

Apr/May/June 2014  
Volume 1, Issue 2

# American Rockhound®

The magazine written by Rockhounds, for Rockhounds



American Rockhound  
Meets Afghanistan!

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Virginia Amethyst, Scufflin Acres  
Treasure Valley, North Carolina

American Rockhounds  
A Tribute to Lee Fleming

Tucson Show Report

Ghost Mines

Bowers Farm Limonite

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## North Carolina Diamonds

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# AMERICAN ROCKHOUND



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On The Cover: Afghan miner living in one of the old mine adits while working the lapis mines in Afghanistan. Photo credit and courtesy of Gary Bowersox, Jim Landon. The 7.27 carat Jacquot/Kyte Diamond, Richard Jacquot photo. Cover design, Sandy Jacquot, Richard Jacquot



# American Rockhounds



# Thinking Out Loud Prospector or Rockhound?

Richard Jacquot

Prospector or rockhound, which one are you? Sometimes there is a difference, but there shouldn't be. Rockhounds like rocks and minerals and everything that has anything to do with them. Many rockhounds focus their interest on certain parts of the rockhounding hobby such as specimen collecting, lapidary art, gem cutting, or collecting a certain type or species of rock or mineral. Other rockhounds collect every rock they find! Rockhounds can be found at many different mines and collecting sites. The casual rockhound is happy to visit tourist type mines where you can buy a bucket of gem bearing dirt, usually with a guarantee of finding a real gem. Some of these mines offer native material while others salt the buckets with stones from a foreign source. More serious collectors tend to look for commercial mines, quarries or BLM and Forest Service land that offer the opportunity to dig for their own gems and minerals.

A lot of rockhounds like to make jewelry or cut stones from their rocks. Some only cut what they find while others frequent rock and gem shows to purchase that perfect piece to create their lapidary art. Almost all rockhounds, including myself, have a love of every aspect of the hobby. I enjoy collecting rocks, fossils and mineral specimens for my shelf. I do not cut stones or make jewelry from them, but I appreciate the work my friends do and many times have them cut a stone or make something for me out of something I have found. I enjoy reading about rockhounding, the history of mines and collecting sites, and seeing what others have found.

Prospectors are more focused. They are out hunting for something new, they are 'prospecting'. They are looking for things like gold, silver, diamonds, ruby, sapphire, emeralds and more. Some prospectors are also rockhounds and they are prospecting for new places to find nice mineral specimens as well. Prospectors spend hours in a creek panning for gold, looking for a nugget, but most times coming home with a small vile with microscopic flakes of gold in it. Some

rockhounds might say that was a bad day digging, but a prospector believes it was a good day. They found traces of gold in the creek and know it is there. They know where to dig when they return. Some rockhounds visit a mine or new collecting site, dig one day, find little or no specimens they like, and declare the site to be unproductive. When a prospector hears of a new site that has produced a small amount of a particular gem or mineral, they spend several days or weeks before declaring a site to be a good location or unproductive. Prospectors, like some rockhounds read a lot about the history of where certain gems and minerals have been found in the past. I spent 10 years working on Chunky Gal Mountain and the Buck Creek Mining District in Clay County, North Carolina, hunting for rubies and sapphires. I read every old publication I could find on the area from the 1800s and 1900s to get an idea of where to hunt. Then I spent weeks at a time searching and digging until I found what I was looking for. Sometimes I would find specimens in the general area listed in the old books, but other times I would locate new deposits close by that had never been worked. I was prospecting.

Get out, knock on doors, ask permission to dig. If you don't get it, move on and prospect for another site. I love rockhounding and spend many weeks every year with the MAGMA club digging at some great places, but every now and then, I get back out in the woods by myself and hunt for something new. Prospecting is one way many new locations are discovered, which eventually benefits all rockhounds, if they are opened to the general public. Rockhounds should develop the attitude that you can never give up. If you think a site might have something of interest, work it for a few days, not a few hours. Give every location you visit a chance to produce before walking away for good. If anyone ever asks whether you are a prospector or a rockhound, you should be able to tell them you're both, because every great rockhound has at least a little prospector in them. 

# NORTH CAROLINA DIAMONDS

Richard Jacquot  
Wade Edward Speer

North Carolina is considered by many to be the gemstone capitol of the United States. A lot of rockhounds are partial to their home state: South Carolina, Colorado, Maine, Montana, California and more. These states and others in the US have produced some fine gems and minerals over the years. North Carolina has a wide variety of minerals, over 300 documented so far. All the precious gemstones are found here: emerald, ruby, sapphire and diamond, as well as many semi-precious gems: amethyst, topaz, aquamarine, apatite, citrine, garnet, moonstone, quartz, tourmaline and more. The mineral species list is too long to go into here. Of all the gemstones found in North Carolina, diamond is by far the rarest.

Diamond is the hardest of all the gemstones,

at 10 on the Mohs scale. It has a specific gravity of 3.52 and a typically octahedral crystal habit. Diamond, like corundum (sapphire) comes in a variety of colors including red and blue (rarely). The colors found so far in North Carolina are clear/transparent (white), yellow, green, black and grayish/green.

According to the North Carolina Geological Survey, 13 confirmed diamonds have been found in North Carolina. All of these diamonds were found during the middle and late 1800s as a byproduct of gold mining. In the *History of the Gems Found in North Carolina*, by George Frederick Kunz, Ph.D. (1907), which I reference throughout this article, there are more than 13 occurrences listed. Kunz discounts some of the reports as they could not be properly documented or accounted for.

The diamonds were found in gold washings, either loose in the soil or taken from the washings of auriferous (containing gold or gold bearing) gravel. All the diamonds have been found in the Piedmont region. According to Kunz, belts of itacolumite (flexible sandstone) run throughout this region and were believed to be the matrix of the diamond crystals. Many rockhounds have collected the flexible sandstone. I used to have a piece in my collection,



***Belts of itacolumite, flexible sandstone, run throughout the diamond bearing region in North Carolina and were believed by some to be the matrix of the diamond crystals. This specimen is from the Clifford Glenn collection, collected in Burke County, North Carolina.***

until I flexed it one too many times while showing it to a friend. No diamonds have been found in this itacolumite belt, but crystals found in areas adjacent to it have led to the idea that the itacolumite belt of North Carolina might prove to be a diamantiferous (a rock formation or region yielding or producing diamonds) region. At the time of the Kunz writing, the diamonds had been found in Burke, Rutherford, Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Franklin and McDowell counties.

The following is a breakdown of the diamonds documented in *History of the Gems Found in North Carolina*, with other references as noted.

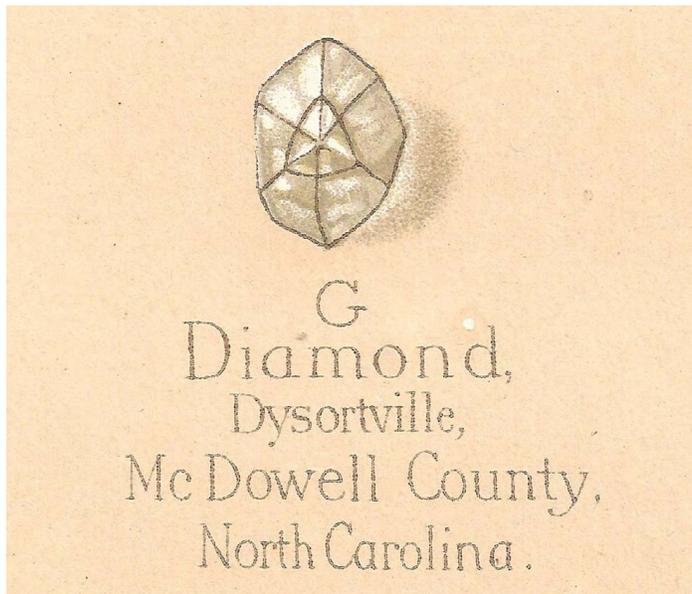
- A specimen found in 1843 was an octahedral crystal valued at \$100. It was found by Dr. F. M. Stephenson at the ford of Brindletown Creek, in Burke County. There is no documentation or record of this crystal today.
- A specimen was found in the same neighborhood as the above noted crystal by Professor George W. Featherstonhaugh. There is no documentation or record of this crystal today.
- A specimen was found in 1845, "a diamond of 1½ carats, a distorted octahedron with curved faces, clear and flawless, though tinged with yellow. It was found in the gold washings of J. D. Twitty's mine, in Rutherford County. It became the property of the late General T. L. Clingman, of Asheville. This stone was described by Professor Charles U. Shepard, who announced the existence of itacolumite in the gold-bearing region of North Carolina, at the meeting of the American Association of Geologists and Naturalists in 1845, and under the impression that the itacolumite is their matrix, had predicted the further discovery of diamonds in that region, as in Brazil."
- A specimen was found by C. Leventhorpe, of Patterson, Caldwell County, North Carolina, who reported a specimen found in a placer mine on his property in Rutherford County. The Rutherford specimen was originally presented by the Englishman, Leventhorpe, to Professor Charles U. Shepard of Amherst, Massachusetts, in 1853 who retained it in his cabinet. It is recorded as "a small, poor specimen, a pale octahedron crystal, weighing only 0.14 carats". Leventhorpe himself described it as "very small and of bad color, but a veritable diamond nevertheless, weighing 0.84 carats". It is now in the possession of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. (Griffin, *Western North Carolina Sketches*)(Lloyd, Richard G., email correspondence, 04/04/2014.)
- A specimen was found in gold-washings in 1852 by Dr. C. L. Hunter, near Cottage Home, Lincoln County. It is described as an elongated octahedron of a delicate greenish tint, transparent and about half a carat in weight.
- A white crystal of 1 carat, was obtained in the same year (1852), at Todd's Branch, Mecklenburg County. It became the property of the late Dr. Andrews of Charlotte, N. C.
- A specimen described as a "beautiful black stone, as large as a chinquapin", was found by some gold-washers in the same locality. This specimen was crushed with a hammer; the finders believed that because a diamond is the hardest gem, it could not be damaged by the hammer blow. The fragments of the black diamond scratched corundum with ease, thereby proving its genuineness.
- Two diamonds, one a beautiful octahedron, were reported by Professor F. A. Genth, obtained at the Portis mine, in Franklin County.
- Two or three small crystals were found at the headwaters of Muddy Creek in McDowell County.
- A specimen found in McDowell County, was described as a "fine stone picked up at a spring near Dysartville, in 1886. This was a distorted and twinned hexoctahedron, of 4½ carats, transparent, with a grayish-green tint. The little son of Mr. Grayson Christie (Willie Christie), going for water to a spring on the farm of Alfred Bright, observed this peculiar shining pebble, and brought it home. After some local interest had developed, its nature was suspected, and it was sent to New York and there at once identified. A model of it was exhibited at the Paris Exposition of 1889, and is now in the Tiffany-Morgan collection of the American Museum of Natural History". The museum closed on October 29<sup>th</sup>, 1964. That night a Florida beach bum and cat burglar named Jack Roland Murphy, a.k.a. Murph



Top left: Plate III from 'History of the Gems Found in North Carolina,' by George Frederick Kunz, Ph.D., 1907, depicting various gemstones found in North Carolina. Dysartville Diamond inset at top right of plate.

Bottom left: Closeup of diamond picture inset from Plate III from 'History of the Gems Found in North Carolina', by George Frederick Kunz, Ph.D., 1907. This is the largest recorded, authenticated diamond found in North Carolina. Found by the son of Mr. Grayson Christie (Willie Christie), going for water to a spring on the farm of Alfred Bright in 1886. Dysartville, McDowell County, NC. This stone was stolen from the collection of the American Museum of Natural History in New York in 1964 and never recovered.

Bottom right: Research at the North Carolina Geologic Survey has this site as the possible location of the Alfred Bright farm where Willie Christie, son of Grayson Christie found the 4 1/3 carat diamond in a spring on the farm. If it is the site, this chimney is all that is left of the home that once stood here, and the last landmark to document the location of where North Carolina's largest recorded diamond was found.



the Surf, broke in with two colleagues and took much of the museums diamond collection. Murphy was arrested and confessed the following year. The police recovered most of the stones, but the  $4\frac{1}{2}$  carat stone found by Willie Christie was never recovered. This diamond still holds the record as the largest diamond found in North Carolina. The value of the Dysartville/Christie diamond as a jewel will hardly represent the interest that attaches to it as a local specimen of large size and fine appearance. (See Plate III.) (*Barren Lands, An Epic Search for Diamonds in the North American Arctic*, Krajick, Kevin)

- A specimen found in 1877 is reported to have been found in the same region as the Christie Diamond. "It weighed  $2\frac{3}{8}$  carats, and is described as white and lustrous, but somewhat flawed, and of irregular flattened form, resembling a bean, with the crystal faces obscure. The finder sold it in Marion for a mere nominal sum. Mr. B. B. Price, of Marion, put it for disposal into the hands of Mr. James M. Gere, of Spruce Pine, an extensive buyer and miner of North Carolina mica. He took it to Syracuse, N.Y., and sold it there to Messrs. C. M. Ball & Co. jewelers, for the sum of \$18. It was finally sent to New York City, where it was cut into a small gem and its identity lost."
- Another crystal is in the State Museum at Raleigh. The particulars of its discovery are not known. It was purchased by the State with the collection of the late Dr. J. A. D. Stephenson of Statesville, North Carolina, who had possessed it for some years. He reported that he bought it, with other minerals, from a countryman in Burke County. It has an oblong spherical form, the faces being curved and rounded, and it weighs  $\frac{5}{16}$  of a carat. These particulars are given in a recent letter from Mr. T. K. Brunner, Secretary of the State Department of Agriculture at Raleigh.
- A specimen was found in 1893 in Cleveland County, near King's Mountain. It was a polished octahedron, weighing  $\frac{3}{4}$  carat, of a bright light canary yellow.

Of the 15 – 16 stones that were discussed in *History of the Gems Found in North Carolina*,

Kunz states that only 10 were authenticated at the time.

After reading about the diamonds found in North Carolina, I never really expected to find one myself. It seems that most of the previous finds were made while gold mining and prospecting. I did not hunt those areas of the piedmont for gold. My focus was in the mountains looking for rubies and sapphires. Many others spend much time prospecting for gold. There may actually be more people hunting for gold than rockhounds hunting for gemstones.

Kunz was apparently an optimist and stated, "I have no doubt if a regular search were to be made for them (Diamonds), they would be more frequently found."

In all the years I have been collecting, I have heard few stories about possible diamond finds in North Carolina. Some may be credible. Some I cannot verify. They may be just folklore and tall tales for rockhounds, to keep us entertained and on the hunt.

One of the sites I did visit frequently was the Propst Corundum locality in Lincoln County, North Carolina. This site is not in the mountain region I usually hunt. Propst has been a favorite of rockhounds for years and is still active today. I started collecting there back in the early 1990s. Sometimes, I would talk with Mr. Propst when I visited. He told me that one collector claims to have found a diamond at the site. He said the collector had a vertical hole dug about 15-20 feet into the ground and that the diamond was found in that hole. The hole had been filled in at the time of my visit. Mr. Propst has since passed away and I have not been able to verify anything more about the find.

I learned of one local rockhound that had recently found a diamond in North Carolina. Roger Grinnell's diamond was found on June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2008. It was located while gold panning with the Western Piedmont Mineral and Gem Society of Conover, at the annual gold panning contest at Lucky Strike Gold Mine, Vein Mountain, south of Marion. It is a near perfect octahedron, colorless crystal weighing about  $\frac{1}{6}$  of a carat. The find was identified by its distinct crystal shape and tested with a diamond tester by the gold mine

staff. Roger has collected minerals for over 25 years. He has a major interest in monazite which is found in small pieces or crystals in the area and believes this is what helped him find the small crystal. Adding Grinnell's diamond to the original 13 documented diamonds brings the total to 14. I have talked with sources who stated that the gravel the diamond was found in was originally dug at a site on nearby Muddy Creek and deposited at Lucky Strike and that the Grinnell Diamond originated from Muddy Creek. This only makes his diamond more credible to me as Kunz stated that 2 or 3 diamonds were found in the same creek. (Grinnell, Roger B., North Carolina Diamonds, Internet reference/article) (Lloyd, Richard G., email correspondence, 04/04/2014.)

The following two diamonds have not yet been verified, but we are working on it. In 2000, I was hired to help liquidate the gem and mineral estate of the late Ken Kyte of Asheville, North Carolina. I worked at the residence for almost two years, cataloging and selling off over 100,000 pounds of specimens and cutting rough. Kyte was a well known and respected rockhound that did a lot of collecting in North Carolina as well as out west. All his minerals were boxed and labeled as to location and he had several papers he had written on some of his finds. While going through the numerous boxes, I found an old cigar box labeled 'North Carolina Gemstones'. In the box, I found several specimens of corundum, an epidote and one unusual stone I did not recognize at first. After examining it, I realized it was a diamond. It looks like a pale green pea. I was readily able to identify all the other crystals in the box as a few pieces of Propst Farm corundum and an epidote crystal mounted and labeled as being from Franklin, North Carolina. There were no labels on the corundum pieces or the diamond.

