



# THE MOUNTAIN GEM

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THE GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY  
OF FRANKLIN, NC, INC.  
25 Phillips St.  
Franklin, NC 28734

**FIRST CLASS**



Roy Ramsey will share mining sites of Franklin at the April meeting.

**Save Stamps**

## 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual Macon County Gemboree July 25-28 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Daily Closed on Sunday

### 2007 MEETING SCHEDULE

MONTH	BOARD	GENERAL	MONTH	BOARD	GENERAL
January	23	25	July		
February	20	22	August	28	30
March	27	29	September	28	**22**
<b>April</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>26</b>	October	23	25
May	29	31	November	27	29
June	26	28	December		**8**

Board Meetings: 6:30 p.m. at the Franklin Gem & Mineral Museum  
All Board Meetings are open to the members. If you want to submit something before the Board, contact the President prior to meeting.

General Meetings: 6:30 p.m. in West Room of the Macon County Community Facilities Building HWY 441 S  
Except When Noted In The Newsletter

\*\*Banquet and End of Year Party

**April Meeting:**

**Date:** April 26  
**Day** Thursday  
**Time** 6:30 P.M.  
**Where:** Macon County Community Facilities Bldg.  
**Program:** Our own club member, Roy Ramsey will give a presentation on local gem hunting sites

**May Celebrations**

*Birthdays*

- 5 – Chick Snyder
- 15 – Alexander Solimine
- 17 – Mary Anne Zoeckler
- 18 – Belinda McGuire
- 20 – Fred Rasmusson
- 31 – Jeffery Burns



*Anniversaries*

- 10 – Lonnie & Nancy Stalcup
- 13 – Ray & Linda Behr
- 16 – Fred & Frances Rasmusson
- 25 – Joe & Ina Raye Muncher

**April’s Mystical Birthstone – Opal**

By Ted Robles for *The Mountain Gem*

Chemically, Opal is hydrous Silicon Dioxide (Quartz), some of which may be the Cristobalite modification. It is in the class Tectosilicate, which is defined as three-dimensional linkage of the tetrahedral molecules. Structurally, it is built of microspheroids of hydrous (water-bearing) silica whose alignment gives rise (in the ‘precious’ variety, to a diffraction grating-like play of color. Mineralogically, it is non-crystalline (but not amorphous), hard, (6.0±0.5), light (Specific Gravity 2.2±0.3), no cleavage, easily fractured, Transparent to translucent with greasy luster. With proper care takes an excellent polish, and is a favorite lapidary stone, the main difficulty in working it arising from the fact that frequently the most brilliant portions of the stone lie in layers, making it quite possible to destroy a valuable gem if proper attention is not paid during

cutting. Also, the fact that it contains water of crystallization causes the necessity to take proper care of the stone. Many “Investment-Grade” Opals have been destroyed by the action of trying to safeguard the stone by putting it in the “Safe Deposit Box” in the bank. Since the humidity in these boxes is held as close to zero as possible in order to protect paper, the water which is innately a part of a precious Opal will evaporate, converting the stone to sand. If you MUST put your precious Opal in Safe Deposit, first place it in a bottle of water, and seal the bottle! Also, the fact that much of the play of color in precious Opal comes in layers leads to “Flat” stones, which are best protected by covering them with a “Dome” of clear quartz. This process creates “Opal Doublets,” or “Opal Triplets” when a thin slice of precious Opal is also “Backed” by a contrasting flat slice of black Onyx or similar material. The legend that Opals are “Bad Luck,” allegedly arose from Sir Walter Scott’s story “Anne of Geierstein,” wherein a magical stone turned on its owner; however, since the stone was not identified as Opal, this notion is at least questionable. My own belief is that Opal, being notoriously fragile as well as subject to destruction by dehydration, it was easy, in older times before the manifold methods of protection were determined, to destroy a stone worth as much as a small farm with a moment’s inattention. This fact would seem to warrant some trepidation! Opal is mostly in the 50 – 65 million year old range, meaning that they were laid down when dinosaurs roamed the earth.

Precious Opal may be found in Australia, Mexico, Romania, Hungary, and in Idaho, Nevada and Oregon.

Opals are alleged to help open the mystical side of the wearer, leading to insight, foresight, and prophetic ability. They also aid in “Invisibility,” not to say that they render the wearer transparent, but that they confer the property of keeping one from being noticed, if so desired. (For this reason it was once maligned as ‘the thieves’ stone’.) Interestingly, Opal was one of the seven sacred stones of the Cherokee; since Opals are not frequently found in the ancestral grounds of this Amerindian Nation, cross-continent trading in antiquity is indicated. It is a stone of happy dreams and positive visions, and is helpful in strengthening and healing eyesight.

