



Volume 57 ♦ Number 09 ♦ September 2011 ♦ A monthly newsletter for and by the members of MAGS

Petra

Dr. Tom Paradise, Geosciences Department, University of Arkansas



Editor's note: This article gives background for the program Dr. Paradise will present at the September MAGS meeting.

Petra (πέτρα in Greek), meaning rock, is a popular ruined city in Jordan that is famous for its rock-

cut architecture. It was made popular in numerous films but become especially well-known in "Indiana Jones & the Last Crusade" (1989). Established in the 7th-6th century BC as the capital city of the Nabataeans Kingdom, it is a *Continued, P. 3*

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MEMPHIS ROCKS!—VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

- ★ Second annual Memphis Rocks! at the Memphis Botanic Garden
- ★ Friday, October 14, 10 A. M.-noon
- ★ Assist with rock related programs for school children (grades 2-6)
- ★ Contact W. C. McDaniel, (901) 274-7706



MEMPHIS ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

Future Trips:

September 24 Starkville, MS—Turkey Creek for Pyrite and Marcasite

October 15 Memphis Stone and Gravel with DMC—agates, fossils, petrified wood

November 19 Wells Creek, near Clarksville but not quite—Meteor impact; shatter cones

Trip Announcement: September 24 Trip to Starkville, MS

Meet 10:00 AM at Shell Gas Station, 801 Blackjack Road, Starkville, MS (**GPS: 33.446877, -88.792574**)

If you are late: Follow Oktoc Road from the Y of the gas station. Turn left onto Artesia. Look for cars parked by bridge over Turkey Creek. The site GPS is: **33.42551, -88.73616**.

For those of you who attended the June meeting, Bob Cooper had a display of pyrite nodules from Turkey Creek.

Equipment:

- ♦ Buckets and wrapping paper.
- ♦ Old shoes and clothes appropriate for wading in creek
- ♦ Chisel, pry bar or two (2) rock hammers or something equivalent to get the Marcasite out of the creek bed. One to put next to the item and the other to hammer the first one into the bed. The bed is quite hard, like chalk.

Directions:

1. I-55 South toward Jackson, Mississippi, for 112 miles.
2. Exit 185 - US 82 toward Winona, 62 miles.
3. Merge onto MS-12 W/Veterans Memorial DR toward Starkville/Mississippi State University, 3 miles
4. Highway 12 E and Spring Street from Hwy 12.
5. Go south on Spring St.
6. Spring St. turns into Blackjack Road. Continue on Blackjack to the "Y" in the road. Blackjack continues to the left and Oktoc to the right. The gas station is in the "Y" between the two roads.

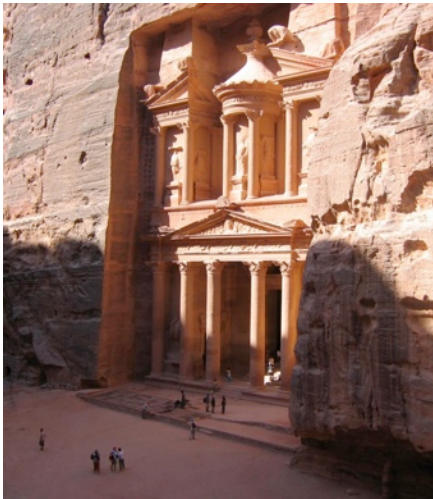
Editor's Note: September 15 is the deadline for submissions to the October newsletter. Send pictures, articles, suggestions to lybanon@earthlink.net, or call (901) 757-2144.

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symbol of Jordan as well as its most visited tourist attraction. It lies to the north on the slope of Jebel Haroun but remains hidden in a protected, and fault-bound valley nestled in the mountains which form the eastern walls of the Wadi Araba—the large valley that runs from the Dead Sea to the Gulf of Aqaba. Petra has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1985. UNESCO described it as "one of the most precious cultural properties of man's cultural heritage on Earth." BBC chose Petra as one of the 40 places you have to see before you die.



