The BACKBENDER'S GAZETTE
The Newsletter of the
Houston Gem & Mineral Society
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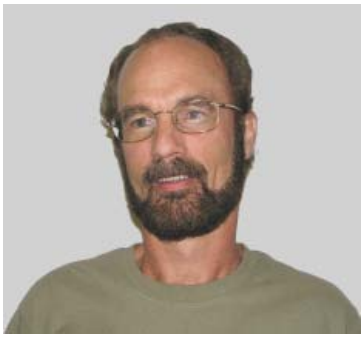
President's Message

by Scott Singleton



I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to the 134 volunteers who came out to help run our annual show (see Shiara Trumble's article on volunteers; also see the Board's statement on volunteer appreciation). Your contribution to our club is significant and appreciated, no matter what you did or how long you did it. The fact is that the HGMS is a volunteer organization and cannot exist without volunteer help. And because of the help of each and every volunteer, the club is not only existing but also growing. I was quite encouraged to hear 2nd VP Beverly Mace's report at the last Board meeting that we have **505 adult members** and **75 youth members**. After having written about the history of the club this summer, I can say that I'm not aware of our club membership ever being this high,

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October 24 General Meeting Program

By Matt Dillon
HGMS 1st Vice President

I will be presenting at the October 24 General Meeting with some hands-on demonstration and a Show 'n Tell opportunity in which I would like everyone to participate. My talk will center on how you find agates. I will talk about identifying the good ones and about the environments most likely to provide good opportunities to those people who are willing to go out into the field to collect.

If you recently had a field experience in which you picked up a special agate and found it to be a great surprise, please bring it with you. Be prepared to tell us how you found it and what caused you to select it from among the many other rocks you saw.

In addition to rough material, I will bring some examples of polished agate specimens from the different sites in which I collect.I will show the changes the agates underwent in moving from the area where they formed to the site where they were found. I

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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**.

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meaning that we have most likely set a new membership record. Congratulations to each of you for making our club something that others (*a lot* of others) want to be a part of. This is something we can all be very proud of.

Speaking of things to be proud of, our annual show--after taking a year off to allow a hurricane to pass by--apparently has resumed its usual position as *The Event* to attend on the 4th weekend of September (see Sigrid Stewart's article on the show). Just ask any of the 8288 people who attended if they agree with that statement, and I think you'll find they do. Although a significant portion of that total number was kids, we had a large enough quantity of paying adults to completely overshoot our budgeted income and thus come close to our goal of a zero net for this show. (Remember that most of the dealer income came last year, so we had to put on this year's show with a small fraction of our normal income). This is a real testament to the viability and energy in this Society.

Speaking of kids, those of you who made the mistake, I mean, were fortunate enough to be at the show on Friday were treated to a powerful statement as to why earth science in general and rockhounding in particular are not going to become extinct on our watch. A total of 2677 kids and 453 adults attended our show for the explicit purpose of learning about earth science (see my article on School Daze). Then, on the weekend, 573 Scouts were there to participate in our Scout Geology Merit Badge program (see my article on this).

Many, many people attending the show commented to me and to others how we obviously know how to put on a fun and educational event for the community in which we live. The lapidary demonstrations were such a big hit that they triggered the fire alarms not once, but twice! There were the usual crowds around the Paleo Section table, and you don't want to ask about the HMNS/HGS/BEG table (at least don't ask Neal or Inda Immega—they're liable to give you an earful). In the Special Events room, Beverly Mace's Youth Section table and the Swap Area were crowded most of the time. Kids (and adults) at the Dino Dig area completely demolished 120 flats of concrete and ended up picking through a trough containing loose fossils, much to their delight.

But I saved the best for last. George Blasing's Traveling Dinosaur Museum was a hit for everybody. His tent outside of the west door was a popular place. And that was in addition to the entry way to the show—Stan, the T-rex, facing off against a Stegosaurus while a Pteranodon soars overhead. Personally, I thought the flying dino "bird" was a great treat, and not something you see at a gem show every day. But, then again, we don't put on your usual, staid, gem and mineral show, do we?

But, alas, all good things eventually come to an end. George Blasing informed us at the Dealer Dinner / Paleo Section meeting on Thursday night (setup day) that he is moving on to bigger and better things. He will be producing a television series for the History Channel and at the same time touring with a company that has several full dinosaur skeletons. This company will be setting up shows in cities across the country, with George coming in to do promos for the shows. He's certainly the right person for

that job, but it also means that he will be unable to do our show again. We will need to replace him with another headliner exhibit, so if any of you have any ideas, please approach Show Chairman Sigrid Stewart or me. We will be beginning this search in earnest very shortly.

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still have not found anyone to deliver the November General Meeting program, and I want you to give me some ideas. If you know anyone whom you believe would be able and willing to give an interesting presentation, please let me know and take an active part in one of the most important aspects of our club.

Building a Mineral Collection in Houston
Part 1: Flea Market Dealers

by Arthur Smith
Member of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society

In the very late 1960s and 1970s, my interest returned to mineral collecting after being semidormant to dormant following graduate school in Missouri in 1960. Three years in Washington, D.C. with the Army Corps of Engineers were followed by employment by Texaco as a petroleum geologist in 1963 in Houston, marriage in 1965, the birth of a son in 1967, and purchase of a house on what had been a rice field in the southwest part of the city. So with things settled down a bit, I felt I could return to the joys of mineral collecting as a diversion from petroleum exploration and yard work. Field collecting was mostly limited to vacations in Arkansas, Colorado, and New England because Houston and the surrounding area is about as far from a field collector's paradise as you can get. So I hit the local flea markets to see what I could stir up. Living in Sharpstown, I found the flea market at the Southwest Freeway near West Park very convenient. I traveled to flea markets throughout the city and at times found people selling minerals at many of them, but most did not warrant a return visit so my visits to the more distant flea markets were limited. Through the years, I had my best success at the West Park-Southwest Freeway Flea market.

The first steady mineral seller I met there was Carl Rubly. Carl had worked for Union Carbide in Arkansas. They were exploring for and eventually mined vanadium at what used to be called Potash Sulphur Springs, now called Wilson Springs in Garland County. Aside from some miserite and some exploratory core pieces, he had little from that area but he had quite a bit from the nearby Magnet Cove where I had collected also. Carl had moved with his family to Houston where he tried to make a living selling minerals and doing a few side jobs. Not having a lot of extra money to spend on minerals, I bought one or two pieces each week, usually under $5 each and had him save back a few until funds became available and I eventually bought all I wanted. Some are still in my collection.

He made a buying trip or two to the mining areas off Mexico and came back with some flats from Mapimi, Durango and other specimens from Naica and Santa Eulalia in Chihuahua. He also had some from a few Zacatecas locations including Concepcion del Oro and Nocha Buena. I soon learned the sources of many Mexican minerals and

developed a good idea of the localities from which many minerals came.

Carl had the first Missouri Viburnum trend minerals I ever saw, nail-head calcite, octahedral and cubic galena crystals, pyrite, and marcasite. He knew they were from Missouri but thought that they might be from the Tri-State zinc area. I bought them because they were not like any Tri-State minerals I had or had seen. Eventually I learned from other sources that they were mostly from the Sweetwater mine in the Viburnum lead tread in southeast Missouri. The Tri-State district is in the southwestern part of the state. What is called the Old Lead Belt was mined for years in southeast Missouri but crystal specimens from it are extremely rare.

So the Viburnum area became the new lead belt. Some of the guys I was in school with at the University of Missouri in 1957–1959 had worked summers on the exploration rigs in the Viburnum area. Between 1960 and 1970 the area became a lead producer and eventually led the nation in lead production for many years. It has produced thousands of good crystal specimens but is now approaching depletion.

There was another guy selling rocks and lapidary material there who went by Big John. Big John and Carl eventually hooked up, and next thing I knew they had a warehouse building near the Galleria filled with really good Tri-State minerals that they were selling. Most were large, and as I remember, pretty good specimens. Prices started at $25 and went up. My budget at that time did not allow for $25 minerals, so I bought nothing. Eventually Carl was back at the flea market, and I asked him what happened to all the Tri-State minerals. He mumbled something about Big John stealing them and dropped it. Being low on money and with no good source for additional cheap specimens except for a long and expensive trip to Mexico, Carl was having a difficult time making a living.

I eventually ran into Big John again in a small shop in Memorial City Mall. He was selling mostly Mexican silver and turquoise jewelry plus other lapidary items. No Tri-State minerals were in evidence. He then showed me some interesting looking Naica specimens in boxes in the back of the shop. They consisted mostly of cabinet size specimens of bright galena crystals, clear, colorless to pale green cubic fluorite crystals, and a few specimens of calcite and aragonite crystals.

Although they definitely needed cleaning, trimming, and labeling, they did show good possibilities of yielding some choice specimens. I offered to do that if Big John would sell me two of the specimens of my choice at his cost. That was easily done because he told me he had paid two dollars a pound for them. So I eventually got two very nice specimens very reasonably with a little effort in cleaning, trimming and labeling.

Big John's stay in that shop did not last long, and I did not see him for quite awhile. I then learned he had a shop in the Highway 290 and 34th street area. I eventually got there, and big John was already going out of business and planning to leave town. He had a large, about 10 by 7 inches, specimen of dark caramel colored, thick tabular wulfenite crystals that averaged about 5/8th of an inch across. I recognized it because it had been one of Carl's treasured specimens. It was from the Ahumada mine, Los Lamentos, Chihuahua, Mexico. He had a $50 price tag on it which was a goof deal even then, but the specimen was much bigger than I collected. He said he was leaving

town and wanted to get rid of it. Before I left the shop, the price was down to $10. For some reason I refused it and have regretted it every since. If I remember it correctly, this specimen would easily go for $1500 or more today.

