



50 Years
1972-2022



The Mountain Gem

October 2022

THE MOUNTAIN GEM

Gem & Mineral Society of Franklin, North Carolina

ESTABLISHED 1972

October 2022 Newsletter

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WWW.FGMM.ORG

Cover Photograph: Australian Boulder Opal; The little reddish nuts are ironstone; the more brownish material is sandstone; from Queensland Australia. Provided by Tom Parker



From the President Stacy Walbridge

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who volunteered during the past year. We had some challenges but it was with you volunteers that the Club and Museum continued to prosper.

Fifty years ago, a few people with a love of Gems and Minerals formed our Gem and Mineral Society of Franklin. Within two years the Society grew and with the support of the town and county established our museum in the old County jail. Over time, the Museum has grown to house over 6,000 specimens and boasts one of the best fluorescent displays in the southeast. Over 3,000 visitors representing all 50 states and several foreign countries have toured our museum this year.



As we transition into the winter months the Officers and Committee chairs will be working to improve our offerings to the members and the community for the coming year. But they can't do it by themselves. Wherever your interest in Gems, Minerals, or Fossils may lie I encourage you to talk with the Officers and Committee chairs to see where you can volunteer some time to help support the Society

Thank you again.

Stacy Walbridge
President

September General Meeting Minutes

Submitted by Chandra Fox, Secretary

Photographs by George Fritz

September 29, 2022

Thursday 6:30 P.M.

First Christian Church of Franklin

Meeting called to order by Vice President Al Pribble. (alton36@gmail.com) at 6:35 pm. A motion made to accept the minutes. Minutes unanimously accepted by attending board members, directors, and coordinators. members, directors, and coordinators.

Treasurer: Treasury Report: Kathi Walbridge (kwalbridge@mail.com) reported sales are steady but beginning to drop off. Collected net profit of \$3874.85 from the July Gem Show. Kathi and Ron will be continuing a review of the Financials. We are beginning to work on the 2023 Budget needs. Signature cards should be updated at the bank to reflect newly sworn board members. Considering the purchase of Microsoft Office for the Treasurer and Secretary. Presented account summary documents for review of attending board members.

Stephanie Brundage: Announced that she has been cleaning the Museum Gardens. There is an Oak Leaf Hydrangea that needs to be moved and is available for anyone who may want all or part of the plant.

John Hayes: Presentation made to Kathi Walbridge and Helen Rogers with a "Certificate of Achievement" for a cabbing class they completed under his instruction. See photos below. There is a signup sheet located at the back of the room for help with instruction of classes. There is an option to do "Intro" or "Advanced" or "Full Class" for Cabochons'.



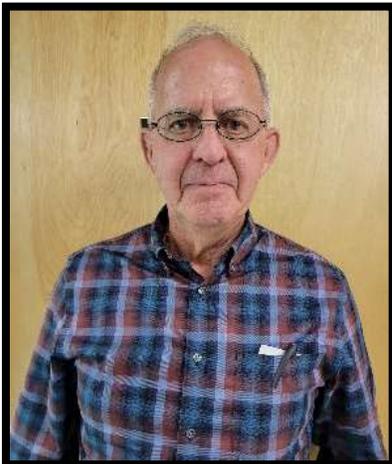


Completed Cabochoning Class: L-R: Helen Rogers and Kathi Walbridge

Membership: Tom Parker (tthom2p@gmail.com). Reported that 46 members and 6 guests attended the General Meeting. He announced that starting in September we will begin collecting dues for the coming year. Dues stand at \$20 single member, \$30 Family, \$5 Pebble pups (under 18 years of age). Membership buttons are also available.

New Members

We would like to welcome our three new members.



James Steinbrecher



Kevin Perkins



Rose Perkins

Field Trips: Helen Rogers (helen.rogers.clay@gmail.com), Sean Price. October 15, 2022 A field Trip is planned for Lost Sea Adventures in Sweetwater, Tenn. This is a cave tour with water attraction. \$20 deposit (non-refundable), \$45 per person. The signup sheet for this





fieldtrip will be located at the museum. The day of the trip, we will meet at the museum at 8am. Sign waivers and leave from that location as a group.

