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 were 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 made arrangements to come or send a designated representative to come in your place.

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 also want to thank the Aiken/Augusta clubs for hosting our Federation 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 have several committees that now have chairpersons. Jim Hazen from the Tri-State Gem & Mineral Club (Haysville, NC) is our new Historian, and from the same club, Kathy Morris is our Bulletin Editors’ Contest Chairperson. We haven’t had a Federation Historian in several years now, so Jim will need any support you can provide.

CARL’S EDITORAL COMMENTARY

Looking for the April 2011 Lodestar edition? Look no further. Due to circumstances within my control …(I allowed myself to get bogged down in details of at least 5 different projects and time got away from me), I decided to use April as one of the two edition-less months of the year. The next month that will not see the Lodestar will be December.

The lead article on bats with white-nose syndrome (Page 4) may help us understand why our national forest officials have closed access to rockhounding sites such as the Ray Mine (see the March 2011 Lodestar).

Opalholics take note of the article starting on Page 6. Although these Canadian opal mines are close to home, very little precious opal has found it’s way into the marketplace.

Website: [http://www.amfed.org/sfms](http://www.amfed.org/sfms)  
email: sfms@amfed.org

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The June 2011 SFMS workshop at William Holland has over 40 paying students. Contact Lisa Roberts (Registrar) for class availability.
THE SOUTHEAST FEDERATION OF MINERALOGICAL SOCIETIES, INC.

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

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

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

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Articles for the June 2011 Lodestar are due by May 25, 2011.

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FIELD TRIPS

May 28, 2011: Cotton Patch Gold Mine & Campground, Stanly County, New London, NC 41697 Gurley Road, New London, NC (http://www.cottonpatchgoldmine.com). The following group rates are for the DMC club members only. Rate discount will be 10% on cabins or camping for our members and their guests. Panning for gold at our troughs. $10.00 for 3/2 gallon buckets or $14.00 for 5/2 gallon buckets. Gold wheel rental with panning material (automatic panner) $8.00 for 4 hour rental. Gold sluicing—more productive than panning, loads of material are brought to you to run at a live flume. 1/4 load (+/- 5 five gallon buckets) $40.00 2-3 hours; 1/2 load (+/- 10 five gallon buckets) $75.00 3-5 hours; full load (+/- 22 five gallon buckets) $140.00 6-8 hours. Charlotte Gem and Mineral Club (Charlotte, NC) (HOST)

June 4, 2011: Corundum Knob (also known as Chunky Gal Knob), Clay County, NC. COLLECTING: Ruby corundum (pink to red), Spinel (black to brown "galaxite" and magnesiochromite), Sapphirine, Talc, Serpentine, Brucite (white to blueish chalky chunks), Tremolite, Actinolite, Smaragdite (chrome-emerald green amphibole), Pyroxine (chrome diopside/sparse green micro-crystals of weathered amphibole matrix), Fuchsite and Dunite. Northeast Georgia Mineral Society, Cornelia, GA (Host).

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


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.
White-Nose Syndrome in Bats

What is white-nose syndrome?
Hibernating bats in the northeastern United States are dying in record numbers, and we don’t know why. This wildlife health crisis, white-nose syndrome (WNS), is named for the white fungus evident on the muzzles and wings of affected bats. This affliction was first documented at four sites in eastern New York in the winter of 2006-07. WNS has rapidly spread to multiple sites throughout the northeast. Researchers associate WNS with a newly identified fungus (Geomyces destructans) that thrives in the cold and humid conditions characteristic of the caves and mines used by bats. The fungus could be responsible for the bat deaths, or it could be secondary to the cause. Since being documented in New York, WNS has spread north and south, and has now been found in Southern Virginia near the North Carolina state line (see map). It’s also getting perilously close to some of the most important bat habitat in the nation in Kentucky and Tennessee.

How is it spread?
We believe WNS is transmitted primarily from bat to bat. There is a strong possibility that it may also be transmitted by humans inadvertently carrying the causative agent from cave to cave on their clothing and gear.

Signs of possible WNS include:
• White fungus, especially on the bat’s nose, but also on the wings, ears or tail
• Damaged wings, including holes in the wing tissue
• Bats flying outside during the day in temperatures at or below freezing
• Bats clustered near the entrance of hibernation sites
• Dead or dying bats on the ground or on buildings, trees or other structures

