# THE MOUNTAIN GEM

## Gem & Mineral Society of Franklin, North Carolina

## March 2021 Newsletter

WWW.FGMS.ORG

**In This Issue**


p. 02 Thank you – Jane Morgan
p. 03 February Meeting Minutes
p. 04 Upcoming Officers Election
p. 05 Help Wanted – Assistant Museum Curator
p. 06 Museum Tour
p. 07 A Pleasant Little Walk – Fred Plesner
p. 07 March 25th Meeting Program
p. 09 Upcoming Shows
p. 10 Meeting Announcements
p. 11 Officers, Directors, & Committee Chairs


Cover photo by Stacy Walbridge, Septarian Nodule, Utah

## THANK YOU

**Jane Morgan, President**

Spring is in the air and everything is starting to bud. I have a lot of thank you's this month and of special note there was a small tour group that we used for a trial run hoping to either get open real soon or having more tour groups.

- Thank you to Marsha Harmon for that. Also "Thank you, Marsha" for all the years of taking tours to many different places to rockhound.
- Thank you Cindy Pease for making the flower beds and garden look beautiful again.
- Thank you to Fred Pleasner for once again standing in for us at the Museum to let someone working on a Documentary come in and film and provide them with the history.
- Thank you to Larry Ellert for fixing the wall in the wash room downstairs.
- Thank you to Mark Laing for all the work he has put in on the collections and showcases.
- Thank you to Stacy Walbridge for all the tireless hours on the newsletter, zoom meetings and all that he keeps up with.
- Thank you to Al Pribble for always stepping in for President, Vice President or anywhere needed.

If I haven't recognized you for something please let me know. I certainly didn't mean to overlook you.

The election is coming up soon. Please decide on whom you'd like for the positions. They will need to get filled.

This will be a busy month coming up. We will need to get to spring cleaning at the Museum and airing it out when possible. Dates for that will be forthcoming.

Hopefully everyone is starting to get a sense of normalcy again.

Main street traffic is starting to pick up. Tourists are starting to filter this way. We should be open at least on Saturdays. More if possible. We need to hear your voice on opening up the Museum and having in person meetings. Weather permitting we can do an outside meeting next month if everyone or most everyone is agreeable. That way you could bring pop up chairs, wear your mask, stay 6 feet apart but at least you will be able to see your smiling eyes.

Hope to see you next week on Zoom.

## FEBRUARY 25th GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

**Susan Fritz, Secretary**

The meeting was called to order by President Jane Morgan on Thursday, February 25, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Jane Morgan, Al Pribble, Kathi Walbridge, Susan Fritz, Larry Ellert, Stacy Walbridge, George Fritz, Tom Parker, Jay Mooney, Jenny Mooney, Gary Galbrecht, Charlene Galbrecht, Cy Amrich, Tom Gadsden, Lee Bender, Deborah Wright, Gail Meredith. We wish to welcome new member Mary Beth Fromeyer.

President Jane Morgan stated that hopefully by the end of the summer we may consider a return to regular in-person meetings and this prospect will be discussed more fully at our May meeting.

John Hayes stated that he had materials for the workshop to raise money for the museum. However, he wished to limit participants to four at a time and only those who have been vaccinated. Information included copper water pipe, how to solder, buff, polish and cast with fiberglass resin. Workshop time would be three or four daily sessions. The Board would need to set a price. John Hayes also has a sign for the Crater of Diamonds in Arkansas that he wishes to donate to the museum.

Al Pribble stated we will need a list of new prospective officers by the July meeting. If you are interested in being on the nomination list, please contact Al directly. Our election of officers was put off last year due to the pandemic.

Larry Ellert stated we are in need of a Librarian. As well, Larry has been working on fixing the wall by the sink in the museum that needed re-plastering which required two coats. He has also vacuumed.

Stacy Walbridge announced the deadline for the newsletter as March 17. He is very much in need of short articles for the newsletter and asked everyone to help out if possible.

Kathi Walbridge said the program for March is all set. We will have a presentation by Walt Lombardo, geologist, on rubies and sapphires. Mr. Lombardo is the owner of the Nevada Mineral and Book Company.

Stacy Walbridge made a motion for adjournment seconded by Susan Fritz. There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m. by President Jane Morgan.

Larry Ellert then gave a presentation and slide show of the museum. He talked about the history of the museum and the slide show included pictures of each room and the displays. Everyone enjoyed it very much and agreed he had done an outstanding job putting it together.

Following tonight's program by Larry Ellert, John Hayes stated he has concerns about showing the Indian Room and mentioning the Indian Room. Al Pribble stated that only items used in burials or ceremonial events could be taken. John Hayes also said he felt that the workshop should definitely be included in any video that is made.

