

The Mountain Gem

June 2023

**Gem and Mineral Society of
Franklin, North Carolina**



In this Issue

p. 02 From the President
p. 02 June General Meeting Minutes
p. 05 Member News
p. 07 Member Awards / Scholarship
p. 08 May Program
p. 08 Membership
p. 09 Donations
p. 10 Education & Tours News

p. 12 Gift Shop News
p. 12 First Lady Visits
p. 13 Bench Tips
p. 14 Jailhouse History
p. 15 Upcoming Shows
p. 15 Club Announcements/Schedule
p. 16 Officers, Directors, and Committees

*Star Sapphire in the collection of the Smithsonian
Photographed by member Pam Martin*

From the President



Thank you – Thank you – Thank you. Our May Gem Show was a success due to all the volunteers and I want to thank all of you that helped out. Without your support it would not have been as successful.

We have another Gem Show coming up in July. We are co-hosting the show with the Chamber of Commerce so will not need ticker takers or security. However, we will need volunteers for demonstrations, club table hosting, setup and teardown. I would like all the volunteers for the May Show to consider volunteering for this July's show.

In August we will host the DMC Field Trip to Chunky Gal. If you are interested in helping out with that event let Chandra Fox know. More information will be provided at the June Meeting.

Doreen Freeman will be helping Charlene Galbrecht filling out the Museum Host calendar so don't be surprised if you soon receive a call from her.

For me, the biggest news is that Mary Beth Stager has volunteered to take over the newsletter. Please provide her with all the support that you have given me to make her transition as smooth as possible

Stay safe and Best Wishes,

Stacy Walbridge
President

General Meeting Minutes

May 25, 2023
Thursday 6:33pm
First Christian Church
Franklin, NC

The meeting was called to order at 6:33pm by Stacy Walbridge.

Minutes: Chandra Fox (fgmshows@gmail.com). Motion made and minutes accepted as written.

Stacy Walbridge presented long standing member, Tom Parker, with a Certificate of Appreciation for years of loyal and committed service to the Society. Stacy also acknowledged and commended all the members whom manned our Club Table at the May Gem Show for their outstanding job.

Treasurer: Kathi Walbridge. (FGMM.Treasurer@mail.com) / Charlotte Ellert. Rpt. Museum hours of operation are now Wednesday through Saturday, 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. There have been several where days the museum was closed because no were hosts available. Sales and donations are up with the extra days – and tours. Monies were withdrawn for Gift Shop Merchandise and to make change at the Gem Show.

Meeting Minutes (Continued)

May Gem Show Summary: Chandra and Kathi counted the cash boxes (ticket takers, club table, cheerleader refreshments) at the close of each day of the show. We used the T-SYS credit card terminals for the first time. The cell signal at the Carpenter Center was sometimes weak and the terminal had to be carried outside to complete a transaction. Not all of the volunteers were aware of this issue. In all, having the credit card terminals was a big plus. The more we use it the more we will become accustomed to its nuances. The hosts at the Club Table did a good job of recording items sold and memberships, as well as which sales were credit card purchases.

Vice President: Larry Ellert. (clellert@yahoo.com) Nothing to Report.

Museum Manager: Larry Ellert. (clellert@yahoo.com). Donavon McDonald (d.macd1@frontier.com). Rpt. Larry reminds everyone upon leaving the museum for the day to double check doors, make sure all locks are secure, and all lights are turned off. When exiting the museum, set the alarm and make sure the door is closed completely and locked securely. A new sink was installed in the ladies restroom upstairs. Still trying to find a handyman or contractor to repair the floor in the downstairs restroom. If anyone knows a good contractor or handyman that might be interested in the job, please let me know. We desperately need volunteers.

Museum Curator: ~~Absent. NRt.~~ Vacant

Workshop: Matt Castor. (combatflyfisher@yahoo.com). Absent. NRt.

Gift Shop: Anamay Rossomando. (anamay@verizon.net) Absent. Vicky Knisley. (). Rpt. Shopping was done for the gift shop up until the May Show. Working on getting the gift shop reorganized and restocked.

