

08 JUNE 2007

VOL 53 / NO 6 a newsletter for and by the members of the Memphis Archaeological and Geological Society

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Important Fossil Site Nearly Lost

MATTHEW LYBANON: In 1999, a student at Oneonta High School in Blount County, Alabama, told his science teacher about fossilized tracks he had found in an abandoned surface coal mine in nearby Walker County. He found vertebrate trackways that had been imprinted on a tidal mud flat 310 million years before. The teacher, who happened to be a member of the Alabama Paleontological Society, scouted the site and alerted other members of the significant fossils and their unusual abundance.



Finding trackways in the field (I to r) Ron Buta, Jimmy Baldwin, Jr., and Ashley Allen pose with a large rock containing numerous criss-crossing invertebrate trackways (Kouchiphichnium) found on a trip to Union Chapel Mine in May 2003.

Many experts in the field of ichnology (the study of fossilized tracks) have said that the Union Chapel Mine, near Jasper, Alabama, is one of the best fossil trackway sites in the world. Since the discovery of the site, the Alabama Paleontological Society has collected and categorized over 2,000 fossils of early Pennsylvanian-age amphibian

[cont'd on page 4]

2007 - 2008 Officers and Board of Directors

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

SANDY WARD: As I watch the news on TV or read the local paper, I'm confronted almost daily with the news



that someone has been murdered in this city. It happens so often that learning of yet another senseless killing doesn't even surprise me, much less shock me anymore....that is, until it touched someone I know. As most of you have heard by now, Ethan Jacobs, the son of MAGS members Alan & Cathie Jacobs was shot Friday night and died early Saturday morning. When the news of this reached me, I was stunned and for days now, the Jacobs family and what they must be going through has been at the forefront of my thoughts. It has also forced me to think about the families and friends of the five other people who have been killed in this city in the last ten days. "realness" of this has taken away the luxury of anonymous detachment for me. The lives of all of these people mattered greatly to someone and their deaths leave a wake of shock and sadness that affect so many in profound ways. If you're a person who prays, say a prayer for those left in that wake. Alan & Cathie, you remain in my thoughts and on behalf of all of the members of this organization I wish for your and your family comfort and peace.

-Sandy Ward

2007 Dates to Remember Due Date For Board Membership Newsletter Submissions Meeting Meeting June 5/31 80 May 23 July 05 13 Jun 27 August 02 10 Jul 25 September 06 14 Aug 29 October 04 12 Sep 26 Oct 24 November 01 09 December 06 Nov 28



Announcements

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

We would like to welcome our newest MAGS members. They are as follows:

Patsy Black
Robert & Bonnie Cooper
Danny Falkner
Billy Kennedy & Family
Dr. Jon & Vickie Stanford & Family

We look forward to having you join us at the monthly meetings and fieldtrips!

MEMBERSHIP MEETING PROGRAM

Be sure and join MAGS at the June membership meeting. Our guest speaker for the Adult Presentation will be Dr. Terry Panhorst of the University of Mississippi. His topic will be the formation of breccias. Also, there will be an auction for various minerals so bring your wallets and pocketbooks!

MEMBER NAME BADGES

We have had an impressive increase in membership in the recent months. Be sure to welcome these new members at the meetings when you see them! The Board encourages all of the members to wear the name badges they received in their new member packets so that everyone can get to know one another by name. If anyone has misplaced their name badge and would like another, please see Pam Gurley at the door before the meeting and she can make arrangements to provide you with a new nametag.

Roadcut

w.c. McDANIEL: Roadcut's Spring Break is over and it's time to hit the road on our journeys to some of the world class mineral sites. This month we will look at those sites outside the Americas.

Cornwall and Devon, Durham mining areas, England

Over 300 different minerals have been discovered in these mines. Centuries of mining for silver, tin, lead, copper, iron, tungsten and other ores, have left this area virtually depleted except for the abundance of mineral specimens located in many museums. Some minerals include galena, hematite, muscovite, epiodote and fluorite.

Kashmir region of Pakistan and India

While this is a troubled region, it produces some great gemstone specimens including topaz, beryl, aquamarine, ruby, sapphire, muscovite and zircon.

Kola Peninsula, Russia

Located above the Arctic Circle in northwestern Russia, this site was described as "a truly amazing mineral locality." This large and important region has produced over three hundred different mineral species and is the type locality for over a hundred minerals. Some minerals include fluorite, spahelerite, milarite, thomsonite, astrophyllite and gold.

