



THE GOLDEN NUGGET

Oct 2006
Number 06 - 10



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

Oct Program

When: Thursday, October 12th, 7:00 p.m.
Where: Mureal Crump Community Center
1735 Highland Ave.
Montgomery, AL
What: Randy Hirst will provide a video and display of weird rocks and minerals.



Refreshments



Drucilla Hornsby will provide the drinks and Julie Tatum will provide the snacks for this month's meeting.

Next month's refreshments will be provided by Linda Lord, drinks, and Randy Hirst, snacks.

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

Happy Birthday!



Steven Easterling - 3rd

Jean McDonald - 7th

Mel Barkley - 9th

Sonny Hall - 26th

Mike Berkman - 31st

DMC Field Trip

**Graves Mountain, Lincoln Co. Ga.
Saturday, November 4, 2006 9:00 a.m.**



Directions: Exit I-20 for Washington, GA SR 78 (SR 10, SR 17). Travel north to Washington, turn right onto SR 378 and drive 11 miles to the Graves Mountain area. The entrance to Graves Mountain is on your right about 8/10 mile past the Lincoln county line. From Lincolnton, Ga., travel east on SR 378 and the entrance to Graves Mountain will be on your left about 5 miles from Lincolnton.

Food and Drinks: Bring your own as there is nothing available at Graves Mountain.

Fees: A donation of \$5.00 per person.

Equipment: A transport cart, buckets, backpack, 8-lb sledge, 2-4 lb crack hammer, rock hammer, pry bar, shovel chisels, SAFETY EYEWEAR, and gloves. Hard hat required if you plan to work adjacent to the high wall areas.

Contact: Jim Stoops Tel. (706) 860-4608, Email jirout_2@hotmail.com.

Price and Prejudice



For Jane Austen, matrimony was as much a financial transaction as an emotional one, with everyone trying to get the best possible bargain. Buying a gem is also the beginning of a life-long relationship and the price you pay is part of the deal. Understandably, you don't want to pay too much.

So how can you tell if you are paying the right price?

First of all, don't ask how much you should pay for a one-carat ruby. A one carat ruby can be worth ten dollars or it can be worth \$10,000. Quality makes the difference. Fortunately you can see differences in quality if you look at a lot of rubies side-by-side. Better color costs more, a lot more. Better clarity costs more. Better cut may cost a little more but it is worth it! The bigger the stone, the more it is per carat. Within each variety, prices are based on these four Cs, with color as the most important factor. There is a more detailed explanation in the judging quality section.

But different varieties have different price ranges. This is where the prejudice comes in. Some varieties are lower in price because they are readily available, some because the color isn't very popular (brown and yellow stones, for example), some because the material is relatively soft, and some because ...they have all the right stuff but no one knows it. There are plenty of examples of beautiful rare gemstones that cost less than gems that are less rare because they have a funny name, or people get them confused with an inexpensive variety or no one has ever heard of them. But enough about the injustice of the gem market.

We can break the price ranges of the different gem varieties down into five basic categories: traditional gemstones, new classics, connoisseur gems, collector gemstones, and affordable gems. These categories have basic price ranges, but, again lower quality stones or stones with less popular colors may cost less and stones with particularly fine quality or color may cost more. These price ranges are meant to give you a general idea of the relationship of prices between different kinds of gemstones and not to serve as a price list, since color and quality can make such a difference.

The traditional gemstones are ruby, emerald and blue sapphire. Because of their lasting appeal and distinguished history, ruby, emerald and sapphire are more valuable than other colored gemstones. Generally, ruby and emerald are also priced higher than a comparable quality sapphire due to rarity. For a one-carat stone of average to good quality in the varieties in this category, you can expect to pay between \$250 and \$10,000 per carat. Of course truly fine gems will cost more.

The new classics are gemstones that are the rising stars of gemstone jewelry: tanzanite, tourmaline, aquamarine, imperial topaz, and tsavorite garnet. These gemstones are sometimes available in standardized sizes but you really should look at some fine larger single stones to see why they have so many fans. Gems in this category range between \$50 to \$1,000 per carat for an average to good quality one carat stone, with a good example of tsavorite easily reaching \$3,000 per carat.

Connoisseur gems are gemstones that have a more specialized market because they are more rare. These gemstones include black opal, jadeite, pink topaz, chrysoberyl cat's-eye, fancy colored sapphires, and rare stones like demantoid garnet and alexandrite. These gemstones are highly prized and prices range from \$250 to \$5,000 per carat, although alexandrite with a good color change will command at least \$10,000 even in a one-carat size.

Collector's gems are not available in quantity to be marketed effectively so you get a lot of beauty for the money. This category includes spinel, zircon, moonstone, morganite and other beryls, and many rare gemstones. Red and hot pink spinels can command a few thousand per carat but most of the gems in this category will sell for hundreds not thousands.

Then there are the affordable gemstones, which combine great color with a surprisingly reasonable price and good availability. These gems include some old favorites and some new gems: amethyst, white opal, citrine, ametrine, peridot, rhodolite garnet, blue topaz, iolite, chrome diopside, kunzite, andalusite, and many ornamental gemstones such as lapis lazuli, turquoise, onyx, chrysoprase, nephrite jade, and amber. Prices for these gemstone range between \$5 and \$100 per carat for a one carat stone.

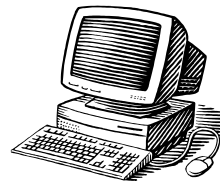
In every variety, especially the more expensive ones, you should expect to pay more for matched pairs, sets, and special shapes and cuts.

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



Web Sites

By Wendell C. Mohr
Have a knife time here!



