

THE MOUNTAIN GEM

Gem & Mineral Society of Franklin, North Carolina

ESTABLISHED 1972

August 2021 Newsletter

WWW.FGMM.ORG

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**Cover Photograph – Labrodite
Dealer Display - Macon County Gemboree**

Photograph by Stacy Walbridge

July 15th GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

Susan Fritz, Secretary

The meeting was called to order by President Jane Morgan on Thursday, 07/15/21, at 6:35 p.m., at First Christian Church of Franklin.

Treasurer- Kathi Walbridge reported that we continue to be in the black and that gift shop sales are increasing. Donations collected at the museum have been good.

Museum Manager – Larry Ellert reported that Mike and Bushy Hartman have been working hard outside in the garden as well as regularly hosting in the museum and he wished to thank them for all of their work.

Museum Curator – Mark Laing reported that there are still a few display cases to be cleaned and will choose a day for that cleaning soon. He would like to change a few things around. He is planning to give new members a tour of the museum.

Gift Shop – Anamay Rossomando requested help this Saturday for the Heritage Day downtown with set up at 8 or 8:30 a.m.

Newsletter Editor – Stacy Walbridge stated the newsletter deadline will be August 18. He is requesting articles for the newsletter, which can be emailed directly to him.

Publicity – George Fritz did not have anything new to report.

Membership– In the absence of Tom Parker and Diane Mason, Susan Fritz reported that Diane recently told her that she is planning to send out letters via email to those past members who have not yet paid dues for the 2020-2021 year.

Field Trips/Education – Marsha Harmon is stepping down from this position. As for education, Marsha will continue but would like a volunteer to assist her.

July Gem Show – Norman Holbert reported that set-up will be Thursday, 07/22, around 8 a.m. He explained that John Parrish will be doing security from 7 p.m. until 7 a.m. We need demonstrators; cabbing, faceting, beading, wire wrapping, etc.

Cover Photograph:

The cover photograph is from a piece of Labradorite from Madagascar. Labradorite is a variety of Feldspar, originally named after being discovered in Labrador, Newfoundland. It is found in several countries, although known as Spectrolite in some locations, due to the many brilliant spectral colors of "flash" or "schiller" which can be seen when light is reflected from it. The iridescent optical effect is known as labradorescence. The several areas of Madagascar where Labradorite is mined provide perhaps the largest concentration of this gem mineral found on the planet. Madagascar produces the world's best quality of Labradorite.

Programs – Kathi Walbridge stated for the August meeting we will have election of officers and Board members. Tom Parker will provide a presentation on Montana sapphires. Stacy Walbridge is desirous of having an auction next month as well.

OLD BUSINESS:

Church Building/Trailer – Larry Ellert reported on the Board meeting Tuesday night. He indicated that church officials are only offering us two years with an extension. He estimated \$4-5,000 to fix the trailer up to standard and we are having a difficult enough time finding volunteers. He reported that the Board voted to put this issue on hold for the next three months. We also need a place to park our trailer.

Much discussion followed. Al Pribble stated the lease of the church building/trailer was still open to discussion. However, he feels we need to find our own building and parking area; something we can envision for the future. It was suggested that Tom Parker, who is a realtor, could be on the lookout for something that might work for us.

NEW BUSINESS:

Cabbing classes – John Hayes reported that he will start classes in November but can only take two people at a time.

Museum Open Thursdays? – Bushy Hartman brought up the subject of the museum being open on Thursdays from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. She said that she and Mike are willing to be there all day long if this is approved. She questioned how we could advertise a Thursday all-day opening. Discussion ensued.

Election of Officers – Jane Morgan asked for nominations from the floor for officers and Board members with the election to take place next month. There were no nominations from the floor. The following members are running:

President – Mark Laing

Vice President – Al Pribble

*2nd Vice President – The museum manager acts in this position.

