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## In Search of Petrified Wood : 2008 (Part 2—A Field Guide to Collecting Petrified Wood)

**W.C. MCDANIEL** *"Let's go collect some petrified wood"* is one my favorite phrases and collecting trips. "A field guide to collecting petrified wood" will take you along on one of those trips. The guide covers: where to look, how to search, what to look for, and concludes with some recommended collecting preparations and precautions.

**Where to look?** In the South the two primary collecting locations are areas with flowing water such as creeks, rivers and gravel bars or pits. Most bars are found along creeks and most pits are usually private mining operations. What type of creeks will produced petrified wood is a frequently ask question. An initial way to assess a creek's petrified wood potential is to stand on a bridge or overlook and see if one or more of the following features can be observed. If the creek looks promising look for a convenient access as sometimes that can be difficult and an obstacle if you find some big pieces that need to be hauled back to your vehicle.

- Creeks that have eroded down about 15-20 feet appear to the best producers of wood. However, this not an iron clad rule and each creek just needs to be checked.
- Is the water clear, flowing and shallow enough to walk? Clear water is not an absolute



Photo by W.C. McDaniel

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## President's Corner



Well, this is it...my last newsletter note as president. I must admit that it was harder than I thought it would be, but I had a great board of directors, that included a few past presidents and lots of collective experience to help me along. I want to thank them and all of you for your patience and understanding as I stumbled through the past two years. We've worked hard and accomplished a few things that we're proud of, and with another great group of board members, some old and some new, preparing to take the reins in 2009, I have no doubt that it will be another productive and rewarding two years. I'm excited about working with Paul Sides to bring you some fun, interesting and informative programs in the future. I wish for all of you a safe, healthy and happy holiday season and a prosperous new year filled with many rock and fossil hunting adventures.

Sandy

## “Best of Show and Found Display Contest” Rules

To display and compete each member is requested to:

1. Bring a single specimen from the location listed in the table on the right (collected on a MAGS field trip or at the same collection site at another time).
2. You must have found the specimen your self.
3. Specimen must be in original form or, if changed/modified, only through lapidary or prep work.
4. Juniors and adults are combined for this contest.
5. One winner will be selected. Winner will determine by members using a point rating from 3(high) to 1(low).
6. Winner will receive a certificate and entry into the Best of Show event in December. *A special prize will be awarded to the Best of Show winner at the December Christmas Party.*

# Best of Show

Month	Type of Material	Location	Winner
March	Druze Quartz	Missouri	David Day
April	Petrified Wood	MS, TN, AR	Carol Lybanon
May	Quartz Crystal	Arkansas	Wayne Williams
June	Fossil	Vulcan or Dale Hollow	John Matthew Erickson
July	No Display—Mineral Sale		
August	No Display— Rock Swap Fund Raiser for Shop		
September	Agate	Gravel bars or pits, etc.	Paul Sides
October	Fossil	Frankstown or Birmingham Ridge	Not reported
November	Geode	Ledbetter or Pharis Farm	David Day
December	Winners from previous months compete for “BEST OF SHOW.”		



### Announcements & Tidbits

#### SUNSHINE REPORT REMINDER

Just a reminder that our Membership Director is the person to advise of any illness or death within our membership. If you have any news to report, please be sure to do so!

#### NEWSLETTER CO-EDITOR

Anyone who would like to assist with the production of the monthly newsletter, please contact Shelby Hartman at (901) 626-1920 or by email at [magsnewsletter@comcast.net](mailto:magsnewsletter@comcast.net) for more information

Happy  
Holidays!

## “Petrified Wood:2008” *(cont'd from front page)*

requirement but it sure helps in finding wood in the middle of the creek. Also flowing or moving water indicates the banks are being eroded away exposing more wood.

Is the creek accessible via banks? Check the vegetation and the slope of the banks. Banks that gradually slope upward from the surface are the best, however in many cases the top part of the bank may be steep for the first four or five feet.

**How to search.** Creek searching requires a commitment to stay focused and check everything that looks like wood and everything that doesn't look like wood. One of the best things, besides your eyes, to bring along is a good walking/probing stick with a metal tip, Petrified wood makes a distinct clink (glass like) noise when hit with metal. Wood can be found on both sides of the creek, in the middle, under water, sticking out of water, sticking out of the banks, lying exposed on bars and/or buried underwater in sand or clay deposits. Some of the best finds were not visible but were found by probing the bottom and responding to the “clink” sound of metal upon petrified wood.



