



The **BACKBENDER'S GAZETTE**

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

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November 2005

President's Message

October 2005

by Norman Lenz

HGMS President 2004–2005



Fellow HGMS Members,

For 23 years I have heard our members express concern about holding our annual shows during hurricane season. We all realized the possibility that a major storm could cripple or prevent a scheduled show. So we held some past shows in the spring and summer. We even held two shows per year for awhile. Eventually, and for many good reasons, we returned to holding our shows in the fall. Our last several shows consistently have been successful and improving each year—proof that we were doing the right thing. As you know, this was the year that nature chose to direct a major hurricane our way on the weekend during which our show was scheduled.



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General Meeting Presentations Scheduled for October & November

by Scott Singleton

HGMS 1st Vice President

The **October presentation** at the General Meeting will be on the Bureau of Economic Geology's (BEG) Houston Core Repository, which is officially known as the Houston Research Center (HRC). It is a state-of-the-art climate-controlled facility and is equipped to permanently store and curate over 500,000 boxes of geologic cores and cuttings. The Houston, Austin, and Midland BEG core facilities have combined holdings of nearly 2 million boxes of geologic material. After curating, the material is en-



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Copy is due for the December issue by Tuesday, November 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

The Board authorized Carol Thompson (2005 Show Chair) and me to make the decision of if or when to cancel. By Wednesday morning we were in agreement that many Committee Members, volunteers, dealers, and attendees would be leaving the Houston area before Hurricane Rita arrived. We canceled the Show.

In the meantime, the Board has considered opinions of the Show Committee and of members and considered facilities' schedules, dealers' schedules, and upcoming holiday schedules. We decided not to attempt a replacement show. We are not confident that it would measure up to our usual high standards.

Some expenses for the show cannot be recovered. However, we have avoided some spending for facilities, trucks, food, etc. Our Club is financially stable at this time. We do not expect to cut any programs or sponsorships. We hope to make up some of the loss by strengthening our enrollment in classes, adding members to the Society, and promoting our auctions. Please help when and where you can.

We have a truly great Show Committee. They were totally prepared and excited to offer the Year 2005 Show. They are very disappointed that it did not happen. Let them know how you appreciate their hard work and dedication. Most of them will be right back in planning meetings to prepare for Year 2006. Our dealers have suffered a loss as well. They help us promote the Show, and they count on the income for their livelihood. Let them know how sorry we are that they were not able to be a part of our activities this year. Our attendees are also disappointed. There is no other show like ours in the Houston area. I especially feel for the students, Boy Scouts, and Girl Scouts who expected to learn by attending our show. I am happy that we are all safe and am looking forward to a great show in 2006. Sigrid Stewart will be our Show Chair next year. Please show her your support by volunteering to help on the 2006 Show Committee.

On another topic, Mary Ann Mitscherling has headed our Education Committee for the last five years. Under her leadership and efforts, the classes offered by HGMS have increased in number and variety. In 2006, she will step back from her Chair position but continue to be a member of the Committee. She deserves our gratitude. David Hawkins will lead the Committee next year. Dave hopes to increase member involvement in the Education Committee and to increase attendance in the classes. Please give him your full support. He has taken on a challenge.

Our Christmas party is scheduled for Saturday, December 10, 2005. Social hour will start at 5:00 p.m., dinner at 6:00 p.m., and the auction at 7:00 p.m. Consider bringing a rock, mineral, fossil, jewelry, or a piece of equipment to contribute to the auction. From past experience, I know I can count on a great meal and great conversation.

The Nominating Committee will make recommendations for elected officers at the October General Meeting. You may offer your suggestions to them for consideration. The Committee consists of Susan Lenz, Rick Rexroad, Phyllis George, Charlie Fredregill, and Steve Blyskal. Nominations may be made from the floor in October. The vote will be taken during the November General Meeting.

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

Program Information continued from page 1

tered into an integrated log and core database for use by the scientific community.

The speaker will be Beverly DeJarnett, who is a geologist and research associate with BEG and is the manager for the Houston Research Center. She has been instrumental in publicizing the HRC as a fixture in professional oil exploration and production circles in this area. In fact, you may have seen the cores that were at the HGMS show in 2004. Her objective now is to formally introduce herself to our club and to begin the process of forming a close relationship with us such as the one we have with the HMNS. Please come to welcome her and see what the HRC has to offer.

The November presentation will be by Andy Mortimer. Andy is a geologist with ENI Petroleum which is the state oil company of Italy. He recently completed a multiyear posting in Jakarta, Indonesia, where he was able to search out and find the local sources of petrified wood that recently have been coming out of Java. Being a geologist, he was able to trace down the geologic formation name and the mode of deposition of this wood. He then started acquiring large quantities of it. However, the petrified wood is not in the state that we are all used to seeing. The full-round and partial-round stumps and logs have had their exteriors completely polished without the use of saws or any modern rock polishing equipment. Andy will present this rather amazing story and show us examples of these polished Indonesian logs.

Southwestern Arkansas Mercury Mining District

by Art Smith

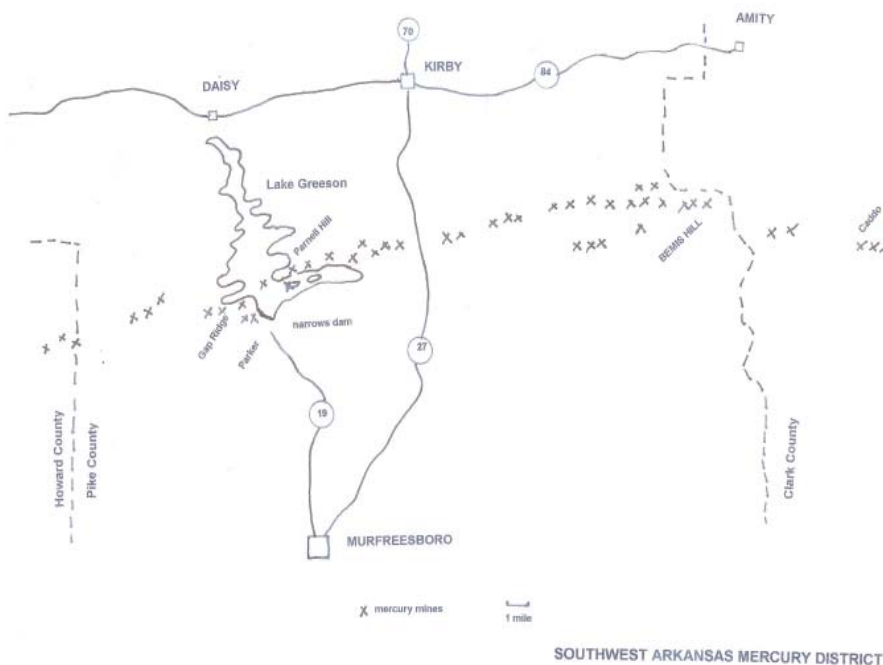
Member of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society

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The Southwestern Arkansas mercury mining district is a one mile wide east-west band on the Athens Plateau, the southernmost portion of the Ouachita Mountains. This narrow band extends from western Clark County through Pike County into eastern Howard County. Further west in Sevier County, but not contiguous with the mercury district is the Arkansas antimony mining district which has a separate mineralogy and mining history. However, stibnite is common in the western end of the mercury district and absent on the eastern end. All of the mercury mineralization is in the folded and faulted east-west trending anticlines and synclines of the Paleozoic age Stanley Shale which is composed of about 25% sandstone and the Jackfork Sandstone. Although the shales may contain some mineralization, all the ore occurs in sandstone as disseminations and fracture and vein fillings. Some of the sandstone is so indurated that it appears more like a quartzite, and indeed, it is often called a quartzite.

