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Withlacoochee Agatized Coral

SHELBY HARTMAN: Having lived in Florida for a decade, it has a special place in my heart. I thought I would write an article this month on something "Florida related." I hadn't really been introduced to the wonderful world of "rocks" when I lived there. Sure, I made the occasional trip to the Sarasota area to pick up fossilized sharks teeth; however, I was oblivious to so many other aspects of rock and fossil collecting that Florida has to offer. In reading and researching since joining MAGS, I have become especially interested in agatized coral.

In 1979, the State of Florida designated Agatized Coral as it's State Stone (although it's actually a fossil...). Corals fall into the marine animal class of Anthozoa. These living polyps secrete calcium carbonate to form tropical ocean reef systems. Agatized coral occurs in one of two ways: Silica will replace a portion of the coral, creating geodes, sometimes with brilliant quartz clusters inside. In extremely rare instances water will become trapped inside a geode. In the second occurrence, the Coral is completely replaced by silica creating some exotic specimens. Although it doesn't sound like a drawn out process, it is. It takes about 20-30 million years before a pseudomorph (one mineral replacing another without losing its original form) occurs.

In Florida, agatized coral is found in three main locations: (1) Tampa Bay, (2) the Ecofina River in the panhandle near Perry, Florida, and (3) the With-



Withlacoochee/Suwannee river beds.

Georgia shares the Withlacoochee River with Florida. Near Valdosta, Georgia, this river flows over an ancient coral reef from the Oligocene Epoch which began about 38 million years ago and lasted for approximately 11 million years. This area is rich with mollusks, echinoids (ancient relatives of the sand dollar), sharks teeth, vertebrate teeth and bones. This Oligocene coral reef appears on the geological map as a narrow strip confined to the Withlacoochee Valley and is isolated miles from it's closest similar formation in White Springs, Florida on the Suwannee River. These ancient coral reefs become exposed in river beds which, over time, erode and cut valleys through sediment.

(Continued on page 4)

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President's Corner



*Holiday Greetings! I hope everyone enjoyed going through the collection at the November meeting. I would like to thank everyone who helped get the collection from the storage site to the meeting...and back again. Well, it's that time of year again so mark your calendars for **Friday, December 14 at 7:30 p.m.** It's the MAGS holiday party at Shady Grove Presbyterian Church at 5535 Shady Grove Road! If you can help decorate and set up, come early — or stick around and help with the cleanup. Board members and officers, don't forget to bring soft drinks. Everyone is welcome to bring guests and the attire for the evening is casual. Please bring a potluck dish. Turkey, ham, drinks, condiments, and dinnerware will be provided by MAGS. With regard to the gift exchange, there will not be a distinction between women's, men's, or children's gifts. The gift should be a minimum of \$10 and could be enjoyed by anyone who receives it. Bring one gift for each person in your group (i.e. family of 3 brings 3 gifts). If you bring a guest who will participate in the exchange, bring a gift for them as well. Gifts should relate to our hobby (rock hammer, chisel, insulated lunch pack, flashlight, gloves, book, etc.) **The gift exchange is optional so if you choose not to participate, there's no need to bring a gift.** The names of monthly display winners (youth and adult) will be placed in a drawing for display winner gifts, provided by MAGS. See ya at the party!*

Sandy

MAGS FIELD TRIP UPDATE

DAVID DAY: Collectors of curious rocks should appreciate the simple beauty of this Devonian fossil found at the Vulcan Quarry during our November field trip to Parsons Tennessee Facility. Twenty-five early-bird club members were rewarded with beautiful weather and bountiful fossils thanks to the friendly folks at Vulcan.

The club does not schedule a December field trip. However, we do start planning for next year and your suggestions are welcome as we discuss and develop the field trip calendar for 2008.



Announcements & Tidbits

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!!

We have quite a few new members to welcome to our club: Lynn & Don Spencer, Jeff & Cathy Oswalt, Mary Norman, Kent Stratton, Jr., Claudia & Marie Simms, and Marc Mueller. We all look forward to seeing you at upcoming membership meetings and field trips!



MEMBERSHIP DUES REMINDER

Membership dues are based on a calendar year. That means that it's time for all

2008 dues to be paid. Please be sure to pay your dues timely. The amount remains unchanged — \$16 for a single membership, \$20 for a family membership. The dues should be mailed to the MAGS Treasurer, Mike Cannito, at 1051 Sandra, Memphis, TN 38122.



