



THE MOUNTAIN GEM

Gem & Mineral Society of Franklin, North Carolina
September 2020 Newsletter



Franklin Gem and Mineral Society

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Director (2020): Tom Parker, (828-342-3619)
Director (2019): Diane Mason, (706-379-1718)
Director (2019): Tom Sterrett, (828-349-3774)

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: Norm Holbert (828-634-0350)
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]

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

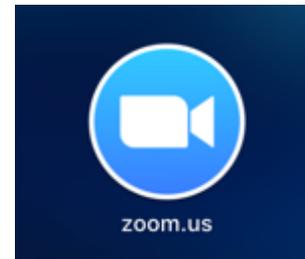


The Gem and Mineral Society of Franklin, North Carolina, is a 501 (c)(3) organization and donations may be tax deductible. Please remember us when planning your estate.

ZOOM IS COMING TO FGMS

Stacy Walbridge

Talking with and seeing other members is one of the big things that I've missed over the past six months. Recently I've participated in several other club meetings and presentations using



Zoom, a way to hold video conferences. I was impressed with the ease of use, the quality of the video conference, and finally talking with and seeing other rockhounds. I thought that our club should give it a try so we held the August Board meeting via Zoom. Several members were initially hesitant on using Zoom but after a little instruction it went off without a hitch. In fact, one of the board members internet service was down and he was able to join using his landline.

With that initial success we are going to hold the September Board meeting next week using Zoom and will also hold the general meeting using Zoom. In addition to the general business part of the meeting I will provide a brief presentation on Collecting in the Sonoran Desert that will highlight some of the features of Zoom and hopefully answer some of your questions about Zoom. A separate notice will go out with details on connecting to Zoom.

Special October Meeting

For the October Zoom meeting we will have a special guest, Brad Smith author of Bench Tips, will share his favorite tips from 24 years of experience in the jewelry industry including a decade teaching hundreds of students. Don't miss it.

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Club Website: <http://www.fgmm.org>

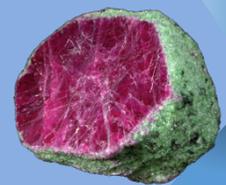
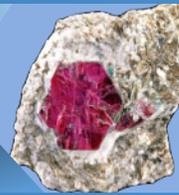
Club Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/franklingems>

Club Newsletter: fgmseditor@gmail.com,

Club Contact E-mail: franklingemsociety@gmail.com

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LABOR DAY SIDEWALK SALE

Annamay Rossomando

On Saturday, September 5th, we opened for business with a sidewalk booth supporting the merchants Labor Day Sidewalk Sale. The Museum remained closed but we were able to offer some items for sale from the Gift Shop. A small table was setup next to the Museum and our signs were proudly displayed. Many thanks to those who stayed all day; Marsha Harmon, Mark Laing, Fred Plesner, and Ron & Anamay Rossomando,



Open for Business

(l to r) Larry Ellert, Charlotte Frye, Mark Laing, Anamay Rossomando, and Marsha Harmon

Other members that stopped throughout the day to help or just say “Hi,” included Jane Morgan, Stacy & Kathi Walbridge, Larry Ellert & Charlotte Frye, Elena Marsh, Paul Thomas, and Vicki Knisley.

