FROM YOUR PRESIDENT
Jason Hamilton

Fall is headed our way, and I hope you’re as excited as I am. There are several dig sites I’ve been waiting for cooler weather to make these trips more bearable. Plenty of fall related family activities, Club gatherings and events as well as the annual SFMS meeting in October.

So with all this running around, please take a moment to think safety and notice the other drivers on the road. They’re also in the last days of sanity before the holidays hit. The rocks, gems, minerals and fossils will still be there tomorrow; let’s just hope you will too!

I’m looking forward to a wonderful annual SFMS meeting in Tampa. My family and I spent Labor Day weekend in Tampa and Sarasota and enjoyed the beaches, fishing, shelling and fossil hunting. We were not disappointed in any of our activities.

I hope your trip to the annual SFMS meeting will be as enjoyable as ours and that you do try to take a little extra time to see the sights. Preparations for the annual meeting are well in hand and many people are working hard to make this meeting productive, fun and memorable.

My best to you and yours, Jason Hamilton

CARL’S EDITORIAL COMMENTARY

According to my watch, it’s still September in Hawaii! Many of you may have wondered what happened to the Sept 2012 Lodestar edition … it’s late because my laptop caught the “FBI Ransom" virus two weeks ago in spite of Norton 360 virus protection software that didn’t protect.

I tried four different virus removal products before I ran across Emsisoft, a German product that worked and fixed my laptop computer except for some recent files including my draft of the Sept 2012 Lodestar edition. If you encounter difficult-to-remove viruses, try this free-download, trial product.

As promised, this month’s lead article on gold and silver as money starts on Page 4. Its opinions are mine, and its facts are indeed facts. Though this content is not main-stream economic thought, I hope it will stimulate your thinking about our nation’s current economic circumstances.

I’m going to play hooky this October and publish the next Lodestar editions in November and December so as to keep you well informed about next year’s education workshops.

Please note on Page 9 that there have been several class cancellations for the Oct 7th workshop at William Holland. The economy and high cost of gas has taken a toll on this year’s workshop attendance. But, there’s still time for last-minute sign-ups.

Website: http://www.amfed.org/sfms
email: sfms@amfed.org

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THE SOUTHEAST FEDERATION OF MINERALOGICAL SOCIETIES, INC.

A Non-Profit, Non-Commercial, Non-Political Organization and Regional Federation of the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies

PURPOSE:
To bring about a closer association of Clubs and Societies devoted to the study of Earth Sciences and the practice of Lapidary Arts and Crafts in the Southeast part of the United States.

OBJECTIVE:
To cooperate with similar Federations to promote public interest in the Earth Sciences and the conservation of natural resources.

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Articles for the Nov 2012 Lodestar are due by Oct 25, 2012.

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DMC FIELD TRIPS

October 13, 2012: Taylorsville, Spencer County, Kentucky. Sponsored by the Kyana Geological Society collecting Lower Kentucky River "Ordovician rocks and fossils".


Official Field Trips of the Field Trip Committee are open to all members of clubs associated with the DMC program of the SFMS Field Trip Committee and to all members of SFMS clubs/societies who provide their membership with SFMS liability insurance. Because of insurance requirements, members of the general public are NOT invited to these or any DMC program field trips.

UPCOMING SHOWS

October 6-7, 2012: Lexington, KY. Rockhounds of Central Kentucky (ROCK). 22nd Annual Gem, Mineral, & Jewelry Show, Kentucky National Guard Armory, 4301 Airport Road, Lexington, KY. Admission: $1 adults, $0.50 children, $3 max family; Scouts in uniform free. Hours: Sat 10-6, Sun 12-5. Contact: Allen Ferrell, 859-277-2469 or kyrock2010kentucky@yahoo.com

Oct. 12-14, 2012: Huntsville, AL. Huntsville Gem & Mineral Society. Annual Show, Von Braun Center, 700 Monroe St., Huntsville. Hours: Fri. & Sat. 10-6, Sun. 12-5. Admission: adults $3. Contact Tony Smith, 3624 Grizzard Rd., Huntsville, AL 35810; e-mail: tsmith@ercincorporated.com


