



Volume 58 ◊ Number 05 ◊ May 2012 ◊ A monthly newsletter for and by the members of MAGS

Fossil Fishing in Kansas

Michael A. Gibson (Dr. Gibson will give the adult program on May 11)



In May 2012, I took nine UT Martin students “fishing” for Cretaceous marine fossils near Dighton, Kansas, in the Niobrara Formation. The trip was funded as a partnership between the Discovery Park of America (DPA), the new park currently under con-

struction in Union City, Tennessee, along the proposed I-69 corridor, and the UT Martin Geology program. The Discovery Park is a nearly \$100 million project that includes natural history exhibits, regional history, technology and

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Did You Know?

Do you know what organization was responsible for publishing the first report on excavations at Chulacissa? Of course, that would be the Memphis Archaeological and Geological Society from their excavations conducted between March 8, 1952, and April 30, 1953. The title of the document is **Report of Excavations Made at the T.O. Fuller Site, Shelby County, Tennessee**, edited by Kenneth

Robert Connolly

Lawrence Beaudoin. A copy is available on the MAGS website.

The report notes that “It was determined in the Spring of 1952 that the Memphis Archaeological and Geological Society excavation should confine itself to one single, archaeologically rich area which was to be worked as thoroughly as possible to show the archaeological potential of

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

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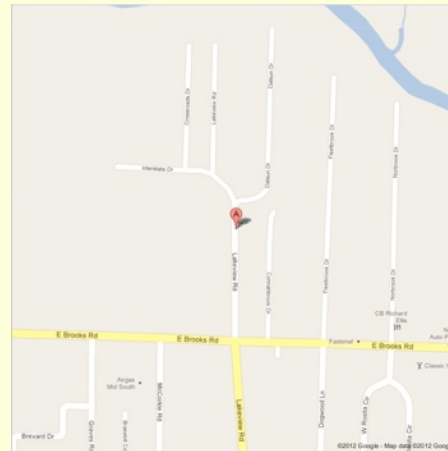
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MAY 19 FIELD TRIP

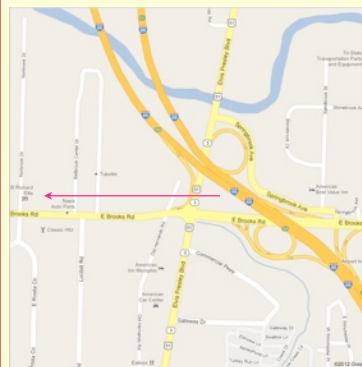


Date and time: May 19, 9:00 A. M.-1:00 P. M.

Location: Nonconnah Creek

Leader: Carol Lybanon, phone (901) 757-2144 or (901) 493-6700 (cell), email lybanon@earthlink.net.

The next MAGS field trip will include a picnic and rock swap. You will need to bring **your own** lunch, drinks, water, chairs, blankets, trading materials, buckets, and small rakes. You will probably need to wade into the creek. There are no bathroom facilities and no shade at this location.



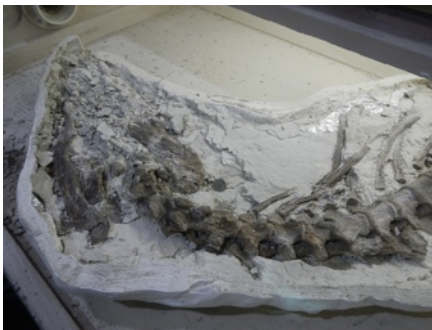
We will meet in the area behind Interstate Industrial Park (3058 Lakeview Road), just off Brooks Road (see top map). From I-240 in Memphis, take I-55 south to the Brooks Road exit. After you exit, turn right onto Brooks Road almost immediately. From Mississippi, take I-55 north to the Brooks Road exit and turn left (west) onto Brooks Road.

Collecting will be on gravel bars on Nonconnah Creek. We will be looking for fossils, petrified wood, agates, and Native American artifacts. W. C. McDaniel will lead us on a short expedition to scope out a bottle collecting area.

Rescheduling: If we get a heavy rain within two days of the trip we will have to reschedule. It is only fun when the water is low. Look for updates on the MAGS website, memphisgeology.org, or call Carol.

Fossil Fishing much more. *Continued from P. 1* Currently the park is looking for a 2013 opening. We partnered with another group, Triebold Paleontology, Inc. (TPI), from Woodland Park, Colorado, which owns collecting rights in the Dighton area and conducts yearly excavations for fossils for commercial resale. Triebold has been contracted by DPA to provide dinosaur and other vertebrate fossil casts for the park.

