



FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

Barbara Green



It's Springtime here in the Upstate. The last few weeks have seen warmer temperatures, and I'm starting to get pollen allergy reports in my emails. I'm sure we'll still have some cold weather before Spring settles in for good, but we've certainly enjoyed the good weather while we can.

In taking a look at the show programs listed on the SFMS website, I can also tell it is Spring, because more shows are starting to be scheduled. On March 11, 12 & 13, we will be off to Augusta, Georgia to take in their show and our SFMS Executive Session. If you are the President of your local club, I hope you have made your arrangements to come. If you are unable to attend, make sure your club's designated representative is coming in your place. Be sure and let Beryl Ferguson, SFMS Secretary, know if you or your representative is attending.

Bob and I have gone to this show before. We were very impressed by all of the various members who were participating and showing off their talents. There is a lot to see & do. I hope to see you all there. I also want to thank the Aiken/Augusta clubs for hosting this meeting and Wayne Parker in particular for all of the work he has done to put this together.

Be thinking about next year. Contact Jason Hamilton, SFMS 1st Vice President and let him know if your club is willing to host an executive session or an annual meeting. The meeting locations need to be spread around, so that everyone has a chance to attend without traveling long distances all of the time.

We still have openings in the SFMS Committee Chairs. Think about volunteering for one of these positions. The Federation is only as strong as the people who are willing to serve. Feel free to contact me if you would like to help out.

See you in Augusta.



CARL'S EDITORIAL COMMENTARY

Kempton Roll, a retired metallurgical engineer and member of the Southern Appalachian Mineral Society, describes "rare earths" deposits in the Southeast region starting on Page 4 and asks why these key resources are not being economically exploited within the U.S.

Mike Streeter, SFMS' State Director for North Carolina, advises on Page 7 a proposed USFS restriction on rockhounding at the Ray Mines in Yancey County. Individual members are invited to read about these proposed restrictions and provide feedback to the USFS prior to March 12, 2011.

SFMS educational workshop opportunities are at Page 9 and an application to partake of same is at Page 10.

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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.

2011 SFMS OFFICERS

President

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

First Vice President

Jason Hamilton
7141 Natal 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
386.589.3583
crossbowcreations@yahoo.com

Membership Secretary

Kerri Wetzel
5010 Sunset Drive
Easley, SC 29642
864.306.6749
williamkerri@bellsouth.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

Immediate Past President

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

AFMS President-Elect

Don Monroe
350 Lapidary Lane
Young Harris, GA. 30582
706.379.9662
donmonroe@windstream.net

President: Mayo Education

Foundation
William G. (Bill) Waggener
1909 Moores Mill Rd.
Atlanta, GA 30318-1309
404.355.7377
wqwaggenerii@bellsouth.net



2011 SFMS STATE DIRECTORS

Alabama

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

Florida

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



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

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 Sias
120 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 April 2011 *Lodestar* are due by March 25, 2011.

FIELD TRIPS

March 12, 2011: Martin Marietta Quarry, Kings Mountain, NC. An Official Field Trip of Gaston County Gem, Mineral & Faceting Club (Gastonia, NC). The minerals found in this area include most of the species found in the Foote mine including the usual assemblage of lithium pegmatite: spodumene, quartz, and feldspar. The area is known for the large number of unusual lithium, tin and beryllium minerals, especially phosphate minerals, which are found in fractures in the pegmatite. The Foote Mine has been shut down since 1992 and the mine dumps have been closed to collectors for approximately 20 years. These dump areas on the Martin Marietta property are the only material from the Foote Mine that have been "turned over" since the mines closure.

April 30, 2011: Girard, Burke County, GA. An Official Field Trip of The Cotton Indian Gem & Mineral Society, Stockbridge, GA. Collecting Savannah River Agate, fossils and micro minerals. This material is actually a conglomeration of agate, jasper, chert, and opalite all mixed together to form a layered specimen that will tumble or cab into beautiful display pieces. This rock occurs as black and brown mottled agate and in a large range of pastel colors from greens to yellows to violets. The fossils you may find are from 30-35 million years old Oligocene age deposits. The micro minerals are located in vugs of the agate/chert rock.