Fellow rockhound and regular contributor for American Rockhound magazine, Rob Whaley, told me of a diamond he purchased from Charlotte rockhound Henry Underhill. He said his diamond was a pale green color as well. Both of the diamonds come from collections of well respected rockhounds. We decided to get our friend and geologist Wade Edward Speer to check them out for us. The following is his response:

## TWO NEW DIAMONDS POSSIBLY FROM NORTH CAROLINA

Wade Edward Speer

Two previously unreported diamonds, possibly from Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, have been found in the collections of two unrelated North Carolina mineral hobbyists. The specimens are described and documented below; however their source locations cannot be positively verified. The fact that both diamonds have the same uncommon crystal habit, surface texture and color suggest they may have come from the same primary source. If that source turns out to be in Mecklenburg County, as reported for one of the diamonds, then an exploration effort to find the source rock is warranted.

### Jacquot/Kyte Diamond 7.27 carats

May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2011. I met with Richard J. Jacquot of Leicester, North Carolina. Rick loaned me a diamond from his collection that may be from North Carolina. Rick is an avid mineral and fossil collector, author of *Rock, Gem and Mineral Collecting Sites in Western North Carolina*, and the owner/founder of the Mountain Area Gem and Mineral Association (MAGMA), the most active mineral collecting club in the southeast. Rick's diamond came from a cigar box bought in 2000 at the estate sale of mineral collector Ken Kyte, who died in 1984. The box was labeled 'North Carolina Gemstones' and contained numerous mineral and gem specimens, all but one of which was a readily-identifiable North Carolina specimen. None of the specimens were individually labeled. Rick assumes the diamond came from North Carolina like all the other specimens in the box. However until verified with conclusive evidence, the diamonds source location remains undetermined.

The diamond weighs 7.27 carats (My Weigh Diamond Scale, model GemPro 50) and measures 10 mm x 9 mm. It tested positive with the hand-held RS MIZAR Diamond Tech Pro tester, model Prestige Series II instrument. The diamond is a pale lime green, fibrous, opaque, and has complex cubic penetration twin crystal habit. This is an uncommon, but not unheard of, crystal habit for

diamonds. Additional literature research should shed some light on the origin of this diamond and its source rock. The surfaces are frosted with tiny crystal growths (called fibrous texture), have brilliant luster and a greasy look. Typical diamond growth lines are also present on some crystal faces. This diamond is remarkably similar to the Whaley diamond described below and may have been purchased by Ken Kyte from the Charlotte area mineral dealer Henry Underhill.

### Whaley Diamond 0.5 carats

June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2011. I met with Rob Whaley of Concord, North Carolina. Mr. Whaley is a mineral collector specializing in North Carolina and South Carolina minerals. His name was given to me by Rick Jacquot of Leicester, North Carolina who has a similar diamond also believed to be from North Carolina.

Mr. Whaley bought this diamond for \$15 from Mr. Henry Underhill in about 1999. At that time, Underhill owned and operated a mineral and jewelry shop on Central Avenue in Charlotte,



*Jacquot/Kyte Diamond showing uncommon cubic penetration twin crystal habit. 7.27 carats, 10 mm x 9 mm. This diamond was found in the collection of rockhound Ken Kyte's estate in a cigar box labeled 'North Carolina Gemstones'. If it is determined that this diamond is in fact from North Carolina, it will become the largest diamond to date found in the state. For now, it remains a mystery.*

North Carolina. Underhill had previously bought approximately 15 diamonds from a gold prospector who reportedly found them while panning in Reedy Creek in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. Reedy Creek begins about 4 miles west of the Mecklenburg/Cabarrus County line in eastern Mecklenburg County and drains into Cabarrus County; it is a tributary of Rocky River which is a tributary of the Pee Dee River.

Underhill is now deceased and his shop has been sold. His wife, Roberta Underhill, still lives in Charlotte but does not remember the diamonds. Ruby, an employee of the Underhill's at the time, now has her own shop (Lapidary Arts, Matthews, North Carolina). She remembers that all of the diamonds were sold to collectors but she does not remember the prospector's name. Apparently at the time, no one questioned that the collection of 15 diamonds actually came from Mecklenburg County.

It is a complex cubic penetration twin with tiny crystals growing on all surfaces giving a frosted appearance to the specimen called fibrous texture. As noted for the Jacquot/Kyte Diamond, this is an uncommon crystal habit for a diamond. It is pale lime green, opaque, has typical brilliant luster and a greasy-like surface. There are lots of surface growth lines marking incipient



*The Whaley/Underhill Diamond shown above is estimated to be approximately 0.5 carats (not weighed) and 5 mm x 3.5 mm x 3 mm. Purchased from Charlotte, NC mineral dealer Henry Underhill in 1999.*

crystal-face edges. The specimen is remarkably similar to the Jacquot/Kyte Diamond in color, crystal habit and surface features.

Since the diamond's source is undocumented, none of the Whaley/Underhill diamond story generates much interest until you look at the geology of upper Reedy Creek where two possible diamond-bearing ultramafic rocks are mapped!

Remarkably, a tiny lamprophyre occurs in the headwaters of upper Reedy Creek. It is one of only three mapped lamprophyre intrusives in nearly 8,000 square miles mapped in the surrounding area. It occurs on the Mecklenburg/Cabarrus County line. See Geologic map of the Charlotte 2 sheet. (Goldsmith, R., Milton, D.J., & Horton, Jr., J.W., 1988, USGS, Map 1-1251-E.) This very small lamprophyre (<50' diameter) is described as a Minette, with biotite and clinopyroxene phenocrysts in a plagioclase and alkali feldspar groundmass. Apparently, it is unmetamorphosed. The other two mapped lamprophyres, also very small, occur about 25 miles to the southeast of Union County.

The majority of the upper Reedy Creek drainage is underlain by Devonian-Ordovician granodiorite with smaller areas of quartzite, and metamorphosed mafic and ultramafic units, including possible intrusives. The Devonian-Silurian Concord Plutonic Suite of gabbro, syenite and diabase occurs 2-10 miles to the north.

If the reported Reedy Creek diamonds are real, the most likely source rocks are either; 1) the lamprophyre (Minette); or 2) the metamorphosed ultramafic intrusives. While lamprophyres worldwide only rarely contain diamonds, the report of diamonds from upper Reedy Creek suggests more investigation here is warranted. Knowing that the proper identification of diamondiferous ultramafic intrusive such as kimberlite, lamproite, & lamprophyre is problematic, it's possible that the Reedy Creek ultramafic is a 'more-favorable' lamproite rather than a 'less-favorable' lamprophyre. In any event, field visits are recommended to sample the mapped units and to collect heavy mineral stream sediments. The Union County ultramafics should also be sampled.

## The Significance of Both Diamonds

The similar color, fibrous texture and crystal habit of the Whaley/Underhill and Jacquot/Kyte diamonds, as well as their existence in locale-resident mineral collections suggests, but does not prove, they may be related in origin, i.e. they may have come from the same intrusive. However, their source/s must remain questionable for the time being. If verified to be from North Carolina, Jacquot's 7.27 carat gem would be the largest diamond ever found in the state, beating the previous record of 4.33 carats for the Christie diamond found in a spring near Dysartville, McDowell County, North Carolina.

Of course, the possible find of 15 diamonds by one man in a single creek, as reported above, would qualify as the most remarkable diamond find in the history of North America and one of the most remarkable in the world! Obviously this story must be verified before taken too seriously. But if even one diamond can be confirmed from upper Reedy Creek, the hunt is on! - **Wade Edward Speer**

When I first acquired this diamond, I was not at all sure about its origin. But since comparing it to the one Rob Whaley has and the report from Ed, I am more confident that we may be able to determine the actual source. I am planning to visit Reedy Creek to explore and see what can be found. It would be nice to find a location that is actually producing more than the occasional small diamond. Currently there are no documented finds of a diamond in North Carolina in the 1900s. 

***According to the NCGS, "The source of 13 diamonds found in North Carolina during the mid to late 1800s has never been determined. Recent NCGS research on lamproites in the Charlotte area may provide clues to the source of these diamonds and for diamond prospecting in other areas of the Piedmont." Hopefully they will turn up more of these green diamonds to help us confirm the Jacquot/Kyte and Whaley/Underhill diamonds are indeed from North Carolina.***



Richard Jacquot  
Richard Buchanan

For a couple of years I had been reading on our American Rockhound talk forum about the rubies, gold and other stones that MAGMA member, Richard 'Buckshot' Buchanan, had been finding on his property. Richard had been posting a lot of information about his site and inviting people to come out and prospect his land as well. Early in 2014, I arranged a club trip to his property. He has opened the site in the past to gold clubs who would come and camp out and search the creek for gold. MAGMA would be the first rockhound group to visit the site. Gold is not the only thing to find at Treasure Valley. If you have the patience and determination, corundum, rubies and sapphires can be found in massive and crystal form with good color. I looked at some of the stones that Richard has found over the years, tourmaline, quartz, sapphire, ruby, gold and a variety of other gems. What got me excited was the location of his property. I had been researching the article on North Carolina diamonds for American Rockhound. Treasure Valley sits in the middle of a hot spot where diamonds have been found since the 1800s. The largest recorded diamond, the 4½ carat Christie



*Treasure Valley owner Richard Buchanan is a great host, here he is hauling a load of rockhounds to dig for garnets on Pinnacle Ridge at Treasure Valley.*



***The Treasure Valley location is host to numerous ultramafic rock outcrops. Rockhounds and geologists are interested in these outcrops and have been studying them with owner Richard Buchanan.***

Diamond was found approximately two miles downstream from Richard's property in a spring near Dysartsville. The most recent diamond find was made upstream from the property at the Lucky Strike Gold Mine in 2008. The Treasure Valley site is in prime diamond hunting territory. I have always wanted to find a North Carolina diamond, so I figured this was as good a place as any to start searching.

Treasure Valley is located in the community of Dysartsville, which is in McDowell County, North Carolina. The North Carolina Geological Survey reports show gems & minerals by county with a map that shows corundum and diamonds in the Dysartsville community.

The location of the corundum looks like it



***This rustic cabin on the Treasure Valley property is available for rent during weekend outings.***

is just about where you turn onto Treasure Valley Drive off of Vein Mountain Road. The report states "Corundum is found 1.5 miles southwest of Dysartsville on the north side of SR 1802, which lies between Dysartsville and U.S. Highway 221. The corundum occurs as float in the fields around an old farmhouse in this vicinity." Over the past 12 years, the owner, Richard has found quite a bit of corundum. In 1970, the American Selco Mining Company did a diamond exploration report which included

part of Tennessee and North Carolina. A portion of it was done in the South Muddy Creek area in Dysartsville.

The first gold discovery in the United States was a 17 pound gold nugget found in a creek in Cabarras County by a young man named Conrad Reed in 1799. This began the first gold rush in the country. Treasure Valley is in the South Mountain Gold Belt and gold was first discovered in this area in 1828. Sam Martin of Connecticut was on his way home from working in the gold mines in South America. He had gotten off a ship in Alabama and was walking back to Connecticut on the Colonial Road through the area which is about three to four miles from the Treasure Valley farm. He got a hole in his shoe and saw

a 'Cobbler' sign nailed on a tree at Bob Anderson's cabin. Anderson fixed his shoe and invited him to stay for supper. While eating, Martin was looking at the mud 'chinking' in Anderson's cabin and had seen a similar type of material in the mines in South America. He asked Anderson where the mud came from, and was told it came from the creek outside. Martin and Anderson went to look at the creek. Sure enough, there was gold. Martin told Anderson what it was and that he knew how to mine it. They formed a 50/50 partnership.



***The creek running through the property at Treasure Valley. It is upstream from the site in Dysartsville where the largest North Carolina diamond was found (1886) and downstream from the Lucky Strike Gold Mine where the most recent North Carolina diamond was found (2008).***

In six months, Martin left a wealthy man with a fine horse and saddle bags full of gold, not to be heard from again. The Anderson's, however, ended up destitute.

Gold fever spread from Anderson's land up South Muddy Creek to the Treasure Valley farm and beyond to Thermal City. As many as 5,000 people worked in the area with an estimated 25% of them being slaves. The farmers in the area would lease out their slaves when not needed on the farms to work in the gold mines. The slave owners were paid \$7.00 - \$8.00 a month and the slaves were to work six days a week, ten hours per day. Some of the mine owners would let the slaves work on their day off and keep what gold they found. Some of them purchased their freedom this way. Some of the slaves and miners died at the mines. A local slave owner tells in his diary of one of his slaves dying and him letting two other slaves, one who was possibly the father, go down for the burying. If anyone at the mine had a bible or knew some scripture, there would be a few words or scripture read and they would bury them on the hillsides near the mines.

The greatest period of local mining activity was from 1830 - 1840. The first McDowell County corporation was a gold mining company. Two German men established the Bechtler Mint in adjoining Rutherford County for the miners. There is a water ditch on the Treasure Valley farm that

was used to supply water to the miners. This ditch is high on the ridge where there is no water today. They ordered a pump from England which pumped water up to sixteen miles to the mines. The gold mine at Treasure Valley farm was the last mine it reached. The majority of mining activity ceased for various reasons, the California gold rush of 1849, the civil war, and North Carolina legislation enacted to stop sending mud and debris downstream to farmers land from hydraulic mining. Some of the miners and their descendants turned

to making moonshine. The South Mountain Gold Belt is one of the most productive gold mining areas in North Carolina. This region is approximately 300 square miles and gold can be found in practically all of the streams in this area today.

### Treasure Valley, Buchanan Family History Richard Buchanan

Our family came to this farm in August of 1946. Dad was a Marine in WWII and we were living in Haywood County, North Carolina. Our Grandfather, Andrew Jackson Buchanan, lived in the community of Elijay, North Carolina near Franklin in his early years, and his mother was a Holbrook. He lived with us all my life growing up. From my grandfather to the youngest in the family is six generations since we came here. The old deed says the land tract was 200 acres (actually 183 when later surveyed) and it was the site of an old gold mine. I'm assuming it was the Luckadoo (Lookadoo) Mine since some of the history books talk of it being just off of South Muddy Creek and our early deed referred to that part of the property adjoining the Luckadoo property. The property was really butchered up with the mining activity when we bought it, a portion of which we never really recovered, but most of the fields we did.

Our old home place was built by Mr. Bob Upton in 1911, who I refer to later as the owner of the

mill downstream. Mr. Upton's daughter, who has recently passed, was born in the house and told me the name of two school teachers who rented a room from them while school was in session. Each community had their own school because there was a lack of transportation and teachers would rent a room from the local families. We were dairy farmers, raised chickens, sold eggs, ran a store in part of the house, and mom was a Watkins Products seller, going house to house. We did various other things to make a living. In the winter months we kept our dairy cows up on the upper part of the property and hardly ever came down to the creek. About circa 1950s, I remember the Sheriff knocking on our door and telling us he had cut down a moonshine still on our property. Most everyone in the community knew the two guys who probably operated it. The moonshine still was located by one of the ultramafic deposits on the farm. Later in the 1960s, a prisoner from the local prison escaped and came to our farm and camped out beside the spring where my old cabin is now. He was there about two weeks before being discovered.

After our parents passed, I inherited  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the property with my brother and sister which also consisted of some other real estate. I ended up with the largest part of the bare land (170 + acres) and paid my sister and brother for the remainder to make things equal. I told my family at that time that I felt there was something special about the farm other than the fact I was raised there.

As I approached retirement, I became interested in the history of the gold and with some friends, started panning, sluicing and dredging. I began seeing some small rubies in the pan. At first I didn't know the difference between garnets and rubies, but after being showed the difference, I began to look more for the rubies and began to find more of them along with some pink sapphire and cognac colored sapphire. I found some

smoky quartz in the road going to the valley and had a necklace made from it for my wife. As time evolved, I became more interested in the gems than the gold.

South Muddy Creek flows through Treasure Valley probably a mile or so on my property. This creek was special to me before finding rubies in it. I was baptized in it downstream, below the mill dam which ground our corn for meal. There was a nice pond there. There have been diamonds found in this creek, but the one location identified is upstream from the bridge where Hwy. 226 crosses the creek just below where the mill dam was.

Over the years I've had geologists from many places visit the farm, from Florida to British Columbia, and gold prospectors from Alabama to Alaska and many states in between. A couple of the geologists alerted me to the ultramafic deposits and showed me how to recognize them. I have also gotten somewhat familiar with what the material looks like in the streams where I find the rubies. My quest right now is to locate the source of the rubies on land, which I think is quite possible in Treasure Valley. The coating on the rubies is pretty fragile which leads me to believe that they haven't traveled very far from their origination point. If I'm fortunate, I hope to one day find a diamond or emerald. That would



***This rock outcrop located on Pinnacle Ridge at Treasure Valley is loaded with small almandine garnets up to  $\frac{1}{4}$ ". No digging is allowed on the outcrop, but numerous specimens can be found by digging around the outcrop on the hillside.***

be icing on the cake. There must have been some volcanic activity in the past on the farm to explain the many different gems and minerals that have been found, some of which don't normally occur together.

I'm not a geologist or a novice at this, but as my interest grows, I read quite a bit and listen to others who are much smarter and have a lot more experience than I do in this field. I have found that it is a continually ongoing learning process. As Socrates once said when asked after discussions with another philosopher what he thought of the other philosopher, "I perceive that I'm wiser than he, because I know what I don't know and he doesn't know what he doesn't know."

It must be said that I'm blessed that the Lord let me be the temporary caretaker of this land during a part of my sojourn here. I think our late dad and mom would be happy knowing us kids are living on the farm or here on a regular basis after living away in Virginia and Charlotte and other places in our younger days.

### MAGMA FIELD TRIP Treasure Valley April 4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup>, 2014

Richard Jacquot

I arrived at the camp area at Treasure Valley on Thursday afternoon to set up my camp and get ready for the weekend event with the club. I brought my prospecting gear as I had high hopes of finding some rubies and hopefully, a diamond! Aside from being in a hotspot for gemstones, the land here is beautiful, whether you are hunting gems or just camping and enjoying the outdoors.