LOOKING FOR SOMETHING TO DO??

It's said giving of one's self is the greatest give of all. If you're looking to give of your time, a great

resource to find a cause that matches your skills and interests is www.1-800-volunteer.org. You'll find everything from working with the Memphis Public Library, the Animal Protection Association, and the Pink Palace to Hospice Aid and helping out at the Memphis Family Shelter. If you have the time, volunteering is a great way to network, make new friends and contacts, and just feel really good about yourself!

WITHLACOOCHEE AGATIZED CORAL *(cont'd from page 1)*

Agatized coral is found in a variety of colors. The color depends largely upon the color of symbiotic algae the animal contained when it was alive. The colors are typically gray or brown, but are also found to be black, white, blue or reddish. Geodes found in these areas of Florida—and Georgia— can be melon size, or even pumpkin size, if you are really lucky.

The best agatized coral geodes have been collected from localized deposits in the lower St. Marks Formation near the Aucilla and Econfinia River basins in coastal North Florida, from Hawthorn Group formations exposed in the bed of the Withlacoochee River near the Florida – Georgia border, and from the Tampa Member of the Arcadia Formation (Hawthorn Group) in the Tampa Bay – Dunedin area of west central Florida. Beautiful solid silicified/agatized coral heads have long been known to occur along the banks of the Suwannee River and its tributaries in the vicinity of White Springs. Many Florida agatized coral locations, once open to collecting, are now closed. The best remaining collectible areas are along the causeway and beaches of Honeymoon Island State Park near Dunedin, the river bed and banks of the Suwannee River in the vicinity of and downstream from White Springs, and the bed of the Withlacoochee River near Clyattville, Georgia. River collecting is best during times of low water. In addition, small creek beds and quarries in many North Florida counties sometimes expose collectible agatized/silicified corals in small quantities.

Sources: *Wikipedia; Apalachee-mineral.com; fossil-treasures-of-florida.com; coral-stoneofflorida.com, and dep.state.fl.us; MAGS newsletter Volume 34: Number 12, "Withlacoochee Coral" by Frank Mayo; statefossils.com; paleoenterprises.com*

Photographs: *Courtesy of paleodirect.com*



December Birthdays



December's birthstone is turquoise, blue topaz or tanzanite.

Due to its growing popularity since its 1967 discovery, tanzanite has now been widely accepted as a December birthstone. Tanzanite is found in only one place in the world — Tanzania, on the continent of Africa. This calcium aluminum silicate is a blue variety of the gemstone, "zoisite" and has a value of 6.5-7 on the Mohs scale of hardness. It was Tiffany's that first coined the name "tanzanite" within the gem and jewelry trade and the name stuck.

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 Lorraine Bradford | 17 Susan Thom |
| 2 Sharon Muir | 18 Marvin Nutt |
| 3 Susan Thompson | 18 David Prudhomme |
| 3 David Helms | 18 Sara Thomas |
| 5 Kim Prudhomme | 19 Paula Gunter |
| 6 Lynn Spencer | 20 Benjamin Shankman |
| 6 David McAlister | 20 Ed Underhill |
| 8 Michael Johnson | 21 Joel Huber |
| 8 Alan Schaeffer | 23 Anthony Douglas |
| 8 Wendy Winter | 23 Jimmy McNeil |
| 9 Marilyn Free | 24 Allen Grewe |
| 9 Angela Underhill | 27 Linda Wilson |
| 10 Robbie Powell | 28 Dr. Chandra (Shawm) Tummalapalli |
| 12 Marc Meuller | 29 Danielle Burns |
| 14 J. Barry Gilmore | 30 Pam Gurley |
| 15 Jerry Seamans | 30 Maureen Walther |
| 16 Cathy Oswalt | |
| 17 Natalie Horowitz | |

Web Site Statistics for November 2007

a brief look at our website (www.memphisgeology.org)
from 1/21/02-10/21/07

Total Visits & Hits

Total visits to web site	274,737
Total hits to web site	1,006,824 <i>Over a million!</i>
Visits in past 30 days	10,327
Hits in past 30 days	42,367
Average daily visits (past 30 days)	271

Top page views past 30 days

Space geology eris article	745 hits
homepage	678 hits
explorernews0604	669 hits
Rocknews 1107	541 hits
Rocknews1 0907	504 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.

