



Tulip City Gem & Mineral Club Conglomerate

Monthly Newsletter of the TCG&MC, PO Box 2082, Holland, Michigan

December 2020

Volume 53, Edition 12

From my Rockpile

Here I am completing my first year serving as your President. Who could have imagined what I had waiting for me in the upcoming year? I am happy that together we managed to keep ourselves safe and healthy, maintained our distance, and found time to reconnect with family, friends, or activities that we have overlooked during 2020.

Speaking on the behalf of the tremendous board that provides me support and strength, we would like to wish your holiday season, regardless the one you follow, be filled with joy, peace, health, and love.

We look forward to see everyone in person during 2021!

M.B. Larson



Keep Current with the club: www.tulipcity.org or www.facebook.com/tulipcityclub/



2020 TCG&M Board

President - Michael B. Larson
mblarson300@yahoo.com

Vice President - Shari Luttkhuizen
sluttikh@oaisd.org

Secretary - Brenda Olson
brendaolson01@gmail.com

Treasurer - Kurt Brinks
kbrinks@hollandpublicschools.org

Field Trip Coordinator - Jon Mull
solace247@yahoo.com

Field Trip Coordinator - Bob Sinke
bobsinke@comcast.net

Historian - Betty Hoekstra
kbhoek@att.net

Jr. Club Coord. - Rick Smith
Hollandrsmith@gmail.com

Jr. Club Coord. - Linda Winkelmann
lindawinkelmann@att.net

Liaison - Rhonda Gehringer
rgehringer@homeofheshamrocks.org

Membership - Christine Silich
CSDS77@icloud.com

Newsletter Ed. - < open >

Social Media Coord. - Julia Sherwood
bobandjulia@accn.org

Show Coord. - Sue Goedert
sonbeams2000@yahoo.com

Social Coord. - Linda Plumert
rplumert@gmail.com

Dir. at Large - Mary Johnson
maryjohnson299@gmail.com

Dir. at Large - Randy Wake
rgwake@charter.net

Past President - C.H. Falstad
cfalstad@ameritech.net

2021 Board Election Results

Officer elections were done during the beginning of December by mail and online ballot. All officers on the ballot were elected unanimously.

The Board would like to thank everyone that took part and submitted their votes. Plans are in the process for Officer Installation during our January General Meeting on Wednesday, January 27th at 7:00 p.m.

President	Michael Larson
Vice President	Shari Luttkhuizen
Treasure	Kurt Brinks
Secretary	Brenda Olson
Newsletter Editor	(open)
Membership	Christine Silich
Juniors	Linda Winkelmann (assisting Robin Kreun)
Field Trips	Jon Mull
Liaison	Rhonda Gehringer
Social Coordinator	Linda Plumert
Historian	Betty Hoekstra
Show Chair	Sue Goedert
Social media coordinator	Julia Sherwood
Member-at-large	Mary Johnson
Member-at-large	(open)
Past president	C.H. Falstad



SPECTACULAR DISCOVERY

Early in July, Bob and Julia Sherwood sold their home on Adams Road, South Haven that many of you have visited. The buyers were a young family from near Toledo, Ohio where Julia grew up. That was bond #1. Of their 3 children, the youngest, 8 year old Finn, turns out to be a rockhound - Bond #2. After finding this new "Pebble Pup" right under our noses, we immediately became mentors.

Since this is a second home for the family, we see them mostly on weekends. One weekend during October, the doorbell rang at 10:30 on a Sunday morning. It was Finn and his older sister, wanting to ask about their Saturday finds. Yes, that is more coral, that one is a nice colorful granite, etc. were our answers. Finn asked Isabelle if she had the big one in her pouch. "Yes", and out came the wonder of a lifetime. It was a knapped long point of what appeared to be Ohio flint!

Bob, who spent his entire life of summers & weekends at Cedar Bluff on the Lake Michigan shore, had never found even an arrowhead. Their mom, Julie, took the attached photo which we forwarded to Roy Miller of Flint Ridge, OH. He confirmed our suspicion about the material being Ohio flint, expressed his opinion that the flaking was not "modern" and set the age at 3000 - 4000 years ago.



When next Tulip City holds a Show, we'd like Finn to allow us to show this find under "Guest Exhibit". Anyone who sees it will be amazed that he found it along the wave line on Lake Michigan, near South Haven.

**TCG&MC General Meeting for December has been
Cancelled**



Wednesday, 1/27/21

TCG&MC General Meeting for January will be VIRTUAL.

