FROM YOUR PRESIDENT  
Mark Easterbrook

I am so grateful to have served as your President for 2010. It has been a challenging year. I have made a lot of new rockhounding friends. I want to thank each of the committee chairs for their service to the SFMS this year. We certainly couldn’t function without you. This year has been a real learning curve for me and I appreciate the patience you have shown and the advice you have given. It has not gone unnoticed. I started out the year with a sort of challenge for better communication within and between the SFMS and the member clubs. I wanted to try and create more interaction between the member clubs and the SFMS through better communication and involvement. I do see some improvement in this area through meeting attendance. But, we still have much more to go. It is the job of all Federation Liaison folks to become more active in communicating news and information about the SFMS to club membership in order to create more enthusiasm in what your Federation can do for each and everyone one of us. Communication and interaction with the SFMS officers, Committee Chairs, and Members involves patience, perseverance, and encouragement. We may not always agree completely, but we can compromise for the betterment of the SFMS and our individual clubs.

The meetings and field trips have allowed clubs spread throughout our Federation to get together to share ideas, stories, renew acquaintances, and swap specimens. This face-to-face interaction helps us all to work together better. This is why I encourage club members to become more involved within their own clubs and within the SFMS. After all, why did we join our clubs in the first place?

I want to thank our Education Chair Danny Griffin, Workshop Directors Roy Deere and Steve Henegar, Registrars B. J. Gearhart and Lisa Roberts for a great job in planning and executing our SFMS workshops this year. Sure, there were some challenges and attendance was down for some workshops, but I am confident that with a turn-around in the economy, attendance will increase. I do appreciate all the effort that these dedicated folks did for our workshops this year. Without their planning and execution we wouldn’t be able to even have the workshops this year. So, make your plans to attend the SFMS workshops in 2011.

I would like to thank a few more folks who I have come to rely on for advice and support. First, I want to thank Carl Talbott for the terrific job he does with the Lodestar in spite of some of us being late (especially me), sometimes very late getting our information to him. As an editor I can appreciate deadlines and Carl had to remind me on more than one occasion about his deadline. I would next like to recognize the efforts of Beryl Ferguson. As SFMS Secretary Beryl has gone above and beyond what her normal duties entail despite her physical setbacks this year. I can’t thank her enough for what she does for the Federation. I would also like to thank Don and Ann Monroe for helping to keep me on track. Ann has been especially helpful by reminding me of things that needed to be done and just listened to what was on my mind – thanks for being a sounding board. Both Don and Ann have been helpful in finding folks to fill some of the Federation positions. I want to thank Danny Griffin for all the long phone conversations we have had this past year bouncing around different ideas. To John Wright for all your advice regarding the boundary issues I thank you. To Ed Harris for keeping straight the SFMS books; you do a terrific job.

My new role starting next year will be as Past President, a position every President looks forward to fulfilling. I look forward to working with you and the new Officers in the upcoming years. I hope you will lend our incoming President Barbara Green the same wonderful support you’ve given me. Let’s keep working together and continue to make the Southeast Federation of Mineralogical Societies an organization dedicated to educating the rockhound community in the lapidary arts and geological sciences.

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

2010 SFMS OFFICERS

President
Mark Easterbrook
6701 Dorchester Rd., Apt. 1007
North Charleston, SC 29418
843.552.1049
asgardsgc@earthink.net

First Vice President
Barbara Green
110 Sycamore Dr.
Marietta, GA 29661
864.836.5896
greentop@bellsouth.net

Second Vice President
Jason Hamilton
7141 Naval Ave.
Jacksonville, FL 32254
904.786.7605
Jasons.designs@comcast.net

Secretary
Beryl Ferguson
414 S. Ridgewood Ave.
Ormond Beach, FL 32174
386.589.3583
crossbowcreations@yahoo.com

Treasurer
Ed Harris
12520 Jeff Hamilton Rd.,
Mobile, AL 36695
904.786.7605
edharrisjr@mchsi.com

Assistant Treasurer
Paula Griffin
1320 Byrd Cir.
Kingston, TN 37763
865.406.8802
sfmsassttreas@yahoo.com

Editor
Carlos (Carl) M. Talbott, D.Sc.
216 Spring View Drive
Murphy, NC 28906
828.494.7213
dtalbott@bellsouth.net

Immediate Past President
Betty M. James
189-A Florence Circle
Florence, MS 39073
601.914.6747
mineralid@comcast.net