7:10 All new officers and board of directors are duly sworn in. Dinner is served. Two special guests were in attendance: Macon County Commissioners, Ronnie Beale and Gary Shields for the official swear in newly elected board members. President, Vice President, Second Vice President/Museum Manager, Chairman of the Nominating Committee, Secretary, Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer and Two new board members.

Congratulations to the 2022-23 Officers & Board of Directors!



From left to right in the photo: The honorable Gary Shields, Macon County Commissioner; Brad Fleszer, Board of Directors; Mark Laing, Past President; Larry Ellert, 2nd Vice President; Charlotte Ellert, Asst. Treasurer & Board of Directors; Chandra Fox, Secretary; Stacy Walbridge, President; Kathi Walbridge, Treasurer; Mike Hartman, Vice President; Marsha Harmon, Board of Directors; and the honorable Ronnie Beale, Macon County Commissioner.

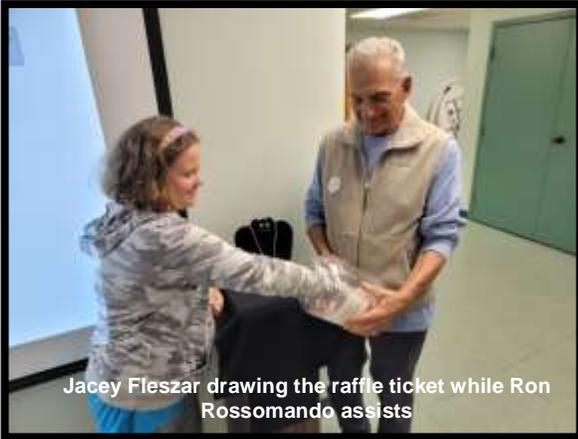
New Business: At 7:40 the meeting was called back to order by Stacy Walbridge. He pointed out that we all have similar paths; we are all interested in rocks, minerals, and fossils. All committee chairs have been filled, except for Museum Calendar. Please see spreadsheet for detailed breakdown. The club should consider updating the By Laws and Constitution. The club has existed for 50 years and the Museum boast over 6,000 specimens. Formed in 1972. We have a newly created committee referred to as "Future Vision". Please fill out the worksheet provided by Stacy for feedback or new ideas as the club continues to grow. The October Fest is going to be held the same weekend as the Leaf Looker Gemboree. We need volunteers! You can sign up in person at the museum, online at Signup.com or by contacting Sean Price 336-964-2061 or Chandra Fox @ 706-982-0402

Motion to adjourn meeting, seconded. The meeting was adjourned 8:05p





Gem & Mineral Society General Meeting & Officer's Installation Dinner



Jacey Fleszar drawing the raffle ticket while Ron Rossomando assists



General Meeting members



Remembering Arlon Eldridge



Members socializing and Tom Parker (sitting) collecting dues and passing out member badges



Chef John Hayes and his sous chef Larry Ellert



Everyone, including Commissioner Ronnie Beale, enjoying the Officer's Installation dinner





