



Volume 58 ◊ Number 02 ◊ February 2012 ◊ A monthly newsletter for and by the members of MAGS

“Between Earth and Sky, there are only a few striking boulders”

Building and thinking with stone in central Madagascar
Susan Kus, Professor of Anthropology, Rhodes College



My talk will introduce you to the prehistory and history of Madagascar, the fourth largest island in the world. In actuality, it is a fairly short prehistory dating back to only 2,000 years ago, maximum. Then we will focus on the sense of the Malagasy proverb

in the title of the talk. The original settlers of Madagascar literally entered a “new” world for them, as an incredibly large proportion of plants and animals are endemic to the island. They entered this new world with eyes wide open, needing *Continued, P. 3*

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“THE CONTINENTS AND EARTH’S CORE”—FOLLOWUP

The November 2011 issue had an article on a study performed by French researchers, that relates the frequency of the Earth’s magnetic field reversals to the location of continents. A Science Daily article (www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2011/10/111021084539.htm) provides more details.

The researchers are from Le Centre national de la recherche scientifique (CNRS) and the Institut de

Physique du Globe. Their study was published on 16 October 2011 in Geophysical Research Letters. They developed two possible scenarios to describe the mechanism behind geomagnetic reversals.

Citation: F. Pétrélis, J. Besse, J.-P. Valet. **Plate tectonics may control geomagnetic reversal frequency.** Geophysical Research Letters, 2011; 38 (19) DOI: 10.1029/2011GL048784

MEMPHIS ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

MAGS Rockhound News ♦ A monthly newsletter for and by the members of MAGS

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GREETINGS FROM THE PREZ and BOARD MEMBERS

What can I say? Here I stand, beside myself, another year older but not an hour richer.

I hope in 2012 the world doesn't come to an end. I'm not through hunting rocks yet. So hopefully the masters of the calendar will extend another century

Keep reading—It's free and it's fun.

Remember to collect and donate specimens for the gem dig at the Earth Wide Open in April.

Rocks are a great way to enjoy life. Rock on. Happy Birthday; Elvis rocks.

That is all we have to say.

The Prez and Board

Editor's note: The above was a group effort. MAGSters should remember the definition of a camel: a horse designed by a committee.

Can You Identify (from January)?

Last month's challenge was to identify this mineral:

- ❖ Color: Colorless, white, gray, brown.
- ❖ Streak: White.
- ❖ Hardness: 1.5.
- ❖ Crystal System: Hexagonal.
- ❖ Crystal Forms and Aggregates: Massive, stalactitic, stalagmitic, crusty, and in fibrous veins.
- ❖ Transparency: Transparent to translucent.
- ❖ Specific Gravity: 0.9
- ❖ Luster: Vitreous.
- ❖ Cleavage: None.
- ❖ Fracture: Conchoidal to uneven.
- ❖ Tenacity: Brittle.

Answer on P. 10 (HINT: We don't want this mineral on our driveway).

Links to Federation News

- ➔ AFMS: www.amfed.org/afms_news.htm
- ➔ SFMS: www.amfed.org/sfms/

Between Earth and Sky to explore, explain, and experiment.
Continued from P. 1

The Malagasy proverb in the title of my talk reminds us that for many traditional people, stone is not only good to build with but also good to “think with.” You might not be surprised by what Malagasy of the central highlands of the island use/used the stone they found to build. However, you might be surprised and interested by what stone brings and has brought to the imagination of the Malagasy.

2012 MAGS Dues

It’s another year, and your annual dues are due (that’s why they are called “dues”). Thanks if you have already paid them. If not, here are the specifics.

Individual dues are \$20.00, and family dues are 25.00. You can mail your check to MAGS, 3982 Glendale Drive, Memphis, TN 38128, or bring them to our monthly meeting (the February meeting will be on February 10, and the preceding article gives information on the adult program).

If you are not a paid-up MAGS Member you are not eligible to go on official MAGS field trips (insurance reasons), you can’t get into the annual Show free, and your subscription to this newsletter will vanish. It isn’t very expensive for a year’s worth of fun meetings, field trips, rock swaps, picnics, and other benefits for the entire family.

If you have any questions, contact Membership Director Neville Mayfield at (901) 388-3006.

Juniors Corner

Carol Lybanon



Looking for Presenters

The Junior program at MAGS has always been an important part of our club’s mission. In the past few years we have asked our members to help provide interesting programs for the 20 or so Juniors who attend monthly. Coming up with a program for each month is a difficult job for one person, so if some of you would do at least one program every two years our programs would continue to be exciting.

