



# THE GOLDEN NUGGET

February 2006  
Number 06 - 02



*The Official Voice of the Montgomery, Alabama Gem & Mineral Society*

## February Program

**When:** Thursday, February 9<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 p.m.  
**Where:** Mureal Crump Community Center  
1735 Highland Ave.  
Montgomery, AL  
**What:** **BINGO!** Please bring any small items  
you would like to donate for prizes.



## Refreshments



Mike Berkman will provide the drinks and Linda Griebel will provide the snacks for the February meeting.

**We still need people to sign up at the meeting to provide either snacks or drinks for future meetings.**

## Happy Birthday!



James Pullen - 02/13  
Linda Griebel - 02/21

## \$ Membership Dues \$

Once again it is time to renew your membership. The dues remain the same as last year, \$12.00 for individuals and \$18.00 for families residing in the same household. Please give your dues to our Treasurer, Iris McGehee, at our January meeting or mail your check to: Montgomery Gem & Mineral Society, P. O. Box 3273, Montgomery, AL 36109.

New members are always welcome. Applicants must attend two meetings or functions before submitting applications. See our club secretary, Mary Lou McHugh, for applications.

## WARNING -- WARNING

**This will be your last issue of *The Golden Nugget*, if your dues have not been paid by February 28<sup>th</sup>.**

# Tanzanite



Tanzanite is a very special and unique gemstone. Worldwide it occurs only in one specific location. Its blue colour, which shimmers in a slightly purplish hue, is magnificent indeed. Because of its unusually attractive flair it was easy for New York Jeweler Tiffany's to make it one of the most sought-after and popular gemstones in the world.

Its name reminds of the worldwide unique occurrence in the east-African state of Tanzania. Africa – the name of this continent does not immediately remind us of gemstones. Nevertheless, Africa is a continent from where many splendid and beautiful stones find their way to the world markets. An example for this is Tanzanite, which was enthusiastically celebrated after its discovery in 1967 as "Gemstone of the 20th Century". The gemstone experts literally held their breaths when they were shown the first deep blue crystals mined in the Merelani Hills near Arusha in the north of Tanzania. Millions of years ago, metamorphous slates, gneiss stone and quartzites shaped impressive flat insular mountains on the wide planes near Mount Kilimanjaro. In the core of these unusual rises there are stored the valuable crystals. For a long time they remained hidden for the eyes of men, until one day some Massai-herdsmen passing by noticed crystals sparkling in the sun and picked them up.

Today at Merelani the popular crystals are searched for in several, usually smaller mines, to some extent by means of modern methods. Generally only smaller grains are being found, but now and then the miners strike a lucky vein and produce a larger crystal – much to the pleasure of the mine-owners and the numerous Tanzanite enthusiasts everywhere in the world.

The Tanzanite trade is managed by many, usually small-scale licensed traders who have built up good business relationships with gemstone firms in Germany, India, Israel and the USA. An estimated 90 per cent of all Tanzanite traders are registered members of the International Colored Stone Association ICA and thus dedicated to the respective high ethical standards of ICA. In this way, then this exclusive gemstone is not brought to the world markets via suspicious back-street dealers, but in spite of its rarity is distributed via reliable and trustworthy official channels to well-reputed gemstone-cutters, and then passed on to the most important jewelers all over the world.

## **Actually only a blue Zoisite...**

Tanzanite is in fact the blue variety of Zoisite gemstone. However, the hydrated calcium aluminum silicate mineral achieves only hardness 6.5 to 7 on the Moh's scale, and is thus not very resistant. Therefore it should be worn with care, never be cleaned by ultrasonic method and never come into contact with acids.

When New York Jeweler Company Tiffany was presented with the first Tanzanites right after they had been discovered, they were immediately convinced: this gemstone is a sensation! However, they recommended finding a new name for the blue beauty, since the gemologically correct denomination "blue Zoisite" reminded unfortunately of the word "suicide". So Tiffany's suggested the name Tanzanite instead, derived from the place of occurrence, and the new name quickly became established on the market. And it was in fact the firm of Tiffany's who introduced the stone to the public in a spectacular promotional campaign two years after it had been discovered.

## **... but what a spectacular colour!**

Spectacular and magnificent is the deep blue of Tanzanite, ranging from ultramarine to a light purplish blue. The most coveted colour is a blue, which shows a purplish hue shimmering around it, which is extremely spectacular in sizes above ten carats. Typical for Tanzanite is the appearance of several colours in one and the same stone: depending on the perspective, the stone appears blue, purple, or dun yellow. Most rough crystals, however, show a disturbingly large proportion of brownish-yellow, but the cutter may cure this by carefully heating the stone in an oven to about 500°C. In the course of this heating, utmost concentration is demanded, for it is essential to determine the moment when the colour turns blue. Heating is therefore a treatment which is generally accepted in the trade, however, the rough stone has to be as free of inclusions as possible, as otherwise the process will lead to fissures in the stone.

Working with Tanzanites is a task, which will cause even experienced cutters to tread carefully, as the cleavage of the gemstone is very high in one direction. The exclusive stone is cut in any imaginable shapes and forms, from classical round cuts to imaginative designer cuts.

Tanzanite is always fascinating because of its unusual appeal that will hold everybody in its thrall. The deep blue with the slight purple shade is one of the most extravagant colours available. It symbolizes immaculate but unusual elegance. Whoever purchases such a unique gemstone wants to be set apart from the masses. Wearing it communicates self-confidence and individuality. The almost magical colour of a perfectly cut Tanzanite is not only attractive on young women; it also emphasizes the individuality of a mature woman.

