FROM YOUR PRESIDENT
Barbara Green

As we approach the end of 2011, it signals the end of my year as your President of SFMS. I have been honored to be able to serve you in this capacity. Thank you to all of you who have worked with me this year. This was a team effort, and I appreciate all that you have done.

As I look back over the past year, I can see some pluses -- we have two more clubs than what we had back in January. I have been delighted to see so many new faces at our SFMS meetings. Newly elected club presidents have taken their duties seriously and are attending federation meetings.

We also have some minuses. People who have served SFMS so well in the past years, are no longer able to continue, so we have positions to fill. This is, of course, an ongoing problem, and I hope some of you new folk will think about stepping up and saying "I'll help". You won't have to do it by yourself. There will be plenty of help from some of us old-timers, but we can't do it all alone.

I was looking at some copies of the Lodestar from 1980 and the major problem that president, Charles Tinman, had then was getting people to volunteer to fill offices. It's not a new problem and I don't think it will ever go away.

One of the purposes of the SFMS as stated in our Constitution and By-Laws is to promote education. We do this by having the four workshops each year.

ARTICLE II - PURPOSES AND OBJECTIVES
Section B. To promote the educational, scientific, and recreational aspects of the hobby in the subjects of Mineralogy, Geology, Archaeology, Lapidary Arts, and other subjects related to the various Earth Sciences.

We need the clubs to participate in this. The schedule will be coming out soon for the 2012 workshops. Please encourage your members to come to the workshops. Not only is it a good educational bargain, but it's fun!

I hope you will give Jason Hamilton, our incoming 2012 President as much help as you have given me. I look forward to maintaining a relationship with the SFMS and encourage you to step up and be counted.

CARL’S EDITORIAL COMMENTARY

This edition’s lead article is about imitation opals and a Minneapolis crook making a killing till caught.

It's time for all SFMS Clubs/Societies to renew their membership. Though the three-page form has been sent to an appropriate representative of each club/society, we reproduce the application herein so that it’s readily available.

Our Safety Committee covers “sneaky things” ranging from banks to politicians.

See the 2011 Junior of the Year report on Page 10 as well as an Education Update and notice of the 2012 Newsletter/Bulletin contest.

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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.

2011 SFMS OFFICERS

President
Barbara Green
116 Sycamore Dr.
Marietta, SC 29661
864.836.5896
greentop@bellsouth.net

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

Second Vice President
Danny Griffin
1320 Byrd Cir.
Kingston, TN 37763
865.406.8802
gcjinc@comcast.net

Secretary
Beryl Ferguson
414 S. Ridgewood Ave.
Ormond Beach, FL 32174
386.589.3593
crossbowcreations@yahoo.com

Membership Secretary
Keri Wetzel
5010 Sunset Drive
Easley, SC 29642
864.306.6749
williamkperri@bellsouth.net

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

Treasurer
Ed Harris
12520 Jeff Hamilton Rd.,
Mobile, AL 36695
251.865.9157
edharrisjr@mchsi.com

Assistant Treasurer
Gene R. Roberts
2980 Oak Road
Orange Park, FL 32065
904.264.5358
icap3@bellsouth.net

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

Editor: Mayo Education Foundation
William G. (Bill) Waggener
1909 Moores Mill Rd.
Atlanta, GA 30318-1309
404.355.7377
wrgwaggerenli@bellsouth.net

2011 SFMS STATE DIRECTORS

Alabama
Iris McGehee
2433 Upper Wetumpka Road
Montgomery, AL 36107
334.262.7275
irisjmcc@aol.com

Georgia
Frank Decaminada
795 Nile Dr.
Alpharetta, GA 30022
770.992.8305
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

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

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

South Carolina
Fred Slais
128 Holly Avenue
Clemson, SC 29631
864.654.6833
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 Jan 2012 Lodestar are due by Dec 30, 2011.