The members began arriving and setting up their camps. The next morning, everyone was off to try their hand in the various areas of the property. Corundum, rubies and sapphires have been found in the creek that runs through the



***Carol, Brent and Daniel Arrington came loaded for bear...or gold. They had metal detectors and a variety of equipment for gold hunting.***

property and in a hole in the field behind the cabin near the old gold mine. Gold has been found in the creek and in the woods above the cabin (site of old gold mine operation.) Excellent specimens of almandine garnet crystals in matrix can be collected on Pinnacle Ridge and small garnets can also be found in the creek. Various other gems can be found by searching the creek, the newly plowed areas in the fields, and possibly by searching in the areas of the ultra-mafic rock outcrops.

The prospectors in the group were at home in the creek hunting for rubies and gold. I spent about three hours in one area where MAGMA member, Dave Boring, had found a decent size ruby. After putting in some time and effort, I was rewarded with two small, but good colored stones. Dave found a couple more as well. Upstream from us, member Tim Heafner found the largest ruby of the weekend, a 32.5 carat stone of good color. Our member 'Prospector Al' came and gave lessons on gold panning to the less experienced members. The owner, Richard, made numerous trips with his tractor and wagon up to Pinnacle Ridge so the rockhounds could collect specimens of almandine garnet in matrix.



**Rockhound Dave Boring searching the creek at Treasure Valley for rubies and sapphires.**



**A handful of small stones found in the creek by MAGMA member Dave Boring, a ruby, sapphires, quartz and a green crystal, maybe tourmaline?**

This site has always been a location for gold panning, and considering we were the first rockhound group to visit, I think we did well. My evaluation of the site is, if you are a serious prospector/rockhound, you will enjoy this location. You need to put in some effort to find the rubies and gold. They are there and not really hard to find, judging from my experience and seeing what other club members found. If you are a casual rockhound, the visit to Pinnacle Ridge is a must. Garnet specimens are easily found with minimal effort and they make great display specimens.

Richard is now offering trips to groups and mineral clubs for weekend outings to collect. He



**Ruby found by Tim Heafner during the MAGMA club dig at Treasure Valley. 32.5 carats.**



**A limonite cube found at Treasure Valley, 1.58 cm x 1.58 cm x 1.27 cm. Richard Buchanan specimen.**

has a few rules. No breaking large rock outcrops, there are plenty of the same rocks on the surface or just under the surface. No cutting of live trees. Do not cross the boundary markers and trespass or dig on neighboring property. These seem like common sense rules to me. With 170+ acres to prospect on, I see no reason to wander. I can't wait until our next club trip. I am still searching for a North Carolina diamond and I believe I have just as good a chance of finding one here as anywhere. To arrange your own group trip, contact Richard at (828) 460-2655. 🏠

References: ([www.geology.enr.state.nc.us](http://www.geology.enr.state.nc.us)), (Richard Buchanan via American Rockhound talk forum at [www.wncrocks.proboards.com](http://www.wncrocks.proboards.com)), (Rock, Gem and Mineral Collecting Sites in Western North Carolina, Richard Jacquot, 2003) ([www.iowagold.com](http://www.iowagold.com))



*Smoky quartz faceted stone set in a necklace, from the Treasure Valley site. Stone is approximately 6.5 carats. Richard Buchanan specimen.*



*A faceted quartz crystal from Treasure Valley. Rockhound Red Reitzel (deceased) faceted the stone for owner Richard Buchanan. 12.5 carats.*



*Ruby in fuschite matrix from the Treasure Valley site. The ruby can be seen at the bottom right of the specimen. 8.89 cm x 4.44 cm x 1.9 cm. Richard Buchanan specimen.*



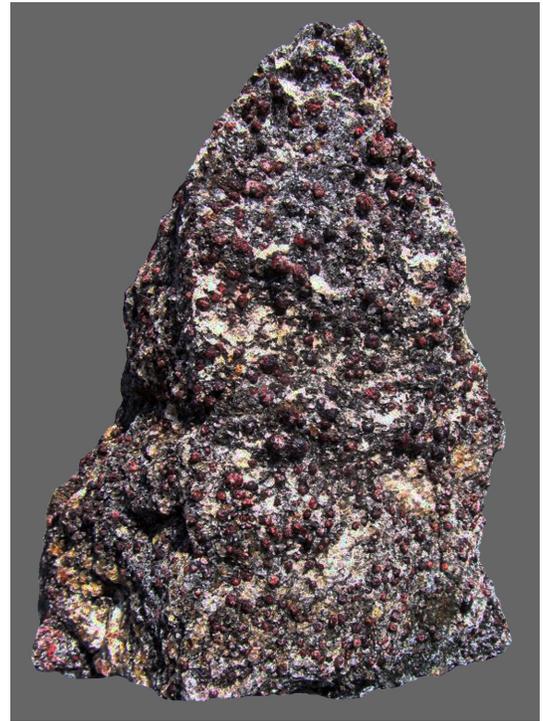
*Quartz crystal from Treasure Valley. 20 carats. Richard Buchanan specimen.*



*Quartz crystal cluster found by rockhound Tim Heafner at the Treasure Valley site. 4.76 cm x 2.22 cm x 3.8 cm.*



*Necklace with pink sapphire from Treasure Valley. Sapphire is approximately 15 carats. Richard Buchanan specimen.*



*Large specimen of almandine garnet crystals on matrix. Collected and cleaned/prepared by John Lichtenberger, specimen measures 35.5 cm x 25.4 cm x 15.2 cm. John Lichtenberger photo.*

**September 25<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup>, 2014**

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**Richard Jacquot (828) 779-4501, [rick@wncrocks.com](mailto:rick@wncrocks.com)**

# *American Rockhounds*

## Lee Fleming

1947 - 2013

Richard Jacquot

What makes a rockhound a rockhounding legend? Some say you become a legend when you find that huge emerald, or discover a new species of gem or mineral. Many rockhounds are remembered for the books or articles they write. There is a lot more to rockhounding than digging a deep hole, getting lucky and finding that once in a lifetime find. I think the rockhounds that are remembered best are the ones that have made a positive impact on the hobby and their friends.

Lee Fleming was one of those rockhounds. Lee was born on April 11<sup>th</sup>, 1947 in Raleigh, North Carolina to Wilton Lee Fleming Sr. and Rose Marie Haynes Fleming. Lee's early life did not involve rockhounding. After graduating from Broughton High School and attending North Carolina State University, he enlisted in the U.S. Army and served in the Corps of Engineers as an officer in California and Viet Nam. Once discharged, he returned to North Carolina State University and received a degree in Civil Engineering. He worked for the State of North Carolina as head of Water Quality at the Department of Environmental and Natural Resources. In 1985, he opened his own company, W. Lee Fleming Jr. Engineering.

Lee began his rockhounding career after attending a gem show put on by the local Raleigh club around 2000. I first met Lee at a gem show in Franklin, North Carolina in 2003. I was set up at the show selling rocks, minerals and my new book, *Rock, Gem and Mineral Collecting Sites in Western North Carolina*. Lee came by my booth and introduced himself and some of his fellow club members from the Raleigh area. He bought a copy of my book and went on his way. A few weeks later, I got a call from the Raleigh club asking if I would lead them on a tour of the Ray Mica Mines in Yancey County, North Carolina. I agreed to show them around the area and spent the day digging with them. They were a friendly group and I told them about the club I had just started, the Mountain Area Gem and Mineral Association (MAGMA).



***Good times at the third annual Western North Carolina Rockhound Roundup. Lee was one of a few members that have attended every roundup since we started hosting the event. Left to right: Ron Seaver, Rick Jacquot, Pat Cummings and Lee Fleming.***

Lee and several other Raleigh members joined our club. Over the next few months we conducted many field trips together.

Through the following years, Lee became one of my best friends. Lee was a huge supporter of the MAGMA club and was constantly promoting the club to other rockhounds and clubs in the area. As our club grew, Lee became one of our board members and offered me much advice and many suggestions to improve the club. It was Lee's idea to offer our members a lifetime membership. Lee still has claim to Lifetime Membership #001. Over the years, Lee arranged numerous field trips for our club and led many trips for me. He was always available to the members to help them and answer any questions they had. Lee had a smile for everyone. He was a true people person.

Lee had his fair share of nice mineral discoveries as well. Clubs in the eastern North Carolina area tend to visit a lot of quarries where the pickings can be pretty slim at times. Lee had some fantastic specimens from these quarries, like large calcites



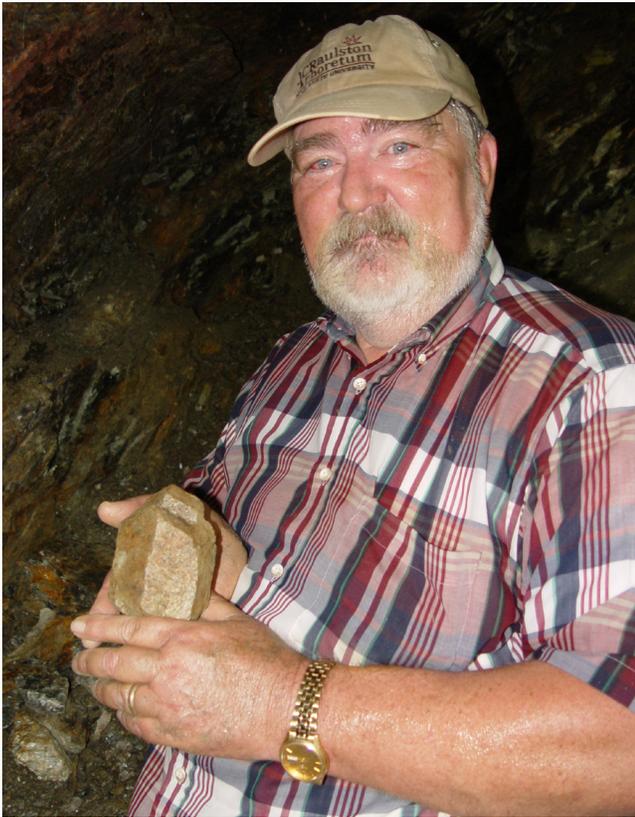
**Lee Fleming collecting calcite at the Pomona Quarry in Guilford County, North Carolina with the Tar Heel Gem and Mineral Society out of Raleigh, North Carolina. Shirley Green photo.**



**Calcite specimen collected by Lee Fleming at the Pomona Quarry, Guilford County, North Carolina. Specimen measures 14.5 cm x 13 cm x 4 cm thick. Lee Fleming photo.**



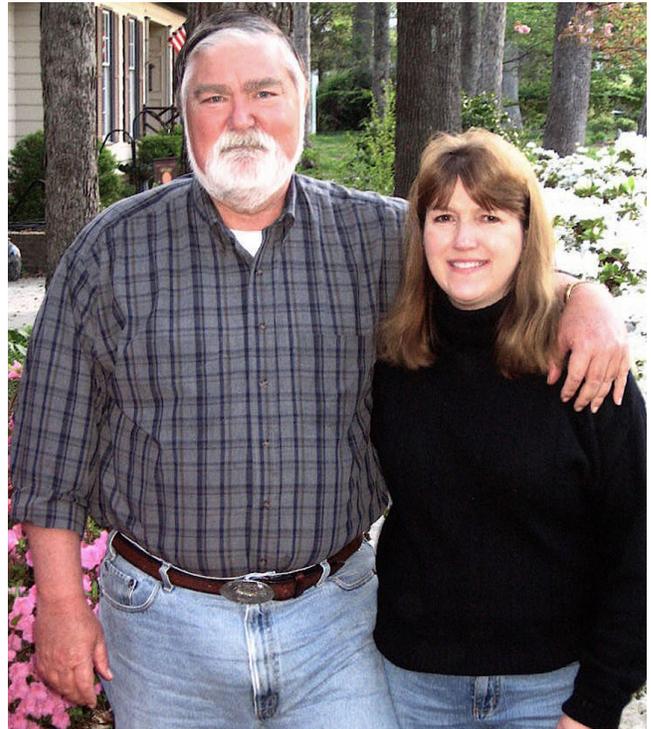
**'The Mountain' is what Lee named this specimen of Skeletal Quartz from the Diamond Hill Mine in Antreville, South Carolina. This was Lees favorite Diamond Hill specimen. Specimen measures 21 cm x 16 cm x 8 cm.**



**Lee showing off a large garnet crystal he collected at the Little Pine Garnet Mine in Madison County, North Carolina. We dug most of the day at the top of the mine and found some nice specimens.**



**Large skeletal crystal cluster collected by Lee Fleming at the Diamond Hill Mine, Abbeville County, South Carolina. Largest crystal measures 7 cm x 5 cm. Lee Fleming photo.**



**Lee Fleming with wife Karen Hines Fleming.**

from the Pomona Quarry located in Guilford County, North Carolina.

One of his favorite collecting sites was the Diamond Hill Mine located in Abbeville County, South Carolina. We had many good times at this site camping and digging. Lee collected one piece, 'The Mountain', that is one of the best examples of skeletal quartz to come from the mine. Lee became friends with the owner of the Morefield Mine in Amelia County, Virginia and had some excellent specimens of amazonite from that site. The list goes on and on. I am fortunate that his wife Karen has allowed me to take charge of Lee's collection and keep some of his finer specimens for my collection. They are treasured pieces in my ever expanding horde of rocks, gems and minerals.

Sadly, Lee passed away on January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2013 at the age of 65. Lee is survived by his wife Karen Hines Fleming, daughters Mary Beth Barrow and Jennifer Fleming Paris, son Scott Fleming, grandchildren Rylee and Tyler Paris, brothers Roy M. Fleming and Walter H. Fleming and too many rock-hound friends to list here.

Lee was a true friend and I will always keep him in my thoughts when I am out collecting. His friendship, advice and suggestions for the club will be missed, but his spirit remains. 🪄



Rob Whaley

Where in the world could you find world-class limonite pseudomorphs after pyrite that have warped sides? That show seemingly endless twinning? That have cores of unchanged pyrite? That will take a polish until they gleam like new steel? That are plentiful enough that even beginning collectors can find scores of them? That's right, such specimens have been collected right in our backyard in Norwood, North Carolina for the past 60 years.



*Indian Money from Bowers Farm. Left specimen measures 3.5 cm x 3 cm, right specimen measures 3 cm x 2 cm. Clifford Glenn collection.*

Well, not any more. I had not collected at the Bowers Farm limonite cube location for nearly 15 years when I heard the bad news in February that the site had been closed to collecting because predatory rockhounds had been digging there regularly without paying the modest \$5 fee to the family. I wonder whether these renegades had noticed that specimens from Bowers had been selling for decent money on eBay; ironically, the cubes had been called 'Indian money' by locals for generations, despite no information Native Americans had ever used them for anything.

Over the years, the Bowers family had been gracious in allowing collectors on their property, but that was ended by the greed of a few. The loss of this location to the hobby of mineral collecting is particularly sad because it was a place where novices and their children could easily find nice specimens with a little effort and learn how to dig while they were finding them.



***MAGMA members working shallow excavations and surface collecting for limonite (goethite) cubes at the Bowers Farm (2005).***

The regularity of the cubes' occurrence in the host rock argillite and in veins with greasy red clay benefited beginners because they could observe patterns they could use elsewhere in digging quartz and similarly occurring minerals. For example, the mineralization at Bowers followed a trend in the Uwharrie area by being located on a hillside sloping to a creek (Cedar Creek). Likewise, once you located the bedrock argillite you knew you were about to find pristine in situ cubes rather than the plentiful, usually somewhat weathered float at lesser depths.

The presence of the deposit had been discovered many years ago when pipeline digging to a depth of 4 feet exposed the material. When I first dug there in the 1970s, the explanation for the discovery was that this had been the site of an abandoned gold mine. Plausible (and perhaps true), but I became convinced of the pipeline theory of origin when my shovel rang like a bell when I struck the large pipe in a deep hole I had excavated. To this day, diggers will tell you the unchanged pyrite on the inside of many of the cubes is accompanied by gold. I've never had it tested. The core of unchanged pyrite is one interesting feature of the Bowers cubes.

That they are not all cubic is another. While some of the specimens have 90 degree sides, many others have convex sides that form arcs rather than straight edges. I think this is an apt description, though it's been 50 years since I studied Geometry. I've never heard an explanation as to why some examples are cubic and others right next to them have 'warped' sides. Was some of the original pyrite warped as well? I have seen some

pyrite specimens from Glendon, North Carolina that have curved sides.

Still another unique feature of the limonite (actually goethite, since limonite is not a mineral) pseudomorphs from the farm is their tendency to appear as twins. What's really unusual is how some specimens exhibit twinning on twinning on twinning. I have one specimen that measures 2 x 3 x 6 inches that is composed of dozens of twins built one upon another, then another, and so on.

Large size, compared with pseudomorphs from other locations, is another interesting feature. One-inch cubes are common and two-inchers are often seen. I recall seeing a man from Charlotte break open a mass of argillite to find a cube five inches on a side! I have clusters over eight inches long.

