



The Mountain Gem

June 2022

THE MOUNTAIN GEM

Gem & Mineral Society of Franklin, North Carolina

ESTABLISHED 1972

June 2022 Newsletter

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WWW.FGMM.ORG

Unakite Cover Photograph courtesy of
silverenchantments.com



May General Meeting Minutes

May 26, 2022
Thursday 6:30 P.M.
First Christian Church of Franklin

The meeting was called to order by **Vice President Al Pribble**. (alton36@gmail.com) at 6:30 pm. An announcement was made to remember President Mark Laing as he awaits surgery for his severe medical condition.

Minutes: Minutes were approved from the April 28, 2022 meeting.

President: Mark Laing. (mw.laing@hotmail.com) Absent, no report.

Vice President: Al Pribble (alton36@gmail.com) Nothing to Report.

Treasurer: Kathi Walbridge. (kwalbridge@maill.com) Reported income exceeded expenses. Having the Museum open Wednesday through Saturday is making a positive difference in revenues.

Al Pribble conveyed a **BIG Thank You** to Mike and Bushy Hartman for keeping the museum open faithfully every Saturday throughout the winter. Membership expressed their support for this heartfelt sentiment with applause.

Museum Manager: Larry Ellert. (clellert@yahoo.com). Sand box renovation is almost done with a new cover, just needs caulking. Larry procured paper supplies, TP and towels for the Museum.

Museum Curator: Mark Laing. (mw.laing@hotmail.com) Absent. No Report.

Workshop: Matt Castor. (combatflyfisher@yahoo.com) Matt Castor and Stacy Walbridge will begin a workshop inventory on June 1, 2022. They say we can expect to have the workshop area inventoried, cleaned and well organized by fall.

Gift Shop: Bushy Hartman. (bushyhtm@yahoo.com) / Anamay Rossomando. (anamay@verizon.net) Absent. Delayed for Program Presentation.



Newsletter Editor: Stacy Walbridge. (fgmseditor@gmail.com) Deadline for newsletter submissions is June 20, 2022. The Mountain Gem always encourages submissions of articles, unique or general information and tidbits of interest. Marsha Harman suggested articles on the location of material and the geological history of the area. Stacy Walbridge will be giving a presentation to the Franklin Rotary Club on June 1, 2022 on Macon County Gem and Minerals and Lapidary. (Editor's Note: The presentation was delayed until September due to a presentation by the Ukrainian Rotary Club.)

Publicity: George Fritz. (fritzga@hotmail.com) Absent.

Streets of Franklin- Charlotte Frye (fryecharlotte@yahoo.com) "Spring Fling" is this weekend. Sections of Main Street and Phillips Street will be closed to vehicle traffic. The Society will have a booth set up on the street in front of the Museum.

Scholarships: Al Pribble. (alton36@gmail.com) No Report.

Membership: The club welcomed several new members that attended the meeting.

Field Trips / Education: Helen Rogers (helen.rogers.clay@gmail.com) / Marsha Harmon. (monaleaf28734@gmail.com) The "Ray Mine" field trip was unfortunately cancelled due to the weather. Our new date for this trip is June 18, 2022. A Dixie Mineral Council fieldtrip is planned for June 25, 2022 at Probst Farm (Sapphires). Contact Helen by email for more information.

Gem Show: Chandra Coffee. (franklingemboree@gmail.com) Absent. Our shared Gem Show put on by the Franklin Gem and Mineral Society and Macon County Chamber of Commerce is coming up soon on July 29th, 30th and 31st. If you are interested in being a vender, contact Linda Harbuck at (828) 524-3161 to reserve your space as soon as possible.

Programs: Stacy Walbridge. Nothing to Report.

Old Business: Three volunteers are requested to organize scheduling for June Museum hosting. Stacy Walbridge has created an online calendar to make it easier for volunteer signup. For FGMS Hosting visit [Signup.com](https://www.signup.com).



If you are volunteering at the museum and need a key, contact Larry Ellert (clellert@yahoo.com)

Remember to write down/log hours served at the museum to be eligible to win a week scholarship at the William Holland School of Lapidary Arts or the Southeast Federation of Mineralogical Societies (SFMS) Workshops at Wildacres.

New Business: Al Pribble suggested the membership have a cookout/ BBQ. Members in attendance showed interest via a show of hands. John Hayes will cook; Matt Castor will coordinate. The date and time of the cookout are to be announced. Checkout the signup sheet in the back of the meeting room for Museum Hosting opportunities. John Hayes has a tray of Sapphires from the Sheffield Mine dated 1971. Attending members were offered three and ask to leave a donation. (\$9.75 was collected)

Thank You Jay and Jenny Mooney for the Wonderful Refreshments!

The meeting was adjourned at 6:49 pm, followed by light refreshments and a program presented by Anamay Rossomando. Anamay gave an overview of the museums gift shop and its operations.