Newsletter Editor: Stacy Walbridge. Deadline for submissions to the newsletter: June 19, 2023

Publicity: Kim Price (kprice@safeteworksinc.com) NRt. The North Carolina's Governors wife visited and toured our museum. A news article was sent to the Macon County News. Kim also wrote a press release from Bryson City, NC to Dillard, Ga in commemoration of the event.

Scholarships: Al Pribble. (alton36@gmail.com) Rpt. Presented a board approved Scholarship to our Societies intern, Ilah Williams of Franklin, NC. to help cover expenses during her studies in the field of Natural Resource Conservation and Management at Western Carolina University.

Future Vision: Ron Rossomando. Absent. Kim Price. NRt. We are the Gem Capital and people should see this when visiting Franklin, NC. Our 50th Anniversary Celebration will be coming up in 2024.

Membership: Roberta Pipitone, Leonard Pipitone. . NRt. We have (8) new members since our last meeting and (13) total new members this year and (2) resignations. The application available on our web page is the most up to date membership application available. Ron Rossomando addressed the attending membership about continuing concerns over training for museum host. Ron is offering training for anyone who is interested in hosting at the museum. The training will focus on museum duties and how to operate the cash register. If you are interested in training contact Ron

Education: Marsha Harmon. (monaleaf28734@gmail.com) Absent. NRt.

Gem Show: Chandra Fox. (FGMShows@gmail.com) Rpt. Deepest Appreciation to all who contributed and were involved in pulling off a great May Gem Show!!!

Meeting Minutes (Continued)

We tried some new things. Some turned out well. Passed and collected comment sheets for future show suggested improvements. There were new and returning vendors from previous shows that gave us a full house. The museum table was separated into a small room and turned out really well. We will definitely do again at the July Gem Show. We are already planning the July Show with the Macon County Chamber of Commerce. Overall, the May Show was great and we roughly doubled our revenue from previous shows. BIG THANKS to EVERYONE for PULLING TOGETHER!!

Programs: Kim Price (kprice@safetworksinc.com). NRt.

MAY: The Washington Monument: A History of How Macon County Contributed to the Capstone.

JUNE: TBD

JULY: U.S. Forest Service Safety and Stewardship presented by the US Forest Service and the Ice Cream Social

AUGUST: The Importance of Local Materials Quarries

Constitution / By-Laws Committee: Al Pribble (alton36@gmail.com), Larry Ellert (clellert@yahoo.com). No Rpt.

Field Trips: Helen Rogers absent. Stacy Walbridge Rpt.

The Southeast Federation of Mineralogical Societies has a field trip sharing program called the DMC (originally the Dixie Mineral Council). Clubs in the program take turns sharing one of their field trips with other clubs in the program. This increases the number of field trips a club can offer their members, and members enjoy a variety of field trips all over the southeast.

The June DMC Field trip is to Dorchester, SC on June 24, 2023. Any interested members should contact Stacy Walbridge for more information.

The August DMC Field Trip is sponsored by our club and will be at Chunky Gal. It will be a repeat of our previous trip in 2018 with 3 locations tentatively identified; Buck Creek, Chunky Gal, and Herbert Corundum Mine. We will need 10 to 16 volunteers to act as guides hosts. More information will be provided at the next meeting.

Old Business: No Report.

New Business: We need a Curator for the museum.

GRAND OPENING of MEMBER Owned MINE

Highlands Road Gem Mine
4961 Highlands Road
Franklin, NC 28734

Meeting adjourned 7:10p.m.

Minutes submitted by Chandra Fox, Secretary

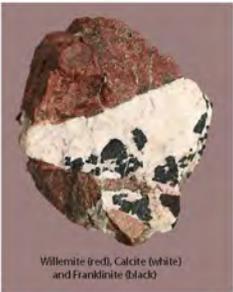
Member News

A Visit to the *Other* Franklin Museum

By Stephanie Brundage



Last year Marsha Harmon told me about the fluorescent mineral mine tours and museums to be found in Franklin, NJ and encouraged me to visit there. My opportunity came this April on a road trip with my family to Boston. We had a leisurely trip and stopped off at a number of tourist attractions along the way. We stayed in a motel in Stanhope, NJ, about 20 minutes south of the museum and visited when it opened at 11 AM. A large school group was just finishing a tour but the host directed us to start in the local mineral room, which they had finished. We had an enjoyable visit to the local, international and native American exhibits as well as the underground mine replica and I came home with a specimen of the local fluorescent mineral, Willemite conglomerate with Calcite and Franklinite.



