



The **BACKBENDER'S GAZETTE**

**The Newsletter of the
Houston Gem & Mineral Society
Houston, TX**

Volume XXXVI - No. 2

February 2005

President's Message

February 2005

by Norman Lenz

President, Years 2004-2005



Fellow HGMS Rock Kickers,

The New Year's activities at the club house are well under way, and we expect to have another good year. One thing hanging from last year is the roof replacement. Our contractor has been in the hospital for over three weeks at the time of this message. However, work began on January 4 and hopefully will be completed by the time you read this. We plan to replace the stained ceiling tiles in the clubhouse as soon as the roof replacement project is complete.



There will be a few changes to supervision of HGMS Shop usage. Neal Immega will work in his preferred role as "shop elf" maintaining and repairing equipment. Tom Wright will take over the position of Shop Supervisor. He will supervise Shop activities and make sure things run safely and smoothly.

Continued on page 4

General Meeting Presentations for January and February

by Scott Singleton

1st Vice President

We have a two-part series on Gold scheduled for the January and February General Meetings. In January, Norm and Susan Lenz will give us a guided tour of Alaska with a presentation entitled "Glaciers, Gold, and Grizzlies." The Lenzes were in Alaska in early September for two weeks and have agreed to share their experience with us. You'll see glaciers from land, sea, and air, and two different gold mining operations. Some of you may recall the Grand Door Prize at the HGMS show in September. It was a carved moose antler and was brought back from Alaska by Norm and Susan.

The Lenzes entertaining presentation will be followed in February with a presentation by the Houston Museum of Natural Science entitled "Gold! Natural Treasure,

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Copy is due for the March issue by Tuesday, February 8, 2005. (When the 8th falls on Saturday, I create the BBG that same weekend.)

Purpose of HGMS

The objectives of this Society are to promote the advancement of the knowledge and practice of the arts and sciences associated with the collecting of rocks, minerals, fossils, artifacts, and their identification and classification; the general lapidary art; the collecting and identification of gemstones; the designing and execution of jewelry or metalcraft; and to provide the opportunity to obtain, exchange, and exhibit specimens and rough or finished materials.

Membership dues are \$30 for an adult membership, \$40 for a couple, \$50 for a family (including all children aged 5-18), and \$8 for a youth membership (ages 5-18).

Advertising rates: \$70 for 2 mo, ¼ page; \$150 for 6 mo, ¼ page.

MEMBER: American Federation of Mineralogical Societies & South Central Federation of Mineral Societies.

All meetings are held at the Clubhouse located at 10805 Brooklet near the intersection of Highway 59 (Southwest Freeway) and Sam Houston Parkway (Beltway 8). See the calendar inside the back page for when the different Sections meet. The General Meeting is the fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:30. The HGMS Internet address is <http://www.hgms.org>.

President's Message continued from page 1

A committee headed by Scott Singleton will review the By Laws of the Club. No major revisions are expected, but several members have questioned issues that are not adequately addressed. Some new issues may need to be addressed. Please contact Scott with your concerns and suggestions. Remember that any changes in the By Laws must be approved by the general HGMS membership.

I have appointed Paula Rutledge to chair a committee to evaluate our HGMS Web site and to bring her recommendations for improvement to the Board. Please contact her if you have skills in Web site development or ideas for improvement. This is our face to the world and requires many hours of work to update and maintain.

The storage room of the club house needs cleaning up. Tom Wright and Dave Hawkins have volunteered to supervise this project. The upstairs storage area also will need work eventually.

The auctions in the Clubhouse case were very successful this past year and added almost \$6,000 to our treasury. Art Smith reports that he has only enough material for one more auction unless new material is received. Anyone can have rock, mineral, fossil, lapidary, or related materials entered into the auction. Donors of materials may request 50% of the proceeds and claim the balance as a donation to the HGMS. Contact Art Smith if you have anything you want to enter into the auction or if you have any questions.

Thanks to Tom Wright and Charlie Fredregill, we have a new refrigerator in the kitchen. Art Smith says he will try to keep it well stock with soda. Please think before you put extra food in it. If there is no planned use for the food, throw it out—or better yet, take it home.

Stan Perkins is the official Education Assistant to Mary Ann Mitscherling.

We are just getting started for the New Year, and there are plenty of opportunities to get involved with activities at the clubhouse or with the Show Committee. There is always a way for you to help keep things running smoothly.

If you have a question, ask it. If you have a suggestion, make it. If you have a skill, share it.

General Meeting Programs continued from page 1

Cultural Obsession.” This presentation dovetails with a special exhibition of the same name opening February 18 at HMNS and running through August 7. Visitors to the exhibition will explore the role of gold through history, art, culture, science, and myth. HGMS club members attending the General Meeting on February 22 will see a special preview of this exhibition and will learn some of the “behind the scenes” details about putting together a high-profile exhibit such as this.

