Arkansas Rockhound News

Official Newsletter of the Central Arkansas Gem, Mineral and Geology Society (CAGMAGS)

February 2014

Meet your club officers for 2014!

Stephanie Blandin
Vice President

Sarah Dodson
Secretary/Treasurer

Mike Austen
President

Upcoming Club Events

February 16  Gem tree class
            The Murray home
            1:00 p.m.

February 25  Next club meeting
            Terry Library
            6:30 p.m.

April 12     CAGMAGS Swap Meet
            Burns Park

IMPORTANT NOTICE!

Meetings returning to Terry Library!

Now that renovations are complete, we will be returning to Terry Library for our club meetings. The next meeting is at 6:30 pm on Tuesday, February 25th.

Blueberries? On Mars?

Check out Stephanie’s article about the blueberries found on Mars, and where you might just be able to get one of your own! (Well… the Earth variety anyway…)

Happy Valentine’s Day!
President’s Message

Mike Austen, CAGMAGS President

The first CAGMAGS meeting for 2014 is history. We had a large crowd in spite of a change of time and place. Lots of old faces and a few new ones, turned out. David Dodson gave a program on how to take photos of your minerals. David will take over this year as are program chairman. If you have any ideas for a program or there is something you would be interested in seeing, just let him know.

Dues for 2014 are due now. Please pay as soon as possible if you have not already done so. Pat and Lenora are looking for help with the Boy Scout merit badge program on May 10th. If you want to help, let one of them know. The club is also looking for help with the spring Swap on April 12th. If you want to help, let me know.

Lenora is having a class on gem trees at her home in Hazen the 16th of February, contact her if you want to learn more on how to make them.

Until next time… ROCK ON!

Can you guess this month’s Mystery Gem?

Hint #1 – This gem is routinely heat-treated to lighten the color.
Hint #2 – NOT a member of the corundum group of minerals!
Hint #3 – Comes in many flavors… including watermelon!

Answer on page 6
What’s a ROCKHOUND to DO When it’s COLD OUTSIDE?

By Lenora Murray

Well, six members of the Central Arkansas Gem, Mineral and Geology Club decided to try “WIRE WRAPPING 101”, with instructor Roberta Frost. The group met at the Murray’s new lapidary shop in Hazen on Sunday Dec. 16. Roberta and Spud Frost brought the supplies, Dave Murray furnished coffee and other beverages, and the students, Stephanie Blandin, David Hodge, and Lenora Murray, each brought a favorite rock or cabochon. And we all had lots of enthusiasm!

After a guided tour of the mineral displays and the equipment in the newly built shop, everyone was ready to wrap! Roberta had a few samples of her work, and a great power point display to go along with her hands-on explanation. We just followed her steps, and in a very short time we all had great wrapped jewelry. She is a great, patient teacher—and so is Spud! I must confess I liked David Hodge’s wrapped stone straight from Razor Rock best. He had an agate, which he said had been oiled up, not really polished. And the finished stone with a black leather cord was quite stunning! Stephanie and I went for traditional cabochons that both made into beautiful pendants. Hopefully there are a few pictures of the finished products in this newsletter. If not, come to the next meeting—we’re all happy to show off our new accomplishments.

Of course the day wasn’t complete without a few refreshments—it IS a long drive to Hazen. We had bar-b-q with potato salad, cole slaw and veggies while everyone waited for Lenora to copy the neat power point onto disks so each member could take home Roberta’s well-done slide show directions. She really set the bar high for club class presentations. But --- I will give a try to do GEM TREES 101 on Sunday Feb. 16 starting at 1 PM. We will meet at our lapidary shop in Hazen. Gem Trees take longer than wrapping a cabochon, and glue takes time to set. So plan on spending the afternoon with us. CALL AHEAD (870-255-3679) so I know how many folks to plan for. I have plenty of wire and stone chips, and bases. But if you have a favorite ‘base rock’ bring it along.

Meanwhile, if you missed the FIRST wire class, perhaps you can check with Roberta about attending one at another date. AND if you have a skill to share (beading? wire knitting?) we’d love to have you share with the club! Thank you again Roberta and Spud for presenting a great class!
Martian Blueberries?

Moqui (pronounced MO-KEY) marbles, also known as “Thunderballs” or “Shaman Stones”, are an unusual geological anomaly. They are formed when water seeps through layers of sandstone, dissolving into pockets within the layers, carrying iron oxides like goethite, limonite & hematite. The iron oxides accrete around the outside of packets to form spheres. When the sandstone wears away, the iron concretions are left behind. They range from small marbles to baseball sizes. Windblown sand and water, geological pressure, and variations in the shape of packets where the orbs form, create a variety of shapes. They come in flat saucer shapes, clusters, walls, towers, buttons, noses and globe-on-a-stick shape (Bogi Stone). Weathering can break them open and create iron oxide bowls or curved shards.

