



The **BACKBENDER'S GAZETTE**

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

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Clear Lake Gem & Mineral Society's 2007 Show

by Art Smith

Member of The Houston Gem & Mineral Society

The fourth Saturday and Sunday in February was the date of this year's Clear Lake Show. It is always a special treat for those of us who do not get to Tucson because a few of the dealers have added some Tucson-purchased materials to their stock, and so some of the new things are available. This year my wife and I took three friends. Two of them had never been to a gem and mineral show, and the other had been only once—to last year's show. It is always nice to get an outsider's reaction to things, and they often point out items that I might completely miss.



My first task was to check out the Fender's booth to see if they had put out any additional materials from Clyde Hardin's collection, particularly Arkansas pieces and specifically Magnet Cove where he collected minerals from the early 1970s to 2002. There were only a few additional Magnet Cove pieces I had to have. One was a 4-cm tall rutile paramorph after brookite from the Magnet Cove Rutile mine. This specimen was not only larger than most from this location, but it was mostly complete, had rough faces, and well developed prism faces that are rare for paramorphs from this mine.

Also of interest were some small, 1 to 5 cm augite crystals that Clyde had collected in 1973. They were of interest because they both had partial terminations and both had

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March 27 General Meeting Program

by Matt Phillips

HGMS 1st Vice President

We will view a short DVD clip from the Texas County Reporter. The clip is based on material recorded during the September 2006 HGMS Show and features Bill and Lois Pattillo's Food Table. Everything on the table is made of rocks—except for one item that actually is food. (Can you guess what it is?) Bill and Lois are from Corpus Christie and have taken their Food Table to shows all over the U.S. for many years.

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Editor: Phyllis B. George

22407 Park Point Drive

Katy, TX 77450-5852

Phone: (281) 395-3087

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E-mail the Editor and Webmaster at

pgeorge4@houston.rr.com

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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some matrix attached. The matrix is coarse white calcite and probably carbonatite. What is carbonatite? Hard to believe, but it is a rare occurrence, an igneous calcite. Calcite is the predominant composition of the sedimentary rock limestone and the metamorphic rock marble. It is represented as all three rock types although carbonatite is the rarest and least abundant. I always thought the augite to be from a contact metamorphic rock and not from the carbonatite. However, they still may be close to the contact metamorphic rocks at the edges of the carbonatite. The prism faces of this augite have discontinuous small silky asbestos-like patches on their surface.

Most of the other specimens from Magnet Cove that I purchased were small, up to 4-mm, brookite crystals perched aesthetically on small gray to black quartz crystals from Moses Hill (Rutherford deposit). I have collected from this deposit many times and have seen many specimens from it, but getting good placements of the combinations of brookite and quartz for some reason is extremely rare. About seven years ago when visiting a friend who owns a rock shop in Hot Springs, I was shown two flats with nicely boxed aesthetic crystal groups of brookite crystals on quartz crystals. I marveled over them saying they were the best I had ever seen. A collector friend in the group chimed he also had a nice flat from the same person. However, whenever such a good thing is shown to me the saying, "If it is too good to be true, it probably isn't" flashes in my brain, and I asked for an ultraviolet light. There was a lot of fluorescence showing, not from the specimens but from the glue holding many of the brookite crystals in place where they were stuck. I think we determined that all specimens in the two flats were enhanced and fakes. This is not true for Clyde's specimens, but I checked when I got home just to be sure.

The other things of interest from Clyde's collection were brookite crystals on or included in white quartz from Miller Mountain, Garland County, Arkansas. The brookites from Miller Mountain are not at all like the brookite crystals from Magnet Cove which are black and equant, pyramidal, or prismatic, but instead are brown or gray and tabular, usually very thin like a blade. Often they are erroneously labeled as rutile but are in fact brookites. The Magnet Cove brookites form at high temperatures in altered novaculite adjacent to or more rarely in the igneous rocks. The Miller Mountain brookites are formed at lower temperatures in alpine-type hydrothermal deposits and are more similar to brookites from Switzerland, Austria, or Pakistan formed in the same environment.

With my main required objective complete, I moved to Tim and Holly Smith's booth (Mineral Reflections) and noticed lots of good stuff but concentrated on their abundant animal carvings. A green frog mostly composed of serpentine has small patches of a purplish red rare mineral called stichtite from near Dundas, Tasmania, Australia. It occurs in only two areas—one in Tasmania and the other in South Africa. The frog I purchased has only two quite small patches of stichtite in the dark green antigorite, but it will do for now.

South Africa is also the source of the lapidary material called petersite. Petersite is essentially dark brown and dark blue quartz and may have thin streaks of brown or

yellow tiger's eye running through it. Originally it was found in a small deposit adjacent to the tiger's eye deposits in South Africa, but it supposedly was mined-out some years ago. There is enough recent material to convince me that another deposit has been found or that more has come from the original deposit. I purchased a one-piece Chinese carving of two attractive blue and brown petersite frogs on a white to light brown quartz base matrix. I am well pleased with its over all appearance, and the petersite is much better than that of a previous frog. An interesting bright blue rough-finished frog is composed of Mexican turquoise, and it also was carved in China. It almost looks like it may have been molded rather than carved, but I am not convinced of that yet. A mottled dark and light green small frog of a material that is less than 5 in hardness definitely is not malachite, serpentine, or calcite, but I am not sure yet what the material is. Complicating this is that it may have been dyed. A small pale tan chatoyant frog from Russia is carved from the satin spar variety of gypsum found in Russia. It probably is the same Russian locality from which a carving of two birds on a white and black mottled bird bath came.

While I was looking at minerals, I sent Marsha and Nancy to Hinshaw's booth on the west wall. Marsha had purchased a silver ring from them last year and was pleased with it. Nancy was looking for a silver ring this year. She came back a short time later having found an unusual ring she wanted me to look at, but she could not remember what the cabochon mineral was. I went over to look at the ring and knew right away what it was even though I had never seen this mineral used in jewelry before. Two weeks prior to this, Tom Wright had shown me a slab he'd had for a long time and had just polished to an unusual deep metallic blue. It was the same thing, covellite, the deep blue copper sulfide—probably from Butte, Montana and mined prior to the 1950s because it forms very rich copper ore and most, if not all, had been mined-out long before that time. Nancy's silver ring had a small, elongated cabochon of covellite set slightly below the surface of the silver because the covellite is extremely soft, usually with a hardness of two or less. I told Nancy to buy it because she would probably never see another ring with covellite, but she would have to treat it gently and carefully. She bought it and is happy with it.

We did the rounds and saw lots of other good things. Monarch Minerals had some interesting polished pieces of silicified wood, chrysanthemum stones, agates, and other materials, but I did not have the time to really examine things closely. Maybe I was distracted to other things by the female booth attendants, but who knows.

My friends each found some short onyx or limestone goblets from Pakistan, and each purchased a nice set of six for what I thought was a very reasonable price. The walking and standing was taking its toll, so I suggested lunch and we left. However, I could have easily used another hour or so to look at more things. There were many other things that needed checking out, but they were left for a future show.

Our friends enjoyed themselves and were impressed with the variety of things displayed and offered for sale. I doubt it made rockhounds out of any of them, but they probably will enjoy seeing another show and now know a bit more about the hobby than they did before.

Paleontological study – ECHINOIDS

by Wayne Barnett

The Paleontology Section is doing a study to potentially revise and update the Section's now out-of-print echinoid publication. I am gathering as much information from the literature as possible and am assembling a listing of the echinoid species found in Texas as based on the most recent paleontological studies.

Once this phase is complete (hopefully early summer 2007), we will undertake the illustration of the species. For this version of the publication, we will use only high-quality illustrations or photographs, with photographs preferred. If you have echinoids that may be loaned or donated to the project, will you please contact me? The best specimens for this project are those with good location information. If the specimens are not identified, we will identify them and will clean those specimens used for illustration. Please contact me by phone at 281-866-7282, by e-mail at rockcutter@sbcglobal.net, or see me at the clubhouse on Saturdays.