Ural Mountains, Russia

Large mining corridor in central Russia that stretches along the nearly north-south mountain chain that divides Europe from Asia. This area has produced many valuable gemstones as well as a diverse assemblage of exotic mineral specimen. Some minerals include rhodinite, Russian quartz, and malachite, platinum and gold.

Some other mineral sites include:

Tsumeb, Otavi District, Namibia, Ratnapura Gem Mines of Sri Lanka, Mount Vesuvius near Naples, Italy; Copiapo and Atacama Desert, Chile, Southern Greenland, Harz Mountains and Saxony, Germany, Kimberly, South Africa Kivu, Demcratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire) Langban Mine and the whole Varmland District, Sweden and Langesundfjord, Norway.

Source: http://mineral/galleries/com/minerals/vablocal.htm

Important Fossil Site Nearly Lost (continued from front page)

trackways and other trace fossils. Paleontologists have found amphibians, millipedes, horseshoe crabs, fish, insect larvae and perhaps early reptiles, as well as compressions and casts of tree-sized "ferns," lycopods and horsetails. "I would say that the Union Chapel Mine site is a Rosetta Stone for those trying to understand the Carboniferous trace fossil record," says Spencer Lucas, curator of paleontology and geology at the New Mexico Museum of Natural History.



The site is now known as the Steven C. Minkin Paleozoic Footprint Site, in honor of a geologist and member of the Alabama Paleontological Society who played an instrumental role in recognizing the significance of this unusual resource. The State of Alabama acquired the property in 2004, and it is managed by the State Lands Division for scientific research and to promote educational programs.

But it almost didn't happen. Federal law requires land restoration after mining operations end. Although owners of the New Acton Coal Mining Company wanted to donate their mine to science, a

local farmer who owned rights to the reclaimed and stood to acquire the property. He saw the site as an ordinary area where he could graze his cows.

The Alabama Mining Commission granted a stay of reclamation just three days before reclamation was legally required to begin. A formal hearing was convened in October 2003 to determine the outcome. All interested parties, including the Alabama Paleontological Society, the mining company, and the local farmer, were allowed to present their arguments. Joining in the preservation effort was Rep. Robert Aderholt, who introduced a bill in the U.S. House of Representatives to allow the mining company to donate the land to the Department of the Interior. This would exempt the mine from reclamation and settle the matter once and



FIGURE 7. The Union Chapel Mine after partial reclamation, February 2001

for all. Fortunately, the site was saved, and we have the chance to see the world's best Carboniferous tracksite. Our June 23 field trip will go there! MAGS members can get a preview by viewing images of fossils found there at http://bama.ua.edu/~rbuta/monograph/.

June Birthdays

The birthstone for June is moonstone. (also Pearl & Alexandrite)



3	Bruce Henry
4	Maggie Gembala
5	Allen Thom
7	Edward DeVoe
10	Kristopher Helms
13	Sherri McCalla
16	Lisa Parks
16	Ann Williams
17	Don Givens
18	Debbie Schaeffer
19	Norman Daniels
19	Dan Reed
20	Melissa Johnston
20	Vivian Sharpe
21	Allen Helt
25	Doris Johnston Jone
25	Danielle Schaeffer
25	Lauren Schaeffer
25	Michael Scilken
27	Sarah Easley
27	Priya Tummalapalli
29	Jennifer Baldwin
29	Cornelia McDaniel
30	Luciano Sejas
3	Bruce Henry
4	Maggie Gembala
5	Allen Thom
7	Edward DeVoe
10	Kristopher Helms

While the pearl has long been held as the June birthstone, Moonstone has become widely accepted. Moonstone is part of the mineral group, "feldspar." They come in a variety of colors and are typically cut as cabochons. The best quality moonstone comes from Sri Lanka, however they are also found in the USA, Brazil, Australia, Myanmar and Madagascar. They are a 6 on the Mohs hardness scale and should be handled carefully.



One of our Junior Rockhounds is in the spotlight! An article written by our own Karen Schaeffer, daughter of Alan and Debbie Schaeffer, was submitted to the 2007 AFMS Bulletin and Article Contest and she placed in the Top Ten in the "Junior Under 12" category! Her exact standing in the Top Ten will be announced at the award ceremony in Roswell, New Mexico on June 9th. Congratulations Karen, We are all very proud of you!

