



# Rock Talk

The Official Newsletter of the Withlacoochee Rockhounds

## Diamond

Diamonds are one of the most precious and valuable gemstones in the world, known for their exceptional hardness, brilliance, and durability.

They are formed deep within the earth over millions of years under intense heat and pressure, and are typically found in kimberlite pipes or alluvial deposits.

The importance of diamonds lies in their widespread use across various industries. In the jewelry industry, diamonds are highly valued for their beauty and rarity, and are used to create stunning pieces of high-end jewelry.

The value of a diamond is determined by the famous "4 Cs" – carat weight, color, clarity, and cut.

Diamonds are also widely used in the industrial sector for their unique physical properties, such as their extreme hardness and thermal conductivity. They are used in cutting tools, polishing abrasives, and as heat sinks in electronic devices.

In addition to their aesthetic and industrial uses, diamonds have also played a significant role in the financial industry. Diamond trading and investment is a multi-billion dollar industry, with major diamond centers located in cities such as Antwerp, Dubai, and Mumbai.



### This Month's Roundup of Stories

- [Diamond](#)
- [Secretary's Report](#)
- [Fire Opal](#)
- [Rock Rummage Sale](#)
- [William Holland Scholarships](#)
- [Seraphinite](#)
- [Bench Tips](#)

April's Birthstone - Diamond

Overall, diamonds are highly valued and important across multiple industries, making them a crucial part of the global economy. Diamonds are formed deep within the Earth's mantle, approximately 140-190 kilometers below the Earth's surface. The formation of diamonds is a complex process that requires specific conditions of pressure, temperature, and chemical composition.

Diamonds are formed from carbon atoms that are subjected to intense heat and pressure. The high pressure is typically generated by the weight of the overlying rock and sediment, and the high temperature is caused by the Earth's internal heat.

The process of diamond formation begins when carbon-rich materials, such as organic matter or carbon dioxide, are subjected to high pressure and temperature. This causes the carbon atoms to bond together in a crystalline structure, forming diamond crystals.

Read the entire article at [GeologyScience.com](https://www.geology.com)

# Secretary's Report

*Minutes and More from Club Secretary - Melodye Steverson*

*Withlacoochee Rockhounds Monthly Meeting - Minutes  
Date 3/13/2024*

The meeting was called to order by Vice President Michael Steverson at 7:05pm.

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

There were no new members to recognize.

There were 4 guests in attendance: Chris Ward, Monica Townsend, Ahava, and Linda.

Roger Wheeler made a motion to accept the minutes of our February meeting as printed in the newsletter, Rachel Blank seconded. Passed by all members.

Treasurer Janet Wheeler gave the Treasurer's report. Carla Howell made a motion to accept the Treasurer's report subject to audit. Seconded by Janice Wojcik. Approved by all.

Vice President Steverson began by announcing the evening program; "Dangerous Rocks". The Presenter, Janice Wojcik told a bit about her program, then announced that the April program will be the 2nd Annual Rock Rummage Sale. Bring anything rock or jewelry related to sell or trade. Or just come to find some great deals. That will be at the April 10th meeting.

VP Steverson reminded all present that club dues are late at this point and should be paid immediately.

He let everyone know that most of the money goes to the Senior Center so we can meet in the clubhouse.

A member inquired about the cost to be in our Annual Gem Show and when the applications will be available.

Janice Wojcik said the applications go out to last years vendors in May. They have 30 days to return them with a deposit to secure their space. After that, applications are sent out to all other vendors that have asked for them.

Any members wishing to be in the show should get their application in as soon as they can because the show fills quickly. \$85 per table is the fee and must be paid in full 30 days before the show begins.

We also accept applications online.

Ms Wojcik stated that she and Pamela Gonzales would be teaching another Beginner Silversmith class the last weekend of April. There will be a sign up sheet at the April meeting. Any students from the last Beginner class are welcome to join this one because the class needs to be repeated at least once to help the student learn the skill. Anyone who has taken the class previously can use a different shaped stone for this one. They will not be restricted to an oval. The cost is \$25 and must be paid at sign up.