**(cont’d to page 2)**

**New key and password are needed for Museum!!!!**

**April's Mystical Birthstone (cont'd)**

It is an attractive stone, and whether one was born in April and treasures it for its mystic qualities, or in October for its traditional birthstone identity, or merely because one is attracted by its beauty. Opal is a magnificent addition to any jewelry collection. Just remember – it needs to be moistened occasionally, and cannot stand long periods of low humidity. Take good care of your Opals, and they will last many lifetimes. (After all, the stones that are still in the ground have been there for at least fifty million years!)

*Sources:*

*Prinz et al, ed's, Simon and Schuster's Guide to Rocks and Minerals, New York, 1978*

*Kunz, G.F., The Curious Lore of Precious Stones, New York, Dover, 1941*

*Verrill, A.H.; Minerals, Metals, and Gems, New York, Grossett and Dunlap, 1939*

*www.jewelrystore.com/birthstones*

*Conversations with Paul Downing*



**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

The Gem Museum is now open on weekends and will open for regular hours on May 1st. Two people are necessary to keep the museum open. Joe Scotti is only one person and is not expected to work six days a week. One person per day is all that is necessary except for large groups. We are that person, you and I, not the other fellow.

So far, the only volunteers to step forward are Mary Bedrick and Ted and Jan Robles. Please call Ray Behr or myself. These opening days are critical to our success since we are stepping into new territory by opening earlier this year.

In addition to the above, there are activities where you are needed. We have been a part of the Science Fair at the Rabun Gap Community School for the first time this year and we have an invitation to the Heritage Day activities at the East Elementary School in Swain County for the first time. The word is out and we are in demand. In addition to the above we will be participating in Heritage day at the Cherokee Elementary School and at Macon Middle School.

If you don't have any skills yet it's no problem. You will get a chance to learn and you can simply help with an active bunch of children. Your presence will help enhance our presence. The same goes with hosting at the museum. We will teach you and you can teach others.

To get your new keys to the museum you must see Ray Behr and provide him with a 4-digit number for the security alarm; any 4-digit number that is not sequential and that you won't forget. It can be the last 4 digits of your telephone number, social security number, a birth date, or street address number. Ray Behr can be reached at 349 - 0827.

"If we would build on a sure foundation in friendship, we must love friends for their sake rather than for our own. - Charlotte Bronte

**The Gem & Mineral Society of Franklin,  
Board Meeting of March 27, 2007**

The meeting of the Board of Directors of the Franklin Gem and Mineral Society was called to order by President Fred Plesner at 6:30 p.m. on March 27<sup>th</sup> 2007 in the Museum meeting room. Present were: Fred Plesner, Bruce Siegfried, Mary Bedrick, Don Smith, Tom Sterrett, Sharon John, and Dean Plesner. Absent were, Ray Behr, Linda Behr and Linda Smith.

**Treasurer's Report:** Bruce Siegfried reported a total income of \$11.00 and a total outflow of \$2,568.68. This included gift shop purchases, renovations, and office equipment. (Detailed report on file.)

**Museum Report:** Fred Plesner reported that the Museum is ready for business: New door locks have been put in and new keys given out.

**Education:** Belinda McGuire will be at the Rabun Gap School putting on a program with her fossil collection. March 29<sup>th</sup> there will be a group of 8<sup>th</sup> graders from Macon Middle School coming to visit the Museum.

Don Smith brought in a faceted smoky quartz and also a big piece of smoky quartz for the Museum.

**Field Trips:** Tom Sterrett reported that he is working on those now.

**Library:** Dean Plesner said she had nothing to report at this time.

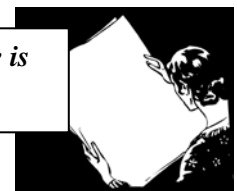
**New Business**

The Board recommended writing a letter to the SFMS for consideration of Elizabeth Siegfried in the Youth Scholarship program.

Meeting was adjourned at 8 pm

Respectfully submitted  
Sharon John, Recording Secretary

*Newsletter deadline is  
May 14th*



**The Gem & Mineral Society of Franklin  
General Meeting of March 29, 2007**

The General Meeting of the Franklin Gem and Mineral Society was called to order at 6:35 p.m. by President Fred Plesner. There were 13 members present and three guests.

**Treasurers Report:** Bruce Siegfried reported that the inflow was \$11 and the outflow was \$2,568.68. This included purchases for the Gift Shop, office equipment and renovations.

**Museum Report:** Fred Plesner reported that the Museum is now ready for business. New door locks have been put in and new keys given out.

