

Tar Heel Tailings

Special Interest Articles:

- Prez Sez
- Rare Emeralds Donated To North Carolina Museum
- Field Trips

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A newsletter for Gem and Mineral enthusiasts in and around the Raleigh, North Carolina area.

Prez Sez By Linda Searcy

The Board officers will be meeting May 10, 2018, at the Carolina Cafe. Minutes will be provided at the May meeting and in the next Newsletter. Since we do not have a program for May, please bring questions and new topics for discussion.

If we want refreshments at the May meeting, we need a volunteer to bring snacks. Seward will provide beverages. Remember, you will be reimbursed up to \$85 with proof of receipts. The club provides paper products and utensils.

Linda Searcy

President, Tar Heel Gem and Mineral Club

Rare Emeralds Donated To North Carolina Museum

By George Harris

Thanks to an anonymous donor, a downtown Raleigh science museum will soon be home to a rare gem and minerals collection featuring four of the largest emeralds ever found in North America.

The collection, which will be housed in the Nature Research Center in the new wing of the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences, and is valued at \$5 million.

"This is exceptional that someone would step up and be this generous," said museum Director Betsy Bennett. "When I first saw these gems, I was speechless. Now all I can think of is, 'How amazing is this?'"

Three of the emeralds were discovered on

March 16, 2011 on the Wren Adams property in Alexander County in western North Carolina, and weigh 1,225 carats, 685 carats and 591 carats, according to a news release from the museum.

The fourth, dubbed the Carolina Emperor, is the

largest cut emerald in North America, weighing in at 64 carats. It was found in 2009, also on the Wren Adams property, and is styled after the emerald once owned by Catherine the Great of Russia.

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Tar Heel Gem & Mineral Club, Inc.

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We're on the Web!
See us at:
www.tarheelclub.org

Program & Refreshments

REFRESHMENT SCHEDULE:

Coordinator: Open

May Snacks – TBD
Drinks – Seward Shaddock

PROGRAM SCHEDULE:

May TBD
June Rachel Smith
July Dr. Tacker
August Ice Cream Social
September Paul Byrne
October Officer Nominations, Grab Bags
November Elections

Remember, the club will reimburse you for up to \$85 (bring your receipts to the treasurer).

May Treasurer's Report

No report for May.
Treasurer is working on Show Report.

May B-Day Members

- Peter Barra
- Mickey Broadway
- Ben Cathey
- Katherine Cherry
- Timothy Challeuer
- Mark Cox
- Jim Davenport
- Shirley Green
- Vincent Hagerty
- John Heinz
- Mark Hipps
- Corinne Hummel
- Ramon Malheiros
- Edward Markarian
- Linda Pratt
- Alexis Norwood
- James Tunney
- Leanna Tunney
- Kim Whitfield
- Ron Wilson



Membership applications may be mailed to:

Tar Heel Gem & Mineral Club, Inc.
Attention: Treasurer
10609 Chelsea Drive
Raleigh, NC 27603

Tar Heel Gem and Mineral Club, Inc. - April Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, April 17, 2018

Attendees = 41

Opening of Club Meeting:

Linda opened the meeting at 7:28 pm.

Introduced new visitors, some of whom came from NC State's geology department, some were familiar with our show, and had a general interest in stones and geodes.

Potluck and Show discussion:

Suggestions for next year's show, from show dealers and club members:

- Door prizes donated by dealers
- Car Magnet for club members advertising show
- Send fliers to the dealers / other clubs
- Advertise items available in raffle ahead of time
- Buy table covers for club areas
- Grab bags \$2, \$1 on last day
- Discount old shirts, or use as prizes
- Modify raffle tickets
- Add address of fairgrounds to flyer
- Clarify raffle
- Remove out-of-date dealer areas (such as ring sizing) from flyer
- Get general signs for fairground: gem, mineral, jewelry, fossil, free admission (need to check limitations)
- New banner
- Rent sign from fairground (sign permit?)
- Add chairs around perimeter of show area
- Field trips with local schools before show opens
- Issues with sluicing booth?

- Use ticket booth that comes with rented space
- Add Facebook accounts to do more live videos
- Silent Auction--some stuff needs to go to grab bags
- Polish some stones?
- Pre-advertise vendor list on Facebook
- Federation member suggests: need masks for geode booth?
- Need new credit card signs

Rundown of what went well:

- Reorganized trailer, fixed saws and display cases
- Geode booth sold over \$10,000
- Made money which we donate to scholarships etc
- New UV light for club
- Club member Brian won a ribbon from national club for his display

Refreshments:

Thanks to all club members who contributed to the potluck dinner!

Door Prize:

Winner: Catherine Cherry won the door prize.

Close of Meeting:

Meeting closed at 9:20 pm

Respectfully Submitted

Lindsey Bradsher,

Secretary, Tar Heel Gem and Mineral Club, Inc.

Field Trips

By Katelyn Hennessey

There are currently 2 field trips scheduled.

May 19th - North Myrtle Beach

June 29th - Castle Hayne - Trip Is Currently Full

More trips coming soon. Please keep an eye on your email for Field Trip Alerts and if you have any questions, contact Katelyn Hennessey, the field trip coordinator.

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions, including neat dig locations, please feel free to email me.

Katelyn Hennessey

Field Trip Coordinator

Tar Heel Gem & Mineral Club

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Carolina Emeralds

Continued from Page 1

"We are preserving a natural treasure for the citizens of North Carolina," Bennett said in the release. "Finally, the people will be able to see these breathtaking emeralds that were found right here in our state."

Generations of rock hounds and miners have turned the earth in western North Carolina, looking to bring a special ruby, sapphire or emerald -- the "big three" of the gem world -- to the light.



The passion started early for Terry Ledford, 53, who operated a gem stand on weekends when he was a kid. "I always loved rocks," said the Spruce Pine resident.

For W. Renn Adams, 90, the world of spodumenes, hiddenite and beryl runs even deeper in his blood. His Alexander County family has been digging for them since the 1880s.

The men's interests became intertwined early this decade when they became partners on the Adams family farm, which grows corn along with its treasures below.

They unearthed hiddenite, a rare pale-to-green mineral in the spodumene family, and other specimens.

"We never found any good emeralds," said Adams.

Until that day in August 2009.

Terry Ledford, 53, found the roughly 2-inch-square chunk rimmed with spots of iron on a 200-acre farm owned by business partner Renn Adams, 90, and his siblings. The rural community of Hiddenite is named for a paler stone that resembles emerald.

"It was just a normal digging day," said Adams, who used to grade roads before he retired.

Using a track hoe and other equipment, Ledford worked his way down a hole in the earth and through a quartz vein, 14 feet below the surface.

That's when he found it.

Reaching below a crystal, he saw what looked to be part of a 7UP bottle.

It was an emerald crystal. A very big emerald crystal. Some 310 carats of it.



"It was so dark in color that holding it up to the sun you couldn't even get the light to come through it," a quality that ensured an intense green hue once the stone was cut with facets that allowed light into the gem's core, Ledford said.

"Terry really had a time when he found that one," recalled Adams, without a hint of understatement.

Dubbed the "Carolina Emperor," the gem has been trimmed to 64.83 carats and is called the largest cut emerald ever found in North America. It is being compared to an emerald that once belonged to Catherine the Great of Russia. The North Carolina stone was cut to imitate the royal emerald, Ledford said. A museum and some private collectors interested in buying the emerald have been in contact, Ledford said.

Modeling an empress's emerald is likely to have less influence on the North Carolina stone's sale price than its clarity, color and cut, said Douglas Hucker, CEO of the American Gem Trade Association, a Dallas, Texas-based trade association for dealers in colored gems.

"A 65-carat cut emerald from North Carolina is a big, big stone," he said. But "once an emerald is cut, it's subject to the same type of market conditions that any emerald would be."

And it could have been yours, but, the co-owners have sold it.

North Carolina is the only place on this continent where significant emerald deposits are found, explaining why the stone is the official state gemstone.

Emeralds are part of North Carolina's mineral claim to fame, though other places in the U.S. also are rich in gems. Maine mines have yielded aquamarine and amethyst, Montana bears sapphires, Idaho is known for star garnets, and Arkansas has diamonds.

While rubies and sapphires are found near Franklin, about 75 miles southwest of Asheville, different gems lure residents and visitors to Alexander County, about 30 miles northeast of Hickory.

The small town of Hiddenite is named for William Earl Hidden, who mined North America's first emerald and hiddenite on the Adams property in the 1880s, said geologist Ed Speer.

"Emeralds are very rare in the world and only a few countries host emerald deposits," Speer said. "North Carolina is lucky to have three known emerald districts, including the Hiddenite district."

Michael Wise, a geologist with the National Museum of Natural History, said emeralds are more likely to be found outside North America. Most are from Colombia, Russia, Brazil and Afghanistan.

According to Speer, emeralds (a beryl colored by chrome and vanadium) and the rarer hiddenite (spodumene) are together only in this part of North Carolina.



It's not fully known why small, subterranean cavities containing emeralds formed in central North Carolina, said geologist Michael Wise of the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History, who has studied the underground world around Hiddenite for years.

Emeralds are produced where a superheated fluid carrying the element beryllium migrated through rocks that contain chromium, Wise said.

"This doesn't happen frequently," Wise said. "The conditions have to be just right to make an emerald. ... It happens to be the case at this particular place."

Gems have created a cottage industry around Hiddenite, with amateurs and mining operations working the soil.

At Emerald Hollow Mine, options for the energetic are "digging," "creeking" and "sluicing."

"We have people from everywhere," said employee Whitney Day, who said the region offers 63 types of minerals.

Mining has a significant impact on the state's economy, with gem mining a small part of that, said Speer, who has 40 years' experience in mineral exploration around the world.

The presence of pegmatites, a form of igneous rock, is largely responsible for the number and quality of gemstones, he said.



Although the public's imagination often revolves around precious gems and stones used in jewelry, including diamonds, collectors often come at gems from a different perspective. They may prefer a certain locality or type of gem, Wise said.

"A serious collector may prefer an uncut crystal to a cut gem," he added.

Adams said his family used to open the farm to the public in the 1970s and into the 1980s. People paid \$3 to dig by hand and foot; no machinery was allowed.

Since then, the small mining operation has been private.

Failing eyesight has somewhat sidelined Adams, but he still has a penchant for the craft.

"I like moving the dirt."

Ledford, who also sells gems and operates an amethyst mine in Georgia, and Adams have had the six-sided "Carolina Emperor" crystal cut twice. It is now slightly wider than a quarter.

They received a comprehensive analysis in early August, and are now marketing the stone.

The emerald compares in size and quality to one surrounded by diamonds in a brooch once owned by Catherine the Great, who was empress in the 18th century, said C.R. "Cap" Beesley, a New York gemologist who examined the stone.

Beesley told The Associated Press that Christie's auction house in New York sold that gem in April for \$1.65 million.

While big, uncut crystals and even notable gem-quality emeralds have come from the community 50 miles northwest of Charlotte called Hiddenite, there has never been one so big it's worthy of an imperial treasury, Beesley said.

"It is the largest cut emerald ever to be found in North America," Beesley said in a telephone interview from Myanmar, an Asian country rich in precious gems.

The discovery is a rarity for emeralds found not in the rich veins of South America and Asia but in North America, said Robert Simon, owner of Windsor Jewelers in Winston-Salem.

Chips or cuttings that resulted from the faceting of "Carolina Emperor" sold for between \$10,000 (1.89 carats) and \$15,000 (2.36 carats), said Ledford.

Ledford, the son of a mica miner, said he would rate the quality of the gem an 8 on a 10-point scale. Its uniqueness and size, with color and clarity following, may put it in the area of the selling price for the Catherine the Great emerald, he said.

Generally, larger gems are more likely to have internal flaws and inclusions, said Wise. But Douglas Hucker, CEO of the American Gem Trade Association, who like Wise said he has not seen the stone, said those factors are not as critical as size and color.

The Hiddenite emerald's biggest asset is that it is from an area not known for large emeralds, said Hucker. "If it wasn't from North Carolina it wouldn't be creating the buzz it is now," he said. Standards for colored gems are not as exacting as for diamonds, he added.

Still, Hucker said, it is a large stone with desirable color and a potential buyer may be drawn to it. "When you combine all those things it increases the rarity."

Hucker said that comparing the emerald to the Catherine the Great gem is a stretch because the empress, who he described as a "jewelry hog," was a person of special historic significance.



Beesley's report, which calls the "Carolina Emperor" one of "the most important gemstones in American history," mentions an 18.88-carat pear-shape emerald, which until now was considered the continent's most valuable cut emerald.

"This is a monster by comparison," said Wise.

"Several people are interested in it," said Ledford, adding an unnamed museum has expressed interest.

Meanwhile, Ledford and an assistant continue to operate at the Adams family farm.



"Terry's emerald find is very exciting as it confirms that more large emeralds are still out there," said Speer.

At 90, Adams can savor the moment. "This is what I always dreamed to find," he said.

Ledford said they don't plan to quit after pocketing the profits from their big find, Ledford said.

"We'll definitely keep on mining," he said. "It would be good to know you don't have to go and could do it for pleasure. You feel like you've got to find something to survive but since we found this emerald, once we get it sold, there will be less stress."

Resources:

<http://www.cnn.com/2010/US/08/31/north.carolina.emerald/index.html>

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/65-carat-emerald-pulled-from-nc-farm/>

<https://www.deseretnews.com/article/765560357/Rare-emeralds-donated-to-North-Carolina-museum.html>

<https://www.wral.com/news/local/story/10865416/>

<https://www.wral.com/news/local/video/10868168/>

UPCOMING SHOWS

March 29 - 31, 2019: Raleigh, NC – 43rd Annual Capital Area Gem & Mineral Show. Tar Heel Gem and Mineral Club, Inc. Kerr Scott Building, NC State Fairgrounds, Raleigh, NC. The show is sponsored by the Tar Heel Gem & Mineral Club and includes 29 dealers. The Hospitality area sells grab bags with mineral specimens. Buy a rock at the Geode booth and be the first to see what is inside. The on-going Silent Auction has new items every hour. Dealers provide minerals, fossils, finished jewelry, gemstones, findings and beads for sale.. Hours: Fri 3-8; Sat 10-6; Sun 10-5. Admission: Free and Free Parking. Contact: Cyndy Hummel; 919-779-6220; mchummel@mindspring.com; www.tarheelclub.org;

May 11, 12, & 13, 2018: Franklin, NC - Gem & Mineral Society of Franklin, NC. Fri. & Sat., May 11th & 12th, 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM. Sun., May 13th, 10:00 AM- 4:00PM. Carpenter Community Center, 1288 Georgia Rd. (US441), Franklin, NC. No admission charge, indoor, climate controlled, rough and finished gemstone and jewelry, minerals, fossils and demonstrations. Contact: Norman Holbert, 828-634-0350, normholbert@comcast.net

Vugsites

The following are some links to Web-Sites that may interest some of our members:

<http://www.tarheelclub.org> / <https://www.facebook.com/tarheelgemandmineralclub/> These are the official sites for the Tar Heel Gem & Mineral Club. I would strongly urge all members to check them out on a regular basis.

<http://www.amfed.org> / <http://www.amfed.org/sfms> These are the official sites for the organizing body that the Tar Heel Gem & Mineral Club is founded under. I would strongly urge all members to check them out on a regular basis.

http://www.amfed.org/sfms/lodestar_newsletter.html The SFMS Lodestar Newsletter

<http://www.carolinageologicalsociety.org/CGS/Home.html> This site provides numerous downloadable field-trip guide books, maps, and charts of the Carolinas. It will prove to keep any avid rock hound busy for years. Great Site!

http://www.ncminerals.com/ncmineralswebsite_files/page0011.htm And while we are on the subject, try this link. Its titled: Links of Interest to Rock hounds in NC. It will take you to a list of links for North Carolina gems and minerals.

<http://www.rocksforkids.com/> Just like the name says, a nice place to steer the younger members.

Information & photographs of over 6300 specimens from the Glenn & Martha Vargas Gem & Mineral Collection.

<http://www.rockhoundlounge.com> Scott Laborde, a club member maintains his own web site that might be of interest to people collecting in and around Wake County.

http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/29726500/ns/technology_and_science-science This site highlights a half dozen of the most recent significant fossil finds.

<http://appmodo.com/13971/mole-quest-for-the-terracore-gem-app-review-for-the-iphone-and-ipod-touch/> If you have an iphone or an ipod touch, this rock-hounding may be the game for you.

http://diamonddanpublications.net/index_files/page0009.html Diamond Dan's Mini Miner's Monthly

I would like to encourage all members of the THG&MC that maintain their own presence on the internet to send me a link to their site to be published in future Vugsites so that other club members may learn and enjoy the craft, the art, the interests that many of us have in common.

Park in the Cates Ave. Parking Deck off Jensen Dr. Enter Thompson Building directly across from the parking lot.

Our Next Meeting is

May 15, 2018 @ 7:30PM

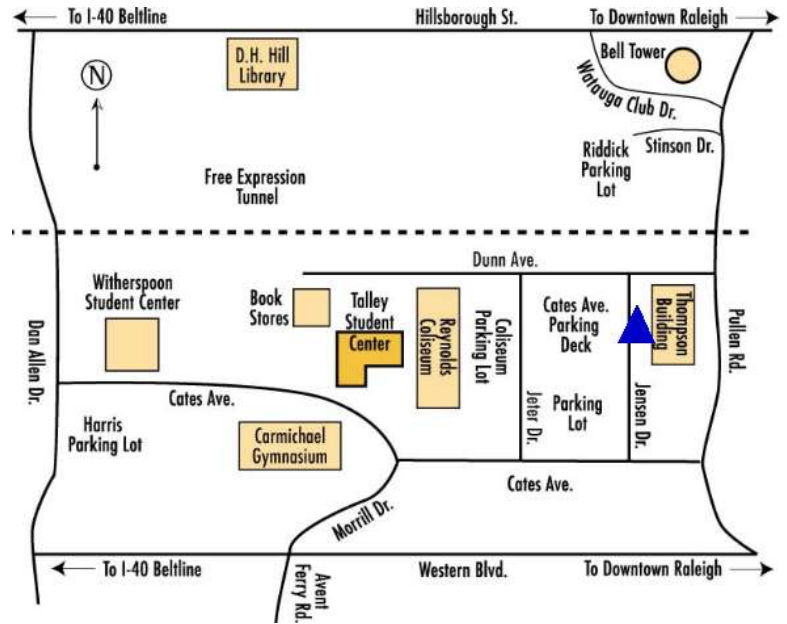
NC State Crafts Center

210 Jensen Dr, Raleigh, NC 27606

About Our Organization...

The Tar Heel Gem and mineralogy, paleontology, Mineral Club, Inc. was earth sciences, and formed in 1974 as a lapidary techniques, nonprofit educational organization for people among the general public. The club pursues these goals through publications, meetings, lectures, field trips, exhibits, demonstrations, and other activities.

Come and be a part of the Fun!



TAR HEEL GEM & MINERAL CLUB
 10609 Chelsea Drive
 Raleigh, NC 27603