Willemite (red), Calcite (white) and Franklinite (black)

The following information is from the museum's website giving an overview of the history (www.franklinmineralmuseum.org) and from an historical marker. The museum is at the site of the Taylor Zinc Mine, located at one of two orebodies 2-3 miles apart, which were famous for spectacular fluorescent minerals and an abundance of rare mineral species. The zinc ore was fabulously rich, averaging nearly 25% by weight. Over the years, the two mines in Franklin and Ogdensburg produced over 33 million tons of ore.



Site of Taylor Open Pit Mine

The first mine was begun in 1866 as an open pit in a farm field of buckwheat, thus it was called the Buckwheat Mine. Tailings from the mine were deposited in the nearby Buckwheat Dump, which is still a favorite site for mineral collectors. The Taylor Mine took over the site and expanded the operation utilizing an aerial tramway to extract the ore. The Taylor mine ceased open pit operations in 1912. The pit is now full of water and is the center of a park located across the street from the museum. Mining continued with underground shafts until 1954 when the last of the ore was raised to the surface and the mine was closed.

Many in the community wanted to preserve the heritage of the locality and the Franklin-Ogdensburg Mineralogical Society was formed in 1959 with a goal to found and support a museum dedicated to local minerals. The Franklin Kiwanis club got involved and undertook the museum as a community project. The museum opened its doors to the public in 1965 in a brick building which had been the engine house of the Taylor Mine. A replica of an underground mine once used for safety training is also included. Over the years the museum has grown by additions to that building.



Many mineralogical articles have been published describing the local minerals in Franklin. The first one was in 1810 when Dr. Archibald Bruce described a new mineral, zincite, previously unknown to science. The museum works closely with the scientific community to inspire and foster research on the local geology. The curator of the museum works with university students on research from the senior undergraduate thesis level to Ph.D. dissertations. The museum offers researchers several benefits including access to 7000 specimens which are numbered and entered into a searchable database. They also offer access to equipment of petrographic microscopes and stereo zoom microscopes. Experts are available locally to provide scientific support. Museum staff assist researchers in finding local housing and provide small grants for various study costs.

The museum is open April through November from 11 to 4 on Wed, Thurs and Friday, 10 to 5 on Saturday and 11 to 5 on Sunday. For admission to museum exhibits and mine replica the charge is \$15 for adults, \$12 for children and \$14 for Seniors and Veterans. Members (\$30/year) are admitted free. They also have Fossil Dig, Rock Collecting and Gem Panning areas at various costs. The full Adventure Package for all activities costs \$34 per person for all ages, 3 and up. The rock collecting area includes a specimen bag and 2 pounds of specimens per person, with a \$2 per pound charge over that.

Special events include a monthly night dig for fluorescent minerals, mineral sales in the gift shop and a “Swap and Sell” flea market event. They also have a multi-location Gem and Mineral show in September. The museum also sells specimens on ebay at: [ebay.com/str/franklinmineralmuseum](https://www.ebay.com/str/franklinmineralmuseum)

The Franklin Mineral Museum advertises itself as located in the “Fluorescent Mineral Capital of the World”. It is located at;

32 Evans Street, Franklin NJ 07416

Phone 973-827-3481

Website www.franklinmineralmuseum.org

The website includes podcasts on various topics as well as lists of the many local minerals and fluorescent minerals.

When planning your trip to Franklin, consider also visiting the Sterling Hill Museum in Ogdensburg, just a couple of miles away. (sterlinghillminingmuseum.org) The museum is only available by guided tour at 1 PM on Saturday and Sunday. Visitors are guided through about 1300 feet of tunnel inside the closed Sterling Hill Mine. One feature of the tour is the Rainbow tunnel, an area of the mine with intensely fluorescent zinc ore: Calcite fluoresces red and Willemite appears green under short wave UV light. Unfortunately I wasn't there on the weekend, so missed this attraction.