As the paleontologist at UT Martin, my responsibility for the DPA is to help design the natural history floor of the museum and help acquire the minerals, rocks, and fossils that will be on display. Acquisition of the items includes a combination of donations by collectors, purchases on the open market, and collecting trips of our own. So it was this past May that our fishing expedition for fossils took place on the western side of the Cretaceous Interior Seaway.



Our trip was extremely successful as we “netted” a small mosasaur (40% complete) with a nearly complete skull that showed evidence of shark scavenging, the largest *Ichthyodectes ctenodon* fish collected to date, nearly 9 feet long, a smaller *Xiphactinus audax*, and several specimens of the small

fish *Cimolichthys*. In addition, the group collected nearly 40 specimens of the *Inoceramus*-like clam *Durania*.



This past March the UTM students visited Triebold's preparation facility in Woodland Park where they helped to extract and prep the fossils for extraction and display, affording the students their second learning opportunity. Dr. Gibson will share images of the trip and discuss the connection with our own Coon Creek Formation.

For more information on the Discovery Park visit www.discoveryparkofamerica.com and for more information on the geosciences program at The University of Tennessee at Martin, please visit their website (www.utm.edu) or contact Dr. Gibson ((731) 881-7435; mgibson@utm.edu).

Juniors Corner

Carol Lybanon

Thanks to all Juniors who helped in the RockZone at our April 28-29 Show. It was a fun weekend for me and I hope that everyone who attended had fun. Our May program will be given by Idajeen Jordan. I know it will be a great program about crystals. In June our group will compile a

mineral collection to take home. In July our program will be about ammonites.

See you at the meetings.

Nonconnah Creek Science Park Petition

MAGSters are familiar with Nonconnah Creek as a good collecting site. This month's field trip will go there (see article on P. 2). During the construction of the Mall of Memphis workers unearthed the remains of a mastodon (now in the Pink Palace Museum) on Nonconnah Creek¹, and we know it's a good place to find petrified wood, ice age fossils, agates, and other interesting minerals².



Yes, MAGSters know this. But many other Memphians and visitors to Memphis don't. The fact that we have this resource in our backyard remains a secret to most of the public.

And there is another problem. There are very few places where people can get down to Nonconnah Creek, and in several of those places getting down is not easy. If more people knew of the scientific importance of the site, and access was easier, it would be a good thing.

That's why Carol and Matthew Lybanon went

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Editor's Note: *A temple collapsed at the Panhellenic sanctuary of Nemea, Greece, sometime between 425-400 BCE. Its destruction was left unexamined until 1980, when a team of archaeologists began digging up the foundations of the site. They found heavy deposits of carbon—suggesting a large fire—structural rubble, and bronze and iron weaponry. Because the temple's demise coincided with the Peloponnesian War—setting Athens against Sparta—the working assumption was that the building was a casualty of battle. Enter Meagan Young, honors student of archaeology at Johns Hopkins University, with a double major in civil engineering.*

Meagan wasn't buying the war theory. She looked carefully through the archaeological data and the weighty authority of Thucydides' History of the Peloponnesian War, and concluded it just didn't make sense. An attack big enough to bring down a major monument would most likely have become part of the historical record. But Thucydides makes no mention of the event. An alternative explanation was an accidental, but deadly, fire. How to adjudicate between these accounts?

Following is an extended abstract of an archaeology honors thesis Meagan is submitting for publication to a professional journal, printed here with permission.

Rebuilt from the Rubble

Meagan Young

Sometime between 425-400 B. C. E., a temple was destroyed at the Panhellenic sanctuary of Nemea, Greece. The details of its destruction were lost to time until a team of archaeologists unearthed evidence of its destruction in 1980. The evidence included heavy deposits of carbon (indicating a large fire), structural rubble, and bronze and iron weaponry. Other buildings throughout the sanctuary were damaged, as the archaeological record indicated that they had either been damaged or remodeled at the same time as the temple's destruction. The time period in question also happens to be the time of the Peloponnesian War, a dispute that pitted Athens and her allies on the mainland against Sparta and her allies on the Peloponnese.

