



The Nugget

North Mississippi Gem & Mineral Society Newsletter

September 29, 2011 ~ Volume 10, Issue 4

Notes from the President's Desk

With the end of summer rapidly approaching, I know that everyone is longing for those cool, crisp fall days that are especially good for outdoor field trips. I can't say that I have done much rock or fossil collecting this summer, except for the occasional gathering up of interesting beach rocks, but I have managed to keep up with the lapidary side of activities.

I started out by having several "workshops" where I taught my neighbors and their grandkids how to make beaded macramé bracelets and anklets. Those are a lot of fun to make and easy for all ages. Later, we "branched" out and did some wire work, where I had a whole group from 5yrs on up twisting wire for gem trees. The part of that project that they all liked best was searching the beach for the perfect rock on which to glue their tree! The beach is littered with an abundance of nicely smooth and rounded rocks of all kinds, brought down by the glaciers. You can pick from granites, hornblendes, schists and gneisses!!!!

I did have some "serious" beading sessions with the older kids out here on the island and also with my friend and neighbor, Ceil Farnham from Massachusetts. We learned how to do a two-needle version of odd count peyote. That's an experience!! Also collected up some of the nice and thin, flat pieces of beach shale and put together a bead and wire necklace with those after Jim managed to drill holes in them. Did break a few, but turned out to be fun to work with. Real "organic" look! It reminds me of Native American jewelry.

When Jim and I would hike around the island with our neighbors, I would try to interject bits and pieces about the geology of the lake, the glaciers, the types of rocks, etc. and there are now several youngsters interested in rocks and have started their own collections. You should see my deck and picnic table here!!!! I keep wondering why we are always hauling rocks from one part of the island to another! Just can't pass up a pretty rock.... Oh, I did manage to find another bison tooth down on the beach this summer.

So now you know why I call Butler Island the Vermont extension of the North Mississippi Gem and Mineral Society! I hope that all of you have managed to continue cultivating your interest in the many aspects of rocks, fossils, minerals and the lapidary arts this summer by either doing some field collecting or visiting museums to see what has been collected in the past or sharing some of your knowledge and skills with others. I can't wait for us to get back into our fall field trip schedule and get out there to gather up all of those treasures!

Nancy Roberts

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Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was led by: *Bernice Burkeen*

Introduction of guests and new members...David and Belinda Loyd brought the Kinning Family (Leif, Ewa and Sara) visiting from Kallinge, Sweden. Clinton & Linda Adams of Louisville

Do I have a motion to approve the minutes of the last meeting as printed in the Nugget? APPROVED and seconded. If there were any changes, be sure the secretary got them and have them printed in the next issue of the Nugget.

Treasurer's Report: Closing Balance as of today: _____ \$1835.65

Chairpersons' Reports:

Field Trips: Our September field trip will be on Saturday Sept. 10, with Sept. 24 as a rain date. We will be going to the old lime pit on Birmingham Ridge Road. Meet at the site at 9:00 a. m. (**see handouts or emails for directions**).

Publicity: (Reginald Rose)

Membership: John Byzet distributed copies of the 2011 membership roster to those who didn't get one at the May meeting.

Hospitality: We hope that everyone will sign up for at least one meeting during the year. We need two volunteers per meeting. **Sept: Kendall Bullock/Bernice Burkeen Nov: Floy Hawkins/ Robert Langford**

Website: Check us out at www.nmgms.org

Stamps: If there are any to turn in, give them to Mary Reed or Kathy Westbrook

Historian: Turn in any 2011 club related photos, newspaper articles or other memorabilia for next year's scrapbook to Susan Curry.

Bernice encouraged everyone to save photos, newspaper articles or other club memorabilia for next year's scrapbook. Any time you visit a rock show, museum or other related event, please save the flyer, tickets, and etc showing you attended the event. All of this goes into the scrapbook!

Newsletter: (Robert Langford) The Nugget could use more articles written by club members.

Youth Members: (Kendal Bullock) the junior club members voted to name the group "The Rock Heads." The group will start meeting in the fall. Patches will be available for the October meeting.

Old Business:

We will be teaching a beading class in conjunction with the West Point Arts Council on Saturday, October 22, 2011 from 10 until 3 at the McClure Building in West Point, which is on the corner of Commerce and E. Broad St. We will need members to volunteer to help as assistants again. Please email Nancy or Floy, if you can help with this class.