November 9-11, 2012: Ocean Springs, MS. Mississippi Gulf Coast Gem and Mineral Society. Magnolia State Gem, Mineral and Jewelry Show, Jackson County Fairgrounds Municipal Center. Hours: Fri & Sat 10-6, Sun 11-5. Admission $3.00. Contact John Guglik: (228) 818-5412 or jguglik@cableone.net

November 16-18, 2012: Marietta, GA. Cobb County Gem and Mineral Society. 27th Annual Rock, Mineral & Jewelry Show, Cobb County Civic Center, 548 South Marietta Parkway, Marietta, GA. Hours: Fri & Sat 10-6, Sun 10-5. Free Admission. Contact Mary Ingram: 404-915-3588 or mandmingram@gmail.com.


November 23-25, 2012: Mobile, Alabama. Mobile Rock & Gem Society. Gem, Jewelry, Mineral and Fossil Show, Abba Temple Shrine, 7701 Hitt Road, Mobile AL, Show Times: Fri 2-7, Sat 9-6, Sun 10-5. Show Chairman Jim Patterson tel 251-510-85228 jimandde@mobile.com


December 8-9, 2012 (2nd weekend each December): Franklin, TN. Mid-Tennessee Gem & Mineral Society. Gem, Jewelry, Mineral, Fossil Show & Sale, Williamson County Ag Expo Park,4215 Long Lane, Franklin (this is a new location rather than the old location at the TN State Fairgrounds in Nashville). Drive 20 miles south of Nashville on I-65 and take exit #61, turn east onto Peytonsville Road for 1/3 mile, and turn left onto Long Lane. Hours: Sat 9-6, Sun 10-5. Admission $4 (2-Day Pass $6.00), students 18 and under $1, children under 12 free with adult. For additional information and maps visit www.MTGMS.org. Contact John Stanley, Show Chair, (615) 885-5704 or e-mail show@mtgms.org.

January 11-13, 2013: Largo, FL. Pinellas Geological Society. 37th Annual Gem, Jewelry and Mineral Show, Largo Cultural Center, 105 Central Park Drive. Hours: Fri & Sat 10-6, Sun 12-5. Admission free, Contact Hugh Sheffield (727) 894-2440 or cell (727) 707-3236

Please Note
To ensure your show is listed here, send a written notice to the Lodestar Editor: Carl Talbott, 216 Spring View Drive, Murphy, NC 28906 or e-mail dtalbott@bellsouth.net. SFMS clubs/societies are also encouraged to register their event listings on the SFMS website at: www.amfed.org/sfms.
A Short History of Gold & Silver as Money
Carl Talbott, D.Sc., SFMS Editor

Motivation

Some fourteen years ago, during my third career as a machinery reliability and maintenance consultant, I had an occasion to work with Barrick Goldstrike (referred to herein as Barrick) at their Carlin Trend open pit mining operation some 60 miles west of Elko, Nevada. At the time, Barrick was mining two (2) million ounces of gold per year but selling four (4) million gold ounces into the physical gold market. Since I had become an owner of several hundred shares of Barrick Goldstrike, I was eager to understand their “Forward Sales” program whereby they sold two million ounces of gold more than they had produced each year.

The answer was simple; Barrick obtained these additional two million ounces of gold bullion from banking entities who had borrowed it (at low rates of interest) from central banks across the globe with contractual obligations to replace this gold bullion at some future date. These banking entities, known as bullion bankers, would sell their borrowed gold bullion to large-scale gold mining entities (such as Barrick) with contract stipulations that these mining entities would deliver an equal amount of gold bullion from their future production.

This “hedging strategy” is much like farm commodity, futures contracts (corn or soy beans, for example) whereby farmers pledge to deliver a set quantity of their anticipated future harvest in return for a set price per unit of production today. Commodity futures contracts are usually traded (bought or sold) and regulated (to include a commodity delivery date) through a stock exchange. However, gold hedging contracts between mining enterprises and financial institutions engaged in gold bullion trades can be very private with little government oversight.