A preliminary investigation of the archaeological evidence in conjunction with historic data led researchers to conclude that the temple's destruction was a result of a battle. A closer look at the published archaeological information, events following the destruction, in addition to Thucydides'



Fragments of wall block from Early Temple

Notches cut into the stone to hold wooden beams, blackened by smoke
Source: Miller 1980, Plate 38d-e



Architectural roof element

Blackened by smoke
Source: Miller 1980, Plate 38e

History of the Peloponnesian War, illustrated what was potentially a much different scenario surrounding the temple's destruction. The implications of a battle in a Panhellenic sanctuary are much too great to be plausible and would have most likely been noted in the historical record. An accidental fire seemed to be the more likely cause, but how the fire started prompted further questioning.

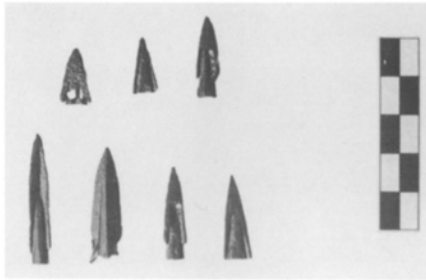
Thucydides notes an earthquake felt by Spartan troops in 415-414 B. C. E. in a city-state not far from the Nemean sanctuary.

Using this historic record, modern earthquake intensity scales, an approximate model of the temple (developed from contemporary temple footprints), and a bit of structural engineering, the earthquake noted by Thucydides might have caused the fire at the temple as well as minor damage to other buildings nearby.

A low strength earthquake is the most plausible explanation as catastrophic levels of destruction from a large earthquake probably

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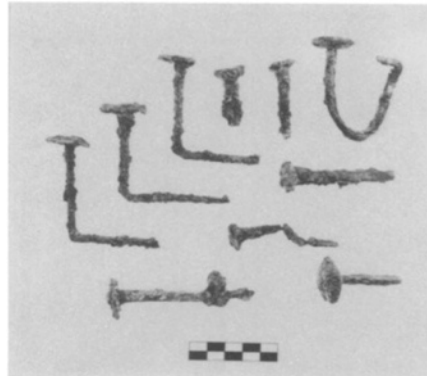
Rebuilt from the Rubble
Continued from P. 4



Bronze arrowheads found in destruction layer of Early Temple
Source: Miller 1981, Plate 14c

would have been noted by Thucydides in his History. He only mentioned retreating Spartan troops and is also known for avoiding discussion of most anything religious in nature. The damage to structures within a Panhellenic sanctuary from a small-strength earthquake could have contributed to Thucydides' silence. Archaeological evidence suggests that the fire

took place prior to any structural damage the temple may have faced. Destruction resulting from earthquakes appears elsewhere in the archaeological record; one case in particular in western Crete yielded similar evidence to that found at Nemea.



Iron nails found in destruction layer of Early Temple
Source: Miller 1980, Plate 38b

More evidence is needed to confirm the actions following the

earthquake and the damage encountered in Nemea. Excavations at nearby city-states, as well as continued efforts in Nemea, could further clarify the circumstances surrounding the destruction. The earthquake scenario can be confirmed as a plausible explanation for the temple's destruction at the end of the fifth century B. C. E. The full thesis provides one of what could be a number of applications of earthquake engineering to complex archaeological problems. Going forward, more open dialogue between fields of this science and archaeology is absolutely necessary, as it can only benefit our understanding of the past.

Sources for illustrations:

- Miller, Stephen G. "Excavations at Nemea, 1979." *Hesperia* Vol. 49 No. 2. 1980. pp. 178-205.
- Miller, Stephen G. "Excavations at Nemea, 1980." *Hesperia* Vol. 50 No. 1. 1981. 45-67.

Nonconnah Park Petition
Continued from P. 3

down to Memphis Park Services on April 2. They met with Cindy Buchanan, the head of Park Services, and Mike Flowers, the Administrator of Planning & Development. Carol and Matthew told them about the scientific importance of Nonconnah Creek (Buchanan and Flowers weren't aware of them), and proposed a new Memphis City Park.

What they asked the City to do was to provide parking and a ramp down to Nonconnah Creek. What they said MAGS would do was to prepare a sign to tell people what can be found on the gravel bars and to help them identify their finds.

This new Nonconnah Creek Science Park could be a worthwhile educational resource for Memphis. It would also complement the recreational benefits of the Nonconnah Greenway and Trail System.

Buchanan and Flowers were receptive to the idea, and acknowledged the benefits of such a park. But getting a new city park isn't that easy. There is too much to do and too little money. They recommended we prepare a petition for the new park and collect signatures, to demonstrate the level of interest and support in the community. The petition was on the front table at the April MAGS meeting, and was also out collecting signatures at the Show. It will

be out for more signatures at our May meeting. If you haven't signed already, we urge you to do so. It's for a good cause.

