



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

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

Volume XXXVII - No. 2

February 2006

## **President's Message**

*by Scott Singleton  
HGMS President*



**S**ince I am writing this message at the end of the Christmas season, my thoughts and feelings gravitate heavily toward being thankful for the privileges we have and the relative comfort in which we live, all of which we have come to expect as normal. But taking the world as a whole, it is not normal, and we are indeed privileged. For that I am thankful.

Case in point: I trust everyone knows that there are only three clubs in the state of Texas that have their own clubhouse. Besides our own, the Austin club and the Arlington club also have buildings that they own. Our shop, paleo cleaning lab, and jewelry fabrication teaching room are unparalleled. Most clubs can only dream about having the things we have. Privileged? You bet.

But it can be taken away in a split second—witness the Harrison County (southern Mississippi) Gem and Mineral Society. They also had a shop. Now they have nothing. They're not even sure where many of their club members are, or if they're alive.

We came very close to being in the same situation. But our time apparently had not come. Next time it might. So let's not grow complacent. Be thankful for and very appreciative of what we have.



## **February Program**

*by Darwin "Matt" Dillon  
HGMS 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President*

**M**s. Katalin Markus was last year's recipient of our scholarship gift to the University of Houston and was chosen by her professor, Mr. Val Link.

Ms. Markus will give us a presentation including show and tell items and a slide show at the February 28, 2006 General Meeting. Her talk will include some background

---

*February Program Information continued on page 4*

## Contents

President's Message .....	1
February Program .....	1
HGMS Officers .....	3
Purpose of HGMS .....	3
Agates Are HOT .....	4
HGMS Entries for the 2006 Bulletin Editors Contest .....	6
Day Light Section .....	6
Lapidary Section Program—February .....	7
Mineral Section .....	7
February Paleo Section Presentation .....	8
An Ode to 2005, Year of Hurricane Katrina .....	8
In Our Library .....	9
HGMS Board Meeting .....	10
Truth and Some Consequences .....	13
News from the American Lands Access Association .....	15
AFMS Safety Message .....	17
Having Fun—Junior Activities .....	18
SCFMS President's Message .....	19
Need a place to keep all your polished cabs? .....	20
Copper Flashing Removal Tip .....	20
Birthstones .....	21
ShowTime 2006 .....	22
Calendars .....	23

---

*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 and Webmaster 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 March issue by Wednesday, February 8, 2006. (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>.

---

*February Program Information continued from page 1*

---

and/or biographical information and will cover her studies and work in Mr. Link's class as well as in other venues. Ms. Markus began her studies in Budapest, Hungary and in Hagen, Germany approximately seven years ago, and she moved to Houston in 2000 along with her family. After taking language classes at HCC, she transferred to the University of Houston where her educational focus is on jewelry design and metal arts under the guidance of Professor Link. Her stated goal is to establish her own studio here in Houston and to continue her education by taking classes at the University of Houston and at schools in Germany and Italy.

### **Agates Are HOT**

*by Art Smith*

*Member of the Houston Gem & Mineral society*

If you are a mineral collector in the United States, you may not know that agates are hot items because they are usually relegated to the realm of the lapidary. However in Europe, agates and agate occurrences are often written about and pictured in mineral magazines, and many mineral collectors also collect agates and other lapidary stones. In the last couple of years *Mineralien Welt* incorporated the *Achat* (German for agate) magazine. This year's (2005) Munich show in October had agates as their central theme. The October issue of *Lapis* had two articles on agate—one German location in the lower Rein area and another in Patagonia, Argentina.

An ardent mineral collector I know has recently become interested in agates—thunder eggs in particular. Although he is still very much a mineral collector, I asked him what attracted him to agates and thunder eggs. He replied that their individual uniqueness and beauty is obvious, but their affordability compared to many mineral specimens is also a factor. But the main reason is they can still be collected, and there are some localities where you can dig for a fee and still find good specimens. In addition, new localities are not as difficult to find and access as are mineral localities.

I was attracted to the banded or fortification agates in my beginning mineral collecting days. When I was working at Mount Rushmore in South Dakota during the summers of 1959, I made a collecting trip to the Fairburn agate beds off the east side of the Black Hills. I searched fruitlessly for several hours with not even a hint of an agate. A small one-cloud thunder shower hit, and it rained for 5 to 10 minutes. In about 15 minutes I found three rocks with agate banding on them. Once everything dried up I again found nothing. Two of the rocks I picked up were teasers and eventually discarded. The other is a 1 by 2 inch Fairburn agate. After it was polished, I realized it is not a super piece because one of the main bands is clear and colorless and detracts from its overall appearance. I had thoughts of going back with a lot of water and sprayer but I never did, mainly because I would not have been able to buy the equipment.

I also collected Teepee Canyon west of Custer, South Dakota where the agates occur in place in a layer of limestone. I did not dig there because the area was so badly undercut, but working the spoil piles provided good examples of the mostly red and

white banded agate. They were quite common in the late 1950s, but I have not seen any since.

Recently in the International Show I purchased two very thin slabs of an India moss agate that is called Mocha Stone or Mokka agate. They were not cheap but their beauty is exceptional, and I had never seen any moss agate that good except in pictures. They were supposed to have been in the collection of the bead dealer's father who was from India. I am a sucker for stuff like that—I have seen it in pictures but never the actual thing, and I know they are very special.

Although these were slabs, most agate collectors generally do not slab their specimens but instead polish the most promising natural surface of the stone.

The only other agate collecting I remember doing was in Wyoming where I searched for Montana agate that was a popular jewelry item in the Mount Rushmore gift shop. I learned quickly that finding an exceptionally good agate with an interesting design is usually very rare. I did not find one so came away with nothing.