**Photo by Don Blalock. Note black mark to right of walking stick is the tip of the specimen in photo on following page.**

### . What to look for.

- **Color-** The overwhelming majority of petrified wood found in the creeks of the south are the earth tone colors of cream, light to medium tans/browns and whitish. In addition some of the wood will be grayish and others will have rust/reddish stains. Wood that has been in the creek for a period of time may have black stains due to decayed organic material. The rust and black stains can be removed with a soaking in a weak solution of oxalic acid.
- **Shape and size -** The majority of petrified wood is going to look like real logs. Most wood will be more vertical (longer/taller) shaped than horizontal (short and wider), rarely will wood be wider that it is taller. Grains, crevices and holes usually run vertical. Some will have exposed crystals. Size does play some role, especially for large pieces which have almost no competition from other competitors. In addition size is not an absolute indicator of quality. This will remain subjective and determined by the preferences of each collector.

**Some wannabes, impersonators and heartbreakers-** The chief culprits are iron concretions, sandstone, clay, chert, real wood and limestone usually placed in the creek for erosion control. Most of these can be quickly assessed with a quick poke with your walking stick. If the material doesn't make a clink (I wish I could say 'clink' here to illustrate the sound) then it is most likely not petrified wood. If you remain uncertain turn it over and check it out. A second opinion from your collecting partners is also a good idea.

### Preparations:

- Check the weather the day of and the previous days for the area you are going. Creeks can significantly change during periods of rain. The Internet is a good source to check current and specific local information.
- The majority of the creeks are located in rural and woody areas. Check to make sure there are no active hunting seasons underway. If there are, delay your trip until the seasons are completed.
- Bring along a backpack (this is easier than carry a bucket in the creek bed), digging tools, change of clothes, especially shoes and socks, insect repellent, snacks and drinks. Leave your valuables at home or in a safe place. If you must take your keys and/or wallet place them in a water tight container. Remotes usually don't work after a good soaking.
- A walking stick with metal end is a good multiple use tool. It can steady you, serve as a probe and if necessary fend off wild creatures of the creek and woods.

## **Petrified Wood:2008** *(Continued from page 4)*

### **Precautions:**

- Creek beds can be slippery, especially rocky bottoms that have organic material accumulating on them. Good sturdy shoes are a big plus.
- Watch out for the vegetation. The common enemies are poison ivy and oak. Also be on the outlook for thorns and root systems that may trip you.
- Watch out for the wildlife and critters that abound in and around creeks. Snakes, spiders, mosquitoes, bees and wasps are the most common. While some contact is inevitable there are some basic precautions you can take to avoid an early end to your trip. They include: generous use of insect repellent, watch where you are going, use a walking stick to check an area out before reaching in with your hand and most important remember you are in their territory, respect them, leave them alone, and if the situation warrants just leave.
- Don't go by yourself. Make sure someone knows where you are going and they know your expected return time.



## **MAGS HOLIDAY PARTY**

**The MAGS Holiday Party will take place on Friday, December 12, 2008 at 7:30 p.m. in lieu of our usual Membership Meeting. The location will be at Shady Grove Presbyterian Church located at 5525 Shady Grove Road.**

**If you are able to help decorate or set up tables, please arrive early to do so. It would also be greatly appreciated if a few members could stick around afterward to help clean up and break down the tables/chairs.**

**Everyone is welcome to bring a guest and dress is casual. The dinner will be potluck so everyone is asked to bring a side dish. MAGS will provide the turkey, ham, drinks, plates, cups and cutlery.**

**With regard to the gift exchange, everyone is asked to bring a gift with a value of at least \$10 that could be enjoyed by anyone receiving it. There is no distinction between adult and children's gifts. Bring one gift for each person in your group participating in the exchange. Three family members should bring 3 gifts. If you choose not to participate in the gift exchange then there is no need to bring a gift. Gifts should relate to the hobby. Suggestions would be mineral or fossils, rock hammers, insulated lunch packs, related books, etc.**

**Hope to see you there!**

# December Birthdays



**SHELBY HARTMAN** Blue topaz is the hardest of all of the silicate minerals. The pure stone is colorless. However, minor changes of the elements in the stone result in a variety of possible colors:

blue, pale green, red, pink and yellow to name a few. Blue topaz occurs when the mineral is heated. Topaz is plentiful and is found in Brazil, Sri Lanka, Nigeria, Pakistan, China, and the United States.