Thank You to members who contribute member made jewelry, gem trees and rock samples. Museum Raffle is a faceted pendant and earrings, \$1 a Ticket or 6 for \$5.

Outside sale for Memorial Day weekend was announced.

All Members are encouraged to attend the FGMS Monthly Membership Meetings. Please consider making time to attend. Look forward to seeing you!



Gift Shop News

by Anamay Rossomando

Spring Fling Sidewalk Sale was a big success we made over \$1k in outside & inside sales



Thanks to Mike & Bushy H. outside sales. Jay & Jenny M., Varshana D. & Earl M., Ron B. & everyone else who helped out on inside sales

A Thank You to Dianne from the Art Room who donated peg board, hooks, sales, beads & jewelry supplies & Thank You to Brad F. for putting up the pegboard to get us more organized & able to showcase more merchandise in the gift shop (we are using every sq. inch we can)

Another Thanks to Kathi W. for the beautiful willow gem tree she made & donated, it got sold as soon as it was shown.

Charlotte is keeping us up to date with upcoming events looks like 7/16 Hometown Heritage Festival & 8/20 @ Cowee School we might need some help with those events, check your calendars to see if you have any free time to help out



Excess Tools for Sale at the June Meeting

Sales are going good for our Fall Raffle. We will be bringing the raffle & a bunch of tools to the next meeting for our members to purchase. Please sign up to host



A closer look at some of the tools



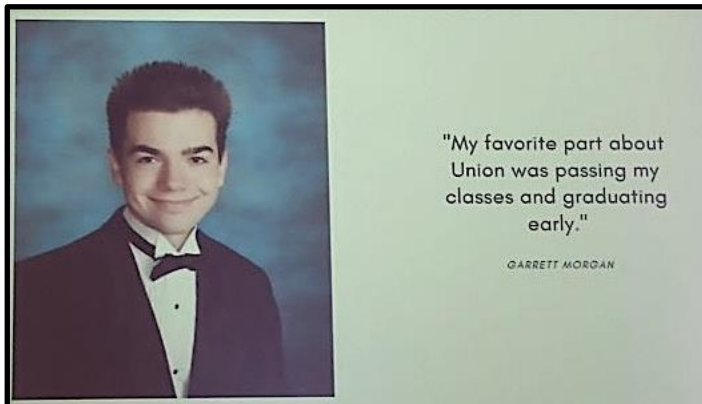
because our museum couldn't run without all our volunteers, you are truly our GEMS.



Congratulations Ilah Williams and Garrett Morgan



Two young club members recently graduated Franklin High School and our congratulations go out to them and their families. Ilah Williams will be attending WCU in the fall to study geology while Garrett Morgan is looking at several colleges to study cyber security.



Garrett Morgan



Ilah Williams with her Mom and Dad

July Field Trips 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 Henderson County Gem and Mineral Society (HOST)



Friday, July 15, 2022
Thermal City Gold Mine
Union Mills, NC 28167
Open 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Limit 35 People
Registration Required
Fee: \$10 per person site fee

Recommend pets stay home; need to be controlled if camping

TRIP: A unique experience, family-friendly and hosted by people who are real prospectors! Anyone who wants to pan or prospect for gold is welcome. Here you can learn about and enjoy the tradition and history of gold mining in North Carolina. Lots of other NC gems and minerals to find, see or buy. Camping available and a shop to buy gold pan/screen equipment.

COLLECTING: The material from the site or river bed will be easy to work with, and we're hoping for a nice, hot day to enjoy the water. Comfortable, covered flume areas for sluicing the native soil. Other possible finds common to this area of NC include: moonstone, emerald, citrine, aventurine, smoky quartz, tourmaline, ruby, etc. You will have assistance if needed to identify your finds.

BRING: Screens and pans are available with your \$10 day fee, but for river prospecting please bring your own equipment. A sluice of your own can be set up in the river. If you're more experienced or want a LOT of material, the site has 4 high bankers they will load, or bring your own equipment and save \$10 a load. Cost is \$60 per load or \$70 for screened material when using site's equipment. Share the cost with a few friends!

REQUIREMENTS: Because this site is public and set up for all ages to enjoy, just bring the basic requirements for your own safety and comfort. We should always have beverages/water, sunscreen/hats, sturdy shoes and the like but no hiking is required. In the water, wear appropriate footwear and move carefully.

SPECIAL CONDITIONS: If you choose to pan for gold in the river, you must use your own equipment. Fee: \$10.00 per person for the day. Check the website for more options, can get a very large amount dug out; good for experienced groups.