April 29, 30 & May 1: Graves Mountain "Rock Swap and Dig". The caretaker in charge of Graves Mountain, Clarence Norman Jr., has announced plans to hold two three day digs and rock swaps on the Mountain during 2011 (one in April & the other in Oct). He will have the mountain open to collecting from 8 am to 6 pm each day. All participants must stop at the welcome table in the Hospitality tent to sign a liability release and make a small contribution to defray the cost of opening the mountain and providing port-o-lets. There will be several golf cart type, four wheeled vehicles available to transport those participants who have trouble walking long distances. The dig will cease and everyone is expected to be off the mountain by around 6 pm each day.

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

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 schmidwj@Eckerd.edu

March 11-13, 2011: Augusta, GA - Aiken Gem, Mineral & Fossil Society. 23rd Annual Aiken-Augusta Gem, Mineral and Fossil Show, Julian Smith Casino, 2200 Broad St. Hours: Fri & Sat 10am-7pm, Sun 10am-4 pm. Admission: \$3 Adult, children under 16 FREE with an adult. Contact: www.aikengmfs.org or www.augustagemandmineralsociety.org.

March 12, 2011: Bartow, FL-Imperial Bone Valley Gem, Mineral, and Fossil Society. Polk County Extension Service Building, Highway 17 S. Contact Cindy at 863-255-5256.

June 17-19, 2011: Asheville, NC - Southern Appalachian Mineral Society. Asheville Gem Fest 2011, Pack Place, 2 South Pack Square (Downtown Asheville). Hours: Fri & Sat 10 AM - 6 PM, Sun 12 noon - 5 PM. Free admission, minerals, gems, jewelry, fossils, kids' activities, silent auction, door prizes. Contact (828) 254-7162 or www.colburnmuseum.org

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

THE “2011 RARE EARTHS RUSH”

By Kempton Roll, Southern Appalachian Mineral Society

Seeing the words ‘rare earths’ is rapidly becoming not so rare. All nations with mountains containing pegmatite intrusions are beginning to realize they’ve struck a bonanza of minerals that are the source of very valuable metals. Considered almost worthless before WWII, rare earth metals are selling at prices far above what they were a few years ago. And increasing rapidly.

It’s the metallic elements and chemical compounds that can be made from them that are fast becoming absolutely essential in modern manufacturing technology. Rare earths are the key ingredients necessary to enhance the performance of a multitude of today’s high technology products. They possess unique physical properties ideal for applications that cannot be achieved with other metals. Even in miniscule amounts the unique properties they possess make them vital ingredients in today’s way of life ranging from hard drives and microchips in computers to cyberspace communication devices and critical components in hybrid cars. Just half a penny’s worth of *neodymium* helps a cell phone vibrate. The “flint” that creates sparks in a lighter depends on *cerium*, a rare earth metal derived from the mineral, *cerite*. Special steel alloys for jet engines, precision-guided weapons, lasers, wind turbines, flat-screen TVs, tiny powerful magnets and even fiber optics all depend on one or more of the rare earth metals or compounds.

In short, rare earths metals have become extremely important in every industrialized nation’s economy, manufacturing technology and defense capabilities. Yet their mineral ore sources are actually not as rare as one might think. They’ve just been ignored. Until now.

What Are Rare Earths?

The term “rare earth” refers to the group of fifteen elements with atomic numbers 57 through 71 in the Periodic Table plus *yttrium* and *monazite*. They were first discovered by Johann Gadolin in 1794 but due to difficulty in separating the elements by atomic weight, the full range of rare earth metals was not complete until more advanced separation techniques were developed in the twentieth century. Best known are *cerium*, *lanthanum*, *yttrium*, *dysprosium* and *samarium*. They are all characterized by high density, high melting points and high electrical and thermal conductivity. Mixtures of rare earths can be refined into metals, oxides and salts.