AFMS 2nd Vice President
Ann Monroe
350 Lapidary Lane
Young Harris, GA. 30582
706.379.9662
annmonroe@windstream.net

Immediate Past President
Betsy M. James
189-A Florence Circle
Florence, MS 39073
601.914.6747
mineralid@comcast.net

AFMS 2nd Vice President
Ann Monroe
350 Lapidary Lane
Young Harris, GA. 30582
706.379.9662
annmonroe@windstream.net

Immediate Past President
Betty M. James
189-A Florence Circle
Florence, MS 39073
601.914.6747
mineralid@comcast.net

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Ann Monroe
350 Lapidary Lane
Young Harris, GA. 30582
706.379.9662
annmonroe@windstream.net

Immediate Past President
Betty M. James
189-A Florence Circle
Florence, MS 39073
601.914.6747
mineralid@comcast.net

2010 SFMS STATE DIRECTORS

Alabama
Iris McGhee
2433 Upper Wetumpka Road
Montgomery, AL 36107
334.262.7275
irisjmcq@aol.com

Georgia
Frank Decaminada
795 Nile Dr.
Alpharetta, GA 30022
770.992.8309
carrie128@comcast.net

Kentucky
Allen Jewell
P.O. Box 805
Versailles, KY 40383
859.873.8749
kyanageo@gmail.com

Louisiana
Dr. Bridget Joubert
P.O. Box 5402
Alexandria, LA 71307
318.443.5184
jemarler@aol.com

North Carolina
Mike Streeter
7 English Place
Candler, NC 28715
828.667.8290
mcstreeter@charter.net

South Carolina
Fred Sias
120 Holly Avenue
Clemson, SC 29631
864.540.6833
fredsias@gmail.com

Tennessee
Marty Hart
4935 Olivia Drive
Antioch, TN 37013
615.331.3570
sfms@gemizo.com

Florida
Joe and Addy De Pietro
P.O. Box 928,
Frostproof, FL 33843
863.635.5138
Mysticalmelts@verizon.net

Mississippi
Floy and Bill Hawkins
P.O. Box 7312
Tupelo, MS 38802
662.844.7441
studiohawkins@gmail.com

South Carolina
Fred Sias
120 Holly Avenue
Clemson, SC 29631
864.540.6833
fredsias@gmail.com

Tennessee
Marty Hart
4935 Olivia Drive
Antioch, TN 37013
615.331.3570
sfms@gemizo.com

Virginia
Steve Gordon
213 Sugar Mill Drive
Amherst, VA 24521
434.929.1524
stevegordan@comcast.net

Articles for the January 2011 Lodestar are due by December 27, 2010.
CARL’S EDITORIAL COMMENTARY

Precious opals with their play-of-color are often a sight to behold. How they get their varieties of color is discussed starting on Page 4 in an article by Sarah Lee Boyce and myself.

The Society/Club Membership Renewal form (3 pages in all) begins on Page 6. This form is due by Feb 1,2011.

Our Safety Committee message on Page 9 is worth the read; my son-in-law nearly got nailed for a violation in North Carolina. Also on Page 9 is an ABC news article that may interest those of us that sell or purchase precious metals.

Finally, I’ve heard from the Directors of next year’s William Holland Federation Workshops that some new courses will be offered in addition to the standard fare. Space permitting, each LODESTAR edition will highlight workshop courses such as on Page 10.

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

UPCOMING SHOWS

December 11-12, 2010: Nashville, TN - Mid-Tennessee Gem & Mineral Society. 30th Annual Earth Treasures Show, Tennessee State Fairgrounds - Creative Arts Building, Nolensville Rd & Smith Ave, Nashville, TN (less than 1 mile off I-65 exit 81). Hours: Sat. 9-6, Sun. 10-5. Admission $3, students 18 and under $1, children under 12 free with adult. Contact show chair John Stanley at (615) 885-5704 or jstanley@picagroup.com


March 4-6, 2011: St. Petersburg, FL - The Suncoast Gem and Mineral Society. 41st Annual Gem, Jewelry & Mineral Show and Sale, The Minnreg Bldg, 6340 126th Ave N., Largo, FL 33773. Hours: Fri & Sat 10-6, Sun 10-5. Hourly Door Prizes & Grand Drawing at end of show! Free Parking. Contact Bill Schmidt, Show Chair, 727 822-8279 or schmidwij@Eckerd.edu


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.
MINERALS

Precious Opals and Why They Display Color
Sarah Lee Boyce and Carl Talbott

Opal, a mineraloid of non-crystalline silicon dioxide and water, may be found in the fissures of common porous rocks such as sandstone, rhyolite, marl, and basalt as well as in fossils. Opal forms when large quantities of terrestrial waters wash over sandstone (or similar porous rock or fossil) and chemically weather it such that large quantities of dissolved silica percolate through the rock strata until it reaches an impervious level. As the silica solution comes to rest, it spreads out along this level, fills voids or cracks within the strata, and begins to solidify over time through evaporation.