REGISTRATION: Trip size will be limited to 35 persons. Please register so we have a head-count and can contact anyone on a wait list. Please contact Helen Rogers: 404-784-2531 or helen.rogers.clay@gmail.com

CHILDREN (Yes): The site encourages “ages 3 to 93” and adult supervision appropriate to ages. The flume is covered allowing fun rain or shine.

PETS (No): Best left safely and comfortably at home; not allowed when camping.

FACILITIES: Facilities are shaded and comfortable. There is a museum and rock shop as well as a variety of screen equipment for purchase. Picnic tables and beautiful surroundings. *Limited* on-site camping and cabins, check in advance if available and make your arrangements ASAP. Various lodging in the area.

Ray Mine Field Trip

The break in humidity last weekend combined with cooler temperatures made for an enjoyable field trip to the Ray Mine near Burnsville, NC. Helen Rogers, Marsha Harmon, Kathi and Stacy Walbridge, and new member Jennifer Cochrane made the drive from Franklin to the site early Saturday morning on June 18th.



Jennifer and Stacy working the tailings



Helen inspecting the feldspar



It took a 20-minute hike to reach the beginning of the tailings where the group split up to search for tourmaline and beryl hidden within the feldspar and mica. With plenty of shade it was easy to pick a spot to sit and paw through the tailings. One drawback of the site was the steep slope so care was taken when moving from one location to another. Marsha opted to search the stream that ran adjacent to the tailings and was somewhat easier terrain to navigate.

By the end of the day no beryl was found but some tourmaline and a few suitable gem tree rocks were recovered. On the return hike to the cars we ran into new member, Justin Hobert, on his way up the hill. He is looking forward to traveling from his home in Charlotte to participate in the July Gem Show. Overall, it was a great day to be out searching for gems.

Unakite – North Carolina State Stone? Yes and No

by Stacy Walbridge

As you enter the Museum Gift Shop you will see on the right some rough Unakite for sale labeled as the North Carolina State Stone. I never gave it much thought and just repeated it to those who asked about the label. Last week I was looking for some article ideas and decided to investigate state stones with a focus on North Carolina.

I've been guilty of using the terms "rock" and "stone" interchangeably, but there is a difference between the two (depending on the context). According to the USGS, a "Rock is an aggregate of one or more minerals, or a body of undifferentiated mineral matter, such as granite, basalt, limestone, and sandstone." Unfortunately USGS does not define a stone for comparison. The Oxford English Dictionary (OED), defines a rock as, "A large rugged mass of hard mineral material or stone," and defines *stone* as "A piece of rock or hard mineral substance of a small or moderate size." So then a stone is smaller than a rock and rocks are made out of stone and minerals. Still a little confusing.

So what has this to do with Unakite? North Carolina does not have a designated stone. They have designated Emerald as the state's "Precious Stone" and Granite is the state's "Rock."

Unakite is composed of pink feldspar, green epidote, and colorless to milky quartz. It was first discovered in the Unakas mountains of North Carolina and is



formed when some of the feldspar in granite is altered to epidote and is sometimes referred to an epidote granite. As it is a granite it could be considered part of the North Carolina designated state Rock but not a stone.



BENCH TIPS

by Bradford Smith

DEBURRING A HOLE

When you drill a hole, there's always a burr produced on the underside of the metal. We all have our ways of removing them - typically by filing or sanding the area smooth. But doing it this way will put scratches on your piece that will have to be polished off.

A quick way to remove the burr is to grab a drill that's two or three times larger than your hole. Simply twist it in the hole to cut off the burr. I usually do this twisting by hand, but if you have many holes to do, it's easier on your fingers to put the drill into a holder like a pin vice.



CLEANING STEEL SHOT

Steel shot in a vibratory or rotary tumbler works great to burnish and shine your finished silver pieces. But a common problem is how keep the shot clean. Carbon steel shot can get rusty if exposed to the air, and even stainless steel shot can sometimes develop a blackish coating that's hard to remove.

My solution of choice to clean the shot is Classic Coke. Just pour an ounce or two over the shot and let the tumbler run for an hour or so. A bad case might require a second cleaning. Some folks like to let the bubbles in the Coke dissipate before using it so that gas pressure doesn't build up in the tumbler barrel. I've heard that it's the phosphoric acid in Coke that does the trick.

While you're waiting for the shot to clean up, just settle back and enjoy the rest of the Coke.

