



March 12, 2012

Volume 11 Issue 9

March 17Tupelo Library from 1 to 3pm
Annual Birthday Party
Presentations and Displays
By NMGMS Members

Notes From the President's Desk

Hey NMGMS, we have a birthday coming up! That's right, at our March 17th meeting, we will be celebrating the close of our eleventh year as a rock and mineral club and we will be "marching" into the start of our twelfth. As far as organizations in our area of interest go, NMGMS is probably one of the youngest, but we have come a long way since our inception and we have a lot to be proud of. So let's take a moment to do a little bragging.

This year is the first time that we have planned out and scheduled an all weekend-out of state field trip for our members and we have 27 eager rockhounds signed up so far. We are all very excited about this trip over to the Mt. Ida area for quartz crystals and we are hoping that this warm, spring like weather will hold. Instead of "sugar plums", right now a lot of us have images of dazzling, glittery, pointy quartz crystals dancing in our heads!

Since we have been focusing on minerals for the first half of our 2012 calendar of programs, we are also helping our NMGMS junior group, the Rockheads, work on the rock and mineral related FRA badges sponsored by the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies. Hopefully, by the end of this year, we will be able to make the very first badge presentations to our junior members. 2012 will also mark the first time that NMGMS, as an avid fossil collecting organization, will set up a display table at the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science's Fossil Road Show on March 3rd.

So while this nice warm weather holds, take time to go through your collection. Dust the cobwebs off of those things that have been stored in boxes and buckets for ages (this is true of a lot of my stuff!) and start to make room for the new specimens that you will be collecting on our future field trips. As you sort through, pick out some for use as door prizes or as give aways for our junior activities. See what might make a good auction item for either our "brown bag" silent auction this month or at our picnic auction this fall. And while you are at it, how about putting together a really nice display for all of your fellow club members to admire at our birthday meeting! Remember, this is your chance to show everyone what interests you most and what you have accomplished over the last year. Hopefully we'll get to see a few gemtrees, kumihimo projects, or fantastic arrays of rocks, minerals and fossils. I can't wait to be impressed!

Nancy Roberts



Nancy going to work.
Photo by Dana Jones.

NMGMS Meeting Minutes

February 11, 2012



NMGMS Meeting Minutes

Date: Feb. 11,

2012

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was given by Nancy Roberts & Peshani Herath. Introduce new members... Janice Watts; Dave Hanes; Tim, Julie, Logan and Faith Wyatt; Angie Taylor. Guests present: Terina and Chase Threadgill

A motion to approve the January meeting minutes as printed in the Nugget was APPROVED and seconded.

Treasurer's Report: Closing Balance as of 2/10/11 \$1870.37

Review of the committees:

Field Trips: Our rescheduled Feb. field trip will be on **Saturday, Feb. 18th**. We will be collecting Mississippian fossils from the Bangor formation. (See email and handouts for details)

March field trip to Mt. Ida for quartz will be on **March 10/11th**. Wegner Phantom Mine on Saturday and the Miller Mt. (Coleman) Mine on Sunday (see email and handout for details) Nancy said that she would be sending in the deposit and making the room reservations next week and that each person needs to have a copy of the waiver signed and along with them on Saturday. The group will meet at the Royal Oak Inn in Mt. Ida at 8:30 am on March 10th. (Copies of waiver available) There was discussion and clarification on the liability waiver form.

Publicity: (Bob Reinhaus) No report at this time.

Membership: (Ann Byzet) Seven new members were introduced. There are still numerous members who have not renewed their club membership.

Hospitality: March- Dana Jones (cake), Bernice (ice cream) and John Byzet (sodas and ice)

April 21st – Peshani Herath and Roger Loyd

Website: (John Byzet) Website has been updated.... Check us out at www.nmgms.org

Newsletter: (Dana Jones) Dana requested the Rockheads to make up a logo for their section of the newsletter. She also would like more articles from club members to be included in the newsletter.

Youth Members: Everyone congratulated Matthew Lambert on taking first place in his school's science fair! The club is planning to set aside the September program for the Rockheads, as their opportunity to set up their displays, collections and projects that they have been working on towards the FRA badges.

Stamps: Members were encouraged to save stamps for the chance to win a Southeast Federation's (SFMS) scholarship to the William Holland Lapidary School.

Historian: Members were also encouraged to turn in any 2011 club related photos, newspaper articles, show flyers or other memorabilia to Susan Curry, so that she can work on the 2011 yearbooks. **Old Business:**

The kumihimo workshop held on January 28th was attended by 12 people and everyone had a lot of fun. There were a few of the projects here today on display.