**Curator:** Mary Bedrick arranged the specimen collections in the World Room by Continents.

**Education:** Debra Siegfried reported that Belinda McGuire put on a program of her fossil collection at the Rabun Gap School. The Society will put on a demonstration on April 5<sup>th</sup> at the Cherokee School for their Heritage Day Celebration. There will also be one at the Macon Middle School on May 1<sup>st</sup>.

There is a beautiful mineral display at the Macon Bank and the display at the Court House is almost finished.

**Publicity:** Ted Robles reported that this month's meeting was in the paper and that the media was notified of the Museum's opening on Fridays and Saturdays in April.

**Old Business**

The new printer is working very well as everyone should be able to tell by the March *Mountain Gem*.

**New Business**

Our program in April will be Roy Ramsey giving a talk about collecting sites around Franklin.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> of May there will be a Civil War Trails dedication in Franklin.

On April 10<sup>th</sup>, the Macon County Republican Women's Club will have a personal tour of our Museum.

The Board of Directors recommended writing a letter to the SFMS for consideration of Elizabeth Siegfried in the Youth Scholarship program.

Meeting adjourned.

Door prize winners were: Gary Gaetano, Fred Plesner, Bruce Siegfried and Jack Jungles.

John Hayes gave a wonderful talk and demonstration on electroplating with the great help of Jack Jungles and Ted Robles.

Respectfully submitted

Sharon John, Recording Secretary.

**Be Safe – Be Well**

Safety Committee – Don Monroe, Chairman

*“Sticks and Stones May Break Your Bones, but Splinters and Stickers Can Hurt You”*

It seems obvious that splinters and stickers do indeed hurt but it may be that the damage is more serious than we recognize.

Most years I spend a couple of weeks assisting a deer hunting group in the Big Bend region of Texas. The ranch we have access to is about 15,000 acres and it is wild country. The most sobering aspect of this area is the fact that everything, and I do mean everything, sticks. In addition to the ever-present cactus in an impressive variety of sizes and colors, almost all other plants stick. Now I don't mean little stickers, but I mean thorns of size and ferocity that you do not see many places. Once you have allowed one of these thorns to deeply penetrate, you have a wound that needs attention. Since we hunt in a really remote area, both guides and hunters often have to take care of their medical problems. To see one of your friends digging in his leg with a sharp knife and tweezers to pull out the offending sticker is not a pretty sight. Applying a strong antiseptic is necessary but can make a strong man cry.

You are now thinking “What can a person do?”. I do not have all of the answers. As a matter of fact, I do not have many answers, but I will tell you what I do. First, I acquire some snake-proof boots and snake-proof pants. I put snakes in the category of nasty stickers and snake-proof outerwear will take care of most all types of stickers. Then I put together a little first aid kit just to handle cuts, punctures and abrasions. Finally I wear gloves. I don't just wear any old gloves, but I wear leather gloves that will repel thorns and the like. The last thing I do is try to be alert. Watch where you step and where you sit and try to not fall down. Vigilance can really pay big dividends.

Do not get the idea that you must “go west” to encounter stickers. Our yard in north Georgia has been left in the “natural state” because that is the way we like it. Most of the trees and bushes are wild crabapple and they will attack you with a vengeance. Add briars, blackberry bushes and other unfriendly varieties and you get the picture. On our farm we had osage orange and black locust, both of which have well-deserved bad reputations. Is there any part of our great country that does not have stickers?

I haven't forgotten about the splinters. There are a great number of splinters that we encounter in daily life and we really should be a lot more concerned about them because any skin penetration can provide an access path for germs.

**(cont'd to page 4)**

**Sticks and Stones.....(cont'd from page 3)**

Splinters can be soft wood, hard wood, metal, glass, plastic, paint, and many other materials. Splinters can be insidious and really quite dangerous. Obviously a splinter in the eye is a serious hazard, but have you enjoyed a splinter under a fingernail? When we were much younger, a friend got a small splinter in his foot and could not locate it so he ignored it. Have you ever heard of phlebitis? He hadn't either until the doctor at the hospital explained why his leg was so severely swollen. Keep a magnifying glass and good tweezers handy and search out those pesky splinters.

The last splinter I want to warn you about is unusual and many have not encountered it. It is the common cat hair. No, not dog hair or any other type of hair, just cat hair. Now cat hair is fine but a bit stiff and has a very sharp tip. If you get cat hair in your shoe it may take a while but it can get lined up so that the sharp tip comes up against the bottom of your foot. This most often occurs on the heel or ball of the foot. This little sharp spike will work its way between the layers of the "print" of the foot and work its way into your foot. You slowly begin to feel a little pain and you cannot see the source. The pain continues and finally you get serious about finding the source. When you find that little hair it will appear that it is growing out of your skin. When you pull it out, the relief will be instantaneous. I know this is hard to believe but it does happen. Ask around and I will bet you will find someone who has experienced this unusual "splinter."

