



# *The* **BACKBENDER'S GAZETTE**

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

Volume XXXVI - No. 7

July 2005

## **President's Message**

*June, 2005*

*by Norman Lenz*

*HGMS President, 2004-2005*



**F**ellow HGMS Members,

By the time you read this, I will have finished half of my second term as HGMS President. The next big challenge will be our annual show. Under the guidance of Carol Thompson, the show is shaping up nicely. With the spring fieldtrips, auctions, and tailgate swap behind us, there should not be many distractions competing with the show planning. Volunteers are always welcome and needed for the show. So, get involved this year. The more people who become involved, the better things seem to go. It is one activity where people from all Sections can get involved together, teach and entertain the public, make new friends, and learn something new.



Phyllis does a fantastic job editing and publishing this bulletin. However, the bulletin

*Continued on page 4*

## **General Meeting Presentations for June and July**

*by Scott Singleton*

*1<sup>st</sup> Vice President*

**D**inosaur-modeler John Fishner (Dreamstar Productions) will give us a presentation entitled "Sea-Changes in the Modern Paleontology Museum." His talk will be centered on the remodeling done at the Denver Museum of Natural History and the Chicago Field Museum. These museums have modernized their paleontology exhibits, for instance by using more computerization. But have these renovations resulted in a better and more stimulating exhibit hall? For the answer to this and other thought-provoking questions, come to the June General Meeting. John will illustrate his claims with before and



*Continued on page 4*

Contents

President’s Message ..... 1

General Meeting Presentations for June and July ..... 1

HGMS Officers and Section Chairs ..... 3

Purpose of HGMS ..... 3

HGMS—Dominican Sisters’ Sale and Auction ..... 4

Arkansas Collecting—1970 ..... 8

Lapidary Section Presentation ..... 12

Place Your Metal Order Now! ..... 12

Day Light Section ..... 12

Day Light Section Summer Plans ..... 13

Paleontology Section Report ..... 13

Llano Fieldtrip—By Myself ..... 16

SCFMS Safety Report ..... 19

Jewelers Saw Blades ..... 20

Web Notes ..... 21

E-mail notification ..... 22

In Our Library ..... 22

April General Meeting ..... 22

May General Meeting ..... 25

May HGMS Board Meeting ..... 26

Bananas—The Fantastic Fruit ..... 29

Tips & Hints ..... 30

SCFMS President’s Message ..... 31

AFMS President’s Message ..... 31

SCFMS Scholarship Challenge ..... 32

AFMS Club Rockhound of the Year ..... 33

Thoughts from the Editor ..... 33

ShowTime 2005 ..... 34

Calendars ..... 35

*Permission to use material originating in this newsletter is given freely, providing credit is given to the author and the source. Articles without a byline are considered to have been written by the editor.*

E-mail the Editor at  
pgeorge4@houston.rr.com

*Editor: Phyllis B. George  
22407 Park Point Drive  
Katy, TX 77450-5852  
Phone: (281) 395-3087*

*Copy is due for the August issue by Friday, July 8, 2005. (When the 8th falls on Saturday, I create the BBG that same weekend. When the 8th fall on Sunday, I create the BBG the following 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 months, ¼ page; \$150 for 6 months, 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*

can only be as good as the input from our members. Write about your summer collecting or field trip. Make it serious, humorous, or scientific, whichever appeals to you. Not only will our members benefit, but some of our sister societies may also find it useful. They are all looking for good new material for their readers. *Editor's note: I'm constantly amazed at how often items that appear in the BBG are reproduced in other newsletters around the country.*

The clubhouse is running smoothly. We are doing some cleaning and rearranging as well. Help us keep it looking presentable. Pick up your empty or partly used coffee, water, or soda can before someone tips it over. Make our clubhouse a place we can be proud to visit. If you have ever heard Dave Hawkins giving a visitor a tour of the clubhouse, you would hear by his enthusiastic descriptions showing how proud he is of our facilities. You should be too.

Please remember to thank the volunteers who help with maintenance, activities in the shop, classes, auctions, publications, etc. Our success depends on them. They deserve your praise. It is the only pay they receive.

Have a safe, successful summer of collecting! Don't forget to drink plenty of water on these hot Texas summer days.

If you have a question, ask it! If you have a suggestion, make it! If you have a talent, share it!

---

*June & July General Meeting Program continued from page 1*

after comparisons of each of these halls and possibly others.

In July we will have Leslie Wood from the Bureau of Economic Geology in Austin give a presentation on "The Landscape of Mars and Possible Evidence of Liquid Water." Leslie is a geomorphologist and became interested in features on the surface of Mars resembling deltas. She will show photos from the large collection sent back by the Global Surveyor, Rover Pathfinder, Rover Opportunity, Rover Spirit, and Europe's Mars Express. One of Leslie's students has a grant to study mud volcanoes on Mars and she will show preliminary results of that investigation. This is sure to be another presentation not to be missed!

### **HGMS—Dominican Sisters' Sale and Auction**

*by Art Smith*

**T**his sale, held the first Saturday in June, was very successful and members were able to buy a lot of gemstone rough, slabs, and other lapidary material at very reasonable prices, but then I may be biased.

The gross sales were \$6916.15 plus \$336 that was purchased at half price by the Society (class materials, school collection materials, small display cases). The Dominican Sisters will receive an initial check for \$3794.07, and the HGMS will receive checks for \$3458.07. The remaining material is in the library. It will be sold later in auctions and special sales with the same split of the money.

Without my wife's support, I would not have been able to do it. Beverly was there whenever work needed to be done, and Stan was also right there when needed. Others who helped move material to the clubhouse were Tom, Charlie, Neal, Matt, John, and Sunday. Those also helping, particularly on the day of the sale, were Fred and Wayne plus all who came to the sale to look and even to buy. I thank you all for the success of this project. If you do not know these people by their first names, come out and learn their last names. See if you can recognize them in the following photos taken by **Steve Blyskal**. Come out and help next time—you will make some good friends and have a good time doing it.



Photos  
taken  
by  
Steve  
Blyskal







## Arkansas Collecting—1970

by Art Smith

artsmithite @msn.com

*Member of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society*

In 1969 my family and I took a week of vacation and mineral collecting in the Arkansas Ouachita Mountains during October (Smith 1970). The trip was so successful that we repeated it in October 1970. Although it was also put into an article for *Rocks & Minerals*, it was never published. Recently while doing some research on Magnet Cove, a copy of the manuscript was found and with editing and updates is reproduced here.

The trip to Hot Springs from Houston, 450 miles, took a good ten hours. Now it takes about seven hours. There was no Interstate highway in Arkansas, and in places U.S. 59 in Texas through East Texas was a two lane road with no shoulders. It was a grueling trip, so we took my wife's '63 Buick instead of my '64 International Scout which was geared to climb a wall but was slow on the road. We stayed at a resort south of Hot Springs on Lake Hamilton. It was off season, so we got a place with kitchen, two bedrooms, and sitting room with B&W TV for a grand total of \$11.00 a night. It was clean and basic with a 1950 country atmosphere.

The next day we headed through Hot Springs and north on State Route 7 with a quick stop at Coleman's mineral shop before turning west at Blue Springs. I was not impressed with the quartz selection or prices. As the previous year, I was looking for a super-small cabinet group. Actually I never did find one in all my trips until the crystal craze hit in the 1980s, and there was a great increase in mining and specimens. Even in 1970, most of the top quality specimens were being sent to Europe, particularly Switzerland I was told. I did buy a couple of golden calcite crystals that were supposed to be from Kentucky, but later I learned they were probably from Indiana. In those days it was common for collectors to take along some extra flats for trading with roadside dealers, particularly in Arkansas. So at times the quartz dealers sold some nice or even unusual minerals from other collectors in other parts of the country.

