THE MOUNTAIN GEM

Gem & Mineral Society of Franklin, North Carolina

ESTABLISHED 1972

February 2023 Newsletter

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Cover photograph: Provided by Pamela Martin. This photograph, of an Aquamarine Crystal, was taken by Pamela (one of our new members) at the Smithsonian

From the President

Stacy Walbridge

Kathi and I just took a short trip to Arizona to visit her sister, do some collecting, AND visit the Gem and Mineral Shows. Late January to early February is a rockhound's dream in Tucson. Forty-three different venues throughout the city with something for everyone and they're free. It can be overwhelming so we limited ourselves to four days of gem shows and tried to stay within our budget.

The most fun was out in the desert looking for Saffordites, fire agates, Chinese writing stone, obsidian, and geodes. This is the first time that we drove out and back so didn't worry about how much to collect. And we did return with several buckets of material. More about that later.

Our club calendar is starting to fill up with field trips and programs so keep your eye on the newsletter and announcements for upcoming events. Planning for the May Gemboree is ongoing with an increase seen in vendor responses so we will be busy. As a reminder we will be running the show without the Chamber and we will need the full support of the membership. Signup sheets will be available at the meetings, in the Museum, or online (https://signup.com/go/zgpSqRG). We have a place for you and will need your help.

See you at the next meeting.

Stacy Walbridge
President

January General Meeting Minutes

Submitted by Chandra Fox, Secretary
Photographs by Kim Price

January 26, 2023
Thursday 6:00pm

The meeting was called to order at 6:35pm by former President, Alton Pribble.

Minutes: Chandra Fox (fgmshows@gmail.com) No minutes from December.

Treasury: Kathi Walbridge. (FGMM.Treasurer@mail.com) Absent. / Charlotte Ellert. Activity in the museum has been steady with a faceting class, curator work on donations, and the museum being open on Fridays and Saturdays. Museum gift shop sales are slower as expected this time of year. Our Southeast Federation of Mineralogical Societies (SFMS) membership was renewed for 2023. All bills are paid.

Vice President: Absent

Museum Manager: Larry Ellert. (clellert@yahoo.com). Change of museum access protocols. No single person entry allowed after hours or when the museum is closed. Must be two or more people. Please contact Larry before entering and upon leaving the museum during closed hours via text or call (727) 455-1849

Museum Curator: Mark Laing. (mw.laing@hotmail.com) Absent. Acting Curator: Bushy Hartman (bushyhtm@yahoo.com) Absent. Via Rpt. The vault is organized and now ready to be updated in the spreadsheet in two weeks, after combining what was worth keeping from the Slammer storage area. The Slammer storage area has just a few more items to be removed for sale. The seashells have been centrally located so Stacy Walbridge can photograph upon his return and contact the President of the North Carolina Shell Club to see what would be the most beneficial way to sell them. We have three shelves of them. There is a shelf that has designated specimens for the Chamber of Commerce to be selected by Kim Price when she has located a display case.

Workshop: Matt Castor. (combatflyfisher@yahoo.com). Recently replaced motor on green slab saw. Cleaned both green and blue saw of buildup and debris. Motor is now burned up on green saw. Blue saw is the only saw currently available.

Gift Shop: Bushy Hartman. (bushyhtm@yahoo.com) Absent. /
Anamay Rossomando. (anamay@verizon.net) Absent. Via Rpt. January has been slow with very low sales and donations. Stock is low in the jewelry portion but specimens are a plenty. One closet has been designated for the May Gemshow and is filling with slabs Mike has been slabbing every chance he gets. The cast offs from the Slammer and Vault have been prepared for sales at the upcoming Gem shows and the Gift Shop. Our next project will be making twenty sifters to be sold with dirtbags.

Newsletter Editor: Mike Hartman (fgmseditor@gmail.com) Deadline for newsletter submissions is February 16, 2023. Anyone can access a copy of our newsletter through FGMM.org, (via a cell phone) click three bars in upper right corner, click newsletter tab. If via a personal computer, just click on Newsletter at the top of the web site. Access to the most current newsletter is available; for archived editions, contact the editor. Calling all members to submit photos of your work to be used for future newsletter covers.