Roger Wheeler made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Rachel Blank seconded, passed by all.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:35pm.

*Minutes respectfully submitted by  
Secretary Melodye Steverson.*

*No Board of Directors meeting in  
March, so no meeting minutes*



Clubhouse Address:  
3357 Susan Dr.  
Spring Hill, FL 34606

# Fire Opal

Fire opal in your hands is like holding a brilliant red, orange or yellow treasure of Prometheus, the Titan who gave fire to mankind and changed the world forever. These beautiful orange gems still hold the power to shape lives and dazzle those who discover their alluring qualities.

Created in volcanic regions, opals, in general, require an almost alchemic scenario to form their beautiful forms and colorations. Made of hydrated silica, scientists believe when water passes through quartz-rich deposits, such as rhyolite, it creates a silica solution that finds its way into crevices between the rocks.

Over millions of years, this mineral-rich water reacts with more acidic groundwater and other minerals, such as feldspar. As this solution remains trapped within these pockets, opals form within the veins, resulting in a variety of colors depending on the additional minerals introduced during their creation.

In the formation of fire opals, iron oxide is prevalent and responsible for their fiery appearance ranging from bright reds to brilliant, lemon yellows.

“Its resemblance is of an orange sunset with that fire coming out of it,” said Austin Mattila, who co-owns the All Gems, No Wallet Mine on Juniper Mountain in Lake County Oregon with his partner, Justin Smith. “There can be dark layers of red or orange. Or there can be different hues. It’s really cool.”

Like other opals, fire opals are a mineraloid because they lack the ordered atomic structure as classified in the definition of a true mineral, although this makes no difference to those who have the privilege of working with them. They’re also considered “hydrated,” which implies water composition, and in fact, many fire opals contain between a three and 10 percent water content within their structure.

Although they do not have set crystals within them, opals certainly dazzle the eye. “People think ‘play of color’ (when they hear ‘fire opal’), but it’s actually the hue of it,” said Mattila.

And when you gaze at them under different light conditions, it’s remarkable how differently opals, particularly fire opals, reflect the light.

Yet, this makes perfect sense considering their name is derived from the Roman word “opalus” which means “to see a change of color.”

*Read the entire article at [RocknGem.com](https://www.rockngem.com)*



2nd Annual

# Rock Hound Rummage Sale!



## April 10th Withlacochee Rockhounds Meeting

Not your average Rummage Sale!

At our April 10th Monthly Meeting, it's all rocks, slabs, fossils, cabochons and jewelry for sale by all our Rockhound members.

Got awful agate, crummy chrysoprase, lousy labradorite or funky flourite collecting dust in the garage or in that big pile in the backyard?

Bring it to the meeting to sell. One man's trash is another's treasure.

Or, better yet, sell your stunning slabs, pretty pendants or fabulous fossils. Every member can sell (at any price). Every member can buy (at any price).

*Please, no old TV's. No kitchen kitsch. No old sneakers.*

**Just Rockhound treasure!**

# William Holland School of Lapidary Arts Scholarships 2024

Our club will be awarding two scholarships to worthy members in 2024. The winners will have their tuition paid for the 1-week class of their choice. This will include lodging and meals.

It will not include transportation to and from the location in Young Harris, Ga., nor will it include Lab fees and expenses for participating in the class. But you will receive a week-long, immersive experience in the craft of your choice and make wonderful memories to cherish forever!

The school opens April 1st and continues until the end of October.

If you're interested, and have been an active club member for at least 2 years, fill out an application at the April meeting and turn it in right away to any Board member.

The Board will be making a decision as soon as possible to give everyone plenty of time to choose their class.

The applications, along with the list of requirements and parameters, will be available at the front table by the door.

