



THE MOUNTAIN GEM

Gem & Mineral Society of Franklin, North Carolina

November 2020 Newsletter



Franklin Gem and Mineral Society

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 Curator Emeritus: Fred Plesner, (828-349-4224)
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 Web Master: Melissa Barfield (803-724-8312)
 Newsletter Editor: Stacy Walbridge [fgmseditor@gmail.com]

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



The Gem and Mineral Society of Franklin, North Carolina, is a 501 (c)(3) organization and donations may be tax deductible. Please remember us when planning your estate.

NOVEMBER MEETING PROGRAM

Introduction to Opals Featuring Opals of Australia By Pete Goetz

Mr. Goetz was the president of the American Opal Society for 15 years and now holds the position of President Emeritus. He graduated from San Diego State University after studying geomorphology of the processes and interactions that form landscapes. After a career in retail, he returned to his earth science passion and taught physical science, earth science, and astronomy in the Anaheim School District for 22 years. Mr. Goetz will provide us with a presentation covering an introduction to opals featuring Opals of Australia.

The November general meeting will be held using Zoom starting at **7:00 pm**. The meeting invitation will be sent by separate email. The Zoom meeting room will open at 6:30 pm if you want to join early (strongly recommended).

\$\$\$ DUES REMINDER \$\$\$

Membership fees for 2021 are due so if you want to keep receiving this wonderful newsletter send in your renewal before the end of the year.

Opal Background courtesy of <http://www.blackopalworld.com>

In This Issue

- p. 02 October Meeting Minutes
- p. 02 Halloween Sidewalk Candy Giveaway
- p. 03 From Golfing to Electronics to Spruce Pine
- p. 04 Museum History Corner by Fred Plesner
- p. 04 November Birthstones
- p. 05 Riddle Me This – What Am I?
- p. 06 Smaragdine
- p. 07 Announcements

Club Website: <http://www.fgmm.org> Club Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/franklingems>
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The Mountain Gem

November 2020



October General Meeting Minutes

Susan Fritz, Secretary

The October General meeting was called to order by President Jane Morgan on Thursday, November 05, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. Due to the Covid pandemic, this meeting was held via Zoom. As well, due to power outages on 10/29/20, the October meeting was postponed until this evening.

Participants: Jane Morgan, Al Pribble, Susan Fritz, Duane Haskell, Larry Ellert, Deborah Wright, George Fritz, Stacy Walbridge, Kathi Walbridge, Mark Laing, Stephanie Brundage, Nancy McShane, Cy Amrich, George Fritz, Sean Price and tonight's guest speaker, Brad Smith.

The newsletter deadline was announced as Friday, November 13, 2020.

Our next Board meeting for the month of November will be Tuesday, November 17, 2020 and the November General meeting will be on Thursday, November 19, 2020; both via Zoom. Note that both meetings are at 7 p.m.

President Jane Morgan wished to thank those who participated in the Halloween sidewalk sale downtown. There are no further sidewalk sales planned until the possibility of Winter Wonderland, though she has not heard a definitive decision having been made about those weekends.

Larry Ellert reported that opening the Museum Workshop is on temporary hold. The security system is still down. The cameras have arrived and he and Al Pribble will be working on all of that next weekend.

Stacy Walbridge has sent the Museum Workshop Rules and Covid Liability forms out to the Board of Directors with the additions that were suggested. The Board needs to contact him if these meet everyone's approval.

Al Pribble asked tonight's guest speaker, Brad Smith, what his club charges for use of the workshop and he stated their fee is \$1.50/hour with additional hourly charges depending on equipment used.

Stacy Walbridge reminded us that we are still seeking a coordinator for our gem shows. Norman Holbert indicates that he is willing to assist.

It was noted that the Tucson gem and mineral show has been cancelled; however, G&LW still plans to go forward with their shows.

The next General meeting will feature Pete Goetz who will be giving a presentation on Opals with the focus on opals in Australia.

There being no further business, the business portion of the meeting was adjourned by President Jane Morgan at 7:15 p.m.