The first documented discovery of cinnabar in the district was in 1930. Following an announcement of the discovery by the state geologist in 1931, the size of the district and mining in it developed rapidly. Between 1931 and 1937 the district produced 4736 flasks of mercury from numerous mines and prospects. Then production and mining lagged for two years but increased dramatically with the marked price increase

of mercury during 1940. The price of mercury was high, and so mining flourished through 1943 but then dramatically decreased with lower prices and depletion of known reserves. By 1947 the district was dead, and the only subsequent recorded production was 11 flasks in 1965 (Clardy & Bush 1976). Total production for the district was about 12,500 flasks with most of it coming from less than 10 mines, but over 50 mining companies had operated in the district during its 15-year period of activity. Discoveries were made strictly from surface outcrops which were followed into the subsurface. Very little core drilling was done to prove new reserves or to find new deposits, and most if not all was done by the U.S. Bureau of Mines during the war years and does not seem to have been very successful



The most notable deposits are those on Bemis Hill, Parker Hill, Parnell Hill, and the Bell, Caddo, U.S., Humphrey, and Gap Ridge mines. Perhaps the most interesting name was Parnell Hill's Bloody Cut, no doubt named for the abundant cinnabar showing on the walls of the cut during mining. Although all of the cinnabar has been removed, the Bloody Cut and other pits and cuts can be observed along the wooded shores of Lake Greeson in the Cowhide Cove Recreation area. The mining activity occurred before dam building and lake formation, as was the establishment of the recreational area. With some diligent searching of the associated dump piles along the lake shore and in the woods, good traces of cinnabar still can be recovered.

Table 1 is a list of minerals reported from the district. Most of these occur only as microminerals. Larger specimens are uncommon but are available occasionally from older collections, particularly bright red sandstone with richly disseminated cinnabar.

Table 1:

Minerals of the Southwestern Arkansas Mercury Mining District			
Mineral	Chemistry	Description	Reference
anglesite (?)	PbSO ₄	white coating on galena	Clardy & Bush 1976
artsmithite	Hg ¹⁺ ₄ Al(PO ₄) _{2-x} (OH) _{1+3x}	white, fibrous, xls micro, late.	Roberts et al. 2003
barite	BaSO ₄	white to colorless, coarsely xline	Reed & Wells 1938
cacoxenite	AlFe ³⁺ ₂₄ (PO ₄) ₁₇ O ₆ (OH) ₁₂ ~75H ₂ O	spheres, yellow fibers	EDS analysis
calcite	CaCO ₃	white to clear, uncommon	Clardy & Bush 1976
calomel	Hg ₂ Cl ₂	white to yellowish coatings	Sohlberg 1933
cinnabar	HgS	bright to dark red crystals	Sohlberg 1933
dickite	Al ₂ Si ₂ O ₅ (OH) ₄	white powdery coatings	Clardy & Bush 1976
edgarbaileyite	Hg ¹⁺ ₆ Si ₂ O ₇	orange, crystalline	EDS analysis
eglestonite	Hg ¹⁺ ₄ Cl ₂ O	yellow crusts turn black	Clardy & Bush 1976
fluorapatite	Ca ₅ (PO ₄) ₃ F	white, 2-3mm discoidal xls	EDS analysis
fluorite	CaF ₂		reported McIlwaine 1944
goethite	a-Fe ³⁺ O(OH)	red, yellow, brown, earthy & botr.	Reed & Wells 1938
hematite	a-Fe ₂ O ₃	mixed with goethite	Reed & Wells 1938
livingstonite	HgSb ₄ S ₈	dark gray globular masses	Clardy & Bush 1976
mercury	Hg	liquid silver spheres	Clardy & Bush 1976
metacinnabar	HgS	dark red to black coatings, xls	Clardy & Bush 1976
opal	SiO ₂ nH ₂ O	hyalite, clear to white coatings	Clardy & Bush 1976
perhamite	Ca ₃ Al ₇ (SiO ₄) ₃ (PO ₄) ₄ (OH) ₃ 16.5H ₂ O	tiny white spheres	EDS analysis
pyrite	FeS ₂	smears, small masses, cubes	Clardy & Bush 1976
quartz	SiO ₂	Clear, colorless to sli. smoky xls	Reed & Wells 1938
siderite	Fe ²⁺ CO ₃	brown translucent xls in deeper mines	Reed & Wells 1938
stibnite	Sb ₂ S ₃	gray acicular crystals, inclusions	Stearn 1936
stibliconite	Sb ³⁺ SbO ⁵⁺ ₂ (OH)	pale yellowish stibnite pseudomorphs	Sohlberg 1933
terlingualite(?)	Hg ₂ CIO	yellow, crystalline, turns green-gray	EDS analysis

The cinnabar in sandstone helps distinguish it from Terlingua, Texas cinnabar specimens which are in a limestone and are much more numerous. Solid crystalline cinnabar may occur as vein and fracture fillings, and small crystals may occur in cavities. Some Arkansas locations have a red ocherous goethite-hematite mixture that masks much of the cinnabar or that can give an impression that there is more cinnabar present than there really is. Bright colorless transparent quartz crystals are not uncommon. They may be completely or partially doubly terminated and are more like Herkimer

quartz crystals than most Arkansas quartz from the central Ouachita Mountains. They may reach 4 cm across, but most are smaller, and they are particularly attractive and desirable with red cinnabar crystals or inclusions or with cinnabar or stibnite. Most of the cinnabar crystals are bright to dark red and under 4 mm. They are not as well formed as the Chinese cinnabars and can be seen as euhedral, slightly rounded, single and twinned crystals, rods, some with branches, or fibers. Most of the other crystallized minerals occur only as micro crystals, but larger specimens containing them are rarely available. Calomel fluoresces a deep red under short-wave radiation and is present as smears and coatings. However, it is usually difficult to discern without a microscope even on larger specimens except with an ultraviolet light.

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Dealer Reaction to Show Cancellation

by Joyce and Delbert Speed

(From a 10/08/05 e-mail sent to Phyllis George and Scott Singleton)

Hi, Please pass along to the Show Committee and Club Members how disappointed Delbert and I (Love of Land Images) were in not being able to be dealers in the 2005 Show. The Committee was given the huge task of looking at all the possibilities concerning the show, and they were more than correct in canceling the show due to Rita.

You put on the BEST SHOW that we attend as dealers, and we hope that Houston continues to produce a show in September. It is the best season for many dealers. There will always be weather problems that cannot be avoided, no matter what time of year. We have had another show canceled for November in Pascagoula, MS due to Katrina.

Yes, losing the two 2005 shows has hurt our pocketbook, but we will recover—just like the folks who have lost much more from the two storms. We spent more than \$200

in our own advertising for the show. We look forward to 2006 and being with all you fine people once again, and we hope to see many of the club members at other shows.

Thanks again for the excellent leadership in your organization. What the club has accomplished since moving to the Humble location is amazing. It's the best move that you could have made. Attendance, spirit, activities, etc. have dramatically increased, and for that all the dealers are happy. The SCFMS thanks the club also for their hard work in putting on the SCFMS meeting in 2004, and we look forward to your hosting the AFMS/SCFMS meeting and show in 2008.

Second Dealer Message

by Joyce Speed

Past President SCFMS

(Later e-mail on 10/8/05 to Phyllis George and Scott Singleton)

Hi again,

Thank you so much for your positive responses. I meant every word I said and then some. Thank you for publishing my e-mail. I do want all the HGMS members to know our appreciation for their hard work. The club's move to September was the best move ever. There is little activity during September other than the big show in Denver, but you skirted that by knowing when the Denver show is always held. Just about all your dealers are in Denver selling, buying, or both.

I can remember one of the May Houston shows at the George Brown where half of Houston was flooded due to heavy rains and Trinity River stuff. Like I said earlier, you can't outsmart Mother Nature. We hope there is not much discussion about changing the time of year. You could lose many of your dealers.

Since you have posted a 7-year schedule, most of us dealers have scheduled our shows around Houston. I know we have, and many clubs in the SCFMS also have scheduled their shows around Houston. A move could create havoc throughout the SCFMS with both shows and dealers. We are dealers in most of the SCFMS shows, and we know that most of your dealers do one or more of those shows. Keep it up with a good thing.