What is its impact?
Hundreds of thousands of cave-dwelling bats of six species have died from WNS with no end in sight. Biologists have seen 90 to 100 percent mortality of bats at several caves in New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut and Vermont. However, there may be differences in mortality by site and by species within sites. The endangered Indiana bat hibernates in many of the affected sites and biologists are closely monitoring their populations during hibernation and, to the extent possible, in their summer maternity colonies. During the winter of 2008-2009, the biennial range-wide winter count of Indiana bats was conducted and early results from New York report significantly fewer bats. In addition to the Indiana bat, WNS has reached sites that contain the endangered Virginia big-eared bat. While no Virginia big-eared bats have exhibited signs of WNS yet, this species is being closely monitored. WNS also poses potential indirect impacts to humans as populations of insect pests may increase in response to the decreased predation from bats.
North Carolina bats
North Carolina is home to 17 species of bats, including three federally endangered species: the Indiana, gray, and Virginia big-eared bats. The North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission has made significant strides in protecting the state’s bats, including acquiring a conservation easement to protect an important mine for Virginia big-eared bats; placing metal gates on several mines to prevent people from disturbing bats during hibernation; and working with The Nature Conservancy to protect habitat. The gains made by these efforts could be eliminated with the arrival of WNS.

What is being done?
In North Carolina, a cadre of bat biologists from a wide variety of agencies and institutions is continually being updated with the latest WNS information. State and federal biologists are in contact with local cave users and owners, including the Flittermouse Grotto organization of cavers, National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, Grandfather Mountain, and Linville Caverns. The North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission recently completed its WNS response plan in anticipation of the affliction’s arrival, and is prepared to respond to reports of possible WNS cases. Additionally, the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission has long monitored state bat populations and will continue to do so, keeping an eye out for the arrival and possible impacts of WNS.

Nationally, an extensive network of state and federal agencies as well as universities, nongovernment organizations and caving groups is working to investigate the source, spread and cause of bat deaths associated with WNS and to develop management strategies to minimize WNS impacts. The overall WNS investigation has three primary focus areas: research, monitoring/management, and outreach. For example, biologists are conducting winter surveys to document and track affected sites, working with the caving community and local-cave owners to target potential sites for surveys and protective measures, and securing funding to research and manage the spread of WNS.

What to do if you suspect WNS in North Carolina?
Contact the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (Gabrielle Graeter gabriellgraeter@ncwildlife.org, 828-273-9097) or the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (Susan Cameron, susan_cameron@fws.gov, 828-258-3939, ext 224). The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service has also set up an e-mail address to accept reports from across the nation, WhiteNoseBats@fws.gov.
• If possible, photograph the potentially affected bats (including close-up shots if possible) and send the photograph to one of the contacts above.
• If you need to dispose of a dead bat found on your property, pick it up with a plastic bag over your hand or use disposable gloves. Place both the bat and the bag into another plastic bag, spray with disinfectant, close the bag securely, and dispose of it with your garbage.
• Thoroughly wash your hands and any clothing that comes into contact with the bat.
• If you see a band on the wing or a small device with an antenna on the back of a bat (living or dead), contact the NC Wildlife Resources Commission or U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service at the numbers above.

Where can I go for more information?
The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service maintains a WNS website: http://www.fws.gov/northeast/white_nose.html, that includes the latest WNS news, information on cave closings, decontamination protocols, and information on what you can do to help.

Editor’s Comment: Effective March 3, 2011 through February 24, 2012 North Carolina National Forests management issued an emergency temporary closure of all caves and mines located on National Forests land in North Carolina. These restrictions are necessary to protect endangered, threatened, and sensitive bat species and to protect the accelerated spread of white-nose syndrome discussed above. A similar order, effective May 21, 2010 through May 21, 2011 was issued by the Georgia Regional Forester.
Opal is hydrated amorphous silica (3% to 20% water) containing aggregates of ordered or disordered microcrystallites of α-cristobalite. Electron microscopic studies show that opal is made up of close packed silica spheres \((\text{SiO}_2\cdot n\text{H}_2\text{O})\) and interstitial silica, water or \(\text{CO}_2\) gas-vapour air. Opal is characterized by a conchoidal fracture and it occurs in wide range of background colours. It is transparent to nearly opaque, and may be distinguished from chalcedony and crypto-crystalline varieties of quartz by its higher water content and lower hardness. Opal is brittle, sensitive to heat, and easily scratched. Furthermore, opal from some localities, is "unstable" and may crack or self-destruct through the loss of water. Despite these faults, opal's beauty is supreme and, for the past thousands years, it is recognized as a "highly prized" gemstone.

The word "opal" evolved from the Roman "opalus" or the Greek "opallios" meaning "to see a change of colour". The Greek version is a modification of the ancient Indian Sanskrit name for opal "upala", which meant "precious stone". As suggested by the derivation of its name, opal has centuries of history as a treasured gemstone. The early Greeks thought that opals gave their owners the powers of foresight and prophecy, and the Romans adored it as a token of hope and purity. Eastern people regarded it as sacred, and Arabs believed it fell from heaven. In the nineteenth century, superstitions grew about the bad luck or fate that could befall one for wearing opal if it were not the wearer's birthstone. Today, these superstitions have diminished, but some people still believe it is bad luck to wear opal.