It has been widely discussed that the site remained unknown to the Western world until 1812, when it was introduced by Swiss explorer Johann Ludwig Burckhardt. However, it was visited and described by Edward Wortley Montagu in 1766 in his accounts of his travels across Egypt and the Holy Land. It had become unknown to the West since its only access was through a one-mile long canyon that narrows to 7 feet at its most narrow, and rises to more than 200 feet at its deepest.

This 'magical city in the Valley of the Crescent Moon' would be lost among the boulders, cliffs, and dunes of the Southern Desert for 1800 years! Since 1812, it has become popular with tourists, artists, scientists, and gawkers. In 1845, it was described in poem by John William Burgon as "the rose-red city half as old as time" and became a well-known site "in the great desert, but oh, so far away". At its peak in the 1st-3rd centuries AD, Petra's population grew dramatically as Petra become one of the most important crossroads in the eastern Mediterranean linking the Silk Routes to the Mediterranean Basin, Frankincense and Myrrh trade to the Roman Empire. It was the link between the West and East, North and South like no other city known at the time.

According to Arab tradition, Petra is the spot where Moses struck the rock with his staff to produce a flowing stream of water ('Ain Musa), and where Moses' brother, Aaron (Haroun) is buried atop Jebel Haroun (Mount Hor). Wadi Musa (Wadi of Moses) is the Arabic name for the narrow valley along which Petra was built. A mountaintop in Petra was described by Jerome in the 4th century, as the Shrine of Moses' sister, Miriam, but its location in Petra is still debated.

Having conducted sandstone weathering research in Petra since 1990 (geologic/petrologic, architectural, and cultural resource management), the site suffers from numerous threats, including extensive damage by tourists, collapse of ancient structures, erosion

due to flooding, and natural influences on weathering (salt, water, past conservation methods, etc.) to but name a few. However, since tourism has increased from 30,000 (1990) to 950,000 (2010) visitors in twenty years, deterioration of the site, architecture, and archaeology has increased substantially, especially since the site received widespread media coverage in 2007 during the controversial New Seven Wonders of the World.

The talk will cover the dramatic and fragile landscape of Petra including its monumental tombs, temples, and buildings, secret High Places (of 'Worship and Sacrifice'), research conducted to better understand it, and new policies created to protect, conserve, and preserve this magical and mystical ruined 'rose-red city half as old as time'.



The pictures show the Khazneh, or Treasury. According to legend, the giant urn on the second level is filled with riches.

Chunky Gal Mountain

Charles Hill

Through the years I had heard about the gemstones of Cowee Valley in North Carolina. Corundum was mined there for industrial use during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Today, there are several fine gem mines there, including the Sheffield mine. So when I got the chance to go, I took it. My wife Emily and I took a trip to North Carolina in June of 2004. We had been planning this expedition for months. During that time, I saw in the June MAGS Newsletter a paragraph on Chunky Gal Mountain, a historic Cowee Valley industrial corundum mining site. I took a two-week vacation, and we packed up our truck, Clyde, and hurried east.

The Northeast Georgia Mineral Society of Cornelia, GA, was the host club for the trip. The club's vice-president had told me that we would meet at a Huddle House in Haynesville on Saturday morning. Well...it didn't happen like that; I messed up. There it is: on paper I admit I made a mistake. I took us to Waynesville, instead. Guess what! There is a Huddle House in Waynesville, too! After 15 minutes, we started looking for club members and found none. Worried, Emily went out to the truck, found my mistake, and the map. We were 75 miles short of our goal! We had about an hour and 15 minutes to get to the correct meeting place, so I don't need to tell you about that wild, hair-raising ride in North Carolina. We made it just as the club members were leaving the restaurant. We

missed breakfast, but we did find a new place to prospect.