Sometime in this period, Jeanne started selling at the Southwest Freeway-West Park Flea Market. First she sold from a drive-in covered booth with trays of minerals, jewelry, and lapidary items and later from a box car. She eventually bought Carl's remaining material before he moved to Corpus Christi and a job in offshore oil field work. Jeanne eventually expanded to a shop on Bissonet and then after a couple of years to her current location in the Bellaire Triangle.

I met Wally Knapp, a geologist with Amoco who was selling his surplus and smaller specimens. Wally grew up in Rhinebeck, New York about a hundred miles up the Hudson River from where I grew up in New Jersey. Wally had collected at many of the same locations back east that I did, but he had started as a young boy so had many more collecting experiences and specimens than I did and before I did. So his specimens were definitely better than mine. However, he preferred large cabinet specimens, so his smaller specimens became expendable. He eventually donated many of them to the HGMS Mineral Section. We auctioned them off, but a few are still on display in our cases.

At one time I decided I would try selling at the flea market. So I took my duplicates and some 15¢ a pound Arkansas quartz (Yes, at one time it was that cheap) plus some surplus stuff around the house that my wife wanted to dispose of. After several boring Saturdays, I had sold all of the surplus house ware but few minerals, so I decided to remain a collector and not become a dealer. I have tried a couple of times since then when my wife was into beads, but it was boring. Most of the sales went to pay for the booth and expenses, so we said "Why bother?"

I also met an artist, I believe his name was Everret, who started the rage of gluing pewter figurines onto mineral specimens for up-scale gift shops. He soon moved his operation to a warehouse in The Bellaire Boulevard area of Chinatown, but he had a large supply of Mexican minerals. Much of the material was not good for much else. He also obtained some drill cores with calcite crystals from the short-lived Phelan Frasch sulfur operations at Nash dome in Brazoria County. I saw some pieces I wanted and so managed to liberate a few specimens, hopefully to a better fate in my collection by giving him two or three flats of garage material that I had did not want for each specimen. We were both happy with the trades. However, the market was soon saturated with his creations, and he went out of business or moved to another area.

Through the years I met a lot of other interesting people who for a short time tried to break into the mineral marketing field, but most of these enterprises were short lived. However, there was a fellow who sold specimens at the flea market north of Pearland on Route 35 for a number of years. However, I do not think I ever bought anything from him. Either he did not know the location from which the specimen came, they were too expensive, or I really did not have to have them.

Mexican minerals permeated the flea markets, and the only useful reference at the time was Johnson (1965). It is still useful for a basic knowledge of Mexican minerals

and localities. Panczner (1987) came out much later unfortunately for me and now is useful for correcting the names on some locations and learning the occurrence of some of the more unusual or rare minerals of Mexico. Eventually I accumulated a pretty good selection of specimens from the Ojuela mine, Mapimi, Durango and the mines at Naica and Santa Eulalia, Chihuahua. Although I have reduced and up-graded these collections since, good specimens from this time period still remain in them.

Reference:

Johnson, P. W. 1965 *A Field Guide to the Gems and Minerals of Mexico.* Gembooks, Mentone, CA, 97p. illustrated.

Panczner, W. D. 1987 *Minerals of Mexico.* Van Nostrand Reinhold, NY, 459p., Illustrated

Quality Categorizing Self-Collected Specimens

Dean Lagerwall
Member of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society

What happens when you get home with several flats of prized specimens from the field or quarry? Luckily, washing, boxing, and labeling the material is not only a necessary part of collecting, but it is also fun. Once the material is cleaned and can be inspected, it should be categorized by quality. That way only the best specimens occupy the coveted space required to house your growing collection.

I have found that dividing my self-collected specimens into three general categories works well. I refer to them as:

- My Collection
- Trade/Sell
- Kid's Rocks

The "My Collection" pieces are the best examples of what was collected from a site or trip. As more trips are made to the same site and improved specimens are obtained, you can move some of your first "My Collection" pieces to the "Trade/Sell" category.

The "Trade/Sell" Category contains specimens that are not the best, but are still desirable to collectors. Whether you chose to trade them or sell them is up to you. This material does well in "Swap Areas" by being reasonably priced (compared to the main floor) and often has a distinctly "local" flavor.

The final category is "Kid's Rocks." These are specimens that are given to kids as an introduction to mineral collecting. At the time of being collected, they had some redeemable qualities but upon closer inspection they were flawed. They do, however, exhibit enough desirable characteristics to make them good "beginner" rocks.

Remember, unless you are collecting in a quarry and "saving" specimens from the crusher, you should take only the material you can use. It is always nice to leave some for the next collector.

Middle Eocene Shark and Ray Fossils of Texas

by Albert J. Robb III
HGMS Paleo Section Member
Dedicated to Sylvester "Skip" Breard, Jr., 1952–2004
Former HGMS Paleo Section Chair

The middle and late Eocene deposits from throughout the Atlantic and Gulf Coastal Plains have been widely reported to contain shark and ray faunae. As early as 1846, the middle Eocene Claiborne Group of Texas was recognized as containing abundant marine fossils (Roemer, 1848), and is now known to contain a locally rich shark and ray fauna. Claiborne fossil localities in Texas that are commonly collected by enthusiasts and which have yielded shark and ray fossils include Stone City Bluff (Burleson Co.), Little Brazos Bluff (Brazos Co.), Shipps Ford along the Colorado River at Smithville (Bastrop Co.), and the Hurricane Lentil at Alabama Ferry near Crockett (Houston Co.). A thorough listing of Claiborne fossil localities in Texas is presented by Fisher et al. (1964) and Knight (1977).

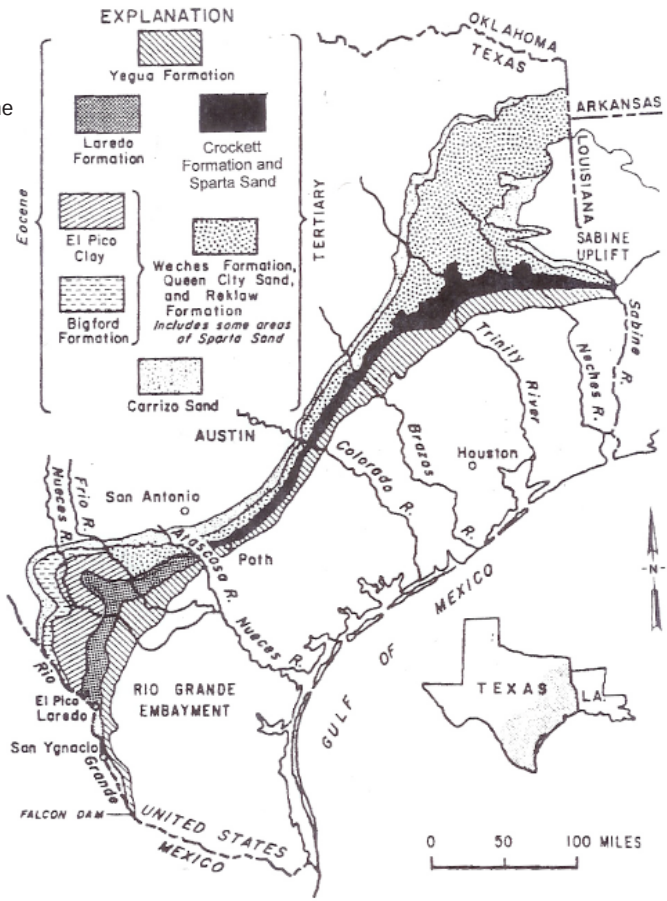

Figure 1. Outcrop area of the Claiborne Group (middle Eocene) in Texas (modified from Hodgkinson, 1977; after Eargle, 1968).

The middle Eocene Claiborne Group outcrops in a southwest to northeast band along the western margin of the Texas Gulf Coastal Plain (Figure 1 on previous page), and consists of the following formations from oldest to youngest, respectively: Carrizo, Reklaw, Queen City, Weches, Sparta, Crockett, and Yegua (Yancey & Yancey, 1988). The stratigraphic nomenclature of the Sparta to Yegua Formation interval within the Claiborne Group has been somewhat contested. According to Yancey (1995), the Crockett Formation contains the Stone City and Wheelock Members, and has also been referred to as the Cook Mountain Formation by some authors, particularly in the subsurface. The units comprising the Claiborne Group represent a cyclic transgressive (advancing sea) - regressive (retreating sea) sequence of glauconitic marine sands and clays, alternating with non-marine sands, sandy clays, and lignites (Hodgkinson, 1977). The Carrizo, Queen City, Sparta, and Yegua Formations are known to contain petrified woods, fossilized leaves, and a few brackish/marine invertebrates. The Reklaw, Weches, and Crockett Formations contain a wide variety of marine fossils. Neither the underlying lower Eocene Wilcox Group or the overlying upper Eocene Jackson Group, both of which are primarily non-marine sequences in Texas with few marine beds, have been reported to yield shark or ray fossils.

Amongst the units comprising the middle Eocene Claiborne Group, the Stone City Member of the Crockett Formation has generally been recognized as one of the most highly fossiliferous marine units and is known to contain gastropods, bivalves (pelecypods), scaphopods, serpulid worm tubes, ostracods, foraminifers, bryozoans, hexacorals, decopods, cephalopods, echinoids, ophiuroids, barnacles, chitons, sponges, crustaceans, brachiopods, lignites, spores, and pollens (Knight & Knight 1977a,b; Emerson & Emerson, 2001). Sharks, rays, bony fishes, amphibians (frogs), reptiles (turtles, crocodiles, a lizard, and a marine snake), as well as marine (cetacean) and terrestrial mammals have all been reported from Claiborne deposits of Texas (Knight & Knight, 1977a, Breard and Stringer, 1999).