JUNIOR ROCKHOUNDS

This month, the Junior Rockhounds will be joining the adults at the Christmas Party and gift exchange.

See ya there!!

2007 Dates to Remember

	Board Meeting	Membership Meeting	Due Date For Newsletter Submissions
December	06	14	Nov 21
January	03	11	Dec 20
February	Jan 31	08	Jan 21
March	06	14	Mar 21

MAGS Members take part in Nonconnah Greenbelt Dedication Ceremony

MATTHEW & CAROL LYBANON : MAGS members took part in the Nonconnah Greenbelt Phase I Dedication Ceremony on November 27. Mike Baldwin, Carol and Matthew Lybanon, W.C. McDaniel, and Alan Parks set up a display table at the entrance to the trailhead (near the Forest Hill Irene exit from the Bill Morris Expressway), and were there to talk to the dignitaries attending the ceremony and answer their questions. The table had samples of the rocks, fossils, and petrified wood that can be found on Nonconnah Creek, as well as an information leaflet about MAGS and other literature.

The Nonconnah Greenbelt Trail is part of a system of trails that will help protect natural areas and connect communities in Shelby County. When complete, the Nonconnah Trail will be a paved path that runs along Nonconnah Creek, from Collierville to the Mississippi River, intended for bicyclists and pedestrians. MAGS participation will benefit every member of our club, and let the public know more about us.

The November 27 ceremony marked the opening of Phase I of the project, a portion of the Trail near where the ceremony took place. Ted Fox, Director of Public Works for Shelby County, introduced the speakers. They were Mayor A.C. Wharton, Jr., Shelby County, Mr. William Dunnivant III, Chairman of the Shelby County Mayors Trails and Greenway Alliance, and Ms. Pamela Marshall, Community Relations Officer, TDOT. Those dignitaries, along with Commissioner Mike Carpenter, Shelby County, Mr. John McCormack, Chairman of the Shelby County Conservation Board, and Collierville Mayor Linda Kerley then performed the ceremonial ribbon cutting.

In his concluding remarks after the ribbon cutting, Ted Fox mentioned that MAGS would play a significant role in future phases of the Greenbelt Trail project. Some possible areas of participation are developing and publishing a geological and archaeological history of Nonconnah Creek, various educational activities including leading field trips, making presentations at schools, and providing science teachers with materials collected from the creek, and publicizing the scientific importance of Nonconnah Creek and working to maintain the area in its natural state. Developing points of access so the public can safely reach the creek is something that would benefit not only MAGS, but the community at large. There is also a possibility



that a nature center could be set up, and operated by MAGS volunteers.

◆◆◆

(A tremendous "thank-you" to Matthew & Carol Lybanon for their efforts to ensure that MAGS was represented at this very important community event. Your hard work is greatly appreciated!)



MAGS CLUBROOM ACTIVITIES

Be sure to mark your calendars for the MAGS Club Room Show and Sale! Come by to acquire new pieces for your collection, or just check out the new space.

777 South Cox

Saturday, December 29 11:00 a.m.- 2 p.m.
Sunday, December 30 1:00 p.m.- 3:00 p.m.

29th Annual Mineral, Fossil, Jewelry Show

It's almost that time again! The 2008 Show will be April 26 & 27 at the Pipkin Building.

Show set up will take place on April 24 & 25.

As always, we will be asking for volunteers to assist so please pencil in these dates on your calendar and come out and lend a hand.



2007-08 Adult Presentations

December

Christmas Party
No program

January 2008

Ashley Allen
Union Chapel Mine near Jasper, Alabama

February 8, 2008

Dr. Michael Gibson
University of Tennessee at Martin
"Stromatolites: Microbes that Ruled the Earth"
Also bring your fossils for identification

