

December 2020

Volume 57, No. 1 Page 1

### President's Message:

At long last, after umpteen long months, 2020 is stumbling to the end. Or maybe it just seems that long. I don't know about you, but I can't even remember where I was or what I was doing this past January.

Not everything was a negative this year. We did welcome some new members in spite of not having meetings, and the cab and silver classes have continued, albeit with necessary precautions. We received a nice donation of wire magazines from wire artist Suzanne Boschen, who formerly worked at the old Pier. Contact Dave Watson if you are interested in a wire class. Other donations and purchases have kept us in the black (at least so far). We learned how to conduct board meetings on Zoom and installed a new slate of officers. Termites were discovered in the breezeway and promptly dispatched by the termite technician. Susan Biel has assumed the position of newsletter editor and the Rock-a-Gram is looking better than ever.

The new year should bring more new faces to the club. Our VP, Rick Bunton, has been working with the education coordinator at the Morean Art Center to offer cab classes through the center. These classes will be held in our cab shop, which means the new students will be joining join the club. Pat, Rick, and Larry Murray will be handling the classes. In preparation for this – and also because it's been needed for some time – Rick and Pat have been working in the cab shop, cleaning and relocating machines, and there are plans to repaint. (That said, they could always use help, so contact them to find out when, where, and what they'd like help with.)

I am cautiously optimistic about the year to come. Hopefully things will regain a semblance of normality...whatever that means. I was thinking that we might be able to resume our meetings next month, but as the Covid numbers continue to go up, that won't be happening, so we continue on indefinite hold.

Meanwhile, since we have been able to hold board meetings on Zoom, the idea of holding general meetings on Zoom is being floated. We'd like to know what you think of this idea. Please see [Page 3](#) regarding this.

Finally, if you haven't paid your dues for this year, please do so. Even though we aren't able to hold meetings, the bills still have to be paid.

I wish all of you a peaceful holiday.

Julia Larson

## Officers, Directors and Appointed Positions for 2020-2021

**EMAIL FOR THE FOLLOWING, UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED IS: SGAMS2020@GMAIL.COM**

Julia Larson, President 727-410-3781	Richard Bunton, Vice President 570-592-6562
Gerri Groves, Recording Secretary 727-656-0322	Patricia Church, Treasurer 941-718-0664
Susan Biel, Corresponding Secretary 315-380-7037 Email: peecheene8@gmail.com	Kelly Nolen, 3 Year Director 440-953-8711 OR 440-346-8705 (no text)
Breta McGuire, 2 Year Director 727-744-7344 (PLEASE LEAVE A MESSAGE FOR A CALL BACK)	Irene Muench, 1 Year Director 727-421-5832
Sherry Staley, 1 Year Director 727-480-6730	Bill (William) Schmidt, Facilities 727-657-0998 and Show Chair
Donna Sapp, Membership 727-420-0383 Email: DSapp43@yahoo.com	JoAnn Knoss, Dinner Committee 727-238-8345
Debra Bremer, Webmaster 727-298-0061 Email: bremerlapslary@yahoo.com	Susan Biel, Editor, Rock-A-Gram 315-380-7037 Email: peecheene8@gmail.com

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**Until We Meet Again — Let's ZOOM!****Please respond to a Poll**

If you would be interested in participating in a Zoom meeting on our regular third Thursday, **please send a quick email to: [sgams2020@gmail.com](mailto:sgams2020@gmail.com)**

and let us know either, "**yes**" or "**no**", then stay tuned for further developments. The Zoom program is free to download on your device and all it takes is a click on an email link to join the meeting.

**SUNCOAST GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY, BOARD OF DIRECTORS****MEETING MINUTES**

NOVEMBER 05, 2020

The meeting was called to order by President Julia Larson at 7:30 p.m.

Board members present were President Julia Larson, Breta McGuire, Susan Biel, Sherry Staley, Rick Bunton, Kelly Nolen, and Gerri Groves. Also attending were Pat Davis, JoAnn Krauss, Bill Schmidt, and Darell Groves.