**Forests of Stone**

*Author Unknown*

Petrified wood deposits have been found in every one of the United States, as well as in many foreign lands. Second to the Petrified Forest National Park in Northern Arizona the largest deposit of petrified wood is believed to be lying in the Egyptian desert south of Cairo. A petrified tree accumulation in Patagonia at the tail-tip of South America also is notable for size. It contains *Araucarioxylon* similar to that of Arizona. The oldest petrified trees are the sheared stumps of *Eospermatopteris taxilis*, a seed fern uncovered by a flood at Gilboa, New York in the Catskills. They are extinct relatives of a New Zealand fern tree, and are thought to have prospered 330 million years ago. This unique antiquity also makes them the earliest known trees. Ginkgo Petrified State Forest State Park west of Vantage, Washington was established in 1934. Despite the park's name, over 2000 varieties of petrified wood have been identified there, but only a few trees are ginkgos. Near Calistoga, California in the Napa Valley is the Petrified Forest (that is its proper name) where sequoias are embalmed in

volcanic mudflows; above them soar living trees of the same kind.

Yellowstone National Park has a number of petrified tree forests. The most notable lies imbedded in the walls of the Lamar Valley. Twenty-seven distinct layers of buried forests, one on top of the other, are exposed in the steep valley, and many trunks remain upright, an unusual occurrence, because even when petrified in that position, erosion and quakes and shifting of the earth eventually bring most to a humbler posture. Over 100 species have been counted: hickory, maple, dogwood, chestnut, laurel, elm, magnolia, fig, redwood, sycamore, walnut, willow and more.

A short drive from Florissant, Colorado, is the Pike (also called the Colorado) Petrified Forest. It is small, but the sequoias that once grew here were towers. One of the stumps has a base diameter of 27 feet. The height of the live tree can only be conjectured. The largest tree yet discovered is also a sequoia - 14 feet, not the greatest diameter, but the trunk can be traced to 295 feet. Weight may be 500 tons. It rests prone, partly covered by desert sand in the Emerald Formation of Southwest Nevada near Coaldale.

Circle Cliffs in the Capitol Reef country of south central Utah, may have more large petrified trees than any other area in America. A number of monoliths measure, it is said, 10 to 123\* feet in diameter. The region is difficult to reach and [is] only superficially explored.

The most valuable single piece of petrified wood gem material is believe to be the famous Roebbling Opal, a hunk of silicified bark weighing 17 ounces and valued at more than \$20,000. The gem came from Humboldt County in northern Nevada near the Oregon line where much preprecious opalized wood has been uncovered.

With erosion constantly going on, there may well be larger trees unearthed since the article was first written.

*From Tuscarora Bulletin 11/77; via The Rockcollector 12-05  
(\*Mountain Gem Editor: could the 123 be 12 feet?)*

**The Statue of Liberty**

*Some statistics*

The total weight of copper in the Statue is 62,000 pounds (31 tons). The total weight of steel in the Statue is 250,000 pounds (125 tons). The total weight of steel in the Statue's concrete foundation is 54 million pounds (27,000 tons). The copper sheeting of the statue is 3/32 of an inch thick or 2.37 mm.

*From USA TODAY via The Southwest Gem, 8/04  
2006 SCRIBE*

**Southeast Federation of Mineralogical Societies  
Report for the March 24, 2007  
Executive Board Meeting  
By Michael Streeter  
North Carolina State Director  
March 9, 2007**

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Greetings fellow rockhounds, fossil collectors and lapidaries!

I am pleased to announce that the state of rock, mineral, fossil and lapidary clubs in North Carolina continues to be strong, although membership and/or club participation appears to be waning in many clubs.

As the Southeast Federation of Mineralogical Societies (SFMS) enters its 41<sup>st</sup> year, its member clubs face an ever-increasing challenge to maintain and bolster their membership roles. Anybody who has attended meetings over the past decade or so can tell you that the average age of most club membership roles has increased with each passing year. To attract and hold new and younger members, rockhounding clubs must compete with countless in-your-face entertainment choices as never before. So, what's a club to do? Let me offer my top ten suggestions that may give you a boost.

