



# THE GOLDEN NUGGET

May 2005  
Number 05 - 05



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

## May Program

**When:** Thursday, May 11, 7:00 p.m.  
**Where:** Mureal Crump Community Center  
1735 Highland Ave.  
Montgomery, AL  
**What:** Video "Gemstones of America"



## Refreshments



Refreshments for the May meeting will be provided by Terry Toney, drinks and Harry Corbin, snacks.

Next month's snacks will be provided by the Stevens, drinks, and the Hirsts, snacks.

Please remember to bring paper plates, napkins and cups. Ice is available at the community center.

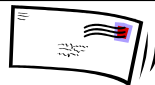


From Rockbuster News 2/85  
via T-Town Rockhound 2/99

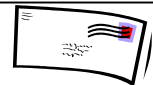
## Happy Birthday to



Iris McGehee  
Harry Corbin  
DJ Sherrod

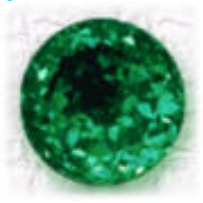


## SFMS STAMP PROGRAM



Please continue bringing in stamps to be sent into the SFMS Stamp Program Chairman. The program can only be successful if we and other SFMS clubs make it successful. To be eligible for your name to be put in a drawing (if our club is chosen as a winner of the scholarship at the annual meeting), you must bring in stamps. So please do your part in helping our club to have a chance for a scholarship to William Holland or Wild Acres. Iris McGehee

## May's Birthstone



May's birthstone is the emerald. Several famous historical artifacts were made of emeralds. Among them was the Crown of Andes, said to be worn by the last Inca king of Peru who was taken prisoner by Conquistador Pizarro in 1532. The crown was said to be set with 453 emeralds, collectively weighing 10 ounces (1523 carats). In the 1940s, the crown was sold to, then broken up by, an American syndicate. Many of its stones are probably in the jewelry collections of wealthy Americans today.

Emeralds vary in color from light to deep green. It's commonly thought that an emerald's color derives from the presence of chromium and / or vanadium, replacing some of the aluminum in the mineral's structure. The stone can, however, lose its color when heated strongly.

The emerald belongs to the beryl family of minerals that include aquamarine (the March birthstone), heliodor and morganite. Beryl, or beryllium aluminum silicate in chemical jargon, is a six-sided symmetrical crystal. Beryl contains beryllium, aluminum, silicon and oxygen.

The synthetic manufacturing of emeralds was achieved by German chemists shortly before World War II. But growing synthetic stones of fine quality began in the United States in 1946. There are also excellent imitation emeralds on the market made of colored cut glass.

Emeralds are most frequently found inside a form of shale -- a fine grained sedimentary rock. Emerald-bearing shale has undergone recrystallization due to changes in the physical environment such as pressure and temperature. Colombia produces the largest and highest quality emeralds. They were also discovered, and subsequently mined, in the Ural Mountains of Russia around 1830. In the United States, emeralds can be found in North Carolina. Around the world, they also occur in Zambia, Brazil, Pakistan, Norway, Austria, India, Malagasy and Australia.

The emerald's name is indirectly derived from the Greek word "smaragdos," a term ambiguously applied to several kinds of green stones. The history of emeralds can be traced back to antiquity. They were worn by royalty in Babylon and Egypt. Tools dating back to 1300 B.C., during the reign of Rameses II, have been found in emerald mines in Egypt. Queen Cleopatra's emeralds were believed to originate from mines in Southern Egypt, near the Red Sea.

When the conquistadors first arrived in South America from Spain, they saw native rulers wearing emeralds. Large quantities of emeralds were taken from Peruvians during the invasion but the source of the emeralds were never discovered. Then in 1537, the Spaniards found Chivor in Colombia, now the location of an important emerald mine. They also took over the Muzo mine following the defeat of the Muzo Indians. Mining operations at Muzo have continued almost uninterrupted since the Spanish invasion. It is now perhaps the most famous emerald mine in Colombia and is said to produce the world's best emeralds.

There are many myths associated with the emerald. The stone was once believed to prevent epilepsy, stop bleeding, cure dysentery and fever, and protect the wearer from panic. Its magnificent green color was said to rest and relieve the eye. To the ancient Romans, emeralds were dedicated to the goddess Venus because it symbolized the reproductive forces of nature. Early Christians saw it as a symbol of the resurrection of Christ. In the Middle Ages, emeralds were believed to hold the power to foretell the future.

From Earth & Sky Radio Series. URL: <http://earthsky.com/kids/articles.php?id=4&p=5>



### **A Critical Alert from the Field Trip Chairman:**

Most of you know Gwen and I are cat lovers and we have a small herd of them. We all recognize cats for their curiosity. Recently we saw five of them at one time staring intently at one of the pieces of petrified wood we brought back from our last field trip to Clio, AL. We had seen this behavior before and always it was an indication of a snake in the immediate area. So, I moved this large piece of petrified wood with a rake, expecting to see and hopefully send a snake to the hereafter. To my surprise I found nothing under the specimen there in the yard.