Publicity: Kim Price (kprice@safetworksinc.com) Requested volunteers to join the publicity committee. Please contact Kim. Photos of new members to appear in up coming newsletters.

Scholarships: Al Pribble. (alton36@gmail.com) Presented mini grants to New Holland Lapidary School.

Future Vision: Ron Rossomando. Absent. Kim Price. (kprice@safetworksinc.com We are looking at the future for the society and will be having a meeting when Ron Rossomando returns in Spring. Any comments or suggestions please contact Ron or Kim.

Membership: Tom Parker. Absent. Attending: 32 members, 2 guest, 4 new members.

Education: Marsha Harmon. (monaleaf28734@gmail.com) Absent. No Report.

Field Trips: Sean Price (blackpinesgeology@gmail.com) / Helen Rogers (helen.rogers.clay@gmail.com) An initial outline of monthly fieldtrips / programs was

introduced to the attending membership through a power point presentation after the general meeting. If you have a particular location, you would like to see the society organize a fieldtrip around please reach out to Sean Price or Helen Rogers. In August 2023, we will be hosting Dixie Mineral and will need volunteers for hosting.

Gem Show: Chandra Fox. (FGMShows@gmail.com) / Sean Price (blackpinesgeology@gmail.com)
Please think about volunteering for greeters, ticket takers, hosting, demonstrations and setup and breakdown for the up coming May Gem Show. At our next General Meeting there will be signup sheets located on the tables at the back of the room. More vendor contracts are coming in daily and is showing a great turnout. Vendor contracts for any members who may be interested in selling are located at the back of the room. Thank you for your support.

Reminder: The May Show will be solely sponsored by The Franklin Gem and Mineral Society so please consider volunteering when and where you are able.

Programs: Kim Price (kprice@safetworksinc.com). Sean and Kim Price presented an itinerary for the upcoming 2023 monthly presentations.

Constitution / By-Laws Committee: Al Pribble (alton36@gmail.com), Larry Ellert (clellert@yahoo.com).
No Report.

Old Business: No Report.

New Business: Norm made an announcement he would conduct a free “Dop” class January 28, 2023. Larry announced Donovan McDonald has agreed to take the position of assistant museum manager.

Motion to adjourned, seconded, and approved at 6:54p.m.

New Members

The Franklin Gem and Mineral Society would like to welcome our newest members: Bill Hodge, Pam Martin, Milton Midgett, Debra Rogers, Patrece Remmel, Tamara Zwinak and Tommy VanHook.

When you see them at the next Society meeting on February 23 or while you are out and about, say hello and introduce yourself. We are glad to have them as members!

Bill Hodge

Pam Martin

Milton Midgett

Debra Rogers

Patrece Remmel

Tamara Zwinak

Tommy VanHook

The Faceters' Corner

By Norm Holbert

As announced at our January meeting, a group of faceters met at the museum on Saturday (1/28/2023). The purpose of the gathering was to see a demonstration of black wax dopping. Dopping is the technique of attaching the stone to be cut to a dop. Norm Holbert demonstrated his way of using black wax. He showed how he did the initial dopping and how he transferred the stone after finishing the pavillion so as to cut the crown of the stone. Mike Hartman, on his first try, did a pretty good job doing an initial and transfer using black wax.

Black wax melts at a higher temperature than the green wax that is usually used for cabbing. Some faceters use epoxy or superglue or a combo of black wax and superglue.

During this session, we decided that we would like to meet like this to discuss, demonstrate, learn some "new" tips, and other aspects of faceting. We decided to meet the Saturday after each monthly meeting at the museum. For now, we will meet at 1:00 PM. The next session will be about cutting synthetic versus natural rough, cutting calibrated versus non-calibrated stones and L/W ratios. If interested, join us.

L-R Virginia Bennis, John Hayes, Gary Galbrecht, Mike Hartman & Norm Holbert

Mike Hartman giving it a go, with Norm Holbert instructing

Breaking News from Al Pribble

1.2-Million-Year-Old Obsidian Axe Factory Found In Ethiopia

By Ben Taub (Freelance Writer)

An unknown species of human apparently mastered obsidian, something it had been thought only occurred in the Stone Age.