1. At the May meeting, we decided to have light blue, short sleeved polo style shirts made with the club's logo embroidered in dark royal blue. If you would like one, they are \$20 ea. (\$22 2x) and can be ordered from Beverly Fortenberry of Very Berry Embroidery. Email: veryberryembroidery@yahoo.com 662-372-2013

2. Don't forget that the club's picnic/rock swap will be at the small pavilion in Ballard Park, which is on the east side of the lake and near the Oren Dunn museum. It will be held on October 29th and is the same Saturday as the museum's fall festival. We will have the "Buy it now or Bid" silent auction again; grab bags for sale and the "Fishing Game" for the kids. We will also have hot dogs, chips and drinks provided by the club and members are asked to bring a dessert.
3. Any members wishing to set up as a craft vendor at the festival on the museum grounds may do so. The set up fee is \$35 and vendors are required to collect sales tax and turn that in to the museum at the end of the day. **(Nancy has a copy of the form)** We will need donations for the auction and grab bags and small specimens of polished rocks, minerals and fossils will be needed for the fishing game cups. Those members, who can sew, please make up some cloth grab bags out of pieces of fabric measuring 8 x 15 inches. Finished size of bag is approx. 7 x 7 inches.

Is there any other old business?

New Business:

1. Matthew Lambert, winner of the \$500 Junior Member Workshop Scholarship by the Southeast Federation, will share his exciting activities at the William Holland Lapidary School with the group in the September meeting. Matthew won one of the two scholarships that were awarded. He must be accompanied by a parent, so Matthew and Roger attended the Mineral ID class in June.

Is there any other business????

Announcements:

Reminders: The September meeting will be at the library on the 17th from 1 to 3p.m. The next meeting of the North Mississippi Gem and Mineral Society will be on Saturday, September 17, 2011 from 1 to 3 p.m. at the Lee County Public Library in Tupelo. The program which follows the business meeting will be "How to make a Chainmail Keychain," instructed by NMGMS member Robert Langford. Learn the art of chainmail by working with jump rings and pliers as you craft your very own keychain. This is an excellent opportunity for everyone to get an introduction into this wirework lapidary art. Come and join us for an afternoon of fun! Refreshments will be served.

Notice: NMGMS members, who have their own lapidary tools or needle nose pliers, are requested to bring them to the meeting. Be sure to put your name on them! Also, if you have any chainmail pieces that you have made, magazines showing pictures of chainmail jewelry or patterns for these types of projects, please bring them along for display. We would like to show everyone the wide variety of artistic things that can be created with this lapidary art.

- Please return the name tags to the basket before you leave. **Is there anyone who needs a name tag printed up for them?**
- Motion to Adjourn.....

WWW. Twenty Mile Creek...

Wet, Wild, and Wonderful! That pretty much sums up the NMGMS May 7 field trip to the monument site on Twenty Mile Creek at the Highway 45 Bridge near Baldwin, MS. We lucked out that day too, because it rained off and on further north, but never there at the creek. Because of the morning cloud cover, the water did feel a little bit "chilly" at first, but once you got across the creek and started to work at sifting the gravel deposits, you warmed up fast! We were joined that day by several of our newest members and families and the collecting was excellent.

The recent storms and heavy rains had brought down lots of new material and a fallen tree had managed to cause a lot of sand and gravel to build up on the upstream side. Every screen full brought many shark, ray, sawfish, *Enchodus*, and pycnodont teeth to light. Everyone had a very productive day! The deposits were so prolific, that Tabitha and Brittani Lambert as well as, Robin and Victoria Langford could come behind the rest of us and find many "itty bitty" teeth and vertebrae that had passed through our sieves and were left on the tailings piles. Everyone enjoyed the fun, from the oldest of us all the way

down to the youngest member of the group. We were so excited, that it was hard to come up out of the creek for lunch!

Robert Langford had his sign in and identification station set up under an easy-up with club flyers available and identification guides on hand for those who wished to check out their findings. After lunch, the day got hot and by then the water felt so refreshing that some of the group actually enjoyed having a little "swimming hole" fun. The sunshine brought out the "wild" critters too and one water snake was spotted by Ethan, so we just moved over to a different boulder. That snake just watched us from under his rock for a long time, never acting aggressive or threatening. Usually the wild animals are more afraid of humans than we are of them and will leave you alone if you don't bother them.

It was hard to quit collecting, but by mid-afternoon, after a hard go at shoveling and sifting for hours on end, the old back says "it's time to stop". So, we came out of the creek and spent some time checking out all of our neat fossil finds and took a few photos of some of the more unusual things. Had to get the sand out of our shoes and dry off a bit before getting in the car and heading home, but it was absolutely worth every wet moment of it! Nancy Roberts



May 22, 2011 field trip to Blue Springs.....