For some reason I was motivated to break the piece in half. Still no snake! What I did find was an enormous number of wooly-looking creatures crawling around on the inside. They looked like nothing I had ever seen before. Long, wide-bodied covered with what appeared to be fur, I assumed them to be "Wooly Worms". As I looked closer at them with a hand-held magnifying glass, I realized they all had exposed (but tiny) teeth! To make a long story short I called three different extermination companies before finding out what I had discovered. Evidence indicates these are some sort of wood-eating bugs that have been in an apparent cryogenic condition--frozen in time for many millions of years and have returned to actual life and metamorphosed into stone dwelling bugs once exposed to sunlight and rain. The worst thing is to learn that they are more destructive to rocks or concrete than to today's termites once they have been awakened! An Entomologist from the State of Alabama has advised me to warn anyone who may have collected petrified wood from Clio, AL to be especially careful as to where you set these specimens. Apparently within three to five years they will devour entirely any petrified wood in which they exist, eating from the inside out. The damage they wreaked on the piece I broke open was obvious and alarming.

**PLEASE, PLEASE TAKE NOTE OF THIS!** Leave those specimens of the petrified wood from Clio, AL out on your lawn away from any other rocks, in particular NOT on concrete surfaces such as front porches, garages, stepping stones or even sidewalks. Eventually all will be consumed by these heretofore unknown creatures.

The state was good enough to advise me that if you soak your petrified wood specimens in a mixture of 1/3 distilled water, 1/3 juice from crushed onions and 1/3 white powdered sugar that this will kill the entire colony infesting your specimens after only 24 hours of soaking. On the other hand, if you make it a point to keep them off and away from other rock or concrete, they will self destruct once they've destroyed their home.

By Herb Whittington, From Rockhounds Tale, April 2005

# MONTGOMERY GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY MINUTES

April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2005

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The meeting was called to order by President James Easterling.

Minutes were approved as published in the Golden Nugget.

The Treasurer's report was given by Iris McGehee, which was approved and filed with the secretary.

No field trip was planned for April.

It was reported that the jewelry workshop was poorly attended and was dismissed after 30 minutes.

Sonny Hall announced that he was awarded First Prize in the chipping competition at Moundville, and he was interviewed by a television station.

The office of First Vice President is open due to the resignation of Monica Hendricks.

It was announced that the Planetarium will be presenting a program on meteorites Saturday.

David Sherrod reported that two tables had been acquired for the workshop building. President Easterling stated that he would be checking on chairs and an air conditioner.

Iris reported that she had received three responses to letters sent out to teachers regarding rocks and minerals kit. Assembled kit will cost approximately \$100.

Jean MacDonald announced that French and Indian Reenactment would take place at Fort Toulouse this weekend.

It was announced that Graves Mountain Dig is scheduled May 13-15 and October 7-9. Rules for the Dig are published in the Lodestar.

Refreshments were furnished by Linda Griebel and Mike Berkman.

Specimens from Graves Mountain were displayed and discussed.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Mary Lou McHugh  
Secretary

## Upcoming Shows

May 6 - 8, 2005, Marietta, GA - The Georgia Mineral Society. 37th Annual Gem and Mineral Mother's Day Weekend Show. Cobb County Civic Center, 548 S. Marietta Pkwy. (at Fairground St.). Hours: 6th - 7th, 10:00 A.M.-6:00 P.M.; 8th, Noon-5:00 P.M. Contact: Jay Gorday, 1690 Granger Ct., Chamblee, GA, 30341; 770.986.0822, or email to [mayshow@gamineral.org](mailto:mayshow@gamineral.org), website: <http://gamineral.org>.

June 4 - 5, 2005, Birmingham, AL - Alabama Mineral & Lapidary Society. 32nd Tannehill Gem, Mineral, Fossil, and Jewelry Show. From Birmingham, take I-20/59S to Exit 100 or Exit 1 off I-459 and follow the signs. Hours: 9:00 A.M.-5:00 P.M. Contact: Rick Kittinger, 1612 Colesburg Circle, Hoover, AL 35226, [rickkittinger@bellsouth.com](mailto:rickkittinger@bellsouth.com).



## 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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## Club Officers

President:	James Easterling, 875-3089
1st V. President:	Monica Hendricks, 285-4626
2nd V. President:	David Sherrod, 285-5537
Secretary:	Mary Lou McHugh, 272-1817
Treasurer:	Iris McGehee, 262-7275
Directors:	Minnie Jerido, 724-9125 Harold Glover, 285-3501



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