The Disposal of Rock and Mineral Collections

(published in *Mineral News*, February 2007)

by Art Smith, Houston Gem & Mineral Society Member

artsmithite@msn.com

In the past in *Mineral News*, there has been some discussion about ways to dispose of mineral collections when the time comes to do so. To this I have added rocks, lapidary materials, fossils, equipment, and supplies. What I am suggesting has not been discussed before and generally does not apply to large, expensive, purchased collections of minerals, fossils, or gemstones, but to moderately-sized collections of excellent-to-good or even below average quality that cannot easily be disposed of except as throw-ins when a larger or more expensive collection is sold. So far in the last five years it has worked extremely well at the Houston Gem & Mineral Society. The Society and the people disposing of the collections have been well pleased.

For years the Houston Gem & Mineral Society has been accepting mineral, lapidary, and gemstone collections plus equipment as donations and adding them to our display cases and our shop, then auctioning or selling the surplus. However, if the donor wants an evaluation for tax purposes, we must keep the surplus for at least two years before disposing of it and then we feel obligated to try to dispose of it for close to its appraised value. With our limited storage facilities and some rather large collections, this can be a problem. So we have devised an alternate plan which allows us to dispose of the collection fairly quickly and to determine a fair value. For that we have established silent auctions.

There is a large display case near the rear of our large meeting room. The case once contained rotating exhibits. So why not display some of the material to be auctioned? We knew we soon would be running out of space to store collections before disposal. Eventually a plan was devised where we would not have to evaluate the material. We

have a silent auction from the show case, and this usually is an acceptable value. All the auction money goes to the club, and then the donor gets a receipt for a cash donation of the total dollars that the auction raised.

This was further modified in the case of high-value collections to let the donor keep up to 50% of the amount received and get a cash donation for the percent the club kept. The donor also has the right to put minimum bids on anything he is donating, and in some cases we have also added minimum bids to be sure the items were not sold below a fair value.

For large donations with a large amount of material, we have held Saturday morning combination sales and silent auctions. In one case, this grossed almost \$7000. We have also turned down some material if we did not think the club auction would give a fair return or the donor expected too much on what was offered to us and we doubted we could meet the expectation. So alternatives are suggested.

So far it has worked extremely well. The Society has added around \$10,000 annually to its treasury, and the donors have disposed of their materials and in some cases also received a nice monetary return. This is particularly true when the material has been in their possession for quite a few years, and even getting half of the auction money is frequently considerably more than they paid for it. This usually is higher than a dealer's offer at 20 to 30 percent of its value. We are not trying to compete with dealers as we handle mostly things that dealers do not wish to bother with, or will not pay for, or will pay very little for.

Most of the silent auctions end when the business part of our monthly General Meeting starts, and the winning bidders can then pay for and pick up their winning treasures at the intermission before the main program begins or after it ends. Needless to say, it has substantially increased our interest in and attendance at the General Meetings with many attending to put their final bids on the sheet.

To date we have helped dispose of many small-to-medium-sized collections of minerals, and several fairly good-size fossil collections. The auction of one large collection has been going on for the last few months and probably will continue for quite a few more months.

An extremely large lapidary collection has been disposed of that included slabs, gem rough, and faceted stones. Other things we have auctioned include a lot of equipment including lapidary equipment, faceting equipment, binocular microscopes, trimmers, ultrasonic cleaners, cabinets, and you name it. All have received good homes, and the donors and society have benefited. It is fairly easy to do, but your club or society has to be registered as a nonprofit organization for the donors to receive the tax benefits for a donation. One other thing to consider is that the Houston Gem & Mineral Society has a membership of over 500 not including children, and it is a pretty diverse group. There are few items we auction in which at least several people will have some interest. So there is a fair amount of competitive bidding, plus the bidding is not restricted to members only.

So if your group or Society is interested in raising additional funds or if people need to dispose of collections and would like them sold or auctioned, I suggest you give it a try. It is not without work because the silent auction needs to be organized with specimen labels and numbers, and then bid sheets must be prepared where participants can bid. I suggest assigning a minimum bid and allowing raises in even-dollar amounts only. This has worked well for us.

Free US Geological Survey Publications

by Neal Immega

You can obtain many free U.S. Geological Survey publications in electronic form from the government Web site <http://pubs.er.usgs.gov/usgspubs/index.jsp> in html or DJVU formats. Click on the "More Info" button, and you are offered the opportunity to get an electronic version. You will need a free plug-in for your browser from www.lizardtech.com to view the DJVU format. That's it. You have access to all the really old publications.

The Paleontology Library at the Houston Gem and Mineral Society will greatly benefit from these publications because we can replace all those really bad Xerox copies and their terrible illustrations. This is marvelous! Thank you, U.S. Government.

Susan Lenz Update

February 21, 2007

by Norm Lenz

Dear HGMS Friends,
Susan's last MRI and blood test was taken on February 16th. We met with her doctor yesterday to get the results. He has scheduled an EEG for Tuesday to check her brain activity. We will schedule a cognitive exam and possible cognitive therapy soon. Her doctor is suggesting more physical therapy.

Positives:

- There is no sign of tumor regrowth on Susan's last MRI
- Her blood counts are acceptable.
- We have hired Heather, a full time independent home health aid. She works eight hours per day Monday through Friday and some weekend hours. She has been a friend of our family for several years, is single, and her family obligations are minimal. She is able to travel with us as needed.
- We have traveled to our Hill Country property twice this year and will be going again tomorrow.
- Susan is feeding herself most of what she eats
- She eats well and sleeps well



- She is communicating well enough but cannot carry on lengthy or complex conversations
- The tremors are tolerable but still a nuisance
- We are able to attend church services occasionally
- We are able to enjoy going to the movies during the day on weekdays when there are no crowds
- Susan's last seizure was January 28th. Since then we have been distributing her medications more evenly through the day and night.

Susan has completed a year of chemotherapy. That is twice the length of chemotherapy typically prescribed in Europe and is typical in the USA for someone with her diagnosis. Based on discussions with her doctor, Susan has decided to stop chemotherapy for now. We could resume treatments later if we feel they would be beneficial to her.

Negatives:

- Her latest MRI indicates some damage to the left side of her brain caused by her radiation treatments. Chemotherapy may have contributed to this problem.
- She has only a low level understanding of her condition
- Susan needs assistance with dressing, walking, bathing, eating, etc. She needs a wheelchair for distances longer than a few feet.
- Susan's short term memory is less reliable than her long term memory
- She has trouble making even simple decisions. This is especially true if there are more than two or three choices. For example, choosing which breakfast cereal to eat is a process of elimination—one at a time.
- She cannot concentrate or focus on anything as complex as reading a book, studying a manual, or planning anything. She does enjoy music and TV.

Photo: Susan's first haircut since her buzz following surgery. Tanya's friend Karla was kind enough to do the job. Susan's hair looks nice!

Thank you for keeping us in your thoughts and prayers while we fight this war.

Norm

Summary of February General Meeting Program

Toshiba Motors in mining.

by Matthew Phillips

HGMS 1st Vice President

For over 35 years, Toshiba International Corporation Industrial Division has head quartered in Houston, Texas. Many products are designed, built, and tested in a 620,000 square foot state-of-the-art manufacturing facility—a totally integrated manufacturing process from research and development, design, engineering, production, and manufacturing to after-market service and support.

Mining requires motors and drives in the grinding and crushing machines, the cyclone pumps, and the material handling conveyors. Crude rock is extracted, transported, and prepared for processing. In processing, mineral is moved to casting, milling, and metal-making furnaces.

The presentation showed some equipment and the repair of equipment involved in a potash mining operation located in Canada. The pictures showed mining equipment during the operation, repair, and installation of critical motors.



The potash mining photos are from Mosaic Esterhazy Saskatchewan Canada and Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, Canada in Rocanville. PCS Rocanville produced 3 million tonnes of KC1 (potash) in 2006. Potash Corp is the world's largest fertilizer enterprise by capacity, producing the three primary plant nutrients (potash, nitrogen, and phosphate). Their low-cost operations in Canada represented 22 percent of the world's potash capacity in 2005 along with 75 percent of the world's excess potash capacity.



There were photos of cement-lime plants, copper mines, gold mines, coal mining, and power plants.

