

GOLDRUSH LEDGER



Charlotte Gem & Mineral Club

May 2008

The Prez Sez ...

May brings us budding flowers as well as budding rockhounds! I attended the second session of the junior rockhound program this past month and Mary Fisher once again held the group of kids in the palm of her hand.

Due to demand from the first session, Mary and her son, William, held two back to back sessions on April 19th. This session was on the fossils and minerals of North Carolina. After the class session,

Mary took the kids outside and gave each one a bag of "salted" dirt that came from one of the sluice operations in the mountains. They shared screens and soon each kid was uncovering treasures. It was neat to see parents on the ground with their children.

As a result, we had two new families join our club. I had to go out of town on the day of our last club meeting, but our vice president told me that Kim Tyler gave a most interesting program on stained glass.

For this month, I will give a program that I have given before. It is a slide show and talk about Idar-Oberstein, Germany. This region was the origin of gem cutting in

Europe and remains a center for carvers, mineral dealers, dealers in rough gemstones, gold and silver smiths, and the original cutting mills are still on display.

I found these small villages of great beauty and interest and hope that you will join us at the meeting on Thursday at 7 P.M. at Discovery Place, May 15th.

On the 25th and 26th of April, I drove to Graves Mountain for the joint dig there. A couple of times a year, in the spring and fall, the locals sponsor a dig there. This was my first time for this sponsored dig, and I must tell you that this is the time to go. Local volunteers who work for tips have golf carts and they ferry you and your tools down into the pits and back.

Having gone before and walked in and out, I can tell you that riding in a golf cart is worth a few bucks tip money. Murray and Linda Simon attended with their grandson, Jake and it sure looked like all were having a great time. Club member, Wayne Abercrombie was there again.

I met some newbies from Savannah who tagged on to Wayne and

Wayne was a great help towards showing them what to find and where to look. There was hot food on site as well as several folks set up tables to sell various specimens. I think that this trip will happen again in October. I highly recommend this famous site to all.

I saw cars from Florida to Canada and they were parked from the top of the mountain all the way down to the highway and up the sides of the highway. I stayed at Culler's

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Inn in Lincolnton, Ga. and I understand that some members camped.

Our club has received a nine lb. box of specimens from a club in South Dakota. In exchange we are to send a box filled with specimens from our area. Needless to say, after going to Graves mountain, I have rutile, kyanite, rainbow hematite and lazulite ready to go into the box. In addition, I have pyrite from Glendon, limonite from Porter, amethyst from SC and some unakite.

If you have some small specimens from our area to round out this box, please bring them to the meeting

. I have two donated UV collections as well as the great collection from former member Helen McCall and her late husband who were members back in the seventies. I need volunteers to get the showcas-

es into the clubhouse, attach them to the walls and arrange and label the specimens.

I look forward to seeing you at our next club meeting and feel free to contact me at any time about ideas to make our club better.

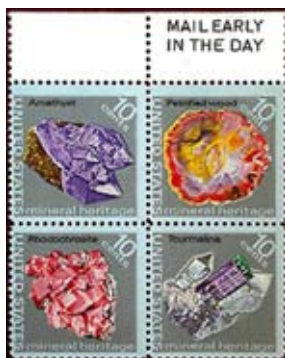
Jack King, President

There's always room
for any article that a
club member might
write.

Please send your
editor some news or
a story.

Photos are good too!

Updated Stamp Program Information



Our club is a participating member in the SFMS cancelled-stamp program. Our members are asked to save stamps from their mail by cutting around the stamp, leaving 1/4", so as not to damage the edges of the stamp. It is no longer desirable to soak the stamps off of the paper, just cut or tear the envelope without damaging the stamps. Please check the SFMS website at

<http://www.amfed.org/sfms/stamp-program.html>

for specific information and instructions for the stamp program. Members are also asked to collect the "PB Meter", (Pitney Bowes) imprinted on the envelope. Members may turn in their collections to Pat Walker at regular meetings, being sure to include a piece of paper with their names. At the SFMS annual meeting, clubs contributing stamps will be included in a drawing. If a club's name is drawn, it in turn will have a drawing from the names of contributing members for a workshop scholarship. Last year four workshop scholarships were awarded!