Membership- a discussion of how to handle the dues for this year were discussed and the board wanted to change the through date. A motion was made by Rick Bunton to change through date until Dec 2022. The motion carried. Julia Larson later check in the by-laws and found we could not change unless approved by the entire club membership. She has suggested a short-term fix because of Covid 19. She has advised Donna Sapp to use the effective date (date dues were received) instead of a through date.

Building- we have Termites in the breezeway, and Julia Larson has contacted the termite company to come out and inspect. Tree limbs hanging over the fence, we need to contact a tree removal company to check this out and let us know what it would cost. Rick Bunton will call the company he has used and let us know.

Auction- we had 24 items bid on with 8 winners for a total of \$258.00

Zoom meeting for the general meeting. Susan Biel will send out an e-mail to all the members to see if anyone is interested. Zoom has a fee of \$149.00 a year for this size meeting.

Show- Pat Davis has been looking for places for the 2021-2022 show and has found a place, cost is \$2200.00 but can not have a contract until next year.

Rick Bunton has been talking to Heather at Morean about classes in lapidary arts. They do not have the equipment for this and would like to use ours. They would do all the advertising and arrange everything, we would need to have people there to teach them the proper use and care of the equipment, it would be on a Tuesday once a month.

Next meeting will be December 03, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

## NOTICES:

### DUES – DO WE OR DON'T WE?

This article is intended to clear up confusion about dues during the Covid-19 induced hiatus of club activities.

Our club fiscal year runs from July 1st through June 30 with monthly meetings (no meetings are held from June through August). According to the by-laws, dues are due by September 1, with a “grace” period through December 31. After the grace period ends on December 31, the individual or family membership is considered suspended (i.e., not in good standing). The member/family will be in suspended status through December 31 of the following year. No news-letter will be sent to those in suspended status, their membership card is no longer valid, and they are not permitted to attend classes or use club equipment. Payment of dues during this period will return the member/family to good standing. If dues are not paid by the end of the following December, the member/family is dropped from the club roster and would need to complete a new Application for Membership.

A number of new memberships are received during or shortly after the annual show in March. This year was no exception. Questions inevitably arise when new members pay in March, then receive notice that dues are again due six months later. While it may cause unhappiness and confusion, this policy is according to the By-Laws and cannot be changed without amending the by-laws.

Through the years various boards have struggled with how to handle this situation. This year the Covid pandemic has further complicated things because the club is closed. We have been unable to hold meetings, although access to the shop and classes are available on a limited basis.

Club expenses – utilities, insurance, property tax, etc. – must continue to be paid whether or not the club is open. Class fees cover some, but certainly not all, of the specific expenses incurred by the class. As of 2021, club income will be severely reduced and we will need everyone's dues to help meet the expenses.

### **MARCH SHOW – A “NO-SHOW”**

Suncoast Gem & Mineral Society will not host a show in March 2021. After much deliberation, the Board agreed we could not guarantee a safe environment for members, vendors or the public. The vendors from this year's show were notified so they could make their plans accordingly.

While a location for the 2022 show has tentatively been identified, the venue has been closed during the pandemic so we have been unable to negotiate a contract. As soon as the location has been reopened, we will make every effort to secure it for our usual time slot, the first full weekend in March.

Julia Larson, President

## FUN FACTS—ABOUT CRYSTALS:

- ◆ It's all about the rhythm: Crystals are repeating, three-dimensional arrangements of atoms, ions, or molecules.
- ◆ Almost any solid material can crystallize—even DNA.
- ◆ The oldest known pieces of our planet's surface are 4.4-billion-year-old zircon crystals from the Jack Hills of western Australia.
- ◆ The center of the earth was once thought to be a single, 1,500-mile-wide iron crystal. Seismic studies now show that the inner core is not a single solid but perhaps an aggregate of smaller crystals.
- ◆ Tiny silicate crystals, which need high temperatures to form, have been found inside icy comets from the solar system's distant, chilly edges. Powerful flares from the sun may have provided the necessary heat.
- ◆ In Chihuahua, Mexico, a limestone cavern 1,000 feet below the surface contains the largest crystals in the world: glittering gypsum formations up to 6 feet in diameter and 36 feet long, weighing as much as 55 tons. ----->
- ◆ Are the streets of New York paved with gold? No, but the bedrock schist beneath them is studded with opal, beryl, chrysoberyl, garnet, and three kinds of tourmaline.