There are a lot of fair but not exciting agates of every type, and finding an exceptional agate in size, form, pattern, or color is rare, and a combination of these is a very rare treasure indeed.

There have been several recently published significant books on agate. The most recent is *Agates* by Johanne Zenz and Rainer Bode published by Bode in Haltern, Germany. It is telephone book-size with 656 pages and an abundance of colored photos. However the best part is that the text is in English. I got the library's copy from the Nevada Mineral and Book Company, 645 Pueblo Blvd, Henderson, Nevada 89015. Walt Lombardo, the owner, is a geologist and mineral collector and long-time book dealer at Tucson and elsewhere who has opened a shop in the last four years or so. His Web site is <http://minbooks.net> and his e-mail is [minbooks@aol.com](mailto:minbooks@aol.com). The cost plus shipping is not cheap at \$98.50, but I think you will find it interesting and an excellent value. When I got the book I looked in the table of contents for Texas but did not find it. Texas has inadvertently been omitted from the table of contents but is covered from pages 560 to 564. In our library this book will be filed under Lapidary – Gemstones – Quartz – Agate – Zenz. The location is in the second room to the left as you go in. However, it is not available for checkout.

#### **Other books on agate in the same area are:**

Dake, H. C. 1951 *The Agate Book, a handbook for the agate collector and cutter*. Mineralogist Publishing Company, Portland Oregon, 64 pages.

Pabian, R. K. and A. Zarins 1994 *Banded Agates: Origin and Inclusions*. Nebraska Geological Survey Circular 12, 32 pages.

Quick, L. 1951 *The Book of Agates*. Chilton, Radnor, PA, 232 pages.

Shaub, B. M. 1989 *The Book of Agates, Thunder Eggs, and other Nodular Structures*. Agate Publishing Company, 105 pages.

Wolter, S. F. 2001 *The Lake Superior Agate*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, Outer Net Publishing, 201 pages.

**Under Mexico:**

Cross, B. L. 1996 *The Agates of Northern Mexico*. Burgess International, 201 pages

**Under South Dakota:**

Clark, Roger 1998 *South Dakota's Fairburn Agate*. Silver Wind, 80 pages

Clark, Roger, editor 1998-2005 *The Fairburn Agate Trader*. A newsletter on agates.

**HGMS Entries for the 2006 Bulletin Editors Contest**

by Phyllis George

HGMS Editor

We just finished presenting the trophies and awards earned by HGMS members in the 2005 Bulletin Editors Contest at the Christmas party (see the January 2006 BBG). It's already time to submit our entries for the 2006 contest. These need to be in the hands of Ike House, SCFMS Bulletin Aids Chair, no later than January 20. Our entries are the following:

Category	Name	Title	2005 BBG Issue
<b>Junior Original Article</b>	Donald Elrod (8 years)	The Caverns	May
<b>Adult Original Article</b>	Sandra Stevens	Llano Fieldtrip—By Myself	July
	James Wark	Precious Metal Mine	September
	D.R. "Matt" Dillon	From Dream to Reality	October
<b>Original Article—Advanced</b>	Art Smith	Fakes! Fraud? Enhanced and Altered Mineral Specimens	May
	Neal Immega	Ammonites—Shared Efforts	September
<b>Feature</b>	Dean Lagerwall	Creating Mini-Flats	April
<b>Poetry—Adult</b>	Mary Ann Mitscherling	Rockhounding	November
<b>Large Bulletin</b>	Phyllis George, Editor	The Backbender's Gazette	July, November
<b>Web Site</b>	Phyllis George, Webmaster	<a href="http://www.hgms.org">www.hgms.org</a>	—

The results of both the SCFMS and AFMS contests will be made known simultaneously. The SCFMS show, to be hosted by the ARK-LA-TEX Gem & Mineral Society, is scheduled August 19–20 at the Bossier Civic Center, Bossier City, Louisiana. The combined AFMS and SFMS show, to be hosted by the Middle Tennessee Gem & Mineral Society, is scheduled for August 14-20 at the Tennessee State Fairgrounds, Creative Arts Building, Nashville, Tennessee. Talk about a photo finish!

**Day Light Section**

Frances Arrighi is having computer problems and was unable to create a report for inclusion in this month's BBG.



## Lapidary Section Program—February

by David Hawkins



**T**his month we will be making a HAMMER—a high-impact plastic hammer.

It seems like I never have enough hammers, and plastic hammers are an easy answer to that problem. They are fun to make, and they're the right price. A hammer with a 2" diameter head and 6" handle costs about \$3.00; a 1.75" x 6" hammer costs about \$2.50; and a 1.25" x 6" hammer costs about \$2.25. I will bring the material. You put it together and shape it as you like.

Plastic hammers can be used in anticlastic forming or when you need to shape metal. Sometimes all you want is a small dome on your metal. A plastic-hammer is perfect for this, plus it never mars the surface.

Come to the Lapidary Section meeting February 20 and try this project. You will have fun doing this one!

P.S.: A 2"x5" pear-shaped plastic-hammer sells for \$18.95 in the Rio Grande Catalog.



## Mineral Section



by Steve Blyskal, Chairperson & Dean Lagerwall, Assistant Chairperson

**M**ineral Section meetings occur on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays of each month from September (3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday only) through June (1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday only).

### Upcoming Meeting Topics

**February 1: Video Night:** As many of our members will be visiting the Tucson Gem & Mineral Shows, we will take this opportunity to show one of the Section's new DVDs. It will be projected on the wall for that movie theater feel. Refreshments will be provided.

**February 15: Social / Tucson Show Review:** This is our opportunity for those who were lucky enough to make it to Tucson to review the shows and to tease us with the goodies they obtained. Refreshments will be provided.