Tulip City Gem and Mineral Club
Via Zoom
November 18, 2020, 7:00 PM; General Meeting Minutes

7:05 PM - Call to Order - Michael Larson, president

Present: about 15 adults.

Board Reports

President-Michael Larson shared that the format would be an informal general meeting. The board officer elections email will be sent out and 26 physical mailings have been sent. Emailed ballots and mail in ballots will be sent to CH and he will do the tabulating for the officers.

Caroline Peterson asked a question regarding when will dues need to be paid. Mike Larson noted the board has voted on not charging dues for 2021 season. Caroline would like to be added to the email list. Vicki Hartung asked to be added as well. They are not getting email either.

Vice President-Shari Luttikhuizen shared she misses everyone and plans to do really exciting things when we get started again. Howard Miller library is closed until December.

Social Media-Julia Sherwood would welcome submissions for the website. Julia has the book for Chet's memorial for the library: Emily's First Agate, a children's book. The adult book is coming.

Meeting ended with members Show & Tell presentation of favorite specimens.

Meeting adjourned 8:30 pm

NO December General Meeting

On the Calendar:

12/16/20	TCG&MC General Meeting	Cancelled
1/13/21	TCG&MC Board Meeting	Virtual / ZOOM
1/27/21	TCG&MC General Meeting	Virtual / ZOOM
2/10/21	TCG&MC Board Meeting	Virtual / ZOOM

There is a current opening for a Newsletter Editor. Responsibilities include the creation of a monthly newsletter, attendance of club meetings, and a point of communications for the club.

Anyone interested in the position or in assisting in the duties, please speak with Michael B. Larson or Shari Luttikhuizen.

Open Position



MEMORIAL BOOKS

In memory of Chet Smith, two books were delivered, at the beginning of this month, to the Howard Miller Library in Zeeland for inclusion in their permanent collection. The first was ***The River Runs North: A Story of Montana Moss Agate*** by Tom Harmon. This is a standard among agate collectors. The second was a children's book, ***Emma's First Agate*** by Jim Magnuson. This story is about a young girl who wants to find an agate like her grandfather has in his collection. A good story to bring a "pebble pup" into the hobby.

Donation of a book or books in memory of deceased members is a tradition begun soon after the Club was formed. While the Club met at Herrick District Library, the contributions were made for permanent inclusion in their collection. Since we have moved our meetings to Zeeland, the books have been donated to the Howard Miller Library. You may check out any of these hobby-related books. Share this news with your friends who love rocks.

Ruizite ~ A Mineral for the Season

Ruizite is a sorosilicate mineral and it was discovered at the Christmas mine in Christmas, Arizona, in 1977. The mineral is named for discoverer Joe Ana Ruiz .

Ruizite is translucent and orange to red-brown in color with an apricot yellow streak. The mineral occurs as euhedral prisms up to 1 mm (0.039 in) or as radial clusters of acicular (needle-like) crystals.

Ruizite is found in veinlets or fracture surfaces of limestone metamorphosed into a calc-silicate assemblage. The mineral formed by retrograde metamorphism during cooling of a calc-silicate skarn assemblage in an oxidizing



Proven Tips for Sanding and Polishing Thundereggs

<https://www.rockngem.com/proven-tips-for-sanding-and-polishing-thundereggs/>

By Bob Rush

Two basic lapidary machines can be used to sand and polish thunderegg halves quickly. Both involve sanding the pieces dry.

Safety First: Because these machines create a lot of silica dust, suitable respiratory protection must be worn. Different types of respirators are available, and you must follow the instructions for each type to determine the level of protection you require.

One machine is the Richardson's Ranch high-speed sander. It is an inverted sanding disk utilizing a seven-inch diameter wheel with silicon carbide sanding disks. When using this sander, you hold the stone up on to the rapidly spinning disk and move it about to sand off the saw cutting marks and any scratches present. I don't often use this machine because my arms tire from holding the rock against the wheel, which also tends to leave circular sanding marks on the thunderegg.

My preferred machine is a horizontal shaft eight-inch diameter wheel unit. I have a three-inch wide Expando drum that I use with silicon carbide sanding belts running dry. If you sand with water, the process is slower because the water acts as a lubricant. This technique results in the rock tending to slide over the sanding belt's surface, reducing contact with the sanding surface. Sanding dry allows better contact with the grit on the belt, so the process is much quicker. Please note that there could be an issue with heat buildup, but because of the thunderegg's mass, it absorbs and distributes the heat readily, so there isn't much heat buildup. I routinely feel the stone's surface to detect any heat buildup. If it feels warm to the touch, I stop and wipe it with a wet rag until it cools down.

