd ring. Sokolov said that while the image exists in early Christian symbolism, representing Jesus as a caring shepherd, tending to his flock and guiding those in need, finding it on a ring was rare. The presence of such a symbol on a ring probably owned by a Roman operating in or around Caesarea made sense, given the ethnically and religiously heterogenous nature of the port in the third century, when it was one of Christianity's earliest centres.

"This was a period when Christianity was just in its beginning, but definitely growing and developing, especially in mixed cities like Caesarea," she told AFP, noting the ring itself was small, implying that it may have belonged to a woman

Alongside the Roman-era finds, IAA divers also discovered in a second wreck nearby a trove of around 560 Mamluk-era coins dating from the fourteenth century.

[Read the entire article here at France24.com](https://www.france24.com/en/middle-east/20210511-roman-gold-ring-jesus-symbol)

The ring was found among a trove of third-century Roman coins



Two 1,000-Year-Old Brooches Discovered on the U.K. Island Suggest the Presence of Female Vikings

Isle of Wo-Man?

A pair of 1,000-year-old brooches discovered on the Isle of Man have historians—and now the public—questioning the long-held belief that only male Vikings settled on the island.

The ornate oval brooches, made from bronze and embellished with silver wire, are believed to have been created around A.D. 900—950. They went on display for the first time last week at the Manx Museum in the capital city of Douglas.

The Isle of Man has a rich Viking heritage,” Allison Fox, curator of archaeology for Manx National Heritage, said in a statement. However, she noted, “This type of brooch, worn by Scandinavian women in the Viking Age and usually found in graves, has been missing so far.”

Without evidence of female presence, it has historically been theorized that when Viking ships landed on the island (which sits between Britain and Ireland in the Irish Sea) in the 800s, they carried only men.

[Read the entire article here at ArtNetNews.com](http://ArtNetNews.com)



Withlacoochee Rockhounds

Membership Form

2022

Annual Dues: Individual member, \$25.00. Under 18 years of age, \$5.00.

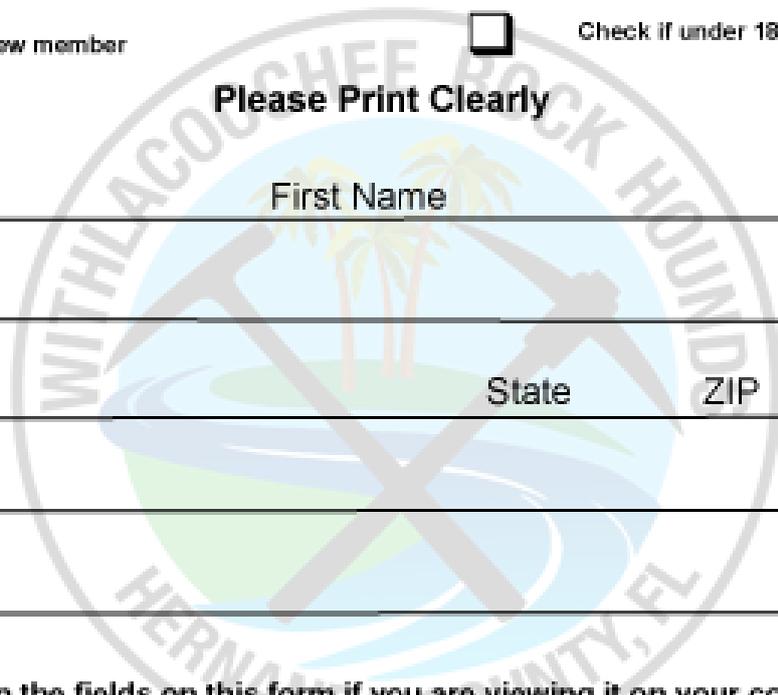
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Please Print Clearly



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First Name

Street Address:

City

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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 form.

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

2022

Moon rock collected by Apollo 17 astronauts reveals new details about lunar evolution

It's a marvelous night for a moon dance

A lunar rock brought to Earth nearly half a century ago is revealing new information about the moon's complex history.

NASA's Apollo 17 mission left the moon to return to Earth 49 years ago Tuesday (Dec. 14) and humanity hasn't been back to our natural satellite since. In a new study, researchers examined a moon rock collected by astronauts during Apollo 17. By measuring the composition of the rock, designated "troctolite 76535," scientists have found patterns that point to a 20-million-year cooling period during the moon's history, defying previous understanding of lunar evolution.

"Welson and the team chose this specific sample to work with because it is exceptionally pristine. "It has not been strongly modified by impacts during its time on the moon's surface," Nelson said. "Such pristinity is rare for lunar rocks."