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## Central Florida Mineral & Gem Society, Inc Rock, Mineral, Gem, Jewelry & Fossil Show

Our friends at the Central Florida Mineral & Gem Society are having their annual gem show in April. Below is the information they provided.

Central Florida Mineral & Gem Society, Inc., a non-profit 501(C)3 educational organization is hosting a Rock, Mineral, Gem, Jewelry & Fossil Show on April 27th and 28th, 2024 at the City of Sanford Civic Center, 401 E. Seminole Blvd., Sanford, FL 32771.

Show time: Saturday 9am to 5pm and Sunday 9am to 4pm.

Vendors offering rocks, minerals, gemstones, fossils, beads, jewelry, artifacts, metaphysical stones, handcrafted cabochons, etc.

Silent auction, door prizes, demonstrations and family activities.

Admission fee: Adults \$6, Kids \$3 and Scouts in uniform free.

Website: [www.cfmgs.org](http://www.cfmgs.org).

Contact: President Salvatore Sansone 321-278-9294 or e-mail: [ssfossilhunter@aol.com](mailto:ssfossilhunter@aol.com).

If you have any questions, please e-mail or call me at 407-761-0622. Thank you.  
Betty Sumner, Secretary of Central Florida Mineral & Gem Society, Inc.

# Seraphinite

Seraphinite is a form of clinocllore, a member of the chlorite group. It is only found in the Lake Baikal region of eastern Siberia.

Seraphinite acquired its name after Seraphim, the biblical highest order of angels, because of its shimmery, feather-like appearance.

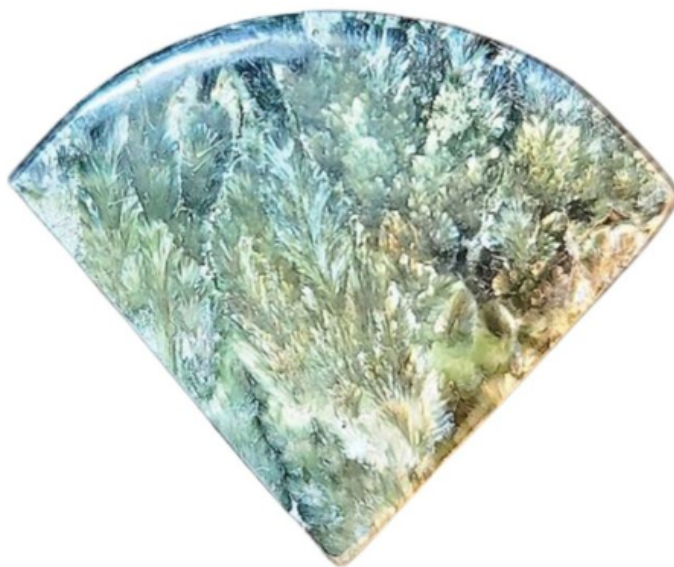
The mica inclusions give the stone wonderful chatoyancy. The inclusions grow at different lengths, the longer ones give that feather appearance. Other times you get shorter growth patterns in rows that give the mystic forest appearance. The radial growth patterns in this stone are more highly sought after and make for beautiful designs in cabochons.

Although seraphinite is getting rather scarce to find, it is still available for sale at shows and online. Most of the time you can easily see what you're getting, as the patterns will be quite visible on the outside. If you are looking for certain patterns and a higher grade, buying pre-cut slabs is the way to go. If you have never cut seraphinite before, know there are some pitfalls with this material.

It's soft and can easily break in the trimming or capping process. It also has varying hardnesses, so it can tend to undercut, as well as easily chip on the edges.

When getting started on cutting slabs, there is a general direction to cut. Most of the time you will see radial or partial radial sprays at the bottom portion of the stone. That will give you a grasp of what is top and bottom, so you can cut north to south for your slabs. This will yield the best chatoyant patterns in the stone. I would also suggest cutting your slabs a slight bit thicker than the average stone because of its softness.