Brad Smith, author of Bench Tips, then presented and shared his favorite tips from over 24 years of experience in the jewelry industry as well as his 10-year history of teaching..



HALLOWEEN SIDEWALK CANDY GIVEAWAY

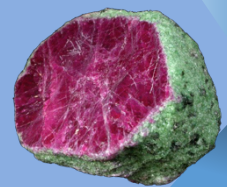
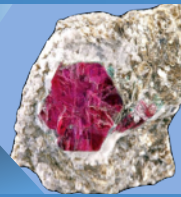
Photographs by Stacy Walbridge



Jane Morgan and her son-in-law Robby, Marsha Harmon, and Charlene Frye

The Mountain Gem

November 2020



The line kept getting longer



Oak Hill Country Club sand: The Field of View is about 4mm across. The average grain size is less than 1mm. Photograph Fred Haynes

FROM GOLFING TO ELECTRONICS TO SPRUCE PINE

Stacy Walbridge

While searching the internet for article ideas I came across Fred Haynes' website. Fred is a well known mineral collector and author in the New England area who writes entertaining articles for his website, fredmhaynes.com. The one article that caught my eye was on golf course sand. For non-golfers like me I was surprised to learn that there is quite a bit of science that goes into selecting the right material for sand traps or bunkers; particle size, particle shape, crusting potential, chemical reactions, hardness, infiltration rate, and overall playing quality.

Although sand color is an important attribute for bunkers it is the other physical properties that determine whether sand is good or not. Too fine a particle size and the sand won't stay on the walls of the bunker, too coarse and balls will sink or disappear in the sand. Augusta National Golf Course in Georgia is well known for the bright white sand used for their bunkers. Golfers also love the soft top layer over the hardened lower layers.

So where does this sand come from? It comes from a place just north of here in Spruce Pine, NC.

Spruce Pine is internationally known for the purity of its sand but this is just a waste product of the real treasure – ultra pure quartz. The quartz is processed into sand to make crucibles that hold the silicon for semi conductor chips that are found in computers, cell phones, TVs, and all kinds of electronics that you use daily. The ultra pure quartz is critical in the formation of the chips as it won't contaminate the pure silicon.

Typically, the total impurities found in the Spruce Pine quartz are measured at less than 50 parts per billion with the quartz costing up to \$20,000 per ton. So when you pick up your phone, turn on your TV, or cruise the internet on your computer chances are that Spruce Pine quartz made it possible.



The Mountain Gem

November 2020



Museum History Corner



Alba Rowland was brought to my attention years ago by Ray Behr. According to Ray, he was hosting at the Gem Museum when a woman walked in and announced “I’m Home!” Ray stated that he thought she meant that she was back in Franklin after being gone for an extended period. Not so!! Alba really was home. You see, Alba had lived in the “Old Jail” for 8 years.

With all the recent press about women and their achievements I thought it appropriate to mention Alba Rowland. Alba was born here in Macon County in 1928 to Harley E. and Eva Raburn Younce. Alba was one of three girls and a boy born into the family and no doubt was raised to fulfill the traditional woman’s role of the day, wife and mother. She fulfilled that roll while working as a waitress at several local restaurants and helping her husband Brice run his business Rowland Furniture.

When her husband Brice became Sheriff in 1962 things really changed. Brice moved into the “Old Jail” and made Alba his Jailor. Alba had been promoted into today’s modern world. A woman ahead of her time all the while raising 3 sons, Mitchell, Stephen and David. Alba served as Jailor for 8 years until 1970 when Brice left office.

Alba died on October 28, 2011. She was a member of the Burningtown Baptist Church and is buried in the church cemetery

NOVEMBER BIRTHSTONES:

Topaz & Citrine

Article and Photos Courtesy of

<https://www.gia.edu/birthstones/november-birthstones>

Topaz

The variety of topaz hues includes colorless, light blue, yellow, orange, pink, violet, brown and, very rarely, red. The vast majority of blue topaz seen today is the permanent result of treating colorless topaz with irradiation and heating. The rainbow effect seen in “Mystic Topaz” is created by coating colorless topaz with a thin artificial film.