A gift of blue topaz is a symbol of love and fidelity.

Alternative December birthstones include turquoise and tanzanite.

2	Sharon Muir	16	Cathy Oswalt
3	Susan Thompson	17	Susan Thom
3	David Helms	18	Marvin Nutt
5	Bruce Loveland	18	David Prudhomme
5	Kim Prudhomme	18	Sara Thomas
6	Lynn Spencer	19	Paula Gunter
6	David McAlister	20	Ed Underhill
7	Shelby Hartman	20	Joel Huber
8	Michael Johnson	21	Michael Fields
8	Alan Schaeffer	22	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. ChandraTammalapalli
11	Connor Buck	29	Bebe Buck
12	Marc Mueller	29	Danielle Burns
14	J. Barry Gilmore	30	Pam Gurley
15	Ken Faulkner	30	Maureen Walther
15	Jerry Seamans	30	Lee Fields

## 2008/2009 Meeting Dates

Month	Board Meeting	Membership Meeting	Due Date for Newsletter Submissions
December	Dec 04	Dec 12	Nov 23
January	Jan 1	Jan 9	Dec 22
February	Feb 5	Feb 13	Jan 26
March	Mar 5	Mar 13	Feb 23
April	Apr 2	Apr 10	Mar 23

## Web Site Statistics for November 2008

a brief look at our website ([www.memphisgeology.org](http://www.memphisgeology.org)) since 1/21/02

### Total Visits & Hits

Total visits to web site since 1/21/02	350,294
Total hits to web site since 1/21/02	1,420,987
Visits in past 30 days	6,065
Hits in past 30 days	60,879

### Top page views past 30 days

homepage	1,481 hits
Spacegeology-eris	916hits
birthstones	501 hits
rocknews1005	376 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.

## The Southeast Federation of Mineralogical Societies, Inc.

### DMC Program of the SFMS Field Trip Committee

## An Official Field Trip of Georgia Mineral Society

## An Official Field Trip of the Memphis Archaeological and Geological Society

### FEE SITE

**Saturday – 9:00 AM, December 6, 2008**

### JACKSON'S CROSSROADS AMETHYST MINE FIELD TRIP

**WHERE:** The Famous Jackson's Crossroads Amethyst Mine

**WHEN:** 9 am, Saturday – December 6, 2008

**COLLECTING:** Amethyst and quartz crystals and clusters. Some in matrix. Some crystals at this site are facetable. I understand that at one point Tiffany had mined the area for gems.

**FEE:** The owners have reduced their normal fee and for this official field trip they are reducing it to only \$15.00 a person

**WHAT TO BRING:** We will not be allowed in the pit area but fresh material is being brought up and we will be allowed to sift through the spoil dumps and the mine operators assure me that there will be many exposed boulders and you can bring your sledges. If this is your thought bring safety glasses as well as a hard hat and boots and gloves. If you just want to look through the dumps you will need a screen or something to sift the soil and a spade or shovel. Wear layers of clothes as it may be cold in the morning but could warm up later in the day. Bring something to drink and of course something to wrap your finds in.

**DIRECTIONS:** Jackson's Crossroads is South of I-85 (Take 17 S) North of I-20 (44 N), West of Washington (78 W) and East of Athens. (78 E) My last trip here I traveled East from Athens on US 78 through the town of Lexington and through Rayle. Just as you leave Rayle town limits you come to Callaway Rd. This goes north and you can not miss it. There is a pull off at the corner and signs for the Callaway Farm on one side and the Double B Farm on the other with cows painted on them. Callaway Rd is a two lane road as you go north. At one point it looks like the road stops at a house. I believe it continues as a one lane road after this point. It doesn't matter as you make a right turn in front of the house. This is a continuation of the two lane road but is Clark Station Church Road and is listed as CR106. You continue down this road for 1&2/10 miles. You come to a cemetery on the left and the Clark Station Baptist Church on the right. On the left is Hollis Norman Rd. This is a dirt road but know as CR107. Make your left on this dirt road. 500 feet down the road you come to double iron gates on the right. You pass this and go another 200 feet down the road to the entrance of the mine also on the right. It took me just over two hours to make this trip but keep in mind that I live on the East side of Atlanta.