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



## Field Trips

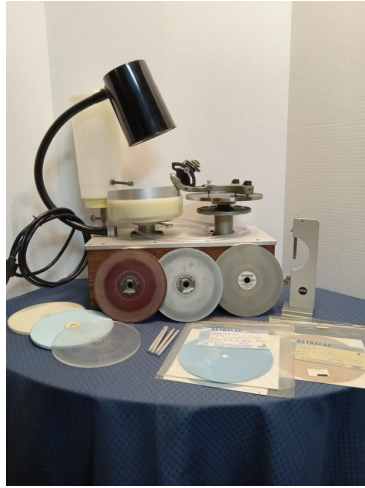
**"Note: The Withlacochee Rockhounds Club does not sponsor field trips other than trips that are sanctioned by the SFMS (The Southeast Federation of Mineralogical Societies).**

**Our club insurance is through SFMS and does not cover excursions not listed on their website as safe."**

Some items for sale by club members.  
All items are local pick up only. No shipping.



Melodye has a new, in-box  
Hi-Tech 6" rock trim saw  
for sale.  
**\$400**  
407.760.4472



Melodye has a lovingly  
restored RayTech  
faceting machine for  
sale.  
Works great.  
**\$900**  
(These normally sell for upwards  
of \$3000)  
407.760.4472



Michelle has some marble  
for sale.  
**\$25 for all the pieces.**

**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](http://www.withlacoocheerockhounds.com)

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The cost for non-club members  
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Contact Michael Steverson to set up an  
ad in both the newsletter and  
the club website. It will benefit both  
your business and our club.

**Advertisers Needed**

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 treasurer, Janet Wheeler: [ceegirl@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:ceegirl@tampabay.rr.com)  
or send to:  
Withlacoochee Rockhounds  
PO Box 5634  
Spring Hill, FL 34811-6634

**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, and workshops. PLUS, our annual gem, mineral and jewelry show.  
Membership is open to anyone sharing such interests.

Dues  
Dues are \$35.00 annually for adults, and \$5.00 for children under 18 years of age.

Club Meeting Location and Time  
Weeki Wachee Senior Citizens Center, 3375 Susan Dr in Spring Hill. Meetings are held the second Wednesday of the month at 7:00PM

**2024 Club Officers and Appointees**

President	Anthony Maffatone	352.397.7694	<a href="mailto:anthonymaffatone@gmail.com">anthonymaffatone@gmail.com</a>
Vice President	Michael Steverson	407.376.5570	<a href="mailto:highlander56@gmail.com">highlander56@gmail.com</a>
Secretary	Melodye Steverson	352.683.9496	<a href="mailto:melodye@designsbymelodye.com">melodye@designsbymelodye.com</a>
Treasurer	Janet Wheeler	727.938.3644	<a href="mailto:ceegirl@tampabay.rr.com">ceegirl@tampabay.rr.com</a>
Rock Talk Editor	Michael Steverson	407.376.5570	<a href="mailto:highlander56@gmail.com">highlander56@gmail.com</a>
Club Webmaster	Michael Steverson	407.376.5570	<a href="mailto:highlander56@gmail.com">highlander56@gmail.com</a>
Mailing Reporter	Janet Wheeler	727.938.3644	<a href="mailto:ceegirl@tampabay.rr.com">ceegirl@tampabay.rr.com</a>
Audio/Visual Coordinator	Michael Steverson	407.376.5570	<a href="mailto:highlander56@gmail.com">highlander56@gmail.com</a>

Anthony Maffatone (President)    Michael Steverson (Vice President)    Melodye Steverson (Secretary)    Janet Wheeler (Treasurer)  
 Hunter Mellring    Leslie Newberry    Roger Wheeler    James Roush (Appointed)    Ralph Barber (Past President)



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

### DRILLING A STONE

One of the things my students often ask to do is drill a hole through a piece of gemstone. The usual thought is to get a diamond drill, but I've been disappointed with them. I think the reason is that the tip of the drill is just pivoting in the hole and fails to cut well. When it looks like the drill isn't cutting, the tendency is to push with more force. The drill gets hot, and the diamond grit falls off.