REFERENCES

1. R. C. Brister, D. H. Dye, and J. W. Armon, 1981. *American Mastodon Remains and Late Glacial Conditions at Nonconnah Creek, Memphis, Tennessee*. Occasional Paper 1, Anthropological Research Center, Memphis State University (Memphis, Tennessee).
2. M. Nutt and G. Swihart, 2008. *Exciting Mineral Find at Nonconnah Creek, Memphis, Tennessee*. 2008 (118th) Annual Meeting of the Tennessee Academy of Science.

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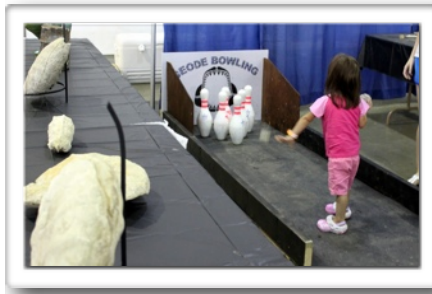


Fun in the Rockzone

Carol Lybanon

Our Show for 2012 had the Rockzone relocated to the other side of the room at the Agricenter. We were interested in having everyone find our new area. Thanks to Bob Cooper we have a fantastic stand from which we hung a cool new banner. I think everyone could see it. Pterodactyls courtesy of Bonnie Cooper.

James Butchko handled the Gem and Fossil Dig in his usual expert style. Our other games this year were Geode Bowling (thanks to Bartlett Lanes we had **real** bowling pins), Pebble Toss (thanks to Bob Cooper again for a second great construction), and Rocks Around the Clock (thanks, Neville Mayfield).



There were so many helpers that I really cannot name them all. Our members stepped up and helped in all areas of the Rockzone. Special thanks to our all-day helpers Sherry Bright, Leigh Butchko, Linda Gibbs, Debbie Schaeffer, Karen Schaeffer, Chris Scott, and Randa Spears.

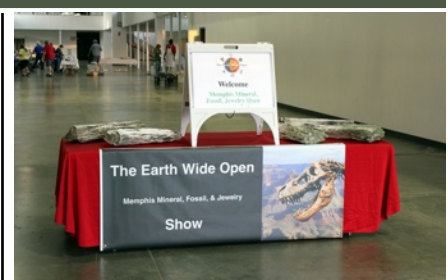
This year for the first time we had a Touch Table with signs that read "PLEASE TOUCH." I really enjoyed watching the reactions of the kids to that sign.

Memphis Botanic Garden and the C. H. Nash Museum at Chucalissa joined us in the RockZone. I hope they will continue to come each year.

I think our new location was a success.

Carol Lybanon
Bonnie Cooper
RockZone Co-Chairs

The pictures on the right show a little of what setup day, the day before the Show, looked like. Look for more Show pictures elsewhere in this issue.



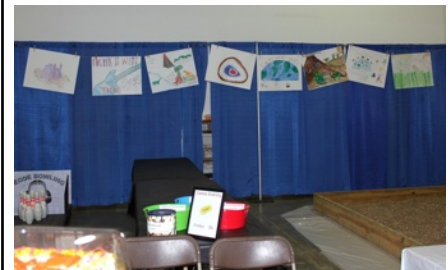
People entering will see this first.



RockZone Touching Table



Did we pack enough grab bags?



MAGS Juniors made these posters.



Volunteers get fed Friday night.

Editor's Note: Thanks to MAGS Member Howard Bromley for forwarding this. This article appeared in the April 2012 edition of the Mineral Chatter, official newsletter of The Mineralogical Society of Southern Africa, PO Box 28079, Goede Hoop Street, Bothasig, Cape Town, 7406, registered Non-Profit Organisation No. 61-850, trading as The Cape Town Gem & Mineral Club. Affiliated to the Federation of South African Gem & Mineral Societies.
www.ctminsoc.org.co.za

QUALITY IN MINERAL SPECIMENS—WHEN COLLECTING IS A HOBBY

by Konstantinos Charalampidis

Kostas Charalampidis comes from Greece. He began mineral collecting seriously eight years ago, when he started studying medicine in Bulgaria. He has a collection of Bulgarian specimens and also collects thumbnails of perfect quality from any locality. He enjoys field collecting and deals part-time in specimens, with a specialty in Bulgarian and Greek specimens. His email address is daus_fr@hotmail.com. The original version of this article was published on the FMF website <http://www.mineral-forum.com>. We thank Kostas for his permission to re-publish it in slightly edited form here, and Duncan Miller for sourcing the article.