Although Opal is said to have no crystalline structure, at the micro-level, one type of opal (known as Opal-AG) contains silica spheres with diameters on the order of 140 to 300 nanometers organized in a number of cubic or hexagonal close-packed-lattices (see Figure 1) that are several hundred times larger than the fundamental silica spheres. Water fills the space between the silica spheres, and when the spacing between packed planes of spheres is approximately one-half the wavelength of a visible light component, that wavelength light can be diffracted by the grating created by the stacked planes.

These internal colors, then, depend on the spacing between the planes (i.e. the size of the spheres) and their orientation with respect to light. The observed color is related to the size of constituent spheres in each close-packed-lattice (i.e., blue wavelengths will be diffracted by the smaller sized spheres of approximately 140 nanometers diameter whereas red wavelengths will be diffracted by larger sized spheres of approximately 240 nanometers). First discovered and described by Australian researchers in 1965, this phenomenon is called a “play-of-color” or “fire” and is the hallmark of precious opal.

Another type of opal (Opal-AN) is amorphous water-containing silica-glass, known as Hyalite, which has a glassy and clear appearance with an internal play-of-color. Under long-wave blacklight, Hyalite glows bright green. If there is no presence of an internal play-of-color in either Opal-AG or Opal-AN, then these are called common opals even though the silica sphere structure may be present. The play-of-color in precious opal has color patches that often vary in size and shape and that change color as the direction of light sources, orientation of the opal, or direction of viewing is changed. This constitutes the opal’s “fire pattern” commonly classified into categories such as pinfire, flashfire, and harlequin.

Since both Opal-AG and Opal-AN are both non-crystalline substances, in the presence of low levels of pressure or heat, they can gradually transform into Opal-CT and then into Opal-C both of which are micro-crystalline in nature where the spheres of silica grow into blades of cristobalite and tridymite. These forms of opal have no play-of-color (and therefore are not precious opal) because the close-packed lattice structure is disrupted by the microcrystalline growth. Such microcrystalline chalcedony, for example, can be found in the Monterey formation on the coastal regions of south and central California where massive bands of opal have undergone this transformation. Moreover, Oregon Thunder eggs may have any one of a variety of Opal-CT
or Opal-C fillings that can be opaque blue, opaque red, translucent pastel blue, translucent yellow, translucent red, white, or colorless, and a small percentage may show a play-of-color being Opal-AG or Opal-AN.

In more recent news, NASA’s Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter (MRO) spacecraft has found evidence of hydrated silica (opal) on the planet Mars. According to Dr. Ralph Milliken of NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory, the MRO has detected “numerous outcrops of opal-like minerals, commonly in thin layers extending for very long distances around the rim of Valles Marineris.” This suggests that water remained on the Martian surface for an extended period of time. “What’s important is that the longer liquid water existed on Mars, the longer the window during which Mars may have supported life,” said Dr. Milliken. Rockhounds, on the other hand, may have something else in mind rather than life on Mars.

References:

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A Note From Doug Arnold CFMS Bulletin Aids and SCRIBE President

If you’re headed to Quartzsite, Arizona this January, you have an opportunity to hear Rock & Gems Magazine senior editor Bob Jones. Jones will be the guest speaker at the SCRIBE meeting on January 22 at the Community building in Quartzsite.

SCRIBE is an international organization of current and former Bulletin Editors, Writers and Webmasters of amateur gem, mineral and earth science societies. The community center where the meeting will be held is on Moon Mountain Road just north of Main Street. There is a $2 registration for the meeting which helps pay for refreshments and building rental. Registration begins at 9 a.m. MST which is 8 a.m. PST.

If you come, bring a rock or mineral with you to share. We always try to have a free drawing at the end of the meeting and hope to have enough rocks and minerals to share with everyone attending. Bring your bulletins, too, to share with the other editors.