Chunky Gal is a mountain of smaragdite and zoisite. Both are matrixes in which corundums form. On the surface, zoisite and smaragdite appear to be the same rock. They share some of the same qualities—color, texture, and hardness—so I don't worry about the difference. One is a lighter green than the other. The corundums found at this site are red rubies and pink, white/gray, blue, bronze, and clear sapphires. The pink sapphires should fluoresce. The zoisite and smaragdite matrixes make beautiful jewelry, figurines, chess pieces, and spheres. The rubies and sapphires are just icing on the cake.



Ruby in the Rough.

Chunky Gal Mountain is not an easy place to find. The nearest public building is about 4 miles to the south. Traveling south Waynesville, State Road 441/US 64 becomes US 64. Just as you enter Clay County, you will see Buck Creek Road on the right. The next dirt road on the right is the road that leads to the dig site. It

looks like a farm road, but it is in good shape.

The digging site is within the Nantahala National Forest, and the US Forest Service regulations limit hole depth to 18 in. There will be some walking; the dig sites are several hundred feet from the parking area. Most of that is uphill. The paths are very rocky, so boots go without saying. I know of two methods that work here. I have had success using both.

Method #1: shovels, sledge hammers, and chisels. Although some can be found on the surface, digging the rocks up is often necessary. Since the corundums are within the zoisite and smaragdite, a sledge hammer is needed for breaking the matrix open. I also find the process of extracting the corundums works more easily with a chisel.

Method #2: washing rocks with a screen. On the back side of the mountain there is most always a small trickle of water. I like to pull up a log to sit on and dam-up with mud until I have a large enough basin for washing rock. While that basin fills, I dig up buckets of dirt and rocks to wash.

Chunky Gal Mountain is a unique site that can be difficult to find. This could be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, so come join us. Tools to bring include heavy boots, screens, buckets, eye protection, and a shovel, sledge, and chisel. A GPS with waypoint technology would be nice to bring if you have one. [Editor's note: A Google search turned up these coordinates: 35.0308333333 : -83.5797222222.] Also, never forget the sunscreen!

What's Happening At Chucalissa?

Dr. Robert Connolly, Director

Last month's issue of the MAGS Rockhound News covered some of the events from the past 50 years at the C. H. Nash Museum at Chucalissa. Throughout that period and continuing today, MAGS and its members have been strong advocates for Chucalissa in contributing their time, talent and resources. Two years ago MAGS contributed \$1000.00 to print over 6,000 Scavenger Hunts for use by our visiting school groups. This year, MAGS came through once again by contributing \$1,000.00 toward the creation of an exhibit that highlights the stone tool collections of avocational archaeologist Robert Ford. Ron Brister is one of numerous MAG members who continue to offer their support and expertise at our museum in many capacities. For that, we extend a very sincere Thank You!

Over the past several years at the Museum, we instituted a several new exhibits and programs. Our Hands-On Archaeology Lab allows visitors to examine some of the very same artifacts that archaeologists analyze when interpreting sites. Our monthly Volunteer Saturdays (9:00 AM to 1:00 PM, September 17, October 15, November 19, December 10) are opportunities for visitors of all ages to assist in the processing of artifacts and participate in other projects at the Museum. No experience is necessary and youngsters are more than welcome.



In a recent readers' survey of our monthly e-newsletter, nearly 60 percent of the respondents said they wanted Chucalissa to prioritize program and exhibit development in our natural environment. In answering that challenge, we connected our half-mile nature trail to the six miles of improved hiking trails at the adjacent T.O. Fuller State Park. We have

also launched a sweetgrass bed and a traditional medicinal plant sanctuary to go along with our herb and vegetable gardens and arboretum. When you stop by, be certain to ask to throw darts with our atlatls, made of traditional materials modeled on those recovered from Kentucky's Indian Knoll prehistoric site.