Opal may be deposited from silica-bearing hydrothermal solutions in hotspring or geyser environments, from meteoric waters or as accumulations of tests of silica-secreting organisms called diatoms in marine or lacustrine environments.

The terminology currently used to describe opal for the lapidary applications is quite complex. The three most commonly used terms are "precious", "common", and "fire" opal. Precious opal is defined as opal with a bright, internal play of colours that may be red, orange, green or blue. This play of colours is caused by diffraction of white light by regular packing of silica microspheres within the mineral structure. The diameter and spacing of the microspheres controls the colour range of an opal (Darragh et al., 1966). Precious opal may be subdivided further by colour modifiers, white, black, pink, and blue, which describe the body colour of the opal. Australia is famous for its white and black precious opal. The term "common opal" groups all opals without a play of colours (including the fire opal). The lack of play of colours may be due to less ordered packing of the silica microspheres. Fire opal is defined as a solid opal with transparent orange to red-orange base colour; it belongs to the precious opal variety if it shows a play of colour, or to the common one if it lacks play of colour. Some of the best fire opal comes from Mexico.

Worldwide, deposits that contain precious opal can be divided into two major categories based on host lithologies: sediment-hosted and volcanic-hosted. Australian deposits of the Coober Pedy, Andamooka, and Mintabie areas are excellent examples of sediment-hosted fields. The deposits in these areas are believed to have formed by descending silica-bearing meteoric waters. The source of silica is linked to the intensity and depth of weathering in the sediments underlying the opal deposits. The silica in meteoric waters was concentrated by evaporation resulting in the formation of colloidal silica gel and ultimately opal. Deposits such as those of the Querétaro region of Mexico, Gracias ¨ Dios area in Honduras and Spencer in Idaho, USA are excellent examples of volcanic-hosted opal.

Most of the world's gem opals are from the Australian fields of Andamooka, Coober Pedy, and Lightning Ridge. The remaining production comes from the volcanic-hosted deposits, such as those of Mexico and Honduras. The volcanic-hosted opal deposits are believed to be genetically associated with hydrothermal activity.

In British Columbia, common opal occurrences are relatively widespread within Tertiary volcanic rocks (Leaming, 1973), but precious or gem-quality opals are rare. Some of the most interesting opal occurrences are Klinker, which contains precious opal (Simandl et al., 1996), Queen containing common opal (Church and Hora, 1996), and Eagle Creek in south central British Columbia.

Recently, beautiful precious opals were found at Klinker located at approximately 25 kilometres northwest of Vernon, British Columbia. Access to the prospect is via a forest service road that connects the main pits at 1475 metres elevation to Highway 97 in the Okanagan Valley to the east. The Klinker deposit is the first precious opal occurrence considered for commercial development in Canada. The opal discoveries are well exposed in a clear-cut logging area and several...
shallow pits. Opal is hosted by volcanic lahars (i.e., a debris flow composed of clast- and matrix-supported volcanic materials mixed with water), scoriaceous beds or blocky lava flows, and ash and lapilli tuffs (i.e., pyroclastic rocks whose average pyroclast size is < 64 mm) of Eocene or Miocene age (Simandl et al., 1996). The precious opal coexists with common opal and agate, which occur as open-space fillings, mainly within fractures, voids, and vesicles in the volcanic rocks. Precious opal occurs in altered or weathered ash to lapilli tuffs and adjacent matrix-supported lahars that dip shallowly (0 to 20°) and closely follow the underlying topography. Consequently, the most important control of opal distribution at Klinker is stratigraphy, structure, and rock porosity.

Precious opals obtained from the Klinker deposit have excellent brightness and multicolour "flash" and "broad flash" patterns. The base colour may be water-clear, orange, honey, red-brown, orange or white. Clarity of the stones varies from transparent through translucent to opaque. Non-precious, facet-grade opals are typically orange and honey colours, similar to the Mexican fire opal (clear reddish-orange opal; some show a play of colours). Common opals occur as transparent, translucent and opaque types in white, honey, brown, amber, orange, and grey.

The Klinker deposit is currently under evaluation for commercial mining, however it is also open to fee digging during the season (mid-June to mid-October). For more information about organized visits or fee digging at Klinker, contact Bob and Alana Yorke-Hardy, Okanagan Opal Inc., P.O. Box 298, Vernon, British Columbia, V1T 6M2 (Tel: (250) 542-5173 or 542-1103, Fax: (250) 542-7115).