Fossil shark and ray remains consisting of teeth, sawfish rostral teeth, vertebral centra, and stingray caudal spines, occur locally throughout the marine deposits of the Claiborne Group but have been reported most commonly in the transgressive lag deposits of the Crockett Formation. The following shark and ray taxa have been reported (Knight & Knight, 1977a,b; Breard & Stringer, 1999) from the Crockett Formation (s = Stone City "Formation," c = undifferentiated "Cook Mountain" transgressive lag) in Texas: *Striatolamia macrota* (s), *Carcharias cuspidata* (s, c), *Carcharias hopei* (s), *Carcharias koerti* (s), *Otodus obliquus* (s, c), *Abdounia enniskilleni* (s), *Abdounia recticona* (s), *Carcharhinus gibbesi* (s, c), *Carcharhinus* sp. (s), *Galeocerdo eaglesomi* (s), *Physogaleus secundus* (s), *Scoliodon* sp. (s), *Rhinobatis* sp. (s), ?*Lophobatis* sp. (s), *Anoxypristis* sp. (s), *Pristis lathami* (s), *Myliobatis* sp. (s, c), and *Rhinoptera* sp. (s). Some of the most common shark and ray macrofossils from the Claiborne Group of Texas are illustrated in Figure 2. These reported shark and ray taxa are all forms consistent with those reported as part of middle Eocene faunas occurring elsewhere in the Atlantic and Gulf Coastal Plains, with the exception of *Otodus obliquus*.

The teeth of *Striatolamia* and *Carcharias* can be easily differentiated by the presence of striations on the lingual tooth surface of *Striatolamia*. There is a superficial resem-

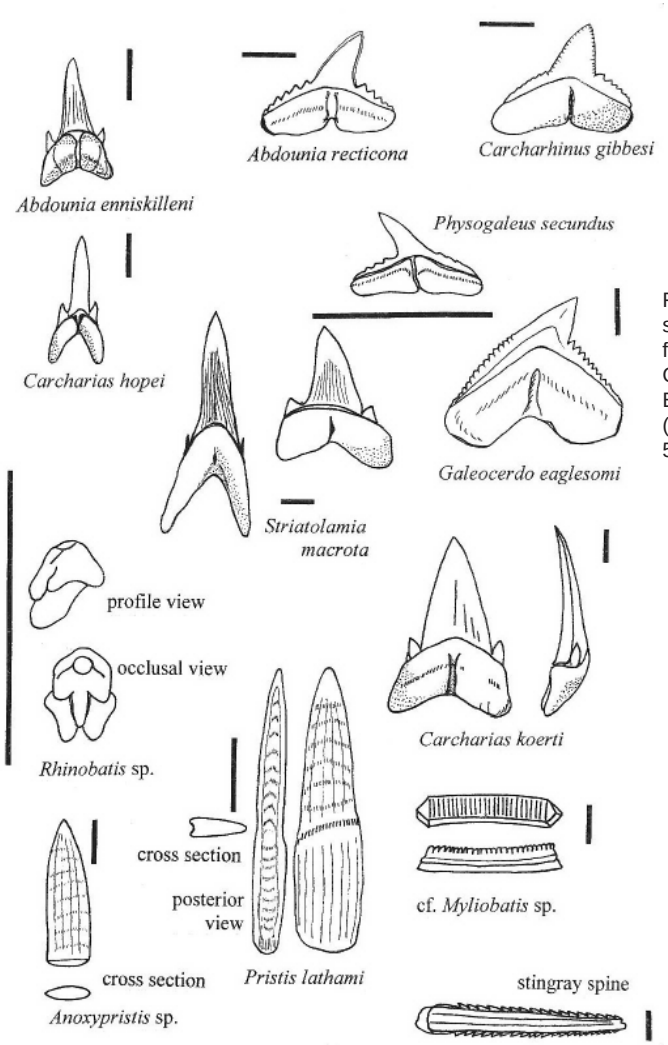

Figure 2. Common shark and ray fossils from the Claiborne Group (middle Eocene) of Texas (scale bars equal 5mm).

blance between the teeth of *Otodus obliquus* and the upper anterior-lateral teeth of *Carcharias koerti*, and as such the reported occurrence (by Knight & Knight, 1977a,b) of *Otodus obliquus* is suspect. Their overall larger size and thickness, the presence of a pronounced dental band at the root-enamel interface, and the lack of a nutrient groove in the lingual root face all distinguish the teeth of *Otodus*.

The teeth of *Abdounia recticona* can be separated from those of *Carcharhinus gibbesi* by the lack of serrations on the cusp and the presence of approximately equal-sized tapering cusplets on both sides of the main blade (cusp) in *A. recticona*. *Pristis lathami* is a widespread Eocene form, differentiated from the other sawfish in the fauna (*Anoxypristis* sp.) by its thicker rostral teeth with concave posterior edges.

It is possible but sometimes very difficult to distinguish between the isolated grinding teeth of the rays *Myliobatis* and *Rhinoptera*. The mouthplates of *Myliobatis* are composed of relatively broad and thin middle teeth surrounded by much smaller generally equal-sized lateral teeth. In *Rhinoptera* the middle teeth are fatter and much less broad than the corresponding teeth in *Myliobatis*, and are surrounded by unequal marginal teeth of graduating size.

The types of sharks and rays recognized from the Claiborne of Texas are generally considered shallow marine species (e.g., *Striatolamia*, *Carcharias*, *Abdounia*, *Myliobatis*), many of which also frequent estuarine settings (e.g., *Carcharhinus*, *Rhinoptera*). In contrast, the reported lamnid shark *Otodus obliquus* is generally considered a more open water (offshore/pelagic) predator. Lone disarticulated shark and ray body fossils generally are not considered definitive paleoecological indicators due to their high mobility potential postmortem and to their susceptibility to being reworked by currents and redeposited. This is particularly relevant when considering the lag zones in which these fossils are most commonly recovered from the Claiborne units of Texas. However, the abundant and diverse in-place invertebrate faunal elements found throughout the Crockett Formation, for instance, indicate a shallow, nearshore tropical marine environment of deposition (estuarine to inner shelf) for these units. Furthermore, the presence of pervasive glauconite beds as part of the transgressive systems tract of the Crockett Formation (Stone City Member, in particular) suggests that paleowater depths never exceeded the inner neritic zone of 20 to 25 meters (Breard and Stringer, 1999). These indicators are consistent with the habitats of the modern relatives of the types of sharks and rays recognized from these deposits.

This paper is a preliminary report of an ongoing research project concerning the middle Eocene sharks and rays of Texas. I thank Skip Breard (deceased) who first suggested this project, George Wolf Sr. for access to reference material (literature and specimens), Jerry Ibara for scanning figure images, and Neal Immega and Andrew Dunham who provided constructive reviews to this paper.

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Houston Gem and Mineral Society Mailing List, Auctions, and Spam

by Neal Immega

I hope you are getting all the electronic mail you can use. If you are a club member and are NOT receiving lots of mail about club activities, then send an e-mail to n_immega@swbell.net and I will get you on the list. Lots of events are not published in the BBG because they come up at the last minute or are electronic in nature—like the new auction of paleo material. Please see the pictures that are posted on our Web site at the symbol of the gavel on the opening page. I expect that we will have paleo material being offered monthly for the next year!

Mail for the following people has been bouncing, so send me a note.

David Allen, Louise and Pat Devine, John and Pat Goyen, R A Hawkins, Joneen Hueni, Bill and Diane Lange, Armen Martirosov, Richie Miller, Jerry Pote, Artiom Ryder, Pam Whitton, Lynn Williams, Phillip Wunderlich, Paula Edwards, Adriana Weathers.

My personal address is posted on many public places, which collects lots of spam. My internet is through SBC/ATT and they have put in a marvelous spam filter at the Web address www.mail.yahoo.com. 90%+ of the spam is removed there and put into a folder, and the rest is forwarded to Outlook on my PC. I think this is a new service since April 2006. If you are offered this service, try it out. It is even easier to be removed from my mailing list – just ask.

Methods for Close-Up Photographs

by Sam Norwood
Member of the Houston Gem and Mineral Society

There are numerous methods for taking close-up photographs. Many cameras have a telephoto or macro mode that allows you to take close-ups. However, if you want to get really close and take photos of objects less than an inch in size, you probably will need to modify your lens system and use computer software to enhance your photographs. Brief descriptions of various techniques for taking close-up photos of small objects are in the following list. The bibliography provides sources for additional details on each technique.

Modification of Lens Systems

Your camera will focus more closely if the distance of your lens is moved further away from the camera body. There are several ways to do this.

Macro lenses are available that have built-in extensions and lens systems to correct for lens aberrations that occur when focusing very closely. These lenses provide excellent photographs for thumbnail-size objects. The drawback to these lenses is that they are expensive.

Extension tubes are cheaper, and you can even make your own from common household materials. Your camera is attached to one end of the tube, and your lens is attached to the other end.

Bellows are a fancier version of extension tubes. The bellows provides an adjustable extension. This approach is more expensive than extension tubes and more difficult to use in the field. However if set up properly, bellows systems can take photographs of objects as small as one millimeter.

Additional lenses can be added to your camera to allow it to focus more closely. Close-up lenses can be purchased to attach to your existing lens. Typically these close-up attachments range from 2x to 4x. The cheaper close-up lenses usually are of poor quality and are avoided by most photographers.

Reversed lenses also can be added to your existing lens to increase magnification. Basically, a normal lens is reversed and attached to your camera. This does not work with all lenses. For example, macro lenses will not work this way.

Microscopes are another approach for taking extremely small photographs. The camera is attached to the microscope with an adapter. This is a more expensive approach than a bellows, but it may be an option if you already have a microscope.

Computer Software

Many types of software are used for processing photographs. *Photoshop* is probably the most well known, but it is very expensive. *Photoshop Elements* is a cheaper version of *Photoshop* made specifically for photography. *Photoshop Elements* is really all you need for processing photographs. In addition to general photo processing software, specialized software is used to merge multiple photographs to correct for depth-of-field problems.