Locations:

Cement plant: Devils Slide (Morgan) Utah

Copper mine: Kennecott Utah Copper in Bingham, Utah—2000–2500 lbs a day

Copper mine: Quadra Mine, Ely Nevada—1000 lbs. of copper a day

Gold Mining: Newmont Gold in Carlin Nevada—100 to 150 lbs a day base placer gold

Coal Mining: Rio-Tinto, Rock Point, Wyoming

The Wemco flotation cell as manufactured by Dorr-Oliver Eimco (Salt Lake) is designed for mixing the solution (mud and water). The design is to keep minerals in suspension. The equipment consists of a large open-top cylinder with a protective cage that mounts over the top. A vertically mounted motor is connected through a series of belts to a vertical set of mixer blades attached to the shaft assembly. The shaft can be jacked up or down, depending on the concentration of the solution. Typically

the blade assembly is stainless steel. The turn-down is typically 10 to 12:1 in a slower rotation.

The flotation cells have a near-surface, self-aspirating rotor combined with a false bottom/draft tube arrangement. Radial launders and baffles stabilize the froth surface, increasing its surface, grade, and froth transport rate. Eimco forced air flotation cells



have high air dispersion capabilities and easy restarting mechanisms with virtually no short-circuiting. Combined with new mechanisms, these cells maximize coarse particle recovery. Pyramid columns are custom designed for each application and feature the called Ratemax aeration sparger which produces the highest bubble surface area flux in the industry. The surface bubbles help to suspend the gold, copper, silver.

Looking at the above description, I am glad we managed to keep the PowerPoint presentation very short and allowed some discussion since we did not have engineer James Russell attending to give more information.



Day Light Section

by Frances Arrighi



Twenty members and two guests plus two instructors attended the 12 February, 2007 meeting of the Day Light Section.

Kelly Adams gave the program on glass fusion. His assistant was Joyce Dwight, who has a studio in town. All members made at least one piece. Joan Riley put musical instruments on her pieces of background glass. I do not know how the pieces looked after firing. I do know that Sunday Bennett and Vickie Finnerty were happy with theirs. For this procedure to work,



one must use glass of the same coefficient of expansion. If this is not followed, explosions occur. Tom Wright did the firing of the kiln. The pictures on the right show the

pieces before firing and the same pieces after firing. These same photos are on the HGMS Web site on the Upcoming Programs page. Tom Wright is the photographer. We thank all the people who helped make this program a success.

The programs for April and May will be announced later.



Mineral Section



by Steve Blyskal, Chairperson & Dean Lagerwall, Assistant Chairperson

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

Upcoming Meeting Topics

Wednesday, April 4: Mineral Collecting in Creede, Colorado, 1960s–early 1980s. Presented by Art Smith. During this period there were two mines operating in Creede, and so the dumps and shops were good places to hunt and “silver pick” for minerals. The Commodore No. 5 mine was a zinc-lead-silver mine that had been worked since the depression times, but it closed in 1976. Its dumps made very productive mineral collecting while the mine was operating. The Bulldog Mountain mine was mining high-grade silver ore since 1969 and closed in 1986. Although the dumps were off-limits, it was easy to buy silver specimens about town. The town of Creede lies in the Rio Grande Valley on the eastern edge of the San Juan Mountains, and it is still a wonderful vacation spot. Refreshments will be provided.

Wednesday, April 18: The 3M quarry, Sweet Home Pulaski County, Arkansas. This quarry, located near Little Rock, has produced syenite rock for roofing granules for many years. Though most of the minerals are microminerals, some larger specimens have been found. The minerals occur in miarolitic cavities and in open spaces in syenite pegmatites. Slides of the microminerals are impressive and will be presented at the meeting to show what can be found. There are seven flats of this material left from Al Kidwell’s garage that will be available for “take all that you want” the night of this program. To prepare and examine your newly acquired treasures, microscopes and trimmers will be set up for your use. Refreshments will be provided.

May 2: AUCTION: Specimens from HGMS members will be auctioned with a portion of the proceeds going to the Mineral Section. This is the same auction format practiced the past few years, please read the accompanying announcement for further details. Refreshments will be provided.

May 16: The Elmwood Mine: Presented by Steve Blyskal. Additional details to follow.

June 6: SWAP-NIGHT: Back by popular demand, we will have a Swap Night where excess material from our collections can be bought/sold/swapped. This will be an informal event and will be held inside. All Sections are invited to participate and swap. Setup is from 7:00 to 7:30, and the formal meeting will be kept to a minimum to allow ample time for specimen exchange and socializing. 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.

May 2 Mineral Section Auction Format

by Dean Lagerwall

On **Wednesday May 2 at 7:30 p.m.**, the Mineral Section will be having its annual auction to help raise money for the Section. Once again, we are allowing ALL HGMS members to bring specimens to the auction and keep a portion of the proceeds. The proceeds of at least one of the specimens (your choice) must be donated to the Section. Five additional specimens are allowed for each person with a portion of each specimen (10%) going to the Section and the rest going to the donor.

This is a great way for ALL HGMS members to thin out their duplicate specimens and to benefit both themselves and the Mineral Section. You can put a minimum bid on the more expensive pieces if you desire. Since this event will draw from all Sections, expect a variety of items to be auctioned and a very interesting and entertaining event. Setup and viewing is from 7:00 to 7:30 with bidding beginning at 7:45.

If you have any questions, call Dean at (979) 480-9373.



Lapidary Section

by Kathy Konkell

Lapidary Section Chair



The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 16 at 7:29 p.m. At the time of publication, our meeting presentation is not yet finalized. Stay tuned. The agenda will be posted on flyers at the clubhouse, and they will be sent by e-mail via Mr. Immega. Tom Wright presented the March program on the care and use of tumblers for finishing metal.

The shop will continue to be available for your use prior to Lapidary Section meetings beginning at 5:00 p.m. until we close it at 7:15 p.m. The usual shop fees apply. Come early to the meeting and socialize, bring your current projects to show off, or complete a piece that you've been too busy to finish on Saturdays. We'd love to have you join us!

Start saving your scraps of gold-filled sheet and wire for our November meeting. We will be processing it to recover the gold.

Lapidary Auction

by Kathy Konkell

Lapidary Section Chair

Saturday, **March 24** is the date you'll want to mark on your calendar for a great auction and spaghetti lunch. Items include tools, bookends, mineral specimens, faceting rough, and finished and rough lapidary material. This material comes from the late James Valigura. He owned a rock shop a number of years ago, and he and

his wife were HGMS members in the 1960s. His wife, Glenna, has generously donated the remaining material from their business to the Lapidary and Faceting Sections of HGMS for this auction. The proceeds from the auction will be split between Glenna Valigura and the specified Sections.

A silent auction will begin at 11:00 a.m. and end promptly at 12:30. Please pick your items up and pay for them immediately after the end of the auction.

Lunch is at 1:00 p.m. We'll supply the spaghetti with meat sauce and bread, and attendees can bring salads and desserts. The live auction begins at 2:00 p.m. Wayne Barnett, our auctioneer, will keep things lively as always. Bring your curiosity and lots of cash (or a check will be fine). We have over 200 lots of material up for bid!



Beading Group
by Michele Marsel
Beading Group Chair



The newly-formed HGMS Beading Group is off and running. Each month the group chooses a project for the following month, and a materials list will be posted under Upcoming Programs on our HGMS Web site. We encourage anyone with an interest in beading of any sort to join us. Feel free to bring your own project, and just work along with the group if the project of the month isn't your cup of tea.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, March 28, 2007 from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

March Project: Honeycomb Bracelet (See photo below, and see **Upcoming Programs** on the Web site for a materials list.)

Project instruction will begin promptly at 7:10 p.m. followed by business discussion at 8:30 p.m. while everyone is finishing their project.

The Beading Group is a great place for camaraderie, fun, and snacks of course. At the March meeting we'll be planning a Houston Bead Crawl—be sure to get your favorite local bead shop on the list!

Hold these dates for future Beading Field Trips:

- **Saturday, October 27:** Day Trip to San Antonio to attend the Bead Renaissance Show
- **Saturday, November 10:** Beading Group tours the Houston Bead Society Show

For more information, please contact Michele Marsel at mamarsel@earthlink.net or (281) 777-0257.





*Paleo Section Meeting
20 February, 2007
by Stan Perkins
Paleo Section Chair*



Twenty-two members participated in our second meeting of the year. Lexy Bieniek won the door prize—Irene Offeman's prize-winning invertebrate display. After much discussion, the Section voted to support the construction of the new room designated as the abrasive room as long as no space was lost. We would like to thank Tom Wright for all his fine work in designing the room!

Chris Peek let us know that we are still solvent. Wayne Barnett, Section Librarian, mentioned that there are 3,400 volumes with an additional 2,700 being processed. In the future, the list of library items will be only on the computer.