NOAA Ocean Explorer, at <http://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/explorations/06fire/>. The 2006 “Submarine Ring of Fire” expedition explores submarine volcanoes lying along the Mariana Arc in the Pacific Ocean. Once more, an extensive site affords a look at explorations, a gallery, technology, history, references, education and “For fun.” A multitude of options are here. Try 2006, Submarine ring of fire, leading to a multitude of links. See sulfur marbles, liquid CO₂, and shallowest black smoker. Black smokers: None of these in Montgomery County, The council enacted a smoking ban. Under sea volcanoes are really haute stuff.

The Fossil Forest, Dorset England by Ian West, is an out-of-the ordinary, very British, spot to learn some geology and paleontology at <http://www.soton.ac.uk/~imw/forest.htm>. Be sure to click on all pictures for an enlarged view. Unfortunately the illustration titles are very poor for legibility. None-the-less you can find out about an unusual mechanism for petrification. Rather than the burial in volcanic ash, so common in the U.S., saltwater flooding or salinization occurred there which killed the trees. See “Other fossils”. If you have all day to browse, go to “Home and Contents” for an immense coverage of the Wessex Coast with remarkable text and photos of the geology. At least look at the first page. Evidently Dr. West went to this location to check out his family tree. How far is it to the fossil forest? Just a hop, skip, and a stump.

Fluorescent Minerals, by Stuart L. Schneider, River Edge, New Jersey, is a commercial site promoting the author’s book and minerals for sale at <http://www.geocities.com/~stuart1031/>. No endorsement is made but there are some nice UV and white light photographs from N.J. and other localities. Besides the narrative, there are ever-popular links. Violet Johnson saw the spectacular N.J. fluorescents. Now she is ultra Violet. The Motel 6 near Franklin is very friendly to mineralogists. Sign: “We’ll leave the – ite on for Ya”

Adapted from Rockhouser, September 2006, via The Hound’s Howl, Jul-Sep 2006

Montgomery Gem & Mineral Society Minutes

September 14, 2006

The meeting was called to order by Iris McGehee. The following visitors were welcomed: Phil and Carolyn Snow and John Tatum.

Minutes were approved as published in the Golden Nugget.

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

Field Trip Chairman, David Sherrod reported on the trip to Blue Hill. Frank Rowell showed the small gold nugget he found.

David Sherrod and Frank Rowell attended a workshop at William Holland Retreat. Due to a misunderstanding, David's scholarship was not honored. Federation scholarships are valid during weeks sponsored by the Federation.

Iris reminded the group that the Alabama National Fair is October 6-15. Judging will occur October 3. Terry and Becky will be demonstrating Monday, October 9.

It was announced that the workshop will be open Saturday. Those who plan to use the workshop should contact Iris.

Iris praised Terry Fetzer's efforts in publishing the Golden Nugget.

Refreshments were furnished by Elise and Terry Toney and Elizabeth Corley.

Laura Hirst introduced Eugemia Cowan of Yesteryear. Not only did she educate about antique jewelry she allowed the handling of rare and expensive pieces.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Mary Lou McHugh,
Secretary



Members Demonstrating at the Alabama National Fair

The following members will be demonstrating at various times during the Fair which will be held October 6-15: Terry and Becky Fetzer, Mary Holland, Julie Tatum, Frank Rowell, Linda Griebel, Mike Berkman, Linda Lord, Drucilla Hornsby, and Iris McGehee. This is one way to introduce Fair goers to what the Montgomery Gem and Mineral Society is all about.

Iris McGehee



The Mayo Education Foundation

The Mayo Foundation was established by the late Frank Mayo, the first President of the Southeast Federation of Mineralogical Societies, Inc. The purpose of the foundation is to provide financial aid to qualified students in the earth sciences.

To be considered for a grant, the applicant must be:

A college junior, senior or graduate student pursuing a degree in one of the earth sciences.

A citizen of the United States.

A legal resident of one of the southeast states to include: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North and South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.

Must not be related to any person responsible for awarding the grant.

Recommended by an SFMS club in good standing.

If you know a worthy student, please contact Ron Denton (President of the East Alabama Gem & Mineral Society) at 6603 Widgeon Drive, Midland, GA, 31820, Ph (706) 569-1219, E-mail: rondenton@earthlink.net.

From *The Boulder Bouncer*, September 2006



Upcoming Shows

Oct 8-10 -- **WINSTON-SALEM, NC**: 35th annual show; Forsyth Gem & Mineral Club; Education Bldg., Dixie Classic Fairgrounds, Gate 5, Deacon Blvd.; Fri. 10-7, Sat. 10-7, Sun. 12-6; contact W.A. Marion, 1163 Bear Creek Church Rd., Mocksville, NC 27028; e-mail: MarionA1@yadtel.net.

Oct 13 - 15 -- **HUNTSVILLE, AL**: 38th Annual Show; Huntsville Gem & Mineral Society; Civic Center (downtown); Fri. 10 -6, Sat. 10 – 6, Sun. 12 – 5. 30+ Dealers, Children's activities: gem dig, flume, etc., hourly drawings, displays, exhibits, demonstrations, UV room. Show Chairman: Tony Smith, tsmith@ercnet.com, Web Site: huntsvillegms.org.

Oct 23-24 -- **HIDDENITE, NC**: 18th annual show; Western Piedmont Mineral & Gem Society; Hiddenite Educational Complex, Sulpher Springs Rd.; Sat. 9-6, Sun. 12-6; adults \$2, children under 12 free; 30 exhibits of local and state minerals and gems, 10 dealers, Children's Corner, rock swap Sun.; contact Roger Grinnell, (828) 675-9281, or Susan and David Hughes, (828) 464-3278.



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.

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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