The primary sources of all rare earth mineral ores are pegmatites and fine-grained granites. *Alanite*, *cerite*, *euxenite*, *fergusonite*, *formanite*, *monazite* and *samarskite* are their most important ores. Of those, *alanite* is the most abundant and widely distributed primarily in pegmatite deposits. Black to brownish-black in color, it can form as massive, bladed or granular aggregates. The photo (on the left) of an *alanite*/*biotite* aggregate was taken inside a Carolina pegmatite mine. Besides consisting of 20% rare earths oxides, alanite can also contain thorium (not a rare earth metal) and radioactive uranium oxides (autunite and uraninite). Some abandoned pegmatite mine wastes in North and South Carolina have been the source of *fergusonite* as secondary inclusions and in Amelia, VA as large crystals. *Monazite* is found in New England and both Carolinas as well as Virginia. Its high thorium content accounts for Thomas Edison’s interest in Western North Carolina mines back in the late 1800s when he needed thorium-based chemicals for gas lamp mantles. *Samarskite* occurs chiefly in pegmatites associated with columbite, monazite, clevelandite, zircon, beryl, muscovite, albite, topaz, garnet and tourmaline. Large masses weighing up to twenty pounds have been found in some North Carolina pegmatites.



Contrary to their names’ implication, rare earths are widely distributed and fairly abundant in the earth’s crust. The largest known reserves are found in China, Australia, North America and Russia. Renewed mining

operations are starting up in Australia and California where they ceased in 2002. Production is also being increased at mines in India and Vietnam. China presently is the world's largest producer of rare earths: and for some of them, the only producer. According to Australian authorities, China possesses 35% of known global reserves of rare earths minerals but supplies more than 95% of the demand of which 60% is domestic. With some "heavy" rare earths, such as *dysprosium* which helps magnets keep their properties at high temperatures, its own market share is nearly 100%.

Where Does The USA Stand?

As a nation and major consumer of these metals the United States is growing rapidly as a consumer but shrinking even faster as a producer. For the most part, the ores are still in the ground just ignored and untouched. Though abundant in nature, especially in pegmatite dike intrusions, extracting metal from them is very difficult and costly; recycling even more so. Another reason why they've been ignored involves pegmatite mining methods. While the Southern Appalachian Mountains are well known to all rockhounds because of their unique, easily recognizable and recoverable mineralization, they were being mined during the last century primarily for their high grade mica, feldspar and quartz content. And they still are in the Spruce Pine area of North Carolina (see photo below). During those early years "hand-cobbing" was the only way to separate unwanted matrix minerals and use them as back-fill or abandon them as surface "tailings". It is most likely that all the rare earth minerals associated with these pegmatites were considered a nuisance by the mine operators and simply discarded. Neither did they hold much appeal for rockhound collectors, but at least they were visible in the tailings and could be collected.

Modern mining and mineral concentration techniques changed all this. Today the highly efficient, labor-saving "flotation process" for separating the primary minerals - mica, feldspar and quartz – requires grinding the ore plus all its other matrix minerals into a granulated sludge. No more tailings from which rockhounds could collect the 'good stuff' much less the rare earth minerals. Nowadays nearly everything hauled out of a pegmatite mine is trucked away and crushed into fine particles. All its mineral contents are destined to suffer the same sad fate as the crushed aquamarines, sapphires, garnets, tourmalines, etc. that also typically occur in those pegmatites. But at least all those rare earth minerals are still there and, hopefully, recoverable in some form or other.

Where Are These Mines?

The United States Geological Survey reports that known placer deposits of rare earth minerals exist in the Appalachian foothills of both North and South Carolina and along the beaches of Georgia and Florida where they're mixed with the black "heavy" sand particles. Most of these deposits are the result of weathering of ancient pegmatite intrusions and the tumbling action of sea surf. All during the last century, the best known exposed and mineable pegmatite intrusion areas in the eastern United States were open-pit mines first operated in Paris, Maine and later in Middletown, Connecticut where some were mined primarily for their gem-quality tourmaline and aquamarine crystals. Opaque beryl crystals also common in these deposits were usually recovered as the ore for beryllium metal. But all those early pegmatite dike intrusions have been worked out commercially. The only recent and still active ones are in North Carolina's Yancey, Macon and Mitchell counties. While many of the earlier ones, such as every rockhound's favorite, the Ray Mine complex near Burnsville, NC, have already been abandoned, many in the Spruce Pine, NC area are still active.