**Top Ten Ways to Maintain and Bolster Club Membership**

- 1) Conduct monthly meetings in a fast paced and entertaining fashion. Try to attract top-notch experienced speakers to provide presentations about current subjects related to rockhounding. If you can't find a good speaker for any given month, don't force the issue. For instance, don't ask old Joe to get up and show pictures of his Star Trek collection just to fill the time. If you don't have a rockhound-related program, then by all means adjourn the meeting and talk amongst your club member friends in front of the dessert table. Having a short entertaining meeting is always better than having a long boring one!
- 2) Have your club purchase a Power Point projector and secure a lap top computer. Power point presentations have modernized the age-old slide show format and can be quite entertaining. Having this setup available will also increase the number of potential speakers - those who have created power point presentations but can't afford a projector (such as myself).
- 3) Food and drink –Something good to eat and drink at your meetings will attract just about anybody!
- 4) Advertise your monthly meetings, programs and field trips. This can be done through various venues, such as public access television, newspapers, radio and the Internet. Don't simply post your meeting schedule on your club website – advertise on busy rockhounding message boards and other websites. You'd be surprised at how little this costs and how many new members you will attract by doing this. You are always welcome to use my very popular message board at [www.mcrocks.com](http://www.mcrocks.com) to advertise any club function – for free!
- 5) Be wary of joining non-sanctioned groups as this may ultimately harm the SFMS and your club. Unfortunately, there is and will continue to be rogue rockhounding groups out there with selfish agendas that will siphon off existing and potential membership from legitimate clubs. If someone asks you to join a group for free, find out the actual cost to you, your club and the SFMS before you say yes.
- 6) Volunteer to give a talk about rockhounding at your local elementary school. Teacher and school budgets are too thin these days to bring in paid help, so they would welcome your assistance. You don't have to be a professional or an expert to talk about rockhounding to a bunch of eager kids. Take along some giveaways to really give them a thrill. Also, be sure to hand out information about your club and its activities for each child to take home to his/her parents. Get a kid hooked on rockhounding and his parents will soon follow.
- 7) Start a Junior Section for your younger rockhounds. Allow them to meet separately from the old codgers during monthly meetings if they so prefer.
- 8) Update your club brochure and disseminate it to local rock shops, museums, malls and other places where potential rockhounds flock.
- 9) Reinvigorate and support your club's field trip program. Younger members are more interested in hands on fun than sitting around talking shop at what they most often consider to be boring monthly meetings. Get back into the field even if you think that you have been there and done that. Even at locations where Chrissy and I have collected many times, we never know when we will turn over just the right rock to uncover the gem of a lifetime.

**(cont'd to page 6)**

(Cont'd from page 5)

10) Present and discuss your own ideas to attract and maintain members at your membership and board meetings. Don't be quick to shoot down new ideas and be prepared to spend a little bit of all that money that you may have languishing in some dusty bank account. Remember, change is good and often necessary.

As I have written before, I hope to be able to spend some quality time with as many North Carolina clubs and their members as possible during the upcoming year, whether on field trips or other club events. I only wish that Chrissy and I had more time to travel and visit clubs, but our full time jobs and collecting on most weekends keeps us pretty busy. Although I may not always be able to see you in person, I am always available should you need any help or advice with any SFMS or other issue – just give me a holler.

Kindness is the language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see.....Mark Twain

Editor's comments:

Club members; as you can see from Mike's suggestions, we are doing most of what it takes to keep a club alive and well. Our biggest handicap is the maintaining of our museum. We are so fortunate in having members giving so much of themselves for our club and museum!

It would be very nice to have a power point projector in the future when we are able to afford one. Since one is over \$500, we would need both the Board and members' approval.

Also, if you have any suggestion/s on improving our club, please contact a board member. We are always open to new ideas. And remember that you are welcomed to any board meeting...this is why we make the time and date available in the newsletter.)



**HELP CELEBRATE!**



This year marks the 60th Anniversary of the American Federation and the Convention in Roswell, N. Mex. will give us a chance to celebrate. We hope that you will join us!

Our BIG celebration will occur on Thursday, June 7<sup>th</sup> beginning at 7:00 P.M. at the host motel.

We'll hear a few words about "the aliens" of Roswell...did they see flying saucers overhead or was it some other anomaly? In addition, several of the AFMS past presidents plan on being in attendance and will share with us some of their recollections of their year as president. And that's just for starters.

The 60th Anniversary Committee also plans to have \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. Sorry, we can't fill in the blanks for you - you'll have to attend to find out all about our special plans and commemorative gifts.

Today...call the motel and make your room reservation (Best Western Sally Port Inn, 1.505.622.6430. \$78.30 per night includes taxes and breakfast).

Tomorrow...send in your registration form for advanced tickets, the Awards Banquet and the Editor's Breakfast.