There will be an upcoming field trip to Brownwood. Lexy will provide a place to stay. Bring your cot or air mattress, sleeping bag, folding chair, painting clothes, food, and rain gear. The field trip will run from March 14 through March 19.

The last field trip to Jacksboro was attended by a huge group of one. Chris Peek reported that snow, rain, and cold weather made collecting interesting.

Neal Immega announced that there would be a field trip to the dinosaur track way on February 24 and 25. The purpose is to make casts of the foot prints.

The trip to the Gibbons Creek Coal Mine proved difficult as the mine has been re-claimed.

Wayne announced an upcoming auction for the Lapidary and Faceting Sections. Bring lots of money!

Neal announced that the silent auction would be over at the end of the meeting and that only one more auction remains of Irene's specimens.

Next month's speaker will be N. Moore on Foraminifera and Micropaleontology. Future meetings will include a return visit by Dr. Westgate and a working session on fossil preparation. Learn some of the techniques for cleaning and preserving your valuable specimens.

Scott discussed a person who has petrified wood covered with drusy quartz. Details are on the flyer posted on the bulletin board in the kitchen.

Fossil News will now be available in the library, and Neal will provide copies from an online subscription.

The Clear Lake show is this weekend. Everyone attend and support another local show. We will have a booth.

Show and Tell produced a number of interesting items including sharks teeth, Whiskey Bridge fossils, and much more.

Instead of a speaker, we discussed the upcoming paleo classes and found volunteers for some of the PowerPoint presentations. Sunday Bennett will do ammonites; Neal, crinoids; Lexy, brachiopods; Scott, plants?; Stan, other mollusks; and Wayne, echinoids? A question mark indicates the person was tagged for the topic. We hope to have good PowerPoint presentations that will help beginners in the future. We still have lots of topics left.

Wood Hunt with the Show Committee

by Sigrid Stewart

2007 Show Chairman

April in Texas! The skies are blue and sunny, the birds are singing, the sun is merely warm on your back, and a rockhound's fancy turns lightly to thoughts of ... hunting for petrified wood! Come with the Show Committee to scour the vacant lots of College Station for the fabulous and exotic fossilized tropical hardwoods of the Yegua formation. *Alangium*, *Rhamnacium*, *Engelhardia*!

And of course palm, juniper, cypress, and the gorgeous snakewood. The Yegua formation is a member of the Claiborne group of Middle Eocene Age, a lively era of volcanism and rapid climate change resulting in repeated transgressions and regressions of the coastal plain. According to Dr. Yancy of A&M, the marine facies were muddy at the height of the transgressive sequence and became sandier as the shoreline again regressed. Lignite was deposited as the sea rose once again. The petrified wood is found just below the sequences of lignite and sandy siltstone. Most likely a river brought wood into a muddy estuary where it could be fossilized with the aid of silica from volcanic ash falls.

We have not set a firm date yet, but are considering the last three weekends in April. Please call or e-mail Sigrid at show@hgms.org to get on the list of interested day-trippers. I will compile a list and let everyone know the date, directions, and destinations. We can make a great day of it, and break for lunch at the new Rosa's in College Station.

In Our Library

by Art Smith, Librarian

I am working hard trying to get the books John Frost donated cataloged and on the shelves along with some subsequent donations by Robert Strauss of geology books. Some of these are invaluable reference books that I would like to keep, but space is starting to become more and more of a problem. Although some areas still have space for more publications, others are more than full. Rather than shifting the whole library around to use the existing spaces, I have chosen to deal with each area where the space becomes full. In a few cases some publications will be removed, but in most cases unused or seldom used publications will be put into storage boxes and a note in the catalog will designate that. Instead of "on shelf," it will say "Storage Box no. ___." Of course eventually this may be remedied with a larger library, but I see nothing in the immediate future to relieve this situation.

A new book in the library is *Tiffany Blue* by Patricia McGraw. It is the story of turquoise and its development by Tiffany and James P. McNulty in New Mexico between 1892 and 1933. Much of it is from appropriate letters and documents and includes particularly the famous Cerrillos deposit near Santa Fe. I have not read it, but anyone interested in turquoise and its mining and development should find it interesting.

The library will have a book sale, ½ marked price to HGMS members on the table outside the library starting in April. There should be some interesting duplicates and good buys. Don't forget to check them out.

HGMS General Meeting

February 27, 2007

by Denise Bicknell, HGMS Secretary

Meeting Called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Matt Dillon, President

Show Committee: Sigrid Stewart reported that several members worked the HGMS table at the Clear Lake Show. A Show Committee field trip to College Station is in the works. An announcement will be made when plans are finalized.

Education Committee: David Hawkins announced three new classes: Casting, Fabrication, and PMC (precious metal clay). Anyone interested in a dichroic glass class should let David know so he can make arrangements with the instructor.

Membership: Dues are due and must be paid to receive further *Backbender's Gazette*.

Field Trips: Neal announced a field trip to Brownwood to be held during Spring Break. Lodging is available at Lexy Bieniek's home in Brownwood, and meals will be a communal effort.

Section Reports:

- **Lapidary:** The Lapidary Section has an auction and luncheon scheduled for March 24.
- **Faceting:** The Faceting Section announced that Section members will be cutting the Lenz cut pattern from quartz and will display the results in the Section's case at the HGMS show.
- **Day Light:** Dichroic fused glass will be the featured activity at the next Section meeting.

Announcements: Phyllis George received information about a jeweler's bench and a HiTech diamond 8-inch All U Need for sale. Notices and information are posted at the clubhouse.

Show and Tell: Sunday Bennett shared examples of fused glass with dichroic inserts that she made at the February Day Light Section meeting.

Door Prize: David Hawkins donated a pendant which was won by Matt Phillips.

Program: Matt Phillips presented a slide show featuring Toshiba motors used in mining applications.

HGMS Board Meeting Minutes

March 6, 2007

by Denise Bicknell, Secretary

X	President	Matt Dillon	X	Faceting Rep.	Phyllis George
X	1 st Vice President	Matt Phillips	X	Lapidary Rep.	Karen Burns
X	2 nd Vice President	Beverly Mace	X	Mineral Rep.	Art Smith
X	Treasurer	Lowell Stouder	X	Paleontology Rep.	Terry Brawner
X	Secretary	Denise Bicknell	X	Day Light Rep.	Sunday Bennett
X	Past President	Scott Singleton			

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Matt Dillon, President

Approval of February Minutes: Done via e-mail

Treasurer's Report

- Lowell Stouder presented a 2006 Year End Report, a report on our current status, and a proposed 2007 budget. A copy of the reports and the proposed budget are attached. The proposed budget will be addressed at the April Board Meeting.
- Karen Burns moved that we purchase a 2007 edition of *Quicken* to replace our very outdated version. The motion was seconded by Terry Brawner. The motion passed. Matt Phillips will purchase the software at Sam's Club and deliver it to Lowell.
- Lowell Stouder requested that a 2-page remittance form be printed. The form will allow those submitting money to the treasury to have a record and will make the purpose of the remittance clear. Lowell will present the form at the next Board Meeting for approval.
- Art Smith reported that at least one check from a past auction has not been cashed. Lowell will investigate.

Committee and Section Reports

- **Faceting:** Members of the Faceting Section will be cutting stones in the Lenz cut. The stones will be displayed in a non-competition case at the show.
- **Programs:** The March program will be a video by the *Texas Country Reporter* on Bill and Lois Patillo's Rock Food Table. Matt Phillips is working on a fossil collecting and preparation presentation by Fossil Fanatics for April.
- **Newsletter/Website:** Phyllis George was contacted by an author/publisher of a new rock and mineral magazine for kids, *Mini Miners Monthly*, whose publisher would like parts to be used in the BBG. She will receive three months free on a

trial basis after which the subscription will be \$20 for 12 issues or \$37 for two years. The author/publisher will allow us to reproduce one or two pages each month on our Web site as well. The magazine will be purchased by the Youth Section budget if we find the magazine useful.

- Phyllis purchased an interactive jigsaw puzzle software program to use on the Web site.
- **Membership:** A letter was submitted questioning rules for membership. The Board agreed that the rules are sufficiently well stated and that no changes are needed.