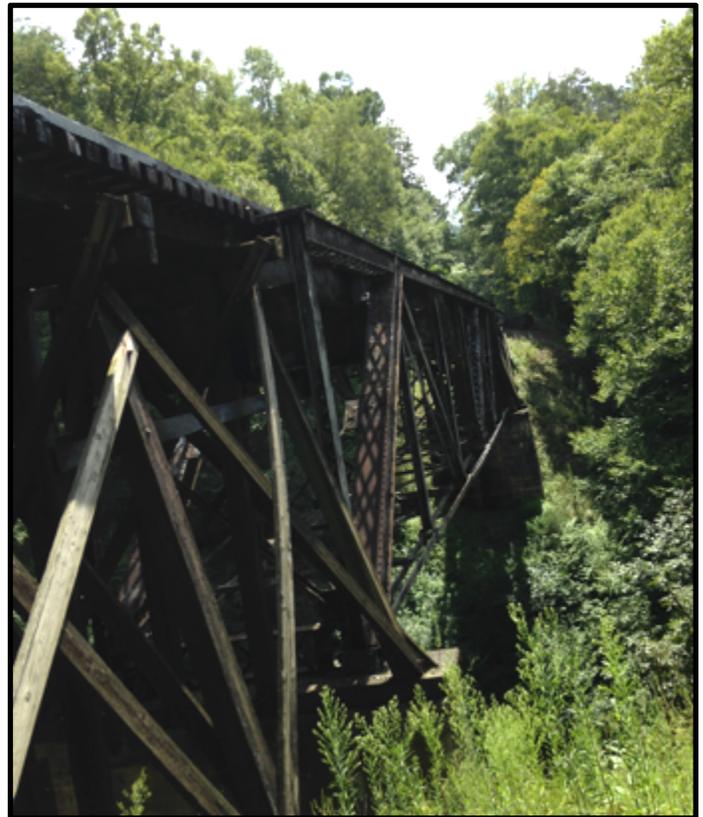
Also a thank you all the people who wanted to come, but couldn't because of health concerns. It was great to see everyone, Marsha, Fred & Mark interacting with the children providing fun education, Stacy & Kathi providing bagels & spread, Stacy did an interview, and Ron hawked our wares. We made about \$160 and received a lot of feedback from people on how they missed the museum, but they all understood our situation.

HIKING THE RAILS

Marsha Harmon

Photographs by Diana Jurss

Having just followed up on a tip by a former host from the Moonshine Creek Campground near Waynesville, NC, I thought I would share how it went. Diana Jurss, a club member from Sylva, and I were on the hunt for reported Corundum. I had been told that the railroad tracks up there on Balsam Gap were supported with local material dug from a nearby mine.



The Trestle

This nice gentleman said that it was Corundum and there was plenty of it. It was used to support several track overpasses to decrease erosion of this section. We hiked up and walked probably 2 miles but only found the usual characters: quartz, feldspar, limestone, mica and garnets. The one thing unusual to



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me was railroad art. Some odd pieces of twisted metal and spikes that are now no longer needed, I hope.



Marsha Hunting Those Rocks!

You don't always find what you're looking for but that was a nice hike. This is a beautiful campground. Please respect this area and ask permission to hike if you choose to visit. Caution trains do pass and the overpasses are very high.



Moonstone but No Corundum

SEPTEMBER BIRTHSTONE: Sapphire

Article and Photo Courtesy of

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



The September birthstone has traditionally symbolized sincerity, truth, faithfulness and nobility. For countless centuries, sapphire has adorned royalty and the robes of the clergy. The elite of ancient Greece and Rome believed that blue sapphires protected their owners from harm and envy. Clerics of the Middle Ages wore sapphires because they symbolized Heaven. Ancient Persians believed the earth actually rested on a giant sapphire, which made the sky blue.

The September birthstone was reputed to have healing powers as well. Medieval Europeans believed that sapphire cured plague boils and diseases of the eye. The sapphire birthstone was also thought to be an antidote to poison.

Famous sapphires include the Rockefeller Sapphire, a 62.02 carat (ct) rectangular step cut stone that was unearthed in Myanmar (Burma). Acquired in 1934 by financier and philanthropist John D. Rockefeller, Jr. (1874–1960) from an Indian maharaja, the gem was recut and remounted over the years.

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The sapphire was first set as a brooch and later as a ring featuring two cut-cornered triangular diamond side stones. Perhaps the best-known sapphire in recent years is the 12 ct blue gem surrounded by diamonds in the sapphire engagement ring first worn by Princess Diana and then given by her son to Kate Middleton, now Duchess of Cambridge.

subsequently reheated a number of times without the risk of unfastening joints that had previously been made. This process made possible the beautiful cloisonné work.

GEMS, ROCKS, AND MINERALS NEAR FRANKLIN, NC

Marsha Harmon

Photographs by Stacy Walbridge

A SECRET SOLDER

(Source: The Glacial Drifter Sep 2021)

The ancient Egyptian goldsmiths soldered their gold work by a most clever but secret process that remained a great mystery until modern chemistry recently rediscovered and revealed the secret. They would solder dainty wire filigree and granular gold to a surface without flux or flooding the work with solder; all the joints were clean and showed no solder.