Again, unlike specimens from elsewhere, the Bowers examples can take a high polish to appear like bright steel. Whether this feature exists because of the freshness of the cubes as it were (with pyrite interiors) or some other factor is open to speculation. Even without the polish, the cubes are sharp and bright. Visitors to my collection often ask how I cut and polished the specimens so well (just as they believe quartz crystals must have been cut by man and could not have



*Limonite (goethite) cubes in argillite matrix. Specimen measures 10 cm x 9 cm, cube cluster measures 2.5 cm x 2 cm. Clifford Glenn collection.*



*Limonite (goethite) cube cluster with twinning. Specimen measures 6.5 cm x 5 cm. Clifford Glenn collection.*



*Limonite (goethite) cube in argillite matrix. Specimen measures 18 cm x 12 cm, cube measures 3 cm x 3.5 cm. Clifford Glenn collection.*



*Limonite (goethite) cube cluster with multiple twinning. Specimen measures 4.5 cm x 5 cm. Clifford Glenn collection.*



*Limonite (goethite) cube cluster. Specimen measures 6 cm x 5 cm. Clifford Glenn collection.*



*Limonite (goethite) cubes in argillite matrix, freshly extracted at the Bowers Farm.*



**Large limonite (goethite) cube cluster displaying multiple twinning. Cluster measures 10 cm x 6.5 cm x 5 cm. Rob Whaley collection.**



**Indian money from the Bowers Farm, Specimen measures 6.5 cm x 4 cm. Rob Whaley collection.**



**Limonite cubes from the Bowers Farm showing a pyrite core. Specimen measures 4.5 cm x 3.5 cm. Rob Whaley collection.**



**Stacked cube cluster from the Bowers Farm. Specimen measures 4.5 cm tall. Rob Whaley collection.**

come right out of the ground that way.) It is interesting that these folk believe nature could not be as precise as something man made.

Finally, while it is clear that the Bowers property is now closed to individual collectors, there remains the possibility the family would open the site to clubs on a basis in which all members would collect at the same time and pay a fair fee for a day's dig. 🏠

**Note: After reading Rob's article, I contacted the owner of the Bowers Farm for an update. The site was closed due to some people digging and not paying, also, Mr. and Mrs. Bowers are up in years and need care from the family. This takes precedence for them and they do not want to be bothered at this time. They did tell me that they may consider reopening the site in the future and I left them my contact information. I hope that in a future issue, I will be able to add this site to the Rockhound News section as a newly reopened site.**

# The Tucson Arizona Gem and Mineral Show 101

Jessica Callan

If you have ever considered going to the gem and mineral show in Tucson, Arizona, I highly recommend it. The show is held each year around the end of January until the middle of February. The main show is broken up into



*These aliens and predators were really awesome. I flipped over them and am so getting one next year! They ran anywhere from \$200 to \$500 depending on the size and detail. They started at about 2' tall and went up to about 4' tall. Jessica Callan photo.*

various smaller shows. There are roughly fifty or more of the smaller shows. When I say smaller shows, you should understand each of the smaller shows generally are the size of several Sam's Clubs. They are held in gigantic tents, hotels, storage units, and several buildings including the convention centers. Most of the smaller shows have several buses that will pick you up and take you around to the various vendors.

Each of the shows have anywhere from ten to three hundred or more vendors. The vendors sell anything from rough rocks, finished rocks, specimens, clothing, lotions, singing bowls, wind chimes, bags, fossils and even a few metal Predator and Alien figures! There are shows just for beads, for high end wholesale only, for retail and wholesale, and random shows that have just about everything mixed together.

The best thing to do is plan to stay at least two weeks at the show. I highly advise getting your hotel and airfare booked at least six months in advance. The hotels literally sell out during the show and the prices go sky high. If you book early enough you can get a great room at a decent price. You can stay downtown near the freeway by some of the shows for around \$69/night. If you go to the other hotels you are looking at anywhere from \$99 to \$169/night. You can get a nice suite from some of the better hotels where you have a couple of rooms and split the cost with a few people. For instance, there are several Embassy Suites in the city. You can get a suite with a bedroom and a living

room with a fold out couch for about \$169/night. It comes with a refrigerator and microwave. You get a complimentary cooked to order breakfast in the morning . So if you figure you can sleep four people comfortably and get a free breakfast before you head to the show, it works out. There are also furnished apartments that can be rented for the show. I would stay at one of the better hotels just because the area near the freeway can be rather scary. It is not too bad when the show is going on but if you have items in your room worth a lot of money I would rather see people have a safer area to store their items. Also the nicer hotels usually have a hot tub, which after walking all day you will surely need.

Because the shows are so spread out, you need to rent a car. You can rent one ahead of time for about \$150/wk. I promise when you look at the map it all looks very close together and you may think you can just walk it. Each block on the map is about a mile long. So unless you want to spend most of your day walking to each show, rent a car. There is usually a fee for parking depending on the show. It runs anywhere from \$5-\$50/day.

So, you are ready to go to the show, the room is booked, the airfare is set, and your car is rented. What should you bring? The most important thing to pack is comfortable shoes you can walk miles in. Plan on walking ten to twenty miles a day when all is said and done. Comfortable clothing and shoes is a must! The weather changes drastically in Tucson. The days are very hot and the nights are chilly. Bring a variety of clothing. Usually shorts and a tee shirt for the day and at least a sweatshirt or sweater for the evenings. I am always cold so I bring pants and sweaters for the evenings. I keep them in the trunk of the rental car in case we don't go back to the hotel first.

The next important thing to bring is lots of cash. They do take credit cards and checks normally, but they prefer cash when at all possible. In order to get the best deals buy as much of an item as you can afford. If a vendor has 10 kg of item 'X' and you can afford it, ask what the price is for all 10 kg. Most vendors

want to get rid of stock and will mark it down significantly if you are willing to take all of an item or a large quantity. Make sure you check prices with several vendors. I was looking at aquamarine for instance. The prices ranged from \$30/kg to \$10,000/kg wholesale. I had to visit a good fifty vendors to find the \$30/kg price. That happens with most materials and you will find certain vendors who give you great deals so that you will come back and visit each trip. If you do find an amazing deal when walking around, grab it right away. Most of the time you can talk the vendors down in price. If you find a really killer deal, buy it. Those types of things go quick. If you don't grab it, expect it to be gone when you come back.

I expected the show to be very organized the first time I went. I thought that staying two weeks was totally nuts but I booked a hotel for two weeks because everyone said to. Let's just say after staying two weeks the first trip and one week the second trip, I still have not seen all the shows. If you are looking for a certain type of rough, don't expect it to be all in one show. For example, I was looking for rough lapis. I went to around thirty shows and each show had at least one person selling lapis, if not fifty. I went around to every vendor and asked pricing and took pictures of the rough I was looking at with the person's business card in the picture. It was extremely helpful because after a day or two all the vendors and shows start blending together. At the end of my trip I compared all the prices I got and went back to the vendor with the best pricing and ordered what I needed. I found such a good deal on lapis that the vendors from Pakistan didn't believe the price I got. They can't get it for that price so I told them where I purchased it and they went and bought them out. The best description I can give of the show, is imagine fifty plus flea markets selling rocks. It is totally huge and unorganized. There is no way to search for say, rough amethyst, and just find the vendors and go. You have to walk around to the different vendors and see what they have.

If you are a reseller, make sure to bring a few things. The shows that are wholesale only require a business card from each person



**Aquamarine crystal, Afghanistan. It weighs approximately 1.5 lbs. The dealer was selling it by the gram for \$50/g.  $680.39 \text{ grams} \times \$50/\text{g} = \$34,000$ . Jessica Callan photo.**



**This topaz crystal was irradiated to turn it to London blue topaz. It weighs 1.5 lbs. and was selling for \$15,000. It is perfectly terminated and the only one I have ever seen. It is approximately 8" tall x 4" wide x 6" deep. Jessica Callan photo.**



**Garnet in matrix boulder weighs approximately 200 lbs. It is 3' wide x 2' deep x 2' tall. Jessica Callan photo.**

attending, receipts for at least \$4,000 in wholesale purchases in the past year, and a copy of your business license. Bring a few copies of your business license, as they usually keep a copy for their records. You can register ahead of time for several of the shows, which saves a bunch of time. Make sure to bring lots of business cards as well. I brought around 100 and ran out in two days.

So now you have walked the show, been there for two weeks, had a wonderful time and are loaded to the brim with great deals. The next big question is: How do you get it home? The good news is USPS and UPS are all over the place. They have great deals on shipping and will get everything sent to you. The best way, however, is to talk to a vendor you purchased a large amount of material from. If they are able to ship pallets and you purchased enough material to warrant a pallet, I highly recommend seeing if they will let you add items to the pallet from other vendors and ship it together. For my purchases in Tucson I needed one pallet shipped. The pallet ran roughly \$200 to ship across the US. If we had sent it via UPS it would have run around \$500. USPS flat rate is the best deal for shipping items in smaller quantities. You can purchase a large flat rate box for \$17.45 and ship up to 70 lbs. in it. If you are shipping rough you can normally get about 40-50 lbs. in a large flat rate box.

Congratulations, you have now graduated from Tucson Gem and Mineral Show 101! I do hope to see everyone next year at the show. I really cannot begin to describe just how big the show is and how incredible it is. One last tip for shopping in Tucson is to have the eBay app on your smart phone. It is the bane of the rock

world on pricing. For example, I was looking at some rough for tumbling. I have to be able to sell it on eBay and make a profit, obviously. So when they told me the price, I looked it up on eBay. The prices on eBay were far cheaper than what they were selling it for. I showed them the links and pictures and they dropped the price to where I could sell it and make a profit. There were several times I did that. While not everyone can come down that far, it definitely made a big difference on the prices people were willing to offer.

Each year there seems to be a trend of minerals that are popular. This year's popular minerals were prehnite, lapis lazuli, sugilite and cognac citrine. The quality, quantity and price varied greatly from vendor to vendor. After talking to many of the vendors there, it seems that the pricing on rough in general is going through the roof. When I would give them the eBay prices they nearly had a heart attack in most cases. They can't even get the items from the mine directly for the prices things are selling for on eBay. Expect the eBay pricing to get higher and higher as old stock runs out and people have to replenish. From what we can calculate, the prices of rough are going up 25% or more per year. Buying big quantities and just sitting on it is a great investment.

The reason the prices are going so high is due to the EPA getting involved in mining overseas. They have shut down lots of mines all over in order to stop bad mining practices, environmental issues and to educate the miners. That means that a good amount of countries are requiring their rough to be worked in some fashion before it is allowed to be exported. The new laws have made it so that instead of there being lots of mines with different owners, it has become a select few owners with working mines. In order to get pricing close to what was offered in the past it is now essential to order full containers of material from each of the countries. This explains why there are now several sellers on eBay and Amazon who offer great pricing while others can't even buy the rough at wholesale for what it is being sold for on those sites.

Another interesting bit of information I picked up is that things like blue topaz are going through the roof on pricing. There is a new

regulation requiring anything that has been irradiated to sit in storage for three years before it is tested for radiation levels and allowed to pass into the market. That being said, anything that is irradiated will have a very high price increase for the next few years until the stock can start being sold again.

Lastly, here is some information on mines that have closed or are going to reopen soon. The mine in Argentina that mines rhodochrosite has been sold. They are mining it for silver and ignoring the rhodochrosite. That means the price on rhodochrosite from Argentina is going through the roof.

One material that should go down in price in the next year or two is larimar. If you are not familiar with larimar, it is also known as the Atlantis stone. It is a beautiful Caribbean blue color with swirls of white. It is found one place in the world within one square mile only. It comes from the Dominican Republic. The problem is that they kept getting flooded since the mine is at sea level. For a long time there has been a big issue getting larimar. A new company supposedly has bought the mine. They are going to be putting in lots of pumps to clear the water out and attempt to mine deeper in the one mile radius. If they succeed, the prices on larimar should go down in the next few years. If they do, I recommend stock piling the material because they are only going to be able to mine a certain amount before it just isn't feasible. So once they can't mine anymore the price will go back up again. It should be a great investment if it goes as planned.

I hope lots of you have the chance to make it to Tucson. You will be amazed at all the items! Amethyst and citrine geodes as tall as a house are all over. I saw a tourmaline from Afghanistan that was selling for \$75,000. I saw a perfectly formed topaz crystal that had been irradiated to turn it to London blue topaz. There are specimens the size of cars and some the size of your finger. I saw a twin Tanzanite crystal that was selling for \$18,000. Even if you don't buy anything, just going to the show to see the incredible minerals and rocks is worth the trip. You just don't see kunzite crystals that are two feet tall anywhere else or malachite boulders that are 200 lbs. Good luck and have fun at the show! 🎒



*Amethyst tree from Uruguay. About 3' tall x 2.5' wide. It weighs about 60 lbs. It is small tumbled amethyst glued together and wire wrapped into a tree. The tree then has roots that go into the base amethyst geode. They had them in various sizes and stones. I bought some of the smaller trees that are about 6" to 8" tall. They sell for \$59.99 to \$10,000. They are really incredible and worth the money. Jessica Callan photo.*



*This aquamarine in matrix is incredible. You can see the mirror in the background to get an idea of the size. That is the mirror in a hotel room as this was one of the shows at a hotel. I believe the one in the middle was afghanite. The three pink crystals in front are kunzite/spodumene which sell for around \$5,000 to \$15,000 each. They weigh approximately 2 - 3 plus lbs. each. They are roughly 12" to 15" long and 4" wide. Jessica Callan photo.*



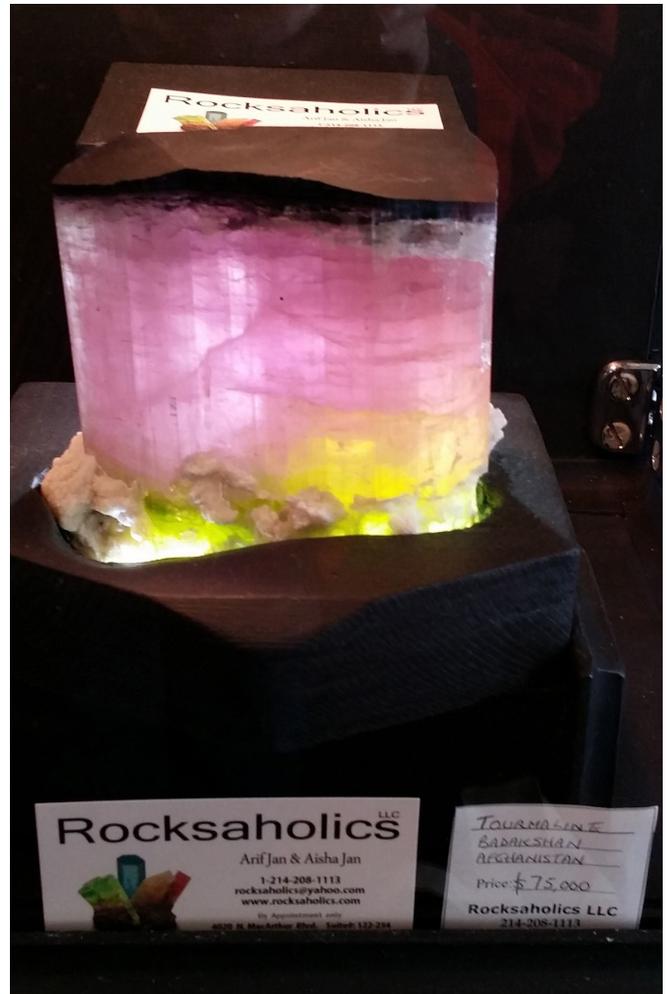
*This beautiful hexagonal material in matrix is from the Minas Gerais location in Brazil. It weighs approximately 100 lbs. I thought it had a huge aquamarine crystal growing out of it but they said it was actually morganite when it was tested. The crystals were about 5" diameter x 3" thick. They were just stunning. Jessica Callan photo.*



*This malachite boulder is approximately 2' wide x 1.5' deep and tall. It weighs around 200 lbs. The price on it is \$15,000.*



*This citrine geode is approximately 10' tall x 4' wide. I would guess that it weighs 1000 lbs. Jessica Callan photo.*



*Tourmaline, Badakshan, Afghanistan, \$75,000.*

# LAPIS LAZULI

## THE STONE OF HEAVEN

Jim Landon

My first introduction to lapis was several years ago when I ran into a gentleman by the name of Gary Bowersox. He was selling rough and finished Afghan gems at a Yakima, Washington jewelry store called Dunbars. Gary founded a company called Geovision, Inc. ([www.gems-afghan.com](http://www.gems-afghan.com)) and travels the country giving lectures, a slide show, and displaying a museum quality collection of gems from Afghanistan and Pakistan to the general public. Having no previous experience with this material, I was instantly

taken by the variety of stones and mineral specimens he was offering and the stories he had to tell about his many adventures



in that part of the world. I was especially drawn to the pile of rough lapis he had for sale and the many finished cabochons that displayed the deep blue color with flecks of bright pyrite found in this material that sparkled like so many stars. At the time, I limited myself to purchasing a copy of his book, *Gemstones of Afghanistan*, and also a copy of a video that he had made of some of his journeys titled *A Gem Hunter in Afghanistan*. His book has a comprehensive overview of the many gem mining areas in Afghanistan with detailed information on the geology, mining practices, and history of mining in the different producing areas.