By 2000 Barrick was reporting, in periodic reports to stock owners, the size of their Forward Sales program as 25 million ounces of gold; that is to say, 12.5 years of their future-year, gold production had already been “sold” (assuming their future annual production rate remained stable at 2 million ounces of gold). Prior to 2000, the price of gold (PoG) had been declining for more than a decade finally reaching a low of around $220/oz. Forward Sales had then been a money-maker for Barrick and other hedging miners since they could sell borrowed gold at then market prices and replace it with “cheaper” gold from production in some future year. This business strategy works if PoG is declining over time; however, by mid 2000 PoG began to increase over the next dozen years from $220/oz to almost $2,000/oz at its peak.

Aside from Forward Sales programs backfiring on hedged mining companies, the root economic question is why did central banks and national governments begin to “loan” or sell their inventories of gold bullion? The answer involves almost 240 years of U.S history starting with our Revolutionary War and the Continental Congress issuing paper “Continental” money beginning in 1775. During the colonial period, “hard money” consisted of British Pounds Sterling, German Marks, Spanish Dollars, and other national coins containing some weight of either silver or gold. Contractual business transactions were denominated in these various coin currencies convertible into other coin based on their precious metal equivalency. To further commerce, banks of that era would issue bearer notes convertible into coin money, and these notes were often traded as if they were money because they could be converted into coin money at will.

Some Early History

Paper Continental currency was not exchangeable into any type of coinage with gold or silver content, and by May 1781, it had become so devalued that it ceased to be accepted as a medium of exchange. With this monetary experience in mind, authors of the Constitution saw fit to include provisions addressing coinage containing either gold or silver as follows:
“The Congress shall have power … to coin money, regulate the value thereof, and of foreign coin, and fix the standard of weights and measures …” (Article I, Section 8, Clause 5).

“No State shall … coin money … [or] make anything but gold and silver coin a tender in payment of debts …” (Article I, Section 10, Clause 1).

Using their Constitutional power, the U.S. Congress, in the Coinage Act of 1792, established the U.S. Mint and set the weight of one dollar ($1) as a coin containing 24.1 grams of pure silver, a ¼ Eagle ($2.50) coin with 4.01 grams of pure gold, a ½ Eagle ($5) coin with 8.02 grams pure gold, and an Eagle ($10) coin containing 16.0 grams pure gold. This Act also stipulated that any person could bring pure gold or fine silver bullion to the Mint and have it coined free of expense.

In the early 1800s, the relative values between gold and silver in the international marketplace began to change such that the weight of pure silver in the $1 coin was below the international price, and most $1 silver coinage flowed from the United States for Europe to be melted back into silver bullion and sold in the marketplace. In response, Congress’ Coinage Act of 1834, among other things, revalued coin weights in favor of gold and set the price of one-ounce of pure (24k) gold at $20.67.

After gold was discovered in California, Congress saw fit to introduce two new gold coins (the $1 and $20 Double Eagle) via the Coinage Act of 1849. Because foreign coins were still circulating within the U.S. with their differing weights of gold or silver, Congress later decided to forbid use of foreign coin as legal tender in the Coinage Act of 1857. Political pressure from western gold-mining states led to the Coinage Act of 1873 (aka the Crime of ’73) wherein gold became the only precious metal authorized for U.S. coinage thereby demonetizing fine silver. Notwithstanding this Act, 10¢, 25¢, and 50¢ coins continued to contain silver content until 1965 when, via the Coinage Act of 1965, all silver content was removed from 10¢ and 25¢ coins, and silver in the 50¢ coin decreased from 90% to 40% by weight.