- ◆ In 1885 a garnet weighing nearly 10 pounds was discovered beneath 35th Street near Broadway, close to today's Macy's store. According to urban lore, it was unearthed either during subway construction or by a laborer digging a sewer; cheaper by the pound: The so-called Subway Garnet was sold within a day, reportedly for \$100—just \$2,300 in today's dollars.
- ◆ The unit of measure for gemstones had humble beginnings. "Carat" comes from the Greek keration, or "carob bean," which was used as a standard for weighing small quantities. It is equivalent to 200 milligrams, or about 0.007 ounce..
- ◆ The Cullinan diamond is the largest known gem diamond—or, actually, was. It weighed 3,106 carats, or nearly a pound and a half, when it was discovered in South Africa in 1905, but it has since been cut into more than 100 stones; all flawless, they are now part of the British Regalia. The largest, a 530-carat behemoth, is set in one of the British royal scepters.





### Partnering with the Morean Arts Center:

SGAMS Vice President, Rick Bunton came up with a grand idea while he was taking classes at the Morean Art Center, and noticed that they did not offer any classes or workshops for Lapidary. He spoke to Heather Petersen, their Director of Education and they came up with a plan to offer Membership and a Workshop to Morean Arts Center members.

The first workshop, run by Pat Davis and Rick Bunton, was held on December 14th, with four participants who learned how to make a cabochon. There are plans to hold another workshop in February. For more information, click on this link: <https://bit.ly/3acfnkS>



## Gem of the Month: DECEMBER – TURQUOISE, ZIRCON, TANZANITE

December is a month with THREE gemstones associated with it, Turquoise being the “Traditional” one, while as of the early 1900’s, the National Association of Jewelers published their list of “Modern Birthstones” and Blue Zircon and Tanzanite are also now recognized as this month’s gems.



Blue Zircon is the more popular of the stones. Naturally occurring (not to be confused with Cubic Zirconium), it has been prized since ancient times. Hindu poets tell of the Kalpa Tree, the ultimate gift to the gods, which was a glowing tree covered with gemstone fruit with leaves of zircon. Zircon is found Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Myanmar, Australia, and other countries but the best blue zircon is found in Cambodia.

### AUCTION NEWS:

After receiving some feed back on the Betterworld club auctions, I have decided to give our Club FACEBOOK page a try for auctions and possibly direct sales. Although using Facebook for this would be free, there will always be a fee involved using a third party to process payment; no getting around that.

I want to thank Jerri Heer for spending hours with me doing some identification, photographing and listing of donated materials (some of which were from her) and simultaneously letting me pick her brain on the how to’s of running an auction on Facebook, from her experience with Tampa Bay Mineral & Science Club which has held several Facebook Auctions. Some background logistics need to take place first, but I will send out notification once an auction is ready to launch.

I want to give a big shout out of thanks to: Grant & Nancy Walker for a great bunch of specimens from their travels out West; Jerri for some wonderful slabs and rough, hours of help and a photography light set up and to Rick Bunton for donating a nifty tabletop tripod that sure beats shaky phone photography!

So, look to the New Year for a new auction and until then, Happy Holidays!

~ Susan Biel



## Helpful Links:

American Federation of Mineralogical Societies web site is at: <http://www.amfed.org>

American Lands Access Association: [www.amlands.org](http://www.amlands.org)

Southeast Federation of Mineralogical Societies Website at: <http://www.amfed.org/sfms>

National Park Foundation: [www.nationalparks.org/explore-parks](http://www.nationalparks.org/explore-parks)

Canaveral Mineral & Gem Society: [www.canaveral-mgs.com](http://www.canaveral-mgs.com)

Central Florida Mineral & Gem Society: [www.cfmgms.org](http://www.cfmgms.org)

Imperial Bone Valley Gem, Mineral & Fossil Society: [www.bonevalley.net](http://www.bonevalley.net)

Pinellas Geological Society: [www.pgs.rocks](http://www.pgs.rocks)

Tampa Bay Fossil Club: [www.tampabayfossilclub.com](http://www.tampabayfossilclub.com)

Withlacoochee Rockhounds of Hernando County: [www.withlacoocheerockhounds.com](http://www.withlacoocheerockhounds.com)

An amazing resource is the website: <https://geology.com> — a wealth of information on geology, rocks, minerals, volcanoes, etc. ; maps, and geology products for sale.