Al Pribble stated he felt we should try to find someone who can professionally narrate and we discussed trying to find a college or high school student studying audio-visual arts/computer graphics/web design, etc., who would consider doing this.

## UPCOMING OFFICER ELECTIONS

Al Pribble

As we start getting our lives back to somewhat "normal" we need to start thinking about the operation of our club and the Museum. In order to do all that we need to select our officers. Jane as done yeoman's (yeowoman's?) service for having served one year past her required term. Since we stopped having in-person meetings last year, we did not have our normal elections last August.

Therefore, we need to start thinking about who will serve during the coming year. We will present candidates for board members and officers at our July meeting.

While this may seem early to start the search for those candidates, it is not based on past experience. Everyone should be thinking about who would be willing to serve and talking to others about be nominated. This is a vital part of the Society and most offices take very little of one's time. We have one board meeting a month which usually lasts no more than 2 hours.

As the Past President on the Board of Directors it is my duty under the Articles of Incorporation to select a committee that will find members willing to serve as officers and board members. In June I will be asking two members to assist me in selecting a slate of candidates for presentation to the membership. Starting now I am asking all to start considering volunteering and / or who would be willing to serve. We have a great organization, but it takes an effort by everyone to keep it profitable for all.

Call me (828-342-3119) or email (alton36@gmail.com) anytime to discuss any questions you may have.

The offices to be filled:

President,
Vice President,
Secretary,
Treasurer,
Assistant Treasurer
Second Vice President (Museum Manager)

In addition, four board members will be elected. In order to get back on schedule two board members will be elected for two year terms and two will be elected for 4 year terms.

## HELP WANTED – ASSISTANT MUSEUM CURATOR

Mark Laing, our Museum Curator, has been busy at the Museum changing displays, labeling new items, and cleaning in preparation to open in the near future and is looking for an assistant. They would help Mark in setting up new displays and maintaining the displays. They would also help to take inventory once a year. Lastly he or she would assist in the disposition of the minerals if they were not to be displayed. If you are interested please contact Mark at (864) 910-1580.

## MUSEUM TOUR

**By Marsha Harmon,**
**Photos by Jane Morgan**

On March 12 a small group of 7 Coffee family members visited our Museum on a two hour tour. They had called and asked for the opportunity as a guided group and of course, we complied to their request.

I have to confess I probably had more or at least as much fun answering challenging questions from the 10, 8, and 6 year old children of the group. It sure felt good to hear life back into our Museum if only for a couple hours. The sandbox was also awoken and the children just loved it. Thank you to Jane Morgan for her much valued assistance. A donation was gladly accepted by us for the Museum. I will be accepting additional club members for tour guides who are willing to help while masked in the future.

If you are interested in serving as a tour guide please call Marsha at 828 369-7262.

## A PLEASANT LITTLE WALK

**Fred Plesner, Curator Emeritus**

Are you tired of being cooped up? Are you ready for a field trip?

Let's take a pleasant walk through your neighborhood and checkout those roadside ditches, turnarounds, parking lots, driveways, etc.

You will need a few things like a sturdy pair of shoes and appropriate clothing for the weather, perhaps a sturdy walking stick, a bag for your finds, stick a snack in your pocket and pick a direction to go. If you have a dog, well a little companionship adds to the pleasure.

I once set up a display for the Macon County Historical Society which I called "Roadside Gems." The display included garnets from a parking area on Hurst Circle, serpentine from Westgate Plaza Shopping Center, Sillimanite from a ditch along Woodland Hills Drive, Moonstone from a neighbor's driveway. Well, you have the idea now. It's just a matter of keeping your eyes peeled for the unusual.

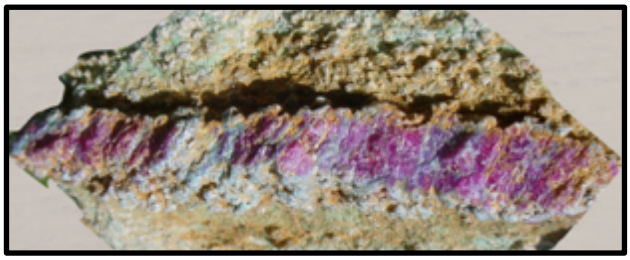
Perhaps nothing is found! I'm betting you feel better anyway. A pleasant little outing is what we all need to chase away the winter blues and that trapped feeling we have from being confined because of "Covid – 19."