The Federal Reserve Bank

In the biggest change to the U.S. monetary system since the Constitution, Congress passed the Federal Reserve Act of 1913 with a mandate for the Federal Reserve Bank (as a privately owned banking entity) to maximize the country’s employment, stabilize prices, and moderate long-term interest rates. The Bank’s Board of Governors, appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate, uses its various powers in regulating the nation’s banking infrastructure to create an “elastic” currency whereby the quantity of money can be expanded or contracted to achieve its mandate. Like the Bank of England and other “central” banks, the Federal Reserve Bank is this nation’s “lender of last resort” in that it can’t run out of money assets; should it need more money, they’ll ask the Treasury Department to print more.

The Federal Reserve has accomplished a number of improvements to the nation’s banking infrastructure to include establishment of a personal and business check clearing system. However, much of its banking decisions are done in secret and may involve international parties and governments (e.g. current-day European Union). Some in Congress are concerned about this lack of transparency. Rep (R-TX) Ron Paul and his son Senator (R-KY) Rand Paul authored the Federal Reserve Transparency Act that passed in the House on July 25, 2012.

Freedom of Gold Ownership

Prior to 1933, anyone in our country could own gold coin and bullion, but from 1933 to 1974, it was illegal to own gold except as jewelry, rare coin collections, dental work, or gold coin in an amount less than $100.
Shortly after taking office in 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed (presidential) Executive Order 6102 forbidding the “hoarding” of gold coin, bullion, and certificates within the continental United States. All persons and companies were required to deliver their gold in exchange for $20.67 per ounce of pure gold. Violations of this Order were punishable by up to $10,000 fine and/or 10 years imprisonment (there was only one violation case prosecuted, and it was dismissed on a technicality; however, the defendant’s gold bullion was confiscated nonetheless). Several months later, again by Executive Order, Roosevelt raised the value of gold to $35 per ounce (and thereby devalued the dollar in international trade).

Though these presidential actions usurped Congress’ explicit powers spelled out in the Constitution and diminished an individual’s freedom to use gold coin as legal tender (an implied right in the Constitution), U.S. Supreme Court decisions in three cases, known as the Gold Clause Cases, upheld these Executive Branch actions by 5 to 4 votes.

Using the five hundred tons of gold sold in 1933 to the federal government at $20.67/ounce, Congress created the Exchange Stabilization Fund via the Gold Reserve Act of 1934. This fund is to be used by the Treasury Secretary at his discretion with presidential review; however, the Act provides for no oversight by either the House or Senate. Thus, there is no transparency available to the public in any activities of the Exchange Stabilization Fund for the past 78 years.

Fast forward ten years to the latter days of WWII when 730 delegates from 44 Allied Nations met in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire to form rules and procedures for monetary relations between independent nations. This activity produced the Bretton Woods Agreement of 1944 that established the International Monetary Fund and (what is today) the World Bank. Since much of Europe’s physical gold bullion ended up in U.S. accounts, each participating country agreed to adopt monetary policy that maintained a currency exchange rate tied to the U.S. dollar, and the U.S. government agreed to convert, on demand, U.S. dollars held by other countries into gold bullion at a rate of $35 per ounce. This is the principal reason why the U.S. dollar became the world’s “reserve” currency widely accepted in most countries until 1971.

Towards the end of the Vietnam Conflict, in July 1971, Switzerland redeemed 50 million U.S. dollars for gold bullion under the provisions of the Bretton Woods Agreement. France followed suit by exchanging $191 million for gold. Citing the depletion of U.S. gold reserves by “price-gougers”, President Nixon issued Executive Order 11615 on August 15, 1971 that, among other things, ended the convertibility of U.S. dollars into gold thereby abrogating the Bretton Woods Agreement. This Executive Branch decision was reached without consultation with the International Monetary Fund which later called the unilateral decision “Nixon Shock”. Since that date, the Treasury Department, in league with the Federal Reserve Bank, has no precious metal constraints to the amount of money they can print.

During the Ford administration, Congress passed and the President signed Public Law 92-268 (1972) that established a new par value for one ounce of pure gold at $38. This law was amended in 1973 via Public Law 93-110 to increase gold’s par value to $42.22/ounce. Shortly thereafter Public Law 93-373 ended the ban on private ownership and trading of gold by U.S. citizens. Then, in 1978 during the Carter administration, Congress passed Public Law 94-564 that repealed the 1973 amended Par Value Act thereby leaving the U.S. dollar undefined with respect to either gold or silver.