Why is it that it always rains the morning of our field trips to the crab site??? I know it was a marine environment, but enough is enough!!! At least it had stopped raining by the time I arrived at 10 a.m. and the site really wasn't terribly muddy. Lots of goodies had been washed out tho, so the collecting was quite good. Roger Lambert found 2 of the best *Notopocorystes testacea* crab fossils that I have seen to come out of this deposit and Tabitha Lambert found a really nice sea urchin specimen.

This was the first time that NMGMS members David and Melissa Blair had been to the Union County site and they too, had good luck with their finds. David came up with a really nice, long *Enchodus* tooth and Melissa found a beautiful *Tetracarcinus subquadrata* with legs!! Another club member who was making his first trip out to this site was Dr. Charles Williams, who came all the way up from Jackson, MS. Ethan Bullock found another *Cristapluma mississippiensis* and I finally got a *Raninella tridens* (so small that it looks like a black bean!) by default, Roger gave me one of his!!

We are still managing to find many of the *Dakoticancer* crabs along with *Linoparus canadensis* lobsters and *Squalicorax* teeth, plus a few vertebrae thrown in for good measure. We were

also joined on this trip by NMGMS member Bob Reinhaus, who played the role of photographer for the day, but he also collected some of the more interesting mollusks that litter the site. After the morning cloud cover dispersed, the day got very hot and humid. By mid day, all in attendance were ready to either head for the creek or head for home, so we decided to forgo the trip over to Birmingham Ridge and call it a good day at the crabsite! Nancy Roberts



Back in April, NMGMS was cordially invited by Ms. Jill Smith to hold their April meeting at the Union County Heritage Museum in New Albany. The facilities were excellent and we were made to feel very welcome by Jill and her staff. Not only did we have a really nice room in which to hold the meeting, but we were also provided with refreshments by the museum. After the club meeting, we were given a tour of the museum and learned about all of the very fascinating and rich history of Union County and New Albany; not to mention that the area also has a lot of interesting rocks and fossils!

Young and old alike enjoyed touring the outside gardens and the pioneer village where there were many "hands on" items of interest, from an old time general store to a real train caboose! All members in attendance had a most enjoyable afternoon. Thank you Jill! Nancy Roberts

Sept. Field Trip to Birmingham Ridge Lime Quarry

Date: Sept. 10, 2011 Time: 9a.m. at the quarry - Note: rain date Sept. 24th

The locale on Birmingham Ridge Road is an old lime quarry and contains numerous Cretaceous period fossils. Lots of large *Exogyra*, oysters and other bi-valves are found there; as a matter of fact, they are literally laying all over the place! Also some shark teeth, bony fish teeth, shark vertebrae and mosasaur vertebrae can be found. The access down into the quarry is fairly easy and so is the collecting. Bring cardboard flats or a bucket and some smaller containers for the little fossils. You can also bring a hand trowel, a screwdriver for prying and your rock hammer, but they are not absolutely necessary, as most of it is surface collecting.

Please let Bernice or Kendal know if you are planning on attending this field trip.

Thanks. Nancy Roberts, NMGMS field trip chair therockhoundlady@yahoo.com ,

Bernice Burkeen: bburkeen@wildblue.net 662-871-3650

Kendal Bullock: kendal_bullock@live.com 662-255-3654

By Jay Hobart
NMGMS Member

I've had an interest in rocks and minerals for about, oh, three or four years now; but it wasn't until recently that I would call myself a rockhound.

Earlier this year, back in March, I had a week off from school to enjoy spring break. At the time, a coworker of mine and I decided we wanted to take a couple of days off from school, work, and other responsibilities by going on a road trip together to the Smokey Mountains. We really had no idea where we wanted to go or what we wanted to do once we got there, but regardless of our lack of plans we knew the trip would be anything but disappointing – and, of course, we were right!

During the few short days of our trip, we managed to eat an excellent breakfast at a café in Asheville, spent entirely too much money at a mall in Charlotte, failed to catch a single fish at a lake in Waynesville, saw Rock City and Ruby Falls outside of Chattanooga, and somehow even found ourselves at a llama farm and winery in the middle of nowhere. However, seeing as I had already had an interest in gemstones and other minerals, one of the more memorable experiences of the trip for me occurred when I went sluicing for the very first time on a cold and rainy evening in Gatlinburg, Tennessee.