(See [www.amfed.org/show2007.htm](http://www.amfed.org/show2007.htm) to download forms and further information.) Plan your competitive or noncompetitive exhibit and send in your application. Some club cases are available on a first come basis. Registration deadline is May 1st.



The psychology professor was lecturing on emotional extremes to his students. "For example," the professor asks one student, "what is the opposite of joy?" The student replies, "sadness." "And the opposite of depression?" he asks another. "Elation," the student replies. Looking toward a transfer student from Texas, the professor asks, "And you sir, what would be the opposite of woe?" The Texan replies, "Sir, I believe that would be giddy-up." Source: the LIGHTER SIDE Farm Bureau

After the elderly gentleman fainted, he woke to find himself stretched out in an ambulance. Checking his vital signs, the paramedic asked, "Sir, do you know what we're doing right now?" Sitting up and looking out the ambulance window, the old gentleman replied, "Oh, I'd say about 60, maybe 65 miles an hour." Source: the LIGHTER SIDE N.C. Farm Bureau 2-06

**May Auction:** Start looking through your stash and consider donating items for our fund raiser in May. The annual auction has been a large hit in the past with members.

**Lapidary Expressions Of The Bible**

By Bruce Siegfried for *The Mountain Gem*

The Bible plies rockhounds and “lapidariests” with stone and rock counsel. Did you know that? As I take this heavenly direction, these words of wisdom out of context, you can note what sage advice they give to all us stonecutters and rock collectors.

Genesis, the beginning, is always a good place to start. “Jacob said, ‘pick up stones,’ and they made a heap.” I’ve always tried to obey that recommended course, have you? In this example the KJ version prompts us to “gather stones till we make a heap.” (Genesis 31:46)

Here is another thought that rockhound and gem cutter alike can get excited about. 1 Kings 5:17 relates how the king commanded, “Quarry great stones, expensive stones.” In my heart I want to believe it must have been diamonds or rubies or some such treasure. Other Bibles mention “costly stones,” or “stones of much worth.”

It is amazing how much Job knew about stones—maybe he tried polishing them in his better days. That is why he stated, “Water wears away stone.” (Job 14:19) He once asked, (rhetorically, of course) “Is my strength the strength of stones?” (Job 6:12) He keenly noted of some people, “They live among the rocks.” (Job 8:17) In his dark days he still had some wise observances to make, “Man goes out to further parts of the earth to look for rocks in dark places.” Another version renders this verse as, “In the dark region of the earth they search for ore.” (Job 28:3) I’ve been in some of those dark places, and I can tell you it is hard to find good specimens by car headlights. Job 28:2 correctly states that “From stone, copper is being poured out.”

Do you ever feel like the person noted at Psalm 102:14? “Her stones are dear to you.” Or another Bible renders it, “For you people will love every stone.” Or “Your servants have found pleasure in her stones.” Perhaps ‘she’ has a rock shop, or is a dealer at the shows.

Proverbs 27:3 sure speaks the truth when it gives us this report, “Stones and sand are heavy.” Sounds like this writer has either carried a five-gallon bucket of his finds out of a deep quarry, or does his own concrete work for sure!

Zechariah 12:3 tells us, “A heavy stone—all who lift it will grievously hurt themselves.” Have you ever tried to collect some of those big specimens? I became entangled in a mess of flint at a dam spillway in Georgia one day. No gloves, hands cut to ribbons as I tried to lift a specimen that weighed more than my wife into the back of my Ford Pinto. Remember also this truth, Hernia surgery is only a lift away. One

Bible records the event this way, “An immovable rock—all who try to move it will injure themselves.”

Or as Luke 19:40 so wisely and concisely puts it, “The stones would cry out!” Or “The stones would start shouting.” I wonder, is this from pain? Or has your water run empty on your cabbing machine? (The only other alternative is that you are over-medicated.)

Here is a good one. Leviticus 14:42 states, “Other stones will be brought in to replace the ones that were removed.” This is truly sage advice, for consider what this person is sharing with us. Cast your culls into the garden, and thus make room for more inside. Don’t tell anyone.

I stand in awe of this wonderful description found at Isaiah 54:12. “I will make your towers of bright red stones, and all your walls will be made of stones of great worth.” Another Bible gets specific on the stones. “I will lay your foundation with sapphires. I will make your battlements of rubies, and your gates of fiery glowing stones, and all your boundaries of delightful stones.”

One bible just calls them jewels and gems. What in the world could this person be building? A Faberge® Egg perhaps?

