



The Conglomerate

BLUE GRASS GEM AND MINERAL CLUB

Lexington, KY

From the Editor

Volume 2011

August Edition

THANK YOU, Robert

I would like to extend the club's thanks to Robert Dalton, our current club Secretary. After much reflection, Robert has decided that he can no longer give his position in the club the attention it needs. As you may know Robert has had many challenges with his back and surgeries. Here is some of his resignation letter to us.

"I had an MRI done last Friday to see what is going on with my back because I've been having a lot more pain and the surgeon wanted to see why I'm having more pain. Unfortunately, because of the metal braces in my back, they interfere with the MRI getting a clear picture. It is definite that my lower back is a mess, according to the surgeon, but I am scheduled to have a Myelogram (I've never heard of it before) this Friday and it will track the nerve pulses using a contrast and will have me involved for four hours.

I hate having to make these decisions, but with my health deteriorating so badly, it's the only choice I have. It frustrates me no end remembering how I used to be, able to do anything, and I suppose how I abused my body. I guess my body is getting its' revenge."

Robert, again thank you for your service to the club. We all appreciate how you gave your time when you were in obvious pain. We look forward to seeing you at meetings and trips whenever its possible for you to attend.

Gemboree 2011

Gemboree 2011, previously scheduled for September 17 & 18, has been cancelled due to lack of vendor interest. All monies sent in for vendor fees have been returned and fees to the Lexington Center owed by the club amounting to \$3000, have been directed to be paid.

2011 ELECTED OFFICERS

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Next Meeting is August 21 at **Tates Creek Library**.

- Business Meeting 1 PM—All Members and guests are welcome
- General Meeting 2 PM
- Discussions on upcoming field trips.
- Auction to follow.

Meeting Records

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING by Secretary Robert Dalton MEMBERSHIP MEETING 7/17/2011

Meeting called to order at 2:01pm by Vice Chairperson Tom Volk. There was no Executive Board Meeting prior to the Membership Meeting. Treasurer Jim Donofrio reported that the club has \$12,640.91 in the bank.

It was reported that Gemboree 2011 has been cancelled due to a lack of vendors as they were attending competing shows on that same weekend.

DeeDee Biles and Jim Donofrio gave a report on the field trip to Tab Farthing's home which was to teach the club members about preparing displays for gem shows. It was reported that more things (minerals and such) are coming out of Afghanistan due to the war. Jane Volk stated that she was hopeful for additional information about setting up cabinets for display. It was noted that the next club meeting would be on August 21st and as we have met at Beaumont Library for our maximum of six meetings, next month we would begin meeting at the Tates Creek Library.

It was reported with new information re-

cently discovered that for the club members to visit quarries for field trips that members need to take an MSHA course that costs about \$30 per year. Jane Volk said that the club could pay for the course for members.

It was decided that the August field trip would be held on August 13th and it would encompass different locations around Frenchburg and heading north. Any members wishing to participate are to meet at the McDonald's Restaurant at Exit 110 off of I-64 East. From Lexington, take I-64 east from the I-75 interchange to Exit 110. Members are to meet at 9 am and the club will leave shortly thereafter.

The possibility of the club having out of state field trips was discussed and the club decided that the September field trip would be to Jackson Crossing over the Labor Day Weekend. It was reported there is an open hunt at Graves Mountain on the second weekend in October and the club agreed that the October field trip would be to Graves Mountain for the open hunt. One club member was going to research the cost of the club renting a 15-passenger van while another member would research hotel costs for the field trips.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 pm.

Georgia Field Trips(s)

The club is sponsoring one of its first out of state field trips in quite a while. We are going to Jackson Crossroad in Georgia to dig for amethyst crystals. We'll leave Friday, September 1 and return Sunday, September 3. We have found a hotel, the Day-Night hotel in Elberton. It is a former Super 8 and it is simple but very clean. The usual triple A rate is \$103.00 total for 2 nights including all taxes. Rooms have been blocked for us until August 20. Camping is also available. Saturday we will be digging at the new site 5 and Rodney will dig a new trench for us. Sunday we'll be at the Site #4. Lots of chances to find amethyst. For this trip the club

will be renting a van for transportation and paying the extra for Rodney to dig a new trench for us. Members are responsible for their own food and lodging. <http://www.digforcrystals.com> is the website of the places where we'll dig.

We're also looking at going to Graves Mountain, GA for the annual

New Members

- Ron Jackson, Lexington, KY
- Tim Siepel - Columbus OH

Bench Tips by Brad Smith

SOLDERING PRONGS

I often use prongs to hold an irregular cab or other object on rings and pendants. But they're a little tricky to solder. You have to find some way to hold them all upright while soldering, and what looks like a strong joint sometimes turns out to be a fake. There's nothing worse than having a prong break off when you're setting the stone — *#~*!

I solved both problems with one little trick. Locate and center punch the location for each prong. Then drill holes just a little smaller than your prong wire. Sand a small taper on the ends of your prong wires and insert them in the holes. The wires support themselves, soldering is easy, and the joint is stronger because of the increased soldering area.

TWISTING WIRE

Twisting wires together can be done with an old hand drill but goes much faster with a power tool. My preference is to use a screw gun, although a Dremel or Foreman should do well. Just make a little hook out of coat hanger wire (or use a screw-in cup hook) and chuck it up in your screw gun. Fasten the ends of the wires in a vice and slip the other ends on your hook. Keep a little tension on the wires as you twist.

Note that a power drill is too fast a tool for this unless you have one with a variable speed control.

SMOOTHING EARWIRES

Any time you make your own earwires, the hardest part for me is to sand and polish the end that's inserted into the ear. Any sharp edge there is no fun. I've tried using sanding sticks, cup burs, and silicone polishing wheels. I've tried buffing on a Zam wheel, and I've tried spinning the wire in the Foreman to polish the tip. While all of these techniques do the job, none are very easy or fast.

Then it occurred to me - I could melt the wire smooth. One quick touch in the flame of the propane/oxygen Little Torch does the trick - not enough to form a bead on the wire but just enough to round off the tip.

Brad Smith is a studio jeweler, lapidary and jewelry instructor in Los Angeles and Santa Monica, CA who enjoys working with sterling silver, exotic woods, ivory and gold. His work is accented with interesting gemstones, and he strives to maintain a balance between the various elements. Brad enjoys field trips to local mines and desert locations and is an active member of the Culver City Rock & Mineral Club. More BenchTips by Brad Smith are available at groups.yahoo.com/group/BenchTips/ or [facebook.com/BenchTips](https://www.facebook.com/BenchTips).



From Vice President Danny Settles, Field Trip Organizer

Upcoming Field Trips

August 13—Meet at Mount Sterling McDonalds at 9 AM at Exit 110. Caravan to sites up between Sharpsburg and Flemingsburg.

September 1-3. Amethyst Digs at 2 different sites near Jackson's Crossroads, GA Rodney from Dixie Eudredrals will dig trenches for us. Van provided by the club. Website is www.digforcrystals.com

October 7-8 Graves Mountain Rock Swap Open to all. Van from Lexington. More information at the August Meeting. <http://www.gamineral.org/commercial-gravesmountain.htm>

Fun and rescue at the Annual Picnic and Geode Hunt



THANKS FOR HELPING

Confused about a Field Trip or Event Sponsored by the Club?? Check it out on our website:
<http://bggamc.intuitwebsites.com> or our FaceBook Page www.facebook.com/BGGAMC



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