



From our President

Greetings everyone, by the time you read this I should be in Arizona for the big rock show, I plan to hit both the shows and hopefully will have another large show & tell for everyone when I get back.

Unfortunately I made plans that would leave me out of our show in February again. I apologize for this error on my part. I hope the show goes well and I have made notes for others on how to get in touch with me if needed.

I hope you all stay warm during this wonderful weather racing along the coast, finally granting the wish of everyone who loves to say, “I wish it wasn’t so hot!”

Until we meet again!! Keep on Rockin!!

Mario Vento
2025 President

Key Dates

- **February 1-2**—CBRGC’s 48th Annual Rock, Gem & Jewelry Show
- **February 6**—Monthly meeting at Merritt Island Public Library
- **April 10-13**—Rucks Pit Crystal Clam Dig
- **April 26–27**—Rock, Mineral, Gem, Jewelry & Fossil Show

See page 3 for additional details

Workshop Info

Open Shop Hours:

- Sundays—1-4
- Wednesdays—9:30-12:30 and 1-4
- Thursdays—Call or text Mario at 321-593-2958 to confirm

Location:

- 407 Imperial Boulevard, Unit D-1B, Cape Canaveral, FL 32920

Reminder: 2025 Membership Dues

2025 membership dues are now due! The cost is \$30 for the year, and members have until **March** to renew.

You can pay your dues at one of our monthly meetings or at the workshop.

If you have any questions, please contact **Tom Brown**.

Thank you for your continued support!

Meeting Minutes—January 2, 2025

Time: Meeting started at 6:11 PM, upon quorum being established

Location: Meeting Room (Set up began at 5:45 PM)

1. Call to Order—President (Mario):

- Welcomed members and visitors.
- Noted the passing of Fred O'Brien.
- Presented a 3D-printed cane and announced free canes for interested members.
- Introduced visitor Joe, who expressed interest in learning more about the club.

2. Approval of Minutes—Secretary (Andrew):

- Read the minutes from the November 7, 2024, meeting and the addendum.
- Correction: Omit the treasurer's report from printed minutes. Motion to correct minutes by Michele, seconded by Tom. **Motion Approved.**

3. Officer Reports

First Vice President (Education)

- Position currently vacant.

Second Vice President (Membership) (Tom):

- 7 new members signed up, totaling 9 as of the meeting.
- Reminder: Membership dues are due this month. Members who have not paid within 90 days will be removed from the roster.

Treasurer (Jennifer):

- Michele reported December's expenses.
- Treasurer's report was delivered at the end of the meeting and 2025 budget was discussed to be voted on by next meeting in February.

Newsletter (Carol):

- Members reminded to check their spam filters and ensure their email addresses are updated to receive newsletters.

4. Committee and Class Updates

Classes (Roz):

- John: One student currently.
- Interest expressed online for a silver class.
- Rick: Two ongoing students; he discussed their progress.
- Announcement: Silver casting class planned after the Gem Show. Earrings class has ample materials available.
- Rick mentioned Mariah stepping away but confirmed her commitment to assembling the grand prize.

Minutes continued...

Supervisor/Shop Schedule (Roz):

- Shortage of supervisors due to medical needs.
- Members urged to communicate commitments and be patient when asking questions.

Workshop Committee (Michele):

- No updates.

Workshop Repairs/Maintenance (Mario):

- Supervisor requirements: Minimum 6 months of experience.
- Shop cleaned on December 29, 2024. Members encouraged to report issues promptly.
- Rick continues to repair faceting equipment.

Gem Show (Erleen):

- Volunteers needed for setup and event support.
- Member vendor sales and volunteer responsibilities were discussed.

5. Break

- A 10-minute break was taken from 7:09 PM to 7:22 PM.

6. Old Business

- No items discussed.

7. New Business:

Committee Chairs for 2025:

- Members interested in retaining chair positions should notify Mario.

Social Media and Website Updates:

- Facebook and website updates in progress.
- Request for rock-related photos and member contributions.
- All newsletters will be uploaded to the website.

Fred O'Brien Legacy Gift:

- Mentioned for acknowledgment.