Some believe the word “topaz” comes from the Sanskrit word *tapas*, which means “fire.” Others trace it back to the Greek *topazos*. This November birthstone was long thought to have many benefits. The ancient Greeks believed that topaz gave them strength. From the 1300s to the 1600s, Europeans thought it could thwart magic spells and dispel anger. For centuries, many people in India have believed that topaz worn above the heart assures long life, beauty and intelligence.

The distinctly pinkish orange Imperial topaz has aristocratic cachet. It is commonly believed that the name originated with the Russian royal family’s insistence on keeping the finest colors of this gem, which was mined in Russia’s Ural Mountains, exclusively for their use. An alternate explanation, especially popular in Brazil, is that it dates from an 1881 visit by Brazilian Emperor Pedro II to Ouro Preto—the town closest to Brazil’s most productive topaz mines—and the gift of a reddish topaz to him.

Where is it found?

[Minas Gerais](#), a state in Brazil, is one of the most important sources for high-quality topaz, which has been mined there for more than two centuries. Yellow to orange, red, pink, violet and blends of red with orange or purple are some of the colors unearthed

The Mountain Gem

November 2020



here. The nearby town of Ouro Preto is a fitting companion. In this UNESCO world heritage site, majestic colonial churches checker the skyline and quaint cobblestone streets crisscross the city.

Northwestern Pakistan is known for producing pink topaz. Ghundao Hill, close to the small town of Katlang, has been mined since 1972. The most sought-after shade of pink topaz from Katlang has a tinge of violet, which some in the gem trade call cyclamen pink. But even at Ghundao Hill, only rarely is this fine pink November birthstone found.

Citrine

This November birthstone is the transparent yellow to brownish orange variety of quartz, which has been used in jewelry for thousands of years. Citrine has been a popular gemstone since ancient times and has shared a history of mistaken identities with the other November birthstone, topaz. As a result, people thought citrine had the same powers as topaz. They believed the citrine birthstone could soothe tempers and calm the wearer.

The ancient Greeks carved rock crystal ornaments that glistened like permafrost. Roman pontiffs wore rings set with massive purple amethysts, and citrine has been reported in Roman jewelry. It was particularly popular in colorful Scottish jewelry from the Victorian era. Citrine, believed to derive from the French word for “lemon” (*citron*), is given for the thirteenth wedding anniversary.

Today, most of the citrine in the marketplace results from the heat treatment of amethyst. With its ready availability in a broad range of sizes, citrine birthstone is one of the most affordable and desired yellow gemstones.

Where is it found?

The top sources for this November birthstone are Bolivia, Spain, Madagascar, Mexico and Uruguay.

Amethyst that’s typically heat treated to a citrine color is mined mostly in Brazil.

Deep in the world’s largest freshwater wetland lies Bolivia’s Anahí mine, an important source for natural, unheated citrine. Fields of wildflowers, brightly plumed birds, kaleidoscopes of butterflies, Howler monkeys and jaguars are some of the actors on this vast stage. The story of the mine is worthy of the setting. Discovered by a Spanish conquistador in the 1600s, it was given to him as dowry when he married Anahí, a princess from the Ayoreos tribe of Paraguay. The mine was lost for three centuries until it was rediscovered in the 1960s.



RIDDLE ME THIS – WHAT AM I

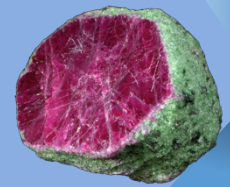
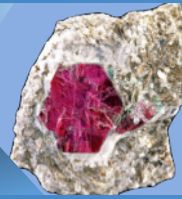
From PGS Outcroppings

- 1 - What's black when you get it, red when you use it, and white when you're done with it?
- 2 - Each morning I appear to lie at your feet. All day I will follow no matter how fast you run, yet I nearly perish in the midday sun.
- 3 - It's red, blue, purple and green. No one can reach it, not even the queen
- 4 - I am the beginning of the end, and the end of time and space. I am essential to creation, and I surround every place.
- 5 - You've heard me before, yet you hear me again, Then I die

Answers on next page.