Review of Action Items from last Board meeting: Included in Business section

Old and New Business

- Matt Dillon found the names of the owners of the neighboring building. He will contact them about the parking issue. Scott Singleton obtained a copy of our Deed with an attached map. The map indicates that the parking lot in question probably does belong with the other building. The Deed states the location in county records of our property description. Matt Dillon will check these records before calling the owners of the other building.
- Matt Dillon and Phyllis George traveled to Bandera, TX to check on the possible donation of a collection. When they arrived, the owners stated clearly that they do not wish to dispose of the entire collection. The owners will be allowed to sell specimens at a tail gate swap held outside in our parking lot on Saturday, March 31 at 11 a.m.
- A check was issued to and received by Mr. Kemp for his portion of the auction proceeds.
- Mr. Kemp's turquoise specimens will be auctioned at the March 24 auction.
- Scott Singleton and Art Smith made modifications to the HGMS Donations document. Denise Bicknell moved to accept the document; it was seconded by Phyllis George. The motion passed.
- All Sections approved the proposed Air Abrasives room. Several issues concerning the room were discussed. The Board agreed that the issues were covered in the proposal. The expenditure will be presented to membership at the General Meeting for a vote.
- Beverly Mace presented a list of possible candidates for the position of Treasurer's Assistant. Matt Dillon will contact the candidates.
- Matt Dillon introduced Lorraine Bader from New York. She donated to the club several pieces of beautiful polished dinosaur bone that are to be used for display purposes only.
- Matt Dillon showed two Patagonian agates donated by Richardo and Claudia Birnie of Argentina. Matt met the Birnies at the Tucson show.
- Matt Dillon announced to the Board that he purchased a slide projector to replace the two non-working projectors.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Meet Scott W. Singleton, another kindred spirit*by Forrest M. Mims III**Editor, THE CITIZEN SCIENTIST**Published in The Citizen Scientist 09 April 2004**Permission to reprint granted by Forrest M. Mims III*www.sas.org/tcs www.forrestmims.org www.sunandsky.org

This week I want to introduce Scott W. Singleton, a professional geophysicist with Reservoir Technologies Division of Houston, Texas and a special kind of amateur scientist.

Scott Singleton, a professional geophysicist and amateur fossil wood expert, shows children some of his samples through a microscope at the Southwest Gem and Mineral Show in San Antonio, Texas.

I met Singleton at the recent Southwest gem and Mineral Show in San Antonio where my daughter Sarah received a special science fair award.

As is the usual situation at gem and mineral shows, most of the exhibitors at the show were commercial dealers. But somehow I was attracted to an exhibit at the very back in a corner.

There Scott Singleton was leaning over his exhibit table, enthusiastically showing several children how to peer through a stereo microscope. There they could see a magnified view of a thin slice of fossil wood.

After each young person had a look, Singleton asked if they would like to have a specimen of fossil wood. He then directed them to a large box at the side of his exhibit, where they could select from dozens of specimens.

Singleton wasn't selling his specimens to those children. He was giving them away!

Between visits by families and individuals to his exhibit, I introduced myself to Singleton and asked if he is a paleontologist. He replied that he is a geophysicist by profession. Fossil wood is his hobby.

"Do you consider yourself a fossil wood amateur scientist?" I asked. Singleton replied that he did. This was a perfect opportunity to introduce Singleton to the Society for Amateur Scientists. He expressed interest and even asked if he could submit something to "The Citizen Scientist" about fossil wood.



Scott Singleton and one of his many specimens of fossil wood.

There's much more to this story. Since 2002 I've been trying to find a source of fossilized baldcypress (*Taxodium distichum*). This has turned out to be much more difficult than anticipated. So I was quite surprised to see several very large specimens of fossil baldcypress on Singleton's display table.

All these specimens had clearly discernable rings. This was especially good news, for I have been working on a novel method to extract sunlight information recorded in the annual growth rings of baldcypress. The method might work with fossil wood, hence my interest in Singleton's specimens.



I suspect we'll be hearing more about Scott Singleton in the future. Meanwhile, the lesson for the Society for Amateur Scientists is that citizen scientists are everywhere we look.

If you are not already a member of SAS, I invite you to join. If you are an SAS member, please consider visiting science fairs, star parties, garden club meetings, lectures, science museums, and, of course, gem and mineral shows. Perhaps a Scott Singleton is just waiting to find out about the Society for Amateur Scientists. ■

BBG Editor's Note: *The original article can be seen at*

<http://www.sas.org/tcs/weeklyIssues/2004-04-09/editorial/index.html>.

THEFT ALERT

from the Association of Applied Paleontological Sciences

The Association of Applied Paleontological Sciences (AAPS) Executive Board has been notified of a fossil theft from the Smithsonian's Fossil Mammal displays. A number of important type specimens have been taken from the museum's public displays, including:

1. *Frictops emryi* (Insectivora) USNM 336367, skull with nearly complete postcranial skeleton.
2. *Neohipparion republicans* (Perissodactyla, Equidae) USNM 352701, partial upper jaw and palate with nearly complete dentition.
3. *Chrysemys picta* (Testudines, Testudinidae) USNM 351927, complete carapace.
4. *Palaeolagus haydeni* (Lagomorpha) USNM 16291, complete skull with lower jaws.
5. *Thinocyon velox* (Carnivora) USNM 22479, complete skull with lower jaws.
6. *Uintacyon juglans* (Carnivora) USNM 22478, anterior part of skeleton on slab.
7. *Ischyromys veterior* (Rodentia) USNM 336369, skull and partial skeleton.
8. *Hyrachyus affinis* (Perissodactyla, Tapiridae) USNM 22482, complete skull and lower jaws.
9. *Paradjidaumo trilophus* (Rodentia) USNM 18804, skull and partial skeleton.

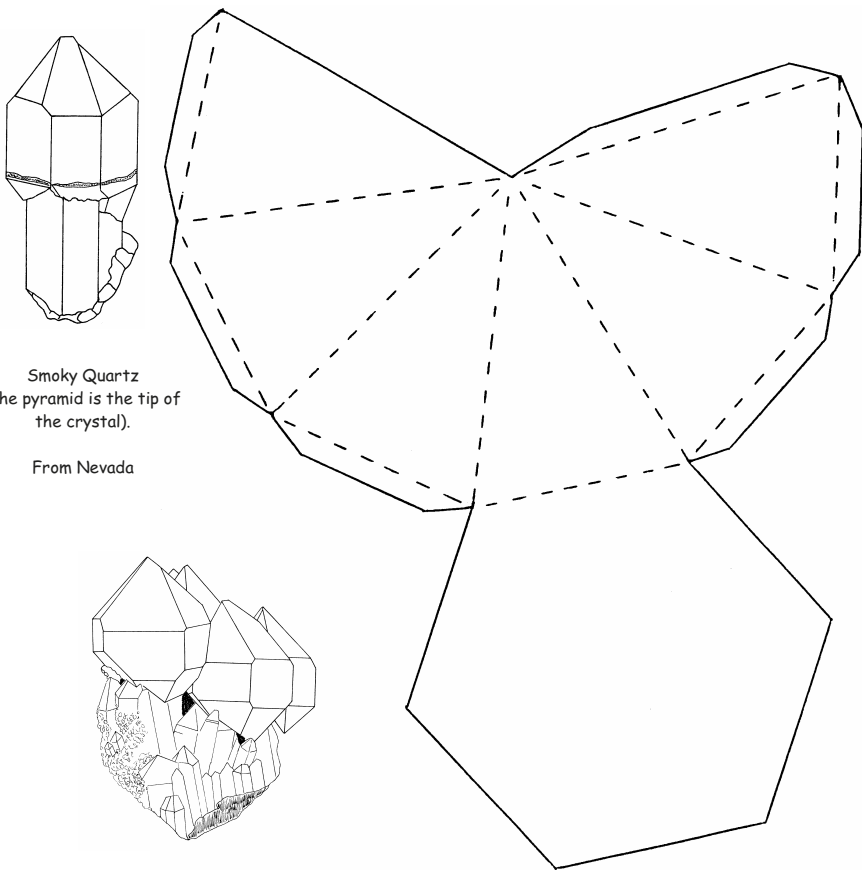
If any one is contacted with any of these specimens, or should see them in Tucson or at a local show, please contact Matthew Carrano - (202) 633-1314, or any of the AAPS board members immediately.

There are pictures of these specimens posted at <www.nmnh.si.edu/paleo/stolen_specimens/>.