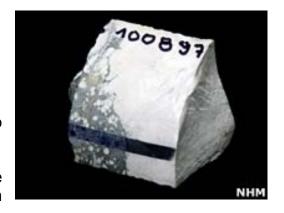
Web Site Statistics for May 2007a brief look at our website (www.memphisgeology.org) from 1/21/02-5/21/07						
Total Vists & Hits		Top page views page	ast 30 days			
Total visits to web site	215,957	homepage	731 hits			
Total hits to web site	776,774	rocknews 0407	426 hits			
Visits in past 30 days	7,294	rocknews 0507	411 hits			
Hits in past 30 days	31,406	The show	313 hits			
Average daily visits (past 30 days)	244	argon2003	285 hits			
Note: A visit is every time someone comes to our web site. A hit is every page viewed once a user enters our web site.						

Scientists Unearth Superman's "Kryptonite!"

Reprinted from BBC News website

Kryptonite, which robbed Superman of his powers, is no longer the stuff of comic books and film.

A mineral found by geologists in Serbia shares virtually the same chemical composition as the fictional kryptonite from outer space, used by the superhero's nemesis Lex Luther to weaken him in the film, "Superman Returns."



"We will have to be careful with it – we wouldn't want to deprive the Earth of hits most famous superhero!," said Dr. Chris Stanley, a mineralogist at London's Natural History Museum.

Stanley, who revealed the identity of the mysterious new mineral, discovered the match after searching the internet for its chemical formula – sodium lithium boron silicate hydroxide.

"I was amazed to discover that same scientific name written on a fictional case of rock containing kryptonite stolen by Lex Luther from a museum in the film, 'Superman Returns'," he said.

The substance has been confirmed as a new mineral after tests by scientists at the Natural History Museum in London and the National Research Council in Canada.

But instead of the large green crystals in Superman comics, the real thing is a white, powdery substance which contains no fluorine and is non-radioactive. The mineral is relatively hard but is very small grained. Each crystal is less than 5 microns (millionth of a meter) across.

The mineral, to be named Jadarite, will go on show at the London's Natural History Museum at certain times of the day on Wednesday, April 25, and Sunday, May 13th. Jadar is the name of the place where the Serbian mine is located.

* * *

Source: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/6584229.stm

MAGS June Field Trip

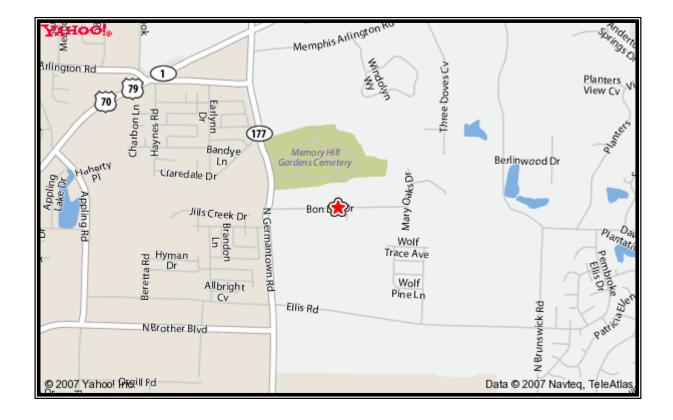
DAYID DAY: We are fortunate this month to have a trip scheduled on June 23rd to the Union Chapel Mine in Alabama. This is a very rare opportunity to explore a new location for MAGS members. To enable us the opportunity, literally months of research, planning and correspondence were necessary. We owe a special thank you to MAGS members Carol and Matthew Lybanon for their diligent effort resulting in this special field trip opportunity.

For those who have been looking forward to collecting fossil shark teeth and other vertebrates at the W.M Browning Cretaceous Fossil Site at 20 Mile Creek near Frankstown, Mississippi, we will be having that planned June field trip on Saturday, June 16th. We will be meeting at the park site and collecting in the creek (you must get wet in order to collect!). Directions and information will be available at the June membership meeting or by email. New members can also quiz experienced collectors during the fellowship period after the meeting for collecting tips. This is a popular and easy day trip fossil site.



SHELBY HARTMAN: The June Rock Swap will take place at the home of Melba Cole on Saturday, June 9th. The time will be announced at the June Membership meeting.

The address is 8280 Bon Lin Drive, Memphis, TN 38133. Melba's phone number is 382-0344.



April 2007 Board Meeting Minutes

SHELBY HARTMAN: The MAGS Board of Directors met April 5 at the Blue Plate Café, 5469 Poplar Avenue. The meeting was called to order at 6:37P.M.. Those present: Cathie & Alan Jacobs, Ron Brister, James Butchko, W.C. McDaniel, Sandy Ward, Shelby Hartman, Mike Baldwin, David Day, Melissa Johnston, Mike Cannito, Barry Burns, Idajean Jordan, and Pam Gurley.