Here is another warning for you field trippers. Found recorded at Ecclesiastes 10:9, it pithily reminds us, “Whoever quarries stones will be hurt by them.” One Bible gets specific here, when it takes on this verse with, “You could get hurt by chiseling stone.” You went on that last field trip too, didn’t you? **NO MORE UNDERCUTTING! And please, no more poking around the bottom of steep talus slopes.**

Habakkuk 2:19 is an odd counterpart to those ‘crying out’ stones we found a minute ago.

Different Bible translations here speak of “lifeless stone” or “silent stone.” Coincidentally, I’ve never been able to wake up any of my stones either. And all my talking to them hasn’t helped a bit.

It has been related to us at Revelation 18:21 that, “A mighty angel picked up a boulder.” Or some bibles say a “huge rock.” I wonder what kind of heavy stones angels collect.

“A gift is as precious stone,” recommends Proverbs 17:8. Another states here, “A bribe is like a magic stone.” But my favorite rendition puts it this way, “The gift is a stone winning favor in the eyes of its grand owner.” I love stone gifts too. Good counsel to remember for anyone purchasing a gift for me.

A strange thought indeed, can you figure out this riddle? “A stone was cut, not by hands.” Or, “A rock was cut, but not by human hands.” Daniel 2:34, 45 is mysterious indeed. Could it be the long awaited miracle of hands-free faceting?

**(Cont’d to page 8)**

(Cont'd from page 7)

The last of the 'stone' verses is my all time favorite. Wise King Solomon knew all about our hobby. He said, "There is a time to scatter stones, and a time to gather them." "A time to cast away stones and a time to gather stones together." "A time to throw stones away and a time to bring stones together." While I seldom practice throwing them out, (just a few culls now and then), I like gathering them. Soon it will warm up a bit outside, and what are you thinking about? **IT'S TIME TO GATHER STONES! LET'S GO!** (Ecclesiastes 3:5)

Now the rock expressions all seem to me to be oriented for field trips. There is advice for safety, and wisdom to get the most out of them. Let me explain. Does this sound like a recent field trip, and the typical results you get?

First, we will note some of the wise safety direction we all need to remember. Numbers 23:9 relates to us the experience of one field tripper, and his keen observation. "From the top of the crags I see him." Or "From the rocky peaks I see them." Yes, he got separated and lost the rest of the group in the desert somewhere, and yes, he had sense enough to climb to a high spot to look for them. And yes, he found them.

Of course, your find must be the best specimen. And you hope others are envious and jealous of your find, as you loudly exclaim, "For their rock is not like our rock." Other scholars apply this verse in an entirely different manner. It could mean that as you stand tiredly by your car at the end of the hunt and spit out the words "All I got was leaverite, and the non-rockhounds (just along for the outing) found gemstones." Bragging, or sour grapes, you decide what this verse implies. (Deuteronomy 32:31)

Could Judges 6:21 sound a rockhound warning? "Fire flared from the rock." And "Flames jumped from the rock." **YES! YOU ARE TOO CLOSE TO THE VOLCANO! GET BACK!** The better specimens have cooled anyway. Active volcanoes are not the best place for field trips.

"Praised be my rock," or "Blessed be my rock." (2 Samuel 22:47) When you say your prayers, do you remember to pray for the geode you are about to break open?

Job 14:18 tells us that, "The rock is removed from its place." Or "In the real world, mountains tumble and rocks crumble." (Contemporary English Version) But can you carry it the three miles to the truck?

Job 24:8 further reports on the unusual activity of hugging the rock, or clinging to it. If you have done it, (and we all have, come on, admit it), don't tell anyone—they will leave you behind next time.

Job 29:6 even admits "The rock kept pouring out streams of oil for me." Job had oil wells!? He was extremely wealthy. Such a find could be a great end to a perfect field trip.

The psalmist begged, "Oh my rock, do not be deaf to me." Or, "Do not refuse to hear me." Afraid he won't hear you. (Most good specimens are male.) The best specimen will lie there quietly and you will pass it by. Yes it will lie there silently and wickedly, in disguise, right by your foot, and never make a sound. You can count on it. (Psalm 28:1)

Here is one all know about, "He split rocks in the desert." Were we in Oregon or Nevada? Anyway, it was another field trip with nothing to show but sore muscles. (Psalm 78:15)

You'd best leave that 15-pound sledgehammer at home.

Finally, on the way home, you will have to explain your fixation and sad results you obtained from the field trip to your questioning children. For Joshua 4:21 prophecies, "Children ask, what do these stones mean?" or "Sons ask their fathers, what do these stones mean?" You will have to admit to them, even though you may already be weeping and gnashing your teeth, that this is not what you went hunting for, and it really isn't all that special. Or, down the road, in your old age, your children will request information just the way the Contemporary English Version puts it, "Years from now your children will ask you why these rocks are here." It's hard to explain why you gathered all those plain rocks.