Children under 12 are **not permitted** at this site. Seems something happened here where they were out of sight of their parents so lack of control led to the mine owners taking control. Pets on a leash are allowed or at least until someone lets them roam free.

Contact: George Libby, Field Trip Chair @ 678-910-7476

## October 2008 Board of Directors Meeting Notes : CAROL & MATTHEW LYBANON

The MAGS Board of Directors met October 2 at the Blue Plate Café, 5469 Poplar Avenue. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 P.M. Those present were: Sandy Ward, Carl Warren, Carol Lybanon, Matthew Lybanon, W.C. McDaniel, Ron Brister, Pam Gurley, Alan Parks, Cathie Jacobs, Alan Jacobs, Park Noyes, Terri Noyes, and Lou White. The minutes from the September Board & Membership Meetings were reviewed and approved as submitted. Treasurers Report: Mike Cannito was not present. Most of the Board did not have the opportunity to review his e-mailed Treasurer's Report. A motion was made and carried that the Board review the September Treasurer's Report next month. Field Trips: The October field trip will be to the fluorite mine in Marion, KY. Barry Burns will have more information at next Friday's Membership Meeting. Alan Parks reported there was great turnout for the field trip to Memphis Stone and Gravel on September 27. Adult Programs: The October program will be on Nonconah Creek, with three presenters: Alan Parks, Ron Brister, and Marvin Nutt. W.C. McDaniel reported he was not sure what the November program would be, but thought it would be an auction. Youth Programs: Mike Baldwin was not at the meeting, but e-mailed his report to the Board. Sandy Ward pointed out that all the programs are listed in the newsletter. Library: Ron Brister reported that Mike Cannito needs to send Alan Parks a check for the publication: Rocks and Fossils Found in Mississippi's Gravel Deposits. Ron has sold 17 copies, for a total of \$136. Membership: Pam Gurley brought two applications for the Board's consideration: Jack Snider, and Patty and Jeff Brunthaver. The applications were approved. Rock Swaps: Cathie Jacobs announced the October and November rock swaps. Carl and Melinda Warren will host the swap on October 11. Carl said they will provide chili, hot dogs, sausages, etc., and asked that people bring side dishes and desserts. On November 15 the swap will be at the home of Alan and Alishia Parks. They will provide catfish and hushpuppies, and asked that people bring side dishes and desserts. Admission to the November rock swap will be a donation for the show's gem dig and grab bags. Show: Alan Parks said the show committee was ahead of schedule. He reminded the Board to look at the show's website, [theearthwideopen.com](http://theearthwideopen.com). Mike Baldwin is developing the website, and plans to put it online by October 15. The committee is looking into a new sponsorship program for the show. There will be three tiers (\$1000, \$500, \$100), with different benefits for the sponsors at each level. The details will be posted on the website. The sponsorship target for the 2009 show is \$6000. The committee would like to approach businesses that have an interest in our show. Alan asked the Board to make suggestions for potential sponsors. W.C. McDaniel reported that we have five dealer contracts so far. Old Business: Nominating Committee report: There is a candidate for the VP in charge of field trips, but we do not have candidates for 2nd VP (Adult Programs) or Director of Youth Programs. We need to present the slate at the October Membership Meeting and vote on it at the November meeting.

The committee will continue its search. W.C. McDaniel told the Board that the lapidary room was vacated on September 30, when the lease expired. He felt that there was a large liability issue if we put any of the equipment into a private home to be used by our members. Presently, Robert Duncan is storing some of the equipment, and the rest is in our storage shed. Ron Brister offered to house the equipment and personally obtain the needed insurance. After much discussion W.C. McDaniel moved that we sell the equipment; Alan Jacobs seconded the motion. The reason for this motion was that experience has shown there is not sufficient interest in this type of facility to seek an alternative site. The motion was passed. An announcement of the sale of this equipment will be made at the October General Meeting, and the equipment will be sold at the November meeting. New Business: None. The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 P.M.

