

The Mountain Gem

September 2024



**Franklin Gem and Mineral Society, inc.
Franklin, North Carolina**



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About the Cover

Photo courtesy Pamela Martin of Casablanca Photography



From the President



Greetings Rockhounds!

I want to congratulate & welcome the newly elected board going forward into 2025. We have an excellent group of members and a talented team of officers, and we look forward to growing our club. Congratulations to the new board members.

We are excited to start having more programs in lapidary arts and education in rocks and minerals. In addition to the gemstone cabbing classes, we look forward to starting classes in faceting, wire wrapping, resin, pebble art, and beading classes. We need members who would like to volunteer to teach these and other gem related arts.



Nathan Ciarleglio, one of our new club members, told us about a volunteer program sponsored by the WCU Center for Community Engagement called “Community Connections Fair” sponsored by the WCU Center for Community Engagement. We want to thank Shawn Dholakia, Connie Nelson, Barbara James, and Karl Williams who had set up a table at this fair to recruit WCU instructors and students to volunteer/work at our museum for WCU credit hours. They recruited over two dozen volunteers from WCU.

We appreciate Ron Biscoff, Connie Nelson, Susan Ray, Karl Williams, Varshana Dholakia, and Earl McGaughey for setting up our education display at the 3-day Macon County Fair. Our FGMS booth looked great, and the fair had lots of activities, and it was packed with visitors.



Finally, I want to share my appreciation to all the FGMM members for all your support and I want to thank you all for allowing me to be your president. It has been a wonderful experience working and spending time with all of you. It has been a fun year, and I look forward to working as your vice president in the upcoming year going forward!

Warm Wishes

Varshana Dholakia – FGMS President



General Meeting Minutes of the Franklin Gem and Mineral Society

August 29, 2024

1. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by FGMS President Varshana Dholakia at 6:33 p.m.
2. Attendance: There were 47 members in attendance.
3. The President called for officer and chair reports:

Treasurer: Kathi Walbridge announced our monthly income well exceeded our expenses, in great part due to the museum being open more Saturdays. We have had good, regular sales from our Gift Shop.

Secretary/Education: Susan Ray expressed Many thanks to Earl Mc., Varshana Dholakia, and Connie Nelson for working a table Saturday, August 24th at the Phillips Street Fair, under the town gazebo. They distributed information about the museum and our Education Programs, and directing people to the museum. Norm Hobert and Susan Ray met recently to review the By-Laws and Standing Rules and making minor recommended changes to the Board. The Macon County Fair will be hosted the week of Sept 16th, and FGMS has a booth in the education area. The last library presentation drew 75 guests. This was part of our Community Outreach plans and we will host another Library presentation in October. Pumpkinfest will be taking place downtown on Oct 19th and FGMS will have a table on Phillips St and the museum will be open 9 am until 6 pm. A volunteer sign-up form is available for volunteer sign-ups. The Jr Rockhounds will be at the museum observing cabochoning and learning about the lapidary arts as part of their September Program.

Museum Manager: Larry Ellert reported that 8 lap wheels have been sent off for refurbishing. We have a new printer in the museum meeting room. He has installed a lock on the slab cabinet. Larry recently resigned the annual contract for our security monitoring system. Cab classes have been going on regularly.

Gift Shop: Anamay Rossomando and Vicki Knisley noted the Gift Shop has been open more often and they thanked the volunteers who devoted time to make that happen.

Membership: Charli Gray reported that we have 47 in attendance tonight, and over 150 in membership.

Social Media: Varshana noted that Stacy Walbridge monitors and updates our website; Susan Ray oversees the Facebook site; and Charli Gary takes care of our Instagram account.

Field Trips: Joe Whitenton reviewed the upcoming field trips. That list was sent out in July newsletter.

Streets of Franklin: Earl McGaughey reported the Pumpkinfest/Monster Mash will be hosted by the town all day, Saturday, Oct 19th. We are recruiting volunteers to help us in and out of the museum. The Franklin Chamber of Commerce and a new marketing agency are hosting early morning meetings for all the Franklin businesses. Meetings are broken down by business categories. These meetings are designed to focus on Franklin tourism and business success. FGMS attended a meeting with gem mine owners.