It is not inconceivable that property owners with access to abandoned hand-cobbed pegmatite open pit mines could re-work the tailings for its rare earth minerals that even the most dedicated rockhounds had been ignoring. Should they also recover a few facetable aquamarines, garnets or tourmalines, so much the better. At least they weren't cruelly crushed to death in a flotation mill!

The photo to the left was taken recently when a shelf of pegmatite was being blasted at the Wakefield Mine in Spruce Pine, NC.



What's Happening Now

Some American economists have put rare earths-producing countries in the same category as the oil-rich OPEC nations citing how they have gotten a strangle hold on all industrialized nations requiring oil for energy. Those economists apparently are not aware that *inorganic* metals and *organic* petroleum are entirely different. Oil is expendable. The metal's "supply and demand game" can go on forever. It's only a question of who's got them and if they are willing to trade them with other nations who need them.

The rate of worldwide industrialization and subsequent globalization of their economies has increased remarkably since the beginning of the new century. On March 17, 2010, the Assistant Secretary of Energy for Policy and International Affairs announced that the U.S. Department of Energy is developing its first-ever strategic plan concerning rare earth metals and minerals. With 97% of production controlled by China, the implementation of a ban by them on the export of rare earths is a move that could have a drastic crippling impact right now on industries around the globe. The only possible exception seems to be Australia where they are actively mining some rare earths-rich pegmatites (and just as actively promoting investment in their company's stock!). Other foreign governments and mining companies may also support alternative sources if only to avoid a Chinese monopoly.

The Future Outlook For America

Because the market demand for rare earth minerals and metals is in the process of making them far more valuable than they've ever been, now seems to be the time for those involved in the pegmatite mining industry, or at least familiar with mineral resources, to take a closer look at abandoned mine waste minerals: the ones that had been used for back-fill or tailings detritus.

Now seems to be the time to start prospecting for rare earths minerals wherever pegmatite dikes are located in the Appalachians. Old dikes that have already been mined out and whose owners discarded whatever was not considered saleable in those days doubtless still have some of this re-discovered mineral treasure hidden on their premises under years of Nature's debris.

Active mine operators may still rescue unattractive yet rare earths minerals before they are cast aside or sold as road-fill. Better still, mineral ore treatment and recovery researchers like those operating the NC State Mineral Research Laboratory in Asheville and flotation mill operators themselves might start looking for a "soap" that will enable them to separate and collect crushed rare earths minerals from their mountains of sludge. Who knows, the sludge that also contains all those beautiful gemstones could also become part of the "2011 Rare Earths Rush"!

References:

The Economist, October 2, 2010

Shaub, B.M., Treasures From the Earth: The World of Rocks and Minerals, , Crown Publishers, Inc. NYpp 140-2

USGS Scientific Investigations Report 2010-5220: The Principal Rare Earth Elements Deposits of the United States

NC State Mineral Research Laboratory, Coxe Avenue, Asheville, NC

Internet:

[PIDC: Nanotechnology at Work](#)