HEXAGONAL PYRAMID

The top, pointed end of a quartz crystal is called the *termination*. When this termination has six sides and forms a peak, it is called a hexagonal pyramid. Can you find the pyramid on your quartz crystals?

Cut this crystal model out on the solid lines. Fold on the dotted lines and tape the small tabs to the opposite crystal face.



Smoky Quartz
(the pyramid is the tip of
the crystal).

From Nevada

Amethyst crystals (the pyramids are on the tops and bottoms of
these crystals). From Colorado

Reprinted by permission from Mini Miners Monthly, March 2007.
Two additional pages can be seen on the HGMS Web site on the
Just For Kids page. For more information, contact Diamond Dan
Publications, P.O. Box 143, Manchester, New York 14504
(diamonddan@rochester.rr.com)

AFMS Presidential Address*by Dr. Robert Carlson**AFMS President**from the AFMS Newsletter 3/2007*

In the February issue of the AFMS Newsletter, John Washburn had an article on Co-Sponsorship. The idea is an excellent one, and John gives a formula that has worked. Not only are there financial benefits, but it allows the club to become more integrated into the community.

Many clubs are suffering from a decline or static membership. A major part of that reason is that clubs are not effective in advertising. Let the Co-Sponsors help. They have as much a stake in making your show a success as your club does (they don't want to be associated with a dud).



They have resources that your club cannot hope to meet. Consider free passes that the Co-Sponsors could pass out. The objective is to get more people into your show. Cheap advertising. Your show should take it from there.

Too often our advertising for shows is only effective for those who are already knowledgeable about the show and its probable contents. Rarely do we hold shows where the public stumbles in and discovers the world of Gems and Minerals. And that is our failing. We keep advertising to ourselves, which brings in no new interest.

Co-Sponsorship could be a way to help your club grow by bringing in new people. A show in a Mall would help as well, but that is another story.

If you have already discarded your February Issue of the AFMS Newsletter (Shame), Steve Weinberger at the Central Office, or Shirley Leeson the Historian will be glad to provide you a reprint or you can download a copy by visiting the AFMS website <www.amfed.org> and clicking on the Newsletter tab.

Join the Excitement in Roswell, NM*by Bob Carlson**AFMS President**from AFMS Newsletter 2/2007*

As a member of the Chaparral Rockhounds and President of the American Federation (AFMS), I would like to take this opportunity to offer a very warm welcome to the joint Rocky Mountain and AFMS annual Gem and Mineral Convention. The welcome is especially warm because the festivities will be held in June in Roswell, New Mexico.

Roswell is an oasis in the southern New Mexico desert and is noted for its strange

events. In addition to beautiful gems, stunning jewelry, fabulous mineral specimens, intriguing fossils, and informative educational displays that you will see at the show, there will be some unusual incidents and displays. Alien, some might say.

So, if you want some unparalleled fun, come see us in Roswell.

AFMS Safety Message

Be Safe—Be Well

by Don Monroe

AFMS Safety Chair

from AFMS Newsletter 11/2006

“Strangers in Paradise”

We all may tend to feel that we pretty well know our way around out in the woods or on field trips and probably are not aware of dangers that may exist in unfamiliar locations. Situations discussed with me at the recent AFMS/SFMS meeting in Nashville reminded me that there is so much that I don't know about conditions in any other areas, and I'll bet that some of you don't know either.



Picture yourself out in the desert in the Southwest, and you encounter an oil well that is being pumped or you find a pipeline pumping station. It may well be unmanned and may not be adequately fenced. Well, it looks fine, but have you thought about poison gases that may be present? Do you rely on your knowledge and sense of smell? I no longer feel comfortable in that situation. We all know about hydrogen sulfide and the “rotten egg” smell, but some of us may not know that it is an extremely deadly gas when concentrated. I lived close to an industrial plant that periodically released quantities of the noxious gas which is very heavy, and it drifted over farmland where it killed both vegetation and livestock. Because of the foul odor, you would think that it would be difficult to get into trouble, but that is not the case. Plant workers become so accustomed to the smell that they cannot differentiate between an irritating concentration and a deadly concentration of the gas. Fatalities did result.



In the Southeast we have a small tan scorpion, which is often referred to as a pine scorpion. Yes, it will sting you and it really does hurt, but it is almost never fatal. In the West they have scorpions that really pack a wallop. They bear some resemblance to their eastern cousins, but they can kill.

They also have snakes in the West such as we find in most parts of the country, but big western diamondback rattlesnakes can inject enough venom to kill quickly. There are many variables that influence the hazard of being bitten by a poisonous snake, including snake size, type of snake, how recently the snake has attacked something, what

part of the body is bitten, and what you do following the bite. My advice? Think about doing the following:

- Research a little and learn to identify poisonous snakes.
- Learn the latest medical recommendations for first aid for snakebite.
- Stay alert and watch where you put your hands, feet, and other body parts. The speed of a striking snake is awesome, and it has been said that they can reach out a third of their length or more.
- Finally, stay calm (if you can). Increasing your heart rate or blood pressure is counter-productive. Having been bitten as a kid, I know it is easy to do exactly the wrong thing. I ran like heck, and my parents had to chase me to take me to the doctor.



Do you know if you have any severe allergies? Being allergic to insect stings can create a far more hazardous situation than snakebite. Wasps, hornets, biting flies, and biting ants are all out there waiting for you.

Last, but not least, please remember that sunstroke, dehydration, sunburn, and many other outdoor problems can do bad things to you. We will talk about these other things some other day.

ALAA—More Information on the Fossil Bills in Congress

by Jon Spunaugle

*ALAA Executive Vice President for Legislation
from AFMS Newsletter 3/2007*

Some talking points on: The Paleontological Resources Preservation Act, Senate Bill S-320 and House Bill HR 554 now being considered by the U. S. House of Representatives Natural Resources and Agriculture Committees and the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

These Bills are, for all practical purposes, identical to the fossil bills considered by the 108th Congress in 2003-4 and in the 109th Congress which passed the Senate in 2005. Therefore, past comments by previous AFMS and ALAA (American Lands Access Association) reviewers applies to these latest Bill introductions, (S-320 and HR 554). I would expect quick action on these bills, without the lack of action in the U.S. House as in the past. You may remember this Bill was passed by the U.S. Senate by voice vote without objection.. In the last several years, several reviewers called this 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 current Bills under consideration have 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 "Baucus 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-320/HR 554 version. However, several of the remaining "rockhound" objections remain.

Some of the remaining objections to the Bill S-320/HR 554 in its current form are:

(1) 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 is 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 a approved repository when collected under a permit.

(2) 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, it completely eliminates the valuable and considerable contributions to paleontology that commercial fossil entities have provided in the past by discovering, extracting, and preparing fossils. The Dinosaur "Sue," a Tyrannosaurus Rex, is a perfect example.

(3) 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.

(4) 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 provi-

sions 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.

(5) 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.

(6) Also subject to forfeiture under this Bill are “paleontological resources” with respect to which a violation occurred and which are in the possession of any person plus 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 by the collector.

So, I worry for fossil collectors if this Bill, S-230/HR 554 becomes law. The best way to prevent its passage in its present form is for each and every one of us to communicate our feelings to our Congressional Representatives. Because it seems likely that these bills will be passed in short order, you need to write that letter immediately. Copies of the Bills are found on the Internet at <http://thomas.loc.gov> using the Bill numbers.

It's That Time of Year Again!

by Joy Bourne, AFMS Endowment Fund Chair

Photos by Clyf Bourne

from AFMS Newsletter 3/2007

The Annual Fund-Raising effort for the AFMS Endowment Fund is now under way, and once again some wonderful people from all around the Federation have come forward to offer some very special prizes to reward all you lucky supporters of the Fund!

The first prize we received is a most unusual 4½-inch round nodule of agate, which has been beautifully cut and polished into eight nested bowls. Each curved bowl is a stand-alone beauty, about one inch deep, with a small flat circular base, and it



stacks beautifully into the next bowl(s) above and below. Donor Fred Schaefermeyer (EFMLS), who is a Past AFMS President, says he has yet to find anyone who can tell him how it was made! If you have any idea as to how it was done, please let him know!