In this article I discuss quality standards in collecting mineral specimens as a hobby. This is slightly different from collecting specimens for scientific purposes. The difference is not necessarily in the specimen itself, but in the criteria for which the specimen has been chosen. Quality equals rarity—rarity of the given specimen, not the given species. Which characteristics make a specimen rare?

I. Aesthetics: Lustre, Colour, Crystal Form, Clarity, Display-ability, Balance and Overall Appearance.

A specimen that exhibits all or most of these characteristics is rarer than a specimen that doesn't,

so it is of higher quality.

Aesthetics of minerals are possibly the second reason all collectors start with the hobby. First is probably the human curiosity about nature, an instinctive need to know our environment and excitement on natural creativity, in this case, how interesting a rock can be! The great role this first impression plays is the fact that minerals are beautiful in many ways. In other words, they are aesthetic. What is aesthetic about a specimen? Which are those factors that make a specimen aesthetic? How often do these factors occur?

A—Lustre: I start with lustre, since it's the first characteristic that attracts humans to a rock. This may sound strange, but think of the first time you saw a piece of glittering rock on the beach or the mountain. In most cases, high lustre is rarer than low lustre on specimens. If you think of a given material, you may consider you've seen more lustrous than matte specimens. However, thinking of world production of the same species, lustrous specimens are rarer. It happens that a collector may desire a matte specimen of a lustrous kind of a specific material. This can be explained by the fact that collectors need to possess something different, something that others don't have, something rare.

B—Colour: Humans have colour-sensitive vision, so appreciating objects like minerals which reflect the light in a great variety of colours is easily understood. Finding a piece with deep, intense colour is uncommon. Even more, the combination of well-contrasted colours on a single piece is even rarer. Again, when a species appears to have deep colour in most cases, collectors may turn to lighter colour of the same material. Many species can be found in different colours. Some colours are more common, while others are rarer. An example is brown pyromorphite. Green representatives form large crystals and have strong colour. Brown crystals though are more desirable. It's because they are rarer, so the brown ones win the game.

C—Crystal form: There are few things in nature that are not man-made and are geometric. Maybe the most geometrical objects in nature, as directly viewed by humans, after the Sun and Moon, are minerals. Crystal form should be judged by the following sub-criteria: I-Symmetry, II-Sharpness, III-Habit, and IV-Special growth.

I—Symmetry: Absolute symmetry doesn't exist even theoretically. Engineers always try to reach as close as possible to this condition. Symmetry in nature is rare *Continued, P. 8*

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Quality in Mineral Specimens and *Continued from P. 7* when it occurs approximately is impressive, not only for mineral collectors but for any human being, just because it's rare. In crystals, symmetry and asymmetry (due to special growth) could be of equal importance as quality standards. It depends on how often each of them occurs. For example, all of us have seen cubic fluorite crystals. But how many have seen curved fluorite crystals? Again, rarity of the phenomenon should be considered.

II—Sharpness: This is only slightly different from symmetry, but there is a difference. This term defines the smoothness of faces and the width of the area where those faces meet at edges. Smooth faces and narrow edges form a sharp crystal. A symmetrical crystal is not necessarily sharp (for instance, a cubic crystal with rounded edges). A sharp quartz crystal may not be symmetric. Generally, sharpness is a desirable characteristic, since it demonstrates more intact crystallisation and geometry. But, again, it's up to the rarity of occurrence to define the most desirable form. For example, round-edged galena from

Madan and Dal'negorsk became best sellers.

III—Habit: Dodecahedra of fluorite versus cubes is the first example that comes to mind. The points for quality in form will go to the habit that can be seen more rarely.

IV—Special Growth: By special growth should be understood any form of crystal that is different from the geometric model of the crystal of the given species. Parallel growth, striations, natural etching, skeletal, tabular, interference, and other types of growth, are unusual phenomena (possibly) and are desirable, especially when they are appealing. When the special growth is more often seen than the theoretical form, then the classic crystal should be considered more desirable. As several types of special growth can be seen on a single species, similarly to habit, they compete with each other. It's easier to find open gwindel quartz than closed gwindel quartz. The theoretical part refers to an unexplained phenomenon in both cases, but the closed examples are rarer, so collectors hunt them more keenly.