Smart Solutions for Your Jewelry Making Problems
[Amazon.com/author/bradfordsmith](https://www.amazon.com/author/bradfordsmith)





Ken's Chemistry Corner: All about Iridium

Source: The Sooner Rockologist Jan 2019

- Iridium (Ir) is named after the Greek word "Iris", goddess of the rainbow. It was named this because its compounds are often highly colored.
- The element was discovered when platinum was dissolved in aqua regia (the only acid capable of dissolving gold and platinum) and a black residue were left over. In 1803, analysis of this residue resulted in the discovery of two new elements, osmium and iridium.
- Iridium metal is quite remarkable, it is one of the most dense (second only to osmium), it is extremely hard and nearly impossible to work using conventional metallurgy (it may be fused as a powder), and has an extremely high melting point, maintaining good mechanical properties even as high as 1600 degrees C.
- In fact, Iridium was not successfully melted until 1813, 10 years after its discovery. In 1834 its first application was in fountain pen tips.
- Iridium is one of the least abundant metals in the Earth's crust. Gold is 40 times more abundant and silver is 80 times more abundant. Meteors, however, often contain as much as 0.5 ppm of iridium (500) times more than Earth's crust). It is known that iridium forms very stable alloys with iron, and it is thought that much of the iridium got trapped in the earth's core when much of the planet was still molten.
- Curiously, a thin layer of iridium-rich clay exists at the cretaceous - Paleogene border. Analysis of this clay in 1980 led to the now generally accepted hypothesis that a meteor collided with earth during this time leading to the extinction of the dinosaurs.

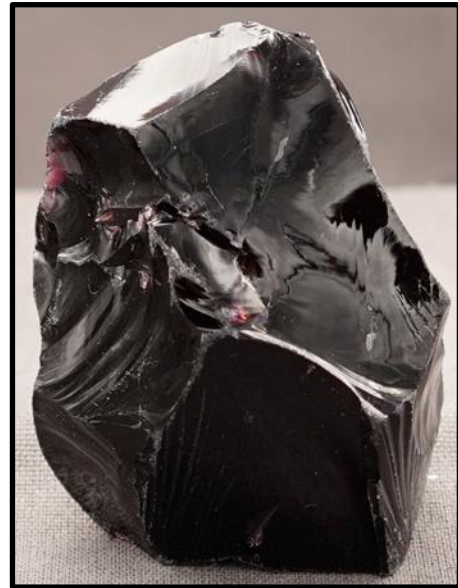


Photo Courtesy of [Life's Treasures](#)



- -Iridium is obtained industrially as a bi-product from nickel-copper mining and purification processes. The demand for iridium is highly variable. For example, it is used to make devices to grow single sapphire crystals at very high temperatures that are then used in LCD TVs, which caused demand to go up. But eventually every manufacturer that needs this device has one and since they may literally last forever, the demand then plummets.
- Iridium metal and its alloys are also used in high performance spark plug contacts, long-life airplane components, and corrosion resistant deep-water pipes. A platinum iridium alloy was also used as the vent pieces for cannons. Very fine iridium metal is jet black. Although expensive, it is the blackest paint for porcelain and most other black porcelain paints look grey next to it.



UPCOMING SHOWS

**Franklin NC JULY Gem & Mineral Showcase
Four Shows – One City**

July 27-31 Franklin, NC

Annual show; Echo Valley Gem Show ; Echo Valley Showplace (across from GLW), 6456 Sylva Rd.; Wed. 10-5:30, Thu. 10-5:30, Sat. 10-5:30, Sun. 10-3; Free Admission; Dealers from around the world selling extraordinary mineral, fossils, cabochons, slabs, rough rock, jewelry, beads, crystal

July 27-31 Franklin, NC

Highlands Road Gem Show: Hours: 9:00 - 6:00, 1602 Highlands Rd, Franklin, NC 28734

July 28-31 Franklin, NC

G&LW Wholesale Gem Show: Watauga Festival Center, 6295 Sylva Road, Franklin, NC, Hours: 9:00 - 6:00, 1602 Highlands Rd, Franklin, NC 28734, 10AM-6PM Daily; 10AM-3PM Sunday

July 29-31 Franklin, NC

Franklin Gem & Mineral Show: Robert C. Carpenter Community Building, 1288 Georgia Road, Fri/Sat 10:00-6:00 Sun 10:00-4:00



CLUB ANNOUNCEMENTS

June Board Meeting
(All members are welcome)
6:00 pm Tuesday, June 28th, 2022
First Christian Church of Franklin
156 Belleview Park Road
Franklin, NC

June General Meeting
6:30 pm Thursday, June 30th, 2022
Carbon Dating
First Christian Church of Franklin
156 Belleview Park Road
Franklin, NC

Newsletter Deadline for July is 7/18/2022

2022 SCHEDULE (Subject to change.)

Date	Event	Time	Program	Snacks
June 30, 2022	General Meeting	6:30 PM	Carbon Dating	Stephanie Brundage
July 28, 2022	General Meeting	6:30 PM	Ice Cream Social	N/A
--- July 29-31, 2022 Gem Show ---				
August 25, 2022	General Meeting	6:30 PM	TBD	Kim & Sean Price



Club Officers and Board of Directors

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: Chandra Coffee (706-982-0402)
 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)

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: 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: 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)



Franklin Gem and Mineral Museum

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