We headed west for Dug Hill until we came to the Avant (Buckville) crossroads and then turned south. After a couple of miles and at the crest of a hill, we found a small borrow pit on the east side of the road. We turned around and drove back to the base of the hill where a dim trail led east. Parking as far off the road as possible, we took the trail for several hundred feet and then turned south up the hill, with me pulling my three-and-a-half year old son who was using both hands to hold onto the head of my geology pick. There were many small diggings about  $\frac{3}{4}$ <sup>th</sup> of the way up and along the north crest of the hill which now appeared more like a ridge. The most recent digging activity was in the largest cut. The wavellite and variscite occur in fractures and rarely in cavities of a gray sandy-appearing phase of the Big Fork Chert. The green to yellowish wavellite generally forms flat concentric and radiating patterns up to 5 cm across in thin seams. In the cavities, the spheres and hemispheres are up to 3 cm in diameter, and their outer surface is composed of wavellite crystal terminations. Variscite occurs as brighter and darker green coatings with drusy crystals coating some rock,



rarely directly associated with the wavellite. Before the late 1970s, practically all the wavellite produced in Arkansas came from this location in Garland County, even though much was labeled Montgomery County, Pencil Bluff, Hot Springs, and Magnet Cove. The Dug Hill area is controlled by the U.S. Corps of Engineers because it is in the Lake Ouachita watershed. They tolerated digging with hand tools, and as far as I know still do. However a few years after our visit, some local dealers moved some power equipment in and started digging wavellite. They were caught, and I heard that their equipment was confiscated and that they were fined.

One corner of the largest cut had some recent digging, and I noticed it was on an irregular 7 cm thick milky quartz vein. The unusual thing was that in the quartz vein the wavellite occurred on variscite in small green hemispheres usually less than one centimeter across. To make digging even harder, the beds of the Big Fork Chert are vertical. I followed the vein down and back into the cut as best as I could and got a few nice specimens up to 5 by 8 cm. before I realized that further digging would be futile. A few years later, in 1979, while talking to mineral dealer Clyde Garmon in Pencil Bluff where he sold minerals from a shop in his house, I learned that he was the one who originally worked the quartz vein, and he still had two flats of the material under his bed though it had been somewhat high graded. We made a swap including them, and I upgraded my own collection and had some nice trading material.

As at Mauldin Mountain in Montgomery County, there are some 1 to 2 cm spheres that are called amorphous phosphates after wavellite. I am not sure they are true pseudomorphs, but an XRD does show them to be an amorphous phosphate. However, further south on a spur of Dug Hill at the DeLinde prospect, milky white crandallite does pseudomorph wavellite in one small area.

In the early afternoon, we continued further west and stopped at Ocus Stanley's before heading back to Hot Springs, then we added a quick stop at the MacGregor Watkins shop that was located west of town on Route 70. There I purchased for \$5 apiece some recently obtained specimens from the Colorado School of Mines. Among the specimens were a Franklin, New Jersey rhodonite; an uncut Fairfield Utah phosphate nodule labeled "odontolite" (dinosaur bone) with a date of 1894, and large titanite crystal from Renfrew, Ontario, Canada.

For the rest of our stay, I concentrated my collecting at Magnet Cove in the area around the Cove Creek bridge and the highway that was then U.S. 270 and is now State Route 51. Here work had been in progress for widening the bridge, and some blasting and digging in the creek bed had uncovered some long-hidden rocks. So I grabbed my sledge and went to work on some of the larger boulders. I did not collect as much carbonatite as previously, so I did not get a large number of magnetite and perovskite crystals. I did get one nice 2 cm magnetite octahedron and some 1 cm skeletal octahedral pyrite crystals in carbonatite.

One small piece of carbonatite I acidized later at home, and I got some small groups of pseudo-hexagonal green biotite with what twenty-five years later turned out to be hercynite octahedrons. Instead this year there was quite a bit of vesuvianite rock in shades of green, yellow, and reddish brown. Crude crystal faces were observed, but

no good crystals were collected. One small white mass composed of elongate natrolite crystals was collected and some natrolite in wollastonite. Several small red to pink masses of eudialyte were also liberated from the syenite, but none showed good crystal form. The only coarse syenite pegmatite minerals collected were some 5 by 6 centimeter greenish and white cleavages of microcline and some green to black partial elongate crystals of aegirine. Coatings of acicular aegirine in green felted masses were collected with the microcline. This type of material was thought to be epidote by some collectors, but epidote still has not been reported with in Magnet Cove. It has been identified in altered rocks in the Jones Mill quarry off the south flank.

However my rarest and best find can only be talked about. In a small chunk of rock broken from a large boulder, were about 5 or 6 plates up to one centimeter across slightly protruding from a fine-grained matrix. They were an extremely bright yellow-brown, and without careful examination I put in out of harm's way on a boulder in the creek. Then I went to work on the rest of the boulder which evidently contained nothing of interest—at least nothing that I remember. On arriving home in Houston and after unwrapping my specimens and not finding it, I realize I had left it on the boulder in the creek. I schemed ways to retrieve it but soon faced reality—the distance was too great, and vacation time was not available to take a quick trip. So I can only guess what mineral I left. I think it was probably the astrophyllite described by Williams (1891), but they also could possibly be titanites. I had never seen either astrophyllite or titanite before from the Cove Creek bridge, but both have been reported. A couple of years ago while breaking open some medium-grained syenite from the location that I purchase, I found a small yellow, not very bright, microscopic plate. EDS analysis showed it to possibly be lamprophyllite, but I doubt that was the mineral left in the creek.

During this trip I made a stop to visit Joe Kimzey who lived along the highway east of the bridge on the north side of the road. I found him at home and well enough to entertain visitors. We had a nice visit, and I purchased some small black andradite garnets, some small brookite crystals, and some black quartz. However, the larger pegmatite specimens he had sitting on the lawn were beyond my means at \$25 each. Now they would be worth many times that while the specimens I did purchase have been all bettered and so removed from my collection.

## References:

Smith, A. E., Jr. 1970 Arkansas Revisited – 1969. *Rocks & Minerals* 45:748-751.

Williams, J. F. 1891 *Igneous Rocks of Arkansas*. Annual Report of the Geological Survey of Arkansas for 1890, Volume 2.



# Coming Attractions: Lapidary Programs

June 20 ..... Practice **Riveting** and other cold attachments

Photographs below taken by Matthew Phillips at the May meeting.

## Making doublets



## Lapidary Section Presentation

*Making Doublets*

05/16/05

*by Matthew Phillips*



**R**on Talhelm presented the very interesting program. As I understand it, the actual process involves picking two materials, making the mating surfaces very flat using a 400 grit lap, and applying Epoxy 330 to both surfaces. A light flame can be used to remove bubbles. To avoid captured bubbles, press the surfaces together from one side first. Allow the epoxy to cure 24 hours before cutting and polishing the product. Various combinations of materials were suggested:

- Use dark jade to back thin slices of opal.
- A black background under rutile quartz is very striking.
- Clear quartz can be used as a cap over colorful material that will not hold a good polish

This a great way to improve the display of your stone and to give strength to beautiful yet fragile material that normally cannot withstand use as jewelry. *See photos on previous page.*

## Place Your Metal Order Now!

*by Mary Ann Mitscherling*

**I** will be putting in an order for sterling silver, fine silver, and for gold-filled wire, sheet, etc., on June 30, 2005. Anyone who wants to get the large quantity discount can add to this order at either the Lapidary Section meeting on June 20 or at the General Meeting on June 28. I need a \$20 deposit, a written description of the order, and written contact information in case of questions. Last year we had one order for over 100 ounces of silver and over 50 ounces of gold-filled. For questions, e-mail me at [maryann@hal-pc.org](mailto:maryann@hal-pc.org).



## Day Light Section

*by Frances Arrighi*



**T**en members attended the 9 May, 2005, meeting of the Day Light Section. The program was doing silver fusion. This technique involves the fusion of metal to metal without the use of solder and by using a flame only. Very interesting pieces of jewelry can be made using this technique. It is also a very useful way of recycling scrap metal. I do not think copper will work, but silver and gold should both give interesting results.

Val Link will be in charge of the 13 June, 2005, meeting. We are going to make an ingot of silver and copper using the proportions of each that are recommended for reticulation. After cooling, the silver/copper pellet will be rolled into a sheet using the rolling mill. After obtaining a sheet of metal of suitable gauge, the sheet will be heated with a torch to produce the reticulation. It will then be up to the individual member to determine the use of the reticulated piece.

## Day Light Section Summer Plans

by Tom Wright

**T**he Daylight Section meets the second Monday of each month at 1:00 p.m. For the summer months, it will be a hands-on learning experience.