**March 1: Social / Clear Lake Show Review:** We will discuss the Clear Lake Show. Bring in any show purchases and let us drool. Additional Show & Tell material purchased at Tucson that didn't make it to the previous meeting is also welcome. Refreshments will be provided.

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.

## February Paleo Section Presentation

by Scott Singleton

**F**ebruary's presentation will be by Andy Mortimer. You may remember Andy if you attended the November General Meeting (he also gave that presentation). Andy is a geologist with ENI Petroleum which is the state oil company of Italy. He recently completed a multi-year posting in Jakarta, Indonesia, where he was able to search out and find the local sources of petrified wood that have recently 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 wood is not in the normal state that we are all used to seeing petrified wood. 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. By invitation of the Paleo Section, Andy will also have specimens with him that are for sale. He has a number of damaged pieces that he's willing to part with for a very reasonable price.

## An Ode to 2005, Year of Hurricane Katrina

*(Sung to the tune of Twelve Days of Christmas)*

by Sunday Bennett

*Member of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society*

**O**n the first day of the season, Katrina gave to me...  
A bass boat in my oak tree.

On the second day of the season, Katrina gave to me...  
Two neighbors swimming and a bass boat in my oak tree.

On the third day of the season, Katrina gave to me...  
Three trailers floating, two neighbors swimming, and a bass boat in my oak tree.

On the fourth day of the season, Katrina gave to me...  
Four broken windows, three trailers floating, two neighbors swimming, and a bass boat in my oak tree.

On the fifth day of the season, Katrina gave to me...  
Five new car dings, four broken windows, three trailers floating, two neighbors swimming, and a bass boat in my oak tree.

On the sixth day of the season, Katrina gave to me...  
Six roofs a flying, five new car dings, four broken windows, three trailers floating, two neighbors swimming, and a bass boat in my oak tree.

On the seventh day of the season, Katrina gave to me...



Seven miles eroded, six roofs a flying, five new car dings, four broken windows, three trailers floating, two neighbors swimming, and a bass boat in my oak tree.

On the eighth day of the season, Katrina gave to me...

Eight reporters crying, seven miles eroded, six roofs a flying, five new car dings, four broken windows, three trailers floating, two neighbors swimming, and a bass boat in my oak tree.

On the ninth day of the season, Katrina gave to me...

Nine ruined shrimp nets, eight reporters crying, seven miles eroded, six roofs a flying, five new car dings, four broken windows, three trailers floating, two neighbors swimming, and a bass boat in my oak tree.

On the tenth day of the season, Katrina gave to me...

Ten senators all pointing, nine ruined shrimp nets, eight reporters crying, seven miles eroded, six roofs a flying, five new car dings, four broken windows, three trailers floating, two neighbors swimming and a bass boat in my oak tree.

On the eleventh day of the season Katrina gave to me...

Eleven oil platforms busted, ten senators pointing, nine shrimp nets ruined, eight reporters crying, seven miles eroded, six roofs a flying, five new car dings, four broken windows, three trailers floating, two neighbors swimming, and a bass boat in my oak tree.

On the twelfth day of the season, Katrina gave to me...

Twelve FEMA forms to fill, eleven oil platforms busted, ten senators pointing, nine shrimp nets ruined, eight reporters crying, seven miles eroded, six roofs a flying, five new car dings, four broken windows, three trailers floating, two neighbors swimming, and a bass boat in my oak tree.

## In Our Library

*by Art Smith, Librarian*

**T**he library finances for 2005 are as follows:

### CREDIT

\$567.79 – money in the treasury from 2004

\$528.00 – magazine and book sales

\$1027.00 – soda sales at the clubhouse, soda is donated

**\$2122.79 TOTAL CREDIT**

### EXPENSES

(\$718.28) for book and magazine binding

(\$964.66) for book and supply purchases

**(\$1682.94) TOTAL EXPENSES**

**\$439.85 money in the treasury 1/1/2006**

A less up-to-date but more detailed summary for last year and also from previous years is in the desk drawer. We have quite a bit of binding to catch up on, so the surplus will quickly be spent. With our new bindery, I have to do volumes of the same publication in pairs that cost \$48 each. Single volumes not in a pair are \$78 each. This means that journals and magazines that I normally have bound every year will now be bound every two years unless they are done in two separate volumes.

I have ordered a DVD that is about the formation of sedimentary agates. It is an AFMS program that I can get because I get the Fairburn Agate Collector and Trader newsletter. I will review the program when I get it and put it in the library.

I notice that one of the Sweet Home Rhodochrosite DVDs in our library has been out for awhile. Will the person who borrowed it please bring it back?

The final auction of slabs and other items from the Dominican Sisters is in the silent auction that will end the night of the General Meeting, January 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:30PM. The items have all been grouped, and looking over the bids so far, there are some terrific bargains. Get in a bid before you miss out.

**HGMS Board Meeting**  
*January 3, 2006*  
*by Margaret Hardman-Muye*  
*HGMS Secretary*

X	President	Scott Singleton	X	Faceting Rep.	Paula Rutledge
X	1 <sup>st</sup> Vice President	Matt Dillon	X	Lapidary Rep.	Dave Hawkins
X	2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice President	Beverly Mace	X	Mineral Rep.	Art Smith
X	Treasurer	Paul McGarry	X	Paleontology Rep.	Terry Brawner
X	Treasurer Assistant	Lowell Stouder	X	Day Light Rep.	Sunday Bennett
X	Secretary	Margaret Hardman-Muye		Past President	Norm Lenz

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM

**Approval of Minutes:** The October 2005 and December 2005 minutes were approved as corrected. Sunday will make the changes and will file the corrected copies in the 2005 binder.