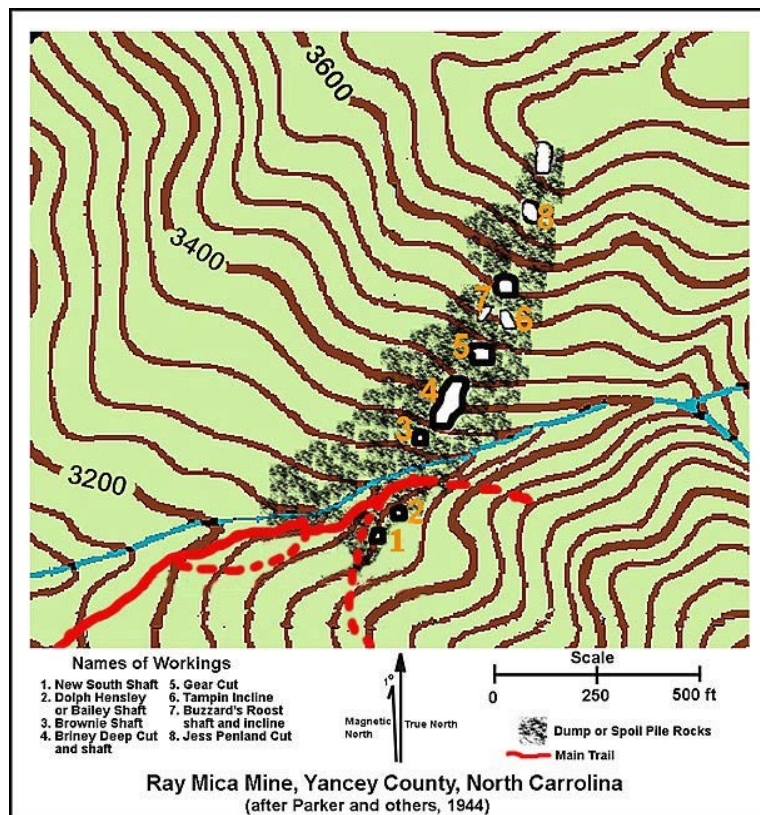
[HTTP:periodictable.com/elements/058/index.HTML](http://periodictable.com/elements/058/index.HTML) (excellent full color photos and descriptions of rare earths minerals)

[HTTP://vaneck.com/funds/REMX](http://vaneck.com/funds/REMX)

RAY MINE CLOSURES

By Mike Streeter, SFMS North Carolina State Director

According to a notice I just received in the mail from the US Forest Service, Pisgah National Forest, Appalachian Ranger District, a specific area for rockhounding for the Ray Mica Mine has been designated; it is north of the un-named creek that flows through the base of the spoil piles. Rockhounding outside the designated area, including along the creek, is not allowed. The USFS has also proposed to close four existing shafts at the Ray and Little Ray Mines. These mines are the Dolph Hensley or Bailey shaft, the Brownie shaft, the New South shaft and one of the Little Ray Mine shafts. The locations of these mines can be seen on the following maps taken from my field trip reports:



You can see the proposal by clicking on the following link: <http://mcrocks.com/images-5/RayMinesClosure.pdf> As indicated on page 3, you can submit questions or concerns to the USFS prior to March 12, 2011 for their consideration.

Again, as it stands right now, rockhounding (digging) is no longer allowed along the creek, but there is a large area just to the north where plenty of excellent minerals may be found with some effort (see map on page 4 of the above proposal for location). Please adhere to the new rules and hopefully we will be able to collect at the Ray for many years to come.

Editor's Note: The Ray Mine in Yancey County, NC (northeast of Asheville) with its various workings are sources for amazonite, beryl, black & green tourmaline, aquamarine, apatite, thulite, and fluorite. The USFS Appalachian/Tocane Ranger District contact is Tina Tilley, 828-682-6342, P.O. Box 128, Burnsville, NC 28714.

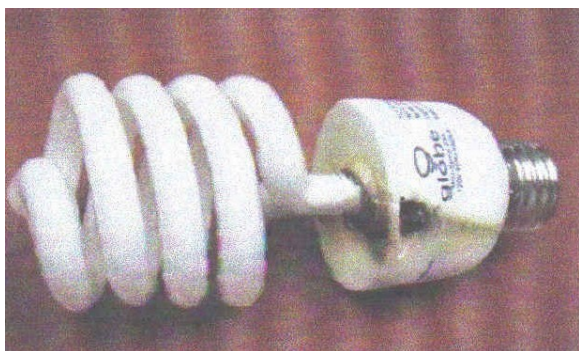
BE SAFE – BE WELL

Don Monroe & Linda Behr - Safety Committee

Compact Florescent Light (CFL) Bulbs

Below is a picture of a CFL light bulb from my bathroom. I turned it on the other day and then smelled smoke after a few minutes. Soon, four-inch flames were spewing out of the side of the ballast like a blow torch! I immediately turned off the lights, but I'm sure it would have caused a fire if I was not right there. Imagine if the kids had left the lights on as usual when they were not in the room.