## MARCH 25th MEETING PROGRAM

## RUBIES AND SAPPHIRES OF NORTH AMERICA

**To Be Presented by Walt Lombardo**

Rubies and sapphires are varieties of the mineral corundum, which is made of the elements aluminum and oxygen. Although corundum is commonly used as an abrasive because of its extreme hardness, the gem varieties ruby and sapphire have long been known for their beauty and durability. Most people are not aware that



**Chunky Gal Rubies**
**Photo by Stacy Walbridge**

there are significant resources of these gems in North America. The talk will focus on three major geographic areas: the sapphire deposits of central Montana; the ruby deposits of North Carolina; and the recently discovered ruby deposits of Greenland. We will discuss the geology and origin of the deposits, the history of mining, and the color range and beauty of these gemstones.

Walter Lombardo is a geologist with more than 35 years' experience in mineralogy, mining and mineral exploration. He worked for American Borate Company in Death Valley (Billie Mine), for Cyprus Minerals Company in the California Mother Lode (gold), and several small exploration companies in the Southwestern U.S (gold). For sixteen years he managed the Southern Nevada Office of the Nevada Division of Minerals. And before retiring from the industry, he was a project manager for a company involved in worldwide exploration for uranium, gallium and germanium.

Walter is the owner of Nevada Mineral & Book Company, a natural history gallery and earth science bookstore located in Orange, California. He has lectured nationwide on topics related to mineral resources, mining & mining fraud, mineralogy and gemology.

**Franklin-opoly Board Game**
**Featuring Franklin Gem & Mineral Museum**

**Images © Late for the Sky Productions**
**Photo by Stacy Walbridge**

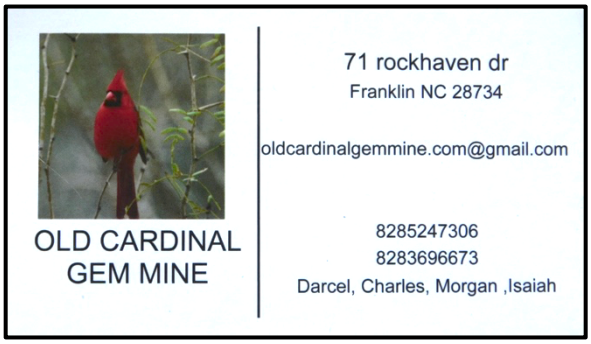
## UPCOMING SHOWS

**March 26 – 28, 2021; Jacksonville, FL**
Jacksonville Gem and Mineral Society Show and Sale
Greater Jacksonville Agricultural Fair and Expo Center
Fri. 0-5, Sat. 9-5, Sun. 10-4
Adults $5 Children under 12 free, $1 off for seniors and military personnel with ID

**March 26 – 28, 2021; Hickory, NC**
Catawba Valley Gem & Mineral Club Annual Show
Hickory Metro Convention Center, 1960 13th Ave., DR. SE, 5254 Olde School Drive
Fri. 9-6, Sat. 9-6, Sun. 10-5
Adults $5, Free Admission for children under 12, military and law enforcement personnel with ID
27 vendors selling gems, minerals, fossils and jewelry

**April 16 – 18, 2021; Lawrenceville, GA**
Bellpoint Annual Show at Gwinett Count Fairgrounds
2405 Sugarloaf Pkwy, Lawrenceville
Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5
Adults $5, Children under 15 free when accompanied with a paying adult.
Dealers selling minerals, jewelry, gems, crystals, fossils and rocks

**May 5-9 — Franklin, NC**:
Echo Valley Gem Show Annual show;
Echo Valley Showplace, 6456 Sylva Rd. (across from GLW)
Wed. 9-6, Thu. 9-6, Fri. 9-6, Sat. 9-6, Sun 9-4
Free admission; Dealers from around the world selling minerals, fossils, rough rock, slabs, cabochons, jewelry, beads, crystal, gems.



**March General Meeting**
**7:00 pm Thursday, March 25, 2021**
**This will be a Zoom Meeting**
**Rubies and Sapphires in North America**
**By**
**Walter Lombardo, Geologist**

**March Board Meeting**
**7:00 pm Tuesday, March 23, 2021**

## 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: Lake Holland, (828-369-5421)
Assistant Treasurer: Kathi Walbridge, (802-598-7025)
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: Virginia Bennis (631-830-5403)
Publicity: George Fritz, (828-524-4936)
Field Trip Coordinator: Marsha Harmon, (828 369-7262)
Program Coordinator: Kathi Walbridge
Museum Calendar: Jay Mooney, (678-488-0620)
Gemborees: TBD
Education/Tours: Marsha Harmon, (828 369-7262)
Asst Education/Tours: Ron Rossomando (828-349-2807)
Web Master: Melissa Barfield (803-724-8312)
Newsletter Editor: Stacy Walbridge, [fgmseditor@gmail.com]