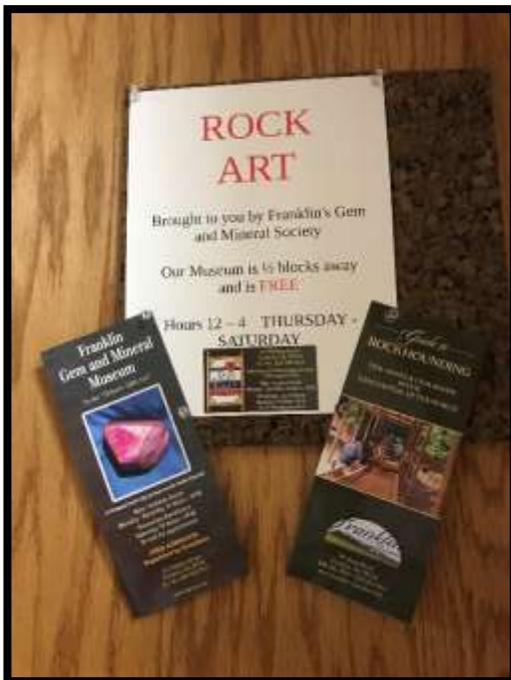
Education/Tours

By Marsha Harmon

We are supporting 3 educational exhibits throughout Macon County. They are located in Rickman's Store, the Macon County Public Library and the Macon County Courthouse. I would like to focus on our Courthouse exhibit. "Rock Art" as it is named was set up to encourage visitors into our museum. The fact that it is 1/2 blocks away from our museum, makes it a no brainer for great free publicity. What does Rock Art mean? In my opinion it means, whatever you want it to mean. A cabochon, a faceted piece, a wire wrapped rock or an intarsia project certainly fits into this picture; as does little houses, huge slabs, clocks, and of course Ron's rock Cairn meaning a pile of rocks. As members in our club some of these exhibits are great examples of classes you can take and further fill your artistic knowledge. Check them out as they are meant to rotate around, to reach the largest number of spectators possible. Thank you to the members who chose to loan their Rock Art pieces: Bushy, Mike, Stacey, Annamay, Ron, Fred, Stephanie and Marsha. Thank you also for taking the pictures Mike.

Please remember our Tour program and pass the word to all groups interested in a guided tour of our museum with at least 10 persons or more.

Marsha Harmon, harmonmarsha06@gmail.com or 828-369-7262.





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Education/Tours (cont'd)

By Marsha Harmon

On the chilly morning of October 18th, our museum was visited by 26 fourth graders and several teachers/parents from Summit Charter School in Cashiers, NC. Their trip was to be finished with a visit to the Cherokee Mine with sluicing in a chilly troft. It was an exciting day for all as the children, and the teachers were impressed by our vast and diverse collection. The big hit for the tour was the Slammer and Florescent Room. The children were very interested in many of our rooms and asked several thought provoking questions. Marsha coordinated the tour with Stacy, Ron R, Fred and Brad hosting in the various rooms. It was a rewarding experience for the children and teachers as well as for the hosts. The head teacher, Lauren Bennett, had many fine compliments as to what a nice job we all did and how impressive our museum was to the 4th graders. We hope that all visitors spread the word and come back soon. I would like to thank Stacy, Ron, Fred and Brad for their volunteering with this challenging adventure which required knowledge and thinking on your feet.



Gift Shop News

by Anamay Rossomando

Looking forward to our busy Leaf Lookers Season. We will be having an outside table for Pumpkinfest Sat. Oct. 22nd we will be open 9-4 so if you haven't signed up to help, we still have some spots left. Also, our raffle will be drawn the end of the month so get you tickets while visiting the museum, winning this would make a nice Christmas gift, along with other one-of-a-kind gifts, shopping @ the museum helps us all.





On the Radio by Mike Hartman

Mr. Gordon Mercer, Professor Emeritus at Western Carolina University, sat down with Stacy Walbridge and myself for an interview, on behalf of the Citizens Making a Difference program. The interview was based on how the Franklin Gem & Mineral Museum/Society contributes to Franklin holding the title of “Ruby Capitol of the World”. The recorded interview will be broadcasted on radio channels: WNCC 104.1 AM, WFSC 1050 AM, and 104.9 FM, this Saturday morning, at 08:00 AM. Hope that everyone tunes in! Wyatt Duvall (Mr. Mercer’s grandson), Mr. Gordon Mercer, Marcia Mercer (Mr. Mercer’s wife), and Stacy Walbridge.



