



Pretoria Gem and Mineral Club

Affiliated to the Federation of Southern African Gem and Mineralogical Societies

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July 2015

Pretoria Rockhound Digest

Pretoria Gem and Mineral Club
P.O. Box 36 888
Menlo Park
Pretoria 0102

Clubhouse: no. 29, 26th St., Menlo Park
Saturdays 11:00–15:00, Thursdays 18:00– 21:00
Website: www.pgmc.co.za
Bank: ABSA Bank, Acc. No. 405 584 9839

Chairman: Bernard Strydom, 074 850 5683
bernardstrydom@gmail.com
Vice-Chairman: Willem Vorster, 076 612 4888
wcs.vorster@gmail.com

Treasurer: Jeanne Wentzel, 082 449 5450
Secretary: Elmarie Coetzee, elmariec1@gmail.com
Editor: Heidi Naudé, 072 923 2180
heidi.naude@za.bosch.com

Programme Highlights July 2015

- *** **Swop & Sell and Social** **4 July**

- *** **Club Outing: Vivo and surrounding areas** **8 - 11 July**

- *** **Silversmithing Course** **18 July**



Birthstone July - Ruby

There's no better way to demonstrate your love than by giving a Ruby in celebration of a July birthday.

Rubies arouse the senses, stir the imagination, and are said to guarantee health, wisdom, wealth and success in love. Ruby is a variety of the gem species *corundum*. It is harder than any natural gemstone except diamond, which means, a Ruby is durable enough for everyday wear.

Fine-quality ruby is extremely rare, and the color of the gem is most important to its value. The most prized colour is a medium or medium dark vivid red or slightly purplish red. If the gem is too light or has too much purple or orange, it will be called a fancy-color sapphire.

See more at:
<http://www.americangemsociety.org/july-birthstone#sthash.rTjISZu9.dpuf>

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PGMC Programme for June 2015:

(as at 28.05.2015)

Date	Event	Time	Contact Details
2 July	Silversmithing Workshop open	18:00 – 21:00	Bernard Strydom, 074 850 5683
4 July	Lapidary and Silversmithing Workshop open Swop & Sell and Social	11.00 – 15.00 11.00 – 14.00	Duty Members
8 – 11 July	Club Outing: Vivo and surrounding areas (see prev. email and also pg. 3 of this NL)		Linda Stone, 082 598 9117
11 July	Lapidary and Silversmithing Workshop open Committee Meeting	11.00 – 14.00 14.30 – 16.30	Duty Members – Short Shift Committee Members
16 July	Silversmithing Workshop open	18:00 – 21:00	Bernard Strydom, 074 850 5683
18 July	Silversmithing Course – booking essential! Lapidary Workshop open	10.00 – 15.00 11:00 – 15:00	Bernard Strydom, 074 850 5683 Duty Members
23 July	Silversmithing Workshop open	18:00 – 21:00	Bernard Strydom, 074 850 5683
25 July	Lapidary and Silversmithing Workshops open	11:00 – 15:00	Duty Members
30 July	Silversmithing Workshop open	18:00 – 21:00	Bernard Strydom, 074 850 5683

A very warm welcome to the new members who joined recently:

Ingrid & Alex Hahn, Eric & Annemie Teunen and Michelle Fraser.

May your association with the club be enjoyable, long and productive.


Duty Roster: July and August 2015

July	4	11	18	25	N/A
Open – 11:00 am	Heidi	tba	Bernard	Lex	
Duty Team	Len Botha Ada Beresford	Henry Viviers Jean Snyman	Hendrik Swanep tba	Lex Krabbend. Zelda Carey	
Close – 15:00 pm	Lex	Committee	Bernard	Lex	

August	1	8	15	22	29
Open – 11:00 am	Heidi	tba	Bernard	Lex	Hobby Booster Weekend
Duty Team	Willem Vorster Marion Blair	Will v/d Berg Karin Mayerl	Dieter Heinichen Linda Stone	Len Botha Ada Beresford	
Close – 15:00 pm	Lex	Committee	Bernard	Lex	