Elections: Stacy Walbridge presided over the officers' election. After handing out ballots, he joined two other members who counted each ballot. The election results are:



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President:	Dr. Susan Ray	
Vice President:	Varshana Dholakia	
Secretary:	Charli Gray	
Treasurer:	Terri Grimmett	
Asst Treasurer:	Connie Nelson	
Museum Manager:	Karl Williams	
Director:	Barbara James	
Director:	Rodney Gray	
(Continuing Director)	Carl Seaman	(elected last yr for 2 years)
(Continuing Director)	Earl McGaughey	“ “ “ “

The officers' Installation and Dinner will be at our next meeting, Thursday, Sept 26th at 6:30 pm. There will be a pot-luck dinner that night, with Carl Seaman providing the main dish.

With the business of the general assembly of the Franklin Gem and Mineral Society concluded, Earl McGaughey made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Larry Ellert. FGMS President Varshana Dholakia adjourned the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

Varshana Dholakia	September 12, 2024
FGMS President	(electronically signed)

Susan Ray	September 12, 2024
FGMS Secretary	(electronically signed)



Education

Junior Rockhounds Learn about Lapidary Arts

The Franklin Gem and Mineral Society Junior Rockhounds will meet next Wednesday (Sept 25th) at 3:30 in the museum workshops to learn about the lapidary arts: Wire wrapping, faceting, and cabochoning. Because the kids are too young to use the museum workshop equipment (minimum age is 13), they will be observers of the lapidary skills.

To date, the students have started personal rock collections and have learned about commonly found rocks and minerals in this area. Furthermore, they have joined in discussions about the techniques used to identify rocks, including hardness testing, as well as rock characteristics like color, cleavage, luster, refractiveness, weight and crystal form. As they continue their participation and education about rocks and minerals, these kids will be well prepared for their 8th grade Science Geology Unit!

Instructors Needed

We're currently putting together the **Fall and Spring Schedule of Classes** and we need our members to step up as volunteer instructors. Skill is important, but previous teaching experience is not required. If you aren't sure you could teach it- but you know it, we can pair you with a more experienced teacher. We would like to offer Intro to Cabochoning (1 class), Cabochoning 1 and 2 (5 class meetings), Faceting 1 and 2 (5-6 class meetings), Wire Wrapping(2-3 class meetings), and any other lapidary arts you might suggest. We're anxious to get our classes scheduled and started, so please contact Susan Ray (drsusanray@gmail.com) right away if you can teach, co-teach, or learn to teach. When we have our instructors in place, we can finalize a class schedule and make that public with fees. Class fees run \$10 to \$50, depending on the length and materials.

FGMS hosts Streets of Franklin Table



Many thanks to Connie Nelson, Varshana Dholakia, and Earl McGaughey for working a table Saturday, August 24th at the Phillips Street Fair, under the town gazebo. They distributed information about the museum, our Education Programs, and directed people to the Museum.



Gift Shop News



Thanks to all who are willing to step in to fill the days we need for hosting. Roberta & Lenny were always our go to people for Saturdays. A full and quick recovery is wished for Roberta.

These are the trees Bushy made & donated to the gift shop. We already sold 5. The picture was sent from Mike. May his memory be eternal. They were truly good & hard workers for the club.

Pumpkinfest & other festivals are coming up and anyone with the time to help is greatly appreciated.

Museum

Museum Donors Fulfilling Our Dreams

Our goal during the next year is to spruce up the museum, giving it a fresh facelift. Our building was taken over in 1974, and much of the decorations and design show the 50 years of wear and tear.

We have 50 display lighted display cases. Many of the display case lights are out and we found that the fluorescent lights are no longer available. Karl Williams to the rescue! Karl has very generously donated the funds to purchase new LED, motion-sensor lights for ALL the display cases and the gift shop shelving.