Multicolor fractured quartz and 2-toned jasper from Tikrit, Iraq
Photos by Sgt. Yonis Lone Eagle

AFMS Bulletin Editors' Contest—Final Results
And Preliminary Results of the SCFMS Contest
 by Phyllis George

The annual AFMS Bulletin Editors' Breakfast took place in St. Louis, MO on August 20, 2005. At that time the final results of the AFMS contest were announced. We already knew that a number of HGMS entries were forwarded to the AFMS because the AFMS had notified me that several ranked in the top ten of their individual categories.

The results of the AFMS contest are:

Large Bulletin: The Backbender's Gazette: 5th place

Adult Articles – Advanced:

- Art Smith, 7th place for "High Grading: Part I"
- Neal Immega, 10th place for "Danger Stalks the Cullen Hall of Gems and Minerals"
- Thomas J. Akers, Honorable Mention for "Fossils During and After Oil"

Poetry – Adult:

- Terry Proctor, 2nd place for "Terry Becomes a Rockhound"
- Ed Clay, 7th place for "Be Grateful My Soul"

Two days ago I received a card from Ike House, Bulletin Aids Chairman for the SCFMS contest. It identified HGMS members who have earned a trophy or who are in the top ten at the SCFMS level for their entries. Trophies are awarded to the top three entries in each category. We won't know the final results until the annual SCFMS show in Austin December 3.

Trophies have been earned at the SCFMS contest:

Poetry – Advanced:

- Terry Proctor
- Ed Clay

Special Publications: Neal Immega & Scott Singleton for their "Zuhl Collection of American Petrified Wood at the Houston Museum of Natural Science," a CD book

Features: Dean Lagerwall for his "Mineral Treasure Hunt"

Adult Articles - Advanced :

- Art Smith
- Neal Immega
- Thomas Akers

Web site: Neal Immega

Large Bulletin: Phyllis George

Entries placing in the top ten of their categories

Lexy Bieniek, Jill Rowlands, Terry Proctor

New Education Committee Needs Volunteers

by Mary Ann Mitscherling

The HGMS offers unique and affordable educational opportunities in the lapidary arts. Education classes bring in new members, and the classes generate significant revenue for maintenance of the clubhouse and our broader agenda. One or two people cannot manage the entire coordinating effort and still do justice to the promise of education at HGMS. Therefore, the Board of Directors agrees that we need an active Education Committee at HGMS.

We need people to help with advertisement, brochure production, student contacts, and new class development among other duties. You do not have to be an expert, just be willing to learn and work. If you can make the time, please help us plan and schedule classes that showcase the skills, experience, learning, and mastery of our instructors. See, e-mail, or call Mary Ann Mitscherling or talk with your Section Board Representative if you are interested in getting involved. Specific duties are available for review, and suggestions are welcome.

Midlothian Trip

Friday, October 21

by Neal Immega (in an e-mail sent to the membership)

David Temple has permission to collect the Ash Grove (former NT quarry) bare. He wants to have the largest dino dig-type kids' area filled with the "fish bone zone" of the Austin Chalk. There is no fee to collect, and you may keep everything you find. What David wants you to do is help haul back 5-gallon buckets of rock. Lots of 5-gallon buckets. I will bring all the loose buckets from the clubhouse, but you should find as many as you can.

There is plenty of rock at the quarry. They mine 7,000 tons a day and will never miss what we take.

Problem: they want to let in only a limited party of 5 vehicles (**not** 5 people) on **FRIDAY** October 21.

We will drive to the quarry and then combine into a few vehicles. Preference is for pickup trucks with lots of load capacity. We will drop off the buckets at the museum loading dock. The reason for using 5-gallon buckets is that only 50 pounds can be put in each. Don't bring huge buckets.

I tried to get this to be a regular Saturday trip because I know that you working stiff's have big trucks, but it is their quarry. Take a day off from work and tell them you will work extra hard to make up for it. Or phone in sick.

What will you find? Shark teeth and mosasaur vertebra, ammonites (little). See photos on the next page.

I personally like the oysters (inoceramus) because I have no competition for them.

Bring your hand picks and some shovels, and if you have one, bring a pick ax. David

and I will help load your buckets.

This is not the quarry with the pyrite. Easy collecting. The rock weathers nicely.

E-mail me that you can come. Bring your pickups. If you are a car driver, be prepared to consolidate to the back of a truck. It is only a mile from the company parking lot to the quarry floor.



Left to right: Crusher tooth of Ptychodus shark, shark tooth, and shark vertebra

Norm Lenz Presents

Norm Lenz gave a program on rocks, minerals, and fossils at the Harvard Elementary school in September. A few days later he received a large envelope containing letters from each of the students who heard him speak. They seemed very interested in what he had to say and in the samples he passed around. A few of the best are presented here. Who knows, these students may become our rockhounds of the future.



Cool igneous "astronomy" rock; photo by Sgt. Yonis Lone Eagle

9-07-05

Dear Mr. Lenz,

Thank you for coming to Harvard and telling us about fossils, rocks, and minerals. I did not know that glass is made of sand. I also didn't know that a oyster that is thousands of years old is a devels xemail. I think that it is cool that you were interested in rocks, fossils, and minerals when you were a kid. I didn't know that a diamond can be sold for only two dollars! I would like to know how much a rock saw cost so I can see if there are fossil in my rocks at home. When you were a kid did you want to be a geologist? I hope that you can come back to Harvard so we can learn some more!

From: Joshua Coronado

9-7-05

Dear Mr. Long

I thank you for teaching me more about rocks, fossils, and minerals. Amber is now my favorite fossil. Also I now know more about turquoise. I have it now almost my enemy at night because of toothpaste. The quartz that I have is very bright now. I found out that my rock is a limestone! I thank you for showing me my rocks. We have a beautiful diamond that we bought at a jewelry shop. Now I wish I could label my collection.

Now I'll be even more interested in rocks. The marble tiles in my bathroom is very beautiful if I look at that way. Now geology is a considered job. Thanks to you Mr. Long. Now I thank you for teaching me about rocks, fossils, and minerals.

Sincerely,
Samuel

The rocks depicted here and on the next few pages were collected and photographed by Sgt. Yonis Lone Eagle in Iraq. The one above is an agate found near Tikrit.

9-6-05

Dear Mr. Long

I thank you for showing us such cool rocks. I really liked them. My favorite one was the amber. It was my favorite because of the color. I also loved it because you can see things inside that cracked in it when it was dry. I learned a lot. I really enjoyed how you taught us by showing us the rocks, minerals, and fossils. They were really neat. I liked the way that the copper looked. I enjoyed it because in some places it was shiny. It looked pretty. I also liked the gold. I liked it because I thought it was neat that there were crystals forming inside the rock.

I really enjoyed your visit at my school, Hakeem Elementary. I hope you enjoyed it too. Thank you for taking time to visit us.

Sincerely,
(Joni) Brown

Mystery green rock & fractured igneous rock--both from Tikrit

September 7, 2005

Dear Mr. Sany,

I thank you for the presentation this afternoon, it was great. The rock were cool. I liked the turquoise rock you paster around. That iron was a little heavy. I liked that green mineral you passed out. What was it called? I thought the fossil were very interesting. The diamond was cool. I learned about what fools gold was and what it was made out of. I also learned that fish could be made at the bottom of the sea or an ocean. I learned that if you crack open a rock that a fossil might be inside.

From
Christian Rios



"Call her 'Fatso' again. That last rock she threw has a perfect limb cast!"

Via Rock Chips 8/03, Strata Gem 3/04, and Scribe 1-3/04



Photos top to bottom: Fractured mystery rock found near Tikrit, fossilized coral found in Qatar, fusulinids in matrix found near Tikrit, and fossilized gastropods in matrix

Rockhounding

by Mary Ann Mitscherling

Member of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society

October 6, 2005

When age or infirmity intervene
To slow our favorite rockhounding treks,
Then savoring samples from prior trips,
There is an energy that bubbles up.
For there is something magic in the rocks.
It is the sprawling connections we feel,
From rocks to boulders, continents to worlds.

The treks of memory are just as real,
Almost as exciting as our first finds.
Then trudging exhaustedly through the fields,
There was an energy that bubbled up.
For there is something magic in the rocks.
It is the latent timelessness we sensed,
For mind is here but everywhere in rocks.