Copyright© 2011 by the Southeast Federation of Mineralogical Societies, inc. Except for items that are specifically copyrighted by their authors, other societies may use material published in Lodestar provided that proper credit is given and the sense or meaning of the material is not changed. - Editor: Carl Talbott
DMC FIELD TRIPS

Jan 7, 2012: Fort Drum, Okeechobee County, FL. The Treasure Coast Rock & Gem Society in Vero Beach, FL is hosting a field trip to the Fort Drum Crystal Mine collecting honey colored calcite in fossil clam and whelk shells, shark teeth, and bone fragments. This is a fee area: $20/adult & $10 for children under 12.

Field trips 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


January 15-16, 2012: DeLand, FL. 39th annual show; Tomoka Gem & Mineral Society; Volusia County Fair Grounds, State Rte. 44; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; adults $4, children 12 and under free. Contact Florence D. Nordquist (386) 226-4032; e-mail: fndesign@aol.com; Web site: www.tomokagms.org

January 28 & 29, 2012: Panama City, FL. Panama City Gem & Mineral Society 21st Annual Show. Location: Bay County Fairgrounds. Contact: Joseph Schings at 850-871-1846 or by email at mojo3002@comcast.net


February 25, 2012: Lakeland, FL. Imperial Bone Valley Gem, Mineral & Fossil Society, 8th Annual Gem, Mineral & Fossil Show & Sale; Sat: 10-4, First Presbyterian Church, 175 Lake Hollingsworth, Lakeland. Show contact: Jim Reed, 863-644-6665 Email contact: rocks57@tampabay.rr.com http://www.bonevalley.net

February 29– March 1, 2012: Panama City, FL. Panama City Gem & Mineral Society. Bay County Fairgrounds, 2230 E. 15th St. Contact: Joseph Schings, 850-871-1846 or e-mail: mojo3002@Comcast.net


March 24-25, 2012: Tampa, FL. "Fossil Fest 2011"; Tampa Bay Fossil Club; Florida State Fairgrounds, US 301 and I-4; Sat. 9-6, Sun.10-4; fossils, artifacts, gems, minerals, shells, exhibits, "how to" seminars, kids' games, fossil mine, raffles, door prizes, silent auction; contact Barbara Fite, (813) 977-0892; e-mail: bfite@tampabay.rr.com; Web site: www.tampabayfossilclub.com


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.
Opals: Natural, Synthetic or Fraudulent

Early last March, federal authorities in Minneapolis arrested an Australian man on charges of selling more than $2 million worth of imitation opals, which he claimed were rare natural specimens from Down Under. According to a criminal complaint reported in the Pioneer Press, Robert John Kane sold more than 50 nationwide jewelry distributors rights to territories along with an inventory of “fake” opals through newspaper ads that promised profit margins between $324,000 and $810,000 per year.

Like selling low-cost beachfront property in Montana, the opal scam is a typical example of how an unscrupulous person can take advantage of a gullible gemstone buyer, said reputable opal dealers. But far more problematic is the industry-wide confusion surrounding what constitutes an imitation opal versus a synthetic opal.

“This is a very difficult area in terms of definition,” said Kenneth Scarratt, lab director of the American Gem Trade Association’s Gemological Testing Center. “There are synthetic opals out there, and there are imitation opals with close properties to synthetics.” A synthetic stone has “virtually identical physical, chemical, and optical properties to its naturally occurring counterpart,” said Gerry Manning of Manning International, the oldest opal dealer in the country. “In other words, a synthetic gemstone is almost identical to a natural gemstone of the same type, but for the fact that it is made in the laboratory and not in the earth.”

But with opals, it’s not unusual to find synthetics that contain a high plastic content – so much so that they display different chemical and physical properties from their lab-grown counterparts. These gems are probably closer to being classes as stimulants, or imitation opals, because they will not meet the FTC’s strict requirements for labeling something a synthetic. Trouble is, without an in-depth laboratory analysis, many buyers will find it very difficult to identify these “pseudo synthetics.”