In June, July, and August, the Day Light Section will be taught by Val Link from the University of Houston. We will be working on the reticulation of a silver and copper alloy. If time permits, we will also work on other metal treatment methods.

The use of the term “reticulation” in reference to metalwork is recent. The earliest use of reticulated surfaces created on sheet metal occurred during late Victorian times in Czarist Russia and in Scandinavia. The Russian term for this process is “samorodok” which literally means “born by itself.” The technique was used by Fabergé and other Russian goldsmiths of that era. From Russia it spread to Finland where it is called “hehkutus” (literally “glowing,”) or “rypytetty” meaning “wrinkled.” In Swedish it is called “krympad,” also meaning “wrinkled.” Objects such as cigarette boxes, card cases, eyeglass cases and liquor flasks were made of reticulated sheet metal, and it is still used for these items in Scandinavia.

From *Jewelry Concepts and Technology* by Oppi Untracht.



### Paleontology Section Report

by Rick Rexroad, Chairperson

May 17, 2005 Meeting



**P**aul Combs, a “second career” graduate student at Texas A&M – Corpus Christi, presented a discussion concerning Ice Ages and the Pleistocene fauna of coastal southeast Texas at the Paleontology Section’s May 17, 2005 meeting.

The first half of Paul’s lecture addressed Ice Ages: What are their characteristics, and why do they occur?

Although many of us automatically think of thick sheets of ice covering the entire earth during an Ice Age, Ice Ages create little to no climatic change at equatorial and tropical latitudes and only moderate cooling in temperate latitudes. Only the polar areas of the earth become substantially colder. Polar cooling causes glaciers to accumulate and spread. The surface of the glaciers reflects long-wave ultraviolet light from the sun back into the sky, preventing the land surface from heating and thus reinforcing the cooling trend. The sea level drops as more water is contained in glaciers. During the Pleistocene Ice Age, the sea level was as much as 320 feet below the current sea level. The ocean acts as a temperature buffer for the land, and having less ocean present facilitates the cooling of the land during Ice Age conditions.

What causes or influences Ice Ages? Solar cycles? Continental drift? Greenhouse gases? Ice Ages are influenced by variations in the amount of solar power reaching the earth. Climatologists use the term insolation (incident solar radiation) to describe the manner by which the sun’s rays strike the earth. At the equator, the sun’s rays strike the



earth's surface at a 90-degree angle, contributing to "100%" solar power. When the sun's rays strike the earth's surface at a 45-degree angle in temperate latitudes, solar power is 70% of that at the equator. In polar regions, the sun's rays strike the earth at a 30-degree angle, transmitting only 50% of the solar power present at the equator. Three astronomic factors influence the amount of incident solar radiation that reaches the earth:

- Eccentricity, which is the position of the earth relative to the sun during the earth's oval (not circular) orbit around the sun;
- Obliquity, which is the angle of the earth's axis from vertical at a given time of the year (varying from 22.5 degrees to 24.5 degrees; and
- Precession, or gyroscopic wobble (occurring on a 21,000-year cycle).

The effects of eccentricity, obliquity, and precession combine to affect the earth's temperatures in what are termed Milankovic Cycles. Global cooling, as measured historically through  $O_{16}/O_{18}$  ratios, coincides with times when the individual effects of eccentricity, obliquity, and precession in decreasing insolation occur simultaneously and harmoniously to limit overall incident solar radiation to the earth's surface.

The second half of Paul's lecture focused on his thesis area, the Wilson Gravel Pit near Robbstown, Texas, which provides a window into the Texas Gulf Coast of 13,500 years ago. In addition to the Pleistocene fauna present at this locality, the Nueces River watershed drained outcrop areas consisting of igneous material and sedimentary units ranging in age from Cretaceous through Pliocene. All of these various types and ages of materials are present in the deposits at the Wilson Gravel Pit. Based on the abundance of fauna present, Nueces County, Texas (Wilson Sand Pit location), along with the Hagerman and Ashfall beds in Nebraska and the LaBrea tar pits in southern California, is one of the three most important Pleistocene fossil localities in the United States. Unfortunately, access to the locality is highly restricted, so an overview of the Pleistocene (and some older flora and fauna) is provided below.

The savannah-like grasslands that were prevalent during the Pleistocene in southeast Texas supported a wide variety of grazing animals including mammoths, mastodons, and gomphotheres. Mammoths were grass grazers and were equipped with three sets of teeth over their lifetime. Many mammoths starved to death in old age as their final set of teeth was worn down due to the abrasive effects of grass and associated soil materials. The Pleistocene climate was mild in this portion of southeast Texas, and the Columbia Mammoths that lived in the area were not "woolly" like their cold-climate relatives, instead having hair similar to that of modern elephants.

Other contemporaneous grazing animals included two species of llama (*Hemiauchenia macrocephala* [large-headed], which was up to seven feet tall, and a smaller, deer-sized llama) and two species of camel (*Camelops hesternus*, which was as large as modern-day camels, and a smaller, undefined species referred to as *Camelops* sp.). A very bizarre member of the camel family that has also been identified at this location is the Miocene-aged *Synthetoceras tricornatus*, which had a forked unicorn-like third horn that extended from the distal portion of its head. As opposed to modern two-toed camels, this animal had four-hooved front feet and rear feet in which two toes were

starting to retreat (similar to dew claws). Deer-like animals that were present included antilocaprids such as *Capromeryx minor* (a 10-kg dwarf pronghorn), *Tetrameryx shuleri*, and *Stockocerus*.

Three species of bison are preserved in the fossil record at this locality: *Bison antiquus*, *Bison latifrons* (long-horned bison), and *Bison bison*, which were hunted by paleo-Indians. *Platygonus compressus* was an animal similar to the modern Giant Peccary, a group of pig-like animals (similar to javelinas) that diverged on a separate evolutionary path from pigs.

The most common types of fossils present at the Wilson Gravel Pit locality are horses. Four species of 3-toed Miocene horses dating back to four million years ago are common, along with three one-toed species of Pleistocene horses from 13,500 years ago. A fourth one-toed species, *Equus gigantus* (similar to modern Clydesdales) has also been reported.

*Holmesia* sp. was a giant armadillo that weighed up to 300 pounds and attained a length of 6 feet. Glyptodonts, as represented by *Glyptotherium floridanum*, had armadillo-like scutes, but were not related to armadillos.

Animals present in southeast Texas during the Pleistocene that are more commonly associated with modern-day South America include *Tapirus veroensis* (a water-loving forest dweller that is ancestral to modern tapirs of South America, Africa, and southeast Asia) and three species of giant ground sloth:

- *Megalonyx* (meaning giant claw) *jeffersoni* (named by Thomas Jefferson), which weighed up to two tons and was also hunted by paleo-Indians;
- *Enometherium laurillardi*, which was up to 19 feet long; and
- *Paramylodon harlani*, which was seven feet long and the size of a cow.

All was not pastoral grazing at this time, however. Saber-tooth cats (*Smilodon fatalis*), American lions (*Panthera leocrotis*, which were 25% larger than modern African lions) and precursors of modern cat-family predators such as mountain lion and puma stalked the herbivores. Dire wolves (*Canis dirus*), coyotes (*Canis latrans*), and gray wolves (*Canis lupus*) lurked. Two species of bear also roamed: *Arctodus simus* (which, at 12 feet long, was the largest species of bear that has ever lived) and *Tremarctos floridanus*, which is closely related to the modern South American bear. A Pliocene carnivorous bird, *Phorusrhacos* (ragged wing), which had a claw on the edge of each of its wings and may have used its wings exclusively as a feeding tool rather than for flight, is also represented at this locality.

Paul concluded his lecture by giving away many individually labeled teeth (including horse, mammoth, and mastodon), tusk, and bone fossils, along with petrified wood specimens, including ever-popular palm wood. A superb time was had by all.

### Upcoming Paleontology Section Presentations

**June 21, 2005—Dinosaur Tracks:** HGMS member **Glen Kuban** will share with us his interest in dinosaur and pre-dinosaur tracks of Texas and other states in a presentation entitled “On the Heels of Dinosaurs: An Update on Dinosaur Track Finds and

Other Trace Fossils.” Glen is one of our most gifted speakers, and his lectures are always accompanied by his spectacular photos of often multiple sets of dinosaur tracks. Members and visitors are especially invited to bring kids to what promises to be a most entertaining and enlightening presentation.