Please **check the dates assigned to you** and organize “**stand-ins**” for the days you might not be available. We are still looking for **additional duty volunteers (machines & admin.)**, please contact Bernard Strydom if you are willing to help. The Duty Roster 2015/2016 will be reviewed monthly; **please refer to your latest Newsletter for final Duty Team allocations.**

1. Membership Fees 2015

	R 470	Principal Members
	R 415	Pensioners (over 60's)
	R 80	per additional Family Member
	R 30	Joining Fee (new members only)

Bank transfers can be made to: Pretoria Gem & Mineral Club, ABSA Bank, account no. 405 584 9839); cash payments can be made at the club on Thursdays or Saturdays.

2. Personals



Get Well Wishes go to José Portero who is slowly recovering after he had to endure major surgery. José we are thinking of you and wish you a speedy and full recovery.



We also pray for the **daughter of Willem Vorster** (our vice-chairman), who is seriously ill and being treated in hospital. Willem, our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family during this difficult time.

Section III - Club Activities:

3. Swop & Sell & Social

The next **Swop & Sell and Social** has been scheduled for Saturday, 04.07.2015 from 11.00 onwards. Please bring your family/friends and introduce them to our hobby.

4. Silversmithing Course, 18.07.2015

The next course is scheduled for **Saturday, 18.07.2015** (10h00) at the clubhouse. Please contact Bernard Strydom regarding this course project, fee and material required. Remember to book your place in advance as space is limited.



Previous projects:



5. Club Outing Vivo and surrounding areas, 8 – 11 July 2015

It is almost time for our yearly Vivo adventure which will start at 11:00 on Wed July 8 and end on late afternoon on Sat July 11. We will all meet at the new garage at Vivo on the 8th of July from where we will take off.

Minerals to be collected include Agates, copper related minerals, Corundum, Dragon Stone, Garnets, green Quartz, Ice Land Spar, Jasper, Quartz and Unakite. We will visit Shaft 5 (the old Messine Mine), as well as the local dealers. Previous years we bought Aventurine, Jasper, Magnetite, Rhodonite, Rose Quartz, Unakite and lots more.

We will be lodging on Ari and Sannie Kruger's game farm called 'Dankbaar' which is situated near Alldays. They are kind enough to let us stay for as long as we want to. It is advisable to wear the appropriate gear since we will be covering some tough terrain. Please keep in mind that snakes are commonly found in this area. One of the sites to be visited is a mine, and according to the Mine's Act you have to wear a hard hat, a reflective jacket as well as sturdy shoes. The malaria mosquito has been detected as far as Mopani. Be sure to take precautionary measures. Please bring along a torch. 'Dankbaar' is also subjected to load shedding.

The following accommodation is also available:

Rooms: (The main house and 'jaghuis'): R200,00 pppd sharing. Children under the age of 18 are free of charge. Linen and towels will be provided. Facilities are shared.

Camping and caravanning: R75,00 pppd. Children under the age of 18 free of charge. Please remember to bring an extension cord. Bathroom facilities will be shared.

In all cases a 50% deposit is required. The balance to be paid in cash on arrival.

The following facilities are available: Braai and a fully equipped kitchen (gas stove, fridge, freezer, cutlery, crockery), a cold store, tables, and chairs.

As it has always been a custom, Sannie will supply either pap en sous / a potato dish every evening.

Directions: The coordinates are: **S** 22°37.55,6 **E** 29°22.42.0 . From Polokwane (Pietersburg) take the R 521 to Alldays. Turn right on the Bronbeek Road (This road is about 1,5km before Alldays). Be on the lookout for the 22km and 23km at the 'Ari en Sannie' sign board. Travel down this road, fenced on the one side with game fencing for 8km. When approaching the MTN tower the farm house will be visible.

Booking: Call Sannie Kruger at 071 0487 381 to book your accommodation. Please contact me afterwards to confirm the booking. I will need the names, surnames, cell numbers and booking details from you as well as those accompanying you. The information required should be sent to me via SMS only at 082 5989 117. If you have any other queries, feel free to contact me after 13: 30 on weekdays or during the day on Saturdays.