Secretary – This position is open

Treasurer – Kathi Walbridge

Assistant Treasurer – Charlotte Frye

Museum Manager – Larry Ellert

*Curator – This position is appointed by the Museum Manager

2-year Board of Directors – Marsha Harmon

2-year Board of Directors – Matt Castor

1-year Board of Directors – Charlotte Frye

1-year Board of Directors – Susan Fritz

Door prize winning tickets were drawn. Everyone enjoyed the ice cream social. Thank you to those who assisted with serving, clean up, and a special thank you to Jane Morgan for bringing the ice cream.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned by President Jane Morgan at 7:30 p.m.

THE MACON COUNTY GEMBOREE

By Norm Holbert

Photographs by George Fritz

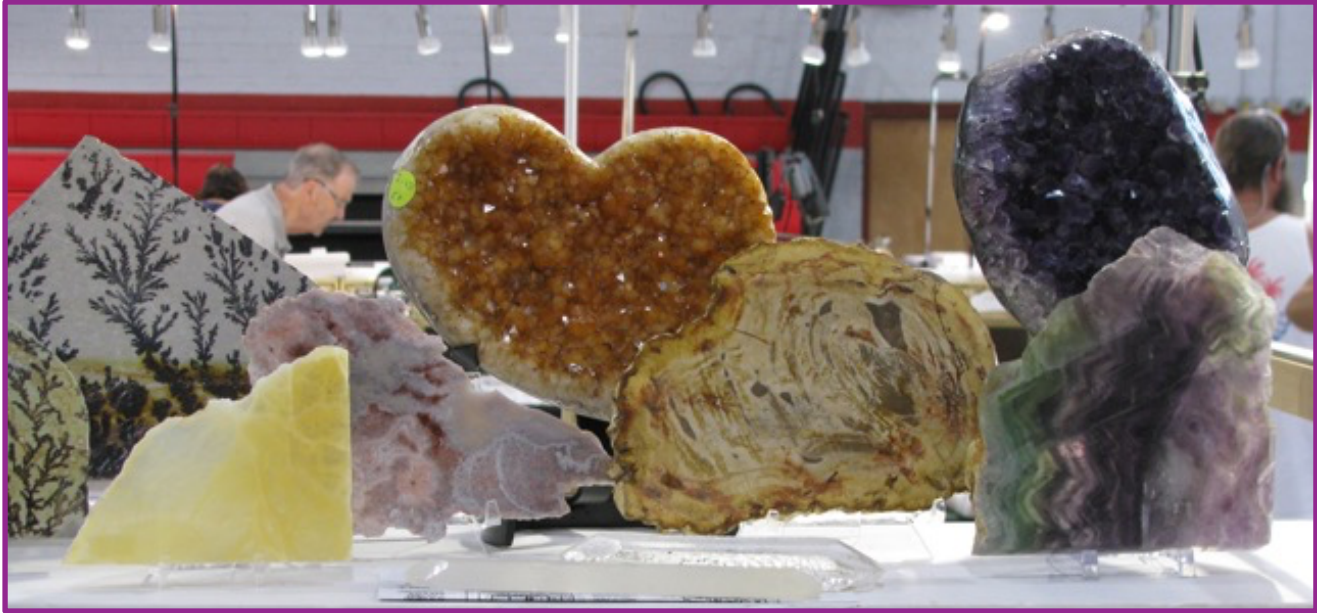
The Chamber of Commerce and our club had a successful gem show. Attendance was better than what we have seen in many years. Practically all of the vendors stated that they had a very good show. Speaking with one, he told me that he had more than made his expenses the first day. Set up went fairly smoothly. I use the term fairly for when all was set, it was discovered that one dealer had been left out and a few changes had to be made at the last minute.

Originally, I was told that all the rooms had been filled, but it appeared that four or five dealers canceled a few days before the show. That meant that the large meeting room would have only two vendors in it. We were able to fit them into the gym. One of major inconveniences was that the AC in the gym was out. Our club tables were manned much of the show time by Marcia and a few others with raffle sales and club info. Demonstrations of cabbing (Vicki, Jade and Mark), faceting (Virginia), and wire wrapping (Stacy and Barbara) was a popular area.



