

# Tar Heel Tailings

## Special Interest Articles:

- Prez Sez
- Historic 'Star-Rubies' Found By North Carolina Man

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A newsletter for Gem and Mineral enthusiasts in and around the Raleigh, North Carolina area.

## Prez Sez By Beverly House

Greetings all. Happy July! I want to wish a Happy Birthday to all our members born in July and welcome to our new members!

Thanks to all who came out to Senter Quarry for the field trip last month. I cannot express how sorry I am that we were unable to gain access to the quarry at that time. I sent a letter out to those who signed up, explaining the situation. I thank those who followed us to Raven Rock and hang out the rest of the afternoon- it was a great opportunity for all to share their rocks and get to know one another.

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## Historic 'Star-Rubies' Found By North Carolina Man Could Sell For Over \$90 Million

From Blackbeard's booty to stockpiles of forgotten Confederate currency, the South has procured many a legend about hidden Southern treasures—and what happens when they're found. In 1990 in the woods outside of Asheville, North Carolina, Jarvis Wayne Messer, a local fishing guide and self-proclaimed "rock hound," trumped the lore with a find worth upwards of \$90 million: the largest and most unique set of star rubies in existence, now up for auction.

Four of the world's most famous star rubies (the rarest type of rubies), discovered just outside of Asheville, NC, are now on sale to the highest bidder.

After being examined

by the world's top gemological testing labs, the 139-carat Appalachian Star was put on display at the Natural History Museum in London. Shortly thereafter, the gentleman who found the stones passed away and the Collection was returned to his

family where it has quietly resided ever since," according to Guernseys.

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**Tar Heel Gem & Mineral Club, Inc.**

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**We're on the Web!**

See us at:

[www.tarheelclub.org](http://www.tarheelclub.org)

**Program & Refreshments**

<u>REFRESHMENT SCHEDULE:</u>	
Coordinator: Open	
July	TBD
<u>PROGRAM SCHEDULE:</u>	
July	Ron of Dreaming Down Under - Opals & Opal mining

Remember, the club will reimburse you for up to \$85 (bring your receipts to the treasurer).

**July  
B-Day Members**

- Mike Allsbrook
- David Baltzegar
- Lindsey Bradsher
- Ruth Challeuer
- Becky Davenport
- Maria Gonzalez
- John Guerriero
- Sabrina Hanson
- Katelyn Hennessey
- P.D. Hill
- Michele Rosar
- Penny Rosser
- Eric Schaufler
- Barbara Todaro
- Susan Violon
- Jeff Wilson



Membership applications may be mailed to:

Tar Heel Gem & Mineral Club, Inc.  
Attention: Treasurer  
P. O. Box 33783  
Raleigh, NC 27536-3783

## Tar Heel Gem and Mineral Club, Inc. - June Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, June 15, 2018

**Opening of Club Meeting:**

Beverly opened the meeting at 7:34 pm.

**Program:**

No program.

**Business:**

There is a field trip scheduled for Sunday. The corporate offices have closed quarries. Hopefully this will be regained in September. The lock had been changed for the quarry for which we had the key. The rockswap was moved to Raven Rock Park. Over 20 club member attended. Grab bags were given to attendees.

The Treasurer's report was in the Newsletter.

We need a presentation for July on Zoom. Programs were discussed. John will work on programs.

**Refreshments:**

No Refreshment

**Door Prize:**

No Door Prize

**Close of Meeting:**

Closed meeting at 8:19 pm.

Respectfully Submitted  
 Cyndy Hummel,  
 Secretary, Tar Heel Gem and Mineral Club, Inc.

## Tar Heel Gem and Mineral Club, Inc. - July Meeting Information

The Tar Heel Gem and Mineral Club is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting for the July Monthly Meeting.

Topic: Tar Heel Gem and Mineral Club July 2021 Monthly Meeting

Time: July 20, 2021 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm

To join the Zoom Meeting, use the following link:  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87064667686?pwd=bGdoaXhINIBUUVNSa0Y4K01WVzVPUT09>

Our Meeting ID: 870 6466 7686  
 This meetings Passcode: 132206

We look forward to "seeing" everyone there. If you experience any issues getting into the meeting, you can call or text me at (919) 389-1821. Thanks,

Beverly House  
 President  
 Tar Heel Gem and Mineral Club, Inc.

## July Treasurer's Report

TGMC Treasurer Report - June 2021			
<b>Beginning Balance:</b>	6/1/21		<b>7,731.40</b>
<b>Income:</b>			
	Membership Dues	65.00	
	<b>Total Income:</b>		65.00
<b>Expense:</b>			
	Show - Trailer tires replaced	284.18	
	Field trip food	25.64	
	Postage (t-shirt)	4.80	
	Stripe Fees	2.79	
	<b>Total Expenses:</b>		317.41
<b>Ending Balance:</b>	6/30/21		<b>7,478.99</b>
	<b>CDs</b> 91-181 day		5,705.50
			-
	<b>Total CDs</b>		<b>5,705.50</b>

This is the July report for the fiscal month of June.

Linda Searcy  
 Treasurer,  
 Tar Heel Gem and Mineral Club, Inc.

## Prez Sez

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### Field trips:

Senter Quarry is unavailable for field trips until further notice. The corporate owner is doing some renovations to the quarry and will let us know if and when we can return.

Other quarries: The following have provided updates on future field trip opportunities:

- Martin Marietta- Castle Hayne, NC- none for the remainder of the year
- Onslow Quarry- possible additional information later in the fall
- Holly Springs- no information at this time.
- Hanson Gardner- Lillington- They are getting a new plant manager in July- status of field trips unknown at this time
- Wake Stone- Loris SC and Rocky Mount, NC- no information at this time.

When we have field trip notifications, they are made through emails, sent to all current members. If your email is incorrect in our records, you may be missing important information about upcoming events.

### Meetings:

Next Meeting: July 20, 2021, 7:00 pm-8:00 pm

Agenda: General information

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87064667686?pwd=bGdoaXhlNlBUUVNSa0Y4K01WVzVPUT09>

Meeting ID: 870 6466 7686

Passcode: 132206

Please feel free to contact me via email, text, or phone or if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you all for either being a member of THGMC or your interest in our club-and as always ROCK ON!

Beverly House

President

Tar Heel Gem and Mineral Club, Inc.

## Historic 'Star-Rubies' Found By North Carolina Man

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Messer was a man of simple means living with his wife and young son in Buncombe County, North Carolina, when he discovered trace elements of corundum during a fishing trip near his home—in an exact location he chose never to disclose. “He’d often see something in a stream bed that drew his attention, and he’d trace it back to some origin and dig down into the ground to follow the trail,” says Arlan Ettinger, founder and president of Guernsey’s, the New York City-based auction house now responsible for the sale of the rubies. “For this particular find, he had to dig about eight feet down.” From first sighting to protraction of the rubies, the discovery took three years.

“When I found it, there was a red-tailed hawk that soared right over me,” Messer told a local reporter on North Carolina Now during an early 1990s interview. “I knew it was something special, but I didn’t realize how important the stones would be.”

### [Star Ruby Interview - YouTube Video](#)

When a friend cut and polished them, it became obvious that they were star rubies, pigeon’s blood-red gems with six radiating lines that refract light in the shape of a star. While rubies are already rarer than

diamonds, star rubies are roughly a thousand times rarer than regular rubies.

In the simplest of terms, a “star” is formed when a stone is placed under a light. As noted above, this happens very rarely. When such stars appear, they are most often faint or somewhat fuzzy. The stars in Wayne’s four stones are vivid. Sharp and bright, when viewing them it almost seems like an internal light switch is turned on. The stars are stunning.

“Messer was educated enough to know that you typically don’t find this kind of thing in North Carolina, or even the United States for that matter,” Ettinger says. “Before this, star rubies had only been found in Southeast Asia—Sri Lanka, Burma—but not western North Carolina.”

It is a tradition that large and rare gemstones be given names;; with this in mind, Wayne’s stones became known as the Appalachian Star (139.40 ct.), the Promise Star (64.16 ct.), the Misty Star (52.36 ct.), and the Smokey Mountain Two--Star (86.54 ct.) which remarkably has stars on both its top and bottom. Together, the Mountain Star Ruby Collection weighs in at a staggering 342.46 ct!

His now world-famous collection consists of;  
 'The Appalachian Star Ruby'



At 139.43 carats, it is larger than the Rosser Reeves Star Ruby displayed at the Smithsonian Institution's Museum of Natural History. It is a 28.6mm x 21.7mm x 19.1mm oval cabochon with semi-translucent, brilliant deep red color. Its star is sharp, perfectly centered and well-defined, with very straight, unbroken rays.

'The Promise Star Ruby'



A beautiful 64.17 carat round cabochon, it's also a medium deep-red. Its perfect star is sharp, centered and exceptionally well-defined. Its semi-translucency reveals a visible crystal structure. It measures 21.8mm in diameter and 12.8mm deep.

'The Misty Star Ruby'



This is an unusual pear-shaped cabochon weighing 52.37 carats and measuring 21.2mm long x 17.6mm wide x 13.4mm deep. It is also a strong, rich, semi-translucent red with interesting slight color zoning in its crystal structure. Its star also exhibits exceptionally perfect asterism.

and 'The Smokey Mountain Two Star Ruby'



This amazing 86.56-carat gem exhibits sharp, centered and well-defined perfect stars on both its top and bottom. It has a strong, medium dark-red, semi-translucent color with a visible crystal structure. This round cabochon measures 21.5mm in diameter and 18.8mm in depth

Star rubies are the rarest rubies, according to Guernsey's, and they are among the most valuable types of colored gemstones in the world – rarer and more valuable than diamonds of comparable size.

The value of a ruby is typically determined based on color, cut, clarity and carat weight, but rubies also are evaluated based on their geographic origin. Ruby gets its name from the Latin word "ruber," which means red. In the Sanskrit language, ruby is called "ratnaraj," which translates to "king of gemstones."

Before Messer's discovery, the finest star ruby in the world, the "Rosser Reeves," sat in the Smithsonian at 138 carats, with only five perfect rays. The largest of Messer's find, the "Appalachian Star" weighs in at just over 139 carats and has all of its rays intact. "The Promise Star," "The Misty Star," and "The Smoky Mountain Two Star," the three other rubies in what was dubbed "The Mountain Star Collection," are identical in color and pattern, with one even displaying a double star on both front and back.

The Natural History Museum in London invited Messer to display the "Appalachian Star" for thirty days, during which time an estimated 150,000 guests filed through the museum to see the gem.

The institution's leading gemologist, Dr. Cally Oldershaw, described the stone as "quite breathtaking." In the Natural History Museum of London's Mineralogy Newsletter, Sept. 20, 1992, the Appalachian Star was described as "a perfect six-rayed natural star ruby... thought to be the finest in the world." London's Daily Mail was more succinct referring to the stone simply as "the world's finest ruby."

Although many attempts to sell the stones were made over the next decade, the rubies remained in

Messer's possession. (Eight and nine-figure appraisals for the entire collection shrink the potential buyer pool.) When he died in 2008 after a long battle with cancer, the rubies remained with the Messer family, mostly forgotten. "There's the notion that these are worth many, many millions of dollars," Ettinger says, "but the family is still living a very humble life."

A recent appraisal revived interest in the rubies, and the same friends who raised money to test the stones more than twenty years ago contacted Guernsey's auction house. Guernsey's is known for its unusual sales, and many valuable artifacts have passed through its doors during its forty-three years of existence, including the contents of the SS United States ocean liner, possessions of John F. Kennedy's and Elvis's, and the complete collection of Rosa Parks's belongings at the time of her death, which were bought and donated to the Library of Congress.

Although the rubies are nearly priceless, Guernsey's has taken on the challenge of trying to sell them. "Our job now is to help Wayne's widow," Ettinger says. "She deserves to live comfortably." The rubies are currently available for a privately negotiated sale before an official auction is scheduled, and no bid, Ettinger says, will be ruled out.

Resources: <https://www.charlottestories.com/historic-star-rubies-found-north-carolina-man-sell-90-million/>  
<https://gardenandgun.com/articles/an-appalachian-treasure/>

## UPCOMING SHOWS

**September 3 – 6, 2021:** Raleigh, NC – Treasures of the Earth. Kerr Scott Building, NC State Fairgrounds, Raleigh, NC. Our shows feature estate, classic, handcrafted and fashion jewelry made from a variety of metals, as well as a vast array of crystals, minerals and fossils. Hours: Fri 12-6; Sat 10-5; Sun 10-5. Admission: TBD and Free Parking. Contact: <https://treasuresoftheearth.com/events/nc-state-fairgrounds/>;

## Vugsites

The following are some links to Web-Sites that may interest some of our members:

<http://www.tarheelclub.org/> / <https://www.facebook.com/tarheelgemandmineralclub/> These are the official sites for the Tar Heel Gem & Mineral Club. I would strongly urge all members to check them out on a regular basis.

<http://www.amfed.org/> / <http://www.amfed.org/sfms> These are the official sites for the organizing body that the Tar Heel Gem & Mineral Club is founded under. I would strongly urge all members to check them out on a regular basis.

[http://www.amfed.org/sfms/lodestar\\_newsletter.html](http://www.amfed.org/sfms/lodestar_newsletter.html) The SFMS Lodestar Newsletter

<http://www.carolinageologicalsociety.org/CGS/Home.html> This site provides numerous downloadable field-trip guide books, maps, and charts of the Carolinas. It will prove to keep any avid rock hound busy for years. Great Site!

[http://www.ncminerals.com/ncmineralswebsite\\_files/page0011.htm](http://www.ncminerals.com/ncmineralswebsite_files/page0011.htm) And while we are on the subject, try this link. Its titled: Links of Interest to Rock hounds in NC. It will take you to a list of links for North Carolina gems and minerals.

<http://www.rocksforkids.com/> Just like the name says, a nice place to steer the younger members.

Information & photographs of over 6300 specimens from the Glenn & Martha Vargas Gem & Mineral Collection.

<http://www.rockhoundlounge.com> Scott Laborde, a club member maintains his own web site that might be of interest to people collecting in and around Wake County.

[http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/29726500/ns/technology\\_and\\_science-science](http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/29726500/ns/technology_and_science-science) This site highlights a half dozen of the most recent significant fossil finds.

<http://appmodo.com/13971/mole-quest-for-the-terracore-gem-app-review-for-the-iphone-and-ipod-touch/> If you have an iphone or an ipod touch, this rock-hounding may be the game for you.

[http://diamonddanpublications.net/index\\_files/page0009.html](http://diamonddanpublications.net/index_files/page0009.html) Diamond Dan's Mini Miner's Monthly

I would like to encourage all members of the THG&MC that maintain their own presence on the internet to send me a link to their site to be published in future Vugsites so that other club members may learn and enjoy the craft, the art, the interests that many of us have in common.

Park in the Cates Ave. Parking Deck off Jensen Dr. Enter Thompson Building directly across from the parking lot.

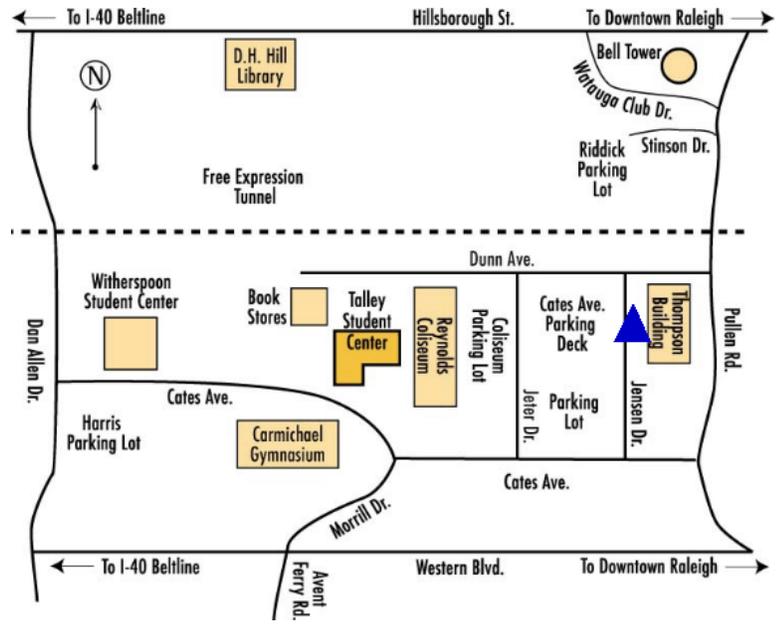
# Our Next Meeting is July 20, 2021 See Inside for Meeting Details

## About Our Organization...

The Tar Heel Gem and Mineral Club, Inc. was formed in 1974 as a nonprofit educational organization for people who enjoy the lapidary arts, earth sciences, and related subjects. The club pursues these goals through publications, meetings, lectures, field trips, exhibits, demonstrations, and other activities.

mineralogy, paleontology, earth sciences, and lapidary techniques, among club members and among the general public. The club pursues these goals through publications, meetings, lectures, field trips, exhibits, demonstrations, and other activities.

**Come and be a part of the Fun!**



**TAR HEEL GEM & MINERAL CLUB**  
10609 Chelsea Drive  
Raleigh, NC 27603