A much better approach is to use a core drill. This is a small hollow tube with a coating of diamond grit at the business end. The diamonds easily carve out a circular arc without undue pressure or heat buildup.

Core drills are readily available from lapidary and jewelry supply companies. They come in sizes as small as 1mm and are very reasonable in price. For instance, a 2mm diameter drill is about \$6.

Chuck the core drill in a drill press, Dremel or Foredom and be sure to keep the drilling zone wet to cool the tool and to flush out debris. Also, if you're drilling a through hole, go very easy on the pressure as the drill is about to cut through. Otherwise you will usually chip off some of the stone surface around the hole.



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

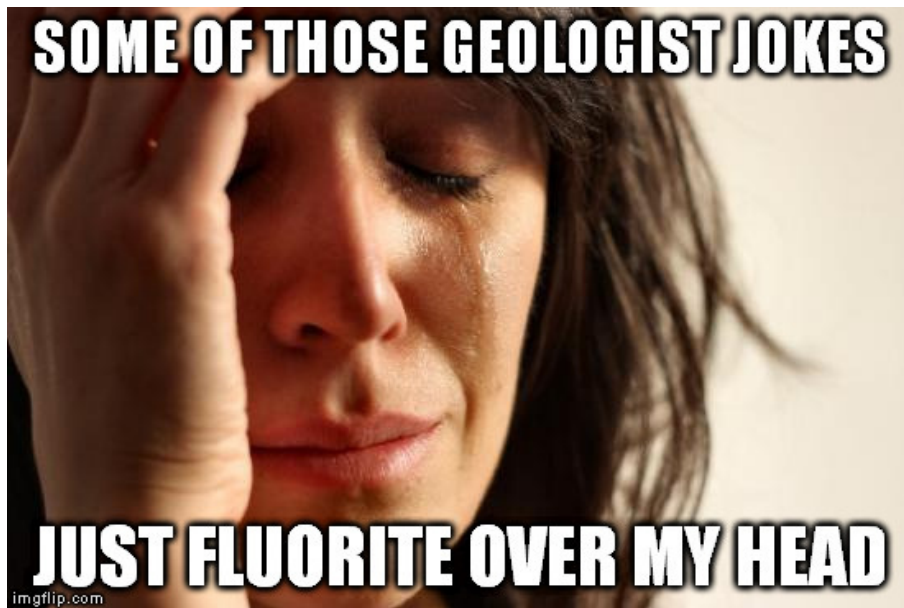
[Amazon.com/author/bradfordsmith](https://www.amazon.com/author/bradfordsmith)