Member Awards / Scholarship



At the May meeting, President, Stacy Walbridge, presented a long standing member, Tom Parker, with a Certificate of Appreciation for years of loyal and committed service to the Society.



Ilah Williams was presented with a \$1500.00 scholarship for the 2023-24 academic year from the Franklin Gem and Mineral Society at the May Meeting. Ilah has been a member of the Society for 3 years. She is a student at Western Carolina University studying Natural Resource Conservation and Management. Congratulations!

May Program

The Washington Monument: A History of How Macon County Contributed to the Capstone.

By Al Pribble



The May program was The Washington Monument: A History of How Macon County Contributed to the Capstone. It was presented by our own Al Pribble with contributions from Sean Price.

Al was born and raised in Abilene, Texas. He has an amazing bio. – graduating from Texas Tech College with a degree in Mechanical Engineering and working many well know projects like the Saturn V launch vehicle for the moon mission and the Apollo Space Program.

Al worked on the Sprint missile, an extremely high velocity anti-missile defense system and on the Superconducting Super Collider which was a large underground “atom smasher”. Al retired in 1992. He and his wife of 65 years, Rosie, moved to this area in 2000 after stopping to visit their daughter who lived in Cullowee. The Franklin Gem and Mineral Society is so lucky to have Al Pribble as a member for the last 14 years. He has served as both vice-president for one term and president for 3 terms and on several committees.

Al provided many interesting facts and speculations about how the aluminum was processed from corundum and became the capstone for the Washington Monument. Thank you Al for a very interesting and informative program.

Membership

By Roberta & Leonard Pipitone



Please welcome our May meeting guests and new members of the Franklin Gem & Mineral Society, Rodney and Charli Gray

Donations

Bailee Hadelka and Clay Seckinger

During the May Gem Show, Bailee Hadelka and Clay Seckinger donated some great specimens to the Museum. These photographs don't do them justice as they are absolutely gorgeous. Bailee and Clay visited the museum last year and were so enamored with our displays that they wanted to come back and donate some great pieces that we could add to our collection.



Left to Right: Selenite on Quartz-Lincoln Co KY - Calcite on Dolomite - Lincoln Co KY Polished Agate-Eshill & Jackson KY Fluorite-Harden Co IL

Jose Pena of Daphne, Alabama

Rock & Specimen donations are always being taken at the Franklin Gem & Mineral Museum. On June 10th, Jose Pena from Daphne, Alabama and a friend stopped by the Museum after spending a week at William Holland taking a cabochon course. Both men were so impressed by our museum, Jose asked if we would be interested in receiving one of the cabochons he made from petrified bamboo as a donation. Jose received the slab of petrified bamboo from Thomas Werman in Daphne, AL. It is believed, Mr. Werman purchased the specimen from Thailand. This has not yet been verified. The Franklin Gem & Mineral Museum is always interested in receiving donated specimens and collections. Thank you Jose for the beautiful cabochon donation.



Education & Tours News

by Ron Rossomando

The Jail was Hoppin' in June.

There were tours for LBJ Job Corps and Members of the 4H club. Also, the faceting classroom was occupied with a beginning faceting class and also a special techniques student. Five new members attended training and then helped with the LBJ Job Corps tour.



LBJ Job Corp Visitors

New Members Complete Host Training

Five new members completed Museum Host Training on June 5th, 2023. Guided by Ron Rossomando, the new members were provided useful tips and checklists on successful hosting. New members were trained to work in the museum and also helped with the Job Corp tour. Congratulations and Thank You.



Pictured L-R: Tamara Zwinak, Kathleen Gray, Mike White, Karl Williams, Rodney Gray, and trainer Ron Rossomando



Larry Ellert and Chandra Fox are working towards completion of the Beginning Faceting Class taught by John Hayes while Dean Plesner is receiving special faceting techniques on a new faceting machine. It was a busy faceting room.



June 13th Macon County 4H Club.

Gift Shop News

By Anamay Rossomando



Want to thank Diane, Larry, Barbara, Stacy, Mary Beth for participating in the wire wrapping for the rounder day. Some beautiful stuff came out of that get together. Other thanks to Stephanie B. for cab jewelry made for the gift shop, Mary Beth S. for beaded cabs, (all are one-of-a-kind & on display or in our rounder) & to our Hosts for doing a great job of keeping the museum open, educating our guests & mentioning all the treasures we have in the gift shop for purchase.