The second prize is a lovely 21-inch gold filled hand-knit chain necklace, which was donated by Marge Collins (MWF). The "chain" is actually a hollow $\frac{1}{4}$ inch diameter tube of finely knit gold wire. Marge tells us the pattern is an original creation of master wire-crafter "Grit" Turner, and she does not know of anyone else who has the pattern.

Our third prize is an exquisite pendant featuring a freshwater pearl blister set in a dainty 18mm x 24mm, 14 karat gold filigree bezel. This quietly stunning gift was the contribution of AFMS President Dr. Robert Carlson (RMFMS), who created it especially for this year's drawing.

Howell Whiting, RMFMS committee-man for the Endowment Fund, donated prize #4; A most intriguing Tampa Bay Geode pair from his personal collection. Howie's daughter, Diane Weir, says she's pretty sure there is a "a one-eyed fat little alien sitting in the left bottom corner of the biggest piece. So," she continued, "we think we might have a fossilized alien to offer." (Remember, this convention will be held in Roswell, NM—Could it be?—JB)

Judy Washburn (MWF), famous for her lovely gem trees, contributed prize #5 which consists of two exceptional examples of her handiwork. One is a 4-inch gem tree of green wire with selenite rose flowers and tumbled petrified wood buds mounted on chalcocite with malachite rosettes. The second is also a 4-inch tree. This one is made of silver wire with perky flowers of milky quartz, peridot buds, and the tree is mounted on a peridotite volcanic bomb. The two items are one prize.

Not to be outdone, Judy's husband John (also the MWF member of our committee) donated our prize #6: An excellent mineral specimen of well-defined sparkling red vanadinite crystals perched on quartz crystals, which came from the Pure Potential Mine in La Paz County, Arizona.



These items are just a sample of the full list of gifts we are lining up to express our appreciation to the supporters of the AFMS Endowment Fund during this drive. We are expecting to receive more prizes in the near future, and we will be showing them as they arrive.

If you would like to try to become a recipient of one of these prizes, or of the ones we have not yet mentioned, you will need to obtain a prize eligibility coupon. A contribution of \$5 entitles you to a coupon—and any contribution of \$20 will give you five coupons. A drawing to decide the prize winners will be held following the 2007 Awards Banquet in Roswell, NM.

Coupons are available from all Regional Representatives, listed below. Or, you can make your donation directly to me by mail and I will send your coupons to you by return mail. You do not need to be present at the drawing to win!

For more information - and color pictures of all our prizes - updated as we add more - please check out the AFMS website <www.amfed.org>. Marty will be keeping you up to date as we progress.

Won't you please help us build the AFMS Endowment Fund? Keep Our Committee Busy and Our Federation Growing!!

The Need to Bead

by Betsy Gager

AGMS member, Austin, Texas

via Midland Gem & Mineral Society Newsletter 2/2007

Do you have a "Need to Bead?" This need can come upon you for a variety of reasons. One reason is that you inherit Great Aunt Bertha's old string of pearls, and they come to you in a little bag because the cord broke. You take them to a jeweler who quotes an amazing cost per inch to restring them, and you decide to leave them in that little bag for awhile longer.

Another reason is that you looked in some Hi-end Ladies' Fashion catalog, and you spied a nifty looking string of beads strung with pot-metal findings that was hideously expensive. You decided then and there that you could make that and use better findings in the process.

Still another reason is that you "must match at all times," and you need a beaded bracelet to match your necklace and your earrings, and of course, your ring.

There are lots more reasons to bead. I'm sure that you can come up with some that I haven't even thought of, but at any rate, here we go!

You start by assembling all your materials and tools. These include beads (usually strung on temporary string), the bead cord which comes with a flexible needle attached, some needle-nose pliers, sewing machine needles or small awl, your findings (bead tips, jump rings and clasps), and a bead board. You can find bead boards at most hobby shops. These have inch markings printed on them so you can lay out your beads to fit the desired length for your neck. Also you can adjust your pattern for the design of the necklace. I prefer to use 14K findings, but you can use 14K gold filled. Silver

will require cleaning over time, and the cleaning can sometimes affect the cord by stretching or straining it.

All bead cord should be pre-stretched. Nylon cord is by far the worst since it continues to stretch over time, so I usually use silk. I have found that the best way for me is to tie each end to one of my husband's shoes and hang the pair of shoes over the top of a door overnight. My husband is not especially fond of this practice.

While your cord is stretching, there is plenty of time for you to lay out your beads in whatever pattern you wish on your bead board. Additionally, you might go ahead and string up your beads on practice cord to hold up to your neck to see if you have the correct length for whatever outfit or occasion you have in mind. It is far easier to make changes now rather than later.

Basically, I prefer for my necklaces to have a small knot between each bead. Almost all pearl necklaces are knotted between each bead for two reasons. One is the reason that you've heard of and that is if the strand breaks then you won't lose all your pearls. There is also the factor of wear and tear. If you have two pearls rubbing directly against each other at the location of the drilled hole, eventually some chipping and wear to the nacre of the pearl occurs. I also personally believe that a knotted strand of beads lies more gracefully against the bony contours of the neck and shoulders.

To make a knot between each bead or pearl, you must make the knot as close to the hole in the bead as possible. You can use something called a tri-cord knotter, or you can simply place the end of a sewing machine needle or small awl into the bead hole and tie the cord around it. You want to make sure that this knot is close and tight before stringing on the next bead. Remember that some stretching will occur over time so do get your knot close and tight. When you begin to bead your strand, you tie a knot at the opposite end of the cord from the needle and string on a bead tip so that the first knot rests in the cup of the bead tip and the hook end of the bead tip is away from the strand. This hook on the bead tip will eventually connect with a jump ring and a clasp. You then proceed to string your beads, knotting after each one, to the end of your desired length and ending with another bead tip. I always put a drop of super glue on the knot at each end to hold the knot securely. After the glue dries and sets up, then clip the ends of the bead cord as close as possible to the knot, close over the bead cup, and attach your findings and clasp.



First knot tied inside bead tip.
Photo by Laura Dow.

(BBG Editor's Note: See the information about the newly-formed Beading Group's March 28 meeting.)

These basic instructions will at least get you started. Remember that when getting dressed, pearls and beads in general should be the last things you put on and the first things that you take off. Neither the pearls, nor the beads, nor the bead cord do well with hair spray or perfume. Enjoy!!!

Betsy recommends *Pearl and Bead Stringing with Henrietta* by Henrietta Virchick as a good book for beginner bead-ers.

SCFMS—House Special*by Ike House**SCFMS Executive Vice President**from The SCFMS Newsletter 1–2/2007*

Greetings fellow rockhounds!

Well the holidays were great, but now that for all practical purposes football is over, it is time to get the equipment out and start working! Let's be looking out for those in our area who are interested in our hobby and invite them to join our happy band.

On a more somber note, several members have passed recently. Be sure to let me know about those in your club who are no longer with us. We plan to acknowledge them at both the SCFMS and AFMS meetings. I know that Paul Good would like to know about each one as well. He might be able to put some information into the newsletter if it is sent to him. Let those who have left us be an encouragement for us to help others while today is still called today.

We are fast approaching a decision about the AFMS scholarship recipient. Please get any new nominees to me as soon as you can so we can begin working on next year's winner a little earlier.

I am participating as a judge for the junior articles from the California Federation of Gem and Mineral Societies, and I came across a wonderful article that a junior wrote. It seems he has collected many specimens in the last few years, and he set up a table with his finds (and donations) and had those interested fill out a card trying to guess the names of the minerals in his collection. I think that is a wonderful thing to do. Let's see if you can find in your club one junior who would do that at the club table or as an exhibit case during your club's show this year. I think it would encourage the youngsters and adults alike!

SCFMS Future Rockhounds Forum*by David and Carol Abbott**SCFMS Juniors Program Co-Chairs**from SCFMS Newsletter 1–2/2007***Choosing a Lapidary Project**

First, I'd like to apologize to all for our non-entry in the last newsletter. Paul Good is patient and consistent in his reminders...but we blew it this time.

We left-off talking about Lapidary Arts. In the area of "Choosing a Lapidary Project," we thought it might help to give some examples of the successful projects we have seen at the Arlington Gem and Mineral Club.

The club has on display an exquisite rendering of "cave art" in the permanent collection. This was created by a former juniors leader and talented artist. The rock used was flagstone from a local landscape supply. The participants were shown photos of actual

pictographs, and given free-reign to create. Aging of the art (optional) was performed by taking the dry stone (after painting) out to the parking-lot and rubbing it on the concrete. The high areas are abraded, giving a very reasonable impression of age.