General photographic processing provides methods for modifying contrast, brightness, sharpness, color, etc. Cropping allows you to electronically magnify an object by cutting out a smaller portion of a photo and increasing its size to that of the original photo. This reduces resolution. Using cameras with 5 megapixels or higher allows cropping while still maintaining good resolution.

Specialized software that is available for merging photographs eliminates the out-of-focus portions of close-up photos. The best way to see how this works is to look at the examples on the Internet.

Bibliography

The above descriptions are too brief to really understand all the available techniques for close-up photography. You can learn more by searching the Internet for "micro photography" and "macro photography." Many books and articles also are available on the topic. As a start, a bibliography with notes is provided below. The links were checked in July 2006. Since these links may change over time, you should download any Web pages you find helpful.

General theory

How cameras and telescopes work: http://www.howstuffworks.com/ Search on Camera & Telescope Lens Work, Canon, 1986 edition. Available at: http://www.canonfd.com/lenswork.htm

General macro / micro photography

Close-up and Macro Photography: http://www.nikonians.org/html/resources/nikon_articles/other/close-up_macro/macro_1.html

Some concise articles on macrophotography: http://www.macrophotography.org/modules.php?name=Stories_Archive

Close-up and Macro Photography for Entomologists: http://www.alanwood.net/photography/index.html

Insect Photography: http://www.richard-seaman.com/Photography/Insects/index.html

Equipment

Make your own extension tubes or reverse mount for macro. Available at: http://www.jyoseph.com/extras/archives/2006/03/diy_macro_lens.php

Camera to microscope attachment—homemade with PVC: http://www.barrie-tao.com/microscope_photo.html

Camera to microscope attachment with macro lens: http://www.scopetronix.com/mvp.htm

BETZ, V. (2005) "Micromineral Photography with Multifocus Processing," Mineralogical Record, 36, 365–369. (This is a "must-read" if you want to take photos of objects down to 1 millimeter. It is available in the HGMS library.)

Software

The *Photoshop Elements Book for Digital Photographers*, Scott Kelby, New Riders Publishing, 2004. See Web page: www.scottkelbybooks.com

Multifocus software (heliconfocus): http://helicon.com.ua/pages/. This software is available for free trial.

Multifocus software (combinez5): http://www.hadleyweb.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/CZ5/combinez5.htm. This is freeware with additional information on the HGMS Web page: http://www.hgms.org (click on the green "HGMS News" button, then the red "how2doit" button, and then on "Extended Focus in Macro Photography")

A New Breed of Rock Stars Takes Shape

A hobby with a long history reaches out to "pebble pups"
by Eileen McClelland
Published September 22, 2006 in the Houston Chronicle

Editor's note: I meant to take photos at the clubhouse October 7 for inclusion with this article, but it didn't happen. There are photos of some of our youth on the Web site if you wish to access them there.

A rock hounds' clubhouse on a Saturday morning is a hive of activity. Projects are under way in every dusty cubbyhole and behind every half-closed door inside the southwest Houston warehouse. Several volunteers teach wide-eyed, goggle-clad kids how to cut cabochons with gem-cutting machinery.

"We've raised them from pebble pups," jokes Houston Gem and Mineral Society member Neal Immega.

Rockhounds are a diverse bunch. While they are universally fascinated by - what else? - rocks - each has a niche interest: hunting for fossils and minerals, faceting gems, crafting fine jewelry, or teaching children about geology and dinosaurs.

HGMS, originally founded as the Houston Rock and Lapidary Club in 1948, is a convenient mother ship for them all, open to anyone with an incurable case of rock fever.

The group, one of the few such clubs in the country with its own facility, offers classes and equipment. It also has a long history of volunteerism, both within school systems and at the Houston Museum of Natural Science.

"Every kid loves rocks," says Scott Singleton, president. "When I go out to schools and do conferences, the parents come up and the first thing out of their mouth is `So and so loves rocks.'"

The hobby's future depends on cultivating the next generation. Youths are invited to the clubhouse on first and third Saturdays of the month.

"It's the type of hobby that tends to have old, retired fogies just because those are the people who have the time," Singleton says, "but that tends to eliminate the youth component."

David Temple, director of volunteer services for the Houston Museum of Natural Science, is a former president of the society. He says it's important that kids new to the

hobby avoid a rocky start.

“This used to be the hobby that everybody did,” Temple says. “I still happen to believe that it is an outstanding hobby. But kids have gotten too dependent on TV, video games, and computers; they’ve become obsessed with virtual reality. When they’re given the opportunity to experience reality, it just doesn’t seem to be as popular - with the hot sun and biting bugs. In order to hook ‘em, you have to make sure they’re successful early on.”

Temple says the rise of litigation has also cut into the hobby’s popularity.

“It used to be that you could get permission to get onto someone’s property to look for rocks or fossils. But these days, if I fall off your boulder, get bit by a snake or stung by a wasp - or any of those things associated with having fun in the great outdoors - you might get sued.”

Despite those challenges, the club has longstanding relationships with landowners and an active fossil-hunting program. One field-trip location is 100 miles north of Bryan.

“This is a place where there are more fossils than dirt,” Temple says. “Every place you stand is a fossil. I’ve gone up there with kids and they’ll whine, ‘Where are the fossils?’ I’ll grab their shoe and move their foot 6 inches, and say `Look - you’re standing on it!’”

The club is also active at the HMNS. For the Royal Tombs of Ur exhibit, members demonstrated bead making. Others bring their personal collections to the museum for Dino Days, a hands-on fossil fair, and give informal lectures about collecting or cleaning fossils.

“When you can get them here and share some of their passion with the public, it’s valuable,” Temple says. “Knowledge and facts are one thing, but if you’re able to communicate them with passion, it’s the passion that will come through.”

But considering the club’s resources, organizers believe it is underpopulated with only 350 members. *Editor’s note: As of October 3, our membership was 505 adult members and 75 youth members.*

Member S.E. Altman says he used to design jewelry for his wife and have it made by a professional. Now he cuts out the middleman, implementing the designs himself.

“There’s nothing you can’t do here,” Altman says. “It’s the best kept secret in the city.”

Amethyst points
Photo by Matthew Phillips

Patterns

by Mary Ann Mitscherling
09-11-06
Member of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society

Patterns cascade as forms from a template
Drop upon slabs spread out on my table.

Moss agate, carnelian, onyx-like slate
Scream "Attention!" like towers of Babel.

Forms coalesce from borders newly drawn
Discarding "outsides" for future demise.

Patterns are finalized as slabs are sawn.
Only orientation will revise.

What order from chaos slips into view
When simple slabs are arranged for review.

September 26 General Meeting Program Report

by Matt Dillon
1st Vice-President

The September General Meeting program was one we had been looking forward to for a long time. It was truly informative and somewhat provocative. **Dr. Dave "Duck" Mittlefehldt** spoke to us and delivered a wonderful PowerPoint presentation on the research NASA is doing on Mars. His focus was on the information returned from the two Mars Orbital Landers. The two Rovers have been returning valuable information about the rocks and terrain of Mars.

The southern highlands received many meteor impacts as shown by its many craters. The northern lowlands are the same, but the craters have filled in. Outflow channels indicate the direction of past water flow. The entire surface is very ancient. Dr. Mittlefehldt showed us a brief movie clip sent back by one of the Rovers of Martian dust devils.

It appears that water was there in the past as shown by the many surface channels, but now it may be present only as subsurface water. In the current environment, any water existing on the surface would do so only briefly—it would freeze and then sublimate (evaporate from its frozen state). The atmosphere is CO_2.

He discussed a number of the surface features as detected by the two Rovers on opposite sides of the planet. Spirit checked out the Gusev Crater. A stream bed empties into the crater (or it would if there were water). The crater perhaps was a lake at one time. It now is filled in.

The Meridian Crater has hematite pebbles (christened "blueberries") in abundance. Water was probably present there and contributed to the production of hematite.

The Mars Rovers are rather complex robots. They stand five feet tall and are about six feet wide. They contain multiple instruments and cameras. Hazard cameras are below (to see what they are going over) and navigation cameras are above (to see where they are headed). The Landers can travel 70 meters per day on a good day. They have been on Mars over 700 Martian days. A Martian year is roughly 2½ Earth years.

The Lander sites were selected because of their likelihood of containing water in the past, but that turned out to be a false hope. The two sites had lots of basaltic rocks but no evidence of water.

One Rover has difficulty in moving about on the Martian surface—its right front wheel died, so it is limping along. As the rovers traverse the Martian dust on their Caterpillar treads, they disturb the soil and expose what is being called "white dirt." The rovers have been able to cover more distance in a shorter period of time than was thought possible. It is unlikely that we will ever send a man to Mars, due in part to the great success of the Rover projects.

Columbia Hills is another feature on the Martian surface. It consists of layered rocks and outcrops, and it shows evidence that it's been altered by fluids—probably acidic solutions. Columbia Hills may have been uplifted. The scientists are unsure of the rock origins.

Opportunity is currently visiting Victoria Crater which is 800 meters across. At the time of Dr. W. Mittlefehldt's speech, Opportunity was just about to reach the rim of the crater. The plan is for the Lander to circumnavigate the rim looking for a likely spot from which to enter the crater. Since the two Landers have lasted so much longer than their initially expected work life, the scientists are not expecting that Opportunity will to be able to leave the crater. An exit strategy up the rather steep walls probably will not be planned for it.

Two days after Dr. Mittlefehldt spoke to us, the international media announced to the world that Opportunity had reached the rim of Victoria Crater, was looking into it, and was sending back photos.

Because of this research and the ability of scientists like Dr. Mittlefehldt to interpret the returning data, we are learning of the water-related evidence on the surface of Mars and the part water may have played in shaping that surface. This question has always been a major factor in the Mars investigation, and it appears much more will be learned from the data returned by the two Rovers.

Susan Lenz Update

by Norm Lenz

Dear HGMS friends,

I am very relieved to hear early reports of a great 2006 HGMS Show. Of course, I expected nothing less. Well done! Sorry I could not be there to help.