Virginia and Norm Explaining Faceting

Thanks!



Dealer Display of Picturesque Slabs

One occurrence that I wish to relay to you is that on Friday, a gentleman came in and introduced himself as one of our lifetime members. He also told me that he too had been the club's show chairman. For some of you have been with our club for a while, he's a 92 year old retired lawyer who drove up here from Peach Tree City, GA. His name is Quentin King. He's going to be getting in touch with me soon to donate rocks that we can sell or auction off.



Jade Carving on Display

The most troublesome part of the show was the load out. Our geriatric crew (one in their 60's, 4 or 5 of us in their 70's and about 4 in their 80's) were over worked. My suggestion for future shows is to hire someone or several who are not Medicare card holders!.

The actual financial results are still being determined, but our raffles sales went well and one dealer upon leaving, donated a crisp \$100 bill to the club.

We, the club, are still looking for someone to take on the task of Gemboree Chairman. Whoever that may be, can depend on me and others to be of assistance prior to and during future shows.



GIFT SHOP NEWS

By Anamay Rossomando

Want to THANK EVERYONE who helped out Gemboree Week. What a week! Now we are CALLING ALL WIRE WRAPPERS we are in NEED of small & simple pendants to fill the rounder & be put on display on our shelves. Want to showcase what are members can do. Please help out with as many as you can make. We have some stones & wire to use. Just let me know what you need.

Stop by the Gift Shop with suggestions, donations (we repurpose) , or ideas to help out our museum.



LOCAL STAUROLITES

Article and Photographs By Helen Rogers

Back on July 21st, I decided to go on a little adventure searching for Staurolites. It was a warm day—not terribly hot—with a few clouds in the sky. The day before saw heavy rains, so I was hopeful there may be some exposed crystals where I was going.

I followed directions shared by Marsha Harmon. The site is located in Brasstown, NC and I followed Route 64 West out of Franklin. The mountain views between Franklin and Brasstown were a bit obscured by haze due to smoke from the fires burning out West. Even the air had the scent of wood smoke in it. Nevertheless, the drive was lovely.

The staurolite locality is a series of road cuts along Trout Cove Road. It took me a little while to start finding any material, but once I figured out what I was looking for the pieces seemed to jump out at me. I found two good areas and a possible third. In case anyone wants to check these out, I dropped google pins on them so I have an approximate address and exact location. Google uses their own notation instead of lat/long and it's easiest to type those pins into google maps.



Specimens From Location 3



Location 3 Staurolite

I'll give those locations with a short description of what I found at the end. Staurolites are interesting crystals. The pieces I found were mostly a dark reddish brown but they may also occur as black crystals.

Their crystalline shape is monoclinic, and it has a fairly complicated chemical formula: $Fe_2+2Al_9O_6(SiO_4)_4(O,OH)_2$. Some of the crystals I came across were shiny, however, the majority were dull with a fine coat of schist that made them almost appear sparkly. I found single blades, pieces of blades and several 60 degree crosses—but no 90 degree crosses.

Large and small crystals occurred in a fine mica schist with a gold hue. Many of the larger pieces were without matrix.

I collected a good sampling of different specimens, and have included photos of some of them cleaned up. I think of this type of crystal as a mineral enthusiast's crystal. It's not a gemstone to fawn over. Rather, it's a mineral that makes you wonder at the geologic conditions in that location that produced it. And how long those conditions were in place so that a crystalline material could form. That's pretty cool. If you decide to go, bring lots of water. Some areas are in the direct

sun, so bring a hat, too. If you go after a rain, look first in areas with erosion or at the base of the road cut, as crystals may have washed down. Why dig if you don't have to?