Public Law 94-564 also amended the Bretton Woods Agreement Act and established the concept of Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) with the International Monetary Fund while recognized Federal Reserve Notes as SDRs. In Senate Report No. 94-1148 dated October 1, 1976, there is the following quote on this legislation’s history.

"The dissolution of the monetary system created by the Bretton Woods Agreements can be traced to the early 1960's. The monetary system during this time made a de facto transition from a "gold standard" to a dollar standard . . . There were more dollars abroad than the U.S. had gold. The U.S. commitment to redeem international dollars for gold became a physical impossibility. The reality of dollar convertibility ended.”
Of course Congress could have continued on a gold standard by again and again devaluing the dollar as the Executive Branch, in concert with the Federal Reserve Bank, printed more and more dollars to achieve its domestic growth objectives. However, by breaking with the gold standard, growth in the nation’s money supply became more opaque and therefore easier to manipulate. Recall the easing of credit during the Alan Greenspan era and how money flowed into the housing marketplace because of the popular belief that real estate was a risk-free investment.

**Why Central Banks Lend Gold**

Let’s go back to the question of why Barrick was able to supplement (double) its annual gold sales with “borrowed” gold bullion. Since all national currencies in the world have no convertibility or exchangeability into either gold or silver (or anything else for that matter), there is little motivation, aside from negative public reaction, to hold stocks of gold bullion. Why not lease these “reserve” assets with the stipulation that they will be returned at some future date.

As an aid to such a practice, the International Monetary Fund’s recommended accounting practices allow a central bank to account for its gold reserves as the total of physical bullion plus lease contracts that provide for return of gold bullion in the future. But, what happens if a counter-party to a lease contract becomes insolvent and defaults on its obligation to return borrowed gold?

**One Man’s Conclusion**

It appears to this author that our nation is back to the equivalent of paper Continental dollars for its currency. Although our elected federal legislators, over the years, took an oath to defend the U.S. Constitution, they overlooked our implied right as U.S. citizens to sound Constitutional money.

****************************************************************************************************************************
BE SAFE – BE WELL
Don Monroe & Linda Behr - Safety Committee

Hazards – Some New

It is the end of summer or the beginning of fall and change is in the air. This time of the year has often been referred to as the “dog days” of summer which apparently has something to do with the “dog star” which is Sirius and nothing to do with animals.

There are some new hazards that we have observed this year. One is the European Hornet which is new to us in the mountains. For details of this varmint read the information available on the internet. Two of our friends have been stung by these hornets and can give you a run-down on the effects. This hornet is not as aggressive as the bald-faced hornet or the yellow jacket but is active at night and is attracted to lights and will sting if you grip them or trap them in your clothing.

This is a bad year for the West Nile Virus. Mosquitoes spread this disease which can be very serious for the young, the old and those with a weakened immune system. Many cities are involved in very active spraying programs as well as programs to eliminate standing water which is the mosquito breeding ground. Be alert, use repellent and stay indoors when possible.

Do you live in an area where poisonous snakes may be found? In the South we do have a lot of copperheads which are a very aggressive snake. Many people regard them as more dangerous than rattlesnakes because most rattlesnakes will back off, warn you of their presence and only certain varieties of rattlesnakes will press the attack. The copperhead gives no warning and will press the attack particularly against dogs and other small animals and small children. Statistics seem to indicate that fatalities resulting from snakebite are somewhat rare but a bite from a large reptile can be very dangerous. I can address this issue from experience remembering being bitten by a rattlesnake when I was a teenager. Basically I received what is known as a “dry bite” (no venom was injected) but it scared the hell out of me.

If you live near the gulf coast you have already have probably been exposed to the potential of a hurricane this year. The wind, the flooding, the flying debris, and the lightning are real hazards. I have been close enough to these storms that they have no appeal for me and I definitely take the warnings very seriously. I think the idea of riding out a hurricane and having a big party is the height of idiocy.