D—Clarity: This refers to the crystals which show translucency or transparency. Examining this criterion reveals the difference between collector's value and user's value. As users, let's think of jewellers and machinery companies. Clear crystals are an optical medium and will reflect one part of the light, absorb one part and let one part pass through them. The effect is charming for the human eye and is appreciated as aesthetic by everyone. Inclusions or flaws of the crystal interfere to the light passing through it and instead reflect it back. Such flaws are normally disadvantages for users, but not always for collectors! It depends on the mineralogical rarity of the flaw. Great examples are the so-called phantoms, which could be a problem for a jeweller, but raise the value for a collector. Again, what is rare is desirable. An aquamarine crystal with a phantom should be more desirable than a similar clear one, just because we don't see many aquamarine crystals with phantoms!

This article will be continued in the next issue of MAGS Rockhound News.



Did you see these billboards around town?



Links to Federation News

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

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	<p>Dixie Mineral Council Field Trips The Southeast Federation of Mineralogical Societies, Inc DMC Program of the SFMS Field Trip Committee- Copyright © All rights reserved.</p>	
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DMC Program of the SFMS Field Trip Committee
An Official Field Trip of the Mississippi Gem and Mineral Society (Jackson, MS.) (HOST)
An Official Field Trip of the Memphis Archaeological and Geological Society

8:30 AM, Saturday, May 26, 2012
Bayou Pierre
Utica, MS

Place: Bayou Pierre near Utica, MS
Time: Saturday, May 26, 2012 from 8:30 AM to 2:00 PM

What to find: Jasper, chert fossils, agates, petrified wood, and sometimes (although rare) palmwood.

Lodging: There are motels a few miles north in Clinton (mostly on Springridge Rd.), please don't stay in Jackson. There are no motels in Raymond or Utica.

What to bring: Buckets or bags for putting rocks in, a stick or tool to stir rocks with, sunscreen, insect repellent, water, drinks and snacks. Also bring lunch to eat under the trees, and we often share with each other.

What to wear: Light clothing, hat, sturdy shoes (you might want to wade).

Meeting Place: Hubbard's Truck Stop, Corner of Hwy 18 and Hwy 27E.

Directions: Off I20 at Jackson, take Hwy 18 (26.7) miles toward Raymond. Hubbard's will be on the left, just before Highway 27E going toward Crystal Springs.

For further information call Janie Hand at 601-706-4629 or email rockngranny49@aol.com.

Other Upcoming Area Events

- ➔ May 11 & 12: SFMS Quarterly Meeting, Pikeville, TN, info (865) 406-8802 or gcjinc@comcast.net
- ➔ May 12: Mobile Rock and Gem Society Gem-O-Rama, Mobile, AL, info (228) 806-1039
- ➔ June 2 & 3: 7th Annual Ben E. Clement Gem, Mineral, Fossil, & Jewelry Show, Marion, KY, info (270) 965-4263, beclement@att.net, or clementmineralmuseum.org
- ➔ June 9: DMC Field Trip of the Montgomery Gem & Mineral Society, (trip goes to) Trenton, AL, info (334) 312-0572

Did You Know? (continued from P. 1)

the site rather than to explore the site for possibly rich burial areas..."

The excavations consisted of ten 10 x 10 ft. units that ultimately uncovered the entirety of a 28 square foot house.

Beaudoin rather prophetically noted in the report "... the site would lend itself admirably to in situ development should the State or any other agency ever decide upon such a program." It was part of the objective of these excavations to draw attention to this potential of the site."

MAGS is the longest running active supporter of the C .H. Nash

Museum, extending back 60 years and continuing to the present day.

Thanks so much for all that you do!

Our May Volunteer Day is set for Saturday, May 19th, from 9:00 A. M. to 1:00 P. M. Come out and help us with our inventory of artifacts or landscaping for our new medicinal plant sanctuary. No experience is necessary and children are welcome with adult supervision. For more information contact Robert Connolly at (901) 785-3160 or at rcnolly@memphis.edu.

Calendar

May 3, 2012

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

May 11, 2012

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

May 19, 2012

Field trip, rock swap, and picnic, 9:00 A.M.-1:00 P.M.

May 26, 2012

DMC Field Trip, Bayou Pierre near Utica, MS, 8:30 A.M.-2:00 P.M.

Memphis Archaeological and Geological Society
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Memphis, TN 38016