**July 19, 2005—Preservation and Color of Petrified Wood:** Scott Singleton will give a presentation entitled “Preservation and the Color in Petrified Wood”. This presentation will first define the various terms involved in petrification, and then will illustrate the process by which wood becomes stone. What conditions are necessary for wood preservation? Is the wood replaced by minerals or encased by minerals? Does the process stop after it becomes a fossil?

The second part of the presentation deals with the color present in fossils, including petrified wood and bone. Why is color present? What do the different colors mean? Handouts will describe the color key for different minerals so that the audience can go home ready to identify different mineral constituents based on fossil colors.

Finally, the audience will be given an opportunity to practice their new-found knowledge of fossil color identification by random sampling of specimens from the Zuhl Collection at HMNS, courtesy of the Zuhl CD, published by the HGMS Paleontology Section.

### **Llano Fieldtrip—By Myself**

*by Sandra Stevens*

*Editor's note: Scott Wingo of the Pleasant Oaks Gem & Mineral club in Garland, TX extended a mass invitation to all SCFMS members to come along on a fieldtrip to the Oxford ranch and Donovan Ranch near Llano, TX over the Memorial Day weekend. Since our group already had plans for a major weekend fieldtrip at the same time, Neal Immega issued a call for someone to go on the Llano trip just to see what was there and to report back. Sandra Stevens answered the call, and this is her report.*

Dear Neal:

Well, I drove all the way to Llano by myself on Saturday, to that Long's Fishing & Digging place. I have about 9 or 10 pictures to attach but will have to resize them tomorrow night to send via e-mail. In the meantime, here's my report:

First of all it takes three hours to drive there from Columbus.

You go to the very Spartan “office” and pay the old man (about your age, hahahaha) your \$20, but I could have gotten by for only \$10 because I'm cute. I gave him \$20 anyway (in retrospect, I should have just slid by for \$10). I thought he might be an old drunk, but actually he had sobered up about 12 years ago. Nice enough guy. Vietnam vet.

Todd Pickens, the president of the Gold Prospector's Club, met me there and gave me a quick tour, told me where to look, and hung around for awhile. Although once I did hear some other guys, I never saw anybody else while I was there in that certain area (however there were people way on the other side of the ranch near the river camping

and fishing). I think the whole place is 2,000 acres, and you can go ANY-WHERE on it and dig all you want. The owner tells you not to even bother covering the holes back up. All he wants is money, and he could give a (expletive deleted) about whatever you want to do there.

The Llano river is on one side, and a smaller sand-bottomed creek runs into it. There are dirt roads. I saw a few Brangus cows, lots of rocks, one cottontail rabbit, and two lizards.

The land has a lot of cactus, mesquite, and small scrub oak. The ground is easy to dig in, that crumbly brown/orange dirt. But lots of rocks. Little flint chips are everywhere; people have been digging big holes looking for arrowheads for years and years. There are lots of big chunks of white quartz rock—big squareish chunks—and many of them have pink in



them. I thought it was really pretty, and I picked up a lot. There were pieces of pink and gray granite. There was a lot of what Todd called “drusy quartz,” whatever that is. Said you guys would be interested in that. A lot of “agatized” stuff, whatever that means. I even saw specks of gold (Neal responded



*that this probably was pyrite*), about the size of pepper (out of a pepper shaker in your kitchen). There were some huge pieces of rock (BIG stuff) that rise out of the ground—I mean like a few feet high and 10–12 ft. across. An old rotting deer blind was set up on top of one of them. Todd also showed me a rock about the size of a large orange that was dark olive green. He said it was called epidote and that he had found it there (but I don’t know how or where).

It was hotter than hell. I nearly got heat stroke; maybe I actually did. It was horrible. You would need a BIG ice chest full of ice and water, I tell you that much. There are no concessions, bathrooms, NOTHIN! After I got overheated, I didn’t care what I found or didn’t find.

Some old geezer with missing teeth came into the “office” at day’s end, and he had found a nice partial point that I would have been thrilled with. I got a lot of that crystal stuff and flint chunks and two little cactuses for my cactus garden.

Todd says he will put me on his e-mail list for future hunts to ranches (500 acres+) in the area that are ripe for rock hunting. He said I might accidentally find an artifact, but it is mostly for rock hunting. So there. I went. Just for YOU. Pictures tomorrow.

I also got brain damage from the heat. Regards, Sandra

*Editor's note: I'll bet that Sandra wishes she'd had the information contained in the following SCFMS Safety Report.*





## SCFMS Safety Report

by George Browne, SCFMS Safety Chair  
from SCFMS Newsletter 5-6/2005

### Dangerous Heat

**R**ockhounds often do their thing where it's hot. Activities that demand bodily exertion in a hot environment can lead to heat stress. This condition may be accelerated when the body is accustomed to an air-conditioned atmosphere and is suddenly placed in a hot location.

#### Types of Heat Stress

**Heat Stroke** occurs when the body can no longer regulate its temperature. Body heat can build up in 105° Fahrenheit or higher. Symptoms: sweating stops, dry skin may be red or spotted, there may be mental confusion or unconsciousness. Without immediate medical attention, death can occur.

For heat stroke, cool the victim. Move them to the shade or cool area. Wet the clothes with cool water and fan. Do this as quickly as possible.

**Heat Exhaustion** has symptoms similar to those of a heat stroke. It is caused by the loss of large amounts of fluids from sweating. The victim may experience nausea, headaches, delirium and fatigue. The skin will be flushed, clammy and moist.

Move the person to a cool area and have them drink plenty of liquids. Do not let them drink alcohol.

**Heat Cramps** are painful muscle spasms caused by the loss of salt. The person may drink lots of liquids, but they are depleting their salt. Have the person drink liquids that contain salt such as sport drinks.

Fainting usually occurs to individuals who are not accustomed to heat. Move them to a cool place and let them rest.

**Heat Rash** occurs in humid areas where sweat is not removed by evaporation. The sweat glands become clogged. It can be very uncomfortable. Regularly rinsing and drying the skin and resting in a cool place help prevent this condition.

To avoid **Heat Stress**, drink plenty of water or sports drinks. Drink at least 8 oz. every 20 minutes regardless of how thirsty you feel. You can sweat up to three gallons a day. Take breaks in the shade or cool area. Take it easy—you can't collect rocks when you are unconscious.



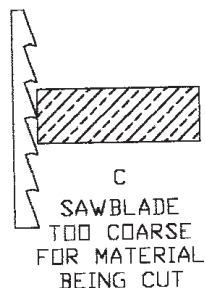
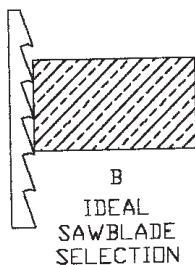
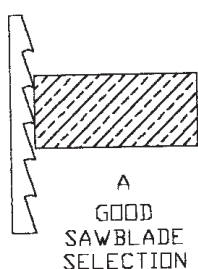
## Jewelers Saw Blades

by Tom Wright

Member of The Houston Gem & Mineral Society

Reprinted from *The Backbender's Gazette* 1/98

The jeweler's saw blade is probably one of the least understood tools used in making jewelry, and hopefully the following information will help solve the mystery that seems to haunt many. The most critical thing we need to consider is the ratio of the number of saw teeth to the thickness of the material to be cut. I have included a list of saw blade sizes and the minimum thickness of material for which each blade should be utilized. The accompanying sketches should also help clarify any misconceptions regarding the mystery of which saw blade should be used. Many times I have heard, "I always use a number 2 blade" or "I break more blades than anyone I know," and I presume that the person who uses only a number 2 saw blade must always cut metal that is 17 gauge or thicker, and that the person who breaks too many blades would reduce the number of broken saw blades by selecting the proper blade.