Scrimshaw art has an old and interesting historic background. The word is said to derive from an older sailors' term for "one who is wasting time." Whale teeth and ivory being somewhat difficult-to-obtain (and politically sensitive), we purchased Tagua Nuts. Please check the Web, but one site selling them is:

<http://www.nedraspyrography.com/Tagua+Nuts.htm>.

At the time that we tried scrimshaw, there was a site (apparently no longer available) where we could purchase large quantities of raw nuts. These were then cut into slices on a band-saw and sanded smooth. Alternately, the relatively flat sides of the whole nuts were sanded smooth, providing as many as three surfaces for scrimshaw. Be aware that every nut (that we have seen) contains a randomly-shaped void near the center. The nuts are nearly white and hard enough to polish. Scrimshaw requires very simple tools: patterns, something to scratch with, and a felt-tip pen. Tagua is somewhat porous, so wiping the surface with ink (as was formerly done with ivory) will stain the nut. Instead, follow the pattern-scratches with a pen and immediately wipe. Also an application of automotive wax to the smoothed nut PRIOR to scratching will help to avoid misplaced ink.

How to Make a Good Walking Stick and Rock Flipper

by Kenneth Sheldon

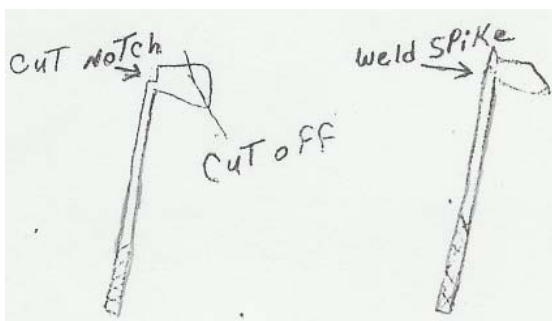
from Shawnee Slate 5/2006

I met a man this last winter at the Woodard Ranch in Texas. Wish I could recall his name so I could give him credit. He had a golf club that had the club cut off at about 25 degrees with the shank (the handle of the club). It looked like about a #2 club. He said that it worked well for a rock hammer, but after seeing its effect on rattlesnakes down at Needle Point, I decided that maybe I should get one!

So I went to a thrift store and bought a #2 club. You can find them at flea markets too. They run about two to four dollars. Cut the outside bottom off of the club at a 25 degree angle off the shank.

I went a step further because it has a tendency to slip when coming down hills. I welded a spike to the shank.

My club had about a 1/4" hole in the bottom in line with the shank filled with plastic, so I drilled it out with a 1/4" drill bit. I then got a 1/4" x 3" stainless steel bolt, cut the head off, and ground it to a taper. I put the thread end up the shank so there was about 1 1/2" of the tapered end sticking out, and I



welded it so it was in line with the shank.

On another golf club that didn't have a hole, I ground a flat spot on the club and welded a ¼ x 1½ stainless steel bolt to it in line with the shank.

Stick the spike under the rock and twist clockwise on the club. If the rock doesn't move you know you've found a big one, and you'll have to resort to your rock pick or shovel. I'm surprised at how well they work for flipping rocks without you having to bend over.

Tumbling Fossils

by W.C. McDaniel

from MAGS Rockhound News 9/2006

The transformation of rough rock into smooth and polished specimens by tumbling is one of the most popular lapidary activities. Contributing factors include its comparatively low cost and the availability of a variety of material. One material, fossils, is frequently overlooked due to the fact that most fossils are fragile and must be handled with great care.

However, some fossils are composed of the same minerals as agates and have similar hardness and can undergo the rigors of tumbling. The polished specimens in the above photo were collected at MAGS field trip locations and were tumbled following some basic steps.



Basic tumbling techniques for fossils: The fossils were tumbled using a fairly consistent three-step process. Step one consisted of an 18-21 day tumbling cycle using a 60/90 ungraded grit in a rotary tumbler. Step two consisted of a 3-4 day tumbling cycle using a 400 or 600 grit in a vibratory tumbler. Step three consisted of a 3-4 day tumbling cycle using cerium oxide polish in a vibratory tumbler. Some deviations occurred such as reducing the first step for gravel deposit fossils to about 10 days. They usually have a fairly uniform and smooth surface when found.

Dale Hollow Lake: The fossils are agatized (flint) crinoids found along the shores of this Middle Tennessee lake. Most are single stems and some clusters. Sizes range from ¼ to 2 inches long and about ¼ to ½ inches in diameter. They are usually a dull/dirty gray with some iron stains and blackish organic material that has accumulated over the past few years. During tumbling, they will maintain a fairly good shape with little loss in size. Finished and polished colors will be a consistent light to rich blue

with an occasional whitish/creamy crinoid. The clusters will produce the same results although they can be a little harder to bring to the polishing step. One caution is that these crinoids have a little more tendency to fracture than the other crinoids.

Vulcan Quarry: Agatized crinoids are found in this working limestone quarry near Parsons, Tennessee. A wide variety of other fossils are found but are not amenable to tumbling. The crinoids are abundant, loose, or can easily be removed from the limestone matrix. They are dull gray and range in size from about a ½ inch to 2–3 inches long and are about ½ inch in diameter. Some will have a sweeping curved shape. Before starting step one, these crinoids require a little prep work. They are covered with a thin dusty layer that must be removed in order to be effectively polished. The crinoids are placed in a rotary tumbler with water and tumbled for about two hours. Open the barrel, and you will see a slurry mix.



“Crinoid Stems”

Photo courtesy of GeoKansas Web
site: <http://www.kgs.ku.edu/Extension/fossils/crinoid.html>

Thoroughly wash the crinoids and the barrel, and repeat this step. Sometimes you may have to do this several times. During tumbling, they will maintain a fairly good shape with very little reduction in size. Even the curved crinoids will remain curvy, and little breakage occurs during tumbling. The finished product is a uniform and consistent light to medium gray.

Gravel Deposits: The streams, rivers, and gravel pits of the south provide some of the best collecting opportunities and specimens for fossil tumbling. Crinoids, brachio-pods, gastropods, bryozoans, and a variety of corals are fairly common. Most of these fossils are located in chert gravel deposits and are composed of silica. Brown varieties are usually referred to as chert, red as jasper, and gray to black as flint. They can range in size from small pebbles to baseball size. During tumbling, they will lose little shape and will not decrease in size. Some fossils, especially the hexagon-shaped tabulate corals, look really good after completion of the second step in 600 grit. You will need to decide whether you wish to move this fossil to the polishing phase. Final colors range from light to rich browns, reds, gray/ black, or a random mixture of the these colors.

Other fossils for tumbling: Other fossils good for tumbling are agate fossils from Wyoming. They commonly are called “turretella” which is actually elimia and petrified wood. However, even though misuse of the name continues, it does not take away the fact that agate is an excellent candidate for tumbling. The first step can at times be a

little difficult to reach a smooth finish. They will maintain size and shape, and final colors are black with a creamy profile for the snails within the silicified material. Some of the agates are brown, and sometimes they can be more difficult to polish. Petrified wood that has silicified and has a smooth surface makes an excellent candidate for tumbling. Very little shape and size are lost during the tumbling process, and the final colors are a mix of browns, creams, reds, and blacks.



"Turretella"

Photo courtesy of Fossilcavern.com

HGMS at the 2007 Clear Lake Show

John Mitscherling took these photos at the Clear Lake Show February 24-25.



Bill and Lois
Pattillo's Rock
Food Table

Amethyst
geodes and
amethyst
cathedrals

Dean
Lagerwall





John Caldine
providing a man's
presence

???, Sigrid
Stewart, Scott
Singleton,
and ???



Sigrid Stewart, Scott Singleton, Steve Blyskal, and ???



Holly and Tim Smith and their Nature's Reflections Booth (above and below)



Quartz crystal display



ShowTime 2007

March 30-April 1	Macomb, IL	Mid-America Paleontology Society (MAPS) Western Hall, Western Illinois University call Gilbert 309-786-6505; Karl 319-837-6690 gilnorris@mchsi.com karstuek@iowatelecom.net
April 7-8	Abilene, TX	Central Texas Gem, Mineral, and Jewelry Show Abilene Civic Center, N. 6