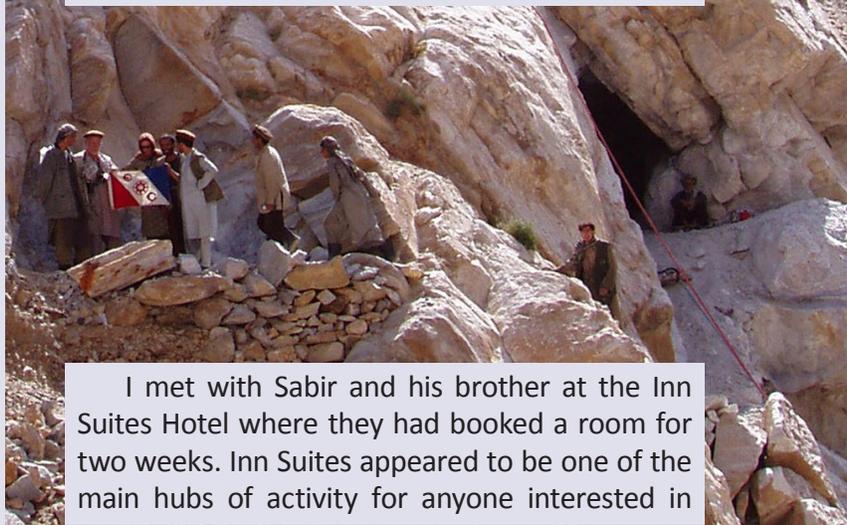
Since retiring from teaching, I decided to expand my freelance writing by researching and writing about gem producing areas of the world that have been known for many years, but in all likelihood most people would never have an opportunity to visit. Memories of my chance encounter with Gary popped into my head so I decided to see what he had been up to. When I sent him an email I found that he was in Kabul,

Afghanistan purchasing an emerald for a project he was working on. I told him that I was interested in writing some articles on the gemstones of Afghanistan and Pakistan and he quickly told me he would be willing to provide me with information and also put me in touch with a long time gem dealer and friend who lived in Peshawar, Pakistan. Boy, was I going to be a world cyber traveler or what.

His friend Sabir Rasool and his brother Mohammed own Peak Valley Gems & Minerals.

After exchanging some emails, I found that Sabir and Mohammed would be traveling to Tucson for the mega-rock show in February of 2013, so

plans were made to meet up there. I had never been to Tucson before, but had heard many stories about how large it was and how it was impossible to see every venue. My friend, Jerry Wickstrom, and I decided to fly down on January 30<sup>th</sup> before things got crazy down there and take in as much as we could and still give me time to gather research information. Wow, what an adventure it turned out to be.



I met with Sabir and his brother at the Inn Suites Hotel where they had booked a room for two weeks. Inn Suites appeared to be one of the main hubs of activity for anyone interested in



***Lower grade lapis with veins of calcite can be carved into freestanding specimens like these being offered for sale at the 2013 Tucson show. Jim Landon photo.***

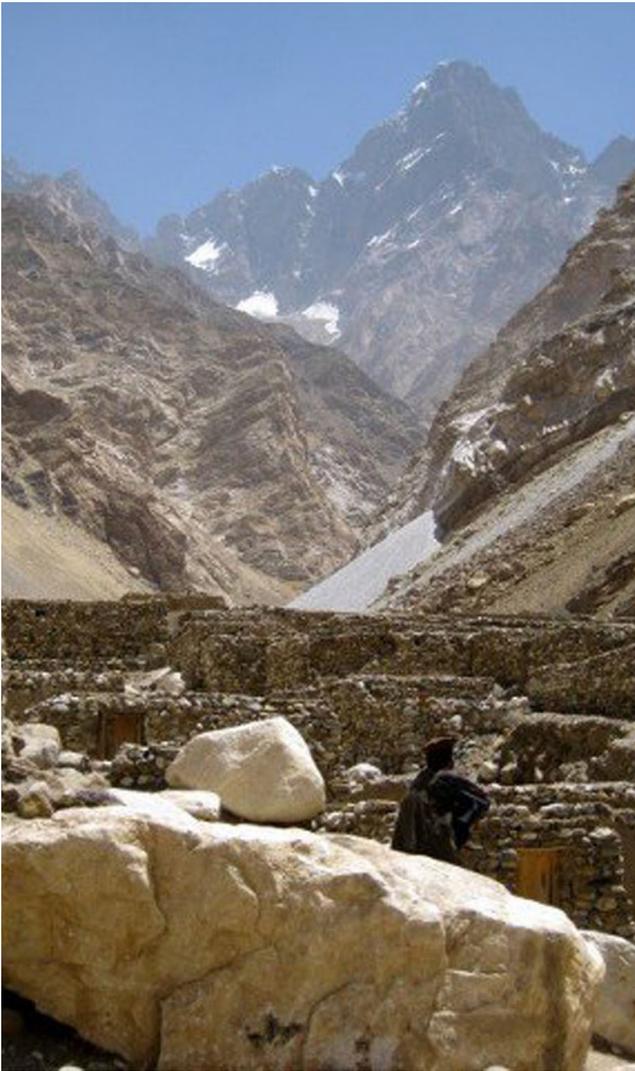
minerals, gems, and fossils. Buyers and sellers swarmed around like so many bees and many shared news and rekindled old friendships in the lobby and at the outdoor patio. Dealers had set up shop in every room in the hotel. Beds were either removed or stacked in corners to allow room for display cases that were stocked with every kind of mineral, gemstone, and high end fossil imaginable. After exchanging greetings and being offered a cup of green tea, we got down to business. I started picking their brains for information and stories about the gem business in Pakistan and Afghanistan. I was told that their home, Peshawar, Pakistan, is considered to be the international hub for gem exports from both Afghanistan and Pakistan. Sabir told me that his father, Gulam, was one of the founding fathers of Pakistan gem exports. He also told me that he has a degree in mechanical engineering and his brother, Mohammad, has a degree in chemical engineering. I found both gentlemen to be very hospitable even though they had just arrived and were suffering from extreme jet lag and Sabir had come down with a cold. Over the next hour or so, Sabir and I talked of many things while Mohammed busied himself with setting up displays of the gems and mineral specimens they had shipped from Peshawar and



***Miners come from all over Afghanistan and Pakistan to sell their rough to Sabir and Mohammed at their office in Peshawar Pakistan. Sabir and Mohammed Rasool photo.***



***The lapis mines and semi-permanent living quarters for the miners perch precariously on the side of the Kokcha River Valley. A mine entrance is to the lower right. Gary Bowersox photo.***



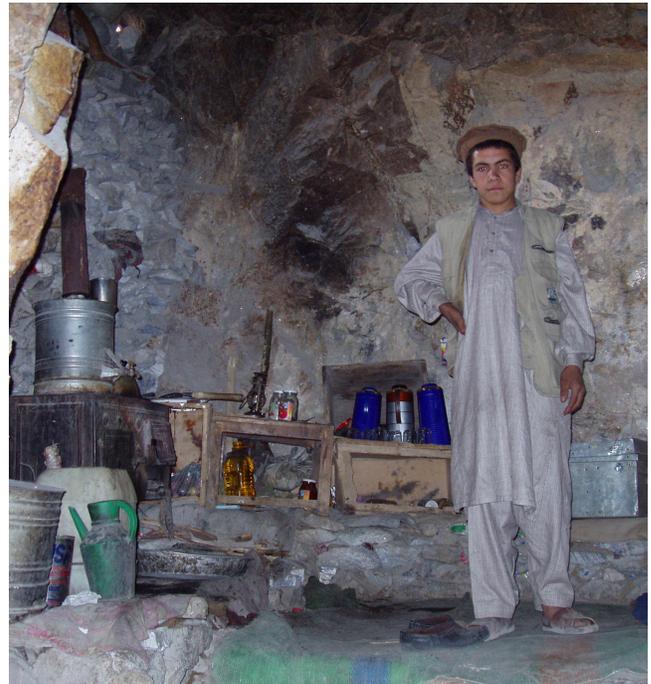
*The lapis mines of the Sar-e-Sang district are found in the Kokcha River Valley that cascades down from the Himalayan Mountains. Bilal Afridi photo.*

were going to offer for sale. From that conversation and others over the next few days, a story started to emerge about the mining and sale of lapis lazuli.

Lapis lazuli is not a mineral, but rather a rock with a complex make-up of different minerals. It is composed largely of lazurite which imparts the blue color, calcite, pyrite, and a few other lesser minerals. Think of it as being like a rock smoothie. Lapis lazuli can be found in several parts of the world, but the best and largest deposits occur in the Afghan province of Badakhshan in a steep walled valley of the Kokcha River. The lapis of the Sar-e-Sang mining area has been emplaced in a mix of metamorphic rocks and is found in veins of varying thickness and quality. On occasion, miners encounter well formed crystals of pure lazurite in



*After holes are drilled next to the lapis veins they are loaded with explosives to break up the enclosing rock. Bilal Afridi photo.*



*Old mine adits like this one are used as living quarters complete with sleeping areas and kitchens. Note that smoke from the cooking stove is not vented outside of the mine. Gary Bowersox photo.*

calcite seams. These are eagerly sought after both for their value as mineral specimens and as high end jewelry rough.

According to Sabir, there are several mines producing lapis which are numbered one through seven. One of those, mine four, renowned for its gem grade lapis is not currently being worked. Different extended families have their own mines and each mine is supported by a village that is in the narrow valley below the deposits. Unlike other higher elevation gem deposits, the

lapis mines are worked year round. The mining, transport, and sale of lapis follows a predictable routine. Miners make the arduous ascent to the mine following foot paths that have been used for centuries and have set up semi-permanent camps in the mines complete with kitchens and sleeping areas. Access to the mines is confined to foot traffic due to the formidable terrain. The seams of lapis are followed using pneumatic drills and explosives. In the distant past, fire was used to heat the rock and then cold water was splashed



*The storage room that Sabir and Mohammed rent to miners is being loaded with sacks of rough that have been brought in from Afghanistan. Sabir and Mohammed Rasool photo.*



*High grade lapis like this has a deep blue color and may or may not have pyrite inclusions. Sabir and Mohammed Rasool photo.*



*Mohammed (left) and Sabir (right) grade and sort rough lapis to fill customer orders. Sabir and Mohammed Rasool photo.*



*This pile of lower grade lapis with veins of calcite is mostly used for carving. Sabir and Mohammed Rasool photo.*

on it to cause thermal shock which would allow the miners to pry chunks of rock free. I can only imagine what that practice did to their lungs with all of the smoke in the narrow confined spaces in the mines and the poor ventilation. They also had to haul in the wood from distant locations because the area the deposits of lapis are in is devoid of vegetation. Once chunks of lapis are recovered they are backpacked down to the villages where they are stockpiled and later loaded on donkeys for the trip to the nearest road. There the miners must negotiate transportation by truck over the border to Pakistan and then to the gem market in Peshawar. Sabir said he rents a storage place below his office to miners who then stockpile their lapis awaiting buyers from Peshawar and the rest of the world. Sabir said he takes orders for lapis from all over the world and then grades and ships the requested material. Money from the transactions is wired to his bank account and he pays the miners who then purchase supplies for the return trip to their home villages. Long time relationships and trust are very important to this process. I found this arrangement to be way different from the customary practices here in the US where the seller generally has to have the money in hand before he/she parts with the goods.

Sabir said that business transactions in the Peshawar gem trade are as much social as business and negotiations can take quite a bit of time to complete. The price paid for lapis rough fluctuates depending on the costs incurred by the miners. Like in the US, fluctuating prices for fuel, food, and other necessities, like explosives for mining, determine the final prices paid for rough. Sabir said that the price paid for explosives has risen sharply due to governmental restrictions on their sale.

Besides selling rough and finished lapis and other gemstones and mineral specimens, Sabir and his brother also offer custom cutting of lapis rough. It is contracted out to an army of local Peshawar cutters who transform it into any products the buyer specifies.

I learned a lot about how to grade lapis on this trip. Generally, it is divided into three categories determined by depth of color, presence

of pyrite, and amount of calcite. The top jewelry grade is currently selling for \$2.00 - \$3.00 per gram, mid grade is going for 10 cents to \$1.00 per gram, and low grade which is used mostly for carving is bringing 10 cents per gram. There was a lot of lower grade lapis to be had in Tucson along with smaller parcels of mid and high grade material. Very few dealers had lazulite specimens for sale. I was really impressed by the time and expense these dealers expend to participate in the Tucson event. Many ship their inventory to the US via ocean cargo containers. Then there is the expense of room rental and food, which can be considerable for the many weeks the show is going on. All in all it seems to be quite an expensive gamble for those wishing to attend. It is no wonder that the prices being asked for lapis are high when compared to those being asked for the agates and jaspers we here in the states are accustomed to.

Gem mining in Afghanistan and Pakistan is a dangerous business and the general lack of modern transportation makes getting rough to markets problematic. All supplies must be brought in from distant cities to the gem producing areas so again transportation is an issue. On top of this, these supplies must be hand carried up the sides of steep mountains to get to the mines. The altitude and unpredictable weather with short summers and long cold winters make year around mining even more difficult. All of this emphasizes the determination and hardiness of the people who earn part of their livelihood by working the mines generation after generation.

I would like to thank Sabir Rasool and his brother Mohammed for their hospitality and willingness to provide me with information and photos used in this article. I would also like to thank Gary Bowersox for helping make this project happen, providing photos, and reading the draft of the article to check for accuracy. If you are interested in purchasing lapis and other gems and minerals from Afghanistan and Pakistan you can contact Sabir and Mohammed at [sabir@peakvalley.com](mailto:sabir@peakvalley.com) or by phone at 011-92-91-2211594, or you can check out their website at [peakvalley.com](http://peakvalley.com). 🇵🇰

## 33rd Annual Henderson County Gem & Mineral Spectacular presents Gemstones from North Carolina

Aug. 29<sup>th</sup> - Sept 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014 during the North Carolina Apple Festival  
Friday/Saturday/Sunday 10am-6pm, Monday 10am-5pm

Whitmire Activity Center, Lily Pond Rd., Hendersonville, North Carolina

Exhibits,  
demonstrations,  
refreshments,  
vendors, and  
door prizes  
every hour



Free shuttle bus  
at the Mineral  
& Lapidary  
Museum on  
4th Ave. to and  
from the show  
hourly

Admission is \$4.00 for adults,  
children 12 and under are free

For more information, call  
Diane Lapp at (828) 775-8098

## GRAVES MOUNTAIN OPEN HOUSE, ROCK SWAP & DIG

Graves Mountain, Lincolnton, Georgia

October 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>, 2014 8am-6pm each day

All clubs and rockhounds are welcome to attend!

Fee: Donation



Golf cart shuttle available to and from the mine

Numerous vendors with gems, minerals and fossils for sale and trade

Clarence Norman Jr. (706) 401-3173

Food and drinks available for purchase

# ROCKHOUND ART

## **BILL BOOTH**

is a longtime rockhound and master craftsman who has hunted the mountains of Western North Carolina and Georgia for decades. Bill was born in Miami, Florida in 1936. He moved to Bryson City, North Carolina in 1955 when his father bought a motel there. Bill met his wife Mary, a member of the Cherokee Tribe, and has been in North Carolina ever since. While browsing through a rock & gem book in a store one day in 1962, Bill saw a picture of a peridot. The label said it was found in Jackson County, North Carolina. Bill thought, "Hey, that's the county I live in," and that was the beginning of a lifelong love of rocks and gems. He met Mr. Wikle, the principle of a local elementary school, who offered to take him rock hunting. Bill was hooked! He gave up his fishing poles and hunting dogs. Almost every weekend since 1962, Bill has spent rock hunting, mostly in the hills of North Carolina and Georgia. He's also hunted in New Mexico, Arizona, Montana, Texas, Arkansas, Florida, South Carolina, Virginia and other states. When not out rockhounding, he is working in his shop creating works of art out of the stones he has collected over the years. Most of his creations are gifted to his children and grandchildren.



*Bill Booth showing off amethyst specimens in his workshop in Cherokee, NC.*

Almost every weekend since 1962, Bill has spent rock hunting, mostly in the hills of North Carolina and Georgia. He's also hunted in New Mexico, Arizona, Montana, Texas, Arkansas, Florida, South Carolina, Virginia and other states. When not out rockhounding, he is working in his shop creating works of art out of the stones he has collected over the years. Most of his creations are gifted to his children and grandchildren.

**"Rocks are found by rockhounds like me where God intended them to be." Bill Booth**



**Faceted ruby ring, Bill cut the stone that was found at the Grimshawe Sapphire Mine in Transylvania County, NC. The ruby is accented with diamonds and pearls.**



**Pink sapphire and diamond ring created by Bill. The sapphire was collected at Chunky Gal Mountain in Clay County, NC.**



**This bolo hosts a fine selection of gems from the mountains. Center amethyst is from the Charlie's Creek Amethyst site in GA. Star rubies on the left and right are from the Bradley Mine in Cowee Valley, Franklin, NC. Faceted rubies at the top and bottom are from the Grimshawe Sapphire Mine in Transylvania County, NC. Aquamarines at the top are from the Grimshawe Beryl Mine. Bottom aquamarines are from Dix Creek in GA. All stones cut and gold casting by Bill Booth.**



**Bill is always thinking ahead, his very own handmade urn. Made of four cabochon garnets from North Carolina, golden beryl from Tate, Georgia, amethyst from Charlie's Creek, Georgia, ruby rock from Chunky Gal Mountain, North Carolina, rubies from the Hogg Creek Mine in Georgia, green beryl from the Ray Mine in North Carolina and blue sapphire from Montana. Hopefully he won't need it anytime soon! Bill Booth photo.**



# The Mountain Area Gem and Mineral Association Gem, Mineral and Fossil Show

Asheville, North Carolina  
March 21<sup>st</sup> - 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2014

Richard Jacquot

It's not Tucson, but for the second year in a row, the MAGMA club pulled off an extremely successful gem show in the mountains of Asheville, North Carolina. The club has been around for over ten years. We never thought we would have our own gem show. The history of our club has been dig, dig, dig. We never had time, or made time, for a show. For many years, the Colburn Earth Science Museum put on a great show for us at their Pack Place location in downtown Asheville. I was a dealer there for seven years and always had a fun time. In 2011 the Asheville Art Museum took over the top floor of Pack Place and would no longer allow the gem show to take place. The Colburn museum could have kept it going in the lower level where they are located, but decided there was not enough room to accommodate all the vendors, so the show was discontinued. After a few years of no gem show in Asheville, MAGMA decided to step up and see what we could do.