Morrow is always there to satiate
To push the body or the mind to work.
Then escaping an overburdened mind,
There will be energy that bubbles up.
For there is something magic in the rocks.
It is the unfolding threshold we learned
To all the destinations of the mind.



Day Light Section

by Frances Arrighi



Twenty-one members attended the September 2005 meeting of the Day Light Section. There were so many attendees that we had to move into the main meeting room from the second class room. The program was on making a wire wrapped cross. Supplies were available to make either a gold filled or a sterling cross, or both. Several members finished their crosses, and they looked lovely. I finished mine at home. The accompanying figure shows a finished cross. Karen Burns designed this cross from a picture that used solder to connect the wires. That cross looks quite different from the wrapped one. We thank Karen for her efforts.



The October program will be silver fusion. The program for November is eating. This will be our annual birthday luncheon. In August the Day Light Section was 12 years old. We celebrate this with a luncheon in November.



Faceting Section
September 14, 2005
by Paula Rutledge
Faceting Section Chair



We had a double presentation at our September meeting and crowded around the table watching Karen and Wayne present their talks.

Karen Burns demonstrated how she creates the risers and other inside parts of display cases. Using readily available components from lumber yards and fabric stores, she creates wonderful, specialized display cases. She uses foam insulation board which is easily cut with a knife (even an electric knife!) to make risers and stands. The foam can be cut to shape and size and easily glued into even more interesting shapes. She then used neutral gray stretch knit fabric to cover everything. The stretchy fabric seems to mold to whatever shape you put in over. The neutral gray shows off jewelry and gemstones to their best advantage, and it does not compete for the judge's eye. She showed shapes for displaying necklaces, earrings, and bracelets.

Wayne Barnett showed various ways to display faceted stones for show and for competition. Even the design and presentation of the labels can affect how a display is judged. He has little tips and secrets for showing stones to their best advantage.

Wayne had made some laps out of Corian® countertop material, and he distributed them to people who wanted one.

Rusty Bennett finished his first faceted stone and brought it for Show 'n Tell. It was a large amethyst. Congratulations, Rusty!

We also talked about the upcoming national convention being held here in 2008 in conjunction with our show. We are considering entering the competition as a Section. We are also considering inviting other faceters and holding seminars at that time.

This was a great meeting. Thanks to all who came and shared it with us.

November Faceting Program

The November 9 Faceting Section meeting program will be a presentation by Stan Perkins on the topic of "Faceted vs. Cabochon—Use of Gemstone Material." Come and see the more traditional faceted stones and also learn about the less often seen cabbed gemstones. Stan Perkins will chair the meeting. The meeting begins at 7:30 at the HGMS clubhouse. Everyone is welcome.



Mineral Section



by Steve Blyskal, Chairperson and Dean Lagerwall, Assistant Chairperson

Upcoming Meeting Topics:

November 2: Malachite. Refreshments will be provided. Sam Norwood will give Part 2 of his presentation of Azurite and Malachite. This week he will concentrate on malachite. These closely related minerals are often found together with malachite as a

pseudomorph after azurite. Primary malachite crystals can also be found at many locations. Formation and crystalline structure will be discussed. Specimens from classic locations as well as those from the newer finds will be presented.

November 16: Synthetic Quartz. Refreshments will be provided. Dean Lagerwall will discuss the formation and uses of synthetic quartz. Our culture relies heavily on the optical and electronic properties of pure quartz, necessitating the production of large amounts of synthetic quartz. Large synthetic quartz crystals will be shown. Come learn how and why synthetic quartz influences your life.

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

HGMS Board Meeting

6 September 2005

by Susan Lenz

X	President	Norm Lenz	X	Faceting Rep.	Paula Rutledge
X	1 st Vice President	Scott Singleton	X	Lapidary Rep.	Dave Hawkins
X	2 nd Vice President	Beverly Mace		Mineral Rep.	Art Smith
	Treasurer	Paul McGarry	X	Paleontology Rep.	John Moffitt
	Secretary	Sunday Bennett	X	Day Lighters Rep.	Tom Wright
X	Past President	Norm Lenz			

Call to order at 7:30 p.m.

Some **past meeting minutes** are not yet approved. Sunday Bennett needs to resend the June and July minutes so they can be amended and approved. Paula Rutledge brought amended August minutes and minor corrections were made. Paula Rutledge moved and John Moffitt seconded that August minutes be accepted. This was approved by the Board.

Avoidance of Potential Child Abuse Liability: Matt Dillon was present to talk about liability issues and to answer questions. He will act as security advisor. Terry Proctor will advise on legal matters. A draft of guidelines and rules was presented by Matt Dillon and distributed at the meeting. Terry Proctor also has guidelines that Norm Lenz will e-mail to board members. The goal is to ensure as best we can that inappropriate behavior does not occur at the clubhouse.

Discussion followed concerning who should have background checks, what level of involvement with children would trigger a background check, and what level of check should be done. One suggestion was to put something on the HGMS Membership Application form indicating that background checks may be performed on members who are elected or assigned to work with children. Board members could not agree on wording. Paula Rutledge moved to adopt a rule that children 17 and under must be accompanied at all times by a parent or guardian while at the clubhouse or at any club-sponsored activity. Beverly Mace seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

Matt Dillon agreed to be on the committee.

No treasurers report (Paul McGarry absent). No Education report.

The **September meeting of the Paleo Section** is moved from its normal Tuesday meeting date to Thursday, September 22 at the Humble Civic Center.

Carol Thompson, Show Chair, brought several show issues to the Board.

- We need a gemologist for gem identification for Friday.
- Carol will work with Beverly Mace to get a check from Paul McGarry for hospitality expenses.
- **Next year's Show Chair and Assistant Show Chair:** John Moffitt moved to accept Sigirid Stewart and Cheryl Lucas as Show Chair and Assistant Chair respectively. Beverly Mace seconded and the Board approved.

The **General Meeting program** for this September is on Lizzadro Lapidary Museum in Illinois. Russ Kemp is the speaker.

Backbender's Gazette: At the last Board meeting, it was brought up that the BBG was supposed to be limited to 28 pages in order to avoid excessive costs. It is currently running 36 pages. Beverly Mace reported on the cost and quantity of BBGs printed. The budget allows for \$500 per month for printing and mailing. The current 36-page issues are within budget. John Moffitt moved that the limit be changed to 40 pages. Dave Hawkins seconded and the Board approved.

A **Nominating Committee** must be presented at the September General Meeting. Rick Rexroad has agreed to represent Paleo, and Susan Lenz has agreed to represent Faceting. Tom Wright will get a Day Light Section member. Steve Blyskal will be contacted for a Mineral Section representative, and Margaret Hardman-Muye will be contacted for Lapidary. Phyllis George has volunteered to represent Lapidary if Margaret has no objections.

Clear Lake Club use of donated saw: Scott Singleton contacted Mike Reeves with the Board's refusal to allow Clear Lake Club members free use of HGMS shop saws in exchange for a large saw donated to us by Clear Lake. Instead, the Board did approve splitting the proceeds resulting from selling the saw. Paul McGarry needs to send a check to Mike Reeves for the saw. The Clear Lake Club did not know what kind of oil the saw had (the saw originally came with the oil.)

Stuart Murphy collection: The collection seems uncollectible at this point. No further action will be taken on this matter.

Terry Proctor informed Norman Lenz that we must be sending in yearly lists of our officers in order to maintain our 501 (3c) status. Norm will contact Terry again and get more information on this.

Taxes: Was the 2004 tax report filed?

Reimbursement for software: Beverly Mace brought the bill for the address checking software renewal (\$195.00) and requested board approval for payment. John Moffitt

moved to reimburse her, and Paula Rutledge seconded. The Board approved payment of the bill.

Grand Door Prize acquired for the show: It is a 10 mm blue topaz in the Lone Star Cut. Jill Rowlands cut and donated the stone. The blue topaz is the official state stone of Texas, and the Lone Star Cut is the official state faceted pattern! Norm Lenz will have the stone mounted and get a chain for it.