Ari and Sannie Kruger's booking details:

Bank: ABSA
Account holder: A.J. Kruger
Account number: 4074272986 (Cheque)
Branch: Pietersburg
Reference: Your name and surname

July 3,2015 is the closing date for bookings and deposit payments.

Can't wait to see you all at Dankbaar!!!

Linda Stone, Outing coordinator

A Wire Wrapper's Tale, by Llewellyn Alspach, Shawnee Gem & Mineral Society

When I first become a Rockhound I had no idea what you did with the rocks that caught your eye. Later after joining the Shawnee Gem & Mineral Society (Shawnee, Oklahoma) the rocks really came to life. There are so many different things you can do with them! I was totally fascinated and wondered what would become my niche. Our club is blessed with so many talented Rockhounds.

As the months passed I grew to love the wire wrapping that I saw and from going to various estate sales we had acquired a considerable number of lapidary equipment machines. It seemed everyone knew how to wire wrap but no one was teaching classes in it. Luckily one member of the Ada club had a beginners class I jumped on that quickly and got to attend two of his classes. I loved it!! So armed with a small amount of knowledge I started attempting to wire wrap. I also donned my sweetest smile, said please and got members of our club in Shawnee, like Bobby and Donnie, to help me with things I did not understand how to do. At the time you could still subscribe to *The Wire Artist* magazine out of Canada.

Those magazines had how to patterns and are worth their weight in gold for learning wire wrapping. But sadly are no longer being published. I learned to cut rocks, shape and tumble freeform cabs over the years so material to work with came easily to me. I haven't met a rock in any shape yet, that I cannot wrap and make it look lovely. Some folks have given me some real challenging projects to do, like oddly shaped pieces of crystal formations. I was most complimented once at a club meeting when someone ask Bobby (whom I considered the best wire wrapper in our club) to wrap something for them. He said "get Llewellyn to do it she is better at it". I felt like I had gained my crown when he said that.

Personally I like to wrap with 14kt gold filled wire because I consider what I do to be works of art. But I have also started using a lot of gold or silver coloured copper wire in projects because it is so very cheap and does not tarnish, also works very well. I am currently teaching classes to anyone who wants to learn. I have taught classed at our Shawnee club, numerous one on one classes to anyone who ask, and I teach a monthly class for two days to a group of ladies where I live. The cheaper wire is very good for teaching.

For those of you who are unfamiliar with rockhounding and the lapidary arts, I want to tell you the adventure a rock goes through on it's way to becoming a fine piece of jewellery. There are a few ways that we can come up with a rock. By far the most interesting one is to go on a field trip or a rockhounding vacation and pick it up yourself. To me that is a thrill like no other! We have walked on beaches, climbed mountains, dug huge holes in the desert, waded rivers and creeks, and even crawled in abandoned mines and caves in pursuit of a rock. The weather is never a reason not to hunt rocks, rain only makes the rocks show their true colours, snow, sleet and wind require a few more clothes, and intense heat requires more water and enhances your suntan. If you find a nice rock it is worth it all!

For those less adventurous souls, you can buy rocks at rock shows or go to an estate sales or auctions when an old rockhound dies and his family has no idea what to do with all those rocks and junk tools. We got some rocks and most of our lapidary equipment in this way. It is a bitter/sweet event that one of our own died but the fact that someone is going to appreciate his/her rocks and equipment is the sweet part. The rockhound would like that.

Ok, now you have rocks and most likely used equipment that doesn't work and has to be repaired. Most equipment built before the age of computer chips and technology are easily repaired with parts from a hardware store.

One thing we like to do is spend the month of January in Quartzsite, Arizona. The desert floor out there is covered with vendors from every country in the world selling rocks. We normally only buy rocks from far away countries that we know we will never visit, like Madagascar, Afghanistan or Africa etc. I have been guilty of chunking down \$300.00 for 100 pounds of a rock that I really want. Rocks are heavy and don't come cheap.