Selecting the proper saw blade is merely using a saw blade that is properly matched to the material being cut. The saw blade should have two (2) teeth engaged in the metal at all times during sawing as shown on sketch "A." I prefer to have a 2-1/2 tooth engagement as shown in sketch "B." Sketch "C" shows a typical problem where the saw blade is too coarse for the material being cut. The probability of breaking the blade is great, and if somehow the blade doesn't break, the accuracy of the cut will surely suffer.

Another problem I have noticed with saw blades is that many times someone will purchase "*cheap*" saw blades. People who buy them get less than they pay for as these saw blades are usually brittle and break quite easily. Also, I have tried some of the inexpensive saw blades that, even though they were new, were dull and wouldn't cut properly. I prefer to spend my time making jewelry and not continuously changing blades. I'm sure that in the long run I save money by purchasing the higher priced and higher quality saw blades. I know the frustration level certainly is less. The following list shows the coarsest saw blade which should be used with various thicknesses of material. If a compromise must be made because you don't have a certain size blade,

use the next finer saw blade. I am sure you will notice that you are not using as many saw blades for your projects.

It is a good idea to keep your saw blades identified by number. I keep mine in separate little envelopes with the saw blade number written on each envelope.

Blade Size	Teeth per Inch	Minimum	B&S or American	Minimum
		Thickness in Inches to be Sawed	Wire Gauge Minimum to be Sawed	Thickness in MM to be Sawed
8/0	89	0.022	23	0.57
7/0	86	0.023	22	0.59
6/0	81	0.025	22	0.63
5/0	76	0.026	21	0.67
4/0	71	0.028	21	0.71
3/0	66	0.030	20	0.77
2/0	61	0.033	19	0.83
1/0	56	0.036	19	0.91
1	51	0.039	18	1.00
2	46	0.043	17	1.10
3	41	0.049	16	1.24
4	38	0.053	15	1.34
5	33	0.061	14	1.54
6	30	0.067	13	1.69
7	28	0.071	13	1.81
8	25	0.080	12	2.03

### Web Notes

*by Scott Singleton  
1<sup>st</sup> Vice President*

**E**ver had that frustrating feeling when you were trying to decide if you wanted to go to a meeting and couldn't remember what the presentation was (and couldn't find your BBG)?

There is a new feature on the home page of the HGMS Web site ([www.hgms.org](http://www.hgms.org)). It is the first item on the banner at the top of the page. It is called "General Meeting." If you select that link, you will be taken to a page that has a description of the upcoming General Meeting presentation as well as descriptions of this year's past General Meeting presentations.

This is part of the philosophy behind our Web site—it is to be used as a resource for information about our Club including current information. For instance, want to know when the meeting dates are? When local shows are happening? What our current class schedule is? Go to the Web site. It's all there. Click on the appropriate month on the calendar on the home page and you'll have all the info you need.

## E-mail notification

*by Wayne Barnett*

I have recently been sending out the e-mail messages for the HGMS. In the list of members I noticed that a significant portion of the members do not have an e-mail address listed. If you want to receive e-mail notification of HGMS events, send your e-mail address to me at waynesb@sbcglobal.net and I will add it to the list. I know some of you do not want to have your e-mail published, so I will not just add it to the list without your explicit request. All e-mails that we send are by blind carbon copy.

## In Our Library

*by Art Smith, Librarian*

Once again the space in the library is some what cluttered by auction and sale material. Do not be afraid to move it if it is in the way of publications you need to see.

I hate doing this (storing auction and sale material in the library) but the library seems the most secure place for such material.

I will be away for much of the summer. The extra drinks for the frig are in the library. I will try to have them well stocked before I go and will add more and check it the end of July. If your favorite drink is missing, check the library storage area in the second room or purchase what you like and take the money from the coffee can.

I have put some of the old videos on DVD, and now all of the new videos will be on DVD. They are on the rack on the desk. They can be signed out by making a card with your name, phone number, address, and date signed out. Some of the old videos still need to be converted, so if you have some checked out, please turn them in. I am only converting the high-demand or impossible-to-replace videos for now. Unfortunately, many of the impossible-to-replace videos have been checked out for a long time and probably are lost to us. I am trying to prevent that with others. The DVDs take up less room and should be more durable, but they can be scratched and ruined.

## April General Meeting

*April 26, 2005*

*by Sunday Bennett, HGMS Secretary*

**Board members present:** Norm Lenz, President; Scott Singleton, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President; Beverly Mace, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President; Sunday Bennett, Secretary; David Hawkins, Lapidary Representative; Art Smith, Mineral Representative; and Tom Wright, Day Light Representative

**Volunteer to supply refreshments for May meeting:** Beverly Mace

**Guests:** Paul Chapman from Louisiana; first discovered the HGMS at our 2004 show. Ron and Colleen Gehenger; first timers from a New Mexico Gem and Mineral Club paid a visit.

**Announcements:** The equipment auction is officially over.

### Reports:

➤ **Day Light Section:** Tom Wright

June's Day Light Section meeting will be on "Working with Reticulation of Silver and Copper Alloy." This is a hands-on project. Val Link from the University of Houston will be our instructor for the June, July, and August meetings. An interesting fact: the use of the term *reticulation* in reference to metalwork is recent. The earliest use of reticulated surfaces created on sheet metal occurred during the late Victorian times in Czarist Russia and Scandinavia. Reticulation was used by Fabergé and other Russian goldsmiths of that era. The technique spread to Finland where it is called "hehkutus," which means "to glow," or "rypytetty" which stands for "wrinkled." If time permits, the Day Light Section will also work on other metal treatment methods.

➤ **Faceting Section:** Paula Rutledge

**May 11:** Orienting Gemstones, presented by Stan Perkins

**June 8:** Gemstone Inclusions, (it can be a flaw, it can be an enhancement!) presented by Norm Lenz.

**July 13:** Gemstone Sale! We will be selling faceting gemstone rough. This material has been donated to the Section over the last year. There is both synthetic and natural material. This is a great time to add to your stash, and a good way for beginners to get rough for faceting. Meeting chaired by Wayne Barnett.

**August 10:** Hot Dog Party! Open session on faceting machines. We will be serving hotdogs and will have the faceting machines set up and running. This is an excellent opportunity to come try your hand at faceting or to get help on those problems you may be having with a stone.

➤ **Mineral Section:** Art Smith

Don't miss our June 1<sup>st</sup> Swap Night Meeting. It will be our final meeting before the summer hiatus. All are invited. The setup will be from 7:00 to 7:30. Refreshments will be served.

➤ **Paleo Section:** John Moffitt

May 19 the speaker will be Paul Combs speaking about the Wilson Clay Pit and the late Pleistocene material deposited there. The meeting will be at 7:00 p.m. so that we can give more time to the speaker.

➤ **Youth Section:** Beverly Mace

The kids are doing well. They love to work on the grinding and polishing machines.

➤ **Education Committee Report:** Mary Ann Mitscherling

Anyone can find out about the classes and discover what classes are available on the HGMS Web site. For those without Web access, please note there are descriptions and listings of classes posted around the clubhouse.

➤ **Program for next month:** Scott Singleton

May's meeting will be a showing of "Rockhounds: The Movie" in its entirety.



### Standing Committees reports:

- **Clubhouse Committee:** Dave Hawkins/Tom Wright  
The floor in the meeting room has been cleaned. A professional service did a pretty good job, but some things could not be fixed—such as the rug—and will have to be addressed later.
- **Field Trip Committee:** Neal Immega
- A field trip to Lake Texoma is on for the Memorial Day Weekend. A second field trip in mid-June is in the works. This trip will be to Brownwood. Please contact Neal Immega for more information
- **Bylaw Committee:** Scott Singleton  
The Bylaws have been reviewed by the Board, and changes have been proposed. The changes to the Bylaws are posted in several places around the clubhouse: the office, on top of the refrigerator, on the door, and an extra set is on the Web site. Please look these over. They will remain for one month. The vote to accept the Bylaw changes is upcoming, so please take time to peruse the document. If you wait, it may be too late.

### Show & Tell:

Scott Singleton brought in some (in his words) “yucky” wood collected during a recent Show Committee field trip. The wood is Late Eocene and very rare because the bark is still on it. At the site there was a great deal of palm wood, palm fronds, and other leaves as well. The reason for the trip was to have a social gathering for the Show Committee. The Show Committee plans to have more social gatherings to help the members get together and learn to work together better. There is a great need for more volunteers on the Show Committee. If you have any interest or feel you could help, please contact Scott.