Location 1: 1631 Trout Cove Road, google pin 23FQ+3W Lots of blades and crosses in the bank and in the wash area at the base of the bank.

Location 2: Trout Cove Road, google pin 867R239P+GP This area had mostly soft mica schist. I did not find very much in here, but it seems to be a promising area. It was directly in the sun, and I didn't spend a lot of time here.

Location 3: 1363 Greasy Creek, google pin: 23JF+34 This was the best location. Lots of blades and crosses.



Location 3 Road Cut

Good hunting!



PRIVATE TOURS NOW AVAILABLE

Private tours in our Museum are available working through Ron Rossomando and Marsha Harmon upon request. We are targeting larger groups of 10+, so we can provide more attention to these groups, without interruptions from other visitors. Our last Private Tour was the Brower Family from Jacksonville, NC and Joplin, MO. They were very pleased and the tips/sales were beyond our antipations. Please call Ron at 828-349-2807 or Marsha at 828 369-7262 if you hear of a request and we will be happy to help make this happen. If you want to help out just let us know.



WHY I VOLUNTEER MY 3 “P’s” OF VOLUNTEERISM

By Ron Rossomando, Historian/ Asst. Education

There are several benefits available to you being a member of the Franklin Gem & Mineral Society.

The well-equipped lapidary workshop has all the resources you need for quality cabbing and faceting. There is an extensive library with over 500 books and publications available to you to improve your knowledge and skills covering every field of mineralogy, the lapidary arts, earth science, jewelry making, gem identification and more. The Gem Museum itself is a resource exhibiting over 5000 specimens of rocks, gems, minerals, and fossils. Membership entitles you to join the numerous field trips and outings to discover you own precious rocks and minerals. Also, there is our award-winning newsletter, The Mountain Gem, with monthly updates on the activities of the Society and its members. And of course, there are the members themselves, who are eager to share their knowledge and experience with other members.

Why do I volunteer at the museum? I do not cab, facet, or go on field trips. I volunteer because of the People. There is such a vast and diverse group of people in our club. I enjoy the stories and experiences each of the members shares. And do not forget about the visitors; over 6,000 a year from every state and over 20 foreign countries. Their personal lives are full of different experiences, and their lapidary knowledge is vast. We expand our personal knowledge from each other. Active volunteerism stimulates this type of experience and can only benefit you by the more people you meet and connect with.

My second reason for volunteering is the Place-the Museum-the Old Jail. With 170 years of history written on the walls how can you not to be impressed and taken in by its history. Add the 8 rooms with over 5000 specimens of rocks, gems, minerals, and fossils it's hard not to be awed by one of the finest gem museums east of the Mississippi.

Finally let me add one more "P" as to why I volunteer. Pride-The personal feeling of pride you experience when you put others before yourself and contribute to a greater good: to continue the good work of the Society and what it offers to its members and our community.

Hosting is one of the most important activities you can perform to keep the museum open as we approach 50 years of uninterrupted service to the community and the members. Running the Society and the Museum takes a lot of effort. You can be part of its success by joining one of the 15 active positions/committees either in a leadership role or support role.

Get involved and feel the reward of personal satisfaction and pride you will get by volunteering. Look at all the people you can meet and the experiences you can share and the new friendships you can enjoy.



BENCH TIPS

By Bradford Smith

FANCY RIVET HEADS

For a nice looking rivet head, use brass escutcheon pins. You'll have perfectly rounded heads that are all the same size and shape. The pins are a little hard to find, so try the best hardware stores first. Be sure to get solid brass pins, not brass plated steel. If unsure, test them with a magnet.

The pins are readily available online. Lee Valley Tools has them in 16 or 18 gauge and lengths from 1/4 inch to 1 inch. Go



to <http://www.LeeValley.com> and do an item search on "escutcheon pin"

For best results, select a drill that gives you a hole with a close fit to the rivet. Trim the rivet to a leave a little less than one diameter sticking out the back side. Place the head on a scrap of hard plastic on the anvil so as to not flatten the head. I prefer a ball peen hammer (with a small 3/8 inch ball) for setting the rivet.