I ask all of you to use your common sense and avoid every hazard that you can.

******************************************************************************

Nominations Committee Report

Per SFMS By-Laws, Section IX, Section 6G, the Nominations Committee recommends the following official slate of nominees for election at the SFMS Annual Meeting to be held in Tampa, Florida on Oct 20, 2012:

President (one-year term) - Danny Griffin
1st VP (one-year term) - James Darnell
2nd VP (one-year term) - David Wayment
Secretary (two-year term) - Beryl Ferguson
Asst. Treasurer (two-year term) - Darlene Gunsolus
Lodestar Editor (two-year term) - John Rasmussen
AFMS - 5th Vice President - Ann Monroe

Submitted by Barbara Green, Chair

******************************************************************************

All-American Award

Any club that has a member that does something special for the club or for someone else needs to be acknowledged by the Southeast Federation. If you know of someone that has gone out of their way to help someone or done something in their community please send an article to me about the event. I am sure there are many people you know that have done a good deed.

Thanks
Kathy Morris, All American Chairman
klmorris45@hotmail.com
252-571-5050

******************************************************************************

SFMS William Holland Workshop

The last Workshop of the year is coming up October 7th at William Holland. Come on everyone, support your SFMS Workshops. We don’t want to lose these valuable educational and fun weeks. There are still classes with room.

Thank you
Kathy Morris, SFMS Education Chair
The intermediate and advanced classes listed with an asterisk (*) require some prior experience by the student. Experience in a class provided by your local club, Workshop class, or self study may be enough. If you're interested in any of these classes, please fill out an application (see Lodestar Page 10).

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<th>Session Four - William Holland</th>
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# 1 NAME
SFMS SOCIETY/CLUB (spell out) _______________________________________________________
Address _______________________________________________________________________
City _______________________ ST__ ZIP________ Email ______________________
Home Phone (_____) _____________________ Cell Phone (_____) _____________________
Have you attended any other SFMS workshops? _____
Do you want to be placed on standby if your class is filled when we get your application? Y  N

# 2 (Spouse/Friend) NAME __________________________________________________________
(If club affiliation, address and phone info is different than above, please list on the back.)
Have you attended any other SFMS workshops? _____

### Single applicants only: Do you have someone you want to share a room with? If yes, whom?

Age Group (used to determine a compatible roommate) 20-30 31-41 42-52 53-63 64-74 74 & up
Are you a smoker?  Y  N  Are you an early riser? _______ or a night owl? _______

### Special Needs:
Do you need a handicap room?  Y  N  Can you negotiate stairs?  Y  N  (elevator at Wm Holland only)
Dietary: Diabetic Other ______________________
Anything else we need to know? (i.e. snore loudly, can’t walk up hills, etc.) ______________________

### Campers: (Wm Holland only) Type _______________________ Length _______ (40 ft. max.)

Do you want to be placed on standby if your class is filled when we get your application?  Y  N

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<th>First Choice</th>
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<td>Spouse #2</td>
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### Workshop Tuition
NOTE: You are encouraged to pay the full amount at registration time. However, a $25 non-refundable deposit per person must accompany your registration. If you send a $25 deposit the remaining balance is due one month before the beginning of class.

* * Tuition Cost per Person:
* William Holland: $330 double occupancy or $490 single.
  * $160 day student or camper.
* Wildacres:
  * $345 double occupancy or $505 single.
  * $175 day student.
* Non-members add $50.00 to all Tuition fees

### William Holland Campsite Fee: $140 per week. No meals are included for day students or campers. They are available from and payable directly to the facility.

### Cancellation Policy: There is a non-refundable $25 administration fee. Other refunds are at the discretion of the director and Education Chair.

### Materials/Class Fees: THE INSTRUCTORS MAY CHARGE A MATERIALS FEE FOR THEIR CLASSES. THIS MATERIALS FEE IS NOT PART OF THE WORKSHOP TUITION.

### Mail Application & Deposit to appropriate workshop Registrar.
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