**Treasurer's Report:**

- **Statement of expenses and income:** Paul McGarry will have a final updated statement for 2005 at the next Board meeting. Currently we have an increase in cash of \$1,125.48 and \$1,818.61 in interest, for a total of \$1,944.09.
- **Web site bill:** The iland bill has been paid twice. Paul and Phyllis George both paid the bill. The company has agreed to return one of the payments although it has not yet been received.
- **Copy of IRS tax returns:** Paul was asked to bring the income tax returns for past years to the next Board meeting. These returns need to be filed in the Board notebooks.
- **Check rewrite for dealer refund (Lonestar Meteorites):** This dealer has re-

quested that his refund check be made out to him personally, not to the company. Paul and Lowell will research this and will rewrite the check if appropriate.

- **Scholarship:** Confirmation letters were received from the University of Houston and from Val Link. Art gave the letters to Tom Wright. Dave was asked to get the letters from Tom so they can be filed with our permanent records in the 2005 notebook.
- **Division of labor between Treasurer and Asst. Treasurer.** Paul and Lowell have met, but no decisions have been made yet about who will do which tasks. They will meet and report to the Board in February.

### Committee and Section Reports:

- **Program:** Matt Dillon reported that the program for January will be "Field Trip Investigation" (or "how to plan a field trip"). He passed out an outline of the program. For February, he has invited the student who won the scholarship to make a presentation regarding her classes and work.
- **Show:** Sigrid Stewart was not present, but sent word that she has a publicity and show budget proposal which she will present to the Board in February.
- **Education:**
  - o Dave Hawkins says he would like to do some general advertising for our classes. He suggested that we put a business card ad in the Houston Geological Society Bulletin. Putting this ad in 10 issues would cost \$135.00. Another place he suggested advertising is the Texas Medical Center News, which has a wide circulation. A Business Directory ad would cost \$135.00 a month. David was asked to bring back a prototype of the ad he wants to run. The Board would like to see that before we approve spending this money.
  - o There was discussion about publishing articles in various places as a free way to get publicity. Several other suggestions were made, as well.
  - o If this committee wants to do on-going advertisement, they need to present a plan and a budget.
  - o David also announced plans for a new class on stone setting to be held in March.
- **Library:** Art reported that the pictures have been received from Eddie Bartsch, and have been hung on the wall in the meeting room. An acknowledgement letter has been sent. His report on expenditures and new additions to the library will go in the next BBG.
- **Refreshments:** Scott will request a refreshment committee at the next General Meeting. Sunday volunteered to head this committee. If there is no interest, there will be no refreshments.

### Scott Singleton proposed to officially disband the following committees:

- **By-law Committee.** The decision was to disband the committee as its work is done
- **Site Committee:** It was decided that this committee will continue. The committee consists of Paula Rutledge and Phyllis George.
- **Nominating Committee.** The decision was to disband the committee.

There were no **Action Items** from the last Board meeting.

**Old Business:** Paula asked if the SCFMS dues have been paid. They have been paid.

**New Business:**

- **Results of the December auction:** The money from the auction has not been turned in to Paul. Sunday Bennett will check with Rusty Bennett to see if he knows who has the money. It is possible that Wayne Barnett or Norm Lenz has it, but Norm currently is out of town.
- **Harrison County G&M Society:** Phyllis has been in e-mail contact with the man who sent us the original e-mail about the club being destroyed by Hurricane Katrina. He reports that the society will be very grateful for any donation. Before we decide to actually send a check, Phyllis will find out to whom it should be sent as there needs to be some accountability. After we have more information, we will decide on the amount we will donate.

There was a discussion about whether it was more appropriate for the Southeast Federation of Mineralogical Societies (SFMS) to be the coordinator of the effort. We decided that there was no problem with us presenting the check to the Harrison Co. Gem and Mineral Society ourselves, once we have good contact information. We did think the SFMS should be informed of what action we take.

At the auction, it was suggested that the three big items be auctioned off instead of sending the equipment itself. The membership agreed with this plan. The money from those items totaled \$675.00. Once we get information regarding where to send the check, we will decide on how much to send.

- **Silent auction:** Art does not have an address for Jim Cross, but has sent an e-mail to him with a statement of the value of the items.
- **Dr. Zingula's rock saw:** This rock saw was offered to us for \$100. According to information from Neal Immega, this saw is not in working order and would take over \$200.00 to fix. It was decided not to accept this donation.
- **Clubhouse:** A number of issues were discussed:
  - o Lights or ballasts in the meeting room need to be replaced. According to David, Tom Wright is getting the bulbs. David said he will replace the bulbs as he has time.
  - o The need for additional lighting in the garage area was discussed. It was agreed that we should have better lighting; however, when we get it will depend on when someone has time to add a fixture.
  - o We discussed the need for a way to store our folding chairs that does not take up so much room. Paula suggested a rolling, two-level rack. She will check on prices and availability and report back to the Board in February.
  - o The clubhouse needs additional tables. Beverly agreed to check prices on plastic tables similar to what we have now. She will report back to us in February.
  - o Sunday reported that the security light outside the back door is not working, creating a safety hazard. It is unknown if the bulb is simply burned out or if it's a wiring issue.

- o Art suggested that we might want to hire someone to come in once or twice a month to do general cleaning of the clubhouse. No decision was made regarding this idea.

- **Review of BBG submission deadlines:** Beverly showed us what the time frames are for publication, about a week from the deadline to when the BBG gets mailed. The problem is that the post office seems very sporadic about when mail is actually delivered, so some people get the BBG early and some get it late. After a discussion, it was decided to leave the deadlines as they are.