Adjourned at 9:20pm

HGMS General Meeting

September 27, 2005

by Phyllis George

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	President	Norman Lenz	<input type="checkbox"/>	Faceting Representative	Paula Rutledge
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1 st Vice President	Scott Singleton	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Lapidary Representative	David Hawkins
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2 nd Vice President	Beverly Mace	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Mineral Representative	Art Smith
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Treasurer	Paul McGarry	<input type="checkbox"/>	Paleontology Representative	John Moffitt
<input type="checkbox"/>	Secretary	Sunday Bennett	<input type="checkbox"/>	Day Light Representative	Tom Wright
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Past President	Norman Lenz	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Call to order: 7:30 p.m.

Refreshments provided by Norman and Susan Lenz

Volunteer for next month's refreshments: David Hawkins

No guests attended.

Announcements:

Day Light: No report

Lapidary: No report

Education: Mary Ann Mitscherling announced that classes are filling up well—so much so that she needs an assistant to help with the scheduling of additional classes.

Field Trips: Neal Immega reminded us that a field trip is planned for November 12, 2005 at Whiskey Bridge. We will be collecting at the most fossiliferous site in Texas, only 100 miles from Houston. This is the famous Stone City beds of the Claiborne Group, Eocene. Over 200 species including conus and squid beaks! Meet at the south-west side of the Hwy 21 bridge over the Brazos River near Bryan, TX at 9 a.m. The dig will be followed up with a barbeque chicken dinner at Terry Stiles' ranch. Bring a side dish. No charge for anything, but if you plan to go, you **MUST** make your reservation with Neal Immega so Terry knows how much to cook.

Membership: No report

Newsletter: Phyllis George announced that October 8 is the deadline for the November issue. Since that date is a Saturday, the BBG will be created that day and the

following day (Sunday). There will be no grace period if articles are late.

Paleo: No report

General Announcements:

- A Tail Gate Swap is scheduled for Sunday, October 16. Please contact Matt Dillon for information.
- The ladies restroom is not being properly maintained. The users should try to keep it clean.
- Art Smith noted that we still have material from the Dominican College that needs to be sold.
- Norman Lenz mentioned that the Jim Cross donation also needs to be sold. Mr. Cross wants a letter similar to one we sent him in the past that identifies each of the items he gave us and the valuation. Art Smith offered to provide the donation letter to Jim Cross.

October Program: Scott Singleton announced that Beverly DeJarnett of the BEG (Bureau of Economic Geology) Houston Core Repository will address us.

Show Committee:

- The September 2005 show was canceled due to the imminent threat of Hurricane Rita.
- The following concerns also entered into the decision:
 - The attendance probably would be quite low.
 - Many HGMS volunteers planning to run the show might have left town.
 - The school children, for whom Friday is the big day, probably would not come.
 - The show probably would not be a success financially.
 - Everyone would be safe in the building, but the safety of anything in the parking lot could not be guaranteed.
- The HGMS Board meets Tuesday, October 4. They will address a number of questions including:
 - Should the show be rescheduled?
 - Is the Humble Civic Center available on a weekend that would be convenient for us should we decide to reschedule?
 - Is there enough money in the budget to pay for alerting the public about the rescheduled show?
 - If we do not reschedule the show, can we get our rental money back from the Humble Civic Center?
 - Where do we stand on a Show Chairman for 2006? Since Carol Thompson put in so much effort and so much time on the 2005 show only to have it canceled, would she want to be the Chairman for 2006?
 - How do we handle the money paid by the dealers if we do not reschedule the show? What inducements can we offer them to not request a refund?

- Norm Lenz will announce the Board's decision on whether to reschedule the show and the answers other questions on the Web site.

New Business:

- The election of 2006 officers will take place at the November General Meeting. The Nominating Committee is made up of one member from each of the Sections—Rick Rexroad of Paleo, Susan Lenz of Faceting, Phyllis George of Lapidary, Charlie Fredregill of Day Light, and Steve Blyskal of Mineral. The Committee will meet soon to develop a slate of officers, and the slate will be announced at the October General Meeting. The offices up for election are:
 - President
 - First Vice President
 - Second Vice President
 - Secretary
 - Treasurer
 - The following Sections need to select a Board Representative from their membership by the end of the year:
 - ☐ Day Light
 - ☐ Mineral
 - ☐ Paleo
- Inda Immega announced that the Houston Museum of Natural Science will be holding Earth Science Day on October 8. She invited HGMS members to man tables featuring Earth Science activities.

Door Prize: The drawing for the door prize was postponed. The person who will be donating the prize was not in attendance, plus the meeting attendance was fairly low. Many people were still away from the area due to the mass evacuation for Hurricane Rita.

Program Introduction: Lizzadro Museum of Lapidary Art

Scott Singleton introduced Russ Kemp and his wife Doris. They have been Houstonites for the past three years, but prior to that they lived in Elmhurst, Illinois where the Lizzadro Museum of Lapidary Art is located. Russ was on the museum board of directors for many years.

Doris presented the club with a collection of amethyst crystals that are to go toward increasing the treasury. Paul McGarry, HGMS Treasurer, accepted the crystals on behalf of HGMS.

Russ told about the life of Joseph Lizzadro, Sr., lapidary hobbyist and collector. Mr. Lizzadro opened the museum in 1962 as a way to share his extensive collection with others. Russ showed many photos he took of the impressive lapidary carvings, cabochons, and specimens housed in the Lizzadro Museum of Lapidary Art.

Adjournment: 9:30 p.m.

September General Meeting Presentation

Lizzadro Museum of Lapidary Art

by Scott Singleton

1st Vice President

The September General Meeting Presentation was on the Lizzadro Museum of Lapidary Art. It was given by Russ Kemp, with an informative running commentary by his wife, Doris. Russ and Doris have been volunteers at the museum since its inception in 1962. He became Chairman of the Museum Board of Directors in 1972. Russ also has had the distinction of being the Midwestern Federation of Mineralogical Societies President in 1963, American Federation of Mineralogical Societies (AFMS) Scholarship Chairman in 1967, and AFMS Chairman in 1979.

GEMS OF THE EARTH CARVED WITH SKILL AND IMAGINATION



Nephrite "Mutton Fat" Jade Hanging Bottle suspended by a continuous chain.



Chinese Guanyin, the Goddess of Mercy, is carved from a single boulder of multi-colored jadeite.



Jadeite Pagoda Incense Burner carved in China stands over two feet high.



"Castle Lizzadro" an 18k gold sculpture designed with cut diamonds and mineral specimens.



The rare Blue Jadeite Pagoda Censer was carved for the Chinese Emperor Qianlong (Ch'ien Lung) 1736-1795.



Delightful Dioramas of carved stone animals, birds and fish spark the imagination.

Russ told about the life of Joseph Lizzadro, Sr., lapidary hobbyist and collector. Mr. Lizzadro opened the museum in 1962 as a way to share his wonderful and expansive collection with others. Russ showed many photos he took of the magnificent collection of lapidary carvings, cabochons, and specimens housed in the Lizzadro Museum. The accompanying image is from the Lizzadro Museum of Lapidary Art brochure, and it shows only a few of the breathtaking items included in Russ's presentation.

For instance, the museum has an extensive collection of cameos, which Russ has a particular interest in since that is one of his hobbies. He has written about the history and different types of cameos. The standard cameo is an image carved in relief above its background, and the image and background are a single piece of stone. A "cuvette" is a cameo that has a concave, dished surface with the image raised above the surface but still below the level of the outer rim. An "assembled cameo" is one made out of two pieces—the background usually made of a colorful stone that highlights the raised image in the center. Doris brought a cameo that Russ had made of her for her birthday one year.

The Lizzadro Museum also has a mineral room and a fossil room where school groups can educate their classes on earth science fundamentals. The other rooms have extensive collections of jade and hardstone carvings, vases, and carved gemstones.