Susan's condition has improved since my last update. Her blood test shows that her counts are back in the safe range, and the MRI shows no tumor regrowth. Her doctor may switch to another chemotherapy drug that doesn't have negative side effects on blood counts.

Don't forget that you can get the most up-to-date information on Susan's condition by visiting the Web site Tanya maintains: http://www.caringbridge.org/visit/susanlenz. I will send e-mails only occasionally and when there is something new to report.

As always, we thank you for your continued support of our family and our war against cancer. Susan has received literally hundreds of cards, letters, and e-mails. Your encouragement is appreciated.

In Our Library

by Art Smith
HGMS Librarian

Finally! Most of the duplicate books, auction mineral specimens, and soda is out of the library, and things are back to normal. I am still cataloging and adding some of the books and documents from Al and Marion Kidwell. We have much of Al's mineral correspondence including the letters that eventually resulted in the name kidwellite for the green iron phosphate mineral Al discovered in the 1940s in Arkansas. However, it was not until 1977 that the mineral was described and named.

I have obtained two new books from Amazon.com that are now in the library. The first is another agate book; there have been six good ones published in the last two years,

and we have them all. This one is *Agates, Treasures of the Earth* by Roger Pabian with Brian Jackson, Peter Tandy, and John Cromartie. Roger Pabian is from the University of Nebraska and has published extensively on agates through the Nebraska Geological Survey, and he certainly is one of our experts on them. The book is very colorful and is well illustrated with photos. This is a small book of 180 pages and covers the subject well. He also includes much of what might be called jasper because the boundary line between what is an agate and what is jasper can be very arbitrary. I was impressed with many of the agates pictured, and fortunately agate collectors have begun to realize the value of documenting their collecting source of agates and realize that it can make them more valuable. Several illustrated outstanding agates have no source available, and one can only wonder and guess at their original location.

While looking up the agate book, I came across *A Rockhounding Guide to North Carolina's Blue Ridge Mountains* by Michael Streeter. This book seems to cover both mineral specimens and lapidary material that can be collected in North Carolina's Blue Ridge. It contains maps and descriptions of the localities and is arranged by counties. Since I have not collected in North Carolina for about 45 years, I cannot verify the accuracy, but the book looks well done and should be a useful guide to collecting there. I hope someone will try out the locations mentioned in the book and give us a report.

The library split the profits from sales at the Mineral Section Booth and added $262.85 to its treasury. Most of this money will be used to buy volume 2 of included gemstones from GIA. I have volume 1 and will donate it to the library to make the set complete.

One Great Show!

by Sigrid Stewart
2006 Show Chairman

Wow! Wasn't that a great show? My head is still spinning. I think that was the busiest four days I've had since I moved to Houston. When I agreed to be Show Chairman, I didn't know that:

- I would be buying 15 bags of ice at a time.
- I would run out to buy picture wire to hang up a pterodactyl.
- I would have to scavenge chains from a toolbox to batten down the Dino World tent.

And you know what? They missed us! Many, many people said they wanted to come last year, and they were glad we were back. How glad were they?

5168 people came through the front doors to examine the glittering and exotic wares of our dealers. They bought rocks and jewelry and T-shirts and hovered over the Silent Auction items. They tromped through the Dino World exhibit and talked to George until his voice gave out. They asked Bill Patillo at the Rock Food Table how to spell "silica" so many times that he forgot how. They marveled at our demonstrations and exhibition cases. They brought their minerals and gems and fossils to be identified at section booths and the Gem ID table, and they prowled the Swap tables for bargains.

And the kids loved us. If you were at the show on Friday morning, you probably feared for your life as you navigated the aisles. But all 1895 elementary school students and 226 accompanying adults were having a wonderful time, and they were well-behaved and well-organized. The 772 home schoolers in the afternoon and the 227 parents and other adults who came with them were fewer but had no less fun. After that deluge, on Saturday and Sunday 573 Scouts worked on their Merit Badge programs with 191 leaders and chaperones. Many thanks to all the volunteers who worked with Scott Singleton, Anna Campbell, and Nancy Fisher to coordinate the school activities. How many people watched the kids hammer away in the Dino Dig? The kids had a great time, but our poor volunteers suffered with the heat.

Food always brings people out. They loved our Hospitality Suite to death—whew! The volunteers working that area put in some long hours. Volunteers and dealers alike enjoyed the dinner on Thursday. Soup and Italian Cream Cake were very popular, but nothing beats a cold bottle of water on a hot day.

And we did it safely. There were no terrible injuries, no show-stopping security incidents. Al and his team patrolling the show and the parking lot, and the professionals from Gulf Coast Security saw to that. Some people are probably still wondering about those fire alarms that went off, but no harm done—it was just the Lapidary Section casting demonstration.

Most of the dealers did very well. The Swap Area reported success. School Daze and Scouts were awesome. The Information Booth performed its functions flawlessly and put out a lot of very popular Silent Auction items and other goodies, thanks to Shiara Trumble and Matt Phillips and a host of volunteers. The Grand Prize winner was a very happy customer. The Section Booths, Demos, Special Events, and visiting societies' booths were all well attended, and there were great little surprises, like the Dallas Paleo Society's Calendar.

And a few gluttons for punishment and Kentucky Fried Chicken closed it all down, packed it all up, and got everything back home. Talk about the faithful few—you know who you are and I love you for it. Thank you one and all for all your time and efforts. It takes the whole club and then some to put on a show like that.

To recap the numbers:

- Front Door Total: 5168
- School Daze Total: 3120
- Scouts Total: 764 (all came in the front door)
- Grand Total: 8288 show attendees

Collective Statement from the HGMS Board of Directors

THANK YOU to ALL club members who volunteered during the 2006 show

The Board of Directors of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society wants everyone who took part in the show in any way whatsoever, regardless of the amount of time spent or the nature of your involvement, to know how greatly we appreci-

ate your efforts. In light of our inability to hold our show last year due to Hurricane Rita, and considering how many of you had little or no prior experience in helping in the past, we believe that our 2006 show was a tremendous success.

We offer a special thank you to Ms. Sigrid Stewart who took on the daunting task of being the Show Chairperson, even though it was her first year to be a member of our club.

Thank you all for your efforts, and please let us know how we on the Board can help you in the future during the preparation and production of HGMS shows in 2007 and beyond.

Thanks to the Volunteers!

by Shiara Trumble and Cheryl Lucas
HGMS Show Volunteer Coordinators

To all of you who stepped up and volunteered when called upon, Cheryl and I send a grateful "thank you!" You made this a successful show, and you are very much appreciated.

Being a volunteer organization, HGMS could not possibly put together a show of this magnitude without the help of many, many club members and students who came out and gave selflessly of their time and talents. Over 135 members volunteered, not counting those who staffed the Demo Booths, Mineral and Paleo ID Booths, HMNS and HGS booths. These 135 staffed ten different service and special interest areas of the show for three days, not to mention those who helped load, set up, and take down the HGMS booths and store them away in the clubhouse for next year's show.

And not only did we have members volunteering, many students from Sharon Choens' classes at San Jacinto Junior College and Lexy Bieniek's students from the University of Houston also came and worked their hearts out for us. I'd especially like to thank Sharon and Lexy for encouraging their students to come help us out. Many thanks as well to those students who took the hot dusty job of Dino Dig supervision. That is a job that really takes youthful exuberance and patience with children, and many of these time slots had remained unfilled from our volunteer calling. Their assistance with the School Daze program was absolutely invaluable as well, so Thanks students! We hope to see you back at our show for many years to come!

I think most of you will agree that although we are tired and looking forward to a good rest after the Big Weekend, it was great fun to be among friends with similar interests, and putting on a great show that our guests really appreciated.

Thanks again to everyone who volunteered and worked so hard to make the 2006 show the best!

2006 Show Publicity Committee Generates Great Coverage and Helps Draw Wide Range of Visitors

by Elizabeth Sheehy
2006 Show Publicity Chair

The 2006 HGMS Show Publicity Committee covered the rockhound world and the Houston metro area with information about the 2006 annual show. Attendance results confirm that new and repeat visitors were attracted by advertising and coverage in newspapers, on radio and television stations, and via the Internet.

Our 2006 show postcard featuring tourmaline was photographed by Steve Blyskal. For the fourth consecutive year, he raised the bar for picture composition and appeal. Great job, Steve!

My thanks to all members of the 2006 publicity team: Steve Blyskal, Nancy Fisher, Joan Reilly, Anna Campbell, Shiara Trumble, Jennifer Lee, Matt Philips, Rick Rexroad, Jeanne Barna, James Wark, Sigrid Stewart, and Scott Singleton. Your ideas and teamwork generated results that helped make the show a fantastic success.

Thanks also to Publicity Committee extended member Charlie Fredregill, whose efforts resulted in a wonderful article in the Houston Chronicle. The extensive piece highlighted the club's Youth Section as well as the show.

Show Report—School Daze

by Scott Singleton
Show Education Chairman

By all accounts, the School Daze program this year was a huge success. We had 1895 public/private school kids come between 9 a.m. and 12:30 p.m., and 772 home schooled kids came between 1 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. Accompanying these kids was a total of 453 adult teachers and chaperones, giving us a total of 3120 people who came through the west door of the Humble Civic Center on Friday (Kid's Day).

Our success is in large part due to the changes the Show Education Committee instituted in 2005 following the huge crowds of kids we saw on Friday of the 2004 show. Although we also had registration limits that year, they were set relatively high, and a majority of the classes registered to come between 9:00 and 10:30. This high concentration of kids in a short period of time overwhelmed our vendors and demonstration booths. It also upset most of the teachers because they immediately saw that they could not physically get to the stations on their scavenger hunts. Combine that with the fear of actually losing one or more of their students in the mass of kids, and the result was a large percentage of negative assessments by teachers on the questionnaires we handed out before they picked up their rock sets at the east door of the HCC.