**Our Web Site:** <http://www.sgams.com>





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Are you a member of SGAMS,  
and want to promote your business?

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### **Clubhouse Class Schedules - By Reservation Only\***

\* please see CLUBHOUSE PROTOCOL DUE TO COVID, PAGE 10

**CABBING: Tuesdays, 12 to 4 m**

Rick Bunton [ricbunton@gmail.com]

Must receive request by Sunday Evening

**Thursdays 12 to 4pm**

Larry Murray (727) 686-1314

Must receive TEXT request by Tuesday Evening

**FACETING/WIREWRAPPING: Tuesdays, 6 to 9 pm**

Dave Watson 727-541-2917 or sgams2020@gmail.com

**SILVER SMITHING: Tuesdays, 6 to 9 pm and Saturdays 1 to 5 pm**

Joe Cooper 317-775-5476 or sgams2020@gmail.com

**WAX CASTING: By Reservation, announced by Email Blast to All Members**

Joe Cooper 317-775-5476 or sgams2020@gmail.com

Rocks are records of events that took place at the time they formed. They are books. They have a different vocabulary, a different alphabet, but you learn how to read them.

~ John McPhee

**CLUBHOUSE PROTOCOL DUE TO COVID (revised 11/07/2020)**

Dear SGAMS Member

We sincerely hope that all of our members have been staying safe during this most stressful time. Due to the continuing pandemic and County guidelines for COVID-19, the SGAMS Board of Directors made the decision to provide shop time, however, to protect our members and our moderators the number of members allowed in our shops at any time has been limited.

**Cab Shop reopening guidelines.**

The Moderators emails are listed on Page 9. Interested participants must contact the Moderator by the stated deadline for the day they wish to attend. Please be advised that you must be scheduled for your shop time. If you do not receive permission from your moderator, please do not just show up, for you will be turned away. We must ensure adequate social distancing so only a few members at a time being permitted to attend the Cab Shop session. The moderators will rotate individuals so everyone gets a chance for shop time. We ask for your patience as we develop a schedule that works for everyone.

**Silver Smithing Students**

For Silver Smithing Students our rules will be similar to the above. Joe Cooper will provide two days each week Tuesday 6 pm till 9 pm and Saturday from Noon till 4 pm.; because of the limited space in the silver room, only two students will be allowed at each work sessions. Joe will send me notification of class times, and when I send the email blast, his email will be included for you to contact him directly—this also applies to Casting Classes.

Please note:

- You must wear a face covering (mask) at all times during shop time or whenever you are within 6 feet of other members.
- As always you are required to clean up all the equipment that you use.
- If you are scheduled for a shop session or class, (please, please, please,) only attend if you are feeling 100% well. If you feel the slightest bit unwell please advise your moderator and stay home. We will all thank you for protecting our moderators and fellow members.

Susan Biel

SGAMS Corresponding Secretary

peechikeene8@gmail.com

## ROCK-A-GRAM

This is the official newsletter of the SUNCOAST GEM AND MINERAL SOCIETY, INC. , 4619 69th St. N. St. Petersburg, FL 33709\*

This Society is a member of the SOUTHEAST FEDERATION OF MINERALOGICAL SOCIETIES, INC., and its parent society, the AMERICAN FEDERATION OF MINERALOGICAL SOCIETIES, INC

The general purpose of this society is to promote popular interest in education and research in the earth sciences and lapidary arts, and to cooperate with other similar organizations

~~General Meetings are held the third Thursday of each month, September through April at 7:00 p.m., at our clubhouse, 4619 69th Street North, St. Petersburg, FL. December and May meetings are special meetings and a time and place will be announced in this bulletin. The public is cordially invited to attend the general membership meetings.~~ **[NOTE FOR 2020: GENERAL MEETINGS HAVE BEEN SUSPENDED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE, DUE TO COVID-19 ]**