Beverly Mace talked about the mounds of wood that she and Carol Thompson found on the Show Committee Field Trip. Carol Thompson was even said to have had to leave wood behind! There was just too much of a good thing.

Neal Immega announced that the Science Museum would be getting rid of plexiglass cases. Anyone who needed to borrow these for the show should contact him.

**Old Business:** Cheryl Lucas has accepted the position of Assistant Show Chair until her house sells. That leaves one immediate need filled, but a long-term commitment is still open.

The Bylaw Review Committee will present their recommendations to the Board.

Old and new versions of the Bylaws are posted around the clubhouse and are on the Web site.

**New Business:** The next tailgate swap session is tentatively scheduled for Oct. 16, 2005. Keep in touch with Matt Dillon for notification changes or confirmation. Please remember that people from other clubs and various rockhounds from all over attend these events. Come and be a part of a great day, looking, swapping, and making new friends.

**Door Prize brought by:** Fred Bruckner supplied a necklace.

**Door Prize won by:** Beverly Mace

**Program Introduction:** The evening speaker, Todd Kent, gave a tantalizing preview of *Rockhounds: The Movie*. This documentary film included snippets from our 2004 Show. Even better, this film will be shown in its entirety during our May General Meeting. The film is in the process of seeking a broadcasting company to buy up the entire line of educational programming supplied by the producers at Explore Multimedia.

## May General Meeting

*May 24, 2005*

*by Sunday Bennett, HGMS Secretary*

**V**olunteer to supply refreshments for June's meeting: Bob Sweeny

**Guests:** Patty Scott, a long-time member whose interests include jewelry and lapidary, visited for the first time in many years. Doug Moore, a new member whose interests are lapidary and mineralogy, came to his first meeting.

### Announcements:

- Many items are to be auctioned off from Sister Clements' collection. The auction will take place at 10:00 a.m., June 4. No one will be admitted early.
- October 16 there will be a Tailgate Swap. More details will be forthcoming. Contact Matt Dillon for information.
- June 8, Norm Lenz will present the Faceting Section program on how to spot gemstone inclusions.
- The Lapidary Section is selling Lexan discs for 50 cents a piece.
- The Paleo Section Library now has a new Dell computer. The computer has a listing of all materials within the library.
- Rick Rexroad announced a field trip to Brownwood in June. (That trip has subsequently been rescheduled pending Lexy's schedule.)

### Reports:

- **Day Light Section:** Tom Wright  
June's Day Light Section Meeting will be on "Working with Reticulation of Silver and Copper Alloy." This is a hands-on project. Val Link from the University of Houston will be our instructor for the June, July, and August meetings.
- **Faceting Section:** Paula Rutledge  
**June 8:** Gemstone Inclusions, (it can be a flaw, it can be an enhancement!) presented by Norm Lenz.  
**July 13:** Gemstone Sale! We will be selling faceting gemstone rough.  
**August 10:** Hot Dog Party! Open session on faceting machines.
- **Mineral Section:** Art Smith  
**June 1:** Swap Night Meeting
- **Treasurer's Report:** Paul McGarry  
We are on budget and doing well.

- **Membership:** Beverly Mace
- Members are listed on a sheet in the shop. If your name is not on that list, then you need to pay your dues before you are allowed to work in the shop.
- **Education Committee Report:** Mary Ann Mitscherling  
All classes are posted on the Web sit and around the clubhouse. There are two slots available in the enameling class, and Rock Carving will begin pending approval of the Board.
- **Show Committee:** Carol Thompson  
The Show Committee reports June as a busy month getting ready for the Show. Among the highlights, Dino George is planning on bringing in new dinos for the show, many more than in previous years. The front hallway has been opened up to create a better flow through and less congestion at the entrance. There is much to do, and WE NEED HELP. Not to say that too loudly but help is imperative to make the Show work, and the committee has several positions without permanent people tending spots.
- **Show & Tell:**  
Patty Scott, instructor for the Enameling Class, displayed and spoke about various enamel pieces that she brought to the meeting. The pieces are examples of what can be made by students of the enameling class. The class is to be basic entry-level oriented. The class runs six weeks, and if time allows, there might be some jewelry making taught.

#### **Old Business:**

The Bylaws were brought for review. Stan Perkins and Karen Burns moved to accept the Bylaws changes and to take a vote. The vote was unanimous to accept the new Bylaws.

**Door Prize brought by:** Beverly Mace

**Door Prize won by:** Pat Hildbold won a petrified piece of Palm Wood.

**Program Introduction:** Scott Singleton introduced the showing of "Rockhounds: The Movie." The movie is actually a documentary. It runs about 55 minutes and is split into 4 segments. The segments include the annual world-class quartz dig in Mt. Ida, Arkansas, fossil hunting with Dinosaur George Blasing, hunting barite roses in Oklahoma, and the nationally acclaimed Rock Food Table (created and maintained by Bill and Lois Pattillo) that was on display at the 2004 Houston Gem and Mineral Show.

### **May HGMS Board Meeting**

*May 3, 2005*

*by Sunday Bennett, Secretary*

**B**oard members present: Norm Lenz, President; Scott Singleton, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President; Beverly Mace, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President, Paul McGarry, Treasurer, Sunday Bennett, Secretary, Paula Rutledge, Faceting Representative; David Hawkins, Lapidary Representative; Art Smith, Mineral Representative, and Tom Wright, Day Light Representative

The April 2005 Board Meeting minutes were approved.

Reports

- **Backbenders Gazette:** Phyllis George
- **Bylaw Committee:** Scott Singleton
- **Shop and Clubhouse:** David Hawkins/Tom Wright  
The floor is clean, but because of the wax buildup cleaning proved difficult. A recommendation was made to strip the floor more often and then to rewax. There were some places on the floor and some carpet problems that could not be addressed. These problems will have to be dealt with at a later date.
- **Membership:** Beverly Mace  
People who come to the Shop can see their name on a signup sheet. If their name is not on that sheet, then they cannot work in the Shop. No membership, no Shop time.
- **Treasurers Report:** Paul McGarry
- **Library:** Art Smith
- **Show Committee:** Carol Thompson (not in attendance)  
Scott Singleton, speaking on behalf of Carol, said that 35 dealers have paid and completed their show contracts. All dealers were notified of the March 2005 deadline, but some five contracts have not been returned. The committee has contacted five new dealers from the vendor waiting list.

Special Committee Reports

- **Nominating Committee:** Art Smith, Tom Wright, Matt Dillon
- **HGMS Web Site Committee:** Paula Rutledge
- **Bylaw Committee:** Scott Singleton, John Moffitt

Section Board Representatives:

- **Faceting:** ..... Paula Rutledge
- **Lapidary:** ..... David Hawkins
- **Paleontology:** ..... John Moffitt
- **Mineral:** ..... Art Smith
- **Day Light:** ..... Tom Wright
- **Youth:** ..... Beverly Mace
- **Program for May General Meeting:** ..... Scott Singleton-  
Todd Kent will show his film, "Rockhounds: The Movie," in its entirety.

Old Business

- There were no problems with the Bylaw changes. Copies of the Bylaw changes will be posted around the clubhouse and on the HGMS Web site. An announcement was made at the General Meeting for all the members to view these changes. The membership was also notified that they have one month to view the changes before the Bylaws are brought up for a vote.
- The Stone Carving Class formed by Mary Ann Mitscherling will proceed even though Norm forgot to bring in her formal proposal. It was agreed that the class would proceed since the class had already been announced, payments received,

and the class filled. Further classes proposed by Mary Ann will need to be in the form of a written proposal brought before the Board for formal approval before announcements can be made.