So we made changes in 2005. We placed tighter limits on the number of kids who could be accepted for each time period, so that we would not be overloaded at any one time. This resulted in an even spread of kids from the opening of the show at 9 a.m. all

the way to 3 p.m. We also beefed up the security presence on Friday by adding another paid security officer and having at least a half dozen volunteers on security detail. They all wore the orange vests with "Security" written on them. (I'm sure you saw those at the show.) The idea was to have security presence on all aisles of the retail section of the show plus in the front hallway, the special events room, and in the dino tent outside.

We also made changes to the traffic pattern. We made all aisles one-way so we would not have collisions of groups of kids. My understanding is that this helped minimize bottlenecks tremendously. Finally, the last change we made was to put all scavenger hunts and route maps onto the Web site. This allowed our registered teachers to study the scavenger hunt material in advance and to coordinate it with their own lesson plans. They also could familiarize themselves with the layout of the HCC and thus eliminate the problem of confused teachers trying to herd their kids to the wrong places.

I understand these changes resulted in a much more organized and effective learning experience for these kids. This makes me very happy because this is the reason they come to our show. It also means that we are meeting one of our primary objectives as a 501(c)(3), not-for-profit, educational organization. We were aided in this effort by Mad Science of Houston who thrilled all of our older students with a 15-minute demonstration of physical and chemical changes in the world around us. If any of you missed this demonstration by their enthusiastic "mad scientists," you missed a real treat.

I wish to send out my sincere thanks to the members of the Show Education Committee who all contributed to pull this off. Our registrars, Anna Campbell (public/private schools) and Nancy Fisher (home schools), diligently assembled lists of registered classes or groups and maintained contact with each to make sure all questions were answered. This went a long way toward preventing problems at the show. They, along with Joan Riley who was still recovering from knee replacement surgery, capably staffed the check-in station at the west door. Lexy Bieniek (U of H) and Sharon Choens (San Jacinto JC) each supervised their cadre of students who were all put to work with security or other tasks at the show. And many thanks to Matt Broussard for the balloons identifying each of the stations for the different scavenger hunts.

I also wish to thank all the club volunteers and college students who helped with security and other tasks associated with our School Daze event. Special thanks go to Elsa Kapitan-White for manning a station inside the west door to help teachers once they entered the HCC, and to Kathy Konkel for bravely being the "point" outside of the west door. Her station required her to get on each bus as it pulled up and instruct the teachers and kids on what they were to do upon disembarking. And I can tell you one thing—after she got through with each busload, there wasn't a misbehaving kid in the bunch. I'm still trying to figure out how she did it. I send out my thanks to each of you for a job well done.

Show Report—Scout Geology Merit Badge Program

by Scott Singleton
HGMS Show Scout Chairman

The second major educational program at our annual show (the first being the School Daze program for school kids) also was a resounding success from all accounts. Our Scout Geology Merit Badge program saw 573 Scouts and about 191 adults on Saturday and Sunday, for a total of 764 people. If you attended the show on the weekend, I'm sure you saw groups of Scouts roaming around the showroom floor.

The success of this program was due to changes following the 2004 show. By that time, it was apparent that this program had reached maturity and could no longer be taught by a few volunteers from the Show Scout Committee. So in 2005, I initiated contact with the San Jacinto Council of the BSA to find out how I could recruit certified geology merit badge counselors to help teach the program. I can assure you that this was not an easy task because the BSA is very decentralized and mostly run by volunteers. However, after a few months I managed to find a few people known as Advancement Coordinators, of which there is one per district. From them I obtained lists of geologists, and then Mike Reves and I worked our way down the lists to get volunteers.

These efforts produced enough certified geology merit badge instructors to teach the first three stations in our program. (The remainder of the stations are scattered throughout the show). Along with our own instructors, we had enough people for two instructors at each of the three stations we teach. All instructors worked only one day (except for Mike Reves and Hope Underwood who worked both days).

Because the quality and quantity of our instructors was high, our program was perceived as a worthwhile educational activity by a vast majority of the Scouts attending. Of course, there are a number of changes we need to make to continue improving the program, not the least of which is a complete redesign of our questions because the BSA has reformulated the Geology Merit Badge. But we will work through these to come up with another outstanding program next year.

I would like to extend special thanks to Clay Keiffer, our Scout Committee registrar, who receives an unbelievable number of inquiries about this program. His preregistration list (600 slots) typically fills up by early September (similar to our School Daze program) meaning he deals with a large number of parents and Scout masters. Clay and his fiancée (Rosanna) staffed the registration desk during both days of the program, although they did have some volunteer help which was much appreciated. I know we couldn't have run this program as smoothly as we did without Clay and Rosanna.

I would also like to recognize and extend my thanks to each member of the Show Scout Committee who have persevered through the years to keep this program on track. Those members are: Mike Bieniek, David Temple, Mike Reves, Clay Keiffer, and Tom Lammers.

My thanks to all of you for a job well done.

Swap Area Report 2006 HGMS Show

by Steve Blyskal

It was the general opinion of the swappers that the swap area was successful this year. The reconfigured space design was modified to accommodate all 8-foot tables and worked out very well. Nine swappers used the space with only a few tables free on Sunday. A good selection of low priced minerals for kids and lower priced collector minerals were provided along with cutting rough, lapidary and faceting equipment, and handmade jewelry. Friday was very busy with the school children, and Saturday was also busy with additional children and families and the Boy and Girl Scouts. The lack of general collectors in the swap area was noticed by several of the swappers, who sold more to the kids and their parents.

The majority of dealers receiving swap dollars were mineral dealers, though one local jewelry dealer was also very popular. Reimbursement of the dealers went very smoothly this year due to the able assistance of Wayne Barnett and Kathy Konkel, who volunteered to help with this task. All expenses for the Swap Area, mainly production of the swap dollars, were paid through the fees paid in by the swappers for expenses and possible shortages.

Sales of the swap dollars were carried out with no major problems this year due to the work of the Volunteer Coordinators. Volunteers were available at almost all times during the show, and they were pleasant and accurate in selling swap dollars. Preregistration and assignment of table space worked very well. However, some people still show some confusion over the need to use “funny money” in the swap area, despite the posted information.

Show Photos

by John Mitscherling and Phyllis George

The show Grand Prize: A Texas Lone Star Cut Topaz Necklace

"Dinosaur George" Blasing standing with Stan the T-rex at the entrance to the show

Ed Clay carving a gemstone

Left: Neal Immega telling all about sharks--and how big they are

Below: Kids as seen through Stan the T-rex's teeth

Editor's note: I removed three pages of photos because it made the BBG too big. More show photos will appear in the December BBG.

Day Light Section

by Frances Arrighi

Seventeen members and guests attended the 11 September, 2006, meeting of the Day Light Section. The program was presented by Cheryl Norwood and her assistant, Connie Parrott. We used seed beads to set (frame) a cabochon. The first thing to do is glue the cabochon to synthetic felt (purchased at Hobby Lobby). A variety of Aleene's glue was used. This glue needs to be flexible and clear (also purchased at Hobby Lobby). This glue sets fairly fast, and one can begin sewing the seed beads onto the felt almost immediately using a back stitch. Select seed beads that are color attractive with the cabochon. Use seed bead size 8, 10, or 11 for the initial row. Size 15 seed beads are used for the second row, and can be the same color or a different color than the first row. A decorative design using seed beads can be used for additional rows. The excess synthetic felt is cut away. To finish, ultrasuede is glued on the back. One can attach a beaded necklace or glue a pin or bola finding on the back. We thank Cheryl and Connie for this interesting program.

Our November meeting will be our birthday luncheon and will begin at NOON. Everyone is to bring what they brought last year. We will have ham again. If you do not remember what you brought or did not attend, call me.

We do not meet in December. So everyone have nice Thanksgiving and Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Lapidary Section

by Kathy Konkel

Metal texturing is on the agenda for our next Lapidary Section meeting to be held on **Monday, November 20**. This installment of our hands-on series will be presented by Ed Clay and David Hawkins. They will demonstrate texturing techniques utilizing a rolling mill, hammer, and flex shaft. Please join us!

Cheryl Norwood was outstanding in her lesson on beading cabochons. It is true—*real* men bead cabochons. (The women had a great time also). Each beaded cabochon was beautiful. Nice job, people.

Mineral Section

by Steve Blyskal, Chairperson and Dean Lagerwall, Assistant Chairperson

The Mineral Section meets in the clubhouse at 7:30 on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month. All are welcome.

Upcoming Meeting Topics

November 1: **Minerals of early Leadville, Colorado**. Art Smith will present the program. Leadville, Colorado boomed in 1879. The shallow oxidized minerals were listed in the mineralogies of the late 1800s but were seldom recovered in the 20th century. In the 1970s, the Sherman Tunnel in neighboring Lake County provided ac-

cess to the Hill Top Mine (in Lake County, six miles west of Leadville) which gives an idea of what oxidized minerals might have looked like in early Leadville mines. Refreshments will be served.

November 15: Topic to be announced via e-mail

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.

Mold-Making Class Scheduled for November 5 and 12

by David Hawkins

The HGMS Education Committee is sponsoring a Mold Making Class on November 2 and November 12. If anyone is interested, please contact David Hawkins. He can be reached through classes@hgms.org or by telephone.

HGMS General Meeting Minutes

September 26, 2006
by Phyllis George
(Substituting for Margaret Hardman-Muye, HGMS Secretary)

Scott Singleton called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Guests introduced were Jill and John Cooper.

Show Committee: Sigrid Stewart reported that early feedback suggests that we had an outstanding show. Preliminary figures show that we had an attendance of 8100 of which 5000 were paid tickets, 2700 were School Daze students, and 600 were Scouts.

Sigrid also singled out Chase Jennings, a brand new member who worked all three days of the show and was very helpful on "load-up" day. Because of his new member status, tireless effort, and enthusiasm, Chase was a presented with a Show Committee T-shirt.