Be Mindful of Heat-Sensitive Materials

If you are working with slabs, this heat buildup occurs quickly due to the lesser mass of rock, so you have to monitor this heat buildup more frequently. This sanding process should not be used on heat-sensitive materials like opal or other such material. I work with many [obsidian slabs](#), which are not particularly heat-sensitive, though I don't recommend placing the hot stone directly into water to cool them off. The shock of the cold water on the hot surface could crack the material.

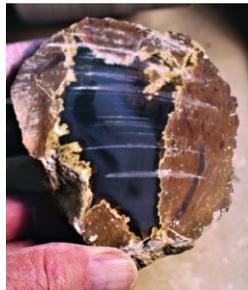
I start with a very well-worn 80 grit belt. I move the piece up and down on the belt. I don't rock it

away on the belt as I get to the edges because I want to maintain the whole surface flat. As you observe the surface, you can see it become smooth as the saw scratches are removed. This step will take about 10 minutes to complete. I only sand in one direction and reverse the stone to stay in that direction. I don't want to have a multiple-direction sanding pattern to try to see my progress. When I have removed all of the saw marks and any very small pits or fractures created by the diamonds on the saw blade, I move the next belt. The next belt is a worn 400 grit belt. The sanding direction remains the same as before. This time I'm looking for a very fine sanding appearance across the whole surface. This step should take about five minutes.

The final step is to polish the piece with cerium oxide on my twelve-inch diameter slow turning polish wheel covered with a low knap office carpet. This step will take about 15 minutes to complete.



1.-Before-sanding



2.-During-sanding



3.-finished-piece



Something New at Biggs Junction

<https://www.rockngem.com/something-new-at-biggs-junction/>

November 5, 2020

Story and Photos by Jim Landon

Biggs Junction, Oregon, is a well-known producer of some of the finest picture jasper in the world. Any Northwest rockhound who has been around for a while knows what Biggs, Blue Biggs, China Hollow, and Deschutes jaspers look like, and many have specimens gracing their collections. In the past, I've led *Rock & Gem* readers on a virtual exploration of the areas where the above varieties of jasper are found, and now I want to share with you another of my favorite locales, the Biggs triangle area.



Pile of jasper waiting to be sorted and stored for future cutting or shipping.

When cut parallel to the bedding plane the delicate pattern of lines and swirls that make this jasper unique.



In the January 2012 issue of *Rock & Gem*, I wrote about a visit our Yakima Washington club made to China Hollow, where we dug in two pits on land owned and mined by Don Hilderbrand. In the March 2015 issue of *Rock & Gem*, I wrote about Biggs jasper, Blue Biggs jasper, and Deschutes jasper, how each formed, and how to differentiate one from another. I've included a couple of photos in this article that also illustrates the differences. The area where the different jasper outcrops occur is called the Biggs triangle. The area extends from the Deschutes River's mouth — where Deschutes jasper was mined back in the day by Hoot Elkins — to Rufus Oregon, which is east of Biggs Junction, and then on to China Hollow where Don Hilderbrand has been mining jasper and agate for many years.

The jasper deposits are present at several locations where erosion from multiple flows of the Columbia River Flood Basalts has exposed the deposits within walls of canyons. One notable occurrence is in the road cut south of US Hwy 97 and south of Biggs Junction, where both classic Biggs and Blue Biggs appear. The Biggs jasper deposits at these localities formed when low lying marshes and shallow ponds were inundated and buried by pulses of lava that emanated from fissures in southeast Washington and northeast Oregon.

Looking Back at Biggs Mining History

During the rockhounding heyday of the '50s, '60s, and '70s, several active commercial mining ventures were going in the Biggs triangle area with each locality producing material that had distinctive patterning. Over the years, production at most of these localities pretty much ceased as miners and miner/rock shop owners in the area died, and landowners denied access to quarries, or deposits were mined out. For many years the only material that has made its way to market has come from old private collections, long-forgotten stashes, or production at the China Hollow locality.