I took this bulb to the Fire Department and reported the incident. The firefighter wasn't at all surprised and said that it was not an uncommon occurrence. Apparently, sometimes when the bulb burns out there is a chance that the ballast can start a fire. He told me that the Fire Marshall had issued reports about the dangers of these bulbs.



Upon doing some internet research, it seems that bulbs made by "Globe" in China have the lion's share of problems. Many of these fire incidents have been blamed on misuse of CFL bulbs like using them in recessed lighting, pot light fixtures, track lighting, or in light fixtures with dimmer controls. Mine was installed in a conventional light socket.

I bought this Globe brand CFL at Wal-Mart; however, I will be removing all the Globe brand CFL bulbs from my house. CFL bulbs are a great energy saver but make sure you buy a name brand like Sylvania, Phillips, or GE and not the ones from China.

Spring SFMS Executive Board Meeting Augusta, GA - March 11 & 12

Host Club - Augusta Gem & Mineral Society

Meeting will be held in conjunction with the 23rd Annual Aiken-Augusta Gem, Mineral & Fossil Show. Show dates are Friday, Saturday & Sunday - March 11-13 at Julian Smith Casino 2200 Broad St., Augusta, GA. The show facility is only about 4 miles from the host hotel.

The host hotel is Clarion Suites located at 3038 Washington Rd., Augusta, GA 30907. Cracker Barrel and the Spring Meeting will be held at the host hotel. To reserve your room please call 706-868-1800 and mention "Southeast Federation of Mineralogical Societies" to obtain the group rate with is \$79 plus 13% tax. A full breakfast bar is included and is open from 7 - 10 a.m. Also included are 2 drink tickets (either alcoholic or non-alcoholic) to be used at the Manager's Reception Friday evening from 5 - 7 p.m.

We look forward to having all of you in Augusta. Please let me know if there is any other information that you need. [Wayne Parker, Treasurer, Augusta Gem & Mineral Society 706-863-9171 parker-wayne9@comcast.net](mailto:Wayne.Parker@comcast.net)

2011 SFMS WORKSHOP CLASS SCHEDULE

Workshop Staff

Wildacres Director, Julia Larson

204 37th Ave North, #250
St. Petersburg, FL 33704
727-522-1254

Email: wadir2011@yahoo.com

William Holland Directors, Denise & Carl Talbott

216 Spring View Drive
Murphy, NC 28906
828-494-7213

Email: dtalbott@bellsouth.net

Wildacres Registrars, David and Leslie Wayment

8802 N US Hwy 1 Suite 10
Sebastian, FL 32958
Phone 772-532-6432
772-539-2409

Email: aastainedglass@bellsouth.net

William Holland Registrar, Lisa Roberts

996 Indian River Boat Dock Rd
Jacksboro, TN 37757
Phone 423-562-9555

Email: whregistrar10@yahoo.com

Education Chairman, Kathy Morris

557 Grayce Lane
Hiwassee, GA 30546
706-896-3256
252-571-5050

Email: klmorris45@hotmail.com

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 one of these classes, please do not exclude yourself without contacting the instructor first.