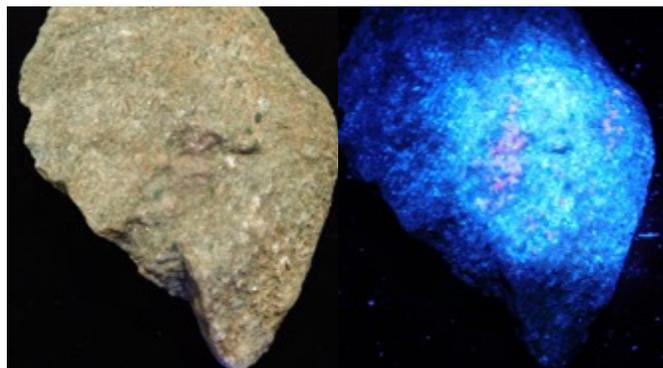
We are all lucky to live in Western North Carolina and as I meet more club members, I see a lot of folks who were not born here. I was not born here but given the choice, I moved here. Whatever your reason for being here, you are living within 2 1/2 hours of prime rockhounding territory. I challenge you to name what you think, as far as gems, rocks and minerals your favorites, that are located near our homes in Franklin.

My list, I held down to 12 but there are **many** more:

The Egyptian goldsmiths mixed ground copper carbonate or malachite with glue. This adhesive was used to stick the grains of gold or wire into place or to coat and hold the adjacent edges of the parts to be joined. The work was then heated on the charcoal brazier with the assistance of the blow pipe on those areas which had to be raised to the highest temperatures. At 220° C. the copper carbonate or malachite changes into copper oxides; at 600° C. the adhesive has become completely carbonized and at 850° C. a curious phenomenon occurs: the gold in contact with the copper melts to form a solder joint, well below the melting point of the gold. The process had great advantages for the ancient goldsmiths.

Corundum (Ruby and Sapphire) are the reason our town is known as the Gem Capital of the World. Cowee Creek area is where corundum was first noticed in the 1800's and many additional sites were found later on. They are valued for their hardness which makes them good as abrasives and some gem quality minerals are still found. Rubies are red and Sapphires are all the other colors. There are plenty of gem mines to choose from or the Cullasaja River, Buck Creek, Herbert Mine or Chunky Gal Mountain.

There was no decrepitation of flux to throw pellets of solder off the job and the various parts were already stuck together by the dried adhesive before the heat was applied. All that was required to be done, once the mixture has been correctly prepared and applied, was to carefully heat over a bed of glowing charcoal. The beauty of this process is that the work can be



Red Fluorescent Ruby Crystals in Smaragdite from Chunky Gal

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Mica comes in book-like formations and many mines are located in multiple spots throughout the US. They are multi colored but possess value due to their good insulation properties. Most of the earlier mines were found to have more valuable material but mica is still used. Our club has the mineral rights to a mica mine out in the Iolta community. Most mines around here started out as Mica mines and then converted to what would result in the best payoff.



Thin Mica Books

Garnets can be found in most Macon County gravel parking lots and driveways, sitting next to mica and there are many varieties throughout the US. Locally almandine (deep red to brown, brownish to black), pyrope (deep red to reddish black) and rhodolite (rose to pale purplish) are best represented. Buck Creek, Deep Gap, Little Pine Garnet Mine, Mason Mountain Mine are a few locations close by.

Kyanite I list due to its characteristic of having two hardnesses within the same specimen. It has a hardness of 5.5 in one direction and 7 in another direction. Blue gray and green are the only colors I can locate within our 2 1/2 hour perimeter. I have to admit that my challenge to myself is with a take a nice blade from Georgia and turn it into a round cabochon. Nearby locations include Clarksville, GA chicken

farm (private property), Buck Creek, NC and Graves Mountain, GA. I have been lucky to find some different colors at these locations.



Kyanite From Clarksville, GA

Quartz (Amethyst, Smokey, Clear and Milky) One of the most common minerals of the earth's crust. Georgia and the Carolina's own quite a good reputation for excellent quartz crystals. There are many more colors and types of this mineral available throughout the US. Tiger eye, citrine, aventurine and moonstone are some included in this diverse silica group. Diamond Hill or any mine near Due West, SC and Sarah's Creek near Tate City on the river I have found Quartz at both.

Marble used in building: as a rough stone and also polished. There is a pink marble also called Etowah found in Pickens County Georgia that boosts the building stone for several famous buildings. The quarries are near Tate, GA. They also have a greenish version called Creole Marble. I have found small piles of this material on a back road but I do not remember where.