This is a great opportunity to visit with collectors from all parts of the country. In the past we have had members from California, Arizona, North Carolina, Idaho, Washington State, Utah and even Alberta, Ontario and Nova Scotia, Canada.
APPLICATION FOR 2011 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Club/Society Name ____________________________________________________________

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL: Due January 1, 2011 through January 31, 2011

In compliance with S.F.M.S. By-laws Article I, Section 2, and Article VIII, Section 1, member clubs/societies desiring to renew membership are required to submit to Membership Secretary the following:

Completed Membership Renewal Application (all 3 pages) with the Annual Dues Check attached (No cash please), based on total members, both Adults & Juniors, on Club/Society rolls as of December 31, 2010.

Annual Dues:                  Total Number of Adult Members  _________
                               Total Number of Junior Members  _________

* Total Dues Enclosed @ $1.25 per member _________

* Does not include optional Liability Insurance fees, which will be billed separately.

Mail (Check for dues only), payable to the Southeast Federation or S.F.M.S. along with all 3 pages of the Renewal Application and a current list of your members to the following address:

Kerri Wetzel
S.F.M.S. MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY
5010 Sunset Drive
Easley, SC 29642

PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY OR TYPE INFORMATION ON THE FORM

According to S.F.M.S. By-laws, Article VIII, Section 1 ---
Membership renewals are due January 1 through January 31, and are delinquent as of February 1. Delinquent clubs/societies forfeit voting rights at the next Annual Meeting, use of Slide Programs, the right to participate in the Federation’s sponsored third-party liability insurance program, the rights of their members to participate in D.M.C. field trips, the rights of their members to attend S.F.M.S. sponsored workshops, and receipt of Lodestar (the S.F.M.S. federation newsletter.) A club/society delinquent membership may be reinstated to full S.F.M.S. Membership upon payment of all dues and fees in arrears before March 1, 2010. Any club/society not paying all dues and fees in arrears before March 1 will be dropped from federation rolls. They may be readmitted as a new club/society by submission of an Application for Membership.
(This requires being voted in as a new club at the next Executive Board Meeting.)

Non-paid clubs are delinquent on February 1, 2011
### S.F.M.S. APPLICATION FOR 2011 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL (Page 2 of 3)

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Please indicate which officers elect to receive the S.F.M.S. LOADSTAR via email:

President ___ Recording Secretary ___ Corresponding Secretary ___ Treasurer ___ Editor ___ Other ___

Please indicate which 3 officers wish to receive the A.F.M.S. Newsletter:

President ___ Recording Secretary ___ Corresponding Secretary ___ Treasurer ___ Editor ___ Other ___

**ELECTED OFFICIALS** (List all officers Elected by membership vote & title of office held)

Month Officers: Elected ________ Take office ________  Officers elected: Annually ___ Other (be specific)__________

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S.F.M.S. APPLICATION FOR 2011 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL (Page 3 of 3)

Do you wish to participate in the optional Liability Insurance program?  Yes ___  No  ___

If No, do you have liability insurance by EFMLS or a third party insurance?  Yes ___  No  ___

Insurance Liaisan  ____________________________________________
                  Phone  ___________________  Email  ______________________

Street Address  ___________________________________________________
City ___________________  State  _______  Zip  ____________

Person in your Club/Society to receive renewal form(s) for next year Renewal in 2012

_________________________________________  Phone  ___________________  Email  ______________________

Street Address  ___________________________________________________
City ___________________  State  _______  Zip  ____________

Federation Liaisan  ____________________________________________
                   Phone  ___________________  Email  ______________________

Street Address  ___________________________________________________
City ___________________  State  _______  Zip  ____________

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Youth Leader  ____________________________________________
              Phone  ___________________  Email  ______________________

Street Address  ___________________________________________________
City ___________________  State  _______  Zip  ____________

Committee  ____________________________________________
            Phone  ___________________  Email  ______________________

Street Address  ___________________________________________________
City ___________________  State  _______  Zip  ____________

Committee  ____________________________________________
            Phone  ___________________  Email  ______________________

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Committee  ____________________________________________
            Phone  ___________________  Email  ______________________

Street Address  ___________________________________________________
City ___________________  State  _______  Zip  ____________

Please include other officers such as directors, additional committee chairs, and other pertinent information about your club or society on a separate sheet of paper.