Rock Hunting in an Iraqi Combat Zone

(Rockhounding at its Extreme)

Part 4 of ??? – September 2005

by Sgt. Yonis E. Lone Eagle

Editor's note: When Sgt. Lone Eagle stated in his last article that he would be including color photos with his next article, I asked him if he would mind e-mailing the photos to me directly so I wouldn't have to use black-and-white images scanned from another newsletter. To conserve space in the newsletter, I have interspersed the many photos throughout in areas that might otherwise have been blank. He was also kind enough to send me his next report, and that is why there is no "from" line identifying the originating newsletter. A photo of Sgt. Lone Eagle taken in Mosul, Iraq is on the next page. He is a member of the Chaparral Rockhounds Gem and Mineral Club in Roswell, New Mexico.

Howdy fellow Hunters of Natures Wonders. I hope everyone is doing Okie-Dokie and finding lots of good stuff on y'all's local fieldtrips. I'm still here in Mosul, Iraq staying hydrated and trying to survive the extreme heat over here. Lately it's been up around 135 degrees during the day with cool nights around 110 degrees. Ahh, what coolness.

And for the latest war news... I doubt very seriously that you will ever see this information on any of the major news networks. But it's time for some good news for a change. All the following "Good News" can be verified on Department of Defense Web sites.

Did you know that when Saddam was in power, fewer than 10 countries had embas-

sies in Iraq? Now that he is gone, over 47 additional countries have reestablished their embassies in Iraq!

Did you know that when Saddam was in power, all government employees were only Sunni Arabs (the minority) totaling 500,000. Now that he is gone, the Iraqi government employs over

1.2 million Iraqi people from all ethnic groups in Iraq!



Did you know that when Saddam was in power, there were fewer than 1000 schools open throughout Iraq? Now that he is gone, over 3100 schools have been renovated, 364 schools are under rehabilitation, 263 new schools are now under construction, and over 38 new schools have been completed in Iraq! And did you know that over 4.3 million Iraqi children were enrolled in primary school by mid October 2004! When Saddam was in power, fewer than 500,000 were enrolled.

And did you know that Iraq's higher educational structure consists of 20 Universities, 46 Institutes or colleges, and four research centers? And did you know that 25 Iraq students departed for the United States in January 2004 for the reestablished Fulbright program?

Did you know that the Iraqi Navy is operational? They have five 100-ft. patrol craft, 34 smaller vessels, and a naval infantry regiment.

Did you know that Iraq's Air Force consists of three operational squadrons, nine reconnaissance and three US C-130 transport aircraft which operate day and night, and that 16 UH-1 helicopters and 4 Bell Jet Rangers will soon be added?

Did you know that Iraq has a counter-terrorist unit and a Commando Battalion?

Did you know that the Iraqi Police Service now has well over 55,000 fully trained and equipped police officers? And did you know that there are five Police Academies in Iraq that produce over 3500 new officers every 8 weeks?

Did you know there are more than 1100 building projects going on in Iraq? They include more than 364 schools, 67 public clinics, 15 hospitals, 83 railroad stations, 22 oil facilities, 93 water facilities, and 69 electrical facilities.

Did you know that 96% of Iraqi children under the age of five have received the first two series of polio vaccinations ever?

Did you know that there are 1,192,000 cell phone subscribers in Iraq, and that phone use has gone up 158%?

Did you know that Iraq now has free and open independent media that consists of 75 radio stations, 180 newspapers, and 10 television stations? This is the most in the history of Iraq.

Did you know that the Baghdad Stock Exchange opened in June of 2004?

Did you know that two candidates in the Iraqi presidential election recently had a televised debate, first time ever in the history of the nation?

And did you know that during the first national election in the history of Iraq this year that over 75% of the population voted for the first time? This included women voters for the first time. And it is estimated that 85 to 90% of the population will be voting in the next one. The US only averages about 35% of the population on Election Day.

And all this is just the beginning. This does not account for all the ongoing humanitarian missions the U.S. military and coalition forces are doing on a daily basis like delivering needed food, clean drinking water, and medical supplies to isolated villages and supplying them with electricity for the first time ever! It's interesting you never hear or see this kind of information on any of the news networks.

Now for the "Rockhound News." I did finally find some more information about the green rocks that I strongly suspect are from the jade family. I found that the closest nephrite in the region came from the Turkistan area, central Asia between Iran and Siberia. It was the earliest known source of nephrite that was used by early Chinese for carving. If what I found is jadeite or nephrite, it would be a new find and a new source in the area.

My rock tumbler has been tumbling some very unique and wonderful creations of "Mother Earth." Well folks, you know the old saying, "A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words." I'll let these pictures speak for themselves.

And I do have a question for my readers. It looks like I might have some problems getting all my rocks back to the states. Does anyone have any information that would help me get my rocks through U.S. Customs to be mailed back home??? If anyone has any information, please contact me via my e-mail.

The Holidays are coming up, and I'll be back home soon. I wish everyone a very happy and safe holiday season and good hunting on y'all's local trips. Until my next report... Yonis "Rock Pockets" Lone Eagle



Above: Petrified wood and a piece of agate, both found near Tikrit



Clockwise from upper left: His pet rock "Cyclops" found near Mosul; two-toned mystery rock found near Tikrit; two-toned rock from Kuwait; and fractured quartz found near Tikrit

AFMS President-Elect Message

What a Week!

by Jim Robinson

from AFMS Newsletter 10/05

We hope that all who attended the AFMS/Midwest Federation Show and Convention had a safe and pleasant trip back home. Those of you who were not able to attend missed a fantastic show! Some of the most beautiful cases you could ever imagine were in this show. I was particularly impressed with the ranch house, barn, wagon, tool, and equipment exhibit. Every item in the five cases was made of petrified wood. The workmanship of this exhibit is indescribable, every item cut and polished to the finest detail. I was told that it took more than 25 years to complete all the items in the five



case displays; it was truly a work of art. The craftsman who made all these things now is in his 90s, and he is still creating more items! I've always said that being involved in rockhounding keeps you young, and this fellow sure is proof of that.

I have been in the hobby for more than 25 years, many years exhibiting faceted stones and cabochons. I don't recall ever seeing an exhibit in any category receive a perfect score of 100 until the St Louis show. That is how good this show was. I didn't look at all the score sheets, but most of those I did look at were in the high nineties. I did not have the pleasure of judging in this show, but I will say that the judges were the some of the best in the Federation, and they were thorough. When we left the show around 3:30 p.m. on Friday, they were still judging!

The Midwest Federation and the Host Clubs deserve a hearty round of applause and our heartfelt thanks for a "JOB WELL DONE!"

Of course now our hearts go out to all the people in New Orleans, in southern Louisiana, and along the Gulf Coast of Alabama and Mississippi. We know that many of our rockhound friends were in the path of the storm. Let's do whatever we as rockhounds can to help.

Truth & Some Consequences #3

by Jon Spunaugle

*AFMS Conservation & Legislation Chair
from AFMS Newsletter 10/05*

More on LANDS USE PERMITS, as promised.

One of the best information sources on "fees" and "required permits" for access and recreational use of Federal lands is found on the Internet on the USDA Forest Service Web site (<http://www.fs.fed.us/>). It is found under the heading of "Passes and Permits."

The information found here describes the types and description of the permits available at the present time. The 2005 Recreational Fee Program is mentioned as a continuing program which suggests that no action has been taken to extend fees and permits to any new areas outside the already existing pilot programs. I quote from that Internet site for those not able to access this information from the Internet:

Passes & Permits

Most national forest system lands are open, free of charge for your use and enjoyment. Entrance and user fees may be charged at some areas. To protect yourself and the forest as well, certain restrictions may apply in some locations. There are several types of passes and permits:



Golden Passports

Entrance fees are required for entering designated federal recreation areas such as National Parks and National Monuments. The Golden Passport Program is a federal interagency recreation pass program comprised of three distinct Passports, including the Golden Access Passport, Golden Age Passport, and Golden Eagle Passport.

Adventure Pass

Managing recreation in the four National Forests located in the coastal and southern California travel zone requires new and innovative approaches to meet visitor expectations and maintain the health of the land. The National Forest Adventure Pass is a perfect example of testing new approaches to meet the needs of forest visitors to the Angeles, Cleveland, Los Padres and San Bernardino National Forests.

Unlike national or state parks, which vehicles access through controlled entry points, the coastal-southern California Forests are accessed round-the-clock via hundreds of different roads. This is a pass to use our local National Forests, facilities, and services. All visitors using these four forests for recreation are required to display the Pass in their vehicles when parked on National Forest land.