November Field Trips by Helen Rogers



DMC Field Trip Sharing Program The Southeast Federation of Mineralogical Societies, Inc



The Friendly Federation - Founded in 1976 to serve
www.southeastfed.org
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An Official Field Trip of Mid-Tennessee Gem & Mineral Society, Inc (HOST)
Saturday, November 5, 2022
10:00 AM to 2:00 PM Central Time
Cumberland Furnace, TN
Registration Required

NOTE: DMC field trips will continue to be planned and scheduled, but may be cancelled or rescheduled pending COVID-19 status. If there are any changes to a trip, all contacts listed for DMC member clubs will be notified via email as soon as possible. The DMC trip schedule page on the SFMS website (<https://www.southeastfed.org/sfms-field-trips/dmc-field-trip-program/dmc-field-trip-schedule>) will also be updated with the current status of trips. **Lori Carter, DMC Coordinator**





TRIP: We are heading to Cumberland Furnace to collect slag. The slag was a byproduct of making iron. Some of the slag is quite colorful in shades of blue and green ... some with swirls. The slag is easily cut and polished and makes nice pendants – it is too soft for rings.

COLLECTING: Our target is a dump pile on the banks of the stream that runs through Cumberland Furnace (access by crossing a large field owned by the community). This dump pile is located about a ¼ of a mile from the parking area. Although the dump pile has the greatest potential, slag can be found anywhere along the banks (both upstream and downstream). Another way to search is by wading downstream from the furnace if the creek is low. I am not sure if conditions will permit - bring wading shoes just in case if you wish to collect in the stream.



BRING: You need to bring a hand tool, trowel, small shovel, etc. to dig in the slag pile and gloves to protect your hands. Bring a backpack or small buckets for carrying. Boots or wading shoes are recommended as your feet may get wet otherwise.

TERRAIN/SPECIAL CONDITIONS: Quarter mile hike through the woods to the site, the path will be slightly overgrown. There is creek and some small streams, so your feet might get wet. Stream should be low this time of the year.

FEE: There is no fee

CHILDREN (Yes): Must be 6 years or older

PETS (Yes): Leash required.

FACILITIES: No facilities at this site. Nearest gas station is one mile away.

Note from Helen: This looks like it may be of interest to our cabbers - lots of slag glass to play with.

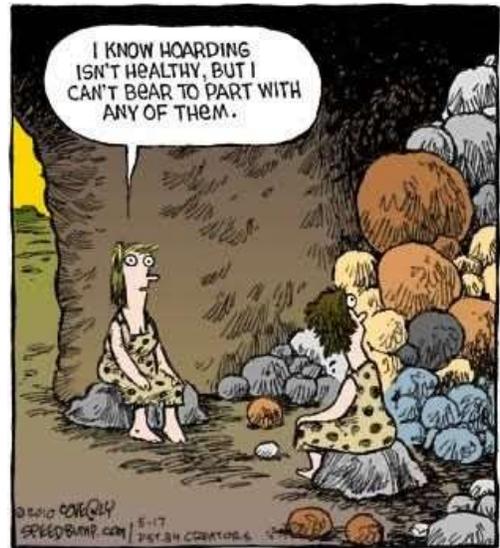
Contact: Helen Rogers (helen.rogers.clay@gmail.com) or Sean Price (blackpinesgeology@gmail.com) for more information.





Rockhounding Humor

Coprolite isn't my favorite fossil, but it is a solid number two!



Breaking News from Al Pribble

Diamonds are the hardest naturally occurring stone on the planet, however, they might have strong competition from outer space!! Al Pribble shared this interesting article, about lonsdaleite, or the "folded diamond", with us:

Scientists Discover Wildly Rare 'Folded Diamond' That Arrived on Earth from Outer Space

written by [Shelby Scott](#) September 19, 2022 12:31 pm

Diamonds are the hardest naturally occurring stone on the planet. However, now, girls' best friend might see some serious competition. A new variety of [diamond from outer space](#) is challenging the hardness of the

diamond found on earth.





Identified by a unique hexagonal pattern, the “folded diamond,” or lonsdaleite, has been discovered by scientists in a Northwest region of Africa.

According to *Newsweek*, the folded diamond is hardly a new discovery. Scientists originally became aware of the rare stone embedded in meteorite samples from outer space half a century ago. However, until now, folded diamonds have only been found in extremely microscopic amounts. Experts have extracted samples from meteorites only measuring nanometers in size. Per the outlet, the newly found folded diamond is 1,000 times the size of crystals uncovered before.