2025 Budget:

- Preliminary discussion held; approval vote scheduled for February.

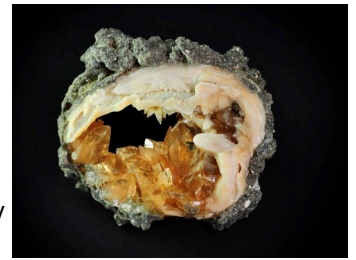
8. Adjournment

- Meeting adjourned at 7:45 PM. Motion - Rick, 2nd Angela

Minutes prepared by Andrew Pepper

Upcoming Events

- February 1-2**—Our club’s 48th Annual Rock, Gem, and Jewelry Show—Kiwanis Island Recreation Center (951 Kiwanis Island Park, Merritt Island)—Saturday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sunday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Show is free to members with your club membership card. See insert on this page for a printable coupon that can be used for family and guests.
- April 10-13**—Rucks Pit Crystal Clam Dig—This is a limited one-time opportunity to excavate crystalline fossil clams from Rucks Pit in Okeechobee, Florida. Hosted by Pacific GeoLab, you can dig the entire day and are guaranteed to find plenty of crystallized clams, and possibly other crystalized specimens such as snails or conchs. Visit <https://pacificgeolab.com> for additional information on this unique opportunity.
- April 26-27**—Rock, Mineral, Gem, Jewelry & Fossil Show hosted by the Central Florida Mineral & Gem Society—Florida Armory National Guard (2809 S. Fern Creek Avenue, Orlando)—Saturday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sunday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Throughout the year**—The William Holland School of Lapidary Arts (<https://lapidaryschoolregistration.org>) offers a variety of courses on lapidary and jewelry arts all year long.



*Crystalized crystal clam
from Rucks Pit*



Rocks, Gems and Jewelry

Show and Sale

February 1 and 2, 2025

Saturday 9:00 -5:00

Sunday 10-4

Kiwanis Island Recreation Center
951 Kiwanis Is Park Rd
Merritt Island, FL 32952

Hourly Door Prizes
Silent Auction
Grand Prize Drawing

Join us for this non-profit
fundraising event!

ADMISSION: \$ 6.00

Children under 12 free when
accompanied by adult.

Sponsored by:

Central Brevard Rock & Gem Club
www.centralbrevardgems.com

For Sale

Soldering table and work bench with shelves. Just \$200 for each. Contact Ann Metz if interested at (772)538-6222

Soldering Table

63.5"W x 20.5" D x 54"H

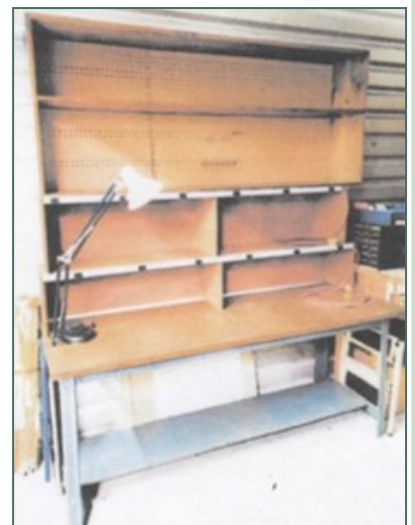


Work Bench

60"W x 24"D x 29"H

Shelves

11.5"D x 55.5" H



Meet Your 2025 CBRGC Officers

Meet the talented individuals leading the Central Brevard Rock & Gem Club in 2025! This year's officers bring diverse professional backgrounds, fascinating journeys, and a shared passion for jewelry and lapidary arts. From rockhounding to mastering silversmithing, each has a unique story reflecting their dedication to the craft and our vibrant community. Let's dive into another exciting year of creativity and exploration with their guidance!

Mario Vento—President

A dedicated member of the club for the past eight years, Mario brings a wealth of experience, enthusiasm, and a fresh perspective to his new leadership role.

A Versatile Background—Mario's professional life is as varied as his interests. With a career spanning auto mechanics and PC repair, he has honed a knack for problem-solving and precision—skills that seamlessly translate to his work in lapidary arts and jewelry design. Outside of his creative endeavors, Mario is a devoted husband and father to one daughter. He describes himself as a collector of many things, reflecting his curiosity and appreciation for unique treasures.

A Passion for Rocks and Gems—Mario's journey in the lapidary world began with the Melbourne club before joining the Central Brevard Rock and Gem Club. Largely self-taught, his passion for exploration and learning shines through in his approach to working with materials. While he enjoys experimenting with new rocks and techniques, Mario has a special fondness for obsidian. Its captivating depth and versatility make it a favorite in his creations.

Staying Ahead in the Field—Mario's commitment to growth and innovation is evident in his approach to staying informed. He actively researches trends online, participates in Facebook groups, and engages with vendors at club shows and major events like the Tucson and Quartzite gem shows. These interactions not only inspire his work but also keep him connected with the broader lapidary community.

Creating Meaningful Pieces—One of Mario's most memorable projects highlights his ingenuity and perseverance. Using material sourced from Bill Dewey (former CBRGC member), he crafted a double-sided square pillow cut with blended corners. Initially labeled as faceting teaching material unsuitable for cabbing, the piece surprised everyone with its stunning final form. This project exemplifies Mario's belief in challenging perceptions and pushing boundaries.

Words of Wisdom—For aspiring artists and designers, Mario offers invaluable advice: *“Don't get too stuck on any single notion. Stay flexible and be willing to accept that things are not always what they seem. Above all, keep trying, learning, and growing.”*

As President, Mario aims to foster a welcoming and inspiring environment where members can explore, create, and share their passion for lapidary arts and jewelry design. Under his leadership, the Central Brevard Rock and Gem Club is poised for another exciting year of discovery and creativity.

Next up in our line-up of introductions...Tom Brown—2nd Vice President

Meet Your 2025 CBRGC Officers

Let's continue getting to know the leaders shaping our club's future!

Tom Brown—2nd Vice President

Born and raised in Detroit, the “Motor City,” Tom Brown's early years were shaped by hands-on work in a high school body shop and later by launching canoes for the city recreation department on Belle Isle. When jobs grew scarce in the late 1950s—Tom was certain he didn't want to sell ladies' shoes—he made a life-changing decision to enlist in the Air Force.

A History of Service—Tom's 22-year military career included 12 years as an enlisted airman and 10 years as an officer. During that time, he served as a radio relay technician, maintaining microwave stations in some of the most remote parts of the world. His postings took him to Germany, France, North Carolina, Texas, Florida, and the Caribbean island of Dominica. After technical school and completing his studies at Michigan State University, he transitioned into security police work, with assignments spanning Texas, the Philippines, Florida, and California.

After retiring from the Air Force, Tom's career shifted to commercial security. He worked with major organizations, including Kennedy Space Center (KSC), Disney, and Honeywell, while pursuing a master's degree in Criminal Justice and Computer Science. His thesis on cybersecurity led him to work locally for a defense contractor and on shuttle facilities at KSC. Later, as an instructor at Webster University, Tom helped develop undergraduate and master's programs in Brevard County.

Tom's journey into jewelry-making began around the turn of the century when a former colleague persuaded him to take a silver course in Melbourne. This turned into a long-standing passion, culminating in his membership with the Central Brevard Rock & Gem Club (CBRGC).

A Personal Connection to Metalwork—Tom's first wife, a master goldsmith from Pforzheim, Germany, played a significant role in his appreciation for the craft. Pforzheim, known for its goldsmithing heritage, was firebombed during WWII, a history deeply intertwined with her family's three-generation legacy in the trade. Tom and his wife met during his Air Force service in Germany and married during the height of the Cuban Missile Crisis. They raised two daughters together while navigating a life filled with travel and duty.

After his wife's cancer diagnosis and eventual passing, Tom devoted himself to her care in her final year. Several years later, he met his current wife, with whom he shares over three decades of companionship, laughter, and a mutual love of beer.

Family Life and Retirement—Tom's daughters have pursued impressive careers. His eldest, married to a talented chip designer, lives in California with two children, while his youngest, residing in Palm Bay with her mechanical engineer husband, is enjoying retirement alongside their mischievous teenage cats.

Tom's rich life experiences, dedication to his craft, and passion for learning make him an invaluable member of CBRGC. Whether sharing stories from his extraordinary career or creating unique jewelry, Tom continues to inspire and connect with those around him.

Next up in our line-up of introductions...Andrew Pepper—Secretary

Meet Your 2025 CBRGC Officers

Let's continue getting to know the leaders shaping our club's future!

Andrew Pepper—Secretary

Andrew brings a unique blend of professional expertise, creative passion, and a commitment to fostering community within the club.

An Impressive Professional Journey—Andrew currently serves as a Senior Data Governance Partner and AI Governance Lead at Blue Origin. His work focuses on ensuring data quality, secure access, and effective governance to support decision-making processes. Before joining Blue Origin, Andrew built a diverse career with roles at The Coca-Cola Company and in the U.S. Army's Military Police Corps. His extensive background in leadership and precision is sure to enhance his contributions to the club.

A Family Man with Diverse Interests—Outside his professional life, Andrew is a devoted husband and father to two sons, aged 17 and 13. His passions extend beyond lapidary arts to include the psychology of human-computer interaction, AI ethics, and people analytics. He is also a strong advocate for educational initiatives that support graduate students, showcasing his dedication to lifelong learning and mentorship.

A Passionate Newcomer to Lapidary Arts—Though Andrew has been a member of the Central Brevard Rock and Gem Club for just over a year, his enthusiasm and curiosity have made a strong impression. Drawn to the intersection of science, art, and history, he finds inspiration in the geological origins and cultural significance of gemstones and minerals. For Andrew, lapidary arts offer a tangible and creative way to connect with these fascinating stories.

Self-Taught and Always Learning—Andrew's journey in lapidary arts is largely self-directed, with valuable guidance from experienced club members. The collaborative and supportive environment of the club has been instrumental in helping him refine his techniques and expand his skills.

Favorite Materials and Creations—When it comes to materials, Andrew favors agates and jaspers for their intricate patterns, as well as sterling silver for its versatility. Labradorite holds a special place in his heart for its magical play of colors, while Larimar (reminiscent of the Caribbean ocean) inspires his creativity. Each piece he creates reflects his deep appreciation for nature's beauty and the stories embedded in the materials.

Advice for Aspiring Artists—Andrew's advice for those new to lapidary arts is simple yet profound: *"Start small, be patient, and don't be afraid to experiment. Seek out a community, like our club, where you can learn from others and find inspiration. Remember that every piece you create is a step in your journey as an artist."*

As Secretary, Andrew is eager to support the club's mission and contribute to its vibrant community. With his diverse background and passion for learning, Andrew Pepper is poised to help lead the Central Brevard Rock and Gem Club into an exciting and inspiring new year.

Stay tuned for more introductions in next month's newsletter.

Spotlight on Creativity

Take a look at these stunning pieces crafted by our talented members during silversmithing classes led by John Catana. From beginner to advanced techniques, our workshops inspire creativity and skill-building.



Arlene
Green agate cabochon in
sterling bracelet



Hannah
Design in amethyst
and sterling



Mark
Ring in jasper
and sterling

Interested in learning a new craft? Explore the variety of classes we offer, taught by experts in our club! Whether it's cabochons, silversmithing, filigree, silver casting, opal cutting, wire wrapping, faceting, glass fusing, chainmaille, or kumihimo, there's something for everyone.

Visit the CBRGC website (<https://centralbrevardgems.com>) to learn more and sign up for your next creative adventure!



January Birthdays

Karen Buckley

Robyn Circle-Egry

Pam Felski

Elijah Pepper

Don Ramer

Sandra Thompson

Rock Chronicles

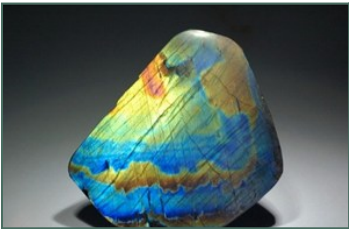
Unearthing Nature's Treasures

Explore the world of geology with this new monthly rock feature. Each installment highlights unique rocks or minerals, offering a closer look at their history, formation, and uses. From the volcanic glass of obsidian to the iridescent glow of labradorite, these articles provide fascinating insights for rock enthusiasts at every level.