Treasurer's Report: Mike Cannito reported that he has changed the report slightly to differentiate the account balances, and has added asterisks that indicate "subject to audit." A motion was made to approve the treasurers report, it was seconded and the motion carried. Field Trips: David Day said the April field trip will be to Robinson's Farm at Birmingham Ridge. He has printed a map; the site is just outside of Tupelo, MS. W.C. has been to the site and indicated it's a big open lime pit and the collecting is easy. Program: Melissa Johnston said this month's kid's program will be a talk about sedimentary rocks. There will also be an Easter Egg. Adult Program: W.C. said that the April program will be made up of two parts: a presentation by a representative from Ronald McDonald House and a hands-on activity with rough amber and sandpaper. We will need to set up the room at the meeting with tables instead of the usual auditorium style seating. He indicated that each member who participates will need to pay \$2 for the amber and supplies. **Minutes:** The Secretary's minutes from the March Board and Membership meetings were reviewed. A motion was made to approve the minutes as written; it was seconded and the motion carried. Library: Ron Brister said that James Butchko had made a good recommendation, that all outdated books be pulled from the library and offered for sale at the Show. This would make more room in the library. W.C. indicated the funds from the sale of the books should be put back into the library. Sandy asked about the outcome of the membership poll regarding library fines for overdue books and tapes. Ron said there were a wide range of ideas from the poll. He recommended extending the checkout to a 2-month period. With regard to the issue of more access to the library by the membership, it was discussed that Ron might either open the library one Saturday each month or, as an alternative, open the library earlier before the membership meetings. Ron asked if he could be on the agenda for the April membership meeting to talk about increasing the library's accessibility. It was decided that a selection of books and videos will be offered for sale at the Show. Newsletter/Website: Mike has been looking over areas of the website that are lacking. Those are "lapidary" and "publications." He is trying to look around for some information that will beef up

Hospitality/Sunshine/Membership: Pam Gurley said there are six new member applications that need to be approved. A motion was made to approve these six new members, it was seconded and the motion carried. With regard to the liability waivers, Pam indicated that having the members sign new waivers as they arrived at the membership meeting in March had very little impact. Ideas were discussed with regard to mailing them out with return postage, continuing to have members sign them at the membership meetings, and including the form in the newsletter. It was determined that if more waivers are successfully collected in the next 2-3 meetings then maybe it will be added to the newsletter and a request made to send it back signed. Sandy asked about the issue of nametags and the possibility of having the members wear them at the meeting. It was agreed that it was a nice idea but that it appears people just choose not to wear them. As there doesn't seem to be a simple way to have everyone wear a name tag it was decided that the issue of nametags would be permanently tabled. Rock Swaps: Cathie Jacobs said that all 2007 rock swap spaces are filled except for May. Jacobs informed the Board he had contacted Shelby Farms about renting a place for a Rock Swap, but they charge \$250 and require a \$25 deposit, and he didn't feel he had the authority to pursue it any further. Sandy said that she would mention that we need a May Rock Swap host at the upcoming membership meeting. Show: It was decided that the door prize should not be displayed at the upcoming membership meeting in order to protect it from breakage and that it shouldn't be moved again until it was time to transport it to The Show. Jim indicated that there is still a dismal number of volunteers and that he is very concerned. W.C. asked Jim to put together a list of all club members who indicated they would volunteer but couldn't pinpoint a definite time due to uncertain work schedules. Jim indicated that we are doing well on the grab bags and asked that anyone who has any completed bags should bring them to the membership meeting. There will be a Show meeting at Jim's house on Tuesday, April 10th. Old Business: a)Sandy Ward announced that the club has successfully obtained the Christian Brothers University mineral collection. accepted our offer of \$2500. It is a good bargain because it was previously appraised at around \$11,000. b) Idajean asked about access to the TV room at the church. previously had difficulty in accessing the TV for use in the Kids' Program. W.C. indicated that the only key was on Sandy's keyring and that copies could not be made. It was agreed that Sandy would arrive at the meetings early enough to allow Melissa time to get the TV and set up for her Kids' Program. c) Melissa Johnston inquired if the club would be renting one of the rooms on Central Avenue in Midtown. W.C. indicated he had talked to Frank and said they would be talking more after the Show this month. Melissa indicated the rooms were being rented fast. New Business: Alan Jacobs said he would like to ask the Board to consider forming an exploratory committee to move the membership meetings from Friday to another day of the week. Sandy asked that everyone think about it and that it would be discussed at the May Board meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 7:48 P.M.