“Any lab that gives a cursory examination and calls something a synthetic without actually looking at its molecular structure is doing a major disservice to the industry,” said Manning. “Empirical testing has great limits. It does not yield the info necessary to determine if something has plastic or a super silica product.” Manning said the problem has been worsened by the popularity of marketing gemstones on television, where “an unnatural demand has created an unnatural supply.” While exact numbers are impossible to pin down, industry sources said there are far more natural and imitation opals in the marketplace than true synthetics, which are produced by only a handful of reputable companies, including Gilson and Inamore, both based in Japan.

The imitation synthesis of opal – there are no bounds to its production,” said Scarrett. “You can go on producing it forever. The volume is as large as you want to make it.” So, how can you protect yourself from being duped into buying imitations that are passed off as synthetic, or even natural, opals? If you’re not willing to go through destructive analysis to get yourself a comprehensive lab report, use the following guidelines:

(a) Look for the telltale “lizard-skin” or “chicken-wire” patterns on the opal to determine whether it’s been manufactured in a lab [ed. comment: of course, a badly crazed natural opal could have the same look].
(b) The easiest way to determine origin is by price. “If it’s too cheap, it’s got to be imitation,” said Manning. Simulated opal is generally about 100 to 1,000 times cheaper than comparable color and quality natural material, while a true synthetic sells for about 10 to 100 times less than natural. (Kane paid between 50¢ and $1.50 per carat for his opals.)

(c) “If it’s sticks to the touch, that’s another indication that it’s an imitation,” said Manning.

(d) Try this [potentially destructive] experiment: hold the sample in a pair of tweezers and light a match under it for about 20 seconds. “If it carbonizes quickly, that will indicate a high content of resins,” said Manning. “Hold it longer and if you get an odor, that will indicate that it’s glued” – and therefore imitation.

[Editor’s Note: This article, by an unidentified author, found on the internet is linked to www.pinfire.de. Many an opal buyer (including my wife during a trip to Australia a decade ago) have been fooled into buying imitation opals for natural opal prices. Nonetheless, with regards to item (d) above, this editor does not recommend putting a flame to a valuable opal.]

[P.S. And now for Chapter 2 of this Kane story … again from the internet … now, we don’t know if Kane was delivering capped doubles or the standard variety. Had Kane argued that doublets are still opals, just not solid natural opals, he may have had a legal leg to stand on. Take an opals class at William Holland School of Lapidary Arts, and you will be able to recognize the difference.]

A Minneapolis, MN man, Robert John Kane, pleaded guilty on Oct 1, 2011 to orchestrating a $2.3 million mail-fraud scheme involving the sale of opal distributorships, mostly through newspaper ads.

More than fifty people paid him between $10,000 and $96,000 for a distribution territory and inventory of gems which they were told came from his opal mine in Australia and could be sold for $90 per carat.

In fact, they were actually thin slices of opal glued to other cheaper stones, known as "doublets," which came from a Des Moines gemstone distributor and cost him less than $1.50 per carat.

Kane also pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit fraud and tax evasion while his "national sales director," Gloria J. Quinn, pleaded guilty to conspiring in the scheme.

They both await sentencing.
SOUTHEAST FEDERATION OF MINERALOGICAL SOCIETIES, INC.
APPLICATION FOR 2012 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Club/Society Name ____________________________________________________________

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL: Due January 1, 2012 through January 31, 2013
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 attached
Annual Dues Check (No cash please), based on total members, both Adults & Juniors, on Club/Society rolls as of December 31, 2011.

Annual Dues:
Total Number of Adult Members __________
Total Number of Junior Members __________
Total Number of Members __________ @ $1.25 = $__________

Check Number

* 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, 2012.

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, 2012!