Because of HGMS’s special relationship with the museum, we have been given another one-of-a-kind opportunity. The museum has offered a special night where HGMS

members can tour the Gold! exhibit for a much reduced cost and be unencumbered by large crowds. This night will be on a Tuesday during March. We are currently finalizing the exact date and cost of this special showing, but we have offered March 1 as a possibility. I will update everyone next month on the details of this special opportunity.

Be sure not to miss either of these great presentations or the special HGMS night at the museum!

The Southern Illinois Fluorspar District

by Art Smith

Member of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society

Recently I have been working on a project for Friends of Mineralogy. It is the Mineral Locality Index of Illinois. I love working on this type of project because you can combine your own collecting experience with knowledge you already have on the area. However more detail is generally required, so you need to search the literature. This usually results in a learning experience, and so your own knowledge is greatly increased. Then you have a chance to integrate all your data and to pass it on to others. Very often with this type of project you say to your self, "If I had only known then what I know now, I would have done my collecting in that area differently, and now I would really have a great collection."

The Southern Illinois Fluorspar district is a great example of what I am writing about. This district is by far the largest specimen producing district in the state of Illinois and one of the largest and most important in the United States. I went to school in Illinois and later in Missouri during the 1950s, yet never visited the district. Why? My best excuse is that I was not inspired to go there even though I was collecting minerals during my years in both states. The impression I had because of several in my collection was that a typical specimen from the district was a dark purple, almost black, not very lustrous specimen of fluorite as cubic crystals. Seldom seen were other minerals associated with the fluorite. Another good excuse I had is that the fluorite district is situated at the extreme southern end of Illinois and extends into Kentucky. You have to be going there; it never was on the way to anywhere else, at least for me.

In the 1960s and early 1970s when I was doing some collecting and was buying specimens in Arkansas, Illinois fluorite was abundant on the dealers' outdoor tables. It sold for about \$2 a pound. The price was cheap but the specimens were seldom great, particularly after they had sat out in the weather a bit and been picked over by other collectors. These specimens were usually bought by the truck full. An adventurous dealer would load up a truck of wrapped and banana-boxed Arkansas quartz and drive to Illinois. He'd swap his load for a load of wrapped and tomato-crated fluorite or visa versa. Naturally, neither the fluorite coming to Arkansas or the quartz going to Illinois was the best quality. So looking at it from a mineral collector's point of view, you were fortunate if you got something good for your collection. However, twice in the early 1970s in Mount Ida, once with John Moudy and once with Ocus Stanley, I did get to help unwrap new shipments of Illinois minerals and so got to pick out some unpicked-

over specimens. Less than five percent of the specimens from each batch were worth buying. From the John Moudy unwrapping, I purchased three or four white barites with no other associated minerals except in the matrix where purple fluorite confirmed their southern Illinois provenance. From the Ocus Stanley unwrapping, I bought all the dark lustrous dark brown sphalerite crystals in the batch. They ranged from about two inches to four inches across, and the crystals were up to almost an inch but most were smaller. I also got one pale yellow partial cube with a pale blue color zone around its outer edge. It is studded with small $\frac{1}{4}$ inch scalenohedral white calcite crystals. It is far from a super specimen but considering the less than \$2 it cost me, a real bargain. This and a few other specimens are still scattered in my collection. Cheaply come and easy go in swaps, particularly with European collectors at that time. The really sad part of the whole thing that I realize now is that none of the specimens had specific localities, though I now do feel they all came from Southern Illinois—if the dealers could have said that a certain batch was from Kentucky, they might have wanted to charge more.

During this time I was made aware of an interesting find in Southern Illinois, benstonite crystals (White and Jarosewich 1970). Benstonite was first discovered in a massive form in the Chamberlain Creek Barite mines near Magnet Cove, Arkansas. So I was familiar with the name. Another article on a barite and fluorite find was good reading, but I never did at that time see any of the specimens (Carlson and Winchell 1975). There were specimens of witherite, alstonite, fluorite, and calcite showing up on some mineral lists but rarely in our local shows so my interest did not increase. Then in the late 1970s an Ohio mineral dealer made the Houston show with a fine array of Southern Illinois fluorite and minerals. However, the prices were many times the \$2 a pound I had been paying, and the better specimens were priced above anything that I would even consider paying for Illinois specimens at that time. Several of us in Houston were a little amazed, and overall I do not believe the dealer did too well. I figured that all the beautiful specimens were telling me that a lot of good things were coming out of Illinois, and sooner or later they would show up in Arkansas. Unfortunately for me, they never did except for a few witherite specimens that were pretty well picked over by the time I saw them. Fortunately for Al Kidwell, Ocus Stanley had saved him a nice very large cabinet specimen that he still has today. Actually the amount of material and quality of the material showing up in Arkansas seemed to decrease. In the late 1980s I realized that these unusual and showy specimens were not going to be around for long, and if I wanted any of them, I would have to pay the prices. So I did buy a small but nice witherite, some fluorite and galena, and a very clear pale blue crystal of fluorite with chalcopyrite inclusions. But I continued to concentrate my collecting efforts on Colorado, Arkansas, and New Hampshire. Even with this I paid no attention to specific locations or specific occurrences though I read articles by Francis (1982) and Lillie (1988). It seemed to me that it was all the same area. Specific mines and locations were meaningless and went through my head without registering. Actually I knew better or at least I should have known better. Local locality data has always been important in my own field collecting and specimen purchases.

