



50 Years
1972 - 2022

The Mountain Gem
March 2022

THE MOUNTAIN GEM

Gem & Mineral Society of Franklin, North Carolina

ESTABLISHED 1972

March 2022 Newsletter



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PRESIDENT'S REPORT



I hope everyone enjoyed last month's meeting. It really is impressive that a club can stay together for 50 years. Of course, this couldn't happen without the love and support of you the members. It takes a lot of work and cooperation to keep running every month. Thank you so much!

Another short thank you to all the members that have helped with the inventory. It is really a large job that needs to be done every year. We are just about done and have just a few displays in outlying areas.

I hope all are well and look forward to seeing you at the next meeting.

Mark

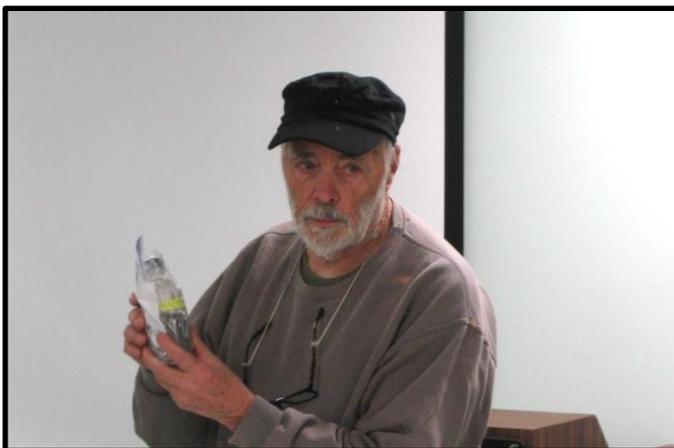
February General Meeting Notes

Photographs by George Fritz

The meeting was opened by Mark Laing, who thanked everyone for showing up to our 50th anniversary celebration. No committee reports or business items were discussed as the focus was on the history of the society. Fred Plesner proceeded to provide the attendees with highlights of the last 50 years and then turned the meeting over to John Hayes.



Fred Plesner recounting some memorable historical events.



John Hayes describing his 2,000-carat donation

When Corundum Hill mine was closing down John visited the site and was able to



obtain 2,000 carats of crushed corundum. The material was kept in a glass jar at John's house for several years and in conjunction with our 50th anniversary John decided to donate the material to the Society.

Following John's presentation, door prizes were distributed and the members were treated to cake and ice cream.

The first door prize was a Smithsonian Institution book by Dr. Jeffrey E. Post, curator of the National Gem and Mineral Collection. The book reviews everything from diamonds, rubies, and emeralds to jade and lapis lazuli, as well as the Hope Diamond and other world-famous stones in the Natural History Museum collection. The book was anonymously donated and won by Ilah Williams.



Ilah Williams with her Door Prize.

----- SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT -----

The May Gem Show is cancelled.

Chandra Coffee and Norm Holbert have been diligently working for the last month trying to line up vendors for our May show. Unfortunately, they were not able to get a sufficient number of vendors to proceed. The Board of Directors voted earlier this week to cancel the show. The vendors that pre-registered for the show will receive a refund in the near future.





Gruetli-Laager, TN Field Trip Photographs by Stacy Walbridge

On February 19th, Helen Rogers led Nancy McShane, Kathi & Stacy Walbridge, and Ernest Klatt on the DMC field trip to Gruetli-Laager, TN to search for Pennsylvanian Epoch fossils. The FGMS group joined approximately 40 other rockhounds from the southwest in Monteagle, TN for the safety



Gathering in Monteagle for the Safety Briefing



Pecopteris fern fossils collected by Helen Rogers

briefing, release form signing, and descriptions of potential finds. The skies were clear but with temperatures in the 30s and a strong wind the prospects for spending a lot of time at the site were slim. After a short caravan to the site everyone disembarked and began dressing in



Nancy McShane prepared for wet work

waders, rain pants, waterproof boots, and numerous layers of warm clothing. The site was located in a small stream at the base of two ridges and heavily forested, which mercifully blocked the wind. It only took an hour



or two for the temperature to rise making for an enjoyable hunt. Wading in the stream and looking at the banks of shale it wasn't long before fossilized leaves and ferns were spotted.

