

GOLDRUSH LEDGER



CHARLOTTE GEM & MINERAL CLUB

JULY 2013

Prez Sez ...

Spring hath sprung and summer is now upon us. With kids out of school, vacation plans about to kick into gear and keeping cool a key goal – what can we do to make the Charlotte Gem & Mineral Club part of your summer activities? The CG&MC board of directors has thought long and hard about this very question and has decided to initiate a “Don’t fight em, join em” approach.

We have some great events planned for the next two plus months and I want to both intrigue you and motivate you to make the club a part of your summer fun.

The CG&MC summer program starts off with the club picnic on Saturday, July 20th (noon – 5PM) at our lake house in Mooresville (45 minutes from downtown Charlotte). There will be good food, beverages, fishing, swimming, canoeing and lots of conviviality and lapidary conversations. In

addition to a picnic blast sent at the end of June, there are instructions contained within this newsletter and a final reminder blast will be sent a few days before the event. Lake Norman is a great place to beat the summer heat and work on your tan so y’all come and immerse yourselves in this fun event.

Our August meeting (8/15) is going to be quite unique and very different. There will be no outside speaker and no silent auction (OK, we’ll do snacks). This will be a major business meeting highlighting the NEWER, BIGGER, BETTER, STRONGER CG&MC being developed for 2014 and beyond.

Your board of directors has been exploring and negotiating an opportunity that presented itself this past winter and appears to be quite close to becoming a reality. We anticipate initiating changes this fall that will dramatically alter

how we conduct our meetings, significantly improve and expand our teaching programs, give the Jr. Rockhounds a new meeting environment and greatly expand the scope and size of our club. Not only do we want to lay this all out and explain it to CG&MC members, but we need your questions and comments to help determine if we are

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heading in the right direction. So make a note on your calendars to attend the Thursday evening August 15 meeting at the Senior Center!!!

And then there's the Mathews Alive Festival on Labor Day weekend. As most of you know, over two years ago a group of our more creative and industrious members built a beautiful sluice to be used at the Mint Hill Madness event held in late September each year. The 2011 event turned out to be more of a "Sluicing under Niagara Falls" thing with heavy rainstorms throughout the weekend. Our second effort in 2012 was a poorly attended and grossly mismanaged affair (by Mint Hill not CG&MC) with poor

returns for all our efforts. It was no surprise to learn this spring that Mint Hill has cancelled the aptly named Madness event. Once again our board stepped up and explored potential optional summer festivals and fairs and came to the conclusion that none were appropriate for a sluicing booth.

Since Labor Day is a few months away, I'm going to withhold comments about Mathews Alive and sluicing until next month's Prez Sez in order to keep things fresh in your mind. See you at the picnic.

Murray Simon,

President Charlotte Gem and Mineral Club, future president Charlotte Gym and Mineral Water Club, potential winner of the first honorary doctorate awarded from a city college ...



Hay Ceek Moss Agate from Oregon
Most moss is made up of metal oxides suspended in the agate media. Green, yellow, pink, red, and orange come mainly from mixed iron oxides. White moss is usually a form of hydrated silica (aka ... opal)

Charlotte Gem & Mineral Club Monthly Meeting

***No Thursday Meeting this Month
CLUB PICNIC Instead***

When – Saturday July 20th from noon to 5PM

Where – 251 Lineberger Drive, Mooresville, NC 28117

What – food and beverages provided. Bring a folding chair , bathing suit, towel, sunscreen and fishing gear (if you're into that sort of thing)

HOW TO GET THERE (45 minutes from downtown Charlotte and it's easy):

Rt. 77 north to exit 36 / left at end of exit ramp onto Rt 150 / 2.2 miles = left onto Dooley Rd. (across from the Harris Teeter shopping center)/ .6 miles = left onto Lineberger Drive / ½ mile over 2 speed bumps and a gravel road = our driveway is on the left (look for the CG&MC banner)

RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED!!!

Call Pat Walker at (704) 523-5261. If she doesn't answer leave your name and # of people attending on her voicemail.

Jr. Rockhounds on vacation till September

Contact Mary Fisher for any additional info ...
mefisher@att.net

A report from Costa Rica

By Jack King

A long time friend, and my cabochon student from William Holland School of Lapidary in Young Harris, Ga. Michael Smith, told me of his trips with his wife to the same resort on the Pacific coast of Costa Rica where they had been going for over ten years. My eyes and ears really perked up when he showed me colorful jaspers that he had picked up while walking on the beach in front of the resort.

So, Kathy and I put this location on our bucket list to do. We learned that Michael and his wife, Ruth, are benefactors to a local school there and that the kids loved having visitors to practice their English with. I discussed it with Michael and it was decided that when we went that we would take books on rocks and minerals that were aimed at youth.