Nancy announced the short sleeved polo style shirts are still available. The shirts are made with the club's logo embroidered in dark royal blue, they are \$20 ea. (\$22 2x) and can be ordered from Beverly Fortenberry of Very Berry Embroidery. Email: veryberryembroidery@yahoo.com or call 662-372-2013

The revised club cards were distributed. The club's new website address was added.

New Business:

A motion was made to make Dr. Terry Panhorst an honorary member of NMGMS. He has agreed to do our January programs for us and was very thrilled when asked if he would like to become an honorary member of our club.

Motion APPROVED and seconded NMGMS has been invited by George Phillips to set up at the Museum of Natural Science in Jackson Fossil Road show on March 3rd. Justin Hobart and Byron and Jennifer Morgan agreed to participate. The club will display our banner, distribute flyers and exhibit some of the Mississippi fossils that members have collected. The club has also been invited back to the MAGS Rock and Mineral show on April 28th and 29th by W.C. McDaniels. We will be setting up a club table in the exhibitor area of the show. NMGMS will get 4 exhibitor passes for each day.

Our **March 17th** birthday party meeting was discussed. All members were asked to bring in something to display. We will also be holding our "Brown Bag" auction and members were asked to bring two items, each one packaged in its own brown paper bag. These bags will be set out on the table for silent bidding during the meeting.

Reminders: Don't forget the MGMS Rock and Gem Show coming up on **Feb. 25th and 26th** at the fairgrounds in Jackson, MS. This is always a great show; plan to be there!

Motion was made to adjourn.....

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Field Trip

Site: Near Red Bay AL
Formation: Bangor

February 18, 2012

Mysterious Location Near Red Bay, AL

If asked what I would do for fun on the weekend, I wouldn't normally reply with, "wake up at 5:30am and get ready for my day"! However, on the cool, dreary morning of Saturday, February 18th, I did just that. I rolled out of bed after a long night at work and an even longer week of hectic college classes; then, despite my weariness, ate a small breakfast and headed to Kroger. There, I met up with club member Dana Jones, who was kind enough to let me ride with her and her daughter, Remy, from Oxford to northwestern Alabama to dig for Mississippian-age fossils. Naturally, there aren't too many things that would convince me to give up my precious Saturday morning hours of sleep, but a fun-filled trip to "dig for goodies" is definitely one of them!

After making a wrong turn here-or-there, we finally made it to the dig site in Alabama. The rest of the group managed to make it there before us, and many of them had already begun scanning the ground and digging around for any traces of horn coral, Archimedes screws, blastoids, crinoids, and other aquatic invertebrate fossils among and within the crumbling masses of ancient limestone scattered throughout the area. Needless to say, with little treasures such as these littering the ground, I couldn't wait to see what the others had already collected and to see if I would have any luck at finding any fossils myself.

Once I trudged through the mud and caught up with the others, it didn't take long until I started finding my first fossils. My first find was a bryozoan, an Archimedes screw, which looks a lot like one of those spiral rotini pasta noodles that you've probably seen in your local grocery store (although, I wouldn't recommend you eat one!). Once I made my first fossil discovery, I just kept finding them! But, I wasn't the only one. Everyone seemed to be finding all sorts of different fossil specimens from brachiopods (bivalves, like oysters) to blastoids, which are filter feeders that closely resemble crape myrtle buds. Dana even managed to lug home a large chunk of coral from the site!

However, after hours of digging and exploring the site, we agreed to call it quits for the day. By that time, many of us were starving, since we didn't have a chance to eat lunch, and the weather looked like it could start raining at any second. So, we packed up all of our finds and headed back home to Mississippi.

The Alabama fossil trip was my first NMGMS out-of-state field trip experience, and all in all, I'd say we had a pretty successful day. Despite the gloomy weather, everyone had a great time digging for ancient marine fossils, and no one went home empty-handed! I'd like to thank Richard and the others from the Alabama Paleontological Society for allowing us to join them in their search for fossils and I look forward to many other out-of-state NMGMS trips to come, even if they require me to "wake up at 5:30am and get ready for my day"!



The group hunting for crinoids.
Photo Justin Hobart.

Justin Hobart

Colonial Coral. Photo Justin Hobart.



Andrew found a crinoid, and enlarged crinoid. Photo Nancy Roberts.



Andrew, Matthew and Brittan searching diligently.
Photo Nancy Roberts.



Disarticulated crinoid.
Photo Dana Jones.



A lovely view.
Photo Justin Hobart.