Due to the friability of the host rock obtaining good specimens took some time.



Sigillaria Specimen



How Sigillaria may have looked
Graphic Courtesy of alchetron.com

Some Interesting Facts About Sigillaria

Instead of having bark like today's trees, the Sigillaria was protected by a series of diamond-shaped scales. The tree's base was not comprised of wood like today's trees, but densely packed leaf bases. Sigillaria grew very tall.

Sigillaria could grow to 30 meters, or just shy of 100 feet. Sigillaria reached its full height fairly rapidly.

Ancient lycopods had a tendency to grow quickly and live short lifespans. Sigillaria was no exception. They reached their maturity in as little as just a few years. Some scientists believe that Sigillaria died after it reproduced, but currently, that is only a theory. There is no supporting science.

If you traveled back in time and saw a Sigillaria, you might think it somewhat resembles a palm tree. Sigillaria had long, slender grass-like leaves that grew from a fork at the top of the tree. These leaves attached directly to the stem of the tree. Sigillaria did not grow branches like today's trees do.

Most of today's trees reproduce by creating seeds, but Sigillaria did things a little differently. Instead of producing seeds, Sigillaria reproduced by creating spores. It would grow structures that slightly resembled today's pinecones that attached to the trunk of the tree. These cones would open and disperse the spores.

Sigillaria was related to plants falling into the Division Lycopodiophyta. Plants belonging to Lycopodiophyta reproduce by spores, just like the Sigillaria did. There are more than 1,290 species that still live today that belong to this classification. Source: <https://blog.tentree.com/7-facts-about-sigillaria-one-of-the-weirdest-trees-to-ever-live/>



Patty Construction Quarry Field Trip by Stacy Walbridge



Site View of Patty Quarry

Sunday, March 20th, started out clear and cold for a day of collecting at the Patty Construction Quarry in Summerville, AL. Gary Galbrecht, Kathi and Stacy Walbridge, Donovan MacDonald, and new members Cozette Green and Jodi Smith scoured the rock piles for the colorful banded agate. The temperature warmed up quickly making a comfortable day to collect.

Kathi and I were more interested in yard rocks and came home with about 100 pounds of rough that are now placed in in our yard. We spent some time with Cozette and Jody going over a section on the higher levels. Gary had several wagon loads of rough and yard rocks when I wandered by his collecting area. I never did find Donovan but assume he came away with a lot of material.



Kathi, Cozette, and Jodi taking a break at Patty Quarry

Upcoming April Field Trips

Goodensville Mine Road - Local trip

The April local field trip will be held on the 23rd. We will be going to a stream on Goodensville Mine Road. You will need a couple large ziplock bags, something to dig with, a black plastic trash bag, a sieve with small holes, a



fluorescent light, and a drink/snack/tissues. We will meet at the turn off to Goodensville Mine road from Ellijay Rd. If you are not there by 1pm we will proceed without you. Cell phones mostly don't work in this area! From Franklin it usually takes 30 - 40 minutes to get to the meeting area.

You can find garnets, quartz, feldspar, mica, and corundum within this small stream. You will be searching on National Forest property and expected to take out all that you bring in. Anybody that has any questions can call Marsha Harmon (828) 369-7262.

Corbin Gneiss Complex - DMC trip

The DMC trip will be going to Corbin Gneiss Complex near Cartersville, GA on the 30th of April. There is a lot of safety equipment required at this location.