It turns out our show is extremely popular. We have people from all over attend. Other local clubs visit us and rockhounds from near and far come to see what our local club members and vendors have to offer. Being near Asheville also has its benefits. Asheville has a large population of metaphysical people who come to find crystals. Asheville also hosts a lot of rock and gem shops. We see a lot of local shop owners coming to purchase items for their business. The show hosts a total of



*When the weather is good, we have numerous outdoor vendors from all over North Carolina set up at our show.*



***Gem dealer Marshall Holman offers a variety of gems and minerals to his customers as well as custom faceted stones that he has created.***



***Longtime Magma members John and Dianne Deney visiting the show, many of the specimens I had on display in my booth were collected by John Deney.***



***Shelton's Collection, gem dealer Shaun Shelton and his wife Amber having fun at our annual gem show.***

fourteen indoor vendors and numerous outdoor vendors. Unlike so many shows that focus more on jewelry, we have a lot of local rockhound talent that offer top quality gems and minerals from the Western North Carolina area and the southeastern United States. You can find everything from inexpensive rock samples to get your kids involved in the hobby up to top quality specimens worthy of museums and high end collections. You may also find a lot of rare and hard to find pieces that are not seen at many other shows. This year, I was able to obtain a few nice corundum specimens. Some were originally from the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia. The corundum



***Jordan Root and Ali with their rock pup. Jordan offers high end specimens for the serious collector at his booth, Natural Selection Crystals.***

pieces were being offered by gem dealer Bruce Caminiti. They are from the 1800s and part of the old collection that was sold off a few years ago by the academy. They are great additions to my collection. Rockhound Rob Whaley was also able to obtain one of the specimens. Bruce specializes in southeastern US minerals and gems, with an emphasis on North Carolina minerals.

Jordan Root was set up with his girlfriend Ali at their booth, Natural Selection Crystals. Jordan offers high end specimens from around the world for the serious collector. The Henderson County Mineral and Lapidary Museum sets up and offers great deals on overstock minerals from the warehouse, many of which are hard to find rare local North Carolina specimens that have been donated over the years. You can visit them in downtown Hendersonville and can get more information by calling (828)698-1977 during regular business hours. I am there with the Jacquot & Son Mining booth (Richard Jacquot) along with other local southeastern mineral dealers. I sell a little of everything with a large variety of local North Carolina, South Carolina minerals and southeastern fossils. Holman's Enterprises (Marshall Holman) offers cutting rough, faceting rough, minerals for collectors, hematite bead jewelry, faceted stones and an abundance of material from the Diamond Hill Mine in Antreville, SC. Luther Hunt Minerals (Luther Hunt) offers rocks, gems, minerals and fossils from the southeast and around the world. Dawn and Shawn Healy offer beaded jewelry, rock samples, painted jewelry boxes, and beads. Shelton's Collection (Shaun Shelton) offers rock and mineral specimens, specializing in North Carolina minerals. Turtlefoot Gems (Jerry Creasman) offers local minerals and a variety of rockhounding tools and camping gear. Mining My Business (Mark Randle) specializes in Hiddenite minerals with top quality specimens from the North American Emerald Mines and the Adams Farm. Skewed Dog Jewelry Design and Beadwork (Sandra Wogomon) offers original handmade, wire wrapped jewelry designs from silver, gold, copper, bronze and other metals. They use gemstones that they have dug, as well as those they purchased. Morgan's (Bob Morgan) offers mineral specimens, tumbled stones, rough material and hand crafted jewelry. Night Owl Creations and Gifts From The Earth (Drew Smith) has sterling silver, fine silver and gold filled wire bracelets, wire wrapped gemstones and crystal earrings pins and charms, polymer clay beads, and crystal and gem specimens from the southeast. There are numerous outside local vendors who come to set up as well, if the weather permits.



***One of my favorite finds at the gem show, this was thought to be a fake artifact. Found in a box of rocks, it turned out to be a pre-Columbian piece broken off of a large bowl.***

I found one of my favorite pieces from this show in a box of rocks. It is what looks like an ancient artifact, with a wolf face with its paws covering part of the face. I figured it was a fake, but two archeologists looked at it. They both came up with the same identification; it is a pre-Columbian piece of pottery that had broken off a large pot. Very cool! This piece, along with the petrified wood bookends from the Petrified Forest, and the multiple corundum and sapphire specimens I acquired, made my weekend complete.

We are already planning for our next show. We hope to continue to serve the rockhound community with top quality vendors offering the finest rare and hard to find specimens from the southeastern USA.

We hold this gem show on the third weekend of March at Camp Stephens Boy Scout Camp in Asheville, North Carolina. We will be hosting another show in Hiddenite, North Carolina on September 25<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup>, 2014. Check the 'Rock Shopper & Shows' section of this magazine, our website at [www.americanrockhound.com](http://www.americanrockhound.com), or call me at (828)779-4501 for more information. 🐾



*Display case filled with top quality gem and mineral specimens from around the world. Natural Selection Crystals, Jordan Root.*



*Sulphur crystal from Cianciana, Agrigento Province, Sicily, Italy. Natural Selection Crystals.*



*This large specimen of quartz and pyrite is from the Hunan Province, Peru. And a nice 'Rams Horn' selenite, bottom right. Natural Selection Crystals.*



*Rockhounds Rob Whaley, Keith Thompson, Steve Barr and Mark Randle hanging out at the 'Mining My Business' booth. Mark specializes in gems and minerals from the Hiddenite, North Carolina mining district.*



*Rockhound and lapidary artist Drew Smith setting up his booth; Night Owl Creations and Gifts From The Earth.*



*Jacquot & Son Mining booth, specializing in North and South Carolina minerals and fossils from the southeast, and a lot of promoting for our American Rockhound magazine!*



**Fist sized corundum specimen that I acquired from gem dealer Bruce Caminiti. This specimen is originally from the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia, mined from the South Yadkin River, Iredell County, North Carolina in the 1800s. Specimen measures 7.5 cm x 6 cm x 5 cm.**



**Large corundum specimen acquired by rockhound Rob Whaley from gem dealer Bruce Caminiti. This specimen is originally from the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia, mined from Hogback Mountain near Cashiers, North Carolina in the 1800s. Specimen measures 12.7 cm x 7.5 cm x 5 cm.**



**Star sapphires from Wood Creek, Haywood County, NC, I acquired from gem dealer Bruce Caminiti during our show in Asheville, North Carolina. Top: 195.5 carats Bottom: 324.5 carats.**



# TRAINS, TRAINS AND ROCKS! THE ART OF CROSS HOBBYING

Richard Jacquot

I have had a fascination with model trains since I was a child. My interest began when I was five or six years old after my dad purchased an American Flyer Frontiersman train set at the local drug store for around \$15.00. At Christmas, he would take out the train set and set it up at the base of our Christmas tree. I sat for hours running the train around the tree. When the American Flyer train engine finally gave up, I bought many HO scale trains and built many train layouts. Even as an adult, I built a small but extensive layout with

my son R.J. that fit in the corner of the bedroom. I always liked my trains, but as time went by, I was focused more on mineral collecting. The trains got boxed up and put away.

I was recently invited to an open house in Northern Virginia by two of my new MAGMA club members, James and Colleen Hall. When I opened the email with the invitation, I skimmed through it and saw some rock pictures, but there were also pictures of trains? At first, I didn't know what to make of the invite, until I read it and realized that



*This large double terminated calcite crystal is from the Elmwood Zinc Mine in Carthage, Smith County, Tennessee. Specimen measures 24.13 cm. long. James Hall collection.*



*James and Colleen Hall host the annual open house that features a cross hobby theme of rocks, minerals and trains.*

*MAGMA member James Hall at the control panel of his extensive train layout. Set up in the train room that measures 60' x 28'. The layout itself measures 19' wide x 49' long, the trains on his layout are Standard and O gauge.*



*The train layout built by James Hall is one of the biggest train sets I have ever seen!*



*Seeing the roundhouse on James Hall's train layout reminded me of the roundhouse we have here in Asheville, North Carolina that is operated by Norfolk Southern.*





***WB&A Chapter members having fun at the open house. Many members bring their own trains to run on the layout built by James Hall.***

James is into model trains just as much as he is into rocks, maybe more. It was the first open house for 'cross hobbling' I had ever been invited to or even heard of. I was intrigued with it and made plans to attend.

I first met James and Colleen in October of 2013. They had joined the MAGMA club and the first dig they attended was the annual fall field trip we have to collect pyrite at the Standard Mineral Company in Glendon, North Carolina. They live in Northern Virginia near Washington D.C., so they have to travel several hours to attend our field trips, most of which are located in the southeast. They showed a lot of enthusiasm about the club and mineral collecting in general and jumped right in to start helping with field trips



***A homemade train engine made from an old passenger car running on the layout at the open house. This engine also had several cars attached to it. Many of the train club members create their own train engines and cars.***

and finding us more collecting sites. James led a club field trip to Barger's Quarry in Lexington, Virginia and he facilitated our machine and club digs at the Scufflin Acres Farm amethyst site also located in Virginia. Their open house was set for May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2014 and I scheduled it for our members to attend.

Their home is perfect for holding this event.



**James and Colleen Hall host the cross hobby train and rock open house at their 6,000 square foot home on top of a mountain in Northern Virginia. James built all the additions and did all the rock work around the house himself.**



**The view from the deck of James and Colleen Hall's home in Northern Virginia.**



**James Hall discusses rocks and trains with the WB&A members during the open house. Many of the train club members were fascinated with the rocks and minerals. I was fascinated with the huge train set!**

Perched high on top of a mountain on the site of an old ski resort, they have five acres of open land for parking and plenty of space outdoors for the kids and adults to enjoy. Their 6,000 square foot home is host to a variety of treasures: gems,



**A huge calcite sits atop a bed of zinc sphalerite, barite and numerous small purple fluorites. From the Elmwood Zinc Mine in Carthage, Smith County, Tennessee. Specimen measures 17.78 cm x 38.1 cm x 30.48 cm, Crystal measures 15.24 cm tall. James Hall collection.**



**A large fluorite cube with attached barite sits amidst several large calcite crystals in a display cabinet at the Hall home. The fluorite measures 10.16 cm from the Elmwood Zinc Mine in Carthage, Smith County, Tennessee. James Hall collection.**

minerals, fossils, trains, antiques and their dogs Bluto and Olive Oyl. I arrived a little early so I could take pictures for the magazine and learn more about the event. I have to admit, I was overwhelmed when I first saw the train layout James



***James Hall has assembled a fine collection of calcites and fluorites from the famous Elmwood Zinc Mine in Carthage, Smith County, Tennessee.***

has put together. I think it may be the largest train set I have ever seen! The layout itself measures 19' x 49' long. The gem and mineral collection is nothing to sneeze at either. James has assembled one of the nicest collections of Elmwood Mine, Tennessee calcites and fluorites I have seen. He has also purchased and collected a variety of other minerals such as smoky quartz and amethyst from the Diamond Hill Mine in South Carolina, fluorite from Bingham, New Mexico, giant bismuth grown by Tom Leary, minerals from Graves Mountain, pyrite from Glendon, calcite from Missouri and more. James has been into rocks and trains since he was a child. His dad gave him his first train and his grandfather gave him his first rock. We have a lot in common in that sense. My dad gave me my first train and took me camping to places where I found my first rocks. The difference is, that while I like my trains, I spend most of my time hunting gems and minerals. James has been able to devote time equally to both of his hobbies, and it shows when you look at his train and rock collection.

This was actually the fourth open house that James and Colleen have held at their home. The first three were focused on the trains and the train club they belong to, the WB&A Chapter of the Train Collectors Association. Colleen is currently the president of the local chapter. Within a couple



***This large specimen of twin calcites on matrix is from the Elmwood Zinc Mine in Carthage, Smith County, Tennessee. Specimen measures 25.4 cm x 20.32 cm, crystal measures 12.7 cm tall. James Hall collection.***



**Large specimen of blue, white and purple fluorite on matrix from the famous Blanchard Mine in Bingham, New Mexico. Specimen measures 17.78 cm x 17.78 cm x 35.56 cm. James Hall collection.**



**Big specimen of bismuth James acquired from MAGMA member Tom Leary, Tom grows the largest bismuth crystals in the world. Specimen measures 12.7 cm x 8.89 cm. James Hall collection.**

of hours, people began to arrive and mingle. James and Colleen said it is not uncommon for over 100 people to attend the open house. They expect that number to increase with the new cross hobbing and the possibility that more rockhounds may attend. This fourth open house was their first for cross hobbing. It was interesting to watch the train people ask about and learn more about the rocks and minerals. I heard some ask James how he had cut the crystals into the various shapes. They were amazed to learn that the crystals grew that way naturally. I learned a lot about the train world as well. Much like a rockhound who will expand the hobby by delving into some form of lapidary work to make art out of the gems and crystals they find, the train club members create art from the trains. I saw a lot of homemade train engines. Some were pieced together from various cars and engines. One engine had two front ends, it looked the same no matter which way it was running on the track. There were engines and cars made of wood, the front of one engine looked normal, but the rear was a caboose that was fused into the engine. The creations I saw took a lot of imagination and skill to put

the pieces together and make them operational.

There were several things about the train club members that were very familiar to me. I am a member of the Henderson County Gem and Mineral Society in Hendersonville, North Carolina as well as our MAGMA club. The Henderson County club is a federation group that has monthly meetings. The meetings are very similar to the train group's meetings. In fact, if I had not seen the trains and had only seen the rocks in the cases, it would have looked like a rock club meeting to me. Like the gem club members who like to bring and show off our favorite rock specimens, the train club members like to bring their favorite trains to run on James's train layout. Like gem club meetings there was plenty of great food prepared by Colleen and brought by the members. There were name tags so we could get to know each other and good conversation with like minded people, just like a gem club meeting. I was taking pictures of the rocks, trains and layout and I overheard one of the members ask James if it was OK to take pictures. James said it was OK and that member proceeded to take some pictures as well. I asked James why the member would ask for permission to take pictures. James said that some of the train club members do not like people taking pictures of their trains or layouts for fear of theft. He said that at some of the train shows they attend, cameras and video cameras are not allowed at all. I have never been to a mineral show where no pictures are allowed, but I do know a lot of gem and mineral collectors who will not allow any photos of their collections, for the same reasons that the train folks do not want pictures of their trains taken. I know some gem dealers who will not allow pictures of some of their high end specimens. They say that some high end buyers will not buy a specimen if a picture has been taken of the piece and it is in a public forum. I respect that, so no names are mentioned in this article except James Hall.

Throughout the afternoon, we shared our common interests as well as learned about the two very different hobbies. One train club member even brought a piece of Arizona petrified wood to give to James to add to his collection. The train

layout that James runs is a 'standard' and 'O' gauge setup. If he had an HO track, I would have likely dug out one of my old trains and brought it with me to join in the fun! I still managed to have a lot of fun even without my own train. I have never been one to pass up great food, so that alone was fun for me. The trains, rocks and conversation were icing on the cake, and yes, I did have the cake with the icing. At one point, someone called down the stairs and said they had a train wreck on the layout. Several people, including myself, climbed the stairs into the train room to see the wreckage. People were taking pictures of the accident that involved a few train cars and an engine. I was relieved that there were no casualties!

If you dig deep enough, you can actually find some comparison with the two hobbies. Many old mines we collect in have small gauge ore cart track and train track running through the tunnels that moved the equipment and minerals in and out of the mine. I have collected a lot of old mine track. Trains move virtually all the mined minerals from today's active quarries. I can understand the fascination some people have with trains. We mineral collectors feel the same way about our rocks and gems. Trains are part of what built this country. They connected the east with the west and are a big reason that our country has grown and progressed as fast as it has. I have always found them interesting. This open house has rekindled my interest in my own train collection. Maybe someday soon, I can take time out from digging and fossil diving, and get out the old setup and get it wired up. I think the cross hobbying is a really cool idea. I have never been to an event like it. I would like to see more people hold cross hobby events to show what other interests they have to go with their rock collecting. I plan to make this a yearly field trip for the MAGMA club as long as James and Colleen continue to host the event, and James, if you can setup a small HO track off to the side, I'll bring a rock and a train to show off next year! 🎒

***To learn more about the WB&A Chapter of the Train Collectors Association, visit their websites at [www.traincollectors.org](http://www.traincollectors.org) and [www.wbachapter.org](http://www.wbachapter.org) and visit [www.americanrockhound.com](http://www.americanrockhound.com) for all your rockhounding needs!***

# VIRGINIA'S EARTH SHAKING AMETHYST SCUFFLIN ACRES

Richard Jacquot  
Tom Leary  
Mary Kay Simpson

I first heard about amethyst in Virginia in 2007 when the MAGMA club made a side trip to a location called the Simpson Farm in Prospect, Virginia. The club had made its annual visit to the Morefield Mine in Amelia County, Virginia. Known for its amazonite and various other minerals, this mine is a collector's hotspot. The Simpson Farm was relatively unknown to most rockhounds. MAGMA member Tom Leary suggested that we check out this site as a side trip while we were in the area. I did not attend the trip myself so I did not see much of what was coming out at the time. This was pretty much a one shot deal for the MAGMA club, We did not return for many years after that first visit.