October 2007 Board of Directors Meeting Notes : CAROL LYBANON

The MAGS Board of Directors met October 4, 2007, at the Blue Plate Café, 5469 Poplar Avenue. The meeting was called to order at 6:45 P.M. Those present were: Sandy Ward, W.C. McDaniel, Carol Lybanon, Matthew Lybanon, Barry Burns, Pam Gurley, Ron Brister, Park Noyes, and Lou White. The minutes from the September Board and General Meetings were reviewed and approved as read. Treasurer's Report: W.C. McDaniel asked for an explanation of a \$16.90 First Tennessee check charge. Mike Cannito was absent, so the Treasurer's Report was approved as submitted, subject to audit and providing an answer to the question. Field Trips: Barry Burns reported that we will go to the Livingston, Tennessee, area on October 20-21. He suggested that people plan to spend three nights: Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. The Overton Motel is the only motel in Livingston, so people should make reservations soon. Mentioning MAGS, may get a small discount. If the Overton Motel is booked, or if people would rather stay elsewhere, Cookeville is a good choice. It is at an I-40 exit, has several hotels, and is about 30 minutes away from our meeting point, the Overton Restaurant. Tentative meeting time Saturday morning is 8:00 A.M. We will visit two geode sites and one fossil site. Barry will have maps at the Membership Meeting. Adult Programs: W.C. McDaniel said that he will not be at the Membership Meeting. Mike Baldwin and Mike Cannito will present a program on fluorescent minerals. The November program will consist of the unveiling of the CBC collection. Youth Programs: There is a bit of confusion as to whether Melissa Johnston has officially resigned. But since there are no scheduled youth programs for October-December, we have a little time to work out this problem. Cathie Jacobs was supposed to head a committee to organize a new youth program, but there was no report from her at this meeting. Library: Ron Brister had nothing to report. Webmaster: No report. Membership: Pam Gurley presented two applications for membership, which were approved. W.C. McDaniel moved that since it is so late in the year, that these memberships will not expire until December 2008. The motion carried. The new members are Don and Lynn Spencer (along with children Kristina Lynn Worrell and Thomas Zachery Worrell); Jeff and Cathy Oswald. Rock Swap: The next Rock Swap will be October 13 at Alan Parks's home. There will be more information at the Membership Meeting. Show: W.C. McDaniel presented a facility comparison for our 2009 show. There is a good chance that the Pipkin Building won't be available, and we don't want to be caught without a place for the show. Other facilities were considered, but the Agricenter seems to be the best possibility. It is well located with plenty of free parking. The only drawback is cost, an increase of over \$4,000. We would have to raise entrance and per-

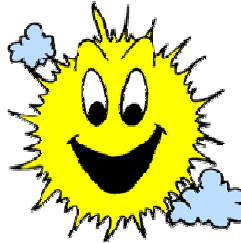
table fees. We will have to pay one-third of the rental at the time of booking, and we need to commit to the Agricenter now, because the facility books quickly and we would like to keep our usual weekend. If we make this commitment we can publicize the change a year in advance, at our 2008 show. We could also let our vendors and the public know a year in advance. After some discussion the Board decided to accept the committee's recommendation. Old Business: W.C. McDaniel recommends that we renew our DMC membership and plan to host a DMC field trip in March 2009. He will send an email to that effect to the DMC. W.C. McDaniel passed out copies of a proposal for use of our club room. Since this is a new venture for us, W.C. will circulate some type of form to find out how we can use the room to satisfy the needs of our Members. We have a 6-month lease on the facility, and the committee is working hard to get the club room up and going. W.C. is planning an open house so interested Members can see the facility. More information will follow. Carol Lybanon mentioned that we received a mailing from the Middle Tennessee Gem and Mineral Society. Their show is scheduled for December 8-9 at the Tennessee State Fairgrounds in Nashville. They sent us flyers, which we will make available to our members at our next Membership Meeting. Matthew Lybanon reported that we mailed a copy of the "mastodon report" to Ted Fox, and that the date of the ribbon-cutting is not definite but may be some time in October. New Business: The Chucalissa museum sent us a letter requesting our participation in their Native American Heritage Days observance, October 16-19. Many school groups will tour the museum. Our members will be allowed to sell inexpensive rocks and fossils, and hand out club information. The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 P.M.