The Mountain Gem

September 2020



SMARAGDINE

Article Courtesy of <https://www.alphadictionary.com/index.shtml>

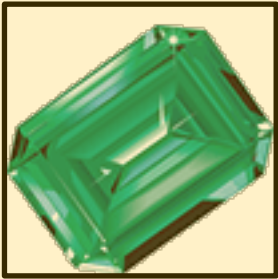
Submitted by Al Pribble

With our proximity to Chunky Gal and the many collecting trips where Ruby is found in Smaragdite Al thought this article may be of interest to members. Smaragdite is an emerald green variety of Actinolite owing its color to small amounts of chromium. Its name is derived from the Greek smaragdus, "green gem", although it is not related to Emerald. Outside of Marin County, CA it is only found in Macon County in the United States.

Pronunciation: [smê-ræg-deen](#)

Part of Speech: Adjective

Meaning: Related to emeralds, particularly having their color.



Notes: This word is the adjective accompanying the noun smaragd "green precious stone; emerald". These words are justifiably rarely used, given the choice between this word and a lovelier one for the same stone. However, its history is absolutely fascinating, showing how *emerald* and *smaragd* share the same source!

In Play: The basic meaning of this adjective is "related to emeralds": "Hermione turned down the emerald ring offered her by Gilliam when he referred to the stone as 'smaragdine'." (I don't blame her.) But this word may refer to anything that is brilliantly green: "The smaragdine lake in front of Gilliam's summer home was connected by an equally smaragdine lawn."

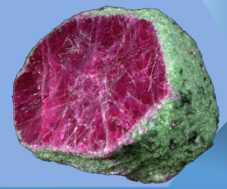
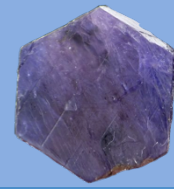
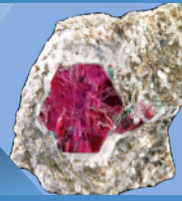
Word History: Speakers of Vulgar (Street) Latin didn't like S + consonant clusters at the beginning of words, so they added an E before such, as Spanish *escuela* and French *école* "school", Spanish *estado* and French *état* "state" show. French even took its distaste for the cluster further and eliminated the S altogether. The English word *emerald* was borrowed from French *émeraude*. We can tell from the acute over the E that Old French must have been *esmeraude*, from Street Latin *esmaraldus*, going back to Classical Latin *smaragdus*. (Latin didn't like the combination GD, either.) The Portuguese and Spanish word for "emerald" is *esmeralda*. Latin *smaragdus* was converted to English *smaragd* in the borrowing, and it underlies today's Good Word. Latin borrowed *smaragdus* from Greek smaragdus "green gem". Greek may have gotten its word from a Semitic language but there is no earlier trace of it in PIE. (Debby Moggio deserves our gratitude for seeing the possibilities in this fascinating Good Word and sharing them with us.)

ANSWERS TO RIDDLE ME THIS – WHAT AM I

- 1 - What's black when you get it, red when you use it, and white when you're done with it? **Charcoal**
- 2 - Each morning I appear to lie at your feet. All day I will follow no matter how fast you run, yet I nearly perish in the midday sun. **Shadow**
- 3 - It's red, blue, purple and green. No one can reach it, not even the queen. **Rainbow**
- 4 - I am the beginning of the end, and the end of time and space. I am essential to creation, and I surround every place. **The Letter "E"**
- 5 - You've heard me before, yet you hear me again, Then I die **Echo**

The Mountain Gem

September 2020



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November Board Meeting
7:00 pm Tuesday, November 17, 2020

November General Meeting
7:00 pm Thursday, November 19, 2020
This will be a Zoom Meeting
Opals
By
Pete Goetz

December Newsletter Deadline is
Wednesday, December 9, 2020