A couple of books from our old club library made into my suitcase along with the other selection of books that we ordered. So, we scraped together some frequent flyer points and made a date for June for us to travel to Tambor, Costa Rica with our friend, Michael as our guide. We flew from Charlotte to San Jose, Costa

Rica, rented a car and were soon on our journey.

What a journey it was to be. We had planned on a 1.5 hr. ride to catch the five o'clock ferry. NOT!. It was blowing rain sideways and we missed the turn to the ferry and drove another 30 miles before we realized that we were lost. By the time we made our way back to the ferry, there was no ferry in sight and the next one was at 8:30 p.m.

I told Kathy that it could have been a.m. So, we opted for a relaxed dinner and to wait. The ferry trip was another 1.5 hr. journey then about another 45 minutes to our rooms. The resort was all buttoned up by this time of night and the manager had to get up to take us to our rooms.

By the next morning we were all walking the beach and it was easy to see the source of the very plentiful jaspers as well as minimal petrified wood along the beach. There was a river about a half mile up the beach which came down from the mountains dumping the treasures of red, green, yellow, orange, brown, and black jaspers. Sizes ranged from walnut sized to fist sized.

I knew that I had the space of the books that I had packed as well as a couple of gifts but was soon wondering which clothes I should leave behind in order to pack more rocks. We all brought our treasures each day back to tables on our porch in front of our room and it soon became a culling process as to which jaspers were the best of the best. A very had choice indeed.

One afternoon as I was sorting thru my finds, a gardener looked up at me and said: " Do you like rocks?" in perfect English. And so, the next adventure of our journey path began. We met the man on Sunday morning and he took us to a VERY secluded beach where he dives to spearfish and he said that the bottom was littered with rocks that we would like and that they were different than the ones in front of our hotel.

We parked the car and trekked about a half mile thru some very hilly woods and found ourselves on a very steep rocky cliff overlooking a spectacular black sand beach. Of course, there were no steps down to the water. It was careful step by step between the boulders which Kathy, Michael and our guide took.

Yes, I wimped out. In about an hour they were

back with the agates that they picked up on the sand as well as the dived for treasures that our guide swam for.

Our next day, for me was the best. And that is the day that Michael and I went to Tambor Beach School. This is not like any Char/Meck school folks. A concrete block building with tin roof and a couple of ceiling fans. Our hotel manager came along to be our make our English understandable.

We started out with the politest 5 years olds who sang to us in English. Then Michael gave a rock program and every eye was eager to see what we had brought. By the time we got to the 11 year olds, (who you will see in the picture) they were like bees on honey when they saw the books that we had brought. Just

like in Mary Fisher's junior's group, there were a couple of kids who were already into rocks and wanted to learn ANYTHING that we could tell them.

One asked had we seen aquamarine. On the way into the school, I spotted a walnut size chunk of red jasper in the parking lot. When we showed the kids this, at break time all that you could see were bent over kids. The next day a teacher sent word that many kids showed up the next day with bags of rocks. While on this journey, we learned that their local translation of CON MUCHO GUSTO, means to them, "WITH MY GREAT PLEASURE."

Well, for Kathy and me, this new journey in life was indeed with our great pleasure.



Salt Casting

By Callie & Dennis Chapman,
Tooele Gem & Mineral

Direct casting is an easy, low tech method of making beautiful freeform jewelry. In this article I will focus on using Sterling Silver and course rock salt. This salt casting gives you a great spiky, nugget effect (if you can set faceted stones, you have natural prongs). The disadvantage is you practically need to Bright Burnish it to get a polish, and that is the most costly part, but I think it is money well spent, and can be used in other projects. ***(Editors Note: Silver was a bit less expensive when this was originally written, but it could be useful for those who have scrap silver from their jewelry bench.)***

Supplies Needed ----

Silver: I use silver scraps, or get a 1oz. fine silver coin (.999) and add 2.5 grams of copper(I pay 35- 50 cents over spot at a local refinery or coin store), or finally you can buy Sterling Casting Shot (about \$2+ over spot).

Crucible: A block of wood (6 in. long 2x4), or a magnesium block, or a well used charcoal block. Make a little indent near one side to melt your silver in the wood or magnesium block.

Empty Soup Can

Extra Course Rock Salt: Like you use for home made Ice-cream or water softeners.

Casting Flux: Borax works fine for the 2x4, but is too messy for the magnesium block or charcoal block, there I use regular Casting

Flux (it only uses a few granules to clean the molten metal).

Torch : Hand held propane torch will work fine or an acetylene & air torch. Magnesium blocks melt at 2000 deg., and acetylene & air torch flame is also around 2000 deg., so it will eventually melt the block.