Education Committee: Dave Hawkins reported that two spots are still available for the casting class which begins Saturday.

He also said that he thinks something might not be functioning correctly with the message storage capability of the club telephone system. Scott said he'd have someone check it.

Day Light Section: Karen Burns reported that they will make a wire wrapped bracelet in October.

Faceting Section: Sunday Bennett reported that the September meeting continued the discussion on how to orient a stone.

Sunday was commended for the outstanding job she did in setting up the Faceting Section case at the show.

Lapidary Section: Kathy Konkel reported that Cheryl Norwood gave instruction in

how to bead a cabochon at the September meeting.

Saturday, October 14 will be the annual Lapidary Section Auction from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Lunch is at 1 p.m. (bring a food item—meat is provided), and bid at the auction which starts at 2 p.m. Neal Immega announced that there will be lots of finished jewelry donated by the Kemps at the auction.

The October meeting will be a hands-on lesson in wire wrapping by Karen Burns (bring a ring mandrel if you have one).

Mineral Section: Dean Lagerwall reported that the October 4 meeting will be Show 'n Tell, and the October 18 meeting will be Minerals of the Silver Trail, Canada—a talk given by Mark Mauthner (of the Houston Museum of Natural Science) during the Tucson Mineralogical Symposium.

Paleo Section: Terry Brawner reported that the September meeting was held Thursday instead of the usual Tuesday, and it was held at the Humble Civic Center in conjunction with our show.

"Dinosaur George" Blasing was the speaker. He spoke about inspecting the bones of dinosaurs for fused vertebra caused by physical injuries and for deformed bone caused by disease. Such findings shed additional light on the life of a dinosaur.

Youth Section: Beverly Mace reported that she had plenty of help during the show. Members of the Youth Section and their parents plus students from San Jacinto College and The University of Houston helped immensely, as did Carol McGarry and other club members.

The number of youth participating in the Saturday meetings has increased dramatically. An article about the Youth Section was published in the *Houston Chronicle* Friday, September 22, so Beverly is expecting a dramatic influx of new youth members. She needs additional volunteers to help during the meetings which are the first and third Saturdays of each month from 10 a.m. to 12 noon.

Newsletter/Web Site: Phyllis George reported that articles for the November BBG must be submitted to her by Wednesday, October 11.

She contacted the *Houston Chronicle* for permission to reprint their article about the Youth Section in the November BBG and also to put it on the Web site accessible from the Youth Section page. She received permission to reproduce only the text in the BBG—not the photographs. (Phyllis will take similar photos Saturday, October 7 for use with the article.)

Permission was denied for reproducing the article on our Web site, but the Chronicle was kind enough to supply us with a link to the article on their Web site. So—the article is accessible through our Web site in two locations—by clicking on the link in the Youth Section page or on the link in the HGMS News page.

New Business:

Scott Singleton introduced the Nominating Committee for 2007 club officers. The

committee consists of Margaret Hardman-Muye of the Lapidary Section, Terry Brawner of the Paleo Section, Phyllis George of the Faceting Section, Steve Blyskal of the Mineral Section, and Tom Wright of the Day Light Section.

Members are encouraged to contact them with suggestions of people to fill the 2007 positions of President, 1st Vice-President, 2nd Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer and for the positions of 2007 Show Chair, 2007 Assistant Show Chair, and 2008 Assistant Show Chair. (Scott Singleton will be the 2008 Show Chair.)

The terms of the Board Representatives (one member from each of the five sections) are for two years each, and the terms are staggered. Representatives from the Faceting Section and the Lapidary Section begin their terms on odd-numbered years, so these two Sections each need to select a member to represent them on the 2007 HGMS Board. The two Sections will vote for their Board Representative at their November meeting.

Announcements:

The Houston Bead Society will be having their annual Bead & Jewelry Show at the H.E.S.S. Club, 5430 Westheimer Road (between Yorktown & Chimney Rock) Friday, November 10 through Sunday, November 12.

The Planetary Society is presenting a special event "Astronauts, Robots, and 21st Century Space Exploration" on Thursday, October 5 at 8 p.m. at The Lunar and Planetary Institute, Lecture Hall, 3600 Bay Area Boulevard, Houston, TX 77058. RSVP to 281-486-2106. Seating is limited and will be on a first come, first served basis.

Show 'n Tell:

Russ Hawkins showed petrified wood that he brought in from his ranch.

Jeanne Barna showed the beaded cabochon (petrified wood) she made during the September Lapidary Section meeting.

Sigrid Stewart displayed the mineral specimens she bought at the show.

Door Prize: Nell Honsinger won the dark blue lapis bead necklace donated by Margo and Bill Bedman.

Program: Matt Dillon introduced Dr. David Mittlefehldt as our speaker of the evening. Dr. Mittlefehldt is a scientist in the Astromaterials Research Office at the NASA Johnson Space Center. He is meteorite expert, and he has been working very closely with the Mars Exploration Rover Mission.

The two Mars Landers (Spirit and Opportunity) have been on Mars for over 950 Mars days (one Mars year is 2.5 Earth years) and are still going strong. They can travel 70 meters per day. Their exploration program has been extended to October 2007. *(Editor's note: Dr. Mittlefehldt also told us that Opportunity was currently a few meters from the edge of the Victoria Crater. The following day news media all over the world displayed photos taken by Opportunity of the area inside Victoria Crater.)*

The primary object was to find evidence of water in Mars's past. Water could not be present on the surface now—it would freeze first and then sublimate. However, evidence indicates that there might be water in some of the lower layers where it is protected from the surface environment and the CO_2 atmosphere.

Dr. Mittlefehldt also brought a Martian meteorite found in Antartica.

HGMS Board Meeting

October 3, 2006
by Phyllis George
Substituting for Margaret Hardman-Muye, HGMS Secretary

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

Call to order, 7:30, by 1st Vice President Matt Dillon

Approval of September Minutes: Done via e-mail.

Treasurer's Report: Lowell Stouder was not present, and Paul McGarry did not have the figures with him. The show figures are not yet finalized.

Committee and Section Reports:
Lapidary Section: David Hawkins reported that the Lapidary Section Annual Auction and Lunch is being held Saturday, October 14. Auction items can be examined and dropped off from 11 a.m. to 12 noon. Lunch is at 1 p.m. (Everyone is asked to bring a food item for the lunch—the Section is providing the meat.) The auction begins at 2 p.m.

Youth Section: Beverly Mace announced that the Youth Section had a very good attendance at the show. However she is concerned that since an article about the Youth Section ran in the *Houston Chronicle* just before the show, the Youth Section meetings may begin having more attendees than she and her two helpers can handle. Beverly desperately needs more volunteers to assist her.

Paleo Section: Art Smith reported that Irene Offeman had a stroke two weeks ago, but she is doing well. The auctions where some of her collection is being sold went well.

Shop and Clubhouse: Tom Wright reported that Bill Rogers has agreed to clean the clubhouse on a monthly basis. He will charge $150 for the initial cleaning and $100 for each succeeding month. He will clean the floors, dust, clean the restrooms, and clean the offices, and the club will pay for all cleaning materials. Phyllis George moved that Bill Rogers be retained to clean the clubhouse with the above-mentioned criteria. Art Smith seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously. The cleaning service will begin when keys are made available.

An electrician will install the three outdoor lights, hopefully Saturday.

Program: Matt Dillon said that Dave Mittlefehldt, from NASA, gave an excellent report on the Mars Explorers at the September meeting. Matt will talk about agate identification in the field for the October General Meeting.

Show: Sigrid Stewart gave a preliminary estimate of the show profit. The figures will change as more bills are presented. Overall, the dealers were very happy with their profit from the show. Only three dealers were less than happy, and their merchandise might have been marked higher than the show attendees wanted to pay.

Newsletter and Web site: Phyllis George asked that all articles for the BBG be submitted no later than Wednesday, October 11. She will not be able to work on the BBG that following weekend. Her daughter will be in town then, and Phyllis also plans to attend the Lapidary auction. She hopes to have all articles already edited before the weekend arrives. If she does, she will still be able to get the finished BBG to the printer the following Monday or Tuesday.

Phyllis has already placed photos Matt Phillips took at the show on the Web site. She will place additional photos on the Web site that she took and that John Mitscherling took.

Membership: Beverly Mace reported that our membership is now over 500—505 adult members plus an additional 75 youth members.

Old and New Business

Rekeying front and back door locks: A member suggested that the front and back doors be rekeyed because it has been six years since the locks were changed, and many people who should not have keys do. The Board decided to address this issue at a later time.

Nominating Committee for 2007 officers: The committee's slate of nominees (including all 2007 officers, 2007 Show Chairman, and 2007 Assistant Show Chairman) will be presented to members at the October General Meeting. Additional nominations can come from the floor at that time. (The Show Chairman and Assistant Show Chairman are voted on by the Board and then presented to the membership at the next General Meeting following the Board meeting.)

Voting on the 2007 officers will occur at the November meeting. No additional nominees can be added to the slate at the November meeting.

Insurance coverage changes: An agent is preparing a quote for a deductible of $2,500 for 2007. They are also putting in place an increase in contents coverage to $270,000 for October through December of 2006 with a deductible of $2,500. We will be invoiced for this and will need to pay upon receipt.

Committee on abuse prevention: Matt Dillon reports that the work done thus far needs to have input from the attorney, Terry Proctor.

Clarification of policy regarding Club equipment offsite usage: This discussion is tabled until November. The President wants to be present for the discussion.

Report on investigation of power companies: Terry Brawner has developed a list of companies and narrowed it down to the following: First Choice (out of Fort Worth), Star Tex, Commerce Energy, Spark Energy, and Gexa. David Hawkins moved that Terry check the published rates of each company tomorrow, then pick and sign up with the one he thinks is the best. It was seconded by Phyllis George, and the motion passed.