Above all else then, it’s the sheer size of the new discovery that makes the outer space rock unique.

That being said, scientists’ latest discovery is unique for another reason. The lonsdaleite could very well surpass naturally occurring diamonds in hardness. Until now, no other natural stone or mineral has unseated the coveted stone before.

For additional information: <https://outsider.com/.../scientists-discover-wildly-rare.../> and <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lonsdaleite>

Our Jail Cell’s Celebrity Status

Not sure if everyone knows it, but our Macon County Commissioner, Mr. Gary Shields, made his mark long before he became Commissioner...on the jail cell wall. He was gracious enough to share his story at our Installation Dinner. When he was a young sixteen-year-old, he and his friends “appropriated” some fish, chickens, and beer, to have a fish and chicken fry. Things went awry, especially since alcohol was involved, and he ended up in the slammer, where he subsequently autographed our jail cell.



After this incident, Commissioner Shields turned his life around and has shown that you do not have to continue down a path of criminal behavior, but instead, you can make a success of yourself. When he became the principal of Franklin High School, he was asked by a club member if he wanted his name painted over, to which he adamantly said no. He wanted to be an example to his students that you can be reformed and make a positive contribution to the community. Thank you, Commissioner Shields, for sharing your story!





Upcoming Shows

October 21-23 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; \$3 adults; 12 & under Free. Website: www.visitfranklinnc.com



November 18-20 Columbia, SC

Columbia Gem & Mineral Society
54th Annual Gem, Mineral & Jewelry Show; Jewelry, beads, loose stones, fossils, minerals, gold, silver, & tools for sale. Geodes sold & cut. Club member's rock collections on exhibit & lapidary demonstrations. South Carolina amethyst on display. Lots of fun for the whole family.
Jamil Temple, 206 Jamil Rd., Columbia, SC; Fri/Sat 10-6, Sun 10-5; \$5 Adults, 16 & under FREE, All military & their dependents FREE.



February 9-12 Tucson, AZ

Tucson Gem & Mineral Society
"SILICA - Agates and Opals and Quartz, Oh My!"
Tucson Convention Center - 260 S. Church Avenue, Tucson, AZ
\$12 Adults, Children under 14 are FREE with a paying adult.
<https://www.tgms.org/show>





Club Announcements

October Board Meeting
(All members are welcome)
6:00 pm Tuesday, October 25th, 2022
First Christian Church of Franklin
156 Belleview Park Road
Franklin, NC

September General Meeting
6:30 pm Thursday, September 27th, 2022
Officer Installation Dinner
First Christian Church of Franklin
156 Belleview Park Road
Franklin, NC

Newsletter Deadline for November is 11/07/2022

2022 SCHEDULE (Subject to change.)

Date	Event	Time	Program	Snacks
October 21-23 Gem Show				
October 27, 2022	General Meeting	6:30 PM	Astro-Geology: From the Big Bang to the Earth by Larry Crary	Charlene & Gary Galbrecht
November 17, 2022	General Meeting	6:30 PM	Minerals of Morocco by Sean Price	TBD





Club Officers and Board of Directors

President: Stacy Walbridge, (802-598-9548)
 Past President: Mark Laing, (864-910-1580)
 Vice President: Mike Hartman (850) 868-1576
 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)
 Director (2023): Matt Castor, (828-421-8701)
 Director (2023): Marsha Harmon, (828 369-7262)
 Director (2022): Susan Fritz, (828-524-4936)
 Director (2022): Charlotte Ellert, (828-200-6023)

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: Bushy Hartman, (850-868-1576)
 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: Kim Price (336-653-1201)
 Field Trip Coordinator: Helen Rogers (404-784-2531)
 Field Trip Assistant: Sean Price (336-964-2061)
 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)
 Web Master: Melissa Barfield (803-724-8312)
 Newsletter Editor: Mike Hartman, [fgmseditor@gmail.com]

