



Jack and Betty Jones of Dry Branch display some of their collection

Robert Seay/The Macon Telegraph

Collections will shine at show

Gem and Mineral Show will be held in May at Centerville

by Lance Wallace
The Macon Telegraph

Jack Jones can't shoot pool until after the 21st annual Gem and Mineral Show.

The show runs May 19-21, and the long-time chairman of the gem and mineral show has read his planning materials out on his pool table in the basement.

"Every year I think I'm going to get out of it," said Jones, a retired electrician with ADM. This year a guy called me and asked me to help. Now it looks like I'm running it again."

The Mid-Georgia Gem and Mineral Society, which was founded in 1960, started its show at the Farmer's Market grounds on Eisenhower Parkway in 1975. Jones was the chairman of the first one and has been in charge of the show all the years.

The show has been at Westgate Shopping Center since 1981, but because of the mall renovation, the gem and mineral society had to move it. They found a home at the new mall in Houston County, the Galleria at Centerville.

"This year it's brand new," said Jones' wife, Betty, who is also the group's treasurer. "We're a little worried about people finding us at our new location. We should do OK, because it's a new mall."

The show will feature unique stones, mineral formations and fossils. There will also be about 20 dealers on hand selling their handiwork which will include everything from turquoise rings to "gem trees."

A gem tree is a miniature tree made from metal with small, shaped stones as leaves. The tree is usually embedded in a larger, unusual stone. They're popular at the Jones household.

Jones lives in Dry Branch in Twiggs County,

near where he grew up. The kaolin mines in the area were prime digging spots to find good stones and minerals.

He started collecting seriously in 1974, the same year he joined the Middle Georgia society. Now, he works with stones and tinkers with metal work. His display at the Georgia State Fair won a blue ribbon last year, and he plans to put out the same display at the show.

Jones is also proud of several large shark's teeth. He said the fossilized teeth are very popular at shows.

The show will be in the Galleria from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., Friday, May 19, and Saturday, May 20; and from noon to 6 p.m. on Sunday, May 21. The Galleria is located at 2922 Watson Blvd in Centerville near Warner Robins.

"When the dealers ask you if they can come back next year, you feel like you have a good show," said Betty Jones.