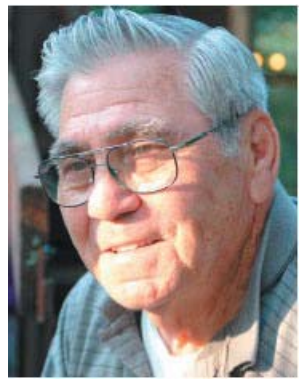
SCFMS yearly dues: The insurance liability program needs to be paid for immediately. It was due September 30. (The past provider doubled their rates for this year, so the SCFMS changed insurance providers to one who would keep the rates the same as they had been. The new provider has an earlier due date than the past provider did.) Paul McGarry will notify Lowell Stouder that he needs to send a check immediately to cover our premium.

We will send in our dues for our SCFMS membership and a listing of our 2007 officers after the November General Meeting (at which the officers will be elected).

Meeting Adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

It's Been a Great Year

by Jim Robinson
AFMS President
from the AFMS Newsletter 10/2006



The AFMS Convention in Nashville was well attended, and I want to thank the Middle Tennessee Gem & Mineral Society for hosting this event. It seemed that members of the club had thought of everything to make our stay a pleasant one. Unfortunately, I was ill during much of the week in Nashville and really could not enjoy the show as I would have wanted to.

The AFMS annual meeting went smoothly. I've had the minutes of the meeting reprinted elsewhere in this newsletter. The Uniform Rules Committee held its meeting as well, and the upcoming changes to the competitive rules are in this issue too. They go into effect January 1, 2007.

This will be my last message to you as President of the American Federation. I want to say "Thank you" to my officers and committee chairpersons. They are the people who keep this organization ticking; who provide guidance and expertise; and who can be relied on to answer questions or provide advice when asked.

It has been a privilege to serve you and an honor to be associated with so many dedicated rockhounds. This has been a wonderful year, and Awilda and I have had so many opportunities to meet and hear from so many wonderful people.

SCFMS President's Message

"Words from William"
by William Medford
SCFMS President
from SCFMS Newsletter 9–10/2006

From all reports, the Federation's annual meeting in Bossier City was very successful and enjoyed by all who came. The local club is to be commended for the fine facilities and the excellent preparation and conduct of the various activities and functions. The show was well attended with vendors saying that the people who came were there to make purchases. **Well done, ARK-LA-TX CLUB!**

The Federation has an excellent slate of officers for the forthcoming year. All are hard working members with the knowledge of what is needed to keep our Federation strong and healthy. I look forward to working with them in the year ahead. There are still several positions that have been vacated by people whose terms are expiring or they are retiring. In either case, we need people to come forward and assume these open positions. As I have stated so many times before, it takes many people to keep this organization operating smoothly. So ask where your help is needed.

This will be my last message as your president as I will complete my term of office next month. It has been a real pleasure to have served the Federation these last two years. I want to thank all of the members who have provided me with their energy and support. Without such support, the Federation could not have operated effectively. I will be working with the new officers and assisting with some of the programs that were started but that still need refining and updating.

During my term of office, I have tried in my bimonthly messages to keep you abreast of Federation activities that needed your attention and oftentimes assistance. In this way I hoped that you would become more aware of the functions of the Federation and more knowledgeable about what the Federation is attempting to do for the membership. There may have been other methods of communicating this information, but for me this was the most cost-effective method. However, our newsletter will become most effective when it is read by the entire membership—not just by one or more club officers or filed in your library by the club secretary.

Again, thank you for allowing me to serve the Federation as your President.

SCFMS Safety Report

by George Browne
SCFMS Safety Chair
from SCFMS Newsletter 9–10/2006

Fall Safety

We are fortunate that we are in an area where we can go on field trips most of the year. However late fall and early winter is usually the time when we spend more time inside. So perhaps we should consider a little inside rockhound safety. There are

numerous subjects we could discuss, but let's limit this topic to dust. Rock dust is far more dangerous than most rockhounds realize. We encounter rock dust when we clean our rocks or fossils, when we saw, grind, sand, and polish. If you are going to work with rocks and fossils, you will encounter rock dust. Why is rock dust a safety issue? Because rock dust is the cause of silicosis.

Silicosis is a creeping killer. Every time we inhale rock dust it affects the lungs. It may take 10 to 20 years for it to create enough scar tissue to do any damage, but when the damage is done, it is irreversible. In other words there is no cure. Therefore it is essential that we prevent the inhalation of the dust. If you can equip your shop with exhaust hoods, that's fantastic. But at least use a proper respirator. Be sure the respirator is the proper type. A respirator that you would use for paint fumes is not proper for particulates. Check with your supplier for the proper type.

Do not be fooled that just because you saw with oil or grind and sand wet that you are eliminating all the dust. The oil and water does remove a lot of the dust—but not all of it. Did you ever notice how much dust accumulates around your sander and grinder? Your polishing compounds also contain particles that can cause silicosis. Just be careful about what you breathe.

For more information on this topic or other safety issues, check the American Federation Web site. Go to www.amfed.org and click on the button at the top labeled "The AFMS." Then click on "Safety" in the left-hand column. You will find a lot of safety articles from the American Federation and several from the regional federations. These articles are for you to read or publish in your club bulletin. I am flattered that I occasionally see this SCFMS safety article published in our club bulletins, but I rarely ever see any AFMS articles published. There are enough articles available that every club bulletin could have a safety article in every issue. Keep *your* members informed and safe.

Tips 'n Hints

A Shop Hint
from Amador Nugget 1/01 via The Roadrunner 9/2006

Here is a suggestion to make the wet grinding procedure more comfortable. Place **water pipe foam insulation** over the edge of the water trough for an easy wrist rest while working the stone. Just cut to the length needed and slip it over the edge of the water pan. *The Roadrunner Editor's note: I have these for my Genie and use them all the time. Until I saw this hint, I didn't think about passing it along.*

Interesting Tidbits *from Cedar Valley Gems 9/2006, via The Roadrunner 9/2006*

Frosted glass: Dissolve Epsom Salts in a pot of boiling water until no more will dissolve. Brush a small amount of liquid onto a window. The liquid evaporates quickly, leaving a film of delicate crystals behind.

To Reclaim Cutting Oil: Put the oil in a milk carton, add a small amount of water, let the sludge settle for a few days, then put it into the freezer. The water freezes and the oil rises to the top. Pour the oil off.

ShowTime 2006

October 20-22	Victoria, TX	Victoria Gem & Mineral Society Victoria Community Center
October 21-22	Glen Rose, TX	Fossilmania--Austin & Dallas Paleo Societies Somervell County Expo Center, Hwy. 67 Bill Morgan, 210-492-9163 morgan@uthscsa.edu, www.dallaspaleo.org
October 28-29,	Tulsa, OK	Tulsa Rock & Mineral Society Expo Square on 21st, Exchange Center 1 Bldg. peggy22@cox.net, http://ttownrockhound.org
November 4-5	Midland, TX	Midland Gem & Mineral Society Midland Center, 105 N. Main St. Craig Tellinghuisen 39122 N. County Road 1243 Midland, TX 79707-9712, (432) 697-7668
November 10-12	Houston, TX	Houston Bead Society The H.E.S.S. Club, 5430 Westheimer Road 409-938-0393; www.houstonbeadsociety.org; shirley@houstonbeadsociety.org
November 11-12	DeRidder, LA	DeRidder Gem & Mineral Society Exhibit Hall, Beauregard Parish Fair Grounds 610 West Dr.; Adam Valin (337) 585-3693 adam.valin@bellsouth.com
November 17-19	W. Palm Beach, FL	Eastern Federation; G & M Soc. of the Palm Beaches; South Florida Fairgrounds Expo Ctr. 9067 Southern Blvd., State Road 80/98 Deb Bengtson (561) 432-2953 gemandmineral@bellsouth.net www.gemandmineral.cc.
November 18-19	Mesquite, TX	Dallas Gem & Mineral Society Resistol Arena Exhibition Hall, 1818 Rodeo David Pirnie, 972-278-4845 www.dallasgemandmineralshow.com
December 1-3	Austin, TX	Austin Gem & Mineral Society Palmer Events Center, 900 Barton Springs Rd. Josie Middleton, (512) 458-9546 E-mail: gemcapers@austin.rr.com Web site: www.austingemandmineral.org
December 1-3	El Paso, TX	El Paso Mineral & Gem Society El Maida Auditorium, 6331 Alabama; (877) 533-7153, gemcenter@aol.com

2006	NOVEMBER					2006
Sun	**Mon**	**Tues**	**Wed**	**Thu**	**Fri**	**Sat**
			1 7:30 Mineral Section	2	3	4 10–12 Youth Section 10–5 Shop Open
5	6	7 7:30 Board Meeting	8 7:30 Faceting Section	9	10	11 10–5 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 10–5 Shop Open
19	20 5:00–7:15 Shop Open 7:30 Lapidary Section	21 7:30 Paleo Dinner & Auction	22	23 Thanksgiving	24	25 10–5 Shop Open
26	27	28 7:30 General Meeting	29	30		

2006	DECEMBER					2006
Sun	**Mon**	**Tues**	**Wed**	**Thu**	**Fri**	**Sat**
					1	2 10–12 Youth Section 10–5 Shop Open
3	4	5 7:30 Board Meeting	6 7:30 Mineral Section	7	8	9 CHRISTMAS PARTY 10–5 Shop Open
10	11 NO Day Light Section	12 7:30 Show Comm	13 7:30 Faceting Section Party	14	15	16 10–12 Youth Section 10–5 Shop Open
17	18 NO Lapidary Section	19 NO Paleo Section	20 NO Mineral Section	21	22	23 10–5 Shop Open
24 / 31	25 CHRISTMAS DAY	26 NO General Meeting	27	28	29	30 10–5 Shop Open

The BACKBENDER'S GAZETTE

The Newsletter of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society

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