Mark Your Calendar

Next Meeting

March 17, 2012

Tupelo Library from 1-3pm

It's our Birthday!

Presentations and Displays

By NMGMS Members

Cake-Dana Jones

Ice Cream-Bernice Burkeen

Sodas and Ice-John Byzet

Happy Eleventh Birthday NMGMS!

Don't forget that March 17th marks the eleventh birthday of our gem and mineral society. The display for this meeting will be anything that members have collected, worked on or made over the past year, in the field of rocks, minerals, gems, fossils, jewelry, etc. If your talent lies elsewhere, that's okay, bring it! Let's show everyone what we have been up to during our eleventh year as a club. I know that we have some very talented members, so show us your stuff!

Brown Bag Silent Auction

Going, going, gone to the highest bidder! Don't forget about the "brown bag" auction to be held at the March 17th meeting. All members wishing to participate are asked to bring a "nice" item and a "silly or cute" item (no garbage please). Each auction item is to be packaged in its own brown bag. These bags will be set out for a silent auction during the meeting, so bring your \$\$\$. This event is lots of fun and helps to raise funds for our treasury. We've always had some really nice things and some funny surprises in the past. The "nice" items should be rock and gem related, but not absolutely necessary.

March 16-18, 2012 – Rome, GA – Valley and Ridge Gem and Mineral Show, Rome Georgia Mineral Society, Fri—Sat. 10am-6pm; Sun 11am-5pm, The Forum, 2 Government Plaza, Rome GA. I-75 exit 290 (GA20) to Rome, left on Broad

St, right on Third Ave. to parking deck (or park on the streets).

Minerals, gems, fossils, jewelry, crystals, demonstrations, door prizes, exhibits. Show contact: Jose Santamaria 770-606-5700 ext. 401; Email contact: rogams.show@gmail.com
<http://rogams.wordpress.com/gem-and-mineral-show/>

April 2012

April 28-29, 2012 Memphis, TN - Memphis Archaeological and Geological Society. Memphis Mineral, Fossil, Jewelry Show — "The Earth Wide Open". Memphis International Agricenter, Expo Center, West Pavilion & A and B-wings 7777

Walnut Grove Rd. Memphis, TN. Hours: Sat 9-6 and Sun10-5.

Adults \$5.00, Children 12 and under \$2.00. Scouts free. Portion of admission benefits the Ronald McDonald House of

Memphis. Contact W.C. McDaniel 901-274-7706 or email

w.c.mcd@att.net www.theearthwideopen.com

April 21

Tupelo Library from 1 to 3pm

"The Fascinating World of Fluorescent Minerals"

NMGMS Member Floy Hawkins

Refreshments: Roger Loyd, Peshani Herath

May 19

Tupelo Library from 1 to 3pm

"The Role of Science Museums Today"

By George Phillips

Paleontologist

Mississippi Museum of Natural Science

Jackson, MS

June 18

Field Trip to 20 Mile Creek

(library is not available-no formal meeting)

July and August-NO MEETINGS

September 15

Tupelo Library from 1-3pm

Rockheads Displays/Presentations

October 27

Annual Picnic and Rock Swap

Large Pavilion at Ballard Park

Tupelo

November 17 TBA

December 15 TBA

Lapidary Tip

If you have completed a kumihimo or other beaded bracelet by adding cones with wrapped loops and are about to add part of the clasp with a jump ring or spring ring, but find that your bracelet is still a bit too small, you can extend the length of your bracelet by taking a coordinating bead placed on a piece of wire, start your wrapped loops on each end, attach one end of this to the bracelet and the other end to one half of the clasp, then complete the wrapped loops.

This should do the trick and it will give you an attractive addition! You can always hang a charm from one of the loops too!

Nikki Kenney

What Is It?

The fossil from 20 Mile Creek turns out to not be a fossil at all. It is a modern alligator frontal bone. George Phillips identified it so you can blame him for having to now worry about gators fossil hunting.

Any interesting specimen you'd like to show off? Send to nuggeteditor@gmail.com



Community

In Our Thoughts

Well known Rocker Billie Wright recently had heart surgery. She's been in fragile health for 2 years. She and her husband John Wright are members of the Mississippi Gulf Coast Gem and Mineral Society (www.mgcgms.org). John is an honorary member of NMGMS. He assisted to establish the club, and helped write up our constitution and by-laws. Please keep them in your prayers.