SESSION ONE - WILLIAM HOLLAND

SUNDAY, June 12-18, 2011

Beading, Seed	Barbara Green
Cabochons	Richard Shackleton
Chain Making	Dee & Bill Conybear
Enameling	Bob Mattingly
Faceting	Bill Roberts
Lampwork	Ann Royer
Mineral ID	Scott Forward
Opals	Sarah Lee Boyce
Silver I	Don Roberts
Silver II	Vicky Prillaman
*Silver Filigree	Stafford/Warrick
Wire I	Velima Lawson

SESSION TWO - WILDACRES

MONDAY, August 22 - 28, 2011

Cabochons	Pat Davis
Enameling/Cold Conn	Renee Kelly
Faceting	Steve Hillenbrand
Fused Glass	Rich Dillon
Gem ID	Mary Lou Kick
*Metalsmithing - Advanced	Jeff Shears
*Silver, Filigree	Shannon Stafford & Annette Gibney
*Stone Setting	Don Roberts
Wire, Beginning	Velima Lawson

SESSION THREE - WILDACRES

MONDAY, September 12 - 18, 2011

Cabochons	Anita Westlake
Casting	John Iacullo
Chain, Beginning	Kathy Morris
Lampwork	Linda White
Mineral ID	Scott Forward
Raku Beads	Jim Cullen
Silver Cold Connection	Charlotte Caughman
*Silver, Filigree	Shannon Stafford & Annette Gibney

SESSION FOUR - WILLIAM HOLLAND

SUNDAY, October 9-16, 2011

Bead Weaving	Ron Midkiff
Cabochons	Anita Westlake
Chain Making	Dee & Bill Conybear
Enameling	Lynda Williams
Faceting	Mary Lou Kick
Fused Glass	Addy DePietro
Jadeite Bas-Relief Carving	Bill Smith
Lampworking	Cindy Reed
Opals	Joe DePietro
*Silver Filigree	Stafford/Warrick
*Southwest Silver	Dan Haga
*Silver II	Vicki Prillaman
Wire I	Judy Peppers

2011 SFMS WORKSHOP REGISTRATION FORM

SESSION: ◇ William Holland June 12-18 ◇ Wildacres August 22-28 (check one) ◇ Wildacres September 12-18 ◇ William Holland October 9-15
ACCOMMODATIONS: ◇ Lodge ◇ Day Student ◇ Campground (Wm Holland only)

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

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.)

Class Selection

****** PLEASE LIST ALTERNATES******

	First Choice	1 st time taking class?	Second Choice	Third Choice
Student #1		Y N		Y N
Spouse #2		Y N		Y N

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:
 - * \$310 double occupancy or \$470 single.
 - * \$140 day student or camper.
- * Wildacres:
 - * \$330 double occupancy or \$490 single.
 - * \$160 day student.
- * Non members add \$50.00 to all Tuition fees

William Holland Campsite Fee: \$120 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.

2011 SFMS Committee Chairmen**Nominations**

Mark Easterbrook
6701 Dorchester Road Apt 1007
North Charleston, SC 29418
843.552.1049
asgardsgc@earthlink.net

SFMS Field Trip Committee

Jim Flora
P.O. Box 608
Hiawassee, GA 30546
706.896.8040
jimflora@windstream.net

Publications

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

Stamp Program

Jim Robinson
1058 Wilderland Drive
Jacksonville, FL 32225
904.221.5038
jrh30@netzero.net

Youth Resources

Bonita Harris
12520 Jeff Hamilton Road
Mobile, AL 36695
251.865.9157
bonitaharris@netzero.net

Webmaster

Jim Flora
P.O. Box 605
Hiawassee, GA 30546
706.896.8040
jimflora@windstream.net

President

William (Bill) G. Waggener
1909 Moores Mill Road
Atlanta, GA 30318-1309
404.355.7377

Long Range Planning

John Wright
3304 Nottingham Road
Ocean Springs, MS 39564-4113
228.875.9192
osjbw@datasync.com

Education

Kathy Morris
557 Grayce Lane.
Hiawassee, GA 30547
706.896.3256
klmorris45@hotmail.com

Safety

Don Monroe
350 Lapidary Lane
Young Harris, GA 30582
706.379.9662
donmonroe@windstream.net

Supplies

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

2011 Annual Meeting Host

Dr. John Rasmussen
P.O. Box 1663
Easley, SC 28641
864.607.6990
jarasmussen@alum.rpi.edu