By the time I read the article on the district by Goldstein (1997), I already knew that it was too late to seriously try and collect minerals from the district. All mining had shut

down in 1996 due to depletion and the cheaper prices on imports, particularly from China. Also I had little room left for cabinet-sized specimens.

However, it was not until I started doing research for the Illinois Locality Index that I realized some of the reasons for the availability of increased good specimen from dealers in the last decade or so before the district shut down.

A brief review of the mining geology and history of the area gives some enlightenment. The first mining in 1842 was lead mining from the Pell mine in the Rosiclare district. At that time the fluorite or fluorspar as the ore is called was worthless so not an ore. Lead mining boomed through the Civil War, and many mines were opened in Illinois and Kentucky. Soon after the war things slumped. In the 1880s new steel making methods included the use of fluorspar as a flux. The Rosiclare district mines boomed, particularly after 1900 because they were near the river and so had cheap transportation north to the steel mills. In 1924 most of the larger producing mines along the Rosiclare vein in the district were flooded and could not at that time be reclaimed. Ores in this district were mostly from large veins that the miners followed for several hundred to thousands of feet. Pockets of crystals were not common, so there were few very good specimens produced for the mineral market which was fairly small at that time anyway. The Rosiclare fluorite is usually white, gray, or pale purple though all shades and colors have been observed. Fluorspar production shifted to other mines on different veins in the Rosiclare district, to mines in Kentucky, and to the Cave-in-Rock district to the north, a few miles northwest of the town by the same name. Both districts are in Hardin County. However, most of the mining in the Cave-in-Rock district is not from veins but from replacement deposits in limestone at different horizons. Here, as in many other replacement-type deposits, cavities with crystals are more numerous.

One of the early producer of specimens (1940s and 1950s) was the Crystal mine that became known for its very clear crystals and also very large crystals. The Minerva #1 mine probably produced most of the dark purple fluorite I was familiar with in the 1950s. However with time, as mining commenced in the north end of this district (Minerva #1, mined 1943 to 1976 and later called the Ozark-Mahoning #1, mined from 1989–1996) and two mines to the northwest across a graben in the Harris Creek district (Denton #1 mined 1979–1993 and Annabel Lee mined 1979–1993) things really broke loose. Sure there were a few smaller mines in their vicinity that also contributed, but most all of the rare minerals (strontianite, witherite, benstonite, and alstonite and paralstonite) came from the Minerva–Ozark Mahoning #1 along with many other good mineral specimens. The Denton and Annabel Lee also produced a host of good attractive specimens during their lifetime, particularly calcite, barite, celestine, strontianite and marcasite. I cannot say that the market was ever flooded with super specimens, but there were many good ones and some very exceptional specimens in dealer stocks. The price for the best always remained high. Only one other mine in Illinois to the west of both districts located in Pope County produced a significant number of good specimens, and that was the Deardorff mine (Carlson and Winchell 1975). Here yellow-orange barite with fluorite and scalenohedral calcite crystals came from a 1974 find.

So now after putting all the history and geology together, I can see why the production of better and more varied specimens occurred in the 1980s and 1990s. There is no doubt that their increase in value also caused more specimens from this period to be saved by the miners. My only regret is that I did not put together a better and larger suite of these minerals for myself, because except for old collections that are remarketed, there are few outstanding specimens available today.

Bibliography

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Lillie, R. 1988 Minerals of the Harris Creek Fluorspar district, Hardin County, Illinois. *Rocks & Minerals* 63:210-226.

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2005 Bulletin Editors' Contest

by Phyllis George, Editor

It seems as though we just received the results from the 2004 contest, and now it's time to select all the entries for the 2005 contest. I mailed them to Ike House, Bulletin Aids Chairman for the SCFMS last Monday, and he received them January 6. The deadline was January 8, so we're on our way! The following table shows which items are entered, their authors, and their categories.