## October 2008 Membership Meeting Notes : NEVILLE MAYFIELD FOR CAROL AND MATTHEW LYBANON

The MAGS Membership Meeting was held at Shady Grove Presbyterian Church on September 12. The meeting was called to order at 7:35 P.M. There were 48 members and 5 visitors. The visitors were Vicky Tuft, Bob Chase, Sydney Chase, Wayne Poole, and Grady Bullard. Sandy Ward announced that the club room had to be closed, and that equipment would probably be auctioned off. Alan Parks gave a status report on 2009 Show progress. The contract/info packages have been sent to the dealers, and some have already been returned. New for this year, we've developed a sponsorship plan to help offset the greatly increased costs at the Agricenter. Sponsor levels are \$1000, \$500, and \$100. Members are encouraged to suggest possible sponsors to the Show Committee. Details of the plan should be on the show website by November 15th: [www.theearthwideopen.com](http://www.theearthwideopen.com). We also plan to promote the show more actively in local schools and organizations. Neville Mayfield emphasized the importance of members collecting material on each field trip and donating it for the gem dig and the grab bags so the club doesn't have to buy these materials. The evening's program was Nonconah Creek Geology, presented by Alan Parks and Ron Brister. Marvin Nutt displayed some very unusual and rare vivionite crystals he discovered at Nonconah Creek, and encouraged everyone to keep looking for interesting materials even in areas where they are not expected. Sandy Ward announced that some board positions are still open, and that we need members to take these positions so as to share the load, invigorate the board, and maintain good organizational administration.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 P.M.



## The Memphis Mineral Fossil and Jewelry Show

### A New Home and a Fresh Start to Celebrate 30 Years!

First I must thank our following members: W.C. McDaniel, Dick McKitrick, Jim Butchko, Neville Mayfield, Beth Day, Cecil Perkins, Nannett McDougal-Dykes, Sandy Ward, and Mike Baldwin. These folks have made a HUGE commitment to our club to produce a Show in *Transition*. This brings new adversity to planning our show. But rest assured we are poised to make our mark on Show History in 2009! We are at the half-way point and I will start contributing each month to the *Rockhound News* to make updates on our progress and show you how you can help.

Everyone should know that we have set clear objectives for the Show, which seek to produce the following results:

- ◆ A successfully promoted event, for which high quality dealers will be contracted to market quality minerals, fossils, and jewelry to the public.
- ◆ An exhibition and forum to provide its participants with well planned and executed educational experiences involving the earth sciences, lapidary arts, and archaeology.
- ◆ A recruiting opportunity for membership in the Memphis Archaeological & Geological Society
- ◆ A benefit for the Memphis Archaeological & Geological Society and the Ronald McDonald House of Memphis.

The Agricenter will give us the facilities and location to grow our show. Over the last ten years our Show at the Pipkin Building has had annual attendance hitting about 2000 participants. Our research shows the bulk of these show goers are repeat customers. We will have a plan to make sure they find us at our new location. But an important aspect about the Agricenter location is it will put our Show in a new area with demographics that support growing the Show. BUT everyone in this club must rise to the occasion and help out! That means in part getting the word out- so start talking about it! Over the next few months I will give some pointers how you can make a contribution to the success of the Show, generally. And there may come a time that you are asked to do something specifically. Please refer to the last bullet listed above when asked to help and before you respond...

Alan

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<sup>nd</sup>—06, 4th—03, 3rd—07 • Special Publication 2nd—03 • Art 77, 80, 81, 82, 86 • Junior Article 1st—03, 07 • Adult Article 1<sup>st</sup>—06, 2<sup>nd</sup>—89, 90, 04, 06; 3<sup>rd</sup>—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)

## DECEMBER 2008

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	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

- December 4**      **6:30 p.m.**      **Board Meeting: Blue Plate Café, 5469 Poplar Avenue**
- December 6**      **9:00 a.m.**      **DMC Field Trip to Jacksons Crossroads Amethyst Mine in Georgia**
- December 12**      **7:30 p.m.**      **Membership Holiday Party/Potluck Dinner**



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