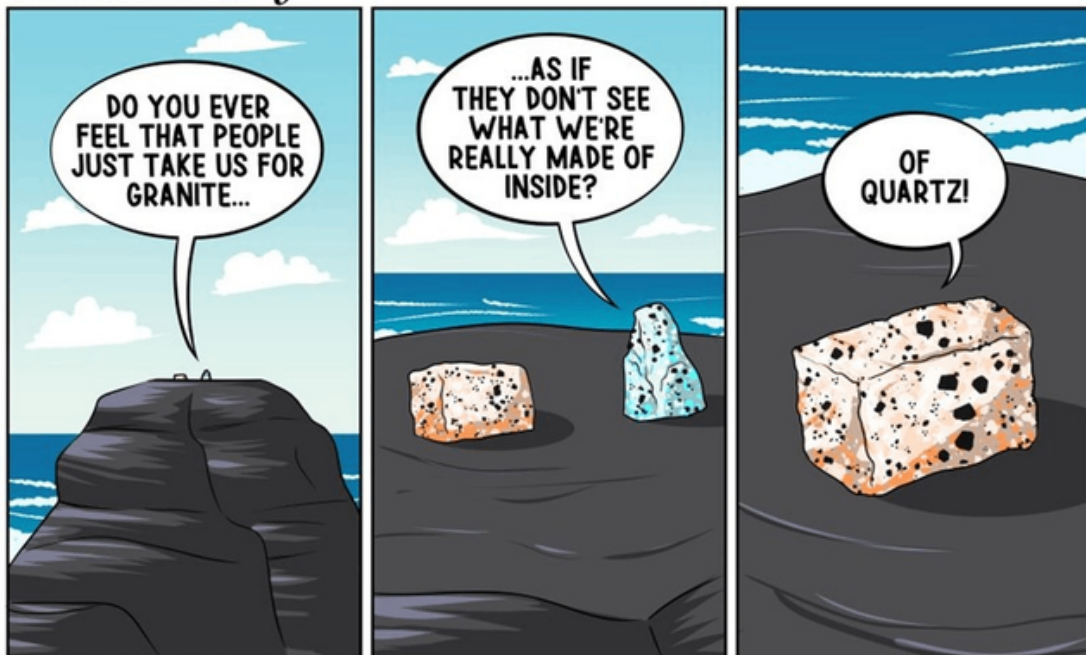
# Rock Talk Funny Papers



Collecting rocks is a fun hobby ...  
you can never have too many  
things to throw at people.

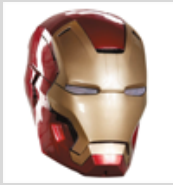


## Gem in the Rough



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## From The Editor

### Hello to all Withlacoochee Rockhounds

It is I, your friendly neighborhood editor again.

For our March meeting, club member Janice Wojcik gave us a presentation covering rocks that could be dangerous if you do not take proper precautions when cutting and polishing. Things like the dust they give off, etc. Wow, found out I shouldn't be licking those rocks!

For our April meeting, we will have the return of the Rock Rummage Sale! Club members are encouraged to bring in jewelry, slabs, cabochons, tools, etc. to sell. No TV's or shoes, etc. Just good 'ole rock or jewelry-related items. And, you must be an active, dues-paid member to sell items at the sale.

Membership for the new year is due. If you have not renewed your club membership, please do so. You can renew at the meeting (we take cash, checks, and credit cards), or mail your renewal application in. The revised application is at the end of this newsletter. If you have not renewed your membership by the end of the month, you will not be able to vote, attend club classes, etc., because you are not an active member anymore. So, please renew!

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 are still not receiving them, please contact me, and let's make sure I have your correct e-mail address.

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

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### 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.*

# Rockhounds Advertisers

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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 your 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](mailto:ceecgirl@tampabay.rr.com) or  
send to:  
Withlacoochee Rockhounds  
PO Box 5634 Spring Hill, FL 34611-5634



# Membership Form – 2024

Withlacoochee Rockhounds  
Hernando County FL

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Full Name

Partner's Full Name   
\* If both applying for membership

Child's Full Name   
\* If under 18, and applying with parent

Street Address

City

State / ZIP

Phone Number

Email

## Annual Membership Dues:

\*Choose your type of membership

- Individual Membership \$35.00/ea
- Individual Membership \$35.00/ea
- Under 18 Membership \$5.00/ea
- Under 18 Membership \$5.00/ea

- Returning Member?
- New Member?

If you are applying, for example, as husband, wife and child (under 18), then fill in full name, partner's name and child's name above. Then, choose two individual memberships to the left, along with an under 18 membership.

Give this completed form, along with your check (made payable to "Withlacoochee Rockhounds") or credit card for dues to Club Secretary Janet Wheeler at a club meeting. Or, you may mail the form to:

Withlacoochee Rockhounds  
PO Box  
Spring Hill, FL 34611-5634