In the winter of 2013, I was contacted by club member James Hall. He told me he had been collecting at a site in Prospect, Virginia called Scufflin Acres Farm. At the time, I did not realize that this was the same site as the Simpson Farm. James had been talking with the owner of Scufflin Acres, Mary Kay Simpson, who had expressed an interest in having someone do some work at her amethyst dig site to make the site more productive and hopefully attract more rockhounds to the area. In December of 2013, I drove to Virginia with club member Steve Barr. We met with James Hall and the owner, Mary Kay Simpson. The site was at the edge of a large cow pasture on a slope leading down to a field. There were

shallow trenches that had been hand dug over the years. There was no evidence that any serious machine work had ever been done. It looked very promising to us. After looking over the site, I talked with Mary Kay about the various ways we could improve her site. We decided to bring in a medium size track hoe to expose the crystal bearing veins. This would benefit in two ways: It would give the rockhounds who enjoy vein digging and pulling crystals and matrix specimens



***Alex Flinchum, Adam Flinchum and Drew Smith working the freshly exposed veins in the trench. The trench was dug along the fault line marked by Tom Leary.***



**Tom Leary photographing a small crystal pocket found during the dig.**



out of the ground a chance to work in a productive manner. It would also create large dump piles of earth we had to remove to get down to these veins, almost all of which would contain numerous loose crystals and small plates of amethyst. There are many people who enjoy digging through the loose dirt and sifting to find these crystals and plates.

Scufflin Acres Farm has been in the Simpson family for over 100 years. Averette Simpson's grandfather, William Howard Simpson bought the farm in 1909. He raised tobacco and had some livestock. There were thirteen children in the family. Three generations have worked in the dairy business, raised chickens and hogs as well as harvesting corn, wheat, hay and tobacco. It is a special way of life all the generations have shared with their children and grandchildren that have gone out into the world. They represent their family with honor. Today, Averette and Mary Kay Simpson live on the farm with Averette's mom, who will be 100 years old on August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2014. The number of lives she has touched is amazing! You can now add amethyst and quartz crystals to the list of resources that



**Damage from the 2011 earthquake in Mineral. Tom Leary photo.**



**Damage from the 2011 earthquake in Louisa. Tom Leary photo.**

this farm has produced over the years.

We put together our dig team and rented a 30,000 lb. John Deere track hoe for the work. One of the members we added to the crew was Tom Leary. Tom was the first person to introduce us to this site several years ago. He had been collecting at the site on a routine basis. He had also studied the geology of the site and had a good idea of where we needed to concentrate our efforts during our dig. He indicated to us that we needed to follow a fault line he had mapped and was confident that we would find crystals in that area.

In March, 2014, we began our work. Tom showed us where he believed the fault line ran and we began trenching along the lines he set. We immediately began finding crystals and plates of amethyst and quartz crystal. I asked Tom what the fault had to do with the amethyst and quartz crystals we were finding. He explained it this way: "Remember the Earthquake in 2011 that most of

us felt here on the east coast? The fault system that produced that earthquake is the same one that we were digging the amethyst in. According to USGS maps and data, the fault closest to the vein we are digging the amethyst from is the Lakeside fault. The property is situated on the extreme southwest end of the fault.

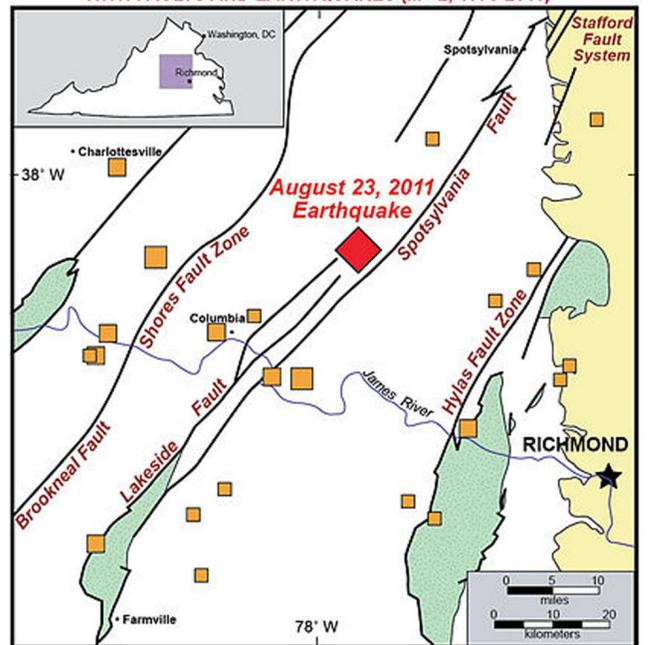
From what we can see, we are in the fault itself. We found a lot of slickensides where rock drug on rock and slid, making smooth faces with parallel scratches suggesting a dragging motion. The quartz and amethyst grew on many of these features. Many of these druzes were in narrow seams where it was solid veins of purple intergrown amethyst among quartz cemented breccia. The breccia is composed of the surrounding rock like schist and low grade granite. Some of the quartz has inclusions of rock and clay trapped in the clear quartz.

According to the USGS, the seismic energy of any earthquake on the east coast travels farther than the west coast due to this re-healing of the faults. Minerals crystallize in the cracks, just like we found here. It can be concluded that earthquakes not only destroy, but they also create. Many of our favorite quartz specimens could not be found as they are without the space to grow in. Excluding features like bubble cavities, vugs and pegmatites, most of these spaces are made from sudden events like cracking and shifting which in turn generate earthquakes large and small.

Geology is very fascinating. In 2011, I felt it happen. I was sitting at the stop light on Portsmouth Boulevard and noticed a weird shaking in my truck. I felt a bit dizzy and noticed the doors

were rattling like never before. I left very slowly when the light turned green, fearing an engine failure was imminent. I got to the gas station and walked in just as a fellow brought up the news on his phone to see what had happened. He said

**GENERALIZED GEOLOGIC MAP OF THE CENTRAL VIRGINIA PIEDMONT WITH FAULTS AND EARTHQUAKES (M > 2, 1973-2011)**



<p><b>Earthquake Epicenters</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="color: red;">◆</span> M &gt; 5</li> <li><span style="color: orange;">■</span> M = 4</li> <li><span style="color: yellow;">■</span> M = 3.0 - 3.9</li> <li><span style="color: lightyellow;">■</span> M = 2.0 - 2.9</li> </ul>	<p><b>Bedrock Geology</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="background-color: yellow; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px;"></span> Cenozoic sediments of the Coastal Plain sand, silt, clay, and shelly sand</li> <li><span style="background-color: lightgreen; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px;"></span> Mesozoic sedimentary rocks arkose, sandstone, siltstone, shale, and coal</li> <li><span style="background-color: lightgrey; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px;"></span> Proterozoic and Paleozoic rocks diverse array of igneous and metamorphic rocks</li> </ul> <p><small>data from: Virginia Division of Geology and Mineral Resources and more recent mapping by VDGMR and William &amp; Mary geologists</small></p>
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data from: Virginia Tech Seismological Observatory and USGS National Earthquake Information Center

*C. M. Bailey, College of William & Mary*



**Amethyst plate showing vibrant color reminiscent of Uruguay or Brazil. 5 cm x 7.5 cm. Tom Leary photo.**



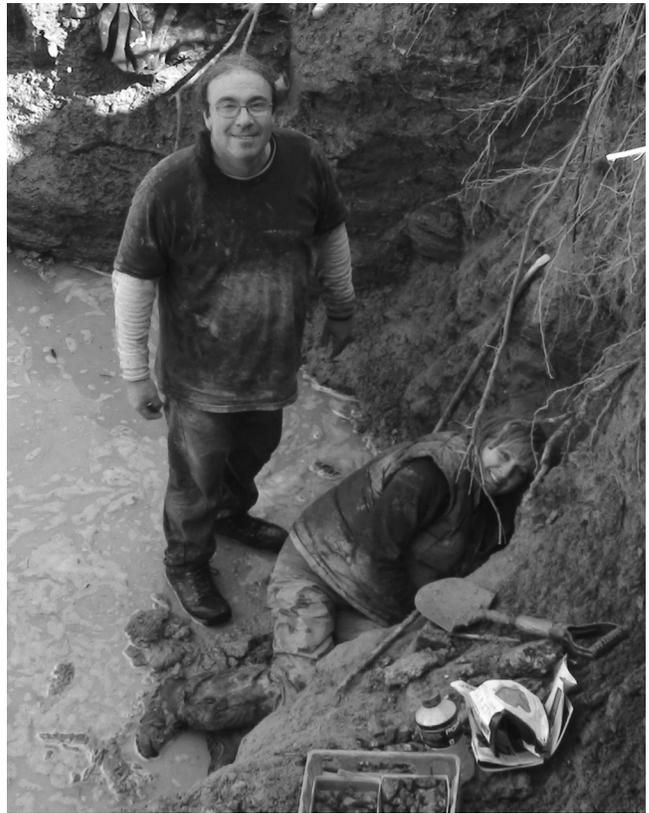
**Gem grade amethyst and smoky quartz pieces collected at Scufflin Acres. Tom Leary photo.**

"Mineral, 5.8." I knew for sure I had experienced my first good shaker. I got to the counter and laughed out loud as I spotted something for sale I had not seen in years...Mexican Jumping Beans! The irony was hilarious! I bought a box of them as a souvenir and kept them in my locker at work. Once in a while we would take them out and watch them shake like they still had the energy from that rare event. They lasted until spring the next year, just about the time I was ready to go back and dig in a now active fault."

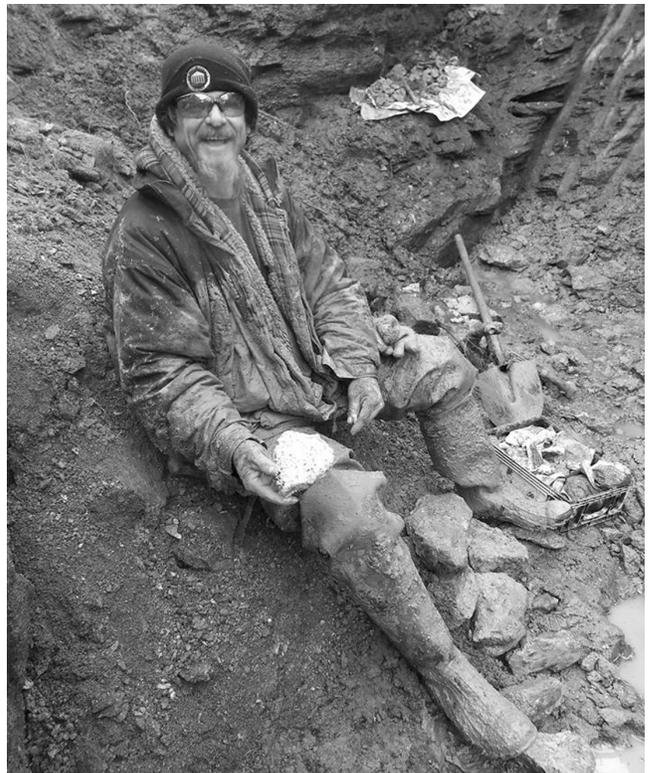
There is a wide variety of quartz at this site including amethyst, clear quartz, quartz with inclusions and smoky quartz. Some of the crystal plates are folded inwards on themselves. Some of the amethyst has formed in thick veins where the crystals are intergrown. Many of the crystal plates have a whitish/brown coating on them that we believe is a feldspar overgrowth. Some have red inclusions and overgrowths that may be hematite, resembling the amethysts from Canada. The color of the amethyst varies from very dark to a vibrant bright purple which looks similar to the material from Uruguay or Brazil. The crystals tend to be small, averaging from ½" to 1" in size, forming as single crystals and plates up to several inches.



**MAGMA member Dave Boring sifting the dump piles for loose crystals.**



**Romin Dawson and Becky Rodgers having fun working a crystal vein in the mud.**



**MAGMA member James Hall showing off a crystal plate just extracted from the vein, it was muddy work but the rewards were worth it. Drew Smith photo.**



*Close up of a pale colored amethyst crystal with red inclusions, possibly hematite, some of the darker amethyst with these inclusions resemble the amethysts from Canada. Crystal measures 18 mm x 18 mm.*



*Intergrown amethyst crystals are common in some of the compact crystal veins at the Scufflin Acres site.*

**M.A.G.M.A. FIELD TRIP**  
**Scufflin Acres**  
**March 7<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup>, 2014**

Richard Jacquot

On March 7<sup>th</sup> through 9<sup>th</sup>, 2014, the MAGMA club held its first dig at Scufflin Acres in several



*Top: Crystal plate showing an overgrowth of what may be feldspar (not tested). Bottom: The same specimen viewed from the other side without the overgrowth. Specimen measures: 10 cm x 6 cm x 3 cm.*



*Crystal plate with very pale amethyst and smoky crystals with multiple inclusions. Specimen measures: 16 cm x 11.5 cm x 4.5 cm.*

years. The new trenches and pits had veins of quartz and amethyst showing when the members arrived. The weather had been brutal this past winter, the temperature dropped to 3 degrees one day while we were working with the machine. The club dig was cold as well, with a little rain and snow mixed in. The weather did not deter the members from digging. The dump piles turned out to be full of crystals where I had evidentially dug through veins of amethyst and quartz and unknowingly dumped it off to the side. The vein diggers were lined along the wall pulling small crystals and plates from the earth. We still had the machine on site for



***The MAGMA club finding crystals after the machine work was done. This site will be productive for years to come.***

the weekend and it was a good thing. On Friday, the intermittent rain and snow had turned the cow field serving as our parking/camping area into a mud hole. Cars and trucks were sinking up to their axles in the foot plus deep mud. I think I ended up pulling around twenty vehicles out of the mud with the track hoe. Despite the bad weather, mud and stuck cars, everyone still had a great time. Some of the members who had to be pulled out of the mud on Friday returned on Saturday for more! I've never known a MAGMA member to pass up a great opportunity to collect

crystals. This site is ripe for collecting after all the work we have done.

The owner was pleased as well and the following weekend we conducted an encore dig for members who would not brave the cold first dig. We plan to visit Scufflin Acres on a regular basis and continue to collect more of this 'earth shaking amethyst!' 🛠️

***To set up a trip for your club or group to collect at the Scufflin Acres Farm, contact the owner, Mary Kay Simpson, at (434) 390-6136. Happy digging!***



## S. SQUIRREL DIGGINS

HELLO, MY NAME IS S. SQUIRREL DIGGINS. THE S STANDS FOR 'SECRET', BUT YOU CAN CALL ME SQUIRREL. I TRAVEL THE COUNTRY VISITING MINES, MEETING ROCKHOUNDS AND LOOKING FOR NEW DIG SITES. I DON'T HAVE A HUGE ROCK COLLECTION AS I TEND TO BURY ALL MY BEST FINDS AND FORGET WHERE THEY ARE. I LIKE TAKING PICTURES OF MY

FRIENDS' ROCKS. I NEVER GIVE AWAY THEIR SECRET SITES. RICK SAYS IF SOMEONE IS THE FIRST ONE TO GUESS WHERE MY ROCKS ARE FROM, HE WILL GIVE THEM A FREE YEAR SUBSCRIPTION TO THE MAGAZINE ON CD!

THESE ROCKS ARE FROM A SITE IN THE WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA MOUNTAINS. MY FRIENDS FOUND THESE ROCKS A LONG TIME AGO. ONE IS A PIECE OF KYANITE AND THE OTHER IS POLISHED FELDSPAR OR MOONSTONE. I SAW A LOT OF OTHER STUFF WHEN I WAS THERE. I SAW SOME NICE LITTLE RED GARNETS AND SOME GREEN CRYSTALS THAT LOOKED LIKE GREEN BERYL? THERE WAS A LOT OF MICA TOO. IF YOU THINK YOU CAN GUESS WHERE THIS PLACE IS, SEND RICK AN EMAIL AT [rick@wncrocks.com](mailto:rick@wncrocks.com). IF YOU GUESS THE RIGHT SITE, AND ARE THE FIRST ONE TO EMAIL RICK, HE WILL SEND YOU THOSE FREE CDS. GOOD LUCK!



***Polished moonstone  
about 30 mm x 15 mm.***



***Kyanite crystal cluster, measures 12.5 cm x 7 cm x 4 cm.***



Richard Jacquot

I attended the Forest Service Plan Revision meeting on Thursday, April 17<sup>th</sup>. About a hundred people were in attendance, representing many hobbies and activities that are conducted on Forest Service land. There were two rockhounds in attendance, myself and one other MAGMA member, Ben North. The meeting started at 9:00 a.m. and ran until 3:00 p.m. I gathered little information on the plan revision, other than the fact that the Forest Service has acknowledged that rockhounding is a hobby that has been conducted historically on Forest Service managed land for many decades, and the hope that they may designate some areas for our hobby. I do not know what the rules will be when the plan revision is finished, but I will continue to attend the meetings as they are scheduled and continue to push for some designation and less restrictive digging rules.