For Tanzanites in especially good qualities and larger sizes almost any price will be paid by now. What is it that makes this stone so coveted? Is it only the spectacular colour? Well, it seems we must also take the exclusive origin into account here. As the stone is found on one special location only in all the world, it is especially valuable. After all, the desire to own something unique and rare has always been a decisive criterion for assessing the value of special gemstones.

© International Colored Gemstone Association (ICA) (<http://www.gemstone.org/index.html>)



## Upcoming Shows

Feb. 10 - 12, Merritt Island, FL - Central Brevard Rock & Gem Club, Inc. Annual Symphony of Gemstones Show. Kiwanis Island Park, 950 Kiwanis Park Rd. Hours: 10<sup>th</sup>, 1 pm - 6 pm, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>, 10am - 5pm.  
Contact: George E. Tolson, 321-783-4795



## HIDING FRACTURES IN YOUR CABS

The secret of hiding fractures in a cab with epoxy is to shape your stone and semi-polish it. Heat the stone to 200 degrees in an oven. Mix epoxy and apply it to one end of the crack and work toward the outside of the cab so that the air in the fracture is driven out and the resin now replaces it. You will note that the epoxy becomes very fluid when it touches the hot stone and flows right into the crack. Put the stone back in the oven for 20 minutes for the epoxy to harden. Scrape off the surplus and proceed with your final polish.

Via High Country Gleamings 02/00: via Chat & Chips 12/05: via Rockhounds Tale 01/06





## CARING FOR YOUR CABS

Natural and synthetic stones need TLC. Here are some tips for extending the life and luster of your stones.

- Clean stones with hot, soapy water.
- Dry stones thoroughly with a soft towel.
- Some stones can be cleaned in an ultrasonic cleaner; some can be permanently damaged if cleaned in one (amber, coral, lapis, opal, pearl and turquoise for example.)
- Rub gems with a smooth, soft cloth to remove fingerprints and keep them shiny.
- Store stones away from intense heat and light.

Via Rio Grande via The Boulder Bouncer, July 2005



## CLEANING STONE BEADS

Immerse stone beads in warm, soapy water and scrub gently with a soft brush. Then rinse the beads and place them on a towel to dry. Most stone beads can be ultrasonically cleaned as well. Please Note: Beads that are dyed or organic (amber, bone, coral, horn, ivory, opal, pearls or turquoise, for example) can be damaged if cleaned in an ultrasonic cleaner. Also dyed stones should not be steam cleaned.

Via Rio Grande via The Boulder Bouncer, July 2005



## General Information

The purpose of the Golden Nugget is to inform members of news about gems and minerals along with news about club, state, and regional activities of interest to our members. Most important, the Golden Nugget provides a way for each of us to share information about projects and to pass on tips that will help others enjoy our hobby. Unless members are willing to contribute, *The Golden Nugget* cannot meet this latter purpose.

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Meetings of the Montgomery Gem & Mineral Society are held every 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at the Mureal Crump Adult Center, 1735 Highland Avenue, Montgomery, AL. The annual gem show replaces the December meeting. Anyone interested in gems and minerals is invited to attend. Field trips, workshops, and classes are held at various locations. These are announced at monthly meetings.

The Montgomery Gem & Mineral Society is a member of the Southeast Federation of Mineralogical Societies, Inc. and the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies, Inc.

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**If you didn't do so at the last meeting, please verify your address, phone number, email address and birthday at the February meeting!**

# MONTGOMERY GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY MINUTES

January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2006

The meeting was called to order by Iris McGehee, who presided in absence of President James Easterling. The following visitors were welcomed:

Frank Rowell, James Murphy, Thomas Tarpley, SaRita Hartin, Diane Slaughter, Mike Mitchell, Mary and Nick Conversino.

Linda Lord reported on Drucilla Hornsby's successful surgery and that she is recovering at a relative's home in Birmingham.

The Minutes were approved as published in the Golden Nugget.

The Treasurer's Report was read by Iris McGehee. It was approved and filed with the secretary. Iris announced that dues are due and she would receive them during the break.

Field Trip Chairman, David Sherrod announced that the Club's Federation field trip is scheduled for September 2007. He also announced that a field trip is planned for Saturday, January 28 at the marble quarry at Sylacauga.

Participants will meet at McDonald's in Wetumpka at 9:00.

Iris McGehee reported on attending the annual meeting of the Southeast Federation in Melbourne, Florida.

It was announced that the workshop building will be opened on the first and second Saturday of the month.

A motion was heard, seconded and approved to provide a limited number of gem and mineral kits to Junior High earth science classes.

Refreshments were provided by David Sherrod and Becky Fetzer.

Laura Hirst, Program Chairman announced that the following would be sharing their hobby's interest: David Sherrod, Iris McGehee, Sonny Hall, Becky Fetzer, Linda Griebel, Terry Toney, Jean McDonald and Laura Hirst. Several visitors also shared their interest.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.



## Club Officers

President: James Easterling, 875-3089  
1st Vice Pres.: Laura Hirst, 590-6946  
2nd Vice Pres.: David Sherrod, 285-5537  
Secretary: Mary Lou McHugh, 272-1817

Treasurer: Iris McGehee, 262-7275  
Director: Harold Glover, 285-3501  
Director: Terry Fetzer, 271-6849



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