



THE GOLDEN NUGGET

May 2007
Number 07 - 05



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

May Program

When: Thursday, May 10th, 7:00 p.m.
Where: Mureal Crump Community Center
1735 Highland Ave.
Montgomery, AL
What: Videos on Fossils and/or Dinosaurs (if they arrive in time!)



Refreshments



Mike Berkman will provide the drinks and Linda Griebel will provide the snacks for the May meeting. Next month's refreshments will be provided by Terry and Elise Toney, drinks, and Linda Lord, snacks. Please remember to bring paper plates, napkins and cups. Ice is available at the community center.

Happy Birthday!



Harry Corbin - 11th
Morning Apperson - 25th
Iris McGehee - 25th
May B Nelson - 27th
Jeff Edwards - 31st

May Field Trip



The field trip is scheduled for May 12th. We are going to the Anniston Museum of Natural History in Anniston, AL. The museum is approximately 160 miles from Montgomery. Admission will be \$4.50 per person and includes a guided tour. **Please sign-up at the meeting if you plan on going.**

Doing Community Service

On Friday, April 27, Helen Kerbey and I went to MacMillan International Academy to judge the School Wide Science Fair. This included entries from students in grades 3 - 5. We found there were many interesting and well thought out projects. It is rewarding to know that the students are being encouraged to enter and research their entries. It was interesting to say the least.

I enjoyed most of all being with Helen and learning about her. She and her husband are here in the United States away from their home in England and even though she is sometimes homesick, she is enjoying the chance to know us in the Club. If you don't know her, make it a point to find out more about her. You'll enjoy her as much as I did.

Iris McGehee

Building a Mineral Collection

by Darryl Powell

If you have been to a mineral show, you know that mineral specimens can be very expensive. Some of you have gone out to dig for your own specimens. Whether you are building your mineral collection by buying specimens, finding them yourself or a little of both, you know that your specimens are valuable. You can't believe how many collections have bunches of mineral specimens piled on shelves or on top of desks. The specimens collect dust, are bumped around and are often damaged. One of the most upsetting experiences of collecting is to have a special, prized specimen broken or damaged. Right away it is worth much less. Also, it looks a lot worse than it did before. Your collection can be carefully kept, and will be more valuable, if you do the following three steps every time you get a new specimen.

Step 1: Store your specimens in a safe place. Keep your specimens in a container that protects them from getting banged into each other. Just piling them up on your desk is not good. Use egg cartons or strong boxes like cigar boxes to hold your specimens. If you keep them more than one specimen in a box, make dividers to keep the specimens safely apart from each other. Some collectors use a chest of drawers. It is usually possible to buy an old dresser or an old box with drawers for a few dollars at a yard sale. Just like a cigar box, remember to make dividers for the drawers to keep the specimens away from each other. You may want to make shelves for your specimens. If you like to display your specimens, always keep one specimen two or more inches away from the next specimen. Remember, an important goal of storing your collection is to protect the specimens so they do not get damaged.

Step 2: Number your specimens and keep a book with the numbers and specimen names. A collection of anything is most valuable if it is more than a pile of objects. It is very important that you keep track of the specimens you have. The best way to do this is to put a small number on each specimen and a list of the numbers. You can keep a written list in a book or on the computer. Using a computer, print out a sheet of small numbers. Cut out the numbers and carefully attach a number to a specimen with a very small piece of sticky blue poster tack. You can buy this at an office supply store. Stick "1" on a specimen. When this is done, write in your list the number, the name of the specimen and where it was found. For example, your record book or computer list will look like this:

1. Calcite. Cave-in-Rock, Illinois.
2. Pyrite. Peru.
3. Quartz. Switzerland.

Every time you get a new specimen, make it your first job to give it the next number on your list and record the information you have about the specimen. Expert collectors will tell you that a specimen with the information about where it was found is much more valuable than a specimen that has no information with it.

Step 3: Label your specimens. It's good to have numbers on your specimens, but you don't want people to be picking up all your specimens to find the number and look at the list to see what the mineral is. Every specimen should have a label sitting in front of it that tells a visitor what the mineral is and where it was found. Some collectors like to have labels with the specimen number on the label. Some get fancy and make labels with their own name on the label. Believe it or not, some mineral collectors collect old labels from old mineral collections. Once in a while an old label is worth more than the mineral specimen that goes with it!

Here are some sample labels you can copy:

Mineral

Locality

<i>Your Name ~ Your Town</i>

Mineral

Locality

No. _____
Mineral _____
Locality _____

Bloodstone: the martyr's gem

Bloodstone, green jasper dotted with bright red spots of iron oxide, was treasured in ancient times and served for a long time as the birthstone for March. This attractive chalcedony quartz is also known as heliotrope because in ancient times polished stones were described as reflecting the sun: perhaps the appearance of the gem reminded the ancients of the red setting sun, mirrored in the ocean.