Dues: \$20.00 single or \$30.00 couple/family; due annually each September

**Feel free to copy any material from this bulletin, but please list all byline credits**

If you have an article or information that you would like to contribute to the Rock-A-Gram, please email it to [peechekeene8@gmail.com](mailto:peechekeene8@gmail.com) with **"FOR THE ROCK-A-GRAM"** in the subject line, by the first Thursday of the month, between September and May. Thank you! ~ Susan Biel, Editor

\*[the club no longer has a Post Office box, and now receives mail at this location]

### **Webmaster**

(Website) **Suncoast Gem & Mineral Society, Inc.**  
Debra Bremer  
Email: [bremerslapidary@yahoo.com](mailto:bremerslapidary@yahoo.com)  
Phone: (727) 298-0061  
[www.SGAMS.com](http://www.SGAMS.com)

### **Membership Committee**

(Membership)—**Suncoast Gem & Mineral Society, Inc.**  
Donna Sapp  
Email: [DSapp43@yahoo.com](mailto:DSapp43@yahoo.com)  
Phone: (727) 420-0383  
3200 74th Avenue North, St. Petersburg, FL 33702

### **Show Committee**

(Show Chair)—**Suncoast Gem & Mineral Society, Inc.**  
Bill Schmidt  
Email: [SGAMSGemShow@gmail.com](mailto:SGAMSGemShow@gmail.com)  
Phone: (727) 657-0998  
4619 69th Street North, St. Petersburg, FL

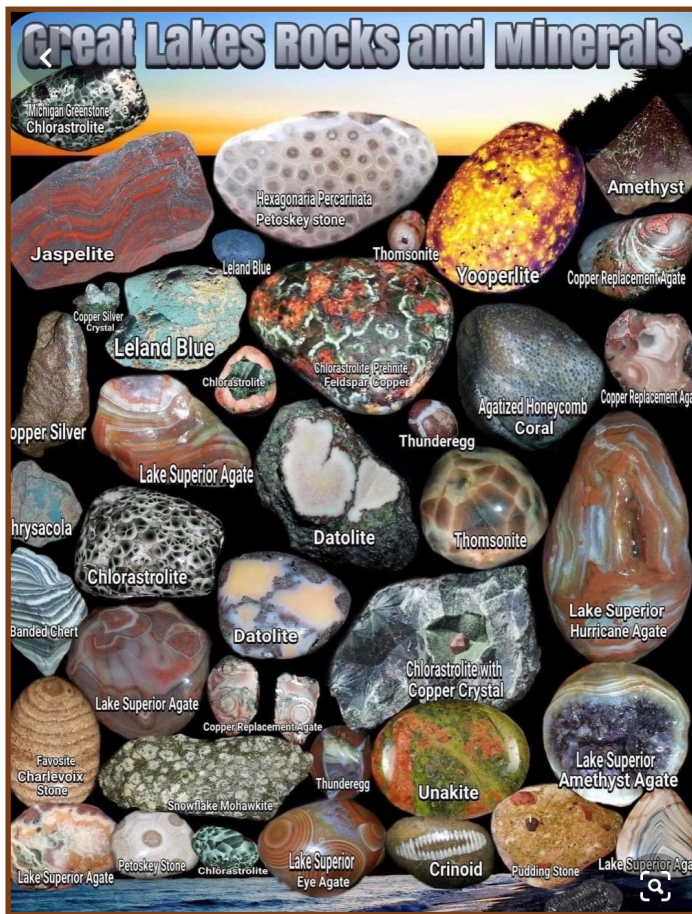
### **Facilities**

(Building Supervisor)—**Suncoast Gem & Mineral Society, Inc.**  
Bill Schmidt  
Email: [SGAMSGemShow@gmail.com](mailto:SGAMSGemShow@gmail.com)  
Phone: (727) 657-0998  
4619 69th Street North, St. Petersburg, FL

### **Dinner Committee**

(Club Dinners)—**Suncoast Gem & Mineral Society, Inc.**  
JoAnn Knoss  
Email: [sgams2020@gmail.com](mailto:sgams2020@gmail.com)  
Phone: (727) 539-6388  
4619 69th Street North, St. Petersburg, FL





## Types of Turquoise:

