WILDACRES 2027 CLASSES
Course Descriptions, Photos & BIOS

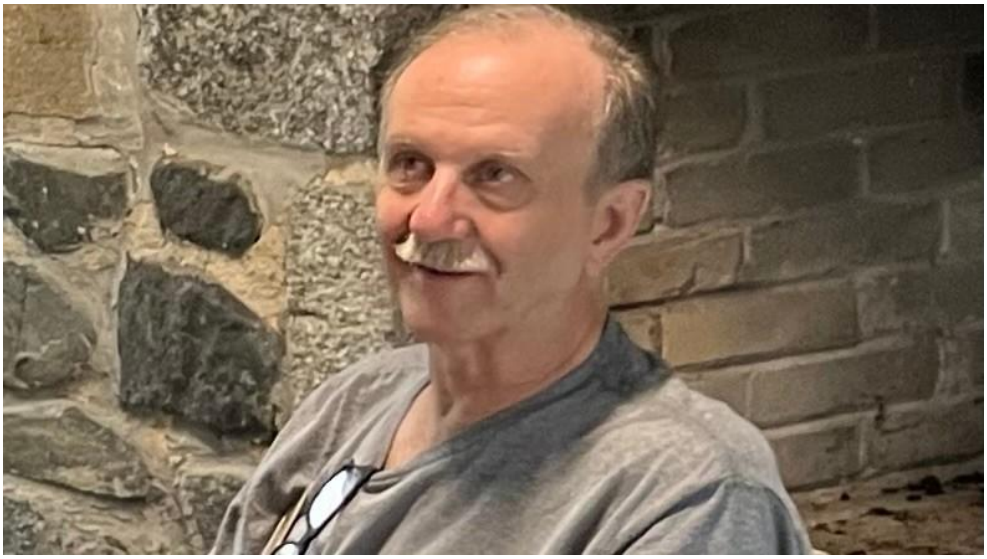
Instructor Rick Marshall, Cabochon Making Class
Cabochons: How do I start? How can I improve?

Want to learn to Cab? Come join Rick for a class that will give you the basics so you can produce beautiful, usable cabochons. This class will also be perfect for those of you who have experience but want to improve the quality of your cabochons. He will show you techniques that will help.
You may want to bring your own OptiVisor or safety glasses and apron.
Rick will provide slabs for you to work with along with supplies and a handbook. Additional slabs will be available for purchase, and you can bring your own.
Class Fee: $75
Estimated Additional Material Fee: $0 to ???
Prerequisite: None

Instructor Rick Marshall (Bio)

Rick began his foray into jewelry making in 2009 when he and his wife began beading. In 2011 he took his first silver fabrication classes at Maitland Art Center in Florida, followed by silver classes at William Holland School of Lapidary Arts in 2011, 2012, 2018, 2024 and channel inlay in 2019. Rick began taking cabbing classes at William Holland in 2013 and continues to take classes from other cabbing instructors.
Rick has taught cabbing in local gem/mineral clubs, William Holland School of

Lapidary Arts since 2022 and Wildacres Retreat several times.
Rick has a well-equipped lapidary shop at his home where he spends a lot of his time improving his craft. He cabs stones that are then set in silver by Rick or wire wrapped by his wife and sold at jewelry and rock shows in Florida. A retired car salesman, Rick and his wife Vivian live in Apopka, Fl. There he is Past President and founding member of Wekiva Gem and Mineral Society. He is also very active in the Southeast Federation of Mineralogical Societies as the Membership Secretary and SFMS William Holland Workshop Director for 2024 and 2025



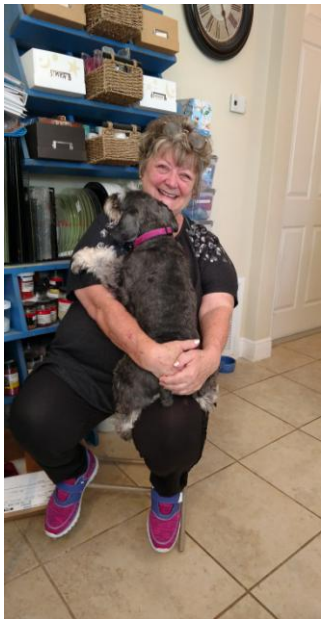
Instructor Bernie Emery
Faceting Class

Faceted gemstones start out as clear crystals or pieces of crystals called rough in the gem trade. Faceting is the skill of taking a rough piece of gem material and turning it into a gemstone, with many flat planes or facets. The student will explore how to select rough for cutting. After selecting the rough they will evaluate it to get an idea of the size and dimensions for their Gem.
In the faceting class, the student will learn how to use a faceting machine to properly cut, place and polish facets, using proper angles and degrees, to produce a standard Round Brilliant Gemstone.
The student will follow written instructions and go step-by-step with the instructor as the stone is cut.
The class will also be able to identify a well cut gemstone, and understand the reasons why faceting enhances the appearance of the Stone. The student can expect to finish one stone during the length of the class.
Students are asked to bring an Optivisor if they have one. Kits that are included in the price of the class have all the necessary tools needed, including a loupe and rough material. No prior experience is necessary.

Cost for this class ranges from $40.00 to $60.00 depending on the size and type of rough you select.

Instructor Bernie Emery (Bio)

Bernie Emery was inducted into the National Lapidary and Rockhound Hall of Fame in the Education category in the spring of 2018.
Bernie has been an active member of the Baltimore gem clubs for over 35 years. He has held numerous positions and offices including director, vice president, field trip chair, auction and estate auction chair; but most importantly show chair for both the Gem Cutters Guild and the Chesapeake Gem and Mineral Society for over 30 years.
Bernie has a Graduate Gemologist Certificate from GIA. He has given numerous talks to the area clubs on related subjects. Bernie is known for his expertise in faceting. He enjoys concave cut and freeform shaped gems in addition to standard cuts. In addition, carving has become an integral part of his lapidary work.
He has been the cabochon instructor at the EFMLS Wildacres for 14years. Since 2023 he has taught Faceting at Wildacres and the Gem Cutters Guild of Baltimore.
He is an avid mineral collector and is interested in researching many old and now abandoned collecting sites.



Instructor Carol Zodrow

Fused Glass

CLASS DESCRIPTION FUSED GLASS BASICS
Learn how to manipulate glass components into your personal creations. Using

glass sheet, frit, stringers and confetti, you will cut and shape pieces to fire in a kiln. Add in dichroic glass, to make it sparkle! You will work with millefiori, copper sheet and wire, mica powders, decals, stencils and more.

Estimated cost: $175

Instructor Carol Zodrow (Bio)

Carol was born in Akron, Ohio, graduated from the College of Wooster with a major in Psychology, and a minor in the studio arts. She has been participating in a variety of arts and crafts her whole life. In college she taught her self silversmithing; then added copper enamels and silver clay. She worked in the medical field as a consultant for a hospital, training supervisors and assisting physicians with their private practices. In 1996, her husband and she moved to Florida, and she retired and started playing with rocks and glass. She has been fusing glass for over 20 years and teaching in her home studio for 15 years. Carol loves working with glass and teaching others about its amazing properties and how it reacts to heat. Her students are my greatest source of inspiration!

Instructor Dr. Michael Wise

Geology Class

Pegmatite Geology (Pegmatology 101) is an intensive four-day course with an emphasis on understanding the origin of granitic pegmatites. Daily lectures will be presented to introduce participants to useful information and concepts regarding pegmatite genesis.

First Two Days - A general introduction to the minerals, rocks and physical

characteristics that define pegmatites. The class will include discussions and hands-on activities aimed at identifying major and accessory pegmatite minerals, recognizing textural features of pegmatites, and interpreting their geological significance. Weather permitting there may be a field trip to local rock exposures to illustrate pegmatite features covered in the lectures. Limited walking is required for the field trip. No prior experience needed. Participants will be required to complete lab exercises that complement the classroom material.

Second Two Days - An overview of pegmatite chemistry, pegmatite genesis and exploration techniques highlights the second semester of the course. Participants will develop the skills necessary to conduct effective exploration on a variety of pegmatite types, including gem-bearing and industrial pegmatites. Weather permitting, there may be a field trip to local rock exposures to illustrate pegmatite features covered in the lectures. Limited walking is required for the field trip. No prior experience needed. No prior experience needed. Participants will be required to complete lab exercises that complement the classroom material.

Supplies students should bring:

A hand lens (magnifying loupe) or other magnifier is desirable. Hiking boots or sturdy shoes and outdoor clothes suitable for the (half-day) field trips.

Nominal class fee of around $25 is expected for the reproduction of handouts.

Dr. Michael Wise (Bio)

Michael is a mineralogist in the Department of Mineral Sciences at the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. His research focuses on the mineralogy, petrology, and geochemistry of granitic pegmatites to better understand the geological processes responsible for the genesis and evolution of granitic pegmatite melts.

Mike has several decades of field-based experience studying pegmatites and has long been active in projects related to the classification of pegmatite types, the regional mineralogical and geochemical patterns of large pegmatite populations, and the exploration of critical minerals associated with pegmatite deposits. In addition to his research program on pegmatites, Mike is also highly active in education and outreach activities and is heavily involved in the management of the Smithsonian's Mineral and Gem Collections.

Instructor Chuck Bruce
Intarsia Class

Intarsia is the making of intricate scenic and/or geometric patterns using a variety of small stone pieces of colorful or otherwise interesting matrix cut to precision and fitted together while leaving no gaps between the pieces. We will be learning to cut and shape square or linear stones to create a composite stone piece that can be made into a cabochon.

Students should bring an Optivisor. Prerequisite: Must have cabbing experience. This is a basic class. We will be using Diamond Pacific Genies, flat laps and Intarsia grinders (not faceting machines).

Lab Fee: $150.00 for the session; includes rocks, glues for intarsia, stabilizer glues, 2 part epoxy, mica powder, mixing sticks, wax paper, plates, pencil and handout.

Instructor Chuck Bruce (Bio)

With a background in interior design and fashion merchandising, Chuck turned his passion to jewelry. He is faculty at various schools across the county, a regional artist for 16 years and is knowledgeable in cabochons, advanced chain making, chasing & repousse, cold connections, design, fold forming, gold, granulation, lost wax casting, mokume-gane, opals, inlay, intarsia, silver I & II, spool knitting and steel tools.

If you have slabs of your own material that you would like to work with then by all means bring them along. He will have a selection of slabs available that you can use and some to purchase if you prefer but he also knows it's great to be

able to use your own stuff if possible. Note that if you plan to bring un-slabbed rough material, we do not have a big saw for slabbing big chunks. The largest saw available in the intarsia room is a 6" water coolant model. If you're unsure as to whether or not your rough (or slabs) will work then bring them along anyway and we can take a look at what you have and go from there.

Most of his intarsia is made with varieties of natural stone however you can use almost any natural or synthetic material. Some like to work with reconstituted stone material due to its uniform color and softness. It's also quite OK to use glass. He sometimes uses dichroic glass for center pieces or for backing material. In general, softer materials are easier to work with however some of the prettiest natural patterns show up in various picture jaspers which are generally pretty hard. Don't worry about combining hard and soft materials together as it's rarely a concern when using the methods shown in the class.

Center Pieces: Generally an intarsia piece will have a center stone as a focal point. Often this will be a stone with an attractive pattern such as one of the picture jaspers or sometimes a piece of opal or other "flashy" material.

In general, working with light colored translucent material (rose quartz, for example) can be troublesome in intarsia. This is because the adjacent stone color and/or the intarsia backing stone color tends to show through. It can be done but takes more thought and preparation.

Another tool that occasionally comes in handy is a set of calipers for squaring up sides and measuring the width of the concentric bands. It's not absolutely necessary but helpful sometimes. I'll have calipers available for use.

If you have an intarsia grinder you can bring it along to use but keep in mind that it will have to reside in your personal workspace.

If you haven't done so already, do a Google or Bing search on "intarsia jewelry". Then when the results come back, look for and click on the "Images" button... then sit back and enjoy.

Well that's all for now. Hope you are looking forward to a week of cutting, grinding, gluing together and polishing pretty rocks... and in general having a great time. Contact Chuck if you have any questions at www.chuckbrucedesigns.com.

Email I will be sending to students

Mines, Mining Museums & Gemstones of the West, Class Instructor Helen Serras-Herman, MFA, FGA gemologist

In this class, Helen will share her extensive knowledge and first-hand experience of mines, mining museums and gemstones of the West, which she has visited and written about in many articles over the years.

We'll visit Arizona, New Mexico, California, Montana, Nevada, Colorado, Idaho and Texas, and look at the landmark museum attractions and mines, give up-to-date rockhounding and collecting information, and feature the beautiful and rare gemstones that make those states famous. Every day we'll focus on one to two states.

Cost for entire class: $25 for printed material (or flash drive) handouts

Instructor and EFMLS Wildacres Committee Chairman Helen Serras-Herman (Bio)

Helen Serras-Herman is an acclaimed gem artist with over 40 years of experience in unique gem sculpture and jewelry art. Her award-winning, one-of-a-kind, distinctive artwork has been exhibited world-wide and published in over 400 trade magazines and books. Her remarkable carved gems and vibrant contemporary jewelry are recognized for the selection of unusual gem materials, modern organic compositions, masterful workmanship, and the ability to blend the mineral world with the art world. Helen's sculptural artwork and artistic jewelry collections always "tell a story", inspired by her world travels to mines and ancient archaeological sites.

Beside her published book Carved Gems – Inspiration & Expertise, Helen is

a frequent article contributor to Rock & Gem magazine since 2009, Gems & Jewellery magazine published by Gem-A in London and the Gem Shows EZ-Guides published by XpoPress in print and online since 2013.

Helen has been Speaker-in-Residence at Wildacres four times since 2006, and is the appointed EFMLS Wildacres Committee Chairman since 2025.

Instructor Susan Brooks
Exploring Bronze Metal Clay: The New "Gold" Class

In this class, students will be introduced to the amazing world of metal clay, featuring bronze metal clay, which results in a beautiful gold metal, for jewelry and a multitude of other items. Both beginner and intermediate students will enjoy creating unique pieces of jewelry and some 3-dimensional sculptural items.

This is a fun class where you will have lots of inspirational materials to choose from and lots of one-on-one coaching to guarantee success. Class size is limited to allow the instructor to give lots of individual attention. No previous experience is required, but if you have done some metal clay in the past and want to resume or improve your skills, this class is for you!

In addition to learning the basic skills of working with metal clays (texturing, cutting, joining, stone setting, creating embellishments, and bail making) students will have the opportunity to explore various techniques to take their skills to another level.

Bring your spirit of adventure and fun - and some reading glasses or optivisor to help with the close work.

Lab Fee: This covers Expendable items, use of class student tool kit, wear and tear on equipment, etc.: $50 (for the week)

Basic Class Kit fee: Covers the major projects for the week… $175 (clays, stones, ear wires, and assorted take home tools and containers)

Additional clay, beads and tools will be available for purchase for those who want to make additional pieces or like to work larger.

Instructor Susan Brooks (Bio)
Certified Metal Clay Artist and Instructor

The creative arts have been a passion for hers for as long as she can remember and has often been her "ticket to sanity". Whether through basketry, weaving, gourd art or jewelry making, she could always find some peace and pleasure. Around 2010, she discovered the world of metal clay and became "hooked" immediately.

The possibilities of adding textures and gemstones to jewelry is very exciting and seems a natural way to create pieces that express one's unique personality and individual style. Susan became certified in all 3 levels of PMC in the summer of 2012 with Mary Ann Devos, one of the first generation metal clay artists in this country, through the William Holland School for Lapidary Arts. She later acquired certifications in Metal Clay (both silver and base metals) through Aussie Metal Clay, and in base metals through Clay Revolution. Most recently, she became certified in Art Clay Silver through the William Holland School for Lapidary Arts in the summer of 2023. She has taken classes with such metal clay experts as Holly Gage, Pam East, Stephanie Chavez, Michael Marx, Carrie Story, and Rodi Frunze. Currently she continues to enjoy taking classes with local and national artists to keep current in the field.

Her family history is rooted in the mountains of North Carolina and it is a blessing to have retired here, with its rich diversity of plant and animal life. Nature continues to be a major inspiration for themes of her work, thus her art business name is "Earthly Treasures". She loves to use insects, blossoms, leaves, and small animals as embellishments to her pieces and feels that the dragonfly is becoming her "totem bug", appearing more and more frequently in her work. Susan loves to use things that have symbolism - such as the dragonfly symbolizing growth, change, and wisdom, ginkgo leaves symbolizing longevity, butterflies symbolizing new life, and various gemstones having special healing properties with their unique energies.

Instructor Ken Valko
Soapstone Carving Class

Basic Carving and Sculpture technique

Ken's process of carving starts by trying to visualize what you can see in rough stone. You will start by using rough stone that has been cut to a rough form template or pattern. There are two methods in carving or sculpture. The one we will follow through with is the subtractive method. The other method is additive. We will be removing the unwanted stone to reveal the object within. This is the above subtractive form. In this method please remember, what is removed cannot be placed back.

The first tools used will be the saws. Removing smaller areas and chunks will need small hacksaw or hacksaw blade. Rasping will be the next step. Rasping will round out edges and will help form organic rather than geometric edges and shapes. Riffles are also used. Using riffles will continue to remove fine material. Decide how much material to remove as you go. Use a fine file/ rasp to smooth down the piece before the sanding.

REMEMBER, what stone you remove may not be placed back. Allow enough material for the sanding stage to come, especially where there will be fine or thin areas such as points, fins and toes. Sanding will require three stages, coarse, medium, and fine. All sanding is done with wet /dry sandpaper for polishing. A large container of cold water will be ready. A block of Bee`s wax is nearby to melt on the pieces as they come out of the oven then placed in the water. Buff with a soft, preferably cotton cloth after taking out of the water. Have fun turning a simple rock into a creation of wonder and beauty. Thanks for taking this class.

Class fee is $80. This fee will include stone, and material to finish completed projects, including sandpaper, beeswax, tool usage, etc.

ITEMS, may be purchased from the instructor

Price of extra Soapstone is $ 3.00 per Lb, Rasp $10.00, Saw $8.00, Kit or riffles $15.00, and paper $ 1.00 per sheet, Wax $1.00

A NOTE FROM THE ARTIST AND WRITER KEN VALKO

THE SMALL CITY OF JOHNSTOWN PENNSYLVANIA IS WHERE I WAS BORN, BUT GREW UP HUNTING AND WALKING IN THE WOODS NEAR DUNLO. AS A CHILD, AND AS I GREW OLDER, MY INTEREST IN ART CAME FROM A NUMBER OF EVENTS.

HAVING SOME MEDICAL PROBLEMS I WAS TAKEN TO JOHNS HOPKINS HOSPITAL IN BALTIMORE, MD. ONE OVERWWELMING EVENT IN MY LIFE WAS SEEING THE STATUE OF CHRIST THE CONSOLER, A LARGER THAN LIFE SIZE MARBLE SCULPTURE AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE HOSPITAL. THIS HAS GIVEN ME THE CONSTANT FEELING AND BELIEF OF A HIGHER POWER AND CREATIVE SPIRIT WHICH I NOW FEEL THE NEED TO EXPRESS TO OTHERS. I HAVE DONE THIS THROUGH MY TEACHING, AND NOW IN MY SCULPTURES AND WRITINGS.

THROUGH THE YEARS WE ARE CONFRONTED WITH EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES OF EXPERIENCING THIS SPIRITUAL CREATIVE QUALITY BY VIEWING A GREAT WORK OF

ART. TWO OTHER NOTABLE TIMES I HAVE EXPERIENCED THIS CREATIVE SPIRITUAL QUALITYT, WAS SEEING ANDREW WYATHES [CHRISTINA`S WORLD], THE OTHER EVENT WAS VIEWING THE PAINTING, [LADY IN THE ROSE GARDEN].
AS A CHILD, MY BEDROOM WALLS WERE COVERED WITH DRAWINGS. THE POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT FROM MY PARENTS TEACHERS AND ESPECIALLY MY SISTERS, PROMPTED ME TO FURTHER MY ARTISTIC ENDEAVORS,
MY SENIOR SHOW IN COLLEGE INCLUDED A SOAPSTONE BIRD CARVING. CARVING THE BIRD FROM SOAPSTONE WAS REWARDING, THIS DIRECTED MY ATTENTION MORE TOWARD THREE DIMENSIONAL FORMS. AFTER A CAREER IN TEACHING I WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO WORKING ON MY OWN PIECES.
I BECAME EVEN MORE ENTHUSIASTIC TO BE CREATIVE AFTER TAKING A SOAPSTONE SCULPTURE CLASS BY SANDY CLINE. SANDY CLINE IS A WORLDL KNOWN SOAPSTONE CARVER FROM CANADA. I MENTIONED TO SANDY HOW EXCITED I WAS TO BE WORKING ON SCULPTURES AGAIN, KNOWING THIS WAS THE MEDIA I WANTED TO CONTINUE TO WORK.
SINCE THIS CLASS I USED SOAPSTONE FROM CANADA, VIRGINIA, GEORGIA, CHINA, OREGON AND OTHER LOCATIONS. I WANTED TO KNOW THE PROPERTIES AND FEELING OF WORKING WITH EACH. BRINGING OUT THE HIDDEN OBJECT FROM A ROUGH STONE HAS BEEN EXCEPTIONALLY CHALLENGING AND REWARDING.
REWARDING ALSO HAS BEEN MY WRITING EXPRIENCE. TAKING ONE'S CHILDHOOD EVENTS AND SHARING THEM IN HOPES THEY LEAD SOMEONE TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES CREATIVELY HAS ALSO BEEN A BLESSING.
I AM NOW PLEASED THAT MY WORK IN SOAPSTONE AND MY WRITINGS CONTAIN THAT SPECIAL CREATIVE SPIRIT. THE SPIRIT AND FEELING I HAD PASSING BY THAT MARBLE STATUE AS A CHILD. MY MOTTO HAS BECOME ------" CHANGE WITH CREATIVITY'
CARVER HOUND, KEN VALKO

Instructor Campbell, Jocelyn
Wire Wrapping Class
Wire I (Beginning-Intermediate)

Discover the fascinating world of traditional, structured wire wrap jewelry. Using pliers, gold-filled or sterling silver wire, assorted beads and gemstones, and a few basic techniques, learn how to create your own fashion jewelry. Instruction will include an overview of tools and materials.

Designed for beginners as well as those with previous experience, projects have been selected to allow participants to acquire or reinforce the basic skills needed to make simple rings, bracelets, pendants, and earrings, then apply those skills to more complex designs. Skills will include selection, measurement, cutting twisting, assembling, binding, and shaping of wire, use of gemstones and beads, and decorative finishing of pieces. Instructor will provide all tools needed, and materials may be purchased in class.

Tools and additional materials may be purchased from the instructor, if desired. Lab fee covers all printed materials, use of instructor's tools, and consumables used in class. The cost of materials will vary depending on projects/materials chosen and the market price of precious metals.
Lab Fee: $15
Estimated Materials Cost: $250+

Instructor Jocelyn Campbell, Wire Artist (Bio)

Originally from Honolulu, Hawaii, Jacolyn moved to Brevard, NC in 1987. She began studying at the William Holland School of Lapidary Arts, and eagerly returned each year to continue learning the intricate skills of jewelry making and design, eventually becoming a William Holland instructor herself.
She has also taught jewelry classes for Brevard College, the Henderson County Gem and Mineral Society, the Eastern and Southeastern Federation of Mineralogical and Lapidary Societies.

Jocelyn’s award-winning creations may be found at regional craft shows and are featured in the Gallery at the Mountains at the Omni Grove Park Inn, Asheville.