We have also been busy upgrading all of our group programs and linking them to the curriculum standards of the local schools. For example, the Junior's Program that we will present at the October MAGS meeting features one of our new offerings that is a hands-on examination of a wide range of prehistoric stone tools. We now offer a Discovery Box Program where students inventory cultural materials as archaeologists do when interpreting prehistoric sites. Also available are educational presentations on Native American Prehistory, Trail of Tears, and African American Cultural Heritage.

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Continued from P. 5 One part of Chucalissa that long time MAGS members will remember are the prehistoric houses that were in place from the 1960s through the 1990s. Because of their dilapidated condition they were removed several years ago. We are very pleased to announce that the Friends of Chucalissa have taken on the fundraising effort to begin rebuilding those houses starting with the one on top of the large platform mound in the central plaza.

As you can see there is a lot going at our Native American site in southwest Memphis. To participate in any of these projects, please do not hesitate to contact me at 901-785-3160, or write rcnnolly@memphis.edu. You can sign up to receive our monthly e-newsletter and join our Facebook Page at www.memphis.edu/chucalissa. I look forward to your next visit with us.

Juniors Corner

Carol Lybanon

Hi, Juniors,

Our Fall program sounds very exciting. I hope you all think so, too. In September Charles Hill is going to talk about crystals and you might acquire some for your own collections. Remember, there are prizes for any home grown crystals that you bring to the September meeting. In October Dr. Connolly is going to show us some Indian stone tools. November will be all aglow with a program by Bob and Bonnie Cooper of fluorescent minerals along with a special holiday craft. The club's holiday party will close out the year.

July 2011 Board Minutes, *Marc Mueller*

The MAGS Board of Directors met June 30 at the St. Clare Room in St. Francis Hospital, 5959 Park Avenue. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 P. M. Present were: Paul Sides, Carol and Matthew Lybanon, Marc Mueller, Alan Schaeffer, Ron Brister, W. C. McDaniel, Charles Hill, Neville Mayfield, Mike Baldwin.

Secretary: June minutes were approved as corrected.

Treasurer: NA.

Field Trips: W.C. McDaniel volunteered to lead a trip to Starkville, MS, to hunt pyrite.

Adult Programs: Paul Sides: July 8, Ryan Parish, U. of Memphis—Dover Chert. August, Indoor Rock Swap. Village Creek State Park offers children's programs. Carol will call.

Junior Programs: In July W. C. McDaniel will present a program on megalodons. In August the juniors will join the adults for the indoor picnic. In Sept. Charles Hill will present crystals. In Oct, Dr. Connolly will give a program.

Library: Three bookcases were donated by Ron to the library. New books will be arriving.

Membership – Neville has entered new members in the roster. Those who have not paid have been dropped from the roster.

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

Historian/Rock Swap: Lou White in Sept and Alan in October.

Newsletter: Matthew Lybanon—Deadline July 12 for August newsletter.

New Business: Nannett needs material for Rocks Around the Clock. All board members need to bring at least two items to the June Meeting to give to Nannett.

Charles Hill is writing a proposal to make a long range field trip out west. Something at least a week in length.



Last month's issue included a challenge: Identify the current MAGS member in this picture. The answer is (drum roll): Our Librarian, Ron Brister, in 1965. One MAGSter (W. C. McDaniel) got it right.

Save The Dates

1. Friday, October 14—Memphis Rocks at the Memphis Botanic Garden; details to be announced
2. Saturday October 15—MAGS hosts the DMC with a field trip to North Mississippi sites. Will include our October rock swap

Planning for the 2012 Show will begin in September. Mark your calendar and save the dates, April 28-29; help needed from April 26-April 30.



Falls Fossil Festival

at the Falls of the Ohio State Park
Clarksville, Indiana

**September 17, 2011 9:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. &
September 18, 2011 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.**

Vendors sell fossils, minerals, books, food and jewelry; children's activities, fossil dig, mineral dig, fascinating guest speakers on geology topics, free brochures from almost every fossil park in North America, teachers can sign up and win a 50, 75 or 100 piece geology collection, guided outer and Indiana shore fossil bed hikes, and more! Free rock and fossil identification—bring in your unknowns!