The place I sluiced at was really nothing out of the ordinary, just a typical touristy “pick a bucket and go” kind of place. But regardless of the atmosphere, I had a great time! I found all kinds of different stones including emeralds and aquamarine, topaz, tourmaline, garnets, and even a few rubies and sapphires. I can't say what it is about precious or semi-precious stones that makes me interested in them, but for whatever reason I just knew that cutting all of those stones I found that day into something beautiful was definitely something I wanted to do.

So what happened next? Well, after my trip, I returned home and started doing some intense online researching with regards to faceting. There's no telling how many articles I read about the subject, but it seemed like the more I read the more fascinated I became with the art of cutting gemstones until, eventually, my research had me anxious and impatient to start cutting them on my own. But, of course, I knew that this art form wasn't something that I could just pick up one day and magically be good at it, so I contacted NMGMS President, Nancy Roberts, and asked if she knew of any good places in the South that offered classes on faceting stones. She assured me that the best place I could go to learn how was William Holland School of Lapidary Arts in Young Harris, Georgia. I recognized the name of the school from some of my research and was already contemplating going there, but to hear a second opinion about it from Nancy really helped convince me that I was making a good decision in going and, so, I went!

After about nine hours of being on the road, I finally arrived at William Holland late in the afternoon on July 10th. I was a little nervous about being there at first because many of the people there were so much older than me; but it didn't take long for me to start talking to people and make new friends. Many of the people I talked to came from as far away as Texas, Massachusetts, and even Ohio! I even met a fellow Mississippian, Lil, who was from Jackson. But it seemed like no matter who I was speaking with, the first few questions asked were either “Where are you from?” or “What class are you taking?”.

One evening I was enjoying the mountain scenery from the porch at the school when I started conversing with a really nice guy named John. As usual, I asked him, “So, what class are you taking?” and he just looked at me and said, “Oh, well actually, I'm instructing the casting classes”. Needless to say, I instantly felt a little stupid about myself after I got his reply; but as with everyone else I had met, I just got to talking with him and we instantly began sharing stories. John told me all about how he grew up in a gulf town in Florida, had worked in a high-class country club, went through a rough divorce with his ex-wife, and had even worked under a man who used to be Adolf Hitler's personal chef! After just a couple of days of knowing him, he gave me a beautiful facetable piece of crystal opal from Ethiopia, three facetable pieces of yellow citrine, and a small rock that he called a “meteorwrong” – something he gave me after explaining how meteorites tend to knock debris from Earth into space upon impact, but the debris re-enters the atmosphere, melts and condenses together due to the intense heat created, and falls back down to Earth as a “false” meteorite – a meteorwrong.

I had a great time getting to know John during my stay at William Holland and ended up gaining a lot of respect for him. However, he wasn't the only instructor who I grew to admire. In fact, I actually really respect all of the instructors there because each week they go out of their way to teach others a

particular lapidary skill and are not paid to do so. I just think that the fact that they volunteer their time to teach others really says a lot about themselves and the school itself. It just goes to show that the instructors there are there because they *want* to teach and they *want* their students to learn. How could I have asked for anything better?

Another instructor who had a positive impact on me was my own, Mary Lou Kick, who taught Mineral ID and Faceting with her fifteen year old great grandson. Mary Lou was an older woman who had been faceting stones since the '80s and knew just about all there was to know when it came to gemstones and how to cut them. Because of this, I am very fortunate to have been working with her. She taught me everything: how to find a stone clean enough to cut, which size dop stick to use, which grit lap to use, at what angles to cut different kinds of stones on, how to handle the stone with the machine, the importance of prepolishing the stone, how to properly clean and store parts of the machine – and the list just goes on! I consider myself very lucky to have had Mary Lou teach me about faceting. I know that it's a skill that I will probably continue to pursue and perfect throughout my lifetime and I can't think of anyone better to start it off with than her. She was phenomenal.

I'm very thankful to have had a chance to go to such a wonderful place where I could learn about lapidary arts and have fun at the same time. I highly recommend to anyone interested lapidary arts to go and check out William Holland. The school offers many more courses than just faceting, too. Whether you're interested in silversmithing, cabbing, opals, working with colored glass, casting silver, wire wrapping, designing jewelry, or even making chains I can assure you that, even if you don't have John or Mary Lou, you would have a great instructor and an even better experience!

I certainly plan on returning to William Holland. I'm not sure what class I'll take the next time I go; maybe silversmithing or a more advanced faceting class. However, I can be sure that no matter what course I end up signing up for, I will meet a number of great people, make many new friends and memories, and will return home once again with a new skill that I can be proud to practice and improve on.

I am extremely thankful for everyone who made my time at William Holland a memorable experience and I can't wait to go there again!

A Sad Day Ends on a Happy Note....

On May 17, 2011 a group of NMGMS members gathered together in Oxford to attend the funeral of fellow club member George Everett. It was a sad day to be sure, but we had come together, not just to mourn the passing of our dear friend and fellow rock hound, but also to give testimony to a man whose life had touched the lives of so many others. We were glad too, to have the opportunity to share a few moments with Rena Everett and daughters Terry and Ellen.

After the service, we gathered for lunch at a local restaurant and reminisced about the early days of NMGMS and of how George had played an important role in the forming of the club. He not only served as an officer in several different capacities, but he also gave programs, workshops and classes; teaching club members and class students the lapidary arts of wire wrapping and gem tree making. George and Rena both were very "front and center" when it came to organizing the NMGMS "Kids' Day" events and were always willing to give of their time to mentor the youth of the community. I wish you could have seen how excited Rena was and how her face lit up when I told her that we had finally taken steps for the junior members to become an active FRA group within the club. George would have been very pleased too.

During lunch, we shared many of the little things that we remembered about George; his sense of humor, his quiet manner and his intense interest in all of the club's members and activities. We all felt so very fortunate that we had known this man and that he had been a part of our lives. So, it made me realize that in any organization as well as in life, we should all give a little something of ourselves to each and every person we come into contact with, no matter if it is a guest we see only once or a member whom we have known for a long, long time. It is not what you get out of life that will count in the long run, but what you put into it that will be remembered by those whose lives you have been a part of and what better testimony to a life well lived than to have someone feel an overwhelming sense of gladness that you were a part of their lives.

So, as we parted for the day, we felt uplifted by a sense of camaraderie and took comfort in knowing that we, too, were touching the lives of others by our participation in NMGMS and all of its many associated activities.

Nancy Roberts

NMGMS Founding Member, Rena Everett:

Rena Everett, a founding member of the North Mississippi Gem and Mineral Society, passed away on July 20, 2011. Rena loved every aspect of the rock and mineral club. She was always very interested in what each member had collected, brought to display or made in a lapidary workshop. She worked very hard at keeping the junior members interested in the organization and especially enjoyed the field trips. Rena was always very happy and upbeat, with a smile on her face and a hug for everyone. She served the club in many capacities, as an officer, a committee chairperson, an organizer and mentor. Rena will be greatly missed by all. She touched many lives and I am glad that she made NMGMS a part of hers. Nancy Roberts

Baubles, Bangles, and Beads!

On May 14th, the North Mississippi Gem and Mineral Society (NMGMS) sent Nancy Roberts, Floy Hawkins, and Bernice Burkeen, from Tupelo to Starkville, MS to teach a beginners' beading workshop to 12 ladies. The class was part of a workshop series offered by the Starkville Area Arts Council, teaching the group of students from Starkville, Columbus, Shuqualak, and West Point basic beading techniques. When the instructors arrived, they were joined by fellow NMGMS members, Beth Wells-Parker and Susan Steelhammer from West Point, Mary Reed from Ackerman, Susan Curry from Mathiston and Linda Lodato, from Starkville as helpers, making one tutor for each of two students, which helped the class achieve some beautiful results in a short period of time. The class shared many laughs, some intense studying, and a lot of fun while making new friendships and learning a new art - jewelry making. Each of the ladies went home with a bracelet and earrings; while some beaded their necklace in class, others took their gems home to finish. At the end of the day, all participants seemed pleased with what they had created and, armed with hand-outs for other projects, seemed eager to try something else. There may be a more advanced class - "Part II" - in the future! Linda Lodato

Remaining Program Line Up for 2011:

October: Second annual NMGMS picnic and rock swap

November: "How to Make Ming Style Gem Trees", workshop presented by NMGMS member Nancy Roberts. Host/Hostess: Floy Hawkins and Robert Langford

December: Annual Christmas Party

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If you should have web sources that you would like to contribute, please e-mail The Nugget editor.

Presented by NMGMS

Next Meeting

Saturday, Oct. 29, 10-4 p.m.

Ballard Park in Tupelo, MS

Program: 2nd annual picnic and rock swap

Presented by: NMGMS

Around the Country



Photos of May Beading Class
by Linda Lodato