CLUB SPONSORED SHOW(S)

Show Chair  ____________________________________________
            Phone  ___________________  Email  ______________________

Street Address  ___________________________________________________
City ___________________  State  _______  Zip  ____________

Vender Chair  ____________________________________________
            Phone  ___________________  Email  ______________________

Street Address  ___________________________________________________
City ___________________  State  _______  Zip  ____________

Show Facility  ____________________________________________
Show Dates  ____________________________________________

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Show Facility  ____________________________________________
Show Dates  ____________________________________________

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City ___________________  State  _______  Zip  ____________

Signature of person submitting this application ___________________________  Office  Held___________________
BE SAFE – BE WELL
Don Monroe & Linda Behr - Safety Committee

New Traffic Law - “Move Over”
New law: If a patrol car is pulled over to the side of the road, you have to change to the next lane (away from the stopped vehicle) or slow down to at least 20 mph under the posted speed limit. Every state except Hawaii and Maryland and the District of Columbia has this law. In California, the Move-Over law became operative on Jan 1, 2010.

A friend’s son got $754 ticket for this recently. A police car was on the side of the road giving a ticket to someone else. The boy slowed down to pass but did not move into the other lane. A second police car immediately pulled him over and gave him the ticket. The boy was unaware of this new law.

It is a fairly new law that states if any emergency vehicle is on the side of the road, if you are able, you are to move into the far lane. Please let everyone you know that drives about this new law.

_________________________________________________________

Gold Coin Sellers Angered by New Tax Law
Amendment Slipped Into Health Care Legislation Would Track, Tax Coin and Bullion Transactions
By Rich Blake, July 21, 2010

Those already outraged by the president’s health care legislation now have a new bone of contention -- a scarcely noticed tack-on provision to the law that puts gold coin buyers and sellers under closer government scrutiny. The issue is rising to the fore just as gold coin dealers are attracting attention over sales tactics.

Section 9006 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act will amend the Internal Revenue Code to expand the scope of Form 1099. Currently, 1099 forms are used to track and report the miscellaneous income associated with services rendered by independent contractors or self-employed individuals.

Coin Dealers Flipping Starting Jan. 1, 2012, Form 1099s will become a means of reporting to the Internal Revenue Service the purchases of all goods and services by small businesses and self-employed people that exceed $600 during a calendar year. Precious metals such as coins and bullion fall into this category and coin dealers have been among those most rankled by the change. This provision, intended to mine what the IRS deems a vast reservoir of uncollected income tax, was included in the health care legislation ostensibly as a way to pay for it. The tax code tweak is expected to raise $17 billion over the next 10 years, according to the Joint Committee on Taxation.

Taking an early and vociferous role in opposing the measure is the precious metal and coin industry, according to Diane Piret, industry affairs director for the Industry Council for Tangible Assets. The ICTA, based in Severna Park, Md., is a trade association representing an estimated 5,000 coin and bullion dealers in the United States. "Coin dealers not only buy for their inventory from other dealers, but also with great frequency from the public," Piret said. "Most other types of businesses will have a limited number of suppliers from which they buy their goods and products for resale." So every time a member of the public sells more than $600 worth of gold to a dealer, Piret said, the transaction will have to be reported to the government by the buyer.

Pat Heller, who owns Liberty Coin Service in Lansing, Mich., deals with around 1,000 customers every week. Many are individuals looking to protect wealth in an uncertain economy, he said, while others are dealers like him. With spot market prices for gold at nearly $1,200 an ounce, Heller estimates that he’ll be filling out between 10,000 and 20,000 tax forms per year after the new law takes effect. "I’ll have to hire two full-time people just to track all this stuff, which cuts into my profitability," he said.

An issue that combines gold coins, the Obama health care law and the IRS is bound to stir passions. Indeed, trading in gold coins and bars has surged since the financial crisis unfolded and Obama took office, metal dealers said. The buying of actual gold, as opposed to futures or options tied to the price of gold, has been a particularly popular trend among Tea Party supporters and others who are fearful of Obama’s economic policies, gold industry members such as Heller and Piret said.

Conservative/libertarian commentators, such as Fox News Channel’s Glenn Beck, routinely tout precious metal on the air as being a safe, shrewd investment in an environment in which the financial system -- and paper money backed by the rest of the world’s faith in the U.S. government’s credit -- is viewed as increasingly fragile.