An obsidian handaxe, made by an unknown hominid 1.2 million years ago. Photo provided by: Margherita Mussi

Forged in magma and capable of producing the sharpest blades on Earth, obsidian is without a doubt one of the most badass materials ever imagined (there's a reason George RR Martin made it the weapon of choice to kill White Walkers). The jet-black volcanic glass is also extremely delicate and dangerous to work with, and was not mastered by humans until the latter part of the Stone Age… or so we thought.

Reporting on the latest findings from the Melka Kunture archaeological site in Ethiopia, a team of researchers has described the discovery of an obsidian handaxe workshop within a layer of sediment dated to 1.2 million years ago. This represents a staggeringly early example of obsidian shaping, and, according to the study authors, is the only handaxe factory ever dated to the Early Pleistocene.

“[Archaeological] sites described as ‘knapping workshops’ are only recorded in the second half of the Middle Pleistocene and only in Europe so far,” write the researchers. Located

predominantly in France and the UK, the most notable Stone Age axe workshops were all associated with the creation of flint blades.

“Generally speaking, obsidian is extensively used only from the Middle Stone Age onwards,” write the study authors.

However, during the course of their excavations, the team came across an ancient layer of sediment containing a cache of 578 stone tools, all but three of which were sculpted from obsidian. “We show through statistical analysis that this was a focused activity, that very standardized handaxes were produced and that this was a stone-tool workshop,” they write.

Describing the axes, the researchers repeatedly marvel that “the morphological standardization is remarkable,” and while they don’t know which species of human crafted the tools, they say that whoever created them diligently applied “secondary retouches” and was highly “focused on the final regularization of the artifacts.”

Achieving such homogeneity would have required highly sharpened skills and a fair amount of dexterity, as obsidian is a fragile rock that must be knapped with considerably more finesse than flint or basalt. “Accordingly, manufacturers had to accurately evaluate the strength of the blow to avoid producing flakes of little use, or just to avoid smashing the core,” explain the researchers.

Techniques for shaping obsidian are believed to have first emerged during the Upper Paleolithic, and even modern knappers wear protective gloves to avoid shredding their hands when working with the razor-sharp material. And yet, when describing tools from over a million years ago, the study authors say that “the standardized obsidian handaxes provide ample evidence of the repetitive use of fully mastered skills.”

The emergence of such abilities marks a surprisingly massive cognitive leap for such an ancient group of humans. According to the authors, the adaptation of existing flint knapping techniques to create more challenging obsidian tools can be seen as an example of “convergent thinking”, which is associated with creative problem-solving.

Hailing this remarkable achievement, the researchers say the old axe makers “creatively solved through convergent thinking technological problems such as effectively detaching and shaping large flakes of the unusually brittle and cutting volcanic glass.”

All without any protective gloves. Over a million years ago.

The study is published in the journal Nature Ecology & Evolution.

A History of Gold Mining and Prospecting

By Kim Price

We are excited to feature Allen Trotter – known to many as "Prospector Al" from East Tennessee. At a young age Mr. Trotter was introduced to mineral collecting or "Rockhounding" by his father. From the age of 8, he was visiting collecting sites across the Southeast with his father and learning about regional minerals and geology.

During his late 30s and early 40s, he began to have a renewed interest in geology and mineral collecting. During this time Mr. Trotter saw a television show called "Gold Fever" and began watching the show regularly. Several months of watching this show led him to researching the topic on the internet. Shortly thereafter, he realized that Tennessee actually had its own Gold Rush! Soon, he realized that there was also a gold mining club located in the Coker Creek, Tennessee area.

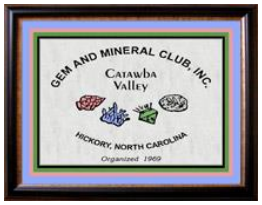
The quest for gold has led him to other States as well as Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Alabama, Colorado, California, Maine, South Dakota, and New Mexico. Mr. Trotter is still engaged in gold mining with emphasis on educating the public on small scale mining practices. location history, and proper techniques. Our program will focus on the history of gold and gold mining in the region. Allen will cover the initial "discovery" of gold in East Tennessee, followed by its economic, social, and historical impact. Locations, gold recovery techniques, and a general description of the gold deposits will be included in the presentation. Our March 4, 2023 Field Trip will be to Consolidated Gold Mine in Dahlonega, Georgia to visit a gold mine and try our hand a panning for some gold!