Category	Title	Author	Date Published
Original Article—Advanced	Danger Stalks the Cullen Hall of Gems and Minerals	Neal Immega	November 2004
	Fossils, During and After Oil	Thomas J. Akers	September 2004
	High Grading: Part I	Art Smith	March 2004
	Kids Are the Rockhound Future	Terry Proctor	December 2004
	Tucson 2004: The Exclusive Specimens and the Experience	Jill Rowlands	April 2004
Original Article	Whoopie! Earth Science Is Back	Lexy Bieniek	September 2004
Poetry	Be Grateful My Soul	Ed Clay	September 2004
	Rocky Becomes a Rockhound	Terry Proctor	November 2004
Features	Mineral Treasure Hunt	Dean Lagerwall	October 2004
Special Publications	The Zuhl Collection of American Petrified Wood at the Houston Museum of Natural Science	Neal Immega and Scott Singleton	October 2004
Bulletin—Large	The Backbender's Gazette	Editor: Phyllis George	June 2004
	The Backbender's Gazette	Editor: Phyllis George	September 2004

As occurred in 2004, the results of the SCFMS contest will be announced after the results of the AFMS contest are known. The AFMS show will be combined with the Midwest Federation show in St. Louis, Missouri August 16–21, 2005. The SCFMS show will be hosted by the Austin Gem & Mineral Society December 2–4, 2005.

Kudos to BBG Writers!

by Phyllis George, Editor

I can't tell you how impressed I am with the quality of the article and report writers we have in the Houston Gem & Mineral Society. They put out quality work, they are responsible, and they are extremely responsive!

Twice a year the deadline for BBG material falls on the same day I create the newsletter. At those times, there is no grace period. If I don't receive the material by the deadline (always the eighth day of the month), the item goes into the following month's issue. This year the eighth falls on Saturday in January and in October.

By yesterday (Saturday, January 8) I had received only three items, and these came from Art Smith, Scott Singleton, and Norm Lenz. It's wonderful to work with such committed people. Late yesterday afternoon I e-mailed the others who typically submit articles and alerted them to the deadline. I doubted that any would even check their e-mail until Monday, if then. It was with great amazement that I found e-mails—and articles—from all but one when I checked again that night before going to bed. Kudos to Paula Rutledge, Steve Blyskal, Dean Lagerwall, Mary Ann Mitscherling, and Sunday Bennett.

The only one who didn't respond until the following day was Frances Arrighi, and she had a really good reason. She has been ill with the flu since Christmas, and we all wish her a speedy recovery. The flu is no fun! Frances is a real trouper.

HGMS is so fortunate to have such dedicated and talented people.

Nude New Year's Day Trip

by Paula Rutledge, Paleo Section

This New Year's Day, the Immegas and the Rutledges took a day trip to McFaddin Beach, on the Gulf of Mexico, in search of Clovis points and bones. McFaddin Beach, near High Island, Texas is a short drive from Houston. This location is well known for its artifacts and fossil bones and teeth! Fossils collected from that site include evidence of mammoths, mastodons, camels, bison, sloths, and sabertooth tigers. Clovis points and other stone tools from Paleoindian cultures can be found here.

This particular day, an overcast, breezy, sixty-degree day, the beach yielded up teeth (possibly camel) and various bones. [If you want to find fossils, I highly recommend taking Inda with you. The fossils just appear and wait for her to find them!]

I am a native to the Houston area and have been coming to this beach area camping and collecting since the 1960s. All these years, and I did not know a nude beach was there! (And some people think fossil collecting is boring!)

Education Classes at HGMS Clubhouse

by Mary Ann Mitscherling

This year we have two people working to facilitate formal, structured classes at our clubhouse. Stan Perkins will be at each first class meeting unless I am there. He will collect membership and class fees and see that all desired paperwork gets done. I will continue the rest of the education duties. Continue to contact me about new classes, the class waiting list, and enrollments.

We have one more experienced instructor added this year with new classes. Tom Wright joins Charlie Fredregill, Ed Clay, and Margaret Hardman-Muye in offerings this quarter:

- 01-09-05 Beginning Wire Wrapping**, 2 p.m.–5 p.m. Three Sunday classes; 4-7 students, \$90, will be taught by Charlie Fredregill, and is already filled as of January 8.
- 01-16-05 Precious Metal Clay**, 10 a.m.–5 p.m. One class on Sunday; 6–12 students, \$90, will be taught by Margaret Hardman-Muye, and is already filled as of January 8.
- 01-30-05 Mold Making**, 1 p.m.–4 p.m. Two classes on Sunday; 4–6 students, \$60, will be taught by Tom Wright, and has not reached minimum enrollment as of January 8.
- 02-08-05 Beginning and Intermediate Jewelry Fabrication**, 7 p.m.–10 p.m. Thirteen classes, Tuesday and Friday; 3–7 students, \$390, will be taught by Ed Clay, and has not reached minimum enrollment as of January 8.
- 02-09-05 Ad Hoc Casting**, 6 p.m.–9 p.m. Wednesday, one class, 3–6 students. Price based on number of flasks processed at \$10 per flask. Will be taught by Tom Wright and has not reached minimum enrollment as of January 8.
- 02-13-05 Chasing and Repoussé**, 1 p.m.–4 p.m., six classes on Sunday. 4–6 students, \$180, will be taught by Tom Wright, and has not reached minimum enrollment as of January 8.
- 02-20-05 Cabochon Cutting**, 1 p.m.–4 p.m., one class, Sunday. 2–3 students, \$30, will be taught by Margaret Hardman-Muye, and has not reached minimum enrollment as of January 8.
- 03-13-05 Cabochon Cutting**, 1 p.m.–4 p.m., one class on Sunday. 2–3 students, \$30, will be taught by Margaret Hardman-Muye, and has not reached minimum enrollment as of January 8.
- 03-27-05 Beginning Wire Wrapping**, 2 p.m.–5 p.m., three classes on Sunday. 4-7 students, \$90, will be taught by Charlie Fredregill, and has not reached minimum enrollment as of January 8.

We have a new policy—the **Class Reserve Policy**—on filling the available student slots in each class. If you wish to take any currently scheduled class, you must send a \$25 nonrefundable check or money order made out to “HGMS” with the name of the class and class start date written on the check or money order. On a first-come-first-served basis, we will fill the class. If the class is full, your deposit will be returned. If you reserve a place in class but do not show up on time at the first class, your deposit is forfeited. Send your deposit to M. A. Mitscherling, 5801 Lumberdale #234, Houston, TX 77092-1526 so that it arrives no later than seven calendar days before the class start date.

So far this new policy is working well for all concerned. Remember that when you tie up a class slot, you are preventing someone else from using that slot if the class is full. This year it will cost you your \$25 reserve check if you do not show up for class. Do not miss out on a class because you procrastinated. Send in your reserve check for the class you want as soon as you know you want it. Note that the Wire Wrapping and PMC classes were filled more than one week early.

Club E-mail

by Neal Immega

Get on the HGMS e-mail list by sending a note to n_immega@swbell.net. If you change your Internet service provider, please let me know your new e-mail address so you will keep getting notices of last minute activities and program changes.

All notices are sent out to the membership as BCCs (blind carbon copies) so the entire list is not circulated.



Mineral Section



by Steve Blyskal, Chairperson and Dean Lagerwall, Assistant Chairperson

Upcoming Meeting Topics:

February 2: Trimming Symposium: Back by popular demand—Art Smith will present a “How-To” talk on trimming specimens. Removing damaged portions of a specimen can dramatically increase the value by focusing the viewer’s attention on the most aesthetic portion of the piece. Several styles of trimmers will be present.

February 16: Tucson Review: Hear the tales from those returning from Tucson and the “Greatest Mineral Show(s) on Earth.” This is an informal meeting. Refreshments will be provided.

The January 5 presentation on Opals was postponed due to the speaker’s bout with the flu. It will be rescheduled for later this year.

If you have any ideas for topics to be presented or topics you would be willing to present at our Mineral Section meetings, please contact Dean at dean_lagerwall@yahoo.com or call him at (979) 480-9373.

HGMS Board Meeting

January 4, 2005

Paula Rutledge, Faceting Representative, acted as Secretary

The following Board members were present: Norm Lenz, President; Scott Singleton, First Vice President; Beverly Mace, Second Vice President; Paul McGarry, Treasurer; Paula Rutledge, Faceting Representative; Dave Hawkins, Lapidary Representative; Art Smith, Mineral Representative; John Moffitt, Paleontology Representative; and Tom Wright, Day Light Representative.

Visitors include Stuart Murphy.

Reports

- *Backbenders Gazette:*
- *Shop and Clubhouse:* Neal Immega
- *Treasurers Report:* Paul McGarry
Paul McGarry requested a copy of the AFMS insurance policy, and John Moffitt agreed to get a copy for him. A check for the insurance dues is issued but not yet mailed.
- *Library:* Art Smith
- *Show Committee:* Carol Thompson
- *Education Committee Report:* . Mary Ann Mitscherling
Stan Perkins is the new official Education Committee Assistant.
- *Program for Next Month:* Scott Singleton
Program for January 25 General Meeting will be "Glaciers, Gold & Grizzlies," by Norm and Susan Lenz.

Old Business

- Roof Repair has begun. Norm Lenz will ask Tom Lammers to drop by and check on the progress of roof repairs during construction. (Explanation of delay in roofing: Contractor Jimmy Spear spent the last three weeks in the hospital due to problems from a kidney transplant. Rain delays and material shortages also added to roofing repair delays.) When the roof repair is complete, Dave Hawkins will replace the stained ceiling tiles with new tiles.
- Noted an error in the Member Roster. Beverly Mace will ask Phyllis George to print corrections in the BBG.
- Carolyn Thompson requested that Norm search for an assistant to help her with the show committee.