The good-sized rocks journey starts by being cut into slabs, or slices, about 1/4th inch thick or as thick as you desire your cab to be. Here is where the next excitement begins. You never know what shapes and colours you are going to see inside of the rock. If it is just duh, you toss it aside and get another rock. This one is filled with all kinds of colour, shapes and vugs (vugs are small cavities inside of rocks that usually contain crystals). The cutting is done on the big rock saws, 12", 18", 24" and 36" saws. All rocks are cut in oil which is an incredibly messy event.

After I decide where is the prettiest I start with my small saw cutting the slab into rough shapes containing the desirable parts. The undesirable parts are put in another container to be tumbled later to give away free to little people at the clubs county fair booth. Now I take the rough cut pieces to my diamond grinding wheels. I start with a really rough textured one to more quickly (actually nothing happens *quickly* to a rock) grind it closer to the desirable shape. From here I move to a finer textured wheel and continue to grinding it into the shape I have envisioned in my mind. I usually let the rock's personality direct me to how it would be most beautiful, I call them freeforms. Thus I come up with unusual shapes and sizes. Some say everything I make is big and gaudy, which is probably correct because I like big and gaudy.

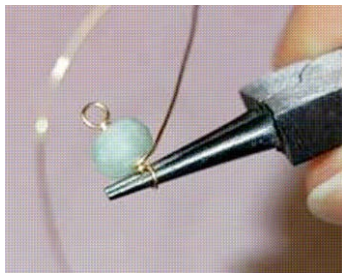
Once I have obtained the desirable shape I separate them into the hard and soft rock containers. The soft rocks must be gently polished on a diamond flat lap or soft diamond wheels, one at a time. It takes a couple hours of working with it to get one polished. I am working on mastering that technique. Once I have enough hard freeforms made they will be put into a six pound rotary tumbler with ceramic filler and a grinding grit and water. They are tumbled continuously (24/7) for at least a month in this condition. What this accomplishes is a rounding of the edges and smoothing of the flat surfaces. After a month or so we remove the contents and wash the freeforms to see how many survived this abuse. We usually lose 3-4 to breaking or undercutting. They are now in what is called a pre-polished state.

After they are thoroughly washed they are returned to the tumbler with ceramic filler and a polishing grit and water. They will remain in this for 2-3 weeks tumbling 24/7. When we finally remove them from this tumbler they are very shiny and ready to be wire wrapped. The beauty of rocks is that there are never two alike. Even slabs cut from the same rock will all vary in some manner from the other slabs. It is totally fascinating to see what the end products will look like.

Wire wrapping is as individual as the person doing it. I was taught by four different men. Each of them did it differently and I developed the way I like to do it, which is totally different from the guys. Again, I will let the shape, colour and designs in the rock guide in the wrapping. I only use wire as a means to display a lovely rock. Some wire artist like to hide the rock with wire swirls and designs, but that is not my way. I will sometimes use small beads or wires off to the side of the rock to create a balancing effect. Like I said it is all individual. The best way to get started wire wrapping is by taking a class. Some rock clubs have them, or you can invest a bit of money and get classes from professionals through web sites, www.wire-sculpture.com is one that offers classes throughout the year in various cities.

The web site for information on this offering is http://www.sfmsworkshops.com/Information_Sheet.html . Patterns and videos are available both to download and view on the internet. A pattern is definitely an asset to learning to wire wrap if you can't find a class. I just recommend reading them very carefully and doing them one small step at a time. I am willing to help anyone who heeds help or has a question if I have the knowledge to do so. My email is llewellyn53@hotmail.com. My feeling on wire wrapping is that it is not rocket science and if I can do it anyone can. Get brave, do some reading, ask people who know to show you and just make a pest of yourself like I did, and someone will teach you to get rid of you. I wish anyone who wants to learn the opportunity to join this fun creative activity. If I can be of assistance just email me and I will help you if I can.

Thanks, Llewellyn



Extract from the Exchange Newsletter of the Norfolk Mineral and Lapidary Society,
"Stone Chat" Vol. 34 No. 4 Summer 2015, Editor C. Lansdell