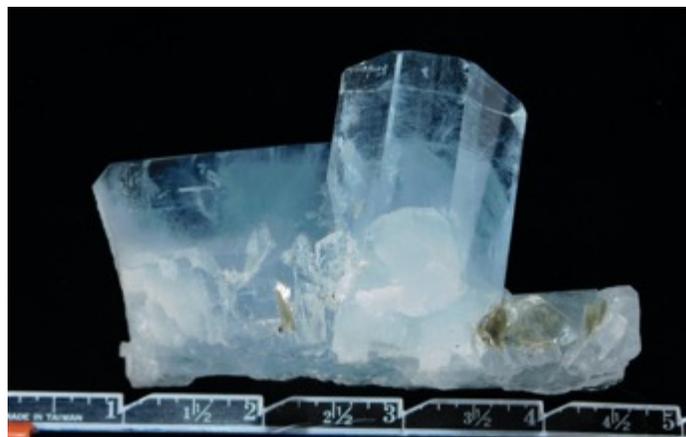
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Diamond Hill Mine Amethyst

Beryl (Aquamarine and Emerald) can be found in several locations but Spruce Pines area is the most known by far in the close distance category. My suggestion is to try Crabtree Emerald mine, Wray Aquamarine mine, hit the NC Mining Museum, Museum of NC Minerals and check out Gem Mountain for a long weekend but a fun one on one of their field trips.



Aquamarine

Tourmaline comes in several colors pink, blue, orange, green and black. Most people think about California and Maine locations but black (schorl) which is an associated mineral in this grouping, has been found in Clay County. There is a location just across Buck Creek where it sits within feldspar.



Schorl in Feldspar

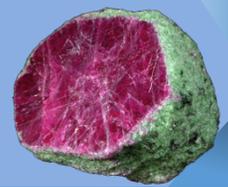
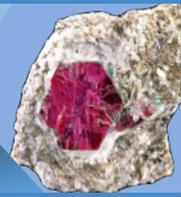
Unakite, first found in the Unaka Mountains of Western North Carolina where it borders TN, is a great stone to tumble or to cut cabochons with. It is also used in construction and architecture. Depending on where you find it will include green, pink to red and maybe a yellow highlight with a hardness of 6 on the mohs scale. I don't have a closer location but have seen plenty at local flea markets.

Copper has been found under Copperhill, TN. Although it no longer is mined there, some of the by-products still come from there. The Ducktown Museum is a great day trip and the history is presented in person by people who grew up there. Very interesting and they do have a dump pile you can pay to dig through but they are no longer searching for copper there.

I would love to hear from you about the ones I did not list or the ones I did. More than likely you will be correct. The sharing of locations is what a good

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rockhound does best. We are lucky to live in Western North Carolina!

Responses to the editor and myself are appreciated.

JEWELRY BENCH TIPS

RAISING A CABOCHON

When a cabochon sits too low in a bezel, the bezel can hide a lot of the stone. The solution is to either sand down the bezel height or boost up the stone. But if you choose to raise it up, the question is what is the best material to use ?

I was taught to use fine sawdust but now think that might be a problem when used in rings. I reason that rings will frequently get wet, which would cause the sawdust to swell in size and push the stone against the bezel. Then when the sawdust dries out, the stone would be a little loose.

In any case, I now prefer to insert a flat sheet to boost up my stones. It can be a scrap of metal or some plastic from product packaging or old credit cards. In either case, just cut a piece to loosely fit into the bezel and drop in the stone (with some dental floss) to check it's height.

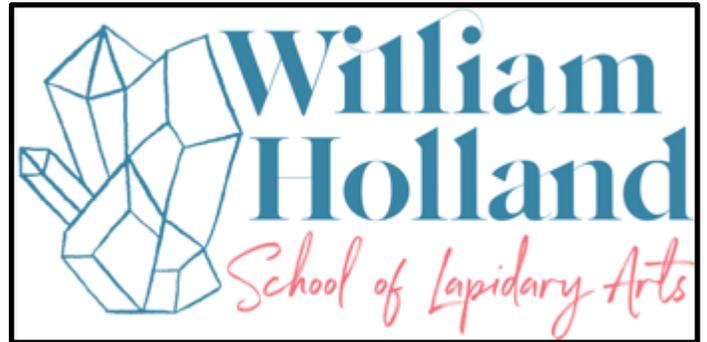
TRANSPARENT CABS

When bezel setting a transparent cabochon in silver, I usually cut out the back of the bezel to allow background light to show off the colors and patterns in the stone. If this is not possible or appropriate, I worry that the silver bezel will tarnish under the stone and will ruin its brilliance. What to do?