New Business

- The February 24 General Meeting topic will be "Gold," and the speaker will be provided by the Houston Museum of Natural Science (HMNS) to coincide with their new Gold exhibit. The HMNS offered a special tour at a special rate. Scott Singleton is liaison and will confirm the requested date (Tuesday, March 1). He will communicate date, time, costs, and so forth to the general club membership. This will also change the March Board Meeting from Tuesday, March 1 to Monday, March 7, thus accommodating the special tour.

- Neal Immega wants to be the Shop Maintenance and Repair Person instead of Shop Supervisor. Tom Wright has agreed to become the new Shop Supervisor.
- Norm's club initiatives for 2005 include a review of the HGMS By-Laws and a cleanup of the clubhouse, especially the center garage area. In keeping with this new initiative, Norm has created a committee to review the By-Laws. The committee includes Scott Singleton and John Moffitt. Norm will put a notice in the BBG soliciting input. Dave Hawkins and Tom Wright volunteered to clean up the clubhouse.
- Scott Singleton inquired about updating our Web site. Paula Rutledge agreed to contact J. Slamen about making a backup of the Web site code in case it is lost through an accident. Stuart Murphy has offered to help with the Web site.

The standing committees are as follows:

Clubhouse Committee	Dave Hawkins
Field Trip Committee	Neal Immega
History Committee	Art Smith
Library Committee	Art Smith
Membership Committee	Beverly Mace
Newsletter Committee	Phyllis George
Nominating Committee	?
Program Committee	Scott Singleton
Refreshments Committee	?
Show Committee	Carol Thompson

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In Our Library

by Art Smith, Librarian

2004 Library Financial Report

Income:

- \$163.79: Money carried over from 2003
- \$1782.55: Money from soda sales at clubhouse, book sales, club show sales
- \$1946.34: Total income for 2004

Expenses:

- \$250.00: Money spent for microscope setup and available in the library
- \$544.42: A.V. Emmott Book Binding
- \$584.15: Books and videos purchased for the library
- \$1378.56: Total money spent in 2004

Current Total:

\$567.79: Money in treasury 1/1/2004

The library treasury is healthy, but we have some books that have been in binding since June. They are not done yet or paid for. Also we have some older journals and books badly in need of rebinding. So at \$35 a volume, this money will go fast. My next trip to the binders will have a double batch of books. I feel having journals bound is important for their protection, plus they tend not to go missing. Our only significant thievery in the library that I am aware of is a couple of unbound books and some early issues of the *U.K. Journal of Mines and Minerals*. I feel that if these had all been bound, we would still have them.

The library purchased two copies of the Rhodochrosite video. I could not get a VHS copy, so I got DVD. I would like to switch most of our new videos over to DVD because they take less room and are obviously the thing of the future. These videos and some other new videos should be on the shelves by the time you read this.

Sales of Paleontology Section Books

by Neal "Book (Sh)elf" Immega

We are not going to get rich, but it is nice to have sold some books in 2004." nti

Well, you cannot say that Houston Gem and Mineral Society publishes only books of local interest. Even though most of them say "Texas" on the title page, this year we sold books to the Japanese National Museum, British Museum, and a private collector in Zagreb, Slovakia. Amazingly, all these checks cleared the bank, though Wells Fargo did not really want to accept the one from Zagreb. The Post Office gave me the most grief because I was using FedEx boxes that Mary Ann Mitscherling purchased cheaply at an auction—the United States Post Office has some special relationship with FedEx. The local clerk started off quoting obscure regulations and promising that nothing would ever arrive anywhere but, after 50+ packages and lots of spray paint to cover the FedEx logos, they have gotten used to it.

Any business major could tell us that our book business is not the way to get rich. We sell books for roughly twice what it costs us to print them. In the case of "Echinoids," the edition took 17 years to sell out. We are now offering the Echinoid book on CD with the pictures scanned in and the text as real searchable text. You would think that Paleo Section members could use the lavish profits to fly to some exotic locality to collect incomprehensible fossils, but that is not the case. Book sales go back into a fund to be used to print our next publication. "Bivalves" was the most recent book we had printed, and it cost us \$13,500 for 1,000 copies. I suspect that our Treasurer was in acute pain when he had to write that check. Our latest publication, "Petrified Wood," is on CD. It costs us less than \$1 to print and ship a copy, and I make the CDs when we get orders. The best part is that Scott Singleton and I are able to keep revising the content because we print on demand. We are adding more Texas wood to the publication. It would be hard never to add to the publication when we keep finding new

things.