Since our Yakima Washington club's trip to the area years back, I've kept in contact with Don Hilderbrand of China Hollow fame. In early May of 2020, during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in the U.S., I received a message from Don inviting me to check out a new mine being developed in the area by a man named Jay Carlson. It seems the man assumed a management position for both Don's China Hollow operation and this new locality near Rufus Oregon he named Beers Mountain. I was overjoyed for the opportunity to check out what was to me, a new locality. So pandemic or no, this was an opportunity I couldn't pass up.

Plans were set for us to get together in May 2020. On the appointed day, my wife Kerry and I piled in our pickup with our two rockhound labs Schmedley and Charles de Gaul, and headed down to Biggs Junction and then to Rufus, with face masks and hand sanitizer packed. We decided to meet at a property Jay had purchased in Rufus that he had hopes of establishing as a rock shop. Jay told me to look for a row of China Hollow decorative boulders he had placed along the boundary of his property.

The trip down to Rufus from our home in Cowiche, Washington was pretty uneventful, except for a howling wind blowing east up the Columbia River Gorge. As a results, above the Dalles Dam we saw whitecap-topped waves that defied the swift current. Driving into the Columbia River Canyon to the bridge that connects Washington with Oregon at Biggs Junction always offers a spectacular view of basalt's enormous layer cake flows that had buried the Miocene Age landscape under thousands of feet of black volcanic rock.

Rockhounding Report

When we pulled up to Jay's property, both he and Don were there. After exchanging pleasantries, we left Rufus and headed to the mine site, passing through a locked gate. The Beers Mountain Mine is on private property and access is only allowed with Jay present. After driving a short distance, we topped out at the mine where Jay had opened a small area he had been exploring. As soon as we left our vehicles, we were buffeted by the 40-plus mile-per-hour wind that rocked Mobie, my great white whale truck, back and forth. The wind turbines on the Washington side of the river were going flat out. Without governors to control their speed, they for sure would have blown themselves apart..



A piece of mine-run rough that displays the delicate banding that makes Beers Mountain jasper.

Although this locality was known to the old-timers, it had not been explored for decades. Jay took me to an area he had been working, so I could get a look at the jasper seam and the material he had been digging. There were chunks of jasper lying all over the place. The rain that had fallen in the area recently had washed the dirt off the exposed material, making it easy to spot. It was an incredible sight to behold. I was surprised to see that the jasper and agate seam at this locality was only capped by a few feet of weathered volcanic rock. At other Biggs jasper localities I've visited, hundreds of feet of tough basalt usually cover the seams, providing only cross-sections of jasper exposure, making digging access both difficult and expensive. Jay had used a CAT to remove the basalt layer down to the jasper seam. Upon contact, the jasper's surface was a dark rusty red to orange, indicating the presence of iron oxide. The actual jasper layer varied in thickness from several inches to over two feet.

Jay has been using a small track hoe to work the jasper layer. It was breaking out in chunks of varying sizes, with the larger pieces weighing several hundred pounds. Like the Biggs jasper that I have seen at other quarries in the are, the Beers Mountain material appeared as thinly banded layers of mud later buried and "cooked" by encroaching red hot basalt. What makes this jasper unique when compared to other types of Biggs is its color and delicate banding. Color wise it somewhat resembles deschutes jasper but is generally more orange. The patterning on this material is unique, however. Whereas the other types of Biggs jasper tend to have larger and more open patterns with wider bedding lines, the Beers Mountain jasper reminded me of high quality thinly banded slate. On some of the pieces, black dendrites were also showing.

There is also some evidence that after the mud had been silicified, it fractured, which shifted the patterns, and it re-healed. The nature of the mud was such that once it hardened, its fine-grained

texture matched high-end porcelain-type jaspers. Jay told me that after each day of mining, he loads the jasper dug that day into a dump truck and hauls it out of the mine to a safe location for sorting and processing. He also said the site would be reclaimed after he has finished mining.

Looking Ahead

I asked Jay what his plans were for the quarry and was happy to hear that he is planning on hosting rock clubs at China Hollow and Beers Mountain as well as having material sent to processors for creating spheres, beads, and other objects. He added that he would like to offer multiple options to clubs, such as a two-deposit one-day dig, visiting China Hollow in the morning, and Beers Mountain in the afternoon. China Hollow has two active quarries, with each having a different kind of material to collect. Another option would be to visit China Hollow one day and then Beers Mountain the second. A third option is to collect at one or the other. Jay said rock from either locality would be sold by the pound and that collectors can pay either by cash or check. He is interested in hosting club groups rather than individuals or families.