Because of the time, it was decided to table the following agenda items until our next meeting:

- **501c3 requirements:**
  - o What are they?
  - o Are we in compliance?
- **Procedure for selection of Show Chairman and Asst. Show Chairman:**
  - o Is it satisfactory?
  - o Recommendations for revision of procedure
- **Committee on abuse prevention**
  - o As discussed in the fall, committee to be formed to develop a policy and written material to deal with this subject.
  - o Matt and Terry Proctor have already written position statements on the issue. These emails were passed to the Board.
  - o Committee was preliminarily constructed consisting of Matt Dillon and Norm Lenz.
  - o Committee was (is) to begin operations in beginning of 2006.

Meeting Adjourned about 9:15 PM.

### **Truth and Some Consequences**

*by Jon Spunaugle*

*AFMS Conservation/Legislation Chair  
from AFMS Newsletter 12/2005–1/2006*

Talking points on The Paleontological Resources Preservation Act, Senate Bill S-263 now being considered by the U.S. House of Representatives Natural Resources Committee.

This Bill is, for all practical purposes, identical to the fossil bills considered by the 108th Congress in 2003–4. Therefore, past comments by previous AFMS and ALAA (American Lands Access Association) reviewers applies to this latest introduced Bill, S-263. Again, as in the last Congress, the Bill was passed by the U.S. Senate by voice vote and has been referred to the U.S. House of Repre-



sentatives for consideration and possible passage. In the last Congress, several reviewers called it a "bad bill" primarily because it criminalized fossil collecting with outrageous penalties for picking up a fossil on public land. The Bill was also criticized for its reward provisions for turning in violators, which seemed ripe for abuse. Those same statements apply to the current version.

The S-263 Bill has some good points and some bad points. For someone like myself who helped write the first version of the "rockhound" fossil collecting bill and worked to defeat the so called "Baccus Bill" in 1992-3, I can clearly see some improvements. Several of the objections the amateur fossil collecting public voiced to the original 1992-3 Bill have been remedied in this latest S-263 version. However, several of the remaining "rockhound" objections remain a part of Senate Bill S-263 as passed by the U.S. Senate.

### **Some of the remaining objections to Bill S-263 in its current form are:**

The Bill fails to make any distinction between scientifically significant and commonly found fossils. Instead it defines the paleontological resource it would protect to mean "any fossilized remains, trace, or imprints of organisms preserved in or on the earth's crust"...except for archaeological resources or those associated with an archaeological resource. (The latter are covered under an archaeological resources protection act passed many years ago.) Casual collecting of a reasonable amount of common invertebrate and plant fossils may be allowed under this Bill in Section 5 at the discretion of the Secretary (the land managers). Therefore amateurs "may" be able to collect certain common invertebrate or plant fossils found on Federal lands, but not necessarily. Only hand tools could be used, and collecting cannot cause more than a "negligible surface disturbance" (undefined). Collecting common vertebrate fossils such as fish fossils, sharks teeth, and the like, would be a violation of the act, as would picking up an isolated single dinosaur bone fragment in the badlands of the western United States if it were on Federal land.

All other collecting of paleontological resources on Federal lands would require a permit issued by the Secretary (the land managers) and be given only to "qualified" applicants. The resources collected would remain the property of the United States with the resources collected and the associated data deposited in an approved repository when collected under a permit.

Further, there would be no commercial collection of fossils allowed. This would preclude anyone, amateur or otherwise, from selling, trading, or bartering any fossil collected on Federal land. Not only does this affect amateurs, but it completely eliminates the valuable and considerable contributions to paleontology that commercial fossil entities have provided in the past in discovering, extracting, and preparing of fossils. The dinosaur "Sue," a *Tyrannosaurus Rex*, is a perfect example.

Penalties for criminal violation of any provisions of this Bill would result in fines in accordance with Title 18 of the U.S. Code and/or imprisonment for up to 10 years. Title 18 provides for fines ranging up to \$5,000 and up to \$10,000 in certain circumstances, or up to \$250,000 in certain cases. Such cases would be tried in Federal

Courts.

Civil penalties are also provided in the Bill and can go as high as double the replacement cost or restoration cost of the resource involved. The value is to be determined by the land managers. No due process is required under the civil penalty provisions other than a required notice of a hearing. A judicial review petition is allowed only within a thirty day period following any civil penalty assessment, but the court is allowed to rule only on the evidence presented in the hearing report. Forget “innocent until proven guilty” and the right to a trial by your peers.

The Rewards and Forfeiture Section, Section 9, allows the Secretary of Interior or Secretary of Agriculture to pay a reward for information leading to a civil (or criminal) penalty. Rewards can go as high as \$500. So, you might want to look out for any neighbors who don't like you if you have any vertebrate fossils in your collection, especially, if you cannot prove where they came from. Most fossils I know of don't say “Made in China” or “Hocho en Mexico” on them. And how many of you kept receipts on items purchased—or can you vouch for exactly where the vertebrate fossils really came from even if you did purchase them and can prove it?. The Bill calls for a person to exercise “due care” in knowing if the resource was excavated or removed from Federal land. Again “due care” is undefined.

Also subject to forfeiture under this Bill are “paleontological resources with respect to which a violation...occurred and which are in possession of any person and all vehicles and equipment of any person that were used in connection with the violation.” I'm not a lawyer, but I do have knowledge of what has happened to several collectors and to several hobbyists in the past with regard to property confiscated, rightly or wrongly. In most cases, nothing was ever returned regardless of its being legally obtained.

So, I worry for fossil collectors if this Bill S-263 becomes law. The best way to prevent its passage in its present form is for each and every one of us to communicate your feelings to your Congressional Representatives. A copy of the Bill is found on the Internet by using any of the Internet search engines, Google, Yahoo, MSN, etc.

There is nothing new on the other issues we are following including the America the Beautiful Pass and legislation that would restrict public access to federal lands.