This is what we shipped in 2004—it's almost a song. ☺

**15 Echinoids,
17 Brachiopods,
5 Tex-as maps!
28 Ammonites, 22 Gastropods, 25 Bivalves,
And 35 Wood CDs.**

These have a value of \$2,215. Merry New Year to our next authors!

Calling All Paleo Library Books!

by Paula Rutledge, Paleo Librarian

It's that time of year again! We are looking for lost and wayward Paleo Library books. If you have any overdue Paleo books, please let them return to the Paleo Library. (No, we don't have any fines. But if you get caught with overdue books, the librarian gets upset.)

Tips & Hints

Please note that none of the tips and hints have been tried by this editor, so I can not attest to the accuracy of the hints. All came from Breccia 1/05 except for the last.

Rock too big? Saturate a 1/2 rope with gasoline and tie it around the stone where you want the split to occur. Ignite the rope and wait until the brief hot flame dies away. Strike the stone several times with a sledge hammer, following the charred mark of the burned rope. The stone will fall cleanly apart where the rope has been bound. *Via Mendo Coast Gems 1/04, Gem-N-I Newsletter 10/03*

To remove cutting oil from slabs: First place them in kitty litter to absorb the oil, then put them in warm water with dishwashing detergent. *Via RockRollers 1/04, via Rockhound Rumblings 1/01*

Reclaiming Cutting Oil: To reclaim cutting oil, use 1/2 gallon milk cartons. Pour in the old oil and add a small amount of water. Let the sludge settle for a few days. Then put cartons in the freezer. The water will freeze and the oil will rise to the top and can be poured off. *Via Rock Chips 1/04*

Cutting Soft Stone: When working with a soft stone such as onyx or marble, soak it in water for a couple of days before cutting. This keeps oil from soaking in to discolor the stone and results in a higher polish. *Via Rock Chips, 11/88; via Stoney Statements 1/03, via the Pineywood Rooter 12/03.*

Cutting slabs: Cut thin chunks of rough on the bias (diagonally) to yield larger slabs.

When reaming a bead to enlarge the hole, place the bead in the small hole of a wood spring clothespin. The wood does not mark the bead and holds it securely, permitting you to frequently dip the bead in a basin of room-temperature water to lubri-

cate and prevent overheating. This method keeps one's hand dry for handling the power tool. We use old dental diamond burrs for drills. *Author Chet & Margery Carlton, MMLSD, from T-Town Rockhound 1/03 via Quarry Quips, 12/04 and The RockCollector 1/05*

World's Oldest Droppings

Author Unknown

from M.G.A.G.S. Newsletter Spring 04, via The Rockpile Midwest M&L Society Dearborn Michigan, November 2004
via Quarry Quips, 12/04, via The RockCollector 1/05

The world's oldest droppings have been found in Wales. The coprolites, fossil feces, date back as much as 412 million years to a time when ecosystems on land were just getting established. The coprolites contain traces of undigested land plants, but it's not clear whether the animals ate plants directly or the remains of plants in the form of dirt. (The only known animals from the time were carnivores.) As no one has yet found fossils of herbivorous animals that could have produced the droppings, the finding suggests that the first land animals ate dirt and then each other.



Web Site Committee Seeks Input and Worker Bees

by Paula Ruteldge, Web Committee Chair

The newly formed HGMS Web Site Committee is holding an open meeting Thursday, January 27 at 7 p.m. at the clubhouse.

This is your opportunity to have input on the function, purpose, format, and design of our Web site. We are also seeking volunteers and will be discussing what experience, training, and so forth are necessary.

For further information, please contact Paula Rutledge at PaulaTx1@aol.com.

Mineral Names

by Bridgette Berman

via Beehive Buzzer 9/04, via Rock and Ice 5/03 and The RockCollector 1/05

Names of minerals normally end in *-ite* or *-lite* from the Greek word *Lithos*, which means stone. Other name endings originate from old German mining terms such as *-spat* and *-blende*, which identify minerals with good cleavage and lacking valuable metals.

In addition, minerals are named for specific properties: *Axinite*—Crystals shaped like an ax; *Astrophyllite*—From the Greek word *Astron*, which means brilliance, and *Pylon*, which means leaf; *Chromite*—for its chemical composition, chrome in this case; *Aragonite*—for its location, Aragon, Spain; *Phillipsite*—after an individual, the English mineralogist W. Phillips.

Today's naming of minerals follows the principles. A new mineral and its name must be approved by an international commission.

NASA To Send Celestial Hammer To Break Open Comet

by I. A. Harry

from Breccia 1/05

Posted on 2004-12-20/ Author : / News

Category : Space

Scientific curiosity is going to cause a minor collision in space. On January 12, 2005, NASA is scheduled to launch a spacecraft named Deep Impact. This spacecraft will fire an 800-pound impactor right into the path of the 4-mile wide comet Tempel 1. The collision is scheduled to take place on July 4, 2005.