Sponsors: Falls of the Ohio Foundation, Kentucky Paleontological Society and Indiana Society for Paleontology.

See our web site: www.fallsoftheohio.org

September 25 Rock Swap

Sunday, Sept. 25, 2:00 to 6:00
P. M. at Lou White's house
3805 Melanie June Drive
Bartlett, TN 38135.

Find your way to the home of Lou White on Sunday, September 25, from 2:00 until 6:00 P. M. for a special Sunday rock swap. A great big thank you to Lou for opening his backyard and allowing us to invade with our rocks and goodies. If you plan to bring rocks to swap or sell, don't forget to bring a folding table [card table works great] for your wares. Whether you plan to set up shop or not, you will still need to bring folding chairs and drinks enough for your crew and a pot luck dish large enough to

share with everyone. Your dish can be anything from a main dish, salad, to a side dish, to chips and dip to dessert. MAGS will provide the paper plates, napkins and cutlery. Lou's number is (901) 937-8522.

Lunar Rock Analysis Suggests Younger Moon Than Thought

How old is the moon? A new analysis of a lunar rock brought back by the 1972 Apollo 16 mission suggests that the moon could be tens of millions of years younger than previously thought. Another possibility, scientists say, is that current models of how the moon cooled in its early years may be totally wrong.

The predominant theory of the moon's origin holds that a Mars-sized object slammed into Earth soon after the solar system formed about 4.56 billion years ago. Previous studies of lunar rocks suggest that the sea of molten rock covering the lunar surface began to solidify anywhere between 4.43 billion and 4.53 billion years ago. But those dates aren't very precise, largely because the concentrations of the trace elements used in the dating techniques are extremely low, says Lars Borg, a planetary scientist at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory California. Now Borg and his colleagues have used several methods of radioactive dating to come up with a new—and surprising—date for when the moon's magma *Continued, P. 8*

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Continued from P. 7 ocean cooled.

The team analyzed a 1.88-gram sample of a moon rock brought back to Earth by Apollo 16, a chunk of a magnesium- and iron-rich silicate mineral called ferroan anorthosite. Using three separate dating techniques that measure the ratios of lead, neodymium, and samarium isotopes, the researchers estimate that the rock had crystallized about 4.36 billion years ago, plus or minus 3 million years, they reported online in *Nature*. These analyses are the first to produce consistent ages from multiple dating techniques on the same moon rock, the scientists contend.

It's not likely that the moon rock the team analyzed is a bit of lunar crust that was melted and then recrystallized long after the moon formed due to the impact of a comet or asteroid, Borg says. Also, he notes, the ratios of samarium and neodymium isotopes in the sample suggest that the rock isn't a remelted blend of previously separate rocks. So, the researchers claim, the extraordinarily young age for the lunar sample means that either the moon solidified significantly later than most previous estimates or current models of how the moon's crust formed are incorrect.

In the first case, the moon may have coalesced from the debris of an early impact more slowly than current models suggest it should have, or it may have retained more heat than expected, delaying the cooling that generated a veneer of crust. But in the

second case, if samples such as the one analyzed for this study didn't solidify from a molten sea of rock soon after the moon formed, then the entire theory of how rocky bodies cool and solidify—including notions about the geochemical effects on the resulting rocks and their isotopic ratios—is on shaky ground.

Either of those options is very exciting, says Alex Halliday, an isotopic geochemist at the University of Oxford in the United Kingdom. In any case, Borg and his colleagues "have done a fantastic job of putting together a beautiful study of this rock, one of the most pristine samples of early lunar crust," he notes. "The findings suggest that the moon had a fiery start at an age much later than previously considered."

But Clive Neal, a planetary geologist at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana, suggests that

there may be other explanations for the rock's apparent youth. In one possible scenario, the dense minerals that formed atop a relatively frothy bit of the moon's primordial crust, still floating on a sea of molten rock, could have rendered the island unstable. Then, like a top-heavy iceberg, that bit of crust could have flipped over, causing the minerals to melt and then recrystallize, in essence resetting the clock and giving a false impression of when the moon actually formed.