Saturday, April 30, 2022
Meet no later than 8:30 AM EST
Caravan into Quarry at 9:00 AM EST
Bartow County, GA

Pre-Registration Required
Contact Marsha Harmon if you are interested in attending

TRIP: This location is part of the Corbin Gneiss Complex. The quarry is mining porphyroblastic granite gneiss, so the rock there has large crystals, e.g., quartz and feldspar. The rocks here are some of the oldest in Georgia - approximately 1.2 billion years.

COLLECTING: We will be collecting granitic gneiss with blue quartz. Small pieces can be collected by hand and larger pieces can be collected with hammer and chisel. This material can be cut and polished and it also makes nice specimens.



REQUIREMENTS: Gloves, safety glasses, hard hat, and steel toed or sturdy boots with ankle support (e.g., hiking boots). No open toed shoes allowed. **Do not show up without the complete list of required equipment!**



CHILDREN (Yes): The quarry allows children, but they must have adult supervision at all times. And, they must have all of the required safety equipment.

PETS (No): No pets allowed.

FACILITIES: There are NO facilities at this location. Food and restrooms are several miles away.

ACCOMMODATIONS: There are many hotels in Cartersville, GA, which is less than half an hour away from this location.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Georgia Mineral Society members will be available to answer questions. There will also be a sign-in table with examples of collecting material.

DIRECTIONS AND WHERE TO MEET:

Registered attendees will receive directions via email.

Quarry employees will escort a caravan into the quarry. You are not allowed to drive around the quarry un-escorted. Everyone must enter and leave the quarry together.

If you arrive late you will not be able to enter the quarry!

If you have any questions you can call Marsha Harmon at (828)-369-7262. This will be an independent trip and signed waiver sheets are required by our club and the DMC both!

EDUCATION/TOURS

Do you know more than an 8th Grader?

By Marsha Harmon

The 8th grade class from Trimont Academy visited our Museum on the 17th of March. They requested and received a two-hour tour. I also included a short review of the Rock Cycle, along with examples of Igneous, Sedimentary, and Metamorphic Rocks. These 8th graders knew their stuff and were able to answer the following Rock Cycle questions --- can you?

- 1) What is the state Rock of North Carolina?
- 2) Does North Carolina contain examples of all 3 types of rocks?
- 3) In the States room of our own Museum, which State has the most different Rocks on display?
- 4) Fill in the blanks: Rocks can contain _____ but Minerals cannot contain _____ .
- 5) Can you name at least one Igneous, one Sedimentary, and one Metamorphic Rock?



Answers to the Rock Cycle Quiz:

- 1) Granite
- 2) Yes, it does.
- 3) Maine
- 4) Minerals: Rocks.
- 5) There are many more than these but here is a short list.
 Igneous - Obsidian, Granite, Basalt, Pumice, Rhyolite, Dolerite, Gabbro
 Sedimentary - Chert, Flint, Shale, Sandstone, Limestone, Conglomerate
 Metamorphic - Slate, Marble, Quartzite, Gneiss, Schist, Anthracite, Phyllite

BENCH TIPS

by Bradford Smith

SOLDERING PRONGS

I often use prongs to hold an irregular cab or other object on rings and pendants. But prongs can be a little tricky to solder. You have to find some way to hold them all upright while soldering, and the simple butt joint that looks strong sometimes breaks when you start to bend the prong over the stone. There's nothing worse than having a prong break off when you're setting the stone *#~*!

I solved both problems with one little trick. It keeps the prongs in position for soldering, and it gives you a stronger joint at the same time.

Locate and center punch the position for each prong. Then drill holes a little smaller than your prong wire. Sand a small taper on the ends of your prong wires and stand them up in the holes. The wires support themselves, soldering is easy, and the joint is stronger because of the increased soldering area.