EASIER PRONG SETTING

When setting stones in a prong mount, the tool is less likely to slip off the prong if you grind a shallow groove into its face or rough up the face a bit with sandpaper. Some folks prefer a prong pusher for doing this, and others like a set of pliers with a slight groove on one jaw.

The easiest way to create a slot on the pusher is with a file, and the quickest way to create a slot on one jaw of your pliers is with a separating disc. Then do a rough polish on the slot with a medium grit, knife-edge silicone wheel.

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



FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION

By Fred Plesner, Curator Emeritus

The lotla-Bowers Mine is located on 38 acres of privately owned land. This means that permission is asked before entering, Permission may be denied but the reality is that the land owner / owners do not own the mineral rights. The mineral rights belong to The Gem and Mineral Society of Franklin, North Carolina, Inc. and again permission is needed from the society's management to be on the property.

The mines principal business and production was mica. Some quartz, feldspar and garnet in minor quantities have been produced.

The mine is one of the oldest in Macon county. The first diggings were made in 1868 and over time various shafts and tunnels were dug to a depth of 200 feet. These shafts and tunnels are a serious safety issue since they are 65 to 150 years old. At the time that the mineral rights were obtained the board of directors were of the opinion that anyone attempting to enter these shafts and tunnels should be immediately ejected from the property and possibly lose their society membership.

The mine was operated in 1868, lay disused until 1890 when production was resumed. From this time the mine was operated intermittently until 1930. The mine was reopened in 1944-1945 as part of the W.W.- II war effort and again in 1952-1955 as part of the Korean War effort. The mine has not been used until lately when its main draw are rockhounds who wish to go thru the old tailings hoping to make a find.

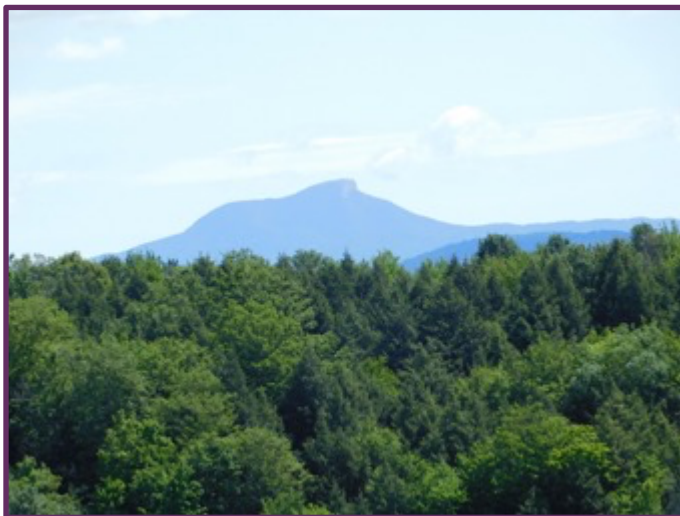
Perhaps when all this Covid business is over we will have another go at it.

Fred Plesner

A MINERAL AUCTION AND A NEW ROCKHOUND

Article and photographs by Stacy Walbridge

Earlier this month Kathi and I traveled to New York to celebrate our grandson's 1st birthday. It just so happened that our trip coincided with the Burlington Gem and Mineral Society's member mineral auction in Charlotte, VT, which we couldn't miss. The auction was held outside a member's farm overlooking the Green Mountains. The weather was perfect, friendships were renewed, plans were made to get together in Tucson next year, and the bidding was fiercely competitive. Kathi and I were able to win a couple of specimens for under \$7. I believe one of the top bids was for 3.5 inch fossil shown below.