Not only will this new lighting system brighten up the museum, LED lights that have motion sensor capabilities will significantly reduce our electric bill. Karl also provided the museum with a new gift shop chair at the cash register and a new portable phone for the front desk. Many thanks to Karl.

While we're thanking donors, our gratefulness goes out to Joellen and Ted Reckwerdt for their donation of handmade jewelry that we will sell in the giftshop. And speaking of giftshop, some of our members make cabochons that they donate to the giftshop to generate sales.

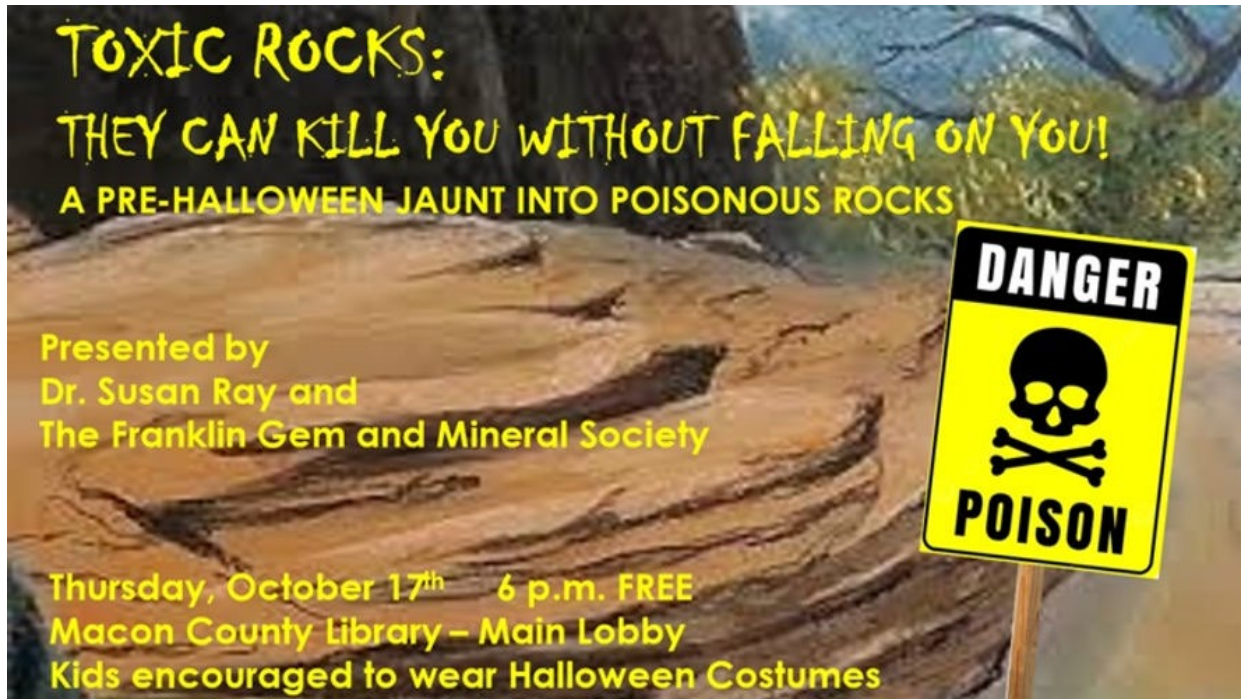
Donate Items or Time

It is absolutely true - every little bit helps. If you have rocks, gems, office supplies, rock-related items, and similar items, think about being one of our beloved donors. If you would rather donate time and energy, we need volunteers to join us **Monday, Oct. 7th and Tuesday, Oct 8th at 10:00 a.m. each day** to install the new display case lights. That involves opening each case and velcroing a very light (2-3 ounces) strip along the inside perimeter of the case. Easy-peasy! If you can help us one or both of those days, please notify Susan Ray at drsusanray@gmail.com



Presentations

POISON ROCKS: A Halloween Event at the Library



The Junior Rockhounds are being invited to display their personal eggcrate rock collections and act as hosts for the event, distributing programs and helping audience members find seating.