Recreation Fee Program

The 2005 Consolidated Appropriations Act (passed in November 2004) permits federal land management agencies to continue charging modest fees at campgrounds, rental cabins, high-impact recreation areas, and at day-use sites that have certain facilities. Recreation fees provide crucial resources that allow the federal agencies to respond to increased demand on federal lands. The goal is to provide visitors with a quality recreational experience through enhanced facilities and services.

Campfire Permits

You must have a campfire permit to use a stove, lantern, or campfire outside a developed campground or recreation area. The permit is your agreement to follow the campfire restrictions and regulations in effect.

The new legislation may result in a single pass called the "America the Beautiful Pass" to cover all of the required fees. So far however, little information has been disseminated on this "pass," and implementation is now scheduled for 2006 with public input opportunities in the interim. It is suggested that this pass would replace the "Golden "Passport Programs and Adventure Pass now available. Nothing on the cost of this new "Pass" is yet published.

The most current information found on the Internet is located on the Federal Land Managers Web sites www.fs.fed.us (US Forest Service) and www.blm.gov (Bureau of Land Management).

Fossil Collecting Legislation

A new Fossil collecting Bill "The Paleontological Resources Preservation Act of 2005," Senate Bill 263 (S-263), was passed by acclamation in the U. S Senate in July. It was referred to the U.S. House of Representatives just before the summer recess. The House Resources Committee and some of its subcommittees will consider it next. In the last Congress (the 108th) your letters, e-mails, and phone calls helped bottle up

this bill in the House Resources Committee. The same will be needed in this the 109th Congress if this bill is to be defeated or amended to meet the objections of amateur fossil collectors.

The Senate Bill can be reviewed on the Internet at <http://thomas.loc.gov> under the Bill number S-263 or obtained through your local Congressional Representative.

Wilderness and National Monument Designations

Loss of collecting locations due to wilderness designated by Congress has been negligible, both in the last Congress and in actions of the current 109th Congress. Several bills have been reintroduced from the last Congress but are not getting much action in Congressional Committees at the present time. No Presidential or Congressional nominations of new National Monuments have been made.

The Committee will continue to follow and report on these and other governmental issues effecting rockhounds.

We'll talk some more later.

Safety First—Lifting Safety

by Bill Klose

AFMS Safety Chair

from AFMS Newsletter 10/05

By our very nature of being rock hounds and in addition to lifting items in our day-to-day lives, we get involved with moving around heavy specimens and equipment. Prior to lifting an item, it is a good idea to consider a number of things.

- 1 How heavy or bulky is the item to be lifted or carried?
- 2 Are you in good shape, and have you had any back problems in the past after lifting? Many back problems are of an accumulative type where a repeated minor injury flares up and becomes worse.
- 3 How much space is there around the object to be lifted, and how much space is around where it is to be deposited?
- 4 What kind of obstacles are there along the transportation route such as trip hazards, holes, overhangs, etc.?

If any of these questions create a concern, or if in doubt, get help or use an aid such as a dolly, hand truck, or even a fork lift. Statistics show that 80% of back injuries occur in people between the ages of 30 and 50.

Be sure to utilize appropriate safety equipment such as safety shoes and work gloves when lifting. According to recent studies, the use of back belts (as seen at some stores and outlets) has not been shown to prevent back injuries.

Prior to the lift, make sure that you have adequate clearance for your hands and arms. Stand close to the load with your feet apart and toes pointed out to provide firm foot-

ing. Bend your knees, not your waist. Grip the load firmly with a “full palm grip.” Do not place your fingers under the load. Tighten your stomach muscles and then lift head and shoulders first, and with your back straight, use the strength of your legs to slowly and smoothly push up. “Jerk lifting” a load multiplies the stress on your lower back. Keep the load close to your body at all times and your back upright.

Never hold the load away from your body. Make sure you can see over the top of the load. If you should have to change direction with the load, move your whole body with your feet. Do not twist your body—that can be especially dangerous for your back.

To raise the load above shoulder height, first lift the load to waist height and rest it on the edge of a ledge, hip, or stand. Then shift hand positions so the load can be boosted after the knees are bent. The knees should be straightened as the object is lifted or shifted to the shoulders. If the load is to be placed on a table or shelf, first set it on the edge. Then push it far enough onto the support so it will not fall. The load should be released gradually as it is set down and then pushed into place with your hands in front.

When setting the load down, keep your back straight and upright, bending the knees. Lower the load slowly and smoothly. Do not add the weight of your body to the load.

Midland’s “Corals” Core Murals Project

by Danny Holeva

President of Arts Assembly of Midland

(Excerpt from his presentation given to MGMS 2/24/2005)

from The Roadrunner 9/05

One of the latest projects of the Arts Assembly of Midland is the “Corals” core mural project which has been transforming overpass support columns into monumentally-scaled stylized “core samples.” At present, these murals are located on the support columns of the overpasses at 1-20 and Rankin Highway, Big Spring and Loop 250, and the underpass at Front and Big Spring streets.

The inspiration for this project came when the board president, Dr. Tulsi Singh, was in Seattle and saw support columns painted with aquatic themes and thought we should do something with all the plain gray concrete that we have in our city. Since Dr. Singh was also connected with the Petroleum Museum, he put those two things together and thought that the basic shape of the overpass columns looked like big core samples. Using a recognizable image that links to our local oil industry, the Arts Assembly of Midland worked with the Texas Department of Transportation (who owns the real estate where the overpass columns are located) and within their guidelines had artist Janet Pontious come up with the mural designs using preapproved paint scheme colors.

The paint is a special oil-based acrylic that has a 7 to 10 year life, specially approved by the Texas Department of Transportation for use in this project. First the columns are cleaned, then they are painted. Volunteers come in, and using lifts and rollers with

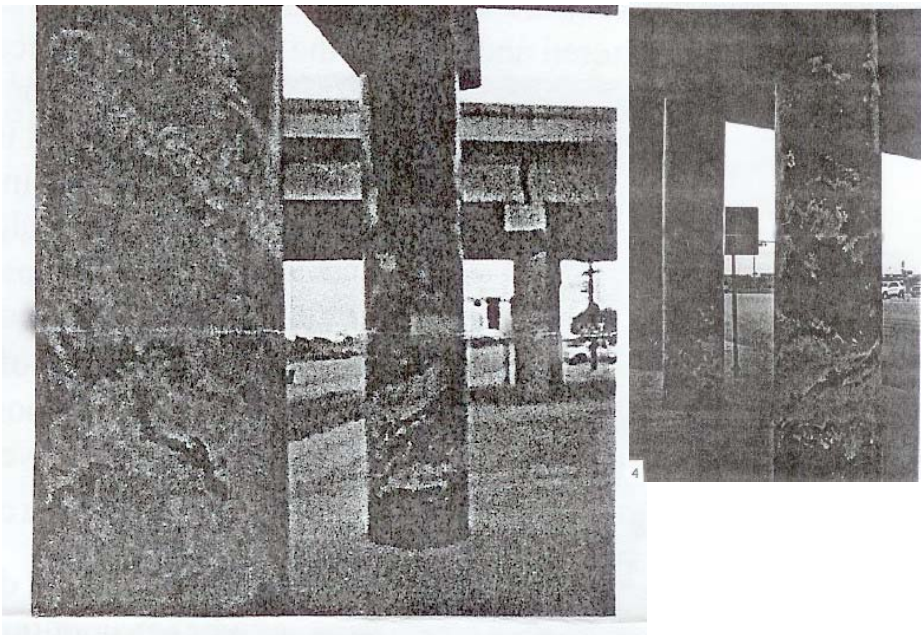
extensions, paint colors are rolled on the support columns. Then, artist Janet Pontious comes in and finishes each of the columns. After the painting is finished, the support columns are sealed with a clear sealant to help prolong the life of the finished murals.