The Graves Mountain Dig

From the Perspective of Someone Who can Occasionally Identify a Slab but not a Rock

Linda and I left Atlanta at 5:30 AM last Saturday morning with our 12-year-old grandson heading for the Graves Mountain dig. Three hours later we were hauling a cart full of tools, sandwiches and bottled water, much of which turned out to be unnecessary (but definitely not the sandwiches and water), up a long dirt road wondering if the “half mile or so to the dig site” was truly a half mile or more or a half mile plus, plus, plus. Luckily a sweet young thing came along driving an empty golf cart: we loaded our stuff on board and were on our way to a rock hound adventure (the distance, by the way, was definitely on the plus, plus, plus side).

bouncing cart off the back end of our bouncing vehicle to notice much but I did look around when I heard my grandson say “Oh wow!” We had arrived at one of the (multiple) dig sites - it looked like a huge deep crater somewhere on the surface of the moon with people climbing up the sides of it. The scene and its surroundings were somewhat surreal (not a word I find use for very often) and quite striking. My grandson could hardly contain himself and was soon climbing and chipping away at everything within reach.

For those of you who did not have an opportunity to go on this dig, we strongly recommend the October Graves Mountain event.

-- Murray & Linda Simon



I was too busy holding onto the

See more pix of Graves Mtn. Dig on page 8.

Murray and grandson Jake
(Murray is the one on the right)

It turned out to be a great day and here are some reasons why:

- * It's a great learning experience both for kids and adults. There are plenty of people there who know what they're looking for or at (e.g., Jack King) and are willing to explain what that thing is you've just picked up off the ground or spent an hour chipping out of the mountainside. My grandson loved learning about “Leaverite” and instantly adopted the word into his active vocabulary (if you're not sure what Leaverite is, ask Jack at the next meeting).
- * You do not need to be a mountain climber (or mountain goat) to find nice specimens. We lucked out and spent much of our collecting time at the bottom of a fairly high, narrow mountain gully. At the top of that gully were two young muscular types who were spending hours trying to free up what they described as a spectacularly large seam of rainbow hematite. In the meantime, they were throwing smaller, semi-spectacular specimens down the gully to clear their path (and to enrich our collecting).
- * Some of the pieces we found and/or acquired are quite beautiful and are now on display in our home with very nice memories and stories attached to them.

Jasper Classification - Part II

Orbicular Jaspers by ron gibbs

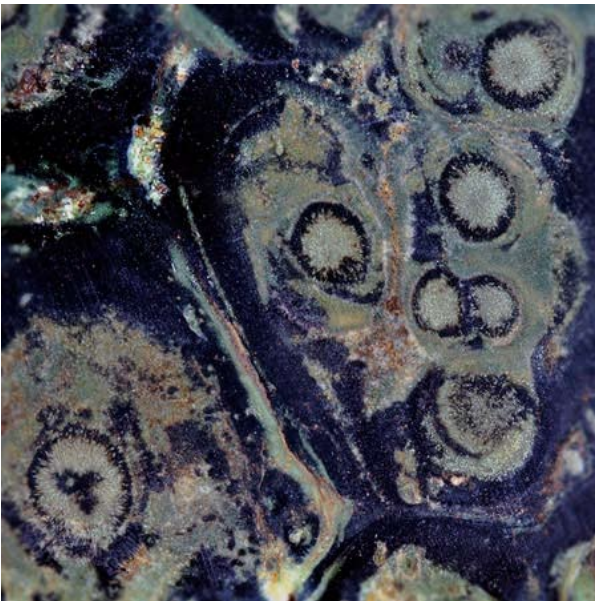


Leopardskin Jasper

Orbicular is the term that used to describe jaspers that contain circular “orbs.” Some of the orbicular jaspers contain elongated ellipses and egg shaped figures. In general you can think of many of these jaspers as the “polka-dot” jaspers.

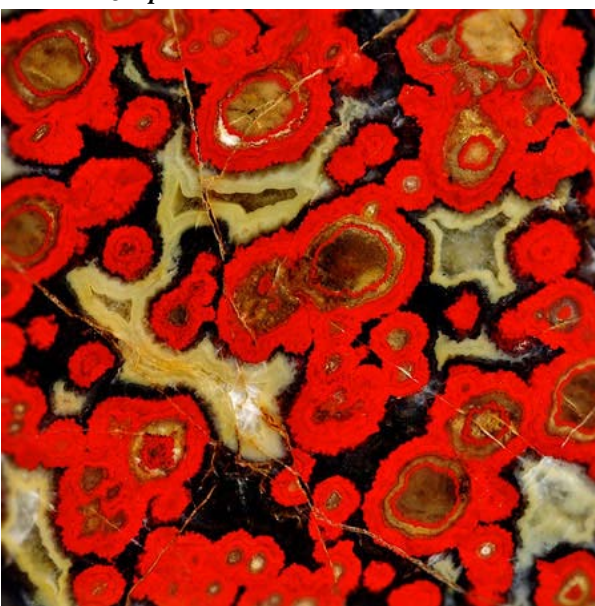
The first one is leopard jasper from Mexico and it has been my experience that it is not as well silicified as many of the others. While it does have beautiful patterns in golden yellows, greens and even some nice reds, it does not take a super high polish.