We also now have "Greetings from Franklin, N.C. Gem Capital of the World" Greeting Cards



Up coming events we need help with will be Sat. 7/15 Heritage Day (Downtown Franklin), & Sat. 8/19 Cowee Folk Festival (Cowee School)

Museum Hosts First Lady



On Wednesday May 17th, 2023, North Carolinas Governor Roy Cooper's wife, First Lady of North Carolina, Kristin Cooper visited the Museum. She was accompanied by two aids and two security personnel. They were greeted by Ron Rossomando who gave the group the background and history of the Old Jail. Stacy and Larry introduced themselves as were Susan Ray and Ron Bischof, who were hosting that day. During the one-hour visit she was able to tour all eight rooms. She expressed her enjoyment in visiting the museum. She asked many questions and showed a keen interest in our collection. In appreciation of her visit Anamay and Kim presented her with a unakite "don't worry" stone, a ruby, and a geode. For all of us it was an exciting time to meet and talk to the First Lady of North Carolina.

Bench Tips

by Bradford Smith
Smart Solutions for Your Jewelry Making Problems

[Amazon.com/author/bradfordsmith](https://www.amazon.com/author/bradfordsmith)



ONE PART DIE FORMING

An easy way to make large and strong components for your jewelry designs while keeping the weight of precious metal to a minimum is done with simple tools in a process called one-part die forming. Complex 3-D shapes can be made quickly from thin gauge sheet with just a piece of plastic and a dapping ball.

I make a forming die by sketching the shape I need on a piece of thick plastic. Then drill a hole and saw out the shape with a jeweler's saw and a coarse blade. When sawing, try to keep edges straight up and down. Refine the cut as needed with a sanding drum or file. Select a thickness of plastic that is just a little more than the amount of doming you want.

> Note: I tend to use 1/4 inch or 3/8 inch plastic that I get as scraps from a local plastics shop.

To use the die, cut a piece of sheet about 3/8 inch wider than the hole in the die on all sides. Anneal the sheet and tape it down on the plastic. Use a dapping ball and hammer to create the domed shape. When the taped down edges begin to warp, planish them flat on the top of the die. Finally, if the sheet is to be domed deeply, you will need to anneal the metal occasionally.

One nice feature of this technique can be seen in the top and left of the picture. If the sawed walls are straight up and down, the hole on the bottom is a mirror image of the hole on the top. This allows you to produce a mirror image shape as needed to make left and right earrings or both sides of an irregular shaped bead as shown.

Jailhouse History

The Jail's Flat Iron Bars

By Fred Plesner

I am sure that many of you have noticed the flat iron bars welded onto the round bars on the right upper window on the back side of the "Old Jail". This was the end results of a jail break in 1947. Times were different then as were the people, including jailers, who were not as security conscious as they are now.

This is the story of the flat iron bars, as best that I can reconstruct it. In August of 1947, there were six men in the jail and the "Slammer" or cage was a free-standing structure without the present barred door on the east end that now prevents entrance to the back side of the "Slammer". Among the 6 male prisoners present was R. L. Hall, about 21, who had been in jail for about a month. Hall had been arrested for assaulting Ferdy Higdon. He had posted bond and been given a suspended sentence and then returned to the jail for violating his probation terms. With him was Jess Webb, about 30, who was charged with passing several bad checks to local merchants.

A conspiracy was entered into with Webb's older brother, Frank, to smuggle hacksaws into the jail. Somehow this was accomplished and work began on Wednesday, August 14, 1947. There was a radio playing downstairs which was used to cover the sound of the work in progress.

Sheriff J. P. Bradley and his family were living in the jail annex but the Sheriff was away at the time. Somewhere around 8:30 P.M. one of the Bradley children saw one of the men running through the cornfield behind the jail. Deputy Walter Dean was quickly notified and he, accompanied by police and others, immediately gave chase. They were unable to catch up with the escaped prisoners. Four prisoners remained in the jail and made no attempt to escape.