We also visited Don's home in the middle of the wheat field country between Rufus and Wasco. During this visit, we saw Don's personal collection. The spheres in his collection, made by Johnny Richardson, of Richardson's Rock Ranch, are amazing. The last stop of our visit was Don's shop in Wasco, which included the set-up of a cutting room featuring rock saws of various sizes. It looks like Don and Jay have big plans for the future.

Upon our departure, Jay and Don gave me a few chunks of the Beers Mountain material to cut when I got home. I discovered a few things when cutting it. The jasper is hard, fracture free, and has a definite texture that runs parallel to the bedding plane. When it is cut perpendicular to the bedding plane, the pattern tends to show very thin lines that resemble sheets of paper, in a repeated manner. The best pattern I found occurs when I cut parallel to the bedding plane. The pattern is much tighter than any other kinds of Biggs jasper I have worked with in the past.

Another characteristic that makes it completely different from any of the other kinds of Biggs jasper is the area in the core of the slab that is charcoal gray with a different pattern from the rest of the slab. When Don wheeled the slab out of his shop strapped to a dolly, my heart skipped a beat, and when he poured water on it, that simple act took my breath away. There was no doubt that rock was going home with me.

I plan to use a MK 1503 rock polishing kit I recently ordered to polish the slab.

To learn more and discuss a possible club trip to China Hollow, Beers Mountain, or both, Jay can be contacted at shermancountyrocks@gmail.com.

Need a Getaway ? Visit the A.E. Seaman Mineral Museum

One of North America's premier mineral museums, the A. E. Seaman Mineral Museum is nationally and internationally recognized by mineral collectors and connoisseurs. Featuring the largest public exhibit and finest collection of minerals from the Great Lakes region and the world's best collection of Michigan minerals, the museum exhibits feature the rich colors of nature's masterpieces. While visitors marvel, they learn about minerals through informative displays and discover how minerals are important in your life.

The A. E. Seaman Mineral Museum was officially founded in 1902 and it was designated as the official Mineral Museum of Michigan in 1991. It draws thousands of visitors each year to the campus of Michigan Technological University, originally founded as the Michigan College of Mines in 1885.



The City of Houghton was named after Douglass Houghton, whose lifesized oil painting from the 1870s is prominently exhibited in the main museum building. Houghton was Michigan's First State Geologist and his 1841 report sparked the first great mining rush in North America to Michigan's Keweenaw Peninsula beginning in 1845 to mine native copper first discovered by native peoples some 7,000 years ago. The museum is a repository of iconic specimens of copper and over 100 other minerals from the modern copper mining era in the western Upper Peninsula of Michigan, which ended in 1996.

The A. E. Seaman Mineral Museum relocated to a permanent newly constructed building at 1404 E. Sharon Avenue in the spring of 2011. The main museum building houses the Thomas D. Shaffner Exhibit Hall, a collection management area, a mineral conservation laboratory, and museum staff offices. Unexpectedly, the building was constructed on top of a past producing native copper mine, the Mabbs Vein.

Did you Know?

The A. E. Seaman Mineral Museum is the **unofficial Mineral Museum of the Great Lakes Region** and is the **official Mineral Museum of Michigan**. The world's best collection of Michigan minerals and outstanding specimens from the rest of Great Lakes region. These and minerals from around the world are on exhibit.

The University of Michigan mineral collection is held by the museum under the Michigan Mineral Alliance. The world-record holding 19-ton native copper vein is on exhibit in the Copper Pavilion.

Source: <https://museum.mtu.edu/>



Advertising rates for club members are: \$5 for business card size, \$10 for $\frac{1}{4}$ page, \$15 for $\frac{1}{2}$ page, \$30 for full page. non-member rates are double. Make check payable To: TCG&M with ad copy to Editor.

Tulip City Conglomerate
 c/o Tulip City Gem & Mineral Club
 P.O. Box 2082
 Holland, MI 49424



Our club is a non-profit organization sponsored by the Holland Recreation Department. It is a member of the Midwest Federation and the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies. The general purpose of this club is to develop interest in and increased knowledge of minerals, rocks, gems, fossils, and the lapidary arts. The objectives of this club shall be promoted whenever possible, through family participation.

Meetings are held monthly on the last Wednesday of the month at the Howard Miller Community Center, 14 S. Church Street, Zeeland, MI at 7pm, unless announced otherwise in the **TULIP CITY CONGLOMERATE**.

Junior Club welcomes young rockhounds and meets separately during the meeting. To become a member, complete the form at www.tulipcity.org