The mission is stated to cost approximately \$330 million. Scientists at NASA are very eager to know what happens after the impact. According to a senior official associated with the project, the impact, they hope, will put an end to all the speculation about the interiors of comets: how comets are formed and their mineral composition.

The scientific community has long been interested in knowing what lies beneath the surface of any comet. They say it will help prove or disprove theories about how our planet was formed. Some scientists believe that comets are leftovers that remain after the solar system was formed. There are some who say that comets are made up of agglomerating dirty chunks of water ice.

At the time of the collision, the comet Tempel 1 will be close enough for astronomers to monitor what happens. The debris that will be kicked up will reveal, for the very first time, just what a comet is made of. A member of the mission management team at Jet Propulsion Laboratory says that this collision is the astronomical equivalent of "tapping something with a hammer to find out what lies beneath its surface," a practice common among geologists. He said "The difference is we're going to tap it with an 800-pound hammer." He said that this collision will provide a better understanding of comets than the previous opportunity they had when NASA's craft Stardust photographed the Comet Wild 2 at very close range. Those photographs only whetted the scientific curiosity of wanting to know what lies underneath a comet's surface.

The mission management team is not sure what they hope or expect to find. Within the team there is already much speculation and even friendly betting. Most are in favor of finding chunks of water ice. One team member said that if that is the case, then they expect a large crater caused by the impact, roughly the size of a football stadium. Another team member speculated that the comet is more porous and fragile than is believed. The collision between the projectile and the comet, at a speed of 22,000 mph, will take place 83 million miles away from Earth.

ShowTime 2005

January 22-23	Tyler, TX	East Texas Gem & Mineral Society Rose Garden Center
february 5-6	Panama City, FL	Panama City Gem & Mineral Society American legion Fairgrounds 15th & Sherman Ave. Al Zar, 850-763-0109, aquezpi3@aol.com
February 19-20	Georgetown, TX	Williamson County Gem & Mineral Society Community Center, San Gabriel Park Business Hwy. #81 N. 19th Donald Buell, 512-793-2740
February 19-20	Plainview, TX	Hi Plains Gem & Mineral Society Ollie Liner Center, 79072 Jim Matlock, 806-293-3476
February 26-27	Pasadena, TX	Clear Lake Gem & Mineral Society Pasadena Convention Center 7902 Fairmont Parkway, 281-481-1591 www.ghg.net/gpenning/annual.htm
March 12-13	Corpus Christi, TX	Gulf Coast Gem & Mineral Society Bayfront Plaza Convention Center 1902 Shoreline Drive Jerrold Simpson 361-851-8788
April 1-3	San Antonio, TX	Southwest Gem & Mineral Society Morris Activity Center, Freeman Coliseum SBC Center parkway, Gate E Bobby Schultz, 210-337-8908
April 30-May 1	Lubbock, TX	Lubbock Gem & Mineral Society Lubbock Memorial Civic Center 1501 6th St. and Ave. Q
May 14-15	Waco, TX	Waco Gem & Mineral Club Fine Arts Bldg., Heart of Texas Fair Complex 4601 Bosque Blvd.
May 28-29	Fort Worth, TX	Fort Worth Gem & Mineral Society Will Rodgers Memorial Center Round-Up Inn

2005		FEBRUARY				2005
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
		1 7:30 Board Meeting	2 7:30 Mineral Section	3	4	5 10-12 Youth Section 11-3 Shop Open
6	7	8 7:30 Show Comm.	9 7:30 Faceting Section	10	11	12 11-3 Shop Open
13	14 1:00 Day Light Section	15 7:30 Paleo Section	16 7:30 Mineral Section	17	18	19 10-12 Youth Section 11-3 Shop Open
20	21 7:30 Lapidary Section	22 7:30 General Meeting	23	24	25	26 11-3 Shop Open
27	28					

2005		MARCH				2005
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
		1 Possible HMNS tour	2 7:30 Mineral Section	3	4	5 10-12 Youth Section 11-3 Shop Open
6	7 7:30 Board Meeting	8 7:30 Show Comm.	9 7:30 Faceting Section	10	11	12 11-3 Shop Open
13	14 1:00 Day Light Section	15 7:30 Paleo Section	16 7:30 Mineral Section	17	18	19 10-12 Youth Section 11-3 Shop Open
20 Palm Sunday	21 7:30 Lapidary Section	22 7:30 General Meeting	23	24	25 Good Friday	26 11-3 Shop Open
27 Easter	28	29	30	31		

The BACKBENDER'S GAZETTE

***The Newsletter of the Houston
Gem & Mineral Society***

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