My solution is one extra step before setting the stone. I place a piece of thin silver Mylar plastic under the stone to act as a mirror that will never tarnish. Mylar is readily available in craft and gift wrap stores, or in a pinch from a party balloon supplier. You may even want to experiment with using colored or patterned Mylar (i.e. diffraction pattern) under some stones.



Work Smarter With Brad's "How To" Jewelry Books, [Amazon.com/author/bradfordsmith](https://www.amazon.com/author/bradfordsmith)



Auction Fundraiser

Every Tuesday evening William Holland conducts an internet silent auction as a fundraiser for the school. If you are interested in participating and seeing what is for sale contact Kristine at: kristine.williamhollandschool@gmail.com

Items range from unique slabs, cabochons, intarsia, instruction books, beads, finished jewelry, jewelry supplies and much more.

WILLIAM HOLLAND 2021 CLASS REGISTRATION

From William Holland Home Page
<https://lapidaryschool.org/main.aspx>

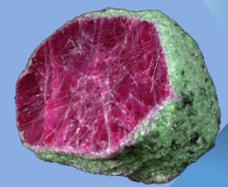
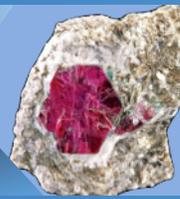
We're excited for the 2021 class year at William Holland! We have moved enrollment up to **10:00 AM Eastern Time Monday October 12th, 2020.**



"Still Diggin" on Belvidere Mountain Eden Mills, Vermont,
Printed by permission - Fred Wilda Watercolor @ <http://naturesfinestcreations.com>

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MEMBER'S TRADING POST & MARKETPLACE



In last month's newsletter we began a new feature for members to sell their used/unwanted lapidary hardware, tools, minerals, fossils, slabs, etc. Unfortunately, there were only 4 items for sale and no takers. So this month 2 of those items are still for sale and we're expanding the feature to include member's business cards, websites, and Etsy sites, that are related to Gems, Minerals, Lapidary, Jewelry, Rockhounding... If you would like your information included in the Newsletter just send an email to fgmseditor@gmail.com with your information.

If you have an interest in one of the items contact the seller and work out the details. For these 2 items all the proceeds will go to the Museum. We will try this for a couple of months to see if there is interest, so members, look through your collections and equipment and follow the directions below to help the Museum.

What is needed from the Seller; send an email to fgmsnewsletter@gmail.com by the Newsletter deadline or earlier and include:

- Seller Name
- Seller Contact Information
- Picture of Item for Sale
- Price OBO

For the Buyer:

If you see an item that you would like to purchase then you will contact the seller directly and work out the price and logistics for completing the sale.

Upon Sale Completion:

Once the sale takes place then the donated funds should be placed in an envelope along with the seller's name and placed in the lockbox (*Donations Box*) at the Museum. A receipt for the donation will be provided to the seller at a later date (*if desired*).



Item 1 - \$10

Tool holder and bucket. Good for field trips and what-have-you. \$10
All proceeds to the Museum.

Contact: Al Pribble, 828-369-2548
828-342-3119 (cell).

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Item 4 - \$15



Mitutoyo 6 inch vernier caliper with case, .001 inch resolution. Good condition, eyes needed to go to a digital caliper. \$15

All proceeds go to the museum

Contact: Stacy Walbridge, 802-318-6624 (cell)

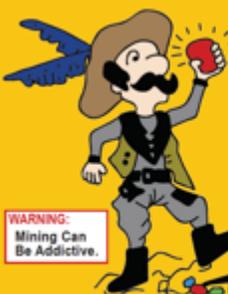
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**OLD CARDINAL
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8285247306
8283696673
Darcel, Charles, Morgan ,Isaiah

September Board Meeting
6:30 pm Tuesday, September 22, 2020

September General Meeting
6:30 pm Thursday, September 24, 2020
This will be a Zoom Meeting
Collecting in the Sonoran Desert
By
Stacy Walbridge

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**October Newsletter Deadline is
Friday, October 15, 2020**

Franklin Gem and Mineral Museum

25 Phillips Street, Franklin, NC 28734