Yes, you can see for yourself, much rock and stone advice is contained in the scriptures. "Better listen to higher wisdom," that is what I always say.

*(Thank you, Bruce for this funny and informative article.)*





The Gem & Mineral Society of Franklin, NC is in need of someone to write Grants to attain a full-time Director. If you would like to consider doing this research, please contact one of the Board Members. All help is appreciated!!!!

**Would you like to write a paragraph on the month's program? If so, I need you!**

*The Editor*

**Coming Events**

**May**

**11-13--Marietta, Georgia:** Mothers Day show; Georgia Mineral Society; Cobb County Civic Center, 548 Marietta Pkwy.; Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 12-5; free admission; auction Sat.; contact Jay Gorday, 1690 Granger Ct., Atlanta, GA 30341, (770) 986-0822; e-mail: mayshow@gaminer.org; Web site: www.gaminer.org.

**12-14--Franklin, North Carolina:** 6th annual show, "Mother's Day Gemboree"; Franklin Chamber of Commerce; Macon County Community Bldg., U.S. 441, south of Franklin; Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 12-5; gems, minerals, fine jewelry; contact Tony Angel, Franklin Chamber of Commerce, (800) 336-7829 or for information visit www.franklin-chamber.com.

**June**

**2-3--Birmingham, Alabama:** 34th annual show; Alabama Mineral & Lapidary Society; Tannehill Historical State Park; Fri. 9-5, Sat. 9-5; gems, minerals, fossils, jewelry; contact Rick Kittinger, 1612 Colesburg Circle, Hoover, AL 35226, (205) 823-2970; e-mail: rick.kittinger@bellsouth.com.

**15-17--Asheville, North Carolina:** Show, "Asheville Gem Fest"; Colburn Earth Science Museum; Pack Place, 2 S. Pack Square; Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 12-5; free admission; speakers Sat. and Sun.; kids' activities, free earth science museum admission, silent auction; contact Felicity Green, Colburn Earth Science Museum, P.O. Box 1617, Asheville, NC 28802, (828) 254-7162; e-mail: museum.colburn@gmail.com; Web site: www.colburnmuseum.org.

**Graves Mountain "Rock Swap and Dig"**

8 am to 6 pm, Friday, April 27, 2007  
 8 am to 6 pm, Saturday, April 28, 2007  
 8 am to 6 pm, Sunday, April 29, 2007

The SFMS Field Trip Committee has been in contact with the caretaker in charge of Graves Mountain, Clarence Norman Jr. All participants must stop at the welcome table in the Hospitality tent to sign a liability

release form and make a small contribution to defray the cost of opening the mountain and providing port-o-lets. There will be several golf cart type, four wheeled vehicles available to transport those participants who have trouble walking long distances. The dig will cease and everyone is expected to be off the mountain by around 6 pm each day. Participants will be allowed to park in a designated area on the mountain.

Junior will set up an area in the upper parking lot for tables to be setup for daily rock swaps. Anyone who would like to setup a table(s), please contact Junior at the phone numbers listed below. Hot food cooked on the grill, cold drinks and chips will be available for purchase on the mountain during all three days of these events. Don't forget to bring some extra money to buy the special "Graves Mountain Rock Swap and Dig" T-shirt!

THESE DIGS ARE OPEN TO ALL SFMS CLUBS and the GENERAL PUBLIC! Contact Information: Clarence Norman Jr. - 706.359.3862 (his business) or 706.359.2381 (his home)

**Hints & Tips**

via SCRIBE 2005

One reason for polishing a stone all over, front, back, and edges, is that the polish acts as a sealer. It seals and keeps in water, especially opal. It prevents natural corrosion as in Rhodonite, which corrodes to black ore called "wad," and helps stop absorption of harmful substances such as perspiration, etc. Polish the back of your cabs by flat lapping on the back of a glass plate or normally.

*(Via Gem of the Rogue 8/98 via THE POST ROCK 9/00)*

Silicon treated tissues such as those used for eye glasses can be used to remove fingerprints from polished stones.

*(From Agate Explorer via THE POST ROCK 9/00)*

An aluminum pencil can be used to determine the hardness of stone. The pencil leaves fainter marks on harder stones. A stone harder than seven will not allow itself to be marked.

*(From A gale Explorer via THE POST ROCK 9/00)*



If lawyers are disbarred and clergymen defrocked, doesn't it follow that electricians can be delighted, musicians denoted, models deposed, tree surgeons debarked, and dry cleaners depressed? *George Carlin*