### **News from the American Lands Access Association**

*by Marve Starbuck, ALAA President*

*from AFMS Newsletter 12/2005–1/2006*

**I**would like to bring everyone up to date on what is going on with the American Lands Access Association (ALAA).

New officers for the association were elected at the annual meeting held during the AFMS Convention in St. Louis, MO this past August. Marve Starbuck was elected ALAA President and Bruce Stinchcomb as Vice President. Most of you know who I am. Bruce lives in the greater St. Louis area, and he is quite active in his clubs and concerned about legislative actions that would limit our collecting activities.

Under normal conditions, the new officers would start their term of office on January 1, 2006, but because of previous ALAA inactivity and the pressing needs stemming from pending legislation in Washington, the Directors encouraged the new officers to begin work immediately.

In the near future, I intend to create a new Web site and keep it up to date. We'll also be producing a newsletter for the members to keep them informed on what's happening in DC and elsewhere and on how these actions affect our collecting rights.

One of the major concerns discussed at the St Louis meeting was the inactivity of ALAA this past year. The officers and Directors felt somewhat guilty at the lack of action and thus decided to extend membership for those who paid dues in 2005 for another year. Thus, if you paid dues to ALAA in 2005, your membership has been extended for one year. We continue to seek new members. Donations to help fund our expenses are always welcome.

If you are a current member of ALAA, please send me your e-mail address so we can use that method of communicating with you. This way you'll be kept abreast of late breaking news.

I'm going to need help in monitoring the BLM, Forest Service, the Federal Register etc. I would very much appreciate anyone willing to help me from that standpoint letting me know. It's really imperative that we stay on top of news so we can get everyone on the same page.

I look forward to hearing from you. Please help us by encouraging your clubs and club members to join ALAA so that we can keep rockhounding a viable activity for ourselves and our kids. See the ALAA enrollment form on the facing page.

#### **ALAA Officers:**

Marve Starbuck, President  
minedump@iserv.net  
Bruce Stinchcomb, Vice President  
BSmonoplac@CS.com  
Izzy Burns, Secretary  
Isnbl@aol.com  
Toby Cozens, Treasurer  
Tobycoz1@earthlink.com

#### **Directors:**

John Alf, Bartlesville, OK  
Ruth Bailey, Santa Clara, CA  
Peggy Blickfeldt, Boise, ID (Past President)  
Bob Carlson, Los Alamos, NM  
Dee Holland, Tendoy, ID  
Jim Hurlbut, Denver, CO  
Bob & Kathy Miller, South Bend, IN  
Jon Spunaugle, Washugal, WA  
Dean Stone, Galesburg, IL  
Howell Whiting, Roswell, NM





THE AMERICAN LANDS ACCESS ASSOCIATION, INC. Protecting the Public Lands for the Public

Please enroll me as a member of the ALAA!

Annual membership fee is \$25.00 \_\_\_\_New \_\_\_\_Renewal

NAME\_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS\_\_\_\_\_

\_CITY\_\_\_\_\_STATE\_\_\_\_\_ZIP\_\_\_\_\_

PHONE\_\_\_\_\_E-MAIL\_\_\_\_\_

CLUB AFFILIATION\_\_\_\_\_FEDERATION\_\_\_\_\_

HOBBY INTEREST\_\_\_\_\_

Remit fees to: ALAA, Mrs. Toby Cozens, Treasurer, 4401 S. W. Hill; Seattle, WA 98116

The ALAA is a 501(c)(4) organization. Its purpose is promoting and ensuring the right of amateur hobby collecting, recreational prospecting and mining, and the use of public and private lands for educational and recreational purpose; and to carry the voice of all amateur collectors and hobbyists to our elected officials, government regulators, and public land managers. Contributions to the ALAA are not deductible as charitable contributions for Federal Income Tax purposes.

### **AFMS Safety Message**

*Metal Smithing—Is It Dangerous?*

*Don Monroe, Safety Committee Chair*

*from AFMS Newsletter 12/2005–1/2006*

**S**tudents in my beginning silver classes often ask if the class is dangerous. The answer to this question can be both yes and no. If you listen to the instructions given by the instructor, it is very unlikely that any sort of injury will result, but we must always be aware and be very careful because minor injuries are not uncommon.

We all learned—probably before age two—that fire will burn you as will hot metal, hot water, and all other hot things. I open each new class with a brief lecture discussing the things in the classroom that can cause an injury. Students will often be afraid of the torch and need some instruction and encouragement when soldering. I always tell them that while the torch is an obvious hazard, it is really not the piece of equipment that is responsible for the most injuries. During the years I have been teaching, I have never had a student suffer a serious injury, but we do not want to see even small cuts, scrapes, or burns.

Almost all of the injuries result from improperly used polishing equipment. A buffing

machine can “grab” a piece of jewelry being polished and sling it away, causing severe injuries if it snags a finger or hand in the process. Surprisingly, more buffing/polishing injuries result from the flexible shaft machines. When using a Foredom, Dremel, or similar machine with small buffing wheels or cratex-type wheels, the edge of the piece can catch the wheel and run around behind the piece being polished. This often results in a bent mandrel that can hit the hand and cause a nasty cut.

Eye injuries are a category where none of us provides enough care for ourselves and for those around us. We should wear safety glasses or some type of eye protection. We all know that, but so few of us do what we should. I must confess that I am not as religious about eye protection as I should be.

We use a variety of chemicals in our workshops, and some of them deserve more caution than we give them. Think about the following list:

Pickle solution for cleaning silver (It is an acid, you know!)

Flux for cleaning silver—requires ventilation to avoid breathing dangerous fumes

Blackening or other solutions used to create a patina

Alcohol and acetone are not only flammable but should not be breathed.