Coffee Can With Water: To drench the 2x4 after use, soak the salt off of the piece.

Soldering Flux: To clean the metal, and for soldering.

Pickling Acid: To clean the metal Copper

Tongs: A flattened copper tube will work. Flatten and bend, like tongs.

Baking Soda: To neutralize the pickling acid.

Polishing Supplies ---

Polishing Cloth

Bright Burnishing Supplies:

Small Rock Tumbler: Flat sides inside preferable. Steel or Stainless Steel Shot Mix: Enough to fill tumbling drum 1/3-2/3 full. Seasoned with a little extra Pin Shot (stainless shot cost 3 times more, but doesn't rust).

Lapidary Soap and/or Burnishing Compound

Abrasive Plastic Media Pyramids: Medium & Fine (Optional, but will reduce bright burnishing time).

Let's Make Some Sterling Silver

Preparing crucible: If you use a 2x4 chisel or grind a small cup to melt your Sterling in. A screwdriver or key will work on the magnesium block.

Get some Fine Silver (shot or 1 oz. coin). Divide the weight

of the silver by 12.5 to determine how much copper to use (1 troy oz., 31 grams/12.5 = 2.48 grams of copper). Put it in your crucible and start melting. The silver will start melting before the copper so give it a quick stir with a pick (my pick is an old bicycle spoke glued in a dowel) to make sure copper is melted. Then pour in a coffee can full of water.

Drain water and look for interesting pieces to save for future jewelry. Now you have very near 927 Sterling Silver (pickling will remove the discoloration but we will take care of that later).

(If you are using sterling silver scrap then skip this step)



Time For The Salt Casting

This is done like making the Sterling Shot.

Almost Fill Soup Can With Salt

Melt & Pour Silver:

1. Put some of your Sterling Shot into the bowl in the crucible (I like to use no more than a 1/3 oz. on each piece, and do several in a sitting). (Photo 1)

2. Light torch and begin melting. When melted together remove torch, add casting flux (a pinch of Borax or a few grains of casting flux), then reheat.

3. When it starts getting fluid, lift crucible to edge of the can of salt. While keeping the torch on the metal, you will see the spin, quickly tip and let the metal roll off the crucible.

(Photo 2)

Important: you have 3 visual levels of the metal.

1st Crusty ball.

2nd Spinning, it is actually the copper & silver separating, this is when you pour.

3rd Boiling, TOO HOT, it jumps around and looks like tiny fireworks coming off the metal, the metal is actually vaporizing. If it get this hot you will have air bubbles in the silver that you won't see till you're done.

Note : I don't like to on direct casting, but stirring with a carbon rod will reduce air bubbles.

Further Reading on casting scrap

Pine Needle or Straw: <http://pineneedlecasting.homestead.com/Main.html>

Bean Casting: <http://users.frii.com/dnorris/beancasting.html>

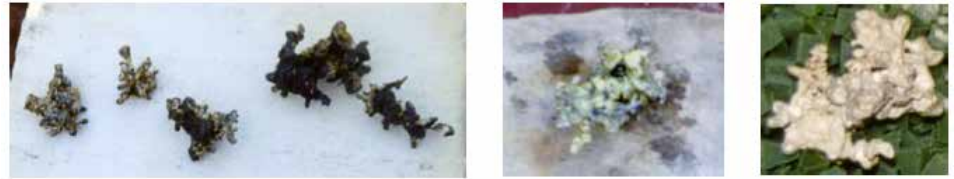


(Photo 1)

Getting Salt Off Silver & Pickle: While hot, pick the piece out of the salt with the tongs and drop into water. Then let the salt soak off or pull it out and scrape it off. Now it is multicolored with black spots on the black (I only seem to get it with the salt casting), the best way to remove that black spot is to put soldering flux on the whole piece. Then reheat the piece (the flux will boil - foam - turn to syrup - then the piece will turn white, remove torch NOW! Next thing that will happen is the silver will start melting, but I've never had one collapse yet). Throw your pieces in warm or cold pickle, let it soak any oxidation that is left (warm pickle works faster). The copper tongs are a MUST to add or remove pieces from the pickle!!! After removing, drop in a baking soda and water mixture then rinse.



(Photo 2)



Bright Burnishing:

Steel Shot Only: Add 1/2 tsp. - 1 Tbsp. of or burnishing compound, your steel shot, and your pieces to the tumbling drum, add enough water to cover shot. Tumble for 16 hours or more.