Smart Solutions for Your Jewelry Making Problems

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

Websites of Interest

Carolina Geological Society- This site provides numerous downloadable fieldtrip guidebooks, maps, and charts of the Carolinas. It will prove to keep any avid rockhound busy for years.
<https://www.carolinageologicalsociety.org/>

North Carolina Rockhounding Location Guide & Map-This site provides information about rocks and minerals, especially those found in Western NC.
<https://rockhoundresource.com/north-carolina-rockhounding-location-guide-map/>



Faceting Equipment for Sale

Gary Galbrecht has a faceting machine that he would like to sell. The price is \$500 (obo) with 5% of the sales price going to the society. If you are interested or would like more information please contact Gary at 954-592-1377 or gcqdsign@bellsouth.net



Graves Mark 1 Faceting Machine w/ 28 Assorted Dops (No Transfer Jig or Laps)

UPCOMING SHOWS

April 1-3; Raleigh, NC
Tar Heel Gem & Mineral Club Annual Show
Kerr Scott Building, NC State Fairgrounds
4285 Trinity Rd, Raleigh, NC
Free admission and Free parking
Silent Auction all weekend

April 2-3, Tampa, FL
Tampa Bay Mineral and Science Club Annual Show
Florida State Fairgrounds
4800 US-301, Tampa, FL 33610
Kids Activities, Gemstones, Rocks, Crystals, Fossils, Jewelry,
Jewelry making supplies, Demonstrations, Beads, ATM on site,
Concession





CLUB ANNOUNCEMENTS

March Board Meeting
4:00 pm Tuesday, March 29th, 2022
First Christian Church of Franklin
156 Belleview Park Road
Franklin, NC

March General Meeting
6:00 pm Thursday, March 31st, 2022
First Christian Church of Franklin
156 Belleview Park Road
Franklin, NC

Newsletter Deadline for April is 4/20/2022

2022 SCHEDULE (Subject to change.)

Date	Event	Time	Program	Snacks
March 31, 2022	General Meeting	6:00 PM	TBD	Mike and Bushy Hartman
April 28, 2022	General Meeting	6:30 PM	GIA Varshana Dholakia, & Earl McGaughey	Volunteers Needed
May 26, 2022	General Meeting	6:30 PM	TBD	Volunteers Needed
June 30, 2022	General Meeting	6:30 PM	TBD	Volunteers Needed
July 28, 2022	General Meeting	6:30 PM	Ice Cream Social	N/A
--- July 29-31, 2022 Gem Show ---				



Club Officers and Board of Directors

Committees

President: Mark Laing, (864-910-1580)
Past President: Jane Morgan, (828-342-8703)
Vice President: Al Pribble, (828-342-3119)
2nd Vice President: Larry Ellert, (727-455-1849)
Secretary: Vacant
Treasurer: Kathi Walbridge, (802-598-7025)
Assistant Treasurer: Charlotte Frye, (727-455-1849)
Museum Manager: Larry Ellert, (727-455-1849)
Director (2023): Matt Castor, (828-421-8701)
Director (2023): Marsha Harmon, (828 369-7262)
Director (2022): Susan Fritz, (828-524-4936)
Director (2022): Charlotte Frye, (828-200-6023)

Membership: Tom Parker and Diane Mason
Museum Curator: Mark Laing, (864-910-1580)
Curator Emeritus: Fred Plesner, (828-349-4224)
Museum Gift Shop: Anamay Rossomando (828-349-2807)
Gift Shop Assistant: Bushy Hartman (850-868-1576)
Museum Workshop: Matt Castor, (828-421-8701)
Publicity: George Fritz, (828-524-4936)
Field Trip Coordinator: Helen Rogers (404-784-2531)
Program Coordinator: Vacant
Museum Calendar: Vacant
Gemborees: Chandra Coffee (706-982-0402)
Education/Tours: Marsha Harmon, (828 369-7262)
Asst Education/Historian: Ron Rossomando (828-349-2807)
Web Master: Melissa Barfield (803-724-8312)
Newsletter Editor: Stacy Walbridge, [\[fgmseditor@gmail.com\]](mailto:fgmseditor@gmail.com)

The Club is a member of the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies and the Southeast Federation of the Mineralogical Societies.