These are just a few of those precautions that we use. Should we not read the MSDS sheets (Material Safety Data Sheets) that come with many of the products? If we don't get the MSDS for new materials we purchase, I am sure that suppliers will jump at the opportunity to send us one. It is the law!

The last type of injury that I want to discuss is the common cut. Almost everything we handle can cause a cut. Paper cuts are most annoying and can become infected. Knives, jeweler's saws, broken glass, and sharp edges of work pieces can open cuts. We keep first aid supplies handy, and for ourselves we use super glue. Not being licensed medical personnel, we do not treat the students with super glue, but we describe for them the potential benefits. My dermatologist (who saved my life) uses super glue for small incisions with great success. It is my understanding that this material was actually developed for battlefield use in Viet Nam, and I have been impressed with it. It might be worth having a discussion with your physician and getting his (or her) opinion.

### **Having Fun—Junior Activities**

*A Juniors Club for Every State*

*by Jim Brace-Thompson*

*AFMS Junior Activities Chair*

*from AFMS Newsletter 12/2005–1/2006*

**E**arlier this year I set a goal of enrolling at least 50 clubs and societies into the AFMS/Future Rockhounds of America's new merit badge program—or approximately one club for each of the 50 states in the U.S. Although we don't actually have clubs enrolled from all 50 states, I am thrilled and happy to report that we have reached that magic number of 50! Over the course of the past year, the juniors

activities coordinators of 50 different societies across the country have called, written, or e-mailed to request FRA membership applications, the merit badge manual, or more information about the program, and I've happily been awarding merit badges to kids throughout the American Federation.

Please help continue the effort by spreading the word throughout each regional federation. Have folks contact me directly to get info (phone 805-659-3577; e-mail <jbraceth@adelphia.net>) or encourage them to download info from the AFMS Web site at [www.amfed.org/fra/meritbadge.htm](http://www.amfed.org/fra/meritbadge.htm). By the end of 2006, here's to yet another 50 clubs and societies taking advantage of the program to reward their kids for—as always—having fun!

### **SCFMS President's Message**

*Words from William*

*by William Medford*

*from SCFMS Newsletter 11-12/2005*

**T**he 2005 SCFMS Convention and Show was very successful, and much of our success can be credited to the members of the Austin Gem and Mineral Society who worked so hard to make the meeting and show a wonderful event. Our hats are off the Austin Club for going that extra mile to make the convention a memorial occasion. I heard many remarks from those who attended that this was one of the best shows produced in Austin. There were certainly a large number of attendees, and the weather was very pleasant the entire time.

The Federation was honored to have several officers from the American Federation of Mineral Societies attend the convention. The newly elected President Jim Robinson and his wife, First Vice President Shirley Leeson, and AFMS Scholarship Fund President Dee Holland all were present and made reports and awards. It is always a pleasure to have representatives from the AFMS attend our convention. For those of you who had the opportunity to meet and visit with these individuals, it was a certainly a pleasure.

Many thanks to each organization that sent delegates to the convention. We always work for a hundred percent attendance but understand that often it is not possible. Each club has an obligation to send a representative to the convention so that their voice can be heard and their needs identified. It is your organization, and it is only as good as the people who are active in the conduct of its operation.

The SCFMS needs organizations to make bids to host an SCFMS Convention and show. We have locations confirmed for the 2006 and 2008 conventions. I ask each of the organizations who have an annual show to consider hosting the SCFMS annual convention in conjunction with their show. Even if you have never hosted a convention before, it is not that great a task. There are a multitude of people who would be pleased to help you with the planning and organization. They have done it before and know all the correct steps to take to have a successful convention and show. I would like to have all the convention locations through 2010 confirmed and announced by

early this year.

I am asking all of you who are currently serving as a member or chairperson of a Federation Committee to continue to serve in that capacity for the forthcoming year. There will be several positions within the Federation that will need a new person due to various reasons. If you are ready to serve, please give us your name so we can contact you about where you would like to serve.

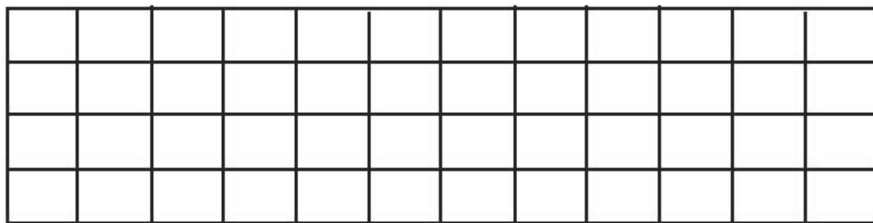
I look forward to being your president for another year and to seeing many of you at upcoming shows. Support your local organization and those around you by attending shows and meetings.

### **Need a place to keep all your polished cabs?**

*by Margaret Kolaczyk*

*Via Amador Nugget 1/2005, The Golden Frog 12/2005, and Breccia 1/2006*

**W**ell here is a simple and effective way. Take a hand towel and fold it in half. Sew up the sides and two edges. Now sew horizontal rows across the towel a little wider than your cabs. Row size can vary, depending on your needs. Then sew vertical rows a little wider than your cabs. Decide which edge is up. Using a sharp knife or X-acto, slice close to the seam to form a pouch. Do this for each little pocket. You now have a way to keep your cabs from being damaged. It should look something like this:



When I first started making cabs, Frank Martz told me of this idea. The towels will lay flat and are easier to stack.

### **Copper Flashing Removal Tip**

*by Tom Wright*

*Member of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society*

**C**opper Flashing—A problem when iron or steel contaminates a pickle pot: Occasionally someone inadvertently gets some steel or iron contamination in the pickle-pot. Usually it is a broken saw blade or drill bit, and when this happens and a piece of metal is placed in the pickle-pot, the metal gets an instant copper flashing on the piece of jewelry. It does not have a desirable appearance.