The most common place to find moqui marbles is in Utah. They are found in the U.S. (Arkansas included) and on several continents in the ancient archaeological excavations. They are even found on Mars. The NASA scientists on the Opportunity Rover team discovered them lying about on the surface of Mars between sandstone formations. The team nicknamed them “blueberries”, and the geologist realized they were martian moqui marbles.

They are used in a lot of spiritual rituals. Hopi and other tribal shamans used them to create special effects. By tossing them into a fire they explode, sending up an impressive shower of sparks. In Hopi, the word “Moqui” means “dear departed ones”. Hopi tradition says the spirits of dead ancestors come down to earth at night to play games with the marbles. They leave them behind to assure their descendants that they are well and happy in the spirit world. Some spiritualist practitioners consider Moqui marbles healing stones today. If you hold the Moqui marbles in your hands and pull them apart slowly, you will sense a slight pull or push. Not all of them will do this, but I have a pair that you can feel push against each other. I held one behind rainbow obsidian and the rainbow actually got brighter! They are really fun and unique rocks!

Stephanie
CAGMAGS Meeting Minutes for January 2014

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. on January 21 at the Thompson Library by President Mike Austen. 29 people were present. We welcomed new member Barbara Champagne of Bryant, who likes to dig quartz—and so do we all. Mike says we have our regular meeting place at Terry Library back following their remodeling. We are reserved through July. Fourth Tuesday at 6:30 p.m..

Upcoming area shows:

   Tyler Texas January 24-26
   Kirkwood, MO February 14-16
   Indianapolis, IN February 21-23
   Jackson, MS February 23-23

Announcements:

Mike DeAngelis announced the science talks at UALR are continuing, every other Wednesday at 4 pm. See the newsletter or the UALR web site for details. Mike Howard will be the speaker on April 16.

The Murrays are having a class on making gem trees at their house on Sunday Feb 16 at 1pm. Call 870-255-3679 for details.

Mike DeAngelis, newsletter editor, says he can run a buy/sell/trade column in the newsletter for the members. Rock stuff only please.

Old Business:

The club scholarship information committee will meet soon and bring a proposal to our next meeting. Members are David Dodson, Mike DeAngelis, Pat Kisser, and Lenora Murray.

New Business:

The club swap will be Saturday April 12th. We need a chairman and committee members for this. Mike asked for volunteers, and encouraged all members to attend even if you don’t have anything to swap or sell.

David Dodson is the new program chairman. He'd like everyone’s suggestions for speakers and/or topics for programs. This month, he treated us to a program of his own, on photographing minerals. It was a brief demo and question and answer session.

Submitted by
Sarah Dodson, Sec/Treas
DENTAL TOOLS
A ready source of free tools is your local dentist. Dental picks can be reworked into wax tools or straightened and sharpened to make a stylus for marking and layout. The steel in these tools is high quality, and the handles are designed for comfort.

A special note however – If you want to modify the shape of the tool, don’t try to just bend it with pliers. Working this alloy of steel while it’s cold will cause it to snap. Changing its shape can only be done when it’s hot. I work it like a blacksmith. Prop your torch up on the bench so that you can use both hands for the work. Have a hammer and bench block ready. Heat the tip red hot, and hammer it straight or bend it with pliers.

And don’t forget to ask your dentist for some of the cutting burs they throw out. These are useful for a variety of things. It’s best to call a week or two before your visit and ask the dentist or hygienist to put some of these tools aside for you. It’s good practice also to ask that they run them through the sterilizer for you. If that’s not possible, pop them in an oven at around 300 F.

For more great BenchTips, visit the BenchTips page at:
www.facebook.com/BenchTips

Mystery Gem for February

Tourmaline (var. Indicolite or Elbaite)

“Somewhere in Brazil in the 1500s, a Spanish conquistador washed the dirt from a green tourmaline crystal and confused the vibrant gem with emerald. His confusion lived on until scientists recognized tourmaline as a distinct mineral species in the 1800s. The confusion about the stone’s identity is even reflected in its name, which comes from toramalli, which means “mixed gems” in Sinhalese (a language of Sri Lanka). It’s a term Dutch merchants applied to the multicolored, water-worn pebbles that miners found in the gem gravels of Ceylon (now Sri Lanka)...”

To read more about the fascinating history and lore of tourmaline, visit:
http://www.gia.edu/tourmaline-history-lore
The Central Arkansas Gem, Mineral and Geology Society is dedicated to promoting interest in mineralogy and the related sciences, interest in lapidary and the related arts; to encourage field trips and the enjoyment of collecting and preserving minerals as they occur in nature, and the study of geological formations, especially those of our Natural State of Arkansas. We are a small group of people that enjoy getting together to share our common interests.

“Old rockhounds never die, they just slowly petrify!”