The recently revealed investigation by California authorities into consumer complaints against Goldline International, which has used Beck as a pitchman, and Superior Gold Group (which has not) has put a spotlight on what one liberal leaning politician, Rep. Anthony Weiner, D-N.Y., calls the "unholy alliance" between gold coin sellers, such as Goldline, and conservative talk personalities, such as Beck. Beck, who through his spokesman, Matt Hiltzik, declined to comment for this story, and Goldline marketers portray gold coins as a better alternative to owning bullion in the event that the U.S. government ever decides, as it did under FDR in 1933, to make it illegal for private citizens to own physical gold.

At that time, the U.S. dollar was still pegged to the price of gold; the gold standard was abandoned during the Nixon administration. Rep. Daniel Lungren, R-Calif., has introduced legislation to repeal the section of the health care bill that would trigger the new tax reporting requirement because he says it’s a burden on small businesses. "Large corporations have whole divisions to handle such transaction paperwork but for a small business, which doesn’t have the manpower, this is yet another brick on their back," Lungren said.

in a statement e-mailed to ABCNews.com. “Everyone agrees that small businesses are job creators and the engine which drives the American economy. I am dumbfounded that this Administration is doing all it can to make it more difficult for businesses to succeed rather than doing all it can to help them grow.”

The ICTA’s Piret says identity theft is another concern because criminals may set up shops specifically to extract personal information that would accompany the filing out of a 1099. The office of the National Taxpayer Advocate, a citizen’s ombudsman within the IRS, issued a report June 30 that said the new rule “may present significant administrative challenges to taxpayers and the IRS.”

From ABC News Internet Ventures

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Tentative List of Courses for Federation Workshop at William Holland, June 12-18, 2011

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Editor’s Note: All Federation Week Workshop courses and application details will be published in the Jan 2011 LODESTAR

Enameling with Lynda Williams
At William Holland During Federation Workshop, Oct 9-15, 2011

Class Fee: $65.00
Class Description:
This is a structured class for beginner’s focusing on Scrafitto technique applied to copper. Only opaque enamels will be used. The class fee includes the first project consisting of three cut-out copper shapes and all enamels and jewelry components required to complete a piece of jewelry.

Students will be taught how to manipulate and shape copper pieces into pleasing forms and how to handle enamels, their application, and firing in a professional and safe manner, thus ensuring a beautiful finished piece. Depending on how quickly students learn and complete their projects, there will be time in the class for creating three more pieces of wearable art (or possibly more although the necessity of firing enamels between each coat to achieve the desired effect does lengthen the creative process).

There will be 8 different kits for students to choose from for purchase, at a cost of approximately $22.00 to $25.00 each. Each kit will include three copper components and all materials and enamels necessary to complete jewelry pieces ready for wear. Matching earring components will be included in the kits.

Equipment and supplies to be brought by students:
Colored fingernail polish: 1 or 2 bottles of "weird" colors: black, purple, gaudy yellow, green, turquoise blue. Nothing "normal"
Scrafitto "tools": Hat pins, T pins, large needles. Anything that has a sharp point, from the size of a pin-head to that of a pencil point
Neck wires or chains so that you may wear and display your pendants
An optivisor will make your work easier. Should you not have one, the school usually has some for sale.

Biography:
Lynda Williams is a jewelry artist and a sculptor who often incorporates her love of sculpture into her jewelry creations. She enjoys the pleasure that her work brings to family and friends, not to mention to her many clients. Her interest in copper and enameling began thirty years ago when she trained at the Arkansas Art Center on the kiln and equipment donated to the Center by Jeanette Rockefeller.
She has a B.A. in Arts, and taught art in Arkansas public schools for seventeen years. She has worked as a sculptor creating bas-relief images of historic buildings in Arkansas. Her work has appeared on the Christmas trees of Laure Bush, and she counts among her patrons Mike Huckabee, and Bill Clinton.
For the last five years Lynda has been designing and creating jewelry that has been carried by Jewelry houses in Guatemala, where she now lives. She continues to refine her ability and expand her creativity as she focuses on botanically inspired pendants, broaches, earrings and bracelets. Most of her pieces are layered, to provide depth and to allow fluidity and movement. It is this combination of layering technique and depth of color thru opaque enamels that she hopes to share with her students at the Federation workshop.

Editor’s Note: 2011 Federation Week classes at both William Holland and Wildacres will have several new instructors with new course material and techniques participating for the first time. In order to give prospective students some insight into course content and instructor background, the LODESTAR will feature at least one of these new courses in each edition.
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