Check in each month as we uncover the stories behind these natural wonders and their connections to the crafts and hobbies we enjoy.

Obsidian—*Nature's Glass*

Obsidian forms when lava cools so quickly that crystals don't have time to form, resulting in a smooth, glassy texture. It is commonly found in volcanic regions such as Iceland, Mexico, and the United States (notably in Oregon and California). This volcanic glass has a rich history, used by ancient cultures for crafting sharp tools and weapons. Its deep black or smoky-gray appearance often includes fascinating inclusions like snowflake obsidian or the golden sheen of gold-sheen obsidian. Modern uses extend to ornamental objects and metaphysical tools believed to shield against negativity.



Laboradite—*Stone of the Northern Lights*

Labradorite, a feldspar mineral, is famed for its labradorescence—a dazzling optical phenomenon that displays flashes of blue, green, and gold as light moves across its surface. Discovered in Labrador, Canada, and also found in Finland and Madagascar, this stone is often associated with magic and spiritual awakening. Its play of colors has earned it a place in jewelry and as a collector's favorite. Labradorite is said to inspire creativity and shield against negativity,

Did you know?

The reference area of our CBRGC website is packed with amazing resources about rocks and minerals. From rockhounding hotspots to fun activities for kids, there's something for everyone to explore. Check it out at <https://centralbrevardgems.com/reference!>

Workshop Donations Needed

Our workshop could use some basic supplies—any and all donations of the following are welcome: facial & bathroom tissue, white & light colored copy paper

Club Purpose

The purpose of this club is to foster interest in and to promote knowledge and appreciation of minerals, gems, fossils, and the earth sciences.

We also disseminate information and instruction in the lapidary arts and the utilization of precious metals in our crafts. These purposes are accomplished through regular meetings with informative programs, workshops, study groups, and field trips.



Officers

President:	Mario Vento	(321)593-2958	rokhounds@gmail.com
1st Vice President:	Vacant		
2nd Vice President:	Tom Brown	(321)917-3602	tbrown2045@cfl.rr.com
Secretary:	Andrew Pepper	(321)416-7711	pepper_andrew@yahoo.com
Treasurer:	Jennifer Davison	(502)930-5870	jdavison@me.com

Directors

Erleen Estes	2025-27	(321)514-8775	erleen9@gmail.com
John Catana	2024-26	(321)633-4366	jcatana5@gmail.com
Richard Prickett	2025-27	(321)698-9359	mancomp@bellsouth.net
Carol Warner	2024-25	(407)468-1333	basinstreetstudio@outlook.com



Member of Southeast Federation of Mineralogical Societies, Inc. - www.southeastfed.org

Affiliated with the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies - www.amfed.org



Central Brevard Rock & Gem Club Inc.

2025 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

ANNUAL DUES: ADULTS \$30.00, JUNIOR: \$10.00 (under 18 w/parent)

DATE: _____ NEW RENEWAL JUNIOR

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE#: _____ CELL#: _____

BIRTHDAY DAY MONTH/DAY: _____

EMAIL: _____

PLEASE CHECK YOUR AREAS OF INTEREST;

- GENERAL BEADING CABOCHONS CASTING FACETING FUSED GLASS
- INLAY INTARSIA KUMIHIMO OPALS SILVER WIRE WRAP

HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT US?

FACEBOOK WEB FRIEND OTHER: _____

CBRGC USE ONLY

DATE: _____ PAID: _____

CASH CHARGE CHECK # _____

CARD ISSUED BY: _____

CLUB FUNCTION: _____ INITS: _____

SAFETY BRIEFING: _____ INITS: _____

PLEASE
PLACE
STAMP
HERE



Central Brevard Rock and
Gem Club, Inc
P.O. Box 542742
Merritt Island, Florida 32954