The team was measuring phosphorus in the sample when they found interesting patterns of chemical variation within the rock's mineral grains, which include olivine and plagioclase minerals.

Until now, it was thought that at some point after the moon's formation it experienced a 100-million-year period of cooling. But in looking at this sample, "we found that it could have taken no longer than 20 [million years] for this sample to cool to the point of complete solidification," Nelson said.

[Read the entire article here at Space.com](#)



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The board meeting started at 6:30 pm and was held via the Internet on Zoom.

President Judith Birx had distributed the meeting agenda via Email.

This meeting was to primarily discuss the upcoming Annual Holiday Party. It began with a discussion of potential restaurants for catering. Several restaurants were brought up and will be contacted for prices. The plan is to have another board meeting in the new year to finalize details.

We decided to change one rule for our Rock Bingo game. If a member has only one present, it cannot be stolen in "Yankee Swap" portion of the game.

VP Janice Wojcik reported that she is planning some very nice programs for the year.

We are getting back to our free jewelry class. Lauren Bell will be teaching in February. Pamela Gonzalez will be teaching a class on soldering metal and Melodye Steverson will be teaching stone cutting. These will be scheduled in the next month.

The Board has decided to award one scholarship to William Holland School of Lapidary Arts this year.

The gathering at Live Oak will be held February 18-20th. Booths are \$50 and members are invited.

The Board decided to call all of the members regarding the party and dues for 2022. President Birx will split up the contact list and assign portions of it to each of the Board members to call.

New Vice President Janice Wojcik asked for a new contact list including all recent new members. Michael Steverson said he would send her and all the other Board members a new list.

Lynn Walters said she sent a message to Saul Mendoza at Vulcan Mine and has not heard back from him.

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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

Your Business Card Size Ad in Rock Talk

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Please help us find advertisers for the Rock Talk and our website. The club can use the monthly income. Both the Rock Talk and our website have more exposure than only club members

Contact club treasure Janet Wheeler: ceegirl@tampabay.rr.com or send to: Withlacoochee Rockhounds, PO Box 9834, Spring Hill, FL 34811-6834

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, mineral and jewelry show.

Membership is open to anyone sharing such interests.

Dues

Dues are \$25.00 annually for adults, and \$5.00 for children under 18 years of age.

Club Meeting Location and time

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

2022 Club Officers and Appointees

President	Judith Birx	352.587.1702	judithbirx@hotmail.com
Vice President	Janice Wojcik	813.677.6263	jfwojcik@verizon.net
Secretary	Melodye Steverson	352.683.9496	melodye@designsbymelodye.com
Treasurer	Janet Wheeler	727.938.3644	ceegirl@tampabay.rr.com
Rock Talk Editor	Michael Steverson	407.376.5570	highlander56@gmail.com
Club Webmaster	Michael Steverson	407.376.5570	highlander56@gmail.com
Mailing Reporter	Janet Wheeler	727.938.3644	ceegirl@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

Judith Birx (President)	Janice Wojcik (Vice President)	Melodye Steverson (Secretary)	Janet Wheeler (Treasurer)
Roberta Oldread (2022)	Lynn Walters (2022)	Lauren Bell (2022)	Ralph Barber (Past President)



Bench Tips from Brad Smith

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

MARKING YOUR TOOLS

It makes sense to mark your tools if you ever lend them to friends or take them out to classes or workshops. Question is how to mark them permanently. For metal tools, I use a very small ball bur running fast in the Dremel or Foredom to "engrave" my initials. Other times I'll form the initials with a number of hits with a center punch.

But for hammer handles and other wooden tools, the country boy in me came back and thought "Why not make a branding iron?" If you'd like to try one, all you need is a little scrap copper or nickel about 22-24 gauge, a piece of heavy brass or copper for a base, about 6 inches of metal rod and a piece of wood for the handle.

I formed my initials from a couple 4mm strips of sheet nickel. The "S" was one piece, but the "B" was three pieces soldered together with hard. (Remember to form the letters backwards). I then soldered the letters with medium onto a piece of 1/8 inch thick brass bar to act as a heat sink. Finally, I soldered a piece of 1/8 round rod on the back of the brass bar as a shaft to join to a wooden handle.



NO SCRATCH VISE JAWS

If your bench vise has replaceable jaws, there is a simple modification to customize it for bending sheet metal and holding jewelry pieces without worrying about the jaws leaving scratch marks.

I make a duplicate set of jaws from high density plastic such as Nylon or Delrin. Remove the jaws and use them as a template. Cut two pieces from a 1/2 inch sheet of scrap plastic. Then clamp the steel jaw over the plastic and drill through the steel side and into the plastic. Finally, use a larger drill to countersink the plastic for the screw heads.