Paul Casteel

Paul Casteel, 88, passed away peacefully, on February 21, 2012. He was a beloved father, grandfather and great-grandfather. Paul was born in Middleburg, Fl. and was a lifelong resident of Jacksonville. As a United States Navy Veteran, he served his country as a Naval Signalman during World War II and Korean War on the USS Electra (AKA-4). He was honorable discharged in 1954. He then worked at USF&G Insurance Company for 31 yrs. and retired in 1985. After retirement, he worked as a Silversmith/Jewelry Designer where he passed on his passion by teaching classes at local schools in the Jacksonville area including DuPont Middle School. He was also a Director, teacher and mentor of the William Holland School of Lapidary Arts in Young Harris, Ga. He also taught at John C. Campbell Folk School in Brasstown, NC. He was a member of The American Legion Post No. 88 and a Lifelong member of The Jacksonville Gem and Mineral Society.

Science at Work!

It was extremely interesting and educational to see the scientific process at work this past Saturday at the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science's fossil road show in Jackson.

I had a fossil specimen from Twenty Mile Creek that I needed identified, so I passed it around to four of the fossil experts that were at the show expressly for that purpose. It was really amazing to see how intense, excited, serious and involved a scientist can become over a fossil!

Each expert pointed out different attributes that would lead to either one particular identification or another one and there was much discussion and input amongst them (peer review at work!). Knowing where a specimen was found along with the age, name or type of formation (if possible) really aids in the identification process. Knowing that my specimen came from Cretaceous marine deposits certainly narrowed the down the possibilities!

My fossil specimen was not complete; it had been split down the middle at some point and was rather worn on the outside. The interior did show some very interesting detail, but the exterior didn't help a lot.

So, consensus placed it as probably a crocodile tooth, but until further study along side of other similar and more complete specimens from that site, it's not a certainty.

That's how science works; until further studies, comparisons and experiments show the same repeatable results and conclusions, the jury is still out! Science is a forever growing, learning, expanding changing, marvelous, astounding, wonderful, phenomenal, field!

Nancy Roberts

The adventures of Souzen Steelhammer and Beth Wells-Parker at the MGMS show of 2012

February 25, 1012

We drove to Jackson on a beautiful sunny morning that was more evocative of spring than of winter. Arriving at the Jackson Trademart around 10 in the morning, we found one of the few remaining parking places in the lot. The crowd gathered early. Souzen and I were very excited. The show has been a major highlight for late winter.

Souzen makes exotic, sometimes edgy, but always chic and beautiful beaded jewelry for sale. She was looking for beads to combine with her striking silver and copper work. I was on a budget and did something that I had not tried before—a shopping list. No “spur of the moment” purchases for me! I was looking for small tsavorite rounds to add between a beautiful uvarite garnet and a killer piece of chrysoprase in a design still on the drawing board, anything pink (for my daughter-in-law who adores that color), and one or two other “hard to match” stones for designs still on the drawing board.

Upon entering, we spotted a dealer with many faceted stones. Immediately I saw a nice selection of tsavorite rounds, and looked over the collection. What were those gorgeous reddish stones? Some glowed with that beautiful warm Chines red, some with a subtle chatoyance, and some an interesting shimmery green—these were all Oregon sunstones! Not cheap! I almost blew my budget at the first booth—but no, I persevered. I could not spend 5400 dollars on that fabulous glowing red emerald cut sunstone—sigh!

I decided to “walk” the show first—past beautiful specimens that included large glowing hunks of ammolite—the Canadian stuff—in iridescent rainbow colors, beautiful silica with chrysocolla druzy—big rocks with that surreal “cuprian” blue in tiny crystals covering their faces, and many more brilliantly colored specimens. I was tempted to stop and browse, but I was on a mission. However, I could not resist a peek at the beautiful opals offered by several of my favorite vendors. In past years I had bought from them some of the new Ethiopian opal rough—which are still just that--rough. I have been too timid to tackle them yet. These vendors had spent their time cutting some killer Ethiopian opals with incredible color and glow—when you want red fire (along with all the other rainbow colors)—the Ethiopian opals are for you.. If the Ethiopian material proves stable, it will rival the Australian finds of the late 19th and early 20th century. Oh yes—the Ethiopian material could be a major strike—only time will tell.

There were other wonderful vendors—including those with pearls, exotic gems and beads. I looked and coveted on my first pass—but ran out of time.

My only other purchases, besides the tsavorites, were two wonderful “Cherry Creek” jasper cabs(a splurge but a great bargain) from another of my favorite cutters, and four round rose quartz cabs to add to my “daughter-in-law” collection. For Christmas, I made for her a necklace from some of Christy's beads in all shades of pink—she loved it. Now I will add these cabs to the remaining beads for a bracelet to match.