### **New Business**

- Scott Singleton announced that one of the televisions had no sound. It was decided to donate the television to charity.
- An overhead projector that is no longer used will be also be donated or auctioned off.
- Tom Wright found a box of donated terrycloth clothes in the main Clubhouse, but the use of this donation is not yet known.
- Dave Hawkins expressed concern over who is taking phone messages and monitoring them. Scott Singleton said that the four people who have responsibility over the four areas that have phone message folders (General, Membership, Education, Show) know about the phone message system and know how to retrieve messages. It's up to those people to check the message system at regular intervals. If they don't check them within about three or four weeks, the messages are automatically deleted from the system.
- It was moved to suspend classes on all fourth Tuesdays of the month so that class attendees could come to the General Meeting. The motion was approved.
- Scott Singleton mentioned the difficulty in getting a permanent Assistant Show Chair. His concerns stemmed from a general lack of membership willingness to commit to taking leadership roles in the Show Committee. He felt that an Assistant Chair is necessary for the continuation of the Show. The Assistant Show Chair frequently becomes the Chair the following year after seeing what is involved firsthand. Dave Hawkins answered this concern by saying there is almost always is someone who "steps up to the plate" at the last moment and not to worry. He said in the past the positions have always been filled, and he felt there was no reason to believe they would not be filled in the future by competent people. The matter was dropped.
- Norm addressed the Board on the subject of Stuart Murphy's collection. He had received a call from Stuart's mother who said Stuart wished to donate his collection and materials to the Club. Art and Norm agreed to go over the collection and see what should come to the Club and what the school might want.
- Norm was informed that Stuart Murphy, the former Treasurer of the Mineral Section still owes the section \$1,500. It was decided to look into the matter further, and if necessary the items auctioned off from Stuart's collection will go to repay that debt.
- The large donation from Sister Clements, one-time President of the HGMS, will be appraised and estimated for value by Art. It was agreed by all that the proceeds from an auction of these items will be split half and half with the Dominican Sisters to which Sister Clements belonged.

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.



## Bananas—The Fantastic Fruit

*from an unattributed e-mail*

**A**fter reading THIS, you'll NEVER look at a banana in the same way again -

**Bananas:** Containing three natural sugars—sucrose, fructose and glucose—combined with fiber, a banana gives an instant, sustained, and substantial boost of energy. Research has proven that just two bananas provide enough energy for a strenuous 90-minute workout. No wonder the banana is the number one fruit with the world's leading athletes. But energy isn't the only way a banana can help us keep fit. It can also help overcome or prevent a substantial number of illnesses and conditions, making it a must-have to add to our daily diet.

**Depression:** According to a recent survey undertaken by MIND amongst people suffering from depression, many felt much better after eating a banana. This is because bananas contain tryptophan, a type of protein that the body converts into serotonin, known to make you relax, improve your mood and generally make you feel happier.

**PMS:** Forget the pills—eat a banana. The vitamin B6 it contains regulates blood glucose levels which can affect your mood.

**Anemia:** High in iron, bananas can stimulate the production of hemoglobin in the blood and so helps in cases of anemia.

**Blood Pressure:** This unique tropical fruit is extremely high in potassium yet low in salt, making it the perfect food to beat blood pressure. So much so, the US Food and Drug Administration recently allowed the banana industry to make official claims for the fruit's ability to reduce the risk of high blood pressure and stroke.

**Brain Power:** 200 students at a Twickenham (Middlesex) school were helped through their exams this year by eating bananas at breakfast, break, and lunch in a bid to boost their brain power. Research has shown that the potassium-packed fruit can assist learning by making pupils more alert.

**Constipation:** High in fiber, including bananas in the diet can help restore normal bowel action, helping to overcome the problem without resorting to laxatives.

**Hangovers:** One of the quickest ways of curing a hangover is to make a banana milkshake sweetened with honey. The banana calms the stomach, and with the help of the honey builds up depleted blood sugar levels, while the milk soothes and rehydrates your system.

**Heartburn:** Bananas have a natural antacid effect in the body, so if you suffer from heartburn, try eating a banana for soothing relief.

**Morning Sickness:** Snacking on bananas between meals helps to keep blood sugar levels up and avoid morning sickness.

**Mosquito bites:** Before reaching for the insect bite cream, try rubbing the affected area with the inside of a banana skin. Many people find it amazingly successful at reducing swelling and irritation.

**Nerves:** Bananas are high in B vitamins that help calm the nervous system.

**Overweight and at work?** Studies at the Institute of Psychology in Austria found pressure at work leads to gorging on comfort food like chocolate and crisps. Looking at 5,000 hospital patients, researchers found the most obese were more likely to be in high-pressure jobs. The report concluded that to avoid panic-induced food cravings, we need to control our blood sugar levels by snacking on high carbohydrate foods every two hours to keep levels steady.

**Ulcers:** The banana is used as the dietary food against intestinal disorders because of its soft texture and smoothness. It is the only raw fruit that can be eaten without distress in over-chronicler cases. It also neutralizes over-acidity and reduces irritation by coating the lining of the stomach.

**Temperature control:** Many other cultures see bananas as a cooling fruit that can lower both the physical and emotional temperature of expectant mothers. In Thailand, for example, pregnant women eat bananas to ensure their baby is born with a cool temperature.

**Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD):** Bananas can help SAD sufferers because they contain the natural mood enhancer tryptophan.

**Smoking:** Bananas can also help people trying to give up smoking. The B6, B12 they contain, as well as the potassium and magnesium found in them, help the body recover from the effects of nicotine withdrawal.

**Stress:** Potassium is a vital mineral which helps normalize the heartbeat, sends oxygen to the brain, and regulates your body's water balance. When we are stressed, our metabolic rate rises, thereby reducing our potassium levels. These can be rebalanced with the help of a high-potassium banana snack.

**Strokes:** According to research in The New England Journal of Medicine, eating bananas as part of a regular diet can cut the risk of death by strokes by as much as 40%!

**Warts:** Those keen on natural alternatives swear that if you want to kill off a wart, take a piece of banana skin and place it on the wart with the yellow side out. Carefully hold the skin in place with a plaster or surgical tape!

So, a banana really is a natural remedy for many ills. When you compare it to an apple, it has four times the protein, twice the carbohydrate, three times the phosphorus, five times the vitamin A and iron, and twice the other vitamins and minerals. It is also rich in potassium and is one of the best value foods around. So maybe its time to change that well-known phrase so that we say instead, **a banana a day keeps the doctor away!**

### **Tips & Hints**

*from NW Newsletter, via SCFMS Newsletter 5-6/2005 and others*

**Purple Glass:** If you wish to know if a clear glass bott will turn purple without exposing it to desert sunlight, place it under a black light. If it fluoresces green, it will turn purple when long exposed to sunlight. This is due to small amounts of manganese.

**AFMS President's Message***Community Involvement**by Bill Smith, AFMS President**from AFMS Newsletter 6-7-8/2005*

**A**s I read bulletins and observe the activities of those clubs that are healthy and growing, I notice they are interfacing with the community. Most often these clubs host a show each year. Several have a three-day show with Friday devoted to school children. Some of these students bring their parents back on Saturday or Sunday, exposing them to the hobby. There are often hands-on demonstrations for adults as well as the children. At their show the Kitsap Gem and Mineral Club, WA added extra tables to accommodate everyone that was interested in beading around a cabochon or in wire-wrapping a free form.

Having a space devoted to the club at the county fair has proven to be very successful in adding new members. The Port Townsend Rock Club in Washington State has several cases, demonstrations, and club members available to talk to anyone who stops at their building during the annual fair.

Many clubs give rock talks at local school and scout groups. Some clubs have programs where a scout can earn the geology badge.

Clubs also have displays at the library and other public facilities. Ask your library if your club can put in a display the month prior to your show. You may have to provide a table for a couple of cases and make sure you have handouts about the show and your club.

Most communities have at least one special event each year for the public. If your town has such an event, ask if you can have space for showing what your club represents. It may cost a small amount but can be an excellent place to introduce people to our hobby.

Bringing in new members can only happen if they know about your club. I will never forget overhearing a fellow at a show saying, "I have lived here and collected rocks for 40 years, and I didn't know there was a local rock show. And I have just been informed there is even a rock club." There are probably many just like him in your community. Community involvement is the way to let them know.

**SCFMS President's Message***by William Medford, SCFMS President**from SCFMS Newsletter 5-6/2005*

**S**ummer is now upon us, and with the coming of warm days comes the desire of rockhounds to get out and start exploring for rocks and minerals. For some of you it is club fieldtrip time, and for others it is going out on your own to search. Just remember to plan your trip completely before you depart. Check your gear and supplies—especially water—so that you don't overdo it in the warm weather.