The Abell-Hanger Foundation gave the Arts Assembly of Midland a \$10,000 matching grant for the "Corals" core murals project. One intersection costs \$3,000 to \$4,000 in materials, and of course the artist who helps direct the project and does the finishing painting of the support column murals is paid for her work. The Arts Assembly plans to have a maintenance fund for the murals, so they can be touched up after the sun, wind and other weather conditions have weather-beaten them sufficiently.

The underpass at Front and Big Spring Streets will be different. The columns on this underpass have already been painted in the usual "core sample" mural fashion. There are, however, two large walls that line the underpass. In the future, we hope to have a design contest held with local and regional artists submitting their designs for murals to be painted on these two underpass walls.

At this point in time, the support column painting part of this project has been completed.

Editor's note: This sounds like something that is very unique, very doable, and we certainly have enough support columns under our high-flying roadways. These scanned images are not very good, but they give some idea of what the "core samples" look like.



Petrified Wood End Table Project (Excerpt)

by Rich Geist

member: Pine Country Gem & Mineral Society Jasper, Texas

member: Central Texas Paleontological Society Austin, Texas

richgeist@earthlink.net

from The Pineywoods Rooter 8/05

Supplies needed: Unfinished end table, unfinished molding (if table doesn't have molding), tile cement, waterbased polyurethane (or similar finish), nails for molding (or glue), water-based stain (or similar finish), grout, brushes for urethane and varnish, and rock slices

This project may seem intimidating, but please keep an open mind. You take slices of rock, break them into usable pieces, glue them to a table top, put grout in the cracks, and then brush urethane on top of your rock, grout, and table.. You can *do* this. Please keep safety in mind when operating any equipment or when working with cements, group urethanes, or other chemicals. **Safety first!**

1. Use a rock saw to cut 3/16" to 1/4" thick slabs of your chosen rock material. You want to have a flat table surface, so **make sure that all of your slices have the same thickness**. You may want to break some of your slabs into smaller pieces if they are too large.
2. Use your grinding wheel, flat lap, hand-held polisher, or rock tumbler to remove any saw marks or other unwanted imperfections. You don't need to go any finer than 220 grit, but you can experiment. Just **make sure that all saw marks are removed**.
3. If you have an unfinished table with molding around the edge of the top of the table, go to step 4. If you don't, use nails or glue to attach the molding to the top of the table. The molding should be at least the same height as your rock slices, but it is preferable that the molding be higher than the rock slices. Sand to remove unwanted rough edges or glue.
4. Time to use the water-based stain. Follow the manufacturer's directions. You won't need to varnish or stain the area of the table where the rocks will be placed. The people who sell you the varnish can tell you what brush you should buy.
5. Lay all of your rock slab pieces on your unfinished table top. All of your rock slices should appear to be the same height. You will want the spacing between the rock slices to be uniform, including the space between the rock slices and the table molding. Remove your rocks from the table top, keeping them in the same order as they were on the table top. This will allow you to place each piece where it belongs after you apply the tile cement to the table top.
6. Apply a thin layer of tile cement to the table top. Place each of the rock slices where they belong on the tile cement. Remember, you want the space between the slices to be uniform. Follow the cement manufacturer's directions! Allow enough time for the tile cement to cure.

7. Use tile grout to fill in those uniform spaces between the rock slices and the molding. Follow the grout manufacturer's directions. You do not want any grout on top of your rock slices. Allow enough time for the grout to dry.

8. Time to use the urethane. Follow the urethane manufacturer's directions. This is a water-based polyurethane, and it is also the sealer for the water-based stain used in step 4. Use a brush to apply the urethane to the top of the rock slices and to the table. The people who sell you the urethane can tell you what brush you should buy. After the urethane dries, decide whether you need another coat.

9. Enjoy your "one of a kind" table.

Some Stuff To Think About:

- While cabbers look for "high-end" material, you won't need to.
- Pitted rocks might add interesting character if your table has an "antique" look. You will want to seal the rock surfaces with the urethane **before** adding the grout.
- Don't buy the cheapest table you can find. When you finish your project, you will want the rock slices to look great. If your table looks "cheap," so will your rock slices.
- Grout is available in different colors, so keep an open mind. A brown or cream colored grout would look great with petrified wood.
- If you have a trim saw and a lot of time, you could cut your rock slices into squares, rectangles, triangles, or other shapes. This would allow you more design freedom.
- Don't forget about fossils. Some fossils can be polished and therefore could make an incredible table top.

Closing Comments:

As rockhounds and lapidarists we seem to focus on what I call "high-end" projects. I believe this intimidates many rockhounds, new or old, from taking what seems like a giant first step into rock-related projects. Fact is, most projects don't require that giant first step. All you need is a small amount of knowledge about what you are doing. Isn't this one of the reasons you joined a rock club? Rock club meetings allow you to socialize with others who are just as "nuts" as you. Rock club meetings also allow you to learn fascinating information about rocks, fossils, minerals, and the lapidary arts. And yes, that includes all of you wrappers and knappers out there. Informative discussions and presentations are just one facet of your rock club experience.

Some rockhounds don't get involved in lapidary projects because they don't have access to rock saws, cabochon grinding machines, tumblers, or other rock-related equipment. Who said you have to own all of this equipment to involve yourself in lapidary projects? The simple truth is that while owning all of this equipment is nice, it isn't necessary for all projects. This table project can be completed without access to any of this equipment. The only requirement would be that you get your rock slabs from a friend or from a rock supplier. Some friends may charge you for the use of their saw—a reasonable request since operating rock-related equipment has its costs. Rock shows are also a great place to buy your rock slabs. Just make sure that there are no visible saw marks.

ShowTime 2005

October 15-16	Amarillo, TX	Goldenspread Gem & Mineral Society Amarillo Civic Center; Dee Hawkins 806-372-3949; dhawks@nts-online.net
October 21-23	Victoria, TX	Victoria Gem & Mineral Society Victoria Community Center 2905 E. North St.; Mary Allison 361-552-5857; allison@tisd.net
October 28-30	Glen Rose, TX	Fossilmania Dallas and Austin Paleontological Societies Somervell County Expo Center, Hwy. 67 210-492-9163; morgan@uthscsa.edu
November 4-6	Round Rock, TX	Central Texas Paleontology Society Old Settler's Assn. Headquarters Old Settler's Park, Hwy. 79; Ron Root 512-345-6718, 512-936-5974 ron@grassrootstrader.com
November 11-13	Pascagoula, MS	Mississippi Gulf Coast Gem & Mineral Soc. Canceled due to Hurricane Katrina John M. Wright; 228-875-9192 osjbw@datasync.com
November 12-13	DeRidder, LA	DeRidder Gem & Mineral society Beauregard Parish Fair Exhibit Hall 610 West Dr.; Adam Valin, 337-585-3693
November 18-20	Marietta, GA	Cobb County Gem & Mineral Society Cobb County Civic Center 548 S. Marietta Pkwy.; Mike Ingraham mingram2@mindspring.com
November 19-20	Mesquite, TX	Dallas Gem & Mineral Society Resistol Rodeo Arena Exhibition Hall I-635 and Military Parkway (Exit 4)
December 2-4	Austin, TX	SCFMS Conv. and Austin G&M Society Show Palmer Events Center, 900 Barton Springs Rd. Laura Dow, 512-458-9546 gemcapers@austin.rr.com
December 2-4	El Paso, TX	El Paso Mineral & Gem Society El Maida Auditorium, 6331 Alabama Jeanette, 877-533-7153; gemcenter@aol.com

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

2005		DECEMBER				2005
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3 10-12 Youth Section 11-5 Shop Open 5:00 Xmas Party
4	5	6 7:30 Board Meeting	7 7:30 Mineral Section	8	9	10 11-5 Shop Open
11	12 No Day Light	13 7:30 Show Comm	14 No Faceting Section	15	16	17 No Youth Section 11-5 Shop Open
18	19 No Lapidary	20 No Paleo Section	21 No Mineral Section	22	23	24 11-5 Shop Open Christmas Eve
25 Xmas	26 Hanukkah	27 No General Meeting	28	29	30	31 11-5 Shop Open New Year's Eve

**The BACKBENDER'S
GAZETTE**
*The Newsletter of the Houston
Gem & Mineral Society*

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