Kambaba jasper comes from a locale not far from the famous ocean jaspers in Madagascar. It is predominantly a green jasper with darker green to somewhat bluish eyes and ring patterns. It is a very hard jasper but does not come in the translucent qualities of its cousin ocean jasper.



Kambaba Jasper

The next two jaspers are known as poppy jasper and both come from central California. Much of the collecting area for Morgan Hill jasper has been closed to collecting as it has been converted into a state park.. Other areas are on private land. It still shows up from time to time in local riverbeds and streams. The Guadalupe poppy jasper also comes from the same general area but a bit further south. It has much smaller orbs often with white centers. This jasper too resides pretty much on private property or state owned lands. Both of these jaspers often con-



Morgan Hill Poppy Jasper



Guadalupe Poppy Jasper

tain healed crack structures. They were likely formed from iron rich, sun dried clay and mud. They also were formed in a very active tectonic area.

The fisheye jasper is a relatively new material found in Mexico and has made its way to the Quartzsite and Tucson shows this year. It is a more highly silicified jasper with small geode like spheres often containing quartz crystals. There are rudimentary fortification patterns between some spheres. This material may be more agate than jasper.

Finally the current king of the small orbs ... Madagascar Ocean Jasper. This material has a very wide array of qualities from truly jasper like material to the best almost pure agate material. In much of this material with nearly perfect round spheres contain small hematite particle cores with radiating rings of color. The outer edges of the spheres are not well attached to the bulk material and can chip-out on thin slabs or near edges.

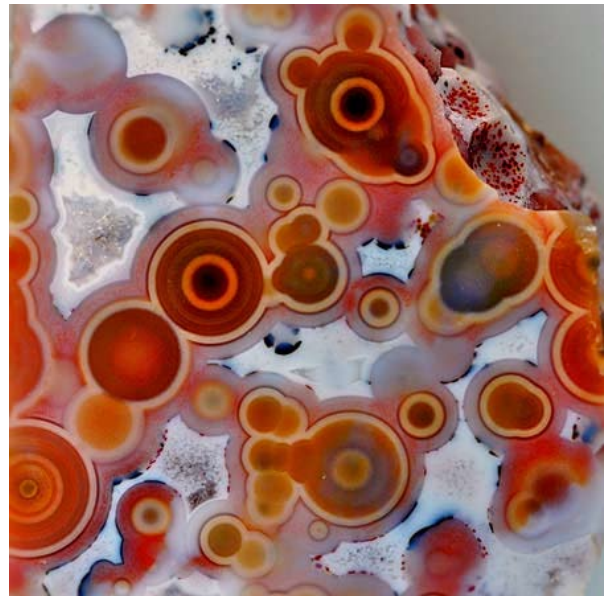
Sometimes the central spheres seem to act as crystallization centers for radiating crystal growth. This in turn may be surrounded by more agate like ring structures. (See lower photo on the left)

The name Ocean Jasper comes from the locale on the coast of Madagascar where the material was collected. The source is not longer easily accessible as it was originally collected at low tide. The "low tide" material is now gone and further collection will require under water operations.

Next month in part III of the jasper series we will continue with some "picture or scenic" jaspers.



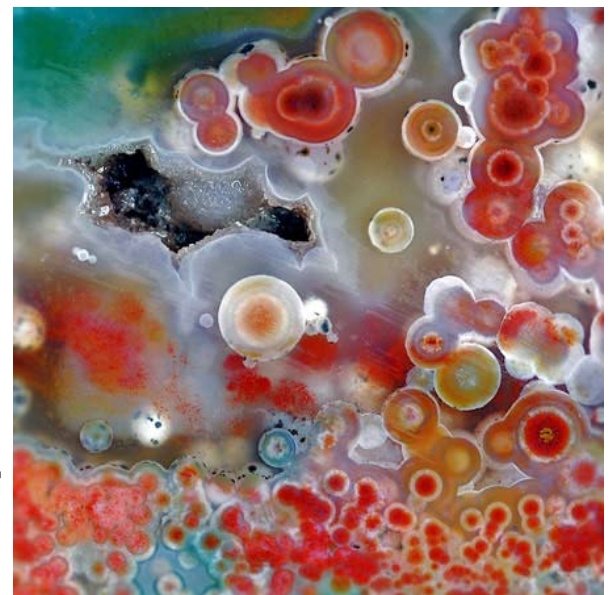
Fisheyes Jasper



Ocean Jasper



Ocean Jasper



Ocean Jasper

**Field Trip: Cotton Patch Gold Mine
Junior Rockhounds Activity
Open to all CGAM club members!
Saturday, May 31, 2008
10:00 AM until...**

Group Rates (tell them you are with the Charlotte Gem & Mineral Club):

Adults: \$10.50, includes 5 two-gallon buckets of material

Children under 12: \$6.50, includes 3 two-gallon buckets of material

Pans are provided

We will be still water panning in open troughs – hats & sunscreen recommended.