October 2007 Membership Meeting Notes : CAROL LYBANON

The MAGS Membership Meeting was held at Shady Grove Presbyterian Church on October 12. The meeting was called to order at 7:35 P.M., with 43 members and 7 visitors in attendance. The visitors were: Mary Norman-Jungklas, Robert Jungklas, Julie Lybanon, Patricia Allen, Kent Stratton, Ardan Cooper, and Claudia M. Sims. Pam Gurley welcomed visitors and new Members. Sandy Ward reminded the membership that we are renting space on Cox Avenue, and asked that Members fill out a survey on the use of the space, and return it by the end of the meeting. We have been asked to participate in the Chucalissa Native American Heritage Days, Tuesday-Friday, October 16-19. Volunteers will distribute information about our club, and they will be allowed to sell small items to the school kids who come to the event. Field Trip: David Day announced the upcoming field trip to Livingston, Tennessee, October 20 & 21. He asked that those who plan to attend sign the signup sheet. He described what can be found at the various sites. We will visit two sites on Saturday and one more on Sunday. Meeting time will be 8:30 A.M. on Saturday, at the Overton Restaurant in Livingston. Show : Con-

tracts have been mailed out. There was a short discussion on a new type of grab bag for the show, that we can purchase instead of having volunteers make them. These bags are considerably smaller than the ones we have used in the past. There was no decision on whether we should change. Rock Swap: Alan Parks invited everyone to come to the October Rock Swap, which will be a catfish fry at his home. It will take place 10:00 A.M.-2:00 P.M. Those who plan to attend were asked to bring a side dish or a dessert, chairs, and tables if they plan to participate in the swap. They were also asked to donate materials to put into grab bags for next year's show. Library: No report. Web: Mike Baldwin said that we are nearing our one millionth visitor (hits) to the web site. Old Business: Melissa Johnston has resigned as our Youth Program leader. Mike Baldwin has volunteered to fill the position. New Business: Carol Lybanon announced the dates for the Middle Tennessee Gem & Mineral Society show and sale. The dates are December 8 & 9, in Nashville. They sent us flyers, which are available to anyone who wants more information. Program: The meeting was turned over to Mike Baldwin and Mike Cannito, who presented a very interesting and informative program on fluorescent minerals. The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 P.M.

Sunshine Report



If you have any announcements to include in the sunshine report, please contact Pam Gurley at 324-7235

There are no reports of illness. Everyone stay healthy and enjoy the holiday season!!

Pam Gurley

SFMS Announces Winners

The results of the 2007 Bulletin Contest were announced recently at the Awards Banquet following the annual SFMS meeting in Biloxi, Mississippi. I believe every entry that was submitted from MAGS won an award this year. Congratulations to the winners.

- [01] Karen Schaeffer won First Place in the Original Articles (Junior-11 and under) category for her article titled "How To Clean Your Quartz".
- [02] Rhena South won Second Place in the Original Articles (Junior-11 and under) category for her article titled "Opals".
- [03] Sherri Baldwin won Second Place in the Poetry (Adult) category for her poem titled "Ode To A Rock Swap".
- [04] Mike Baldwin won Third Place in the Small Bulletin category for MAGS Rockhound News.
- [05] Mike Baldwin won Fourth Place in the Original Articles (Adult) category for his article titled "Mid Atlantic Ridge: Defining Feature Of The Atlantic Ocean".
- [06] WC McDaniel won Fifth Place in the Original Articles (Adult) category for his article titled "Tumbling Fossils".
- [07] Martin Nutt won Eighth Place in the Original Articles (Adult) category for his article titled "Exciting Find At Nonconnah Creek".
- [08] Alan Jacobs won Honorable Mention in the Original Articles (Adult) category for his article titled "Tucson Gem And Mineral Show."

December 2007

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, 2nd—06, 4th—03, 3rd—07 • Special Publication 2nd—03 • Art 77, 80, 81, 82, 86 • Junior Article 1st—03, 07 • Adult Article 1st—06, 2nd—89, 90, 04, 06; 3rd—92; 4th—85, 04, 07; 5th—91, 03, 07; 6th—87; 8th—04, 07; Honorable Mention—03, 04, 07 • Adult Poetry—07

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

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23/30	24/31	25	26	27	28	29

- December 6** **6:30 p.m.** **Board Meeting: Blue Plate Café, 5469 Poplar Avenue**
- December 14** **7:30 p.m.** **Membership Mtg. at Shady Grove Presbyterian Church, 5535 Shady Grove Road**
- December 29 –30** **Open House & Sale at MAGS Club Room, 777 S. Cox.**



MAGS Rockhound News
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