Regardless, Neal notes, "lunar samples are still giving us wonderful insights decades after they were brought back to Earth." The possibility that future analytical techniques can yield even more precise answers reinforces the notion that such samples must be preserved for posterity, he adds. "Moon rocks are the gifts that keep on giving."



Don't forget to bring refreshments and drinks to the September 9 meeting, and be prepared for an outstanding presentation by Dr. Tom Paradise (see the lead article in this issue).

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An Official Field Trip of The Georgia Mineral Society, Inc. - Norcross, GA(HOST)
An Official Field Trip of the Memphis Archaeological and Geological Society

9:00 AM, Saturday, September 17, 2011
Vulcan Materials Company, Bartow Quarry
Cartersville, GA
Free Area

Where: Vulcan Bartow Quarry, 5840 Highway 20 SE, Cartersville, 30121

The Quarry began operations in 1995 at this location. They have 797 acres and their pit is approximately 1,200 feet wide and 250 feet deep at this time.

FREE AREA: This field trip is free for all who participate

Directions: Interstate 75 North to exit 290. Highway 20. At the exit you make a right and go 1 and 1/2 miles to the quarry on the right. This is just past the McDonalds. If you are coming from the North, you would still exit at 290 but turn left, go east and continue to the quarry. When we arrive we will meet Edith, a Vulcan employee who will be our guide for this trip.

Collecting: the rock found here is a porphyroblastic granite gneiss and is part of the Corbin Gneiss Complex. These rocks are some of the oldest in Georgia dating back some 1.2 billion years, making it much older than the granites found at their other locations. This quarry is known for the blue quartz found within the granite. While most of the blue quartz is small, you can normally find some large enough to polish into a very nice cabochon. Some may be found with pyrite inclusions as well as other minerals within the granite.

WHAT TO BRING: Clothes that would be appropriate for this time of year in Georgia. That could be almost anything and I would suggest layers that could be removed and something in the event of a shower. A hat and boots, or at least a good pair of shoes. We should be finished early enough to go to the McDonalds for lunch but something to drink is always good to bring along.

They are blasting rock every week and, as a working quarry, there are spoil piles all around. No one will be allowed near any of the high walls but with the abundance of material we normally just have to bend over and pick things up. All you really need is a bucket to take your samples home. If you want to chip off a piece of a larger boulder be sure you have all your safety equipment including safety glasses, gloves, hard hat and a chisel and crack hammer. At the very least- Bring your camera.

Field Trip Contact: George Libby. GMS Field Trip Chair
Onsiteinatlanta@yahoo.com
Phone 770-978-2117
Cell- 678-910-7476

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Indoor Rock Swap Report, *Susan Thompson*



The food Friday night was simply outstanding. People really outdid themselves, and Jim, John and I enjoyed every bite.

I was grateful that Lou and Park did not bring 500 lb. of their castoffs to entice my little boys in their usual auction.

I vote for Ida Jean and Phillip as having the most interesting items for sale.

Marc had a cute new haircut; Paul intrigued his table of ladies with his story of his trip to Nevada and New Mexico; Nannett provided a good selection of door prizes.

My boys left with full stomachs and shirts covered with the leftovers of everyone's dinner offerings.

Wish we could have this same party more often.

Susan

Calendar

September 1, 2011

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

September 9, 2011

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

September 17 & 18, 2011

Falls Fossil Festival, Falls of the Ohio State Park, Clarksville, IN

September 24, 2011

Field Trip, Turkey Creek, Starkville, MS

September 25, 2011

Rock Swap, Lou White's house

October 14, 2011

Memphis Rocks!, Memphis Botanic Garden

October 15, 2011

DMC Field Trip/Rock Swap, Memphis Stone & Gravel Co.

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