So many gems, so little time. However,our feet and backs hurt and we were hungry! (We had ignored our stomachs for all the “eye candy” around us). I found Souzen, with multiple strands of beautiful beads. Neither of us wanted to stop—but our packed lunches called from the ice chest in the car. As we ate we could not resist “show and tell”—Souzen had some great designs in her head for her new stash, and I was fantasizing about those Cherry Creek cabs that looked like abstract art.

After our show and tell, it was getting late, and we needed to go. Oh well, we will just have to wait until next year's show!

Beth Wells Parker

Rockhead News

ATTENTION

Note From The Editor

Rockheads. You need a logo/mascot. See Bernice, Roger, Nancy, Remy or me. (that would be Dana.)

What Rockheads Had To Say About the Fossil Road Trip

Brittani Lambert: " I really liked everything about the fossil road show. I liked seeing all of the displays and touring the museum."

Matthew Lambert: " It was very interesting and I enjoyed having the chance to help the kids identify their fossils and to tell about what we had on our display table. I learned a little bit more about fossils too. I liked the show and had a good time."



Matthew and Brittani overseeing the exhibit.
Photo Nancy Roberts

NMGMS exhibit at Fossil Road Show in Jackson MS.
Photo Nancy Roberts



Meeting Program Demonstration

You know the old saying, "When all else fails, improvise!". Well, that's just what happened at the Feb. 11th NMGMS meeting. Due to a few set backs and technical difficulties, we never did get to view Myra Soroczak's mineral presentation (yeah, we get to have her back to do it later!).

Thankfully, since she came to the meeting not only with her program material, but also with her lapidary work, she was able to improvise and do a wireworking demo for us using some of the gorgeous polished cabochons she sells at rock and mineral shows. Myra gave us a quick lesson in how to make a simple bail for a predrilled cab and to finish off the wires with a variety of spirals, twists or other embellishments. She demonstrated several different methods depending on how the stone is shaped and drilled.

Thank you Myra for sharing your lapidary skills with us and your great improvising!
Nancy Roberts



Myra, going with the flow.
Photo Jim Roberts

Cathy, Mary, Byron, Jennifer, and Cheryl learning Myra's methods. Photo Jim Roberts

SAFETY

Spring is coming! The weather is warming up and the trees are beginning to bloom. But the trees aren't the only things that the warmer temperatures are waking up. Warmer weather always brings out critters like snakes and bugs. To fossil hunters, this can be a problem. Many snakes and bugs are masters of disguise and can effortlessly blend in with their environment. A few safety precautions will help to prevent critter mishaps:

Always look around. Don't be too focused on finding a fossil that you fail to notice anything else. Avoiding these undesirable critters can be as easy as being aware of your surroundings.

Wear sneakers or hiking boots while fossil hunting. Not only does proper foot wear ensure better footing than sandals, but it also helps protect your feet from snake and bug bites.

Sometimes encounters happen. Should you encounter one of these critters, back away slowly and leave it alone.

Treat all snakes as if they are poisonous. If you are bitten by a snake, seek help immediately.

Extra caution should be taken when snakes and bugs are involved. Fossil hunting is full of fun and adventure, but remember to be safe or you could become a fossil yourself!
Jennifer Morgan



Editor's Note

Nikki Kenney will be starting a regular article on lapidary tips. If you have any tips, photos, web site links, suggestions please send them to nuggeteditor@gmail.com

Mea Culpa

This time there was only one, or two depending on your point of view (mine is going to be one) that was reported. For all that it was one (two if you're picky), it was not a good one to make. I left our address and email site off. It's here this month.

Field Trip

Mt Ida, AR

March 10-11, 2012

NMGMS members had a group field trip to Mt Ida to visit the Wegner Crystal Mines for Phantom Quartz, and Coleman Mine on Miller Mountain.

Saturday was a lovely sunny day at Wegner Mines. Sunday was a rainy day but no less enjoyable at Coleman Mines.

Many crystals were gathered by all.



NMGMS members heading off at Wegner Mines guide Dave. Photo Dana Jones



Searching the pit for phantoms at Wegner. Photo Dana Jones



NMGMS members searching along the bottom before the rain came in earnest. Photo Dana Jones



Robert searching alone at the top of the tailings, soon he was overtaken by the rest of the club at Coleman Mine. Photo Dana Jones



Jim, Dana, Nancy, Remy, Britanni, and Tabitha trying to get out of the rain. Photo Matthew



Sample of crystals found at Coleman Mines. Photo Remy

This field trip will be covered in greater depth in the April **Nugget**. Time constraints prevented a greater amount of coverage.