Upcoming Shows

February 25 Lakeland, FL

Annual show; Bone Valley Gem, Mineral & Fossil Society; First Presbyterian Church of Lakeland, 175 Lake Hollingsworth Dr, Lakeland, FL 33801; Sat. 9-4:30; $3 Adults, Children under 18 and teachers Free; Email: BoneValley.info@gmail.com; Website: www.bonevalley.net/

March 24-26 Hickory, NC



Annual show; Catawba Valley Gem & Mineral Club, Inc; Hickory Metro Convention Center, 1960 13th Ave. Drive, SE; Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; Admission is $6 which is good for all three days. Children 12 and under are admitted free. Law enforcement officers and active or retired military with

credentials, Scouts and Leaders in uniform will be admitted free anytime during this 3-day event; contact Dean Russell, Email: cvgmcsecretary@aol.com; Website: cvgmc.com

March 31-April 2 Raleigh, NC
Annual show; Tar Heel Gem & Mineral Club; Kerr Scott Bldg, NC Fairgrounds, 1025 Blue Ridge Rd; Fri. 3-7, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; free; contact Cyndy Hummel, Email: mchummel@mindspring.com; Website: tarheelclub.org

May 12-14 Marietta, GA
Georgia Mineral Society 54th Annual Mother's Day Weekend Gem, Mineral, Jewelry, and Fossil Show, Cobb Civic Center 548 South Marietta Pkwy SE Marietta, GA 3006. Fri-Sat. 10-6, Sun. Noon-5. Free Parking and Admission. https://www.gamineral.org/showmain.html

May 19-21 Franklin, NC
Gem & Mineral Society of Franklin Show and Sale; Robert C. Carpenter Community Building, 1288 Georgia Road, Fri/Sat 10-6, Sun 10-4.

October 20-22 Knoxville, TN
The Knoxville Gem & Mineral Society; Rothchild Conference Center, 8807 Kingston Pike, Knoxville, TN 37923, Fri & Sat 10-6, Sun 11-5; The Gem Show is open to the public and has an admission fee of $8 a day for adults or $15 for the whole show; children under 12 are admitted free. Website http://www.knoxrocks.org/gem-show/

February Birthdays

13-SHARON FOX

24-BEN LaFLAMM

Happy Birthday!

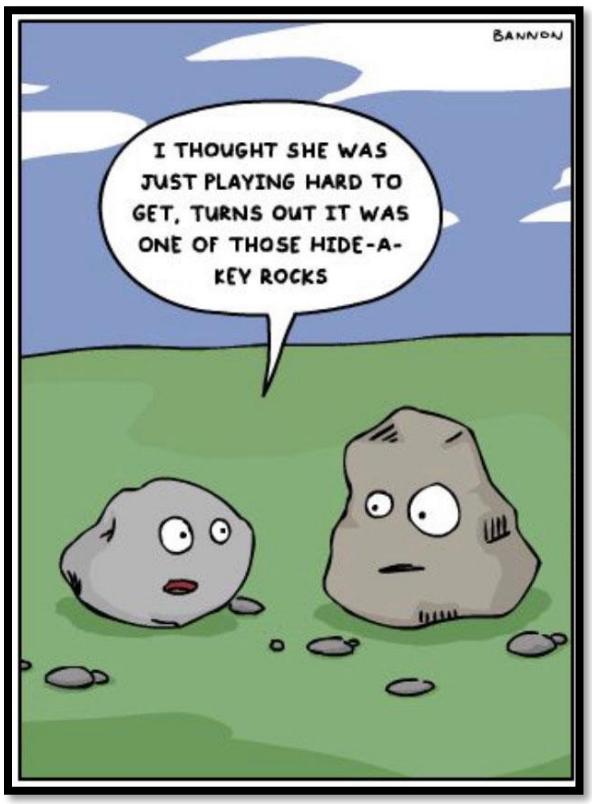
Birthstone information extracted from https://www.gia.edu/birthstones

If you were born in February, your birthstone is amethyst – the purple variety of quartz that has captivated mankind for millennia. Its lilac to deep purple hues can be cut into many shapes and sizes, and it can be manufactured in a lab as well as mined. Amethyst, the February birthstone, can be found in the collections of royal families throughout Europe and Asia. Now it's within reach of most consumers.