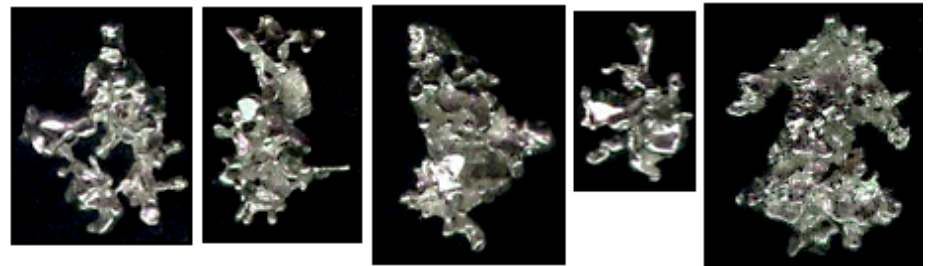


Silver after it is poured into salt.

Abrasive Pyramids & Steel Shot: Mix it same as above (except use lapidary soap for the pyramids), but tumble for 1 hours with medium pyramids, 1 hours fine, 1-3 hours steel shot. For a smoother texture double time with pyramids, more texture use only steel shot.

Drying Steel Shot: If you use plain steel, rinse and put on cookie sheet, pop into a 250 deg. oven until dry. It will rust if stored damp!!!

Note: Vibrating Tumblers are faster, but finding one that can handle the weight of the shot is harder to find.



Now Is The Time For Your Imagination: Look at your pieces, what do you want for the top, where and if a stone can be placed, where can I put a chain or hook it to something ... 1st Look for natural holes for a chain. 2nd Where can I drill a hole for a chain. 3rd Where can I solder a bail for the chain. Solder or drill now, run it through the steel shot again for a couple of hours again. You can do this before bright burnishing, but sometime it is easier to see what you what after a shine is put on.

An Official Field Trip of the Carroll County Gem & Mineral Society, Inc. (Carrollton, GA)(HOST)

Patty Construction Quarry
Summerville Lace Agate
Chattooga County, GA

July 28, 2013

MEET: At the site, on US 27 in Chattooga Co. Ga. This is in the NW corner of the state of Georgia.

WHEN: July 28, 2013

TIME: : 9:00 AM EST

Directions: From Summerville, Ga. follow US 27 South for 2.20 miles. The site will be on the right between the county owned waste dumpsters and the US Forestry office. Coming north from the Rome area, the site will be on the left side of US 27, and approximately 3.0 miles beyond the intersection of Gore Subligna Rd.

Tools: Eye protection is a must for anyone wishing to break apart material with a rock hammer, or sledge. Chisels would be valuable, as would small ground

shovels and rakes. A small cart or hand truck may be useful for hauling larger pieces of take home material. Much of the material is covered with a chalky white chert, and a pale of water is sometimes handy for dipping and identifying the better material.

Other: Bring plenty of fluids. This is a good site for children. Any pets MUST be on a leash at all times.

Facilities: In town about 2 miles away

Special: THIS IS AN ACTIVE QUARRY. NO ONE WILL BE ALLOWED ANYWHERE NEAR ANY OF THE MACHINERY ON THE PREMISES. ANY VIOLATION OF THIS RULE MAY JEOPARDIZES FUTURE FIELD TRIPS TO THIS SITE.

DMC CONTACT:

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Rock & Gem Shows 2013

**July 27 to Aug 5, 2013
Spruce Pine, NC**

29th Annual Grassy Creek Gem and Mineral Show located at the Parkway Fire and Rescue Department, 12966 Hwy. 226 South, Spruce Pine, NC (halfway between US 19E and the Blue Ridge Parkway (Exit 331)). There are 72 dealers who have all kinds of gemstones, mineral specimens, jewelry, beads, fossils and lots more. Admission is FREE. Parking is FREE. BBQ and silent auction of items donated by the dealers on Saturday to raise funds for the fire department. Hours are 8am to 6pm all days.

Contact Donna Collis at collis-donna@yahoo.com or Roger Frye at rcfrye@bellsouth.net for information. (828) 765-5519 or (828) 766-6136

**November 22-24, 2013
Columbia, SC**

The Columbia SC Gem and Mineral Society will hold its 46th annual gem, mineral and jewelry show at Jamil Temple, 206 Jamil Road, Columbia, SC 29210 (Exit 106A off I26). Hours: Friday 10am to 7pm; Saturday 10am to 6pm; Sunday Noon to 5pm. 24 Retail Vendors – jewelry, beads, loose stones, fossils, gold, silver and tools for sale. Lots of fun for the whole family. Admission is \$5 for adults, children sixteen and under are free with adult. All military and their dependents are free. Grand Prize Award – Tourmaline/Topaz specimen from Pakistan (Est. \$450) donated by PAK Designs (Patrick and Anne Kelly). Publicity – Sue Shrader ashnader@mindspring.com (803) 736-9317, Fax (803) 736-2578; Dealers – Sharon Sterrett ssterrett@sc.rr.com (803) 356-1472