Plastic can be obtained from the scrap bin at a local plastics store, can be purchased online from Ebay, or can be repurposed from an old kitchen cutting board.



Apologies for the repeat of last month's Bench Tips. As of publishing, Brad had not sent me tips for December.

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

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

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The Board agreed to meet on January 3rd, to finalize plans for the party: caterers and number of people attending. Lynn Walters made a motion to end the meeting, seconded by Michael Steverson. Passed.

The meeting ended at 7:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Secretary Melodye Steverson

Withlacoochee Rockhounds Board of Directors

Meeting Minutes

Date 1-3-22

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

The board meeting started at 6:35 pm and was held via the Internet on Zoom.

This meeting was to finalize the plans for the Annual Holiday Party.

After much discussion of restaurants and cost, Publix was decided upon for the caterers. Secretary Steverson will contact them and order the food.

VP Janice Wojcik made a motion to set the budget at \$300, seconded by Roberta Oldread. Approved.

All Board members reported the results of their phone calls to members and it was determined that we would probably have 30-35 people at our party.

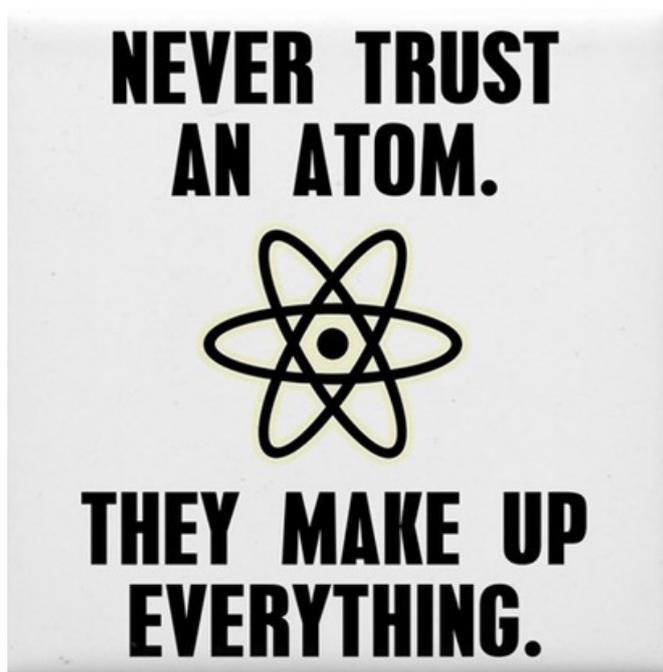
President Birx asked Secretary Steverson to bring in the application forms for William Holland School to the January meeting.

Lynn Walters made a motion to end the meeting. Seconded by Janet Wheeler. Approved.

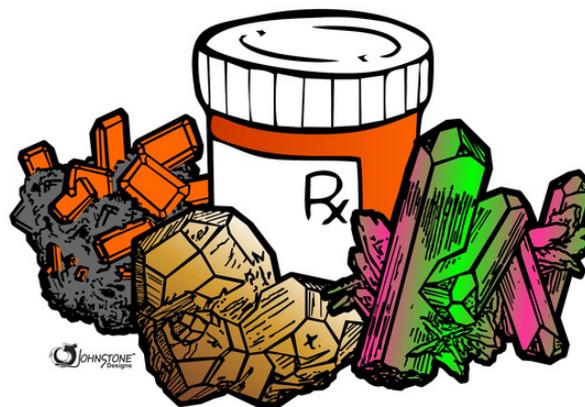
The meeting ended at 7:26 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Secretary Melodye Steverson

Rock Talk Funny Papers



**I'm not self medicating with rocks.
I have a prescription from the
Doctor at the clinic.**



Okay, so the clinic is technically a rock shop.
But the guy behind the counter had his doctorate in *Geology*
Well, fine, they called it a receipt.
Whatever.



From The Editor

Hello to all Withlacoochee Rockhounds

It is I, your friendly neighborhood editor again.

If you missed our December meeting, you missed a chance to vote for your club officers and Board of Directors. Thank you to the club members who were at the meeting. And, thank you to our new members. Nice to have you as part of the Withlacoochee Rockhounds family!

We continue to follow the latest CDC guidelines, and the CDC is advising that vaccinated AND non-vaccinated individuals wear facemasks when gathering indoors. We are wanting to keep everyone COVID-free. So, PLEASE wear your mask when you are attending our next meeting.

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 the 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. I have a few of you who unsubscribed from the mailings. I cannot add you back to the list. You have to subscribe to get back on the list. It's a permissions thing.

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 its educational repertoire. We'd love to hear from you all.

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

Rock On!!!

Club Phone Number - 352.587.2714

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.