The next morning, Sheriff Bradley and his deputies made an early house call to the residence of Furman Hall, the father of R. L. Hall. Officers later stated that R. L. Hall was found asleep in his bed. Frank Webb was readily tracked down and placed back in the jail. Jess Webb made good his escape. Both R. L. Hall and Frank Webb were most likely placed in the "Slammer" for safe keeping.

The round bars were hastily repaired by someone from the Bulgin Forge and the window bricked up. As for all those missing jail doors, they still exist. They were removed sometime between late 1972 and early 1974 and taken to Bulgin Forge where they were used as rebar in the slab that was poured at the forge.

I have been told that we may have them back if we choose to chip them out of the concrete where they are embedded.

Upcoming Shows

July 28-30 Franklin, NC

Macon County Gemboree, The Franklin Area Chamber of Commerce & The Gem & Mineral Society of Franklin, NC; Robert C. Carpenter Community Building, 1288 Georgia Road, Fri/Sat 10-6, Sun 10-4.

July 26-30 Franklin, NC

Highlands Road Gem Show, 1602 Highlands Road, Franklin, North Carolina 28734

July 27-30 Franklin, NC

G&LW Wholesale Gem Show. Over 200 booths featuring U.,S. and International Wholesale Vendors of Diamonds, Gemstones, Pearls, Fine Jewelry, Fashion Jewelry, Findings, Minerals, Fossils and Lapidary Equipment. Wholesale Only Shows – Open Only to the Trade Valid Business License OR Tax Certificate OR Sales and Use Tax Permit in Gem or Jewelry Related Business Fri/Sat 10-6, Sun 10-3.

August 3-6 Spruce Pine, NC

NC Mineral and Gem Festival. Thursday-Saturday 10am-6 pm and Sunday 12:30-5:00 pm Three Peaks Enrichment Center (Formerly Pinebridge Coliseum) 97 Pinebridge Ave. Spruce Pine, NC.

Club Meetings

Date	Event	Time	Program	Snacks
June 27, 2023	Board Meeting	6:30 PM	All members are welcome	
June 29, 2023	General Meeting	6:30 PM	Gem Hunting in North Carolina	Varshana & Earl McGaughey
July 25, 2023	Board Meeting	6:30 PM	All members are welcome	
July 27, 2023	General Meeting	6:30 PM	USFS Safety & Stewardship Ice Cream Social	Bernd & Maggie Phoenix
August 29, 2023	Board Meeting	6:30 PM	All members are welcome	
August 31, 2023	General Meeting	6:30 PM	Ellection of Officers The Importance of Local Material Quarries	Chandra Fox
September 25, 2023	Board Meeting	6:30 PM	All members are welcome	
September 28, 2023	General Meeting	6:30 PM	Installation Dinner	Club Provided
Meeting Location First Christian Church of Franklin 156 Belleview Park Road Franklin, NC				

Club Officers and Board of Directors

President: Stacy Walbridge, (802-598-9548)
Past President: Mark Laing, (864-910-1580)
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)
Museum Manager Assistant: Donovan MacDonald 828-226-3131
Director (2022): Matt Castor, (828-421-8701)
Director (2022): Marsha Harmon, (828 369-7262)
Director (2023): Charlotte Ellert, (828-200-6023)
Director (2023): Brad Fleszar (828-371-1211)

Committees

Museum Curator: Vacant
Curator Emeritus: Fred Plesner, (828-349-4224)
Museum Gift Shop: Anamay Rossomando (828-349-2807)
Gift Shop Assistant: Vicki Knisley (828-371-4954)
Museum Workshop: Matt Castor, (828-421-8701)
Membership: Roberta & Leonard Pipitone, (828-332-2837)
Publicity: Kim Price (336-653-1201)
Field Trips: Helen Rogers (404-784-2531)
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: Charlene Galbrecht (954-592-1377)
Gemborees: Chandra Fox (706-982-0402)
Scholarships: Al Pribble (828-342-3119)
Education/Tours: Marsha Harmon, (828 369-7262)
Asst Education/Historian: Ron Rossomando (828-349-2807)
Newsletter Editor: Mary Beth Stager 404-314-2469
[fgmseditor@gmail.com]

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