Petosky Stones Swap

Petosky stones swapped *for local rocks desired *. James from MI will be in Franklin April 28 for trading from 12 until 4. Please call 828 369-7262 if you are interested.

Rockhounding Humor



Bench Tips

by Bradford Smith
Smart Solutions for Your Jewelry Making Problems
Amazon.com/author/bradfordsmith

Cutting Molds

Cutting molds is easier and more precise with a sharp blade. A new Xacto blade is sufficient for cutting RTV molds but is usually not sharp enough for vulcanized rubber molds. For that it's best to use scalpel blades available from most jewelry supply companies. The #11 blade is triangle shaped, and the #12 is hawksbill shaped. I find the hawksbill is particularly nice for cutting the registration keys of the mold.

Club Announcements

February 2023 Board Meeting
(All members are welcome)
4:00 pm Tuesday, February 21st, 2023

First Christian Church of Franklin
156 Belleview Park Road
Franklin, NC

February 2023 General Meeting
6:30 pm Thursday, February 23rd, 2023

First Christian Church of Franklin
156 Belleview Park Road
Franklin, NC

Newsletter Deadline for March is 03/20/2023

2023 SCHEDULE (Subject to change.)

Date	Event	Time	Program	Snacks
February 23, 2023	General Meeting	6:30 PM	Gold Prospecting & Regional History by Allen Trotter	Tamara Zwinak
March 30, 2023	General Meeting	6:30 PM	Cabbing & Faceting by Stacy Walbridge	Brad & Jacey Fleszar
April 27, 2023	General Meeting	6:30 PM	Geology and Collecting in Japan by Kim and Sean Price	Bernd & Maggie Phoenix
May 19-20 Franklin Gem & Mineral Show				
May 25, 2023	General Meeting	6:30 PM	The Washington Monument: How Macon County Contributed to the Capstone by Al Pribble and Sean Price	Jenny & Jay Mooney
June 29, 2023	General Meeting	6:30 PM	The Cherokee Mineral Trade by an EBCI Tribal Historian	Varshana & Earl McGaughey

Club Officers and Board of Directors

President: Stacy Walbridge, (802-598-9548)
Past President: Mark Laing, (864-910-1580)
Vice President: Vacant
2nd Vice President: Larry Ellert, (727-455-1849) Secretary: Chandra Fox (706-982-0402)
Treasurer: Kathi Walbridge, (802-598-7025)
Assistant Treasurer: Charlotte Ellert, (727-455-1849)
Museum Manager: Larry Ellert, (727-455-1849)
Museum Manager Assistant: Donovan MacDonald 828-226-3131
Director (2023): Matt Castor, (828-421-8701)
Director (2023): Marsha Harmon, (828 369-7262)
Director (2022): Charlotte Ellert, (828-200-6023)
Director (2023): Brad Fleszar (828-371-1211)

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

Committees

Membership: Tom Parker, (828-342-3619)
Museum Curator: Mark Laing, (864-910-1580)
Assistant Curator: Vacant
Curator Emeritus: Fred Plesner, (828-349-4224)
Museum Gift Shop: Anamay Rossomando (828-349-2807)
Gift Shop Assistant: Vacant
Museum Workshop: Matt Castor, (828-421-8701)
Publicity: Kim Price (336-653-1201)
Field Trip Coordinator: Sean Price (336-964-2061)
Field Trip Assistant: Helen Rogers (404-784-2531)
Program Coordinator: Kim Price (336-653-1201)
Refreshments: Charlene Galbrecht (954-592-1377)
Constitution and By-Laws: Al Pribble (828-342-3119)
Future Vision: Ron Rossomando (828-349-2807)
Museum Calendar: Vacant
Gemborees: Chandra Fox (706-982-0402)
Gemborees Assistant: Sean Price (336-964-2061)
Scholarships: Al Pribble (828-342-3119)
Education/Tours: Marsha Harmon, (828 369-7262)
Asst Education/Historian: Ron Rossomando (828-349-2807)
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