Sluicing in the creek is also available, weather permitting.

Drinks, snacks and bathrooms are available at the mine store.

Picnic tables are available – bring your own lunch!

Mine is open from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM

Cotton Patch Gold Mine & Campground

41697 Gurley Road

New London, North Carolina 28127

704-463-5797



**May meeting of the Charlotte Rock & Gem Club
Discovery Place - Thursday, May 15, 2008
-7:00 pm -**

Jack King will be presenting a slide show on Idar-Oberstein, the capital city of the German Gemstone Industry. I'll bet you didn't know ... The towns of Idar and Oberstein originally belonged to the barons of Duan-Oberstein (who eventually became the "counts of Falkenstein") circa 1670. The two towns finally became one in 1933. The town gained notoriety for its agate mines and eventually the cutting of the agate. It is still known today for the sculpting of fine agate bowls although most of the agate now comes from Brazil.

Parking is free in the lot behind Discovery Place - bring your parking ticket with you to get a free validation.)

When the Citrine appears to be "too good to be true" ...
it usually is just that! *by ron gibbs*

I admit it, I buy way too many slabs on E-bay! But, with the exception of Quartzsite and Tucson there is no place where so much material can be found in one location.

So I sez to myself, "Self. how about some gemstones?" There are some huge (200+ ct) amethyst and citrine gems available on E-bay for next to nothing in price.

So off to E-bay I go and bid on a few of the beauties. And low and behold a win some. As posted:

Beautiful Natural Golden Citrine

origin: Brazil
weight: 42 ct.
shape: pear cut
clarity: VVS
luster: excellent
treatment: unheated
hardness: 7

final cost after winning: **\$19**

So I wait a week or so and my stone arrives. And visually it is exactly like the written description. But, here is where the "truth" ends.

Photo 1 shows the stone.

Photo 2 shows an inclusion - it's called a "breadcrumb" inclusion and is only found in SYNTHETIC quartz. This photo also shows triangular growth patterns associated with synthetic quartz.

Photo 3 shows some synthetic amethyst with similar growth patterns.

So it might be from Brazil, although I don't know of any hydrothermal quartz producers there. It was "very slightly included", it was 42 ct., good color, it may have been "unheated" as it was lab grown, BUT it certainly was NOT NATURAL.

Am I really unhappy, not really, it was what I was expecting for the price. I certainly wouldn't facet a 42 ct. synthetic and sell it for \$19.

PS - The majority (but not all of these stones) are being offered by overseas dealers from Thailand and Hong Kong. *So ... buyer beware*



Photo 1



Photo 2

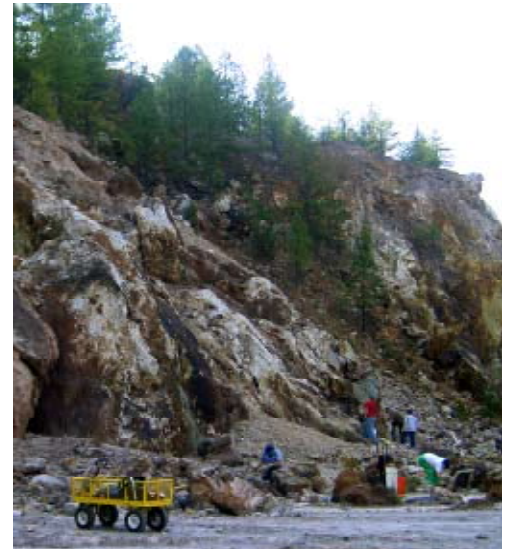


Photo 3

Pictures from Graves Mountain Dig - Linda Simon



Getting to and from the “mountain” was fairly easy ... guest transportation was available.



Yes, there were a few “rocks” on the mountain that could be collected!



Deciding “which ones” and “how much” to take were the major problems.

Imperial Topaz *feature* from some E-Bay sellers ... *by ron gibbs*

So who could resist? Recently the E-Bay market has been full of materials labeled “Imperial Topaz”, “Golden Imperial”, “Honey Imperial”, etc. etc. Most is not true imperial color, but what the heck, for the price if it’s real topaz it’s not all that bad.

So I won an auction for a pair of matched Imperial Topaz, total 21 ct. and the cost only about \$18! They arrived and looked really good. Now see if you can guess which one was placed in sun-light for about 8 hours?



If it’s too good to be true ...
it probably is!