Name of Club/Society ________________________________________________________
Club Mailing Address ________________________________________________________
City_________________________ State_____ Zip__________

Meeting Place (facility) ___________________________________________ Day_________ Time_________
Mailing Address __________________________________________________________
City_________________________ State_____ Zip__________
Elected Officials

(List all officers elected by membership vote & title of office held)

Month Officers: Elected _______ Take Office _________
Officers elected: Annually _____ Other (be specific) __________

President ____________________________ Phone____________ Email________________
Mailing Address _____________________________________________________________
City_________________________ State_______ Zip_________

1st Vice President _______________________ Phone____________ Email________________
Mailing Address _____________________________________________________________
City_________________________ State_______ Zip_________

2nd Vice President _____________________ Phone____________ Email________________
Mailing Address _____________________________________________________________
City_________________________ State_______ Zip_________

Corresponding Secretary __________________ Phone____________ Email________________
Mailing Address _____________________________________________________________
City_________________________ State_______ Zip_________

Recording Secretary ___________________________ Phone____________ Email________________
Mailing Address _____________________________________________________________
City_________________________ State_______ Zip_________

Treasurer _______________________________ Phone____________ Email________________
Mailing Address _____________________________________________________________
City_________________________ State_______ Zip_________

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

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____
Person in your Club/Society to receive renewal form(s) for next year Renewal in 2013

Mailing Address __________________________ Phone __________ Email __________________________
City __________________________ State ______ Zip __________________________

Federation Liaison __________________________ Phone __________ Email __________________________
Mailing Address __________________________
City __________________________ State ______ Zip __________________________

COMMITTEE CHAIRS:

Committee __________________________________ Phone __________________________ Email __________________________
Mailing Address __________________________
City __________________________ State ______ Zip __________________________

Committee __________________________________ Phone __________________________ Email __________________________
Mailing Address __________________________
City __________________________ State ______ Zip __________________________

Committee __________________________________ Phone __________________________ Email __________________________
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Committee __________________________________ Phone __________________________ Email __________________________
Mailing Address __________________________
City __________________________ State ______ Zip __________________________

Committee __________________________________ Phone __________________________ Email __________________________
Mailing 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 __________________________
Mailing Address __________________________
City __________________________ State ______ Zip __________________________

Vender Chair __________________________________ Phone __________________________ Email __________________________
Mailing Address __________________________
City __________________________ State ______ Zip __________________________

Show Facility __________________________________ Show Dates __________________________
Mailing Address __________________________
City __________________________ State ______ Zip __________________________

Signature of person submitting this application ____________________________________________
Office Held ____________________________________________________________
**BE SAFE – BE WELL**

Don Monroe & Linda Behr - Safety Committee

**Sneaky Things**

I dislike sneaky things. When I began this article I began by saying that I hate sneaky things, but I changed that because I do not want to insult anyone and hate is a strong word. The idea for this article came from a long deceased great aunt who never would tell anyone what she wanted for Christmas. She would only publish a “don’t want” list which we all understood and complied with just like the Marines and other military groups do today when they shout HUA (hoo-ah) which means heard, understood and will comply.

My list of sneaky things is not very long but does have an impact on our health and welfare. Near the top of my dislike list are speed traps. In many of the rural areas of the country speed traps seem to be a popular method of raising money for the town treasury. If you are not a resident of the particular area you may not know that the speed trap exists. Your best indicator is to watch the local drivers in front of you. If they slow down suddenly for no apparent reason, you better slow down until you are driving as slowly as they are.

Bank charges have become very popular and can be levied with little or no warning. These charges are often “greed motivated” and frequently have no relationship to the service rendered by the bank. Think about changing banks.

Thieves, liars and cheats seem to be more prevalent during hard economic times. Never assume that these people are limited to people that you do not know or that they really need the money. As my sainted father often said, you have never really been “had” until you have been taken by a relative or acquaintance.

Health problems can really sneak up on you. Many are diet related such as gout and obesity. I know you may be reading this during the holiday season, and not one of you enjoys overeating more than I do. It is a never-ending fight. Some problems can be the result of an injury and there is nothing as sneaky as phlebitis which can result from a splinter or a tack in your shoe. It is somewhat uncommon but if you haven’t thought about it in a long time, read up on it. This time of the year is a popular time for colds and flu and stuff like that. Stay away from those who are sneezing and coughing. If your grocery store offers wipes for the buggy handles, use them.