What we are asking is for you to give a program on a subject that is interesting to you, or that is your expertise. Some of the topics that have not been covered recently are the geologic time scale, layering of the earth (sedimentation), mineral identification, dinosaurs or mosasaurs, cave drawings, and sharing an unusual collection. Perhaps you can suggest other areas of study.

Any assistance would be of great value. I am looking for programs for June and July. The presentation should be about 20 minutes long, and if you don’t have a project (something for the Juniors to do) to go with your talk I can help with that. Thanks for considering helping with a Junior program.

Junior Programs

We have another exciting program for February. In January Sherri Baldwin introduced us to cleaning fossils. Thanks, Sherri. In February the University of Memphis Egyptology Graduate Student Association will present “Hieroglyphs: more than just pictures.” In March our program will help prepare for the annual MAGS Show. The topic for April is “Drum Language.” In May Idajeen Jordan will give us a special program; look for upcoming information on her program.

What’s Happening at Chucalissa?

Our next Volunteer Saturday will be on February 18th. Come join with others as we continue the complete re-inventory of all the collections in the repository at the C. H. Nash Museum. Also, be sure to mark your calendar for March 3, 2012, for our Annual Relic Run 5K event. You can register online for the walk/run at www.racesonline.com. And don’t forget that every Saturday at 10:00 A. M. and 1:00 P. M. we offer our Family Day activities where for the price of regular admission your family can participate in our Drumming Across Cultures musical program, make a pinch pot to take home, participate in a scavenger hunt through the main hall of our Museum, and more. Contact Robert Connolly at rcnnolly@memphis.edu or (901) 785-3160 for more information, or visit the Chucalissa website at www.memphis.edu/chucalissa.

Spending the Day At a Paleo-Indian Village

Mike Baldwin

The site of an ancient native American town sits on a Mississippi River bluff five miles south of downtown Memphis. At one time the population of Chucalissa could have been a thousand to fifteen hundred. The town existed into the seventeenth century, when its townspeople left and never returned. Hence, the name Chucalissa, which is a Choctaw word meaning "Abandoned House". Since most native Americans north of the Rio Grande never developed a written language, we can never know the town's real name.



On Saturday, January 21, 2012, approximately 20 MAGS members (families and individuals) spent the day at Chucalissa. We were informed and educated by museum director Robert Connolly, and MAGS librarian Ron Brister as they gave us a guided tour through the halls of the museum and told us the history of native Americans in the mid-South. We spent some time in the hands-on artifact lab, where we could pick up artifacts which are thousands of years old, examine them, read about them and ask Robert and Ron questions. Then Ron unlocked the doors leading to the plaza.



Even on this cold day, MAGS members enjoyed visiting the grounds of Chucalissa, learning about the history of the plaza, and doing a little bit of spear throwing, aided by the use of an atlatl. The atlatl consists of a shaft with a spur at the end that supports and propels the butt of a six-foot-long spear. The atlatl is held in one hand, gripped near the end farthest from the spur. The spear is thrown by the action of the upper arm and wrist, using the atlatl as a low-mass, fast-moving extension of the throwing arm. We have some rather talented spear-throwing MAGS members (youngsters as well as adults) in our midst.



After our atlatl adventure we visited an archaeological excavation site on the plaza. It was very interesting to see the different levels of ground as Ron pointed out where dwellings had once been. As one dwelling outlived its usefulness, the inhabitants most likely burned it down and rebuilt on top of the same ground.



The highlight of the day was spent in the artifact room, sorting through dozens of boxes of paleo-indian artifacts from different archaeological sites around the mid-South. Our task was to examine the contents of these boxes, verify the contents, and register the artifacts *Continued, P. 5*

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Paleo-Indian Village on information sheets. *Continued from P. 4*

We learned how artifacts are classified and labeled. For example: 3CT8 can be broken down this way. 3 is the numerical code for the state in which the artifacts were found. 3 is for Arkansas. CT is the county designation for Crittenden County. 8 signifies the 8th archaeological site to be examined in the state. Several very interesting

artifacts were unpacked during this part of our visit.



Chucalissa offers opportunities for you to assist in the operations of the museum every month during Volunteer Days. You can participate in a range of activities from artifact sorting to scanning photographs. For more information about the museum, how you can help, or to sign up for the online monthly newsletter, Chucalissa Anoachi, send an email to chucalissa@memphis.edu.

Photo credits: Mike Baldwin, Kim Hill

Mid-South Open Atlatl Championship

If you missed the Chucalissa field trip, you missed a good time. These pictures (thanks to Kim Hill) show MAGSters demonstrating their skill with the atlatl. The original inhabitants of Chucalissa started practicing with the atlatl as young children, so they were really good by the time they grew up. Our people did OK, for folks picking up the implement for the first time.



The Magic of Bridal Veil Falls

Charles Hill

Another site for the June 2012 North Carolina trip will be Bridal Veil Falls, which flows on a tributary of the Cullasaja River through the Nantahala National Forest. This site is a local landmark and important tourist attraction. The 45-foot-high falls is situated right beside Highway 64, 2.3 miles out of Highlands, North Carolina. Because a roadway actually runs under the falls, tourists are able to drive beneath its waters, and marriages are sometimes held there. The scenery of this area is breathtaking, and in June the mountain laurel and other high county flowers will be in full bloom. Their aroma is almost magical. Because rock hunting can prove difficult, it's nice to be able to stop from time to time and smell the flowers.

Experience has taught me that rockhounding often has more to do with luck than it does with knowledge. In 2009, while visiting North Carolina, I got really lucky. I was traveling west on Highway 64, heading for the Lower Cullasaja River to hunt for sapphires, when I encountered a traffic jam. Highway 64 is a two-lane road with sparse traffic, so I got out and walked up the line of cars to investigate. A flagman explained to me that in 2007 a very large section of rock had fallen into the roadway that runs beneath the falls, effectively blocking traffic there for two years. (When I say "large," I mean hundreds of tons.) On this day the Highway Department was starting the removal process—with dynamite.

I made a mental note to look closely when I came back that way in the evening. However, I stayed too long searching up and down the river for sapphires, so it was dark when I returned to the falls. As I pulled in and my headlights panned around, all I saw was thousands of red sparkles on the ground. I got out to look and found garnets everywhere. So I filled my pockets with garnets of various sizes and said to myself, "I know where I am starting tomorrow morning!"

When I returned, I found so many garnets that it seemed the ground in places was covered with marbles. In addition to pounds and pounds of loose garnets, there was a great deal of silvery schist, also infused with abundant garnets. A metamorphic rock, this schist contained iron oxide and small amounts of quartz, along with a lot of mica, drawn out into thin scales by heat and pressure. I watched as the trucks escaped with tons of this material. I asked the Highway Department workers where they were taking it; but sadly, they would not tell me. Nonetheless, I still came home with many treasures. In fact, coming back to Tennessee, my truck was so heavy that stopping was always an adventure.

Although the Bridal Veil site has now been cleared of the fallen rock and its garnets, there is a path leading up the mountain to a water source where good garnets may be found. Getting to that water source is difficult, but there are places along the path that also contain schist and garnets. In addition, whenever I go back, I al-

ways find garnets that have washed over the falls. So for those who don't want to climb, walking slowly and looking carefully should also yield garnets. Either way, this site offers the opportunity to experience the quest, see the falls, and leave with beautiful treasures. For a video of Bridal Veil Falls, complete with audio, please see <http://www.highlandsinfo.com/Video/BridalVeilFalls.htm>.

Equipment to Bring: A lot of climbing is required, so you'll need to keep your equipment as light as possible. In fact, if arranged correctly, all your equipment can be carried in one five-gallon bucket. You'll need a rock hammer, a sifter (a colander works well), a small hand shovel, heavy boots, and sunscreen. A GPS is also a plus; I will be bringing mine. And off course, you'll need bags to carry your treasures in.

February Meeting Highlights

- **Auction:**
 - ✓ Fossils from the Roger Van Cleef collection, donated by Ron Brister.
 - ✓ Miscellaneous minerals and rocks from several collections.
- **Adult Program:** "Between Earth and Sky, there are only a few striking boulders," by Susan Kus, Professor of Anthropology, Rhodes College.
- **Junior Program:** "Hieroglyphs: more than just pictures," by the University of Memphis Egyptology Graduate Student Association.

Countdown To Show



87 days and counting (as of February 1, 2012). The 2012 Memphis Mineral, Fossil, and Jewelry Show will take place April 28 and 29 at the Agricenter International.

Show News:

1. The show is sold-out of dealer space with a waiting list.
2. Exhibit area will expand and under go a new design.
3. Rockzone will expand and relocate to west end of Room A.
4. Volunteer opportunities are now available. A summary schedule is published below. A hard copy will be available at membership meetings and upon email request

All (*that means you*) MAGS members are requested to help with the show by volunteering your time and help. The following chart is a summary of the schedule. Upon request I will email the complete schedule. Please email me (w.c.mcd@att.net) back with the days and times you would like to volunteer. Signup sheets will also be available at the February, March, and April membership meetings

Thursday 4-26	Day 9-6 -times/events will be fluid <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show layout • Tables skirted • Rockzone prep • Show prep as needed 	Evening- 6:00 pm <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grab Bag Packing Party with food • Show prep as needed
Friday 4-27	Day- 9-6- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show prep as needed • Dealers move in • Exhibits set-up • Prepare for show dinner 	Evening- 6:30 pm- see separate signup for dinner <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show dinner • Final show prep
Saturday 4-28	Day 9-6 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2-3 hour shifts • Front/admission • Information • Rockzone • Where needed 	No show events., except eat and rest up for Sunday
Sun 4-29	Day 10-5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2-3 hour shifts • Front/admission • Information • Rockzone • Where needed 	Evening 5 to finished <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakdown • Pack, Organize
Mon 4-30	Day 8-11 Help as needed with move back to shed	No show events

Editor's Note: The next article was forwarded to *MAGS Rockhound News* by a member. It is only printed here for your information. The writer is trying to raise funding for an educational project on gems, minerals and mineral collecting, which falls within the MAGS mission. He needs to raise \$4,000 on his own to get his project funded by Kickstarter.com. MAGS is not soliciting your donation, merely passing along the information.

3D Mineral Documentary Project Accepted for Crowd Support

John Barwood

"MineralCollecting.org Presents: Minerals—A 3D HD Journey" was recently approved by the team at Kickstarter.com, a crowd funding website, and we're offering some fun rewards in exchange for contributions toward getting this important project funded.

My name is John Adam Barwood and I'm a long time collector and enthusiast. I used to run MineralCollecting.org and I've started rebuilding the website to focus on creating a documentary video series about gems, minerals, and mineral collecting.

We have until March 6th at 11:01 P. M. EST to raise \$4000 for the project. Kickstarter is an all or nothing project funding site so we need to reach the mark to get funded. It's quick and easy and we're in dire need of backers! You can contribute toward this project by visiting the project page online by typing the URL address below into your browser's address bar and every dollars counts! A variety of payment methods are accepted and no charges are collected unless/until the project reaches its goal before March 6th.

Please check out our backer rewards and consider supporting a great project. All contributions are sincerely appreciated!

"MineralCollecting.org Presents' is a comprehensive 3D HD documentary video series journeying across the globe and deep into the ground to discover and document gems and minerals. From the ground to the museum, *Continued, P. 8*

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Mineral Project. viewers come
Continued from P. 7 along for the
fun, laughs,
beauty and breathtaking earthly
creations."

Project page, more info, and to
make donations:

[Kickstarter.com/projects/
1119735507/
mineralcollectingorg-presents-
minerals-a-3d-hd-jou](http://Kickstarter.com/projects/1119735507/mineralcollectingorg-presents-minerals-a-3d-hd-jou)

Mark your calendars for the...

9th Annual Museum of Natural
Science **Fossil Road Show!**

Saturday, 3rd March, 2012,
10:00 A. M. to 3:30 P. M.

I'd like to invite everyone in-
terested to come help us celebrate
the 9th anniversary of the MMNS
Fossil Road Show here at the Mu-
seum of Natural Science in Jack-
son. We would appreciate your
devoted or even casual profes-
sional (and/or avocational) partici-
pation. If you've been involved in
previous shows, then you know
the drill; if you've never attended a
show, then please let me know
your level of interest in participat-
ing. If you come as a visitor, that's
great! But if you would like to
participate by either setting up a
personalized display and/or infor-
mation table to promote your or-
ganization and interact with the
public, or if you'd simply like to
show off some of your recent fossil
discoveries, we'd love that even
more!

Whatever your level of inter-
est, professional, novice, or simply
curious, we hope to see you there!

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Conservation & Biodiversity
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voice mail is not available.]
(601) 576-6041—Lab
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December 2011 Board Minutes

Marc Mueller

The MAGS Board of Direc-
tors met December 1 at the St.
Clare Room in St. Francis Hospi-
tal, 5959 Park Avenue. The meet-
ing was called to order at 6:30 P.
M. Present were: Lou White,
Doris Jones, Carol and Matthew
Lybanon, Alan Schaeffer, Marc
Mueller, Neville Mayfield, Charles
Hill, W. C. McDaniel and Nannett
McDougal.

Secretary: November minutes
were approved as corrected.

Treasurer: Report presented
and accepted. One check re-
ceived, \$45.00 for Van Cleef fund.

Field Trips: Wells Creek me-
teor impact site trip on November
19 was excellent. North MS club
Vulcan Quarry this Sat. Chucalissa
trip in January.

Adult Programs: In January,
Alan Schaeffer will present Fluo-
rescent minerals. For February,
Dr. Susan Kus from Rhodes Col-
lege will talk on Madagascar.
March program is still open. May,
Dr. Mike Gibson will do some-

thing about Colorado. April,
MAGS Show will be the program.

Junior Programs: December is
the holiday party. January, Sherry
Baldwin will do fossil cleaning.
February, University of Memphis
graduate students will present
Egyptology. April, Mike Baldwin
will conduct the Indian drums
workshop again. Please collect
coffee cans for drum construction.

Membership: Will design a
membership card and send out
draft. One new member.

Webmaster: Coon Creek and
Devonian Fossil articles have been
linked.

Historian/Rock Swap: Big
Scoop Fundraiser—MAGS was
very popular. Lines formed for
Rocks Around the Clock. 42 ap-
plications given out. All cards dis-
tributed.

Newsletter: Matthew Ly-
banon—December Newsletter is
ready. Deadline December 18 for
January newsletter. Please send
any schedules.

Show: No report.

New Business: For the
Christmas Party MAGS will sup-
ply ham, turkey and a chicken.
Paul Sides can bring a tree. We
can decorate and auction off the
tree. Adults bring a gift around
\$10.

The 2012 Memphis Mineral,
Fossil, and Jewelry Show will be
here before you know it. It's one
of the best shows around, and a
major reason is the help provided
by MAGS Members—and it's fun!
There is a volunteer schedule on P.
7. Sign up today!

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	<p>Dixie Mineral Council Field Trips The Southeast Federation of Mineralogical Societies, Inc</p>	
<p>DMC Program of the SFMS Field Trip Committee - Copyright © All rights reserved.</p>		

DMC Program of the SFMS Field Trip Committee
An Official Field Trip of The Western South Carolina Gem and Mineral Society
(Greenville, SC)(HOST)
An Official Field Trip of the Memphis Archaeological and Geological Society

9:30 AM, Saturday, February 25, 2012

Burgin Quartz Mine

Norwood, NC

FEE AREA

Place: Burgin Quartz Mine in Norwood, NC

Time: Saturday, February 25, 2012 from 9:30 AM to 5:30 PM

Cost: \$10.00 per person and you must sign a release.

What to find: Quartz crystals, often clear and sometimes huge up to 4 inches across and a few inches long. The crystals are found in vugs in a very large milky quartz outcropping, though some crystals can be found by digging through the spoil piles previously dug out by a backhoe. To get the big ones, you need to do some hard rock mining using sledge hammers, and chisels to break apart the massive quartz to expose new vugs. I picked this site, because it has only recently been opened up, its potential has not been fully explored, and the DMC has never been there.

Lodging: There are hotels a few miles north in Albemarle, NC.

What to bring: Sledge hammers, chisels, rock hammers, safety glasses, gloves, dirt sifting tools, buckets, newspaper to wrap specimens, drink and food. (Subway and Bojangles are only a couple of miles away if you prefer to eat out.)

Directions: The address is 40764 Old Cottonville Rd., Norwood, NC. Use MapQuest or GPS for exact directions from the area you are coming from. Norwood is due east of Charlotte, NC. I travel on Route 52 just south of Albemarle. Turn right (heading south) on Route 52 and follow it to the Subway on the right just inside the Norwood town limits. Turn right and then turn right again on the other side of Subway on S. Stanly School Rd. Follow it to the Old Cottonville Road on the left and turn left there. Drive under the railroad trestle and turn left onto a dirt lane. Follow the lane over a low ridge and watch for the digging area on the right. There is plenty of parking.

For further information call Bill Wetzel at 864-306-6749. Brandt Wetzel's Cell 864-404-0001.

The Envelope, Please



Answer to “Can You Identify?” challenge on P. 2: **Ice**. To be a mineral a substance must meet five requirements:

1. naturally occurring (not made by humans)
2. inorganic (not produced by an organism)

3. solid
4. a limited range of chemical compositions
5. ordered atomic structure

If we compare the properties of ice to the five requirements of the mineral definition we find that it clearly meets the last four.

However, requirement #1 presents a problem. Ice is a mineral when it forms naturally (e. g., snowflakes) but it is not a mineral when people play a role in producing it (ice cubes in your refrigerator).

As of this writing, the mineral in question is not in the weather forecast.

Calendar

February 2, 2012

Board Meeting, St. Clare Room, St. Francis Hospital, 6:30 P.M.

February 6, 2012

ShowTeam meeting, Agricenter International, 6:30 P.M.

February 10, 2012

Membership Meeting, Shady Grove Presbyterian Church, 7:30 P.M.

March 3, 2012

Fossil Road Show, Mississippi Museum of Natural Science, Jackson, MS

Memphis Archaeological and Geological Society
2019 Littlemore Drive
Memphis, TN 38016