The Queen and Eagle Creek occurrences in south central British Columbia are known to contain large size specimens of transparent, translucent or opaque varieties of common opal. The potential of these occurrences in terms of precious opal is not fully determined yet. The Queen claims are located on Nipple Mountain, approximately 35 km southeast of Kelowna. The property is owned by Donald Sundberg at Kelowna (Tel: 250-765-6137).

The Eagle Creek occurrence is commonly referred to as "Eagle Creek Agate and Opal Beds". It is located in central British Columbia, approximately 6.5 kilometres from Burns Lake. This site is underlain by nearly flat-lying volcanic rocks that probably belong to the Tertiary Endako Group. Walking time from the picnic area to the opal/agate bearing outcrops is about 30 minutes, but it involves some steep climbs. Mineral collecting is permitted in this area which has been withheld from staking by the town of Burns Lake, having turned it into a park. Agate nodules and common opal are abundant. Rare fire opal but no precious opal was found during our brief visit. Further information on this site may be obtained from Burns Lake Chamber of Commerce (Tel: 250-692-3773, Fax: 250-692-3493).

In British Columbia, the wave of systematic prospecting for precious opal was sparked only after the discovery of the Klinker deposit, in 1991. There is no doubt in our minds that new common and precious opal occurrences will be found during the ongoing wave of exploration.

References


Editor's Note: This article is in the public domain (see http://www.whaton.uwaterloo.ca/waton/s984.html).
BE SAFE – BE WELL
Don Monroe & Linda Behr - Safety Committee

Spring Cleaning

Here in the Blue Ridge Mountains we have experienced the worst winter since 1993. We have had snow every week with the last snow on March 11th. Now if it will stop raining, we can resume our normal lives. This article will not address house cleaning because we all live someplace and somebody has to keep it habitable.

Almost all of us are involved in lapidary activities and therefore are getting ready to do those things that we truly enjoy. Do you have a workshop? I'll bet most of you do and, further, I will also bet that cleanup is on your schedule. At our house we do have a workshop. And, since we both teach and also create jewelry, we have individual work benches. We are each responsible for our own work areas and individual tools.

If you enjoy field trips do you not need to clean your equipment and maybe sharpen tools? An inventory of field trip equipment can really be helpful. When you go on a field trip, what do you hope to find? We have cabinets and shelves to store slabs, cabs and rough to be cut and it is nice to know what stones you really could use on future projects.

Do you work in silver or gold? Don’t you need to inventory your supply and maybe watch the market to know when to order (if there is a good time)? We order metal once or twice a year since we must have a supply on hand for our work and the use of our students. As an old and very dear friend always said: “You can’t sell out of an empty wagon.”

There are other areas that we must not forget. Do you travel in an R.V.? If you do, there is a huge opportunity for fun getting the R.V. ready. Just thoroughly check out whatever vehicle you will be traveling in.

If you are not a “list” person, maybe you should be. Some categories that you must not forget include:

Maps and compass
Basic tools for your vehicle
Safety and first aid supplies
Flashlights
Your normal medicine
Drinking water
Cell phone if you have one
Camera, binoculars and magnifying glass

If you have concluded that this is an endless list you may be correct. But as the Boy Scouts always said, “Be prepared”.

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**

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### SESSION THREE - WILDACRES
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### SESSION FOUR - WILDLANDS
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<th>Class</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bead Weaving</td>
<td>Ron Midkiff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabochons</td>
<td>Anita Westlake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chain Making</td>
<td>Dee &amp; Bill Conybear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enameling</td>
<td>Lynda Williams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faceting</td>
<td>Mary Lou Kick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fused Glass</td>
<td>Addy DePietro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jadeite Bas-Relief Carving</td>
<td>Bill Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lampworking</td>
<td>Cindy Reed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opals</td>
<td>Joe DePietro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Silver Filigree</td>
<td>Stafford/Warrick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Southwest Silver</td>
<td>Dan Haga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Silver II</td>
<td>Vicki Prillaman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wire I</td>
<td>Judy Peppers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 2011 SFMS WORKSHOP REGISTRATION FORM

#### SESSION:
- ◊ William Holland June 12-18
- ◊ Wildacres August 22-28
- ◊ Wildacres September 12-18
- ◊ William Holland October 9-15

#### ACCOMMODATIONS:
- ◊ Lodge
- ◊ Day Student
- ◊ Campground (Wm Holland only)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># 1 NAME</th>
<th>SFMS SOCIETY/CLUB (spell out)</th>
<th>Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#2 (Spouse/Friend) NAME</th>
<th>SFMS SOCIETY/CLUB (spell out)</th>
<th>Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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

#### 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

- 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.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Selection</th>
<th>**** PLEASE LIST ALTERNATES****</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Choice</td>
<td>1st time taking class?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student #1</td>
<td>Y  N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse #2</td>
<td>Y  N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Workshop Tuition**
- * 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.
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