William Holland Director

Denise & Carl Talbott
216 Spring View Drive
Murphy, NC 28906
828.494.7213
dtalbott@bellsouth.net

Bulletin Editors' Contest

-OPEN-

Historian

-OPEN-

Slide/Video Programs

Freda Hull
P.O. Box 115
Grant, FL 32949
321.725.0847
frehull@bellsouth.net

Uniform Rules

Roy Deere
7041 Rhodes Place
W. Melbourne, FL 32904
321.725.9179

Wildacres Director

Julia Larson
204 37th Ave North, #250
St. Petersburg, FL 33704
727-522-1254
Email: wadir2011@yahoo.com

William Holland Registrar

Lisa Roberts
996 Indian River Boat Dock Road
Jacksboro, TN 37757
(423) 562-9555
whregistrar10@yahoo.com

Constitution/By-Laws

Travis Paris
5064 Malmbsbury Rd.
Knoxville, TN 37421
865.691.8228
taparis@msn.com

Insurance Liaison

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

Social Concerns

- OPEN -

Ways & Means

Whit McMillan
7125 Windmill Creek Road
Charleston, SC 29414
843.763.9545
burrfish65@yahoo.com

Wildacres Registrar

David & Leslie Waymont
8802 N US Hwy 1 Suite 10
Sebastian, FL 32958
Phone 772-532-6432
772-539-2409
Email: aastainedglass@bellsouth.net

Public Relations

Herb Whittington
2102 Brookhill Road
Dothan, AL 36301
334.793.6811
alarocks@graceba.net

2011 Mayo Educational Foundation, Inc. Officers/Directors**Vice-President**

Barbara Green
110 Sycamore Drive
Marietta, SC 29661
864.836.5896

Director

Charlotte Mayo Bryant
506 Rain Song Road
Dalton, GA 30270
706.278.8344

Treasurer

Frank Decaminada
795 Nile Drive
Alpharetta, GA 30022
770.992.8309

Director

Barbara Tuttle
85504 Blackmon Road
Yulee, FL 32097
904.225.0689
dttsr@comcast.net

SFMS Education Chairman

Kathy Morris
557 Grayce Lane.
Hiawassee, GA 30547
706.896.3256

Secretary

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

2011 SFMS Representatives to AFMS Committees**Club Rockhound of the Year**

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Collecting Sites

Mike Streater
7 English Place
Candler, NC 28715
828.667.8290
mcastreeter@charter.net

Boundaries

Janie Hand
253 Wanda Drive
Brandon, MS 39042
601.825.3989
mgseditor@aol.com

Education All American

-OPEN-

Bulletin Editors

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

Endowment Fund

Betty James
169-A Florence Cir.
Florence, MS 39073
601.914.6747
mineralid@comcast.net

Supplies & Publications

Danny Griffin
1320 Byrd Cir.
Kingston, TN 37763
865.406.8802
sfmsedchair@gmail.com

Public Relations

Herb Whittington
2102 Brookhill Road
Dothan, AL 36301
334.793.6811
alarocks@graceba.net

Club Publications

-OPEN-

Juniors Program

Bonita Harris
12520 Jeff Hamilton Road
Mobile, AL 36695
251.865.9157
bonitaharris@netzero.net

Uniform Rules

- OPEN -

Safety

Don Monroe
350 Lapidary Lane
Young Harris, GA 30582
706.379.9662
donmonroe@windstream.net

Conservation & Legislation

John Wright
3304 Nottingham Road
Ocean Springs, MS 39564
228.875.4191
osibw@datasvc.com

Program Competition

Freda Hull
P.O. Box 115
Grant, FL 32949
321.725.0847
frehull@bellsouth.net

Ways & Means

Whit McMillan
7125 Windmill Creek Road
Charleston, SC 29414
843.763.9545
burrfish65@yahoo.com

Webmaster

Jim Flora
P.O. Box 605
Hiawassee, GA 30546
706.896.8040
jimflora@windstream.net

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