Find the piece of metal that is causing the contamination and remove it from the pickle—a magnet is very useful in locating the iron or steel. Once the iron or steel is removed,

the pickle solution may be used without causing any further plating.

The copper flashing can easily and quickly be stripped off the metal item by getting a scoop of pickle from the pickle-pot and adding an equal amount of hydrogen peroxide to the pickle. Put the plated object in this solution, and the plating is stripped in about two minutes or less. This solution is good for only about 15 minutes unless it is stored in a dark sealed container. The solution may be returned to the pickle-pot after use as the hydrogen peroxide breaks down to make water. Note: The hydrogen peroxide is the same hydrogen peroxide sold in drug stores and is part of almost all first aid kits.

### Birthstones

*The following birthstone list was adopted in 1912 by the forerunner of the present Retail Jewelers of America*

*Via The Rockhouser 12/2005 and Breccia, 1/2006*

Month	Official Birthstone	Powers anciently attributed to the birthstone	Alternates
January	Garnet	Brings its wearer power, grace and victory	Chalcedony
February	Amethyst	Calms the overwrought, pacifies the frustrated	Hyacinth, Zircon
March	Aquamarine, Bloodstone	Preserves marriage, stops wounds from bleeding	Jasper, Ruby
April	Diamond	Heightens awareness of the infinite	Sapphire, Crystal
May	Emerald	Symbol of immortality and incorruptibility	Agate, Chrysoprase
June	Pearl, Moonstone, Alexandrite	Power to make the married wearer cry	Emerald
July	Ruby	Confers long life, health and happiness	Pearl, Turquoise
August	Peridot , Sardonyx	Gives protection from melancholy and illusion, Brings self control and success in legal matters	Carnelian, Alexandrite
September	Sapphire	Protects against poison and plague	Beryl, Lapis Lazuli
October	Opal	Brings its bearer luck	Tourmaline
November	Topaz, Citrine	Improves psychic abilities and strengthens the body	Pearl, Garnet, Cats Eye
December	Turquoise, Zircon	Draws upon itself the evil that threatens its wearer. Promises riches, wisdom and honor	Blue Zircon, Ruby

## ShowTime 2006

January 25-29	Quartzsite, AZ	Quartzsite Improvement Association 235 E. Ironwood Dr.; Diane Abbott 928-927-6325; qia@redrivenet.com
January 28-29	Tyler, TX	East Texas Gem & Mineral Society Tyler Rose Garden Center 420 S. Rose Park Dr. & Front St. (Hwy. 31) Charles Creekmur; calcite65@earthlink.net
Jan. 28-Feb. 11	Tucson, AZ	Tucson 2006, Arizona Mineral & Fossil Show Multiple locations within Tucson
February 4-5	Panama City, FL	Panama City Gem & Mineral Society American Legion Bldg., Bay Cnty. Fairgrounds 15th St. and Sherman Ave. Al Zar 850-763-0109; Aquezie@aol.com
February 18-19	Plainview, TX	Hi Plains Gem & Mineral Society Ollie Liner Center Jim Matlock; jmatlock@texasonline.net
February 25-26	Pasadena, TX	Clear Lake Gem & Mineral Society Pasadena Convention Center 7902 Fairmont Pkwy.; Al Pennington 281-481-1591; gpenning@ghg.net
March 4-5	Corpus Christi, TX	Gulf Coast Gem & Mineral Society Al Amin Shrine Center, 2001 Suntime Road (Two blocks off I-37--Suntime Road exit)
March 4-5	Dallas, TX	North Texas Earth Science Show Ellison Miles Institute at Brookhaven College 3939 Valley View Lane, Farmers Branch, TX Maryanne Fender 972-437-9980 fendernaturalresources@yahoo.com
March 24-26	San Antonio, TX	Southwest Gem & Mineral Society Morris Activity Center; Freeman Coliseum SBC Center Pkwy., Gate E Bobby Schultz 210-337-8908 swgms_sat@yahoo.com
April 21-23	Gulfport, MI	Harrison County Gem & Mineral Society Rice Pavilion, Hwy. 49 & Hwy. 90 Billy Wood 228-863-6312

2006		FEBRUARY				2006
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 7:30 Mineral Section	2	3	4 10-12 Youth Section 11-5 Shop Open
5	6	7 7:30 Board Meeting	8 7:30 Faceting Section	9	10	11 11-5 Shop Open
12	13 1:00 Day Light Section	14 7:30 Show Comm	15 7:30 Mineral Section	16	17	18 10-12 Youth Section 11-5 Shop Open
19	20 7:00 Lapidary Section	21 7:30 Paleo Section	22	23	24	25 11-5 Shop Open
26	27	28 7:30 General Meeting				

2006		MARCH				2006
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 7:30 Mineral Section	2	3	4 10-12 Youth Section 11-5 Shop Open
5	6	7 7:30 Board Meeting	8 7:30 Faceting Section	9	10	11 11-5 Shop Open
12	13 1:00 Day Light Section	14 7:30 Show Comm	15 7:30 Mineral Section	16	17	18 10-12 Youth Section 11-5 Shop Open
19	20 7:00 Lapidary Section	21 7:30 Paleo Section	22	23	24	25 11-5 Shop Open
26	27	28 7:30 General Meeting	29	30	31	

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

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

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



**SCFMS**

1998 - 1st (Large)  
2000 - 1st (Large)  
2003 - 1st (Large)  
2005 - 1st (Large)



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



DATED MATERIAL - PLEASE DO NOT DELAY !