Camels Hump, VT



The bidding was competitive but friendly



Some of the 35 to 40 items that were auctioned - Photograph by BGMS



Beringiaphyllum Cumanoides, a beautifully preserved 3.5” fossil leaf from the Paleocene Ft. Union Formation at Glendive, Montana
Photograph by BGMS

And the best part of the trip was introducing our grandson to rockhounding. We spent a day at the Ace of Diamonds Mine in New York looking for Herkimers, finding a few, and enjoying the best company in the world.



Mom and son digging for Herks.



It was a fun day.

UPCOMING SHOWS

September 3-6—HENDERSONVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA:

Annual show; Henderson County Gem & Mineral Society; Whitmire Center, 310 Lily Pond DR; Fri. 9-6, Sat. 9-6, Sun. 9-6, Mon. 9-6; adults \$4.00 children under 12 free with adult; Exhibits, Demos, Vendors, Hourly door prizes; contact Diane M Lapp, 22 Foxmoor Ct, ETOWAH, NC 28729, (828) 775-8098; Email: dlapp48@gmail.com; Website: <http://hcgms.com>

September 10-12—WINSTON-SALEM, NORTH CAROLINA:

Annual show; Forsyth Gem & Mineral Club; The Winston-Salem Fairgrounds, 421 West 27th Street , Education Building; Fri. 10-7, Sat. 10-7, Sun. Noon-5; Adults \$3, free admission youth through grade 12 when accompanied by an adult ; Show theme: North Carolina Minerals and Gold. Nearly 30 dealers, demonstrations, displays, and activities for children.; contact Ken Reed; Website: <https://forsythgemclub.com>

September 17-19—ARDEN, NORTH CAROLINA:

Annual show; MAGMA, Jacquot & Son Mining; Camp Stephens, 263 Clayton Road; Fri. 9-6, Sat. 9-6, Sun. 10-4; free admission; 14th annual gem, mineral and fossil show, dozens of vendors from across the U.S. offering gems, minerals, fossils, rocks, artifacts, meteorites, trinitite; contact Richard Jacquot, NC 28748, (828) 779-4501; Email: rick@wncrocks.com. Website: <http://www.americanrockhound.com/magma/magma.html>

ANNOUNCEMENTS

August Board Meeting
6:30 pm Tuesday, August 24, 2021
First Christian Church of Franklin
156 Belleview Park Road
Franklin, NC

August General Meeting
6:30 pm Thursday, August 25, 2021
Elections, Silent Auction, and a Presentation on Opals by Tom Parker
First Christian Church of Franklin
156 Belleview Park Road
Franklin, NC



These 2 Shadow Boxes of Native American artifacts were put together by Mark Laing for the August Meeting Silent Auction and contain excess items from the Museum. They will be on display during the meeting for members to inspect and place their bids. Minimum bid is \$15 for each one. Just prior to the meeting's program the auction will close and the two winners will be announced.

Gem and Mineral Society of Franklin, North Carolina
Established 1972

Club Officers and Board of Directors

President: Jane Morgan, (828-342-8703)
Past President: Al Pribble, (828-342-3119)
Vice President: Arlon Eldridge, (828-369-5271)
Secretary: Susan Fritz, (828-524-4936)
Treasurer: Kathi Walbridge, (802-598-7025)
Assistant Treasurer: Vacant
Museum Manager: Larry Ellert, (727-455-1849)
Director (2020): Mark Laing, (864-910-1580)
Director (2020): Tom Parker, (828-342-3619)
Director (2019): Diane Mason, (706-379-1718)
Director (2019): Tom Sterrett, (828-349-3774)

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

Committees

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)
Museum Workshop: Vacant
Publicity: George Fritz, (828-524-4936)
Field Trip Coordinator: Marsha Harmon, (828 369-7262)
Program Coordinator: Vacant
Museum Calendar: Vacant
Gemborees: Vacant
Education/Tours: Marsha Harmon, (828 369-7262)
Asst Education/Historian: Ron Rossomando (828-349-2807)
Web Master: Melissa Barfield (803-724-8312)
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