Earl McGauhey and Varshana will join Susan Ray to present this slide show on rocks that are poisonous. Yes, there are many besides arsenic! This will be a light-hearted look at over 20 poisonous rocks and minerals. We're inviting kids to attend in their Halloween costumes and get candy treats! The fun begins at 6:00 p.m. in the main lobby of the Macon County Library. This is a FREE event as another function of the Society to host community outreach activities. Come early – our last similar event was packed!



Field Trips

Proposed Field Trips for FGMS – August 2024 through June 2025

(dates subject to change due to weather, club conflicts, etc)

DATE	DAY	LOCATION	DISTANCE	FEES	FACILITIES	INFO
Oct 6th	Sunday	Patty Mine, Summerville, GA	3 hours	FREE	NO	Only open Sundays, easy rock quarry - pick up rocks out of car Must sign waiver
Nov 4th	Monday	Upper/Middle Buck Creek, Clay County	45 min.	FREE	NO	#1: (Upper) ¾ mile hike #2: (middle) no hiking, fairly easy creek access
DEC/Jan/ Feb	NONE					
March 15th	Saturday	Ducktown Basin Museum Burra/Burra Mine, Ducktown, TN	1.5 hours	\$5.00	YES	Museum
April 7th	Monday	Sarah's Creek, North GA	1 hour	FREE	Forest service toilets	Collecting at the creek
May 2nd	Friday	Lake Tugaloo, North GA	1.5 hours	FREE	Forest Service toilets	Tour, light walking
June 10th	Tuesday	Chatooga River area, No. GA	1 hour	FREE	None	Collecting, some walking

DMC 2024

DMC is a program of the Field Trip Committee of the Southeast Federation of Mineralogical Societies, Inc. Copyright © All rights reserved.

Please contact Joe Whitenton for more information. 828-347-6555 whitecloudjoe@yahoo.com

From the Editor

Please submit all entries, comments and corrections to fgmseditor@gmail.com, as this is the best way for me to keep track.

Newsletter Deadline is October 24th



Club Meetings & Events

Date	Event	Time	Program	Snacks
September 24	Board Meeting			
September 26	General Meeting		Installation Dinner	Covered Dish
October 29	Board Meeting			
October 31	General Meeting			
* Please Note: Board Meetings are held at the Museum. All members welcome				
General Meetings First Christian Church of Franklin 156 Belleview Park Road Franklin, NC			Board Meetings Franklin Gem & Mineral Museum 25 Phillips St Franklin, NC 28734	

Event	Date	Time	Location	Notes
Poison Rocks	October 17	6:00pm	Macon County Library	
Gemboree	October 18-20	10-6 Friday & Saturday 10-4 Sunday	Carpenter Center	Setup starts at 8 am on Thursday. For more information, contact Varshana. fgmspresident@gmail.com or Varshana.Dholakia@gmail.com



Officers, Board of Directors, and Committees

Club Officers and Board of Directors

President: Varshana Dholakia, (828-342-3135)
 Past President: Stacy Walbridge, (802-598-9548)
 Vice President: Susan Ray, (727-798-7207)
 Secretary: Susan Ray, (727-798-7207)
 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)
 Board of Directors
 Earl McCaughey
 Carl Seaman
 Charlette Ellert

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: Vacant
 Membership: Charli & Rodney Gray (602-380-8024)
 Karl Williams
 Publicity & Program Coordinator: Kit Terry (423-367-6070)
 Field Trips: Joe Whitenton (828-347-6555)
 Refreshments: Charlene Galbrecht (954-263-8157)
 Constitution and By-Laws: Al Pribble (828-342-3119)
 Future Vision: Ron Rossomando (828-349-2807)
 Museum Calendar: Charlene Galbrecht (954-592-1377)
 Gemboree: Varshana Dholakia, (828-342-3135)
 Scholarships: Al Pribble (828-342-3119)
 Education/Tours: Susan Ray (727-798-7207)
 Asst Education/Historian: Ron Rossomando (828-349-2807)
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