Medieval Christians often used bloodstone to carve scenes of the crucifixion and martyrs, for which reason it was also dubbed the martyr's stone. According to the legend about the origin of bloodstone, it was first formed when drops of Christ's blood fell and stained some jasper at the foot of the cross. A beautiful example of carved bloodstone with the seal of the German Emperor Rudolf II can be seen at the Louvre in Paris.

Even today, finely pulverized bloodstone is used as a medicine and aphrodisiac in India. Perhaps that explains why it is now rather difficult to find fine specimens of bloodstone on the market. Bloodstone is mined in India, Australia, and the United States.

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Iolite: gem of the Vikings

When Leif Eriksson and the other legendary Viking explorers ventured far out into the Atlantic Ocean, away from any coastline that could help them determine their position, they had a secret gem weapon: iolite. The Viking mariners used thin pieces of it as the world's first polarizing filter. Looking through an iolite lens, they were able to determine the exact position of the sun, and navigate their way safely to the New World and back.

The property that made iolite so valuable to the Vikings is its extreme pleochroism. Iolite has different colors in different directions in the crystal. A cube cut from iolite will look a more or less violet blue, almost like sapphire, from one side, clear as water from the other, and a honey yellow from on top. In the past, this property led some people to call iolite 'water sapphire', though the name is now obsolete.

Pleochroism may have been helpful in navigation but it certainly makes life difficult for the cutter. If iolite is not cut from exactly the right direction, no matter what the shape of the raw crystal, its color will not be shown to its best advantage.

The name iolite comes from the Greek 'ion', which means violet. Iolite is usually a purplish blue when cut properly, with a softness to the color that can be quite attractive.

Iolite is readily available and surprisingly affordable. The richer the blue, the better. It is mined in India, Sri Lanka, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Brazil. The Vikings probably mined theirs from deposits in Norway and Greenland.



Iolite is relatively hard but should be protected from blows. With its attractive color and reasonable price, it may become a jewelry staple in the future.

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Upcoming Shows

May 11-13, 2007, Marietta, GA - Georgia Mineral Society. 39th Annual Mothers Day Weekend Gem and Mineral Show. Cobb County Civic Center, 548 Marietta Parkway (at the intersection with Fairgrounds Road). Hours: 11th and 12th, 10:00 A.M. - 6:00 P.M.; 13th, Noon - 5:00 P.M. Jay Gorday @ 770.986.0822 or mayshow@gaminal.org. Website: www.gaminal.org.

June 2-3, 2006, Birmingham, AL - Alabama Mineral and Lapidary Society. 34th Annual Tannehill Gem, Mineral, Fossil and Jewelry Show, Tannehill Historical State Park. From Birmingham: Take I-20/59S to Exit 100. From I-450: Take Exit 1 and follow the signs. Hours: Both days, 9:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M. Contact: Rick Kittinger at rick.kittinger@bellsouth.com.



Club Officers



President:	Frank Rowell - 277-7023
1st V. President:	Laura Hirst - 590-6946
2nd V. President:	David Sherrod - 285-5537
Secretary:	Mary Lou M ^c Hugh - 272-1817
Treasurer:	Iris M ^c Gehee - 262-7275
Directors:	Harold Glover - 285-3501 Terry Fetzer - 271-6849



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 2nd 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. Membership dues are \$12.00 for individuals and \$18.00 for families residing in the same household.

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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MONTGOMERY GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY MINUTES

April 12th, 2007

The meeting was called to order by President Frank Rowell.

Laura Hirst introduced the program speaker, Steve Adams and his wife Gloria from the Alabama Mineral and Lapidary Society, Birmingham. Steve showed via power point a trip to Quartzsite, Arizona. He brought along a number of slabs he had acquired while there.

Refreshments were furnished by David Echols and Randy Hirst.

Charlie McCall, a visitor, brought a quartz crystal weighing approximately 25 lbs.

The minutes were approved as published in the Golden Nugget with a minor correction.

The treasurer's report was read by Iris McGhee, which was approved and filed with the secretary.

In David Sherrod's absence, Terry Fetzer announced that the trip to the Anniston Museum is scheduled for April 28.

The following were approved for membership: May B. Nelson, LaTongia Watkins, Jeff Edwards, Phillip Baker, and Thad Cheatam.

The March 24 wire wrapping class was cancelled due to the illness of the instructor. This is to be rescheduled at a later date.

Linda Lord and Drucilla Hornsby will hold a cross wire wrapping class April 21 at the Coliseum Boulevard Library at 9:00.

Frank asked for help in calling members. Laura Hirst and Linda Lord responded.

Iris announced that a science fair will be held at McMillan School on April 27. Call Iris for details.

Iris reported that several members from the Opelika club had visited the workshop and plan to come again.

Editor Terry Fetzer brought a copy of the Mini Miners Newsletter geared toward junior members, but with information that would be of interest to older members. A two-year subscription for \$30.00 was approved.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Mary Lou McHugh
Secretary

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