Varmints get hungry in the winter and will go to great extremes to find food (your food). I don’t worry as much about the bears because they were here first and they lack a sense of humor and will protect their young. I have been a hunter all of my life but I will not kill a bear, even the one that keeps getting up on our front porch and eating the bird seed. Rodents I do not like, and I really dislike raccoons because down here many of them are rabid. This is not good. Squirrels, opossums and foxes are fine in my book. According to my brother, who is a wildlife biologist, the opossum is only guilty of being ugly and eating anything but does not carry any disease. (I know some people who may fall in this category).

I will not relinquish the pen until I comment on crooked politicians and those in power at any level in our society. Vote them out wherever you find them.

Last, but not least, we must not forgive those who abuse women, children and the elderly. We can only hope that they will ultimately get what they deserve.

**In closing, we wish all a happy holiday season.**

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

**Notice of SFMS’ Executive Meeting in Daytona, FL**

Host club: Tomoka Gem & Mineral Society

Location: Comfort Suites
90 Professional Blvd.
Daytona Beach, FL 32114

Room cost: $59.95 per night (including continental breakfast)

Friday, January 13, 7p.m.: Cracker Barrel Discussion
Saturday, January 14, 8:30 am Registration
9:00 am Executive Meeting

Report on 2011 Junior of the Year
Bonita L Harris, SFMS Youth Resources Chairperson

It was exciting to have had so many Southeast Federation Mineralogical Societies, Inc. (SFMS) Junior of the Year (JOY) 2011 participants. In all, there were eight wonderful junior rockhounds. This year the top four JOY applicants were two sets of siblings from two different clubs and states. Erica Nathan of Tomoka Gem and Mineral Society (TGMS) placed 1st in this prestigious competition. Matthew Lambert of North Mississippi Gem and Mineral Society (NMGMS) placed second. Jett Jackson (TGMS) at 6 years of age was the youngest participant ever during my years of office. The leaders of the local club and the parents deserve a round of applause for supporting the junior rockhounds in this rewarding endeavor. It is quite a challenge to compile all the points.

Erica will receive a first place standing plaque and mineral/fossil specimen. Matthew will receive a 2nd place certificate and mineral/fossil specimen. Kacie Cox (TGMS), Kevin Dance (TGMS), Jett A Jackson (TGMS), Brittani Lambert (NMGMS), Mitch Nathan (TGMS), and Nicolas Valery (TGMS) will receive "Recognition of Participation" certificates and an award. These certificates and awards will be mailed the first week in December to the club address listed on the SFMS website.

I will not be in this SFMS position next year, but I do want to encourage the clubs to have their junior rockhounds apply for the upcoming 2012 workshop scholarship for juniors and the Junior of the Year 2012 competition later in the year. Information on these opportunities will be posted in SFMS’s newsletter, the Lodestar.

SFMS Education Update
Kathy Morris, Education Chairperson

I would like to thank Lisa Roberts for doing a wonderful job as Registrar for the SFMS William Holland Workshops the past two years. Lisa had a tough job and handled all situations with tact and courtesy. Thank you again Lisa.

Our new Registrars for the SFMS William Holland Workshops are Addy and Joe DePietro. Addy and Joe have taught for Federation many, many times; know how our Workshops function; and are familiar with many of the students. Thank you, Addy and Joe, for volunteering.

The dates for the 2012 SFMS Workshops are as follows:

Wildacres         August, 20-26, 2012
                   September 10-16, 2012
William Holland   June 10-16, 2012
                   October 7-13, 2012

The class schedules will be available January Issue of the Lodestar. Please look for them and sign up for one of our classes. Look for our ad in the Lapidary Journal in January and February.

2012 Newsletter/Bulletin Contest

The entry deadline for the 2012 SFMS Newsletter/Bulletin Contest is January 31, 2012. Please submit your contest category entrees to Kathy Morris, Bulletin Chairman, 551 Grayce Lane, Hiawassee, GA 30546. Phone 252-571-5050 (cell). SFMS’s 1st place winners are entered in the AFMS competition later this year.
The policy of the Southeast Federation of Mineralogical Societies, Inc. is that neither the name nor the logo of the Federation may be used for commercial purposes. If any commerce determines the name or the logo of the Federation are found, Member Societies and their members are requested to advise Federation Officers.