Some things to note that are currently happening on the law enforcement end of things. Several people are being investigated for allegedly selling gems and minerals from Forest Service land at gem shows and on the Internet. The rules for collecting have been clear on this for many years "As a rule, there is no objection to taking a handful of rock, mineral, or petrified

wood specimens from the surface of the National Forest System lands. No fee, special permission, or permit is required as long as: **The specimens are for personal, non-commercial use.**" Apparently these people have been at this for many years and an active investigation is ongoing. After talking to law enforcement about this, they have advised that at this time, you cannot sell specimens whether collected personally or bought from an old collection. You cannot trade the specimens for other items. You are allowed to give away specimens to museums, schools and friends.

The Forest Service will hold a public meeting for the plan revision on July 10, 2014. Location: Crowne Plaza Hotel, Resort Drive, Asheville, North Carolina. Tentative meeting time is from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. A meeting agenda will be posted online by July 1<sup>st</sup>. Coming next in August and September: Establishing Management Areas, Desired Conditions, Objectives, Standards and Guidelines in the Revised Plan.

We anticipate six public meetings across Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests in the vicinity of the six ranger districts. Information is available on the website at: [www.fs.usda.gov/goto/nfsnc/nprevision](http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/nfsnc/nprevision).

You may send email comments to: comments-southern-north-carolina@fs.fed.us

More on the Forest Service and Plan Revision in the next issue.

### MINE CLOSINGS

The Shingletrap Quartz Mine located in the Uwharrie Forest, Montgomery County, North Carolina is now off limits to collecting per the Forest Service.

Bowers Farm Limonite located in Stanly County, North Carolina is now closed to collecting.

### NEW MINES AND WORKINGS

The owner of the Mason Farm Staurolite Prospect has advised he has done some machine work on the property and that an abundance of material is being recovered from the new dig areas. This site is located in Brasstown, North Carolina. You may find staurolite crystals, large and small, many crosses and Xs. Gold and corundum are rarely found. Visit [www.americanrockhound.com](http://www.americanrockhound.com) and click on the 'mine sites' link for more information, or call (828) 779-4501

In November, 2013, we did extensive work at the Crabtree Emerald Mine. We have installed a new culvert in the road that allows easier access to the mine. We also uncovered material that has not been seen since the 1980s. In the past few months, many rare specimens have been found such as fluorite, pyrite and gem grade emeralds. This site is located near Spruce Pine, North Carolina. Visit [www.crabtreemine.com](http://www.crabtreemine.com) for more information, or call (828) 779-4501

A relatively new site for rockhounds is the Treasure Valley location that was featured in this issue. This site is located in McDowell County, North Carolina. You may find rubies, gold, garnet and various other minerals and gems. For more information call the owner, Richard Buchanan, at (828) 460-2655, or email [richard@bucksfarm.com](mailto:richard@bucksfarm.com)

Also featured in this issue is the Scufflin Acres

Farm. Located in Prospect Virginia, this site produces a wide variety of quartz specimens; amethyst, smoky quartz, included quartz and more. For information contact the owner, Mary Kay Simpson, at (434) 390-6136.

The Emerald Village Mine located near Spruce Pine has been known as a tourist type mine for many years. It is located on the site of the old Bon Ami Mines. The owner is now allowing collecting on the original mine dumps. Minerals of interest to collectors are: columbite, samarskite, torbernite, uranophane, hyalite opal, malachite, tourmaline, amazonite, pyrite and dendrites. Call Emerald Village at (828) 765-6463

### OTHER NEWS

A possible emerald has been found in Wake Forest, North Carolina. A small stone was found in an area known as "Pop Pop Point" in November, 2013. The specimen has tested positive for beryl, the owner is still waiting for a chemical analysis to see if it is actually emerald or green beryl. More to come!

**Give Yourself A Little Character!**  
(A Rockhound Character, That Is!)

**I AM A ROCKHOUND!**   
Feel Free To Bask In My COOLNESS.

**I Smash Boulders for FUN!**   
You might want to think about that before you give me a hard time...

**I DIG ROCKS!** 



**LADY ROCKHOUND!**   
If You're Looking For A Real "Gem"...You Just Found Her!

Mugs - Shirts - Bumper Stickers & More!  
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## American Rockhound

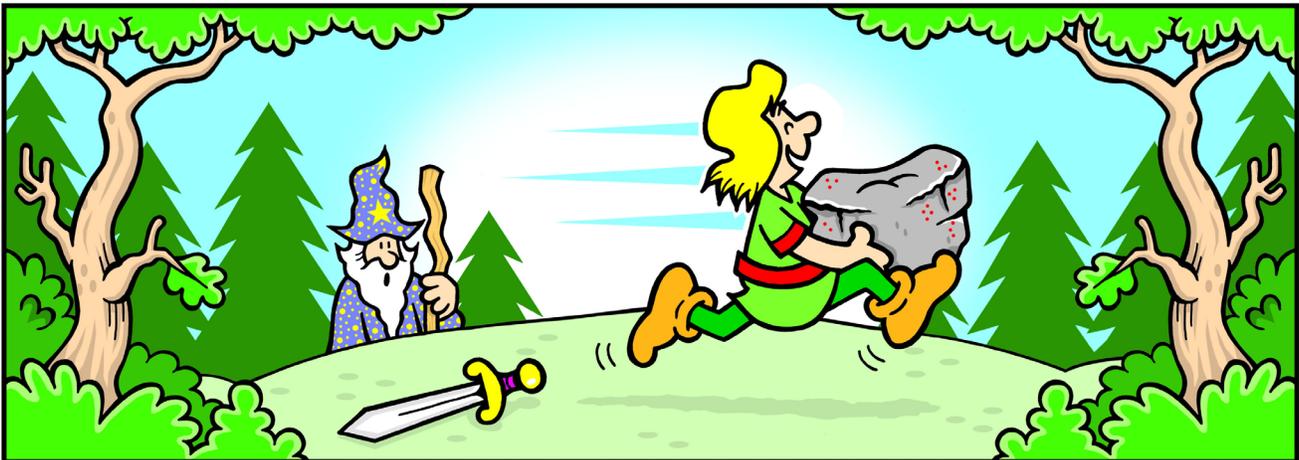
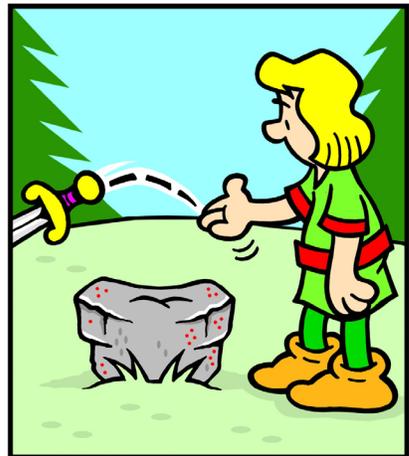
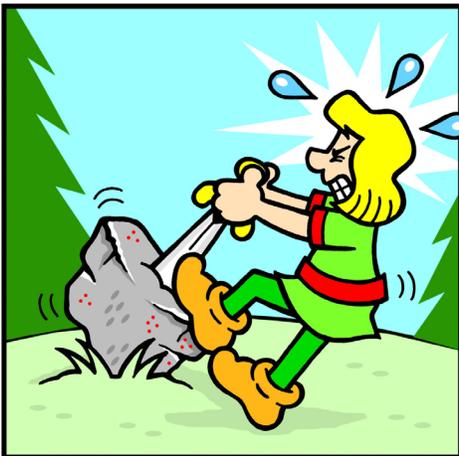
# KIDS' PAGES

By Steve Barr

## SAFETY AND COLLECTING TIPS!

- ALWAYS wear safety glasses if you are breaking rocks or even tapping on them with a tool. And check to make sure no one else is close enough to be hit by flying shards.
- Ask an experienced rockhound to show you how to break rocks. Each type has a different way of breaking and you could destroy a wonderful specimen if you don't do it properly.
- Listen to any adult when you are on a field trip or out collecting. They have learned a lot during their years on earth, and most of them are eager to share their knowledge with you. They also know about risks you might not be aware of, and want to help keep you safe.
- NEVER throw rocks or dirt while you are out collecting. There is always a chance that you might not see someone and accidentally hit them. I'm sure you wouldn't want to hurt someone else!
- Wear a hardhat any time you are visiting a quarry or an open pit mine. Rocks and dirt could fall from overhead unexpectedly, and you'll want to make sure you protect your "noggin".
- It's not a good idea to try to break a rock by hitting it with the pointed end of a pick. Not only could you damage the specimen you are after, the tip could break off and hurt someone. Maybe even you!
- Regular tools like hammers, chisels, woodworking chisels, axes and things like that were not designed for breaking rocks. They weren't made for that, and you could hurt the tools and yourself if the tool breaks.
- Wear gloves. Quartz and crystal tips can be quite sharp, and give you a nasty gash.
- Wash your rocks outside when you get home. The dirt and loose pieces that come off of a specimen when you're rinsing it off could damage indoor plumbing, and that can be quite expensive to repair!
- Stay away from any area marked with a "No Trespassing" sign or a "Danger" warning sign. If people are trying to keep you out, there's usually a very good reason why.
- Stay away from tall dirt walls, especially if they are wet. Large amounts of dirt could slide down. And as the dirt begins to dry, it can also break away and fall in large, heavy clumps.
- Before you ever go collecting on state or national forest land, always check with the folks who are in charge of those areas to make sure it is okay. Rules and laws vary from state to state and often from area to area.

The True Story Of **Arthur and the Sword In The Stone**



Written By Dave "Rockshine" Boring

Art By Steve Barr

## Rockhound Recipes

# Bed Rock Baked Oatmeal

Gary Nielson

Serves 4-6

### Ingredients

- ↗ 2 eggs
- ↗ 1 cup sugar
- ↗ ½ cup vegetable oil
- ↗ 3 cups quick oatmeal
- ↗ 1 cup milk
- ↗ 1 tsp baking powder
- ↗ Brown sugar
- ↗ Dried or fresh fruits/nuts

### Prep

- ↗ In a bowl, mix eggs, sugar and oil. Whisk good.
- ↗ Add oatmeal, milk, and baking powder.
- ↗ Pour mixture into a 12" dutch oven and top with brown sugar.
- ↗ Dried fruit and nuts may be added also.
- ↗ Fresh fruit should be added during the last 5 mins of cooking.

### Cook

- ↗ Bake with 4-6 briquettes under the oven and 18-22 briquettes spread out evenly on the lid.
- ↗ If baking in oven, bake at 350 degrees for 50-60 minutes.

# Ruby Crunch

Gary Nielson

Serves 4-6

### Ingredients

- ↗ 6 apples, peeled and sliced  
Granny Smith/Northern  
Spies work great
- ↗ ½ cup (4-5oz) of red  
cinnamon candies (small  
hard cinnamon red hots)
- ↗ 1 tsp vanilla

### For the Crunch

- ↗ ¾ cup sugar
- ↗ ⅓ cup butter
- ↗ 1 cup flour
- ↗ ¼ tsp nutmeg
- ↗ ¼ tsp salt

### Prep at home

- ↗ Mix all crunch ingredients in food processor, or mix the butter into the dry ingredients using pastry cutter, spoon or fork. Crunch ingredients need to be mixed thoroughly. Place in air tight container.

### Prep at camp

- ↗ Line a 10" cast iron dutch oven with aluminum foil or lightly coat the inside of the dutch oven with butter or vegetable spray to prevent sticking.
- ↗ Place apple slices in the dutch oven and distribute to a flat even surface.
- ↗ Sprinkle the cinnamon candies evenly over the apple slices.
- ↗ Sprinkle the vanilla evenly over the candies and apples.
- ↗ Top with the 'crunch'. Spread crunch evenly forming a flat surface.

### Cook

- ↗ Bake for 45 minutes in the oven at 375 degrees OR at camp in the dutch oven using 7 charcoal briquettes under and about 16 briquettes on the lid spread out evenly.
- ↗ Topping (crunch) should barely start to brown. Ensure you use a camp dutch oven when using the charcoal briquettes as a heat source. The camp dutch oven has legs and a lip on the lid to hold the briquettes.
- ↗ Serve hot and top with scoop of vanilla ice cream if desired.

# Rockhound Recipes

## Trap Rock Tamale Pie

Gary Nielson

Serves 4-6

### Ingredients

- 1-2 chopped onions
- 1 lb ground beef
- 1 lb pork sausage (Use hot sausage for more heat.)
- 1 tsp minced garlic
- 1 28 oz can tomatoes
- 1 can corn
- 1 can black olives
- 1 can Mexican tomato sauce
- ½ lb (8 oz) shredded cheddar cheese
- About 20 small corn tortillas
- Chili powder, cumin and oregano to taste (Use more chili powder and cumin for more bite.)

### Prep

- In a deep skillet/pot, brown the onion, garlic, beef and sausage.
- Once beef and sausage are nicely browned, add all other ingredients except the cheese and tortillas.
- Let cook about 15-20 minutes.

### Cook

- Place some of the cooked mixture in the bottom of a 12" camp dutch oven, approx ½" - 1" deep.
- Cover mixture with some of the tortillas (about 6-7).
- Repeat layers. Mixture and another 6-7 tortillas until mixture and tortillas are used.
- Bake about 30 minutes using 6-8 briquettes on the bottom and 14-16 briquettes on top spread out evenly. Ensure camp dutch oven is used as it has legs and lid has a lip to hold the briquettes.
- After 25 mins, cover top with shredded cheddar cheese and cook another 3-5 minutes, until cheese melts.



# ROCK SHOPPER & SHOWS

## WEBSITES

**Kaps Rocks** Custom Stonework, Jewelry, Knives and Specimens. Web site: [www.kapsrocks.com](http://www.kapsrocks.com)  
Email: [keithphagan@gmail.com](mailto:keithphagan@gmail.com)

**Jacquot & Son Mining** Gem, Mineral and Fossil Sales. Specializing in Gem and Mineral Estates.  
Web Site: [www.jacquotandsonmining.com](http://www.jacquotandsonmining.com)  
Email: [rick@wncrocks.com](mailto:rick@wncrocks.com) or call (828) 779-4501.

## JEWELRY FOR SALE

**Hand crafted Lapidary Designer Jewelry** encased in gold and/or silver selling in my ARTZEE-ITEMS ebay store. View items at: [www.stores.ebay.com/Artzee-items](http://www.stores.ebay.com/Artzee-items). For more information contact: [thesoyka@aol.com](mailto:thesoyka@aol.com).

## MINE - DIG SITES

**Hogg Mine** Come dig for beryl and rose quartz. For more info: [www.hoggmine.com](http://www.hoggmine.com)

**Crabtree Emerald Mine** Come dig for emeralds at a real emerald mine in the mountains of Western North Carolina! [www.crabtreemine.com](http://www.crabtreemine.com) or (828) 779-4501

**Mason Farm Staurolite** Hunt for Fairy Crosses in North Carolina! (828) 779-4501

**Treasure Valley** Group Outings, field trips, family prospecting vacations, & camping on private farm. Site of old historic mine in Western NC. Gold/Gems/ Metal Detecting. Contact Buckshot for details: [Richard@bucksfarm.com](mailto:Richard@bucksfarm.com) or (828) 460-2655

## SHOWS

**11<sup>th</sup> Annual Western North Carolina Rockhound Roundup!** July 21<sup>st</sup>-27<sup>th</sup>, 2014. Field trips to various mines and gem shows each day, rock swap at camp. Info: (828)779-4501

**USFG Franklin Faceters Frolic (FFF7)** The Factory; 1024 Georgia Road (US441), Franklin, NC 28734  
July 24<sup>th</sup> (9-5), July 25<sup>th</sup> (9-8), & July 26<sup>th</sup> (9-4)  
Contact: Norm Holbert (828)634-0350,  
Email: [normholbert@comcast.net](mailto:normholbert@comcast.net)

**33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Henderson County Gem & Mineral Spectacular**  
Aug. 29<sup>th</sup> - Sept 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014 during the North Carolina Apple Festival. Our theme this year is Gemstones from North Carolina. We are open from 10am - 6pm Friday through Sunday and from 10am - 5pm on Monday. We will have exhibits, demonstrations, refreshments, vendors, and door prizes every hour. Admission is \$4.00 for adults. Children 12 and under are free. The

show is held at the Whitmire Activity Center on Lily Pond Rd. in Hendersonville, NC. There is a free shuttle bus from the Mineral & Lapidary Museum on 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. to and from the show hourly. For more information, call Diane Lapp at (828)775-8098.

**Mountain Area Gem and Mineral Association Gem, Mineral and Fossil Show**, September 25<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup>, 2014. Hours: 12pm – 6pm Thursday, 9am – 6pm Friday and Saturday. The show is held at the Hiddenite Center in Hiddenite, North Carolina. Free admission. Top local vendors with a variety of minerals and gems from all over the world, specializing in North Carolina and southeastern minerals. This show is held during the annual Hiddenite Craft Fair. For more information, call Richard Jacquot at (828)779-4501.

**Graves Mountain Open House, Rock Swap & Dig**  
October 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup>, 2014, Hours: 8am to 6pm each day. Fee: Donation. The show is held at Graves Mountain, Lincolnton, Georgia. Food and drinks available for purchase. Numerous vendors with gems, minerals and fossils for sale and trade. Golf carts available to shuttle the diggers to and from the mine. All clubs and rockhounds are welcome to attend! For more information, call Clarence Norman Jr. at (706)401-3173.



Rob Stine is a professional artist and Rockhound. He enjoys painting landscapes of the various mines he visits. If you would like to view and purchase prints of his mine paintings, contact him for more information.



# Rockhounding America