All reports indicate that the Federation is doing well in meeting the scholarship chal-

lence for unrestricted funds for the AFMS Scholarship Program. If your club has not sent in its donation, it is not too late and the money is still needed.

The 2005 SCFMS Directory has been distributed to all clubs. If there are errors, please let us know. For some of the clubs we did not get your officer listing for 2005 and so we used the 2004 data. There are still some clubs who have not paid their dues for 2005. Please check your records and get your dues and insurance up-to-date.

Another summer activity that I always enjoy is club shows, picnics, and swap meets. Many clubs in the South Central Federation have annual picnics and swap days or weekends. I encourage all of you to attend the special events. These are really wonderful times to meet members in a more relaxed setting—there is time to talk individually and in small groups. This is a wonderful place to bring your prospective members so they can learn more about our hobby.

Another event this year is the annual meeting of the AFMS which will be held August 16–21 in St Louis, MO. The convention is being hosted by the Greater St. Louis Association of Earth Science Clubs in conjunction with the Midwest Federation annual meeting and convention. The large number of exhibits from all over the nation makes the trip worthwhile if you attend nothing else. Plan to attend and bring back all kinds of information that you can share with your club members.

Remember that hunting and exploring are not limited to rocks and minerals. It is also for finding and inviting prospective members to your club. Good hunting

### SCFMS Scholarship Challenge

*by Keith Harmon, Past President SCFMS  
from SCFMS Newsletter 5-6/2005*

**A**t the AFMS meeting in Syracuse, New York in July 2004, the Directors of the AFMS Scholarship Foundation were informed that a shortage in funds available for awarding scholarships for 2005 exists. We had a lot of expenses that reduced the interest available for scholarship awards following the audit and bonding requirements we had. The result was that we had to eliminate one scholarship from each regional federation for one year, so each federation will only be able to give one scholarship instead of the normal two.

The rules in place for the Scholarship fund require that all money donated to the fund to be restricted and only the interest earned is available for use. At the meeting, the Directors voted to allow money to be donated to the fund as **unrestricted funds** and so available for use in scholarship funding immediately. If enough money is donated and designated to be **unrestricted**, we will not have to eliminate the second scholarship.

The South Central Federation of Mineral Societies challenges all the Regional Federations to make up the difference in the available funds for the 2005 AFMS Scholarship awards. We propose that each Regional Federation raise and donate to the AFMS Scholarship fund the equivalent of \$1.00 per member. This can be accomplished in any manner each Federation chooses.

The only thing you must do is state that the money is for **unrestricted use** when you send it in so it can go directly to fund the second scholarship. The total we need to raise is \$12,000 (twelve thousand dollars). I believe we can do this and more because it is a worthy cause and one of the most important things that we as members of the American Federation of Mineral Societies do. Remember—the nominating process is already underway, so this is a time-constricted effort.

This is a **Challenge!** Are you up to meeting it?

### **AFMS Club Rockhound of the Year**

*Do You Like Refreshments?*

*by Cathy Gaber, AFMS Chair*

*<bg@his.com>*

*from AFMS Newsletter 6-7-8/2005*

**S**o, you come to the club meeting. What is your favorite thing? The showcase, the refreshments, the program, the treasurer's report, the library? Who are the people who make all these various aspects function smoothly? These people are more than worthy of being selected as the AFMS Club Rockhound of the Year. If you will take just five minutes to send me or your regional representative an e-mail, these special people can be recognized at the club level, the regional federation level, and the American Federation level by being printed in those newsletters.

This recognition program is so easy. All we need is the name of the person to be honored (or the couple), the name of the club, the federation, a couple of sentences about the honoree(s) and the name of the person making the submission. All of you know people who work hard all year long who deserve to get some credit. Why wait? If you do this soon enough, then your candidate will also be listed in my report at the AFMS meeting in St. Louis this summer.

Every club has several people who should receive this recognition. We can recognize only one a year, but each club can submit an honoree every single year. Please do your part in making sure that they get the attention they have earned.

### **Thoughts from the Editor**

*by Phyllis George*

**T**his month was an unusual month for the large number of articles and photos I was sent and was planning to use from other newsletters. (*An absolutely marvelous situation for an editor!*)

I was really looking forward to including a series of articles being done by Sgt. Yonis Lone Eagle, former president of Chaparral Rockhounds in Roswell, New Mexico and a true rockhound. He was called to active duty with the Army Reserve, and he is serving in Iraq. He has begun writing articles describing his experiences and describing Iraq as seen through the eyes of a rockhound. Unfortunately, last month I deleted his first report when I STILL didn't have space to print it after holding it for about three months. Now I have his second report. I'm hoping to get it into the next BBG. I think you will like it.

**ShowTime 2005**

July 15-17	Houston, TX	International Gem & Jewelry Show Reliant Center, Reliant Park www.intergem.net
August 13-14	Baton Rouge, LA	Baton Rouge Gem & Mineral Society Frat. Order of Police, BR Lodge number 1 10777 Greenwell Springs Rd. Clara Broussard (225) 687-3864
August 19-21	Bossier City, LA	Ark-La-Tex Gem & Mineral Society Bossier Civic Center, 620 Benton Rd. Charlie Johns (318) 687-4929
August 27-28	Arlington, TX	Texas School of Earth Sciences (formerly Arlington Gem & Mineral Club) University of Texas, Arlington
September 3-4	Jasper, TX	Pine Country Gem & Mineral Society VFW Building 7 miles west of Jasper
September 17-18	Farmers Branch, TX	Pleasant Oaks Gem & Mineral Club Ellison Miles Geotechnology Institute 3939 Valley View Lane
September 23-25	Humble, TX	Houston Gem & Mineral Society Humble Civic Center 8233 Will Clayton Parkway
September 24-25	Denison, TX	Texoma Rockhounds Denison Senior Center, 531 Chestnut St.
October 1-2	Farmers Branch, TX	Pleasant Oaks Gem & Mineral Club Ellison Miles Geotechnology Institute 3939 Valley View Lane
October 1-2	Jacksonville, AK	Central Arkansas Gem, Mineral & Geology Soc Jacksonville Community Center Main Street, Hwy. 67/167 Exit 9 Ms.PatKissire (501) 821-2346
October 8-9	Temple, TX	Tri-City Gem & Mineral Society Mayborn Civic & Convention Center 3303 N. 3rd St.; Robert Coufal (254)773-9624
October 21-23	Victoria, TX	Victoria Gem & Mineral Society Victoria Community Center
October 21-23	Glen Rose, TX	Austin Paleontological Society Glen Rose Convention Center



2005		JULY				2005
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 10-12 Youth Section 11-3 Shop Open
3	4 Independence Day	5 7:30 Board Meeting	6	7	8	9 11-3 Shop Open
10	11 1:00 Day Light Section	12 7:30 Show Comm	13 7:30 Faceting Section	14	15	16 10-12 Youth Section 11-3 Shop Open
17	18 7:30 Lapidary Section	19 7:30 Paleo Section	20	21	22	23 11-3 Shop Open
24 31	25	26 7:30 General Meeting	27	28	29	30 11-3 Shop Open

2005		AUGUST				2005
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 7:30 Board Meeting	3	4	5	6 10-12 Youth Section 11-3 Shop Open
7	8 1:00 Day Light Section	9 7:30 Show Comm	10 7:30 Faceting Section	11	12	13 11-3 Shop Open
14	15 7:30 Lapidary Section	16 7:30 Paleo Section	17	18	19	20 10-12 Youth Section 11-3 Shop Open
21	22	23 7:30 General Meeting	24	25	26	27 11-3 Shop Open
28	29	30	31			

# ***The BACKBENDER'S GAZETTE***

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

10805 BROOKLET  
HOUSTON, TEXAS 77099  
(281) 530-0942



## **SCFMS**

1998 - 1st (Large)  
2000 - 1st (Large)  
2003 - 1st (Large)



## **AFMS**

1998 - 2nd (Large)  
2004 - 3rd (Large)



NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
BELLAIRE, TX 77401  
PERMIT NO. 303

**DATED MATERIAL - PLEASE DO NOT DELAY !**