April 2007 Membership Meeting Minutes

MATTHEW LYBANON: The MAGS Membership Meeting was held at Shady Grove Presbyterian Church on April 13, Sandy Ward presiding. The meeting was called to order at 7:36 P.M. members and 8 visitors attended. Visitors: Bob & Bonnie Cooper, Graydon Swisher, Jon & Vickie Stanford, Jon Michael & Holly Stanford, Susan Thompson. Randa Spears introduced Lee Rose, who spoke on the purpose of the Ronald McDonald House. Donations fund the house, which supports 51 families year-round, has an annual budget of \$2M, and is free to the families that stay there. The Ronald McDonald House houses mostly St. Jude outpatient families. It has been in operation for 15 years. Lee thanked MAGS for our continuing support. Randa Spears introduced the second program: cleaning amber. W.C. McDaniel had purchased unwashed amber pieces. For a charge of \$2 per piece, MAGS members and guests could select and clean a piece. We all hoped to find bugs; a few people did. It was a fun program. President Sandy Ward attempted to hold the business part of the meeting during the amber cleaning. Field Trips: David Day told the members about next week's trip to Birmingham Ridge, and about the Mt. Ida field trip that will take place over the Memorial Day weekend. Show: Jim Butchko reported that we still need volunteers. He also asked for people to sign up to bring food for the Friday night dinner. MAGS volunteers will fill the grab bags on Thursday afternoon and evening. All are welcome to come and help. **Rock Swap**: Host for May rock swap is still needed. Library: Ron Brister reported that the library will now have extended hours, from 6:30-9:30 P.M. Library materials will be checked out for a 2month period.0 Displays: There were three adult and one junior displays. Adult: Sandy Ward (mixture of minerals from New Mexico), Mike Baldwin (fluorescent minerals), David and Beth Day (crystals and diamond mine findings) Winner: Mike Baldwin Junior: Lauren Schaeffer (trilobites) Winner: Lauren Schaeffer. The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 P.M.



Our sympathies go out to member Lenora Murray and her family for the loss of Lenora's mother.

Also, our hearts go out to Alan and Cathie Jacobs for the tragic and sudden loss of their son, Ethan Jacobs, over the weekends. We will keep them in our thoughts and prayers.

Apologies are extended to James Butchko for last month's erroneous mention of the death of his mother. It was his mother-in law who passed away.

Barry Burns continues to improve after his surgery and regrets not being able to join us on the rock digs.

(To supply reports of members for the sunshine report, please contact Pam Gurley at 324-7235.)

The main purpose of Memphis Archaeological and Geological Society is to promote and advance the knowledge of the Lapidary Sciences in the mining, identification, cutting, polishing and mounting of gems, minerals and fossils to the utmost of our geological and lapidary capabilities.

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AFMS NEWSLETTER AWARDS: New Editor 7th—95 • Small Bulletin Honorable Mention—04, 05, 06 • Adult Article 10th—04; Honorable Mention – 05 (x2), 06 (x2) • Junior Article 3rd—98; 8th—03 • Special Pub 4th—03

SFMS NEWSLETTER AWARDS: New Editor 1st—86; 2nd—88, 97 • New Editor (Explorer) 4th—03 • Certificate of Excellence—89, 90, 91, 92, 93 • Large Bulletin 1st—87 • Small Bulletin 1st—04, $2^{\rm nd}$ – 06, 4th—03 • Special Publication 2nd—03 • Art 77, 80, 81, 82, 86 • Junior Article 1st—03 • Adult Article $1^{\rm st}$ – 06, 2nd— 89, 90, 04, 06; 3rd—92; 4th—85, 04; 5th—91, 03; 6th—87; 8th—04; Honorable Mention—03, 04

DUES: \$20 (Family); \$16 (Single); \$8 (Junior)

JUNE 2007

SUN	MO N	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				MAY 31	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	29	30	

MAY 31 6:30 p.m.	Board Meeting - Blue Plate Café, 5469 Poplar Ave.
JUNE 08 7:30 p.m.	Membership Meeting - Shady Grove Presbyterian Church, 5535 Shady Grove Rd.
JUNE 09	Rockswap at the home of Melba Cole / time TBA at Membership meeting
JUNE 16	MAGS Field Trip to 20 Mile Creek, Frankstown, MS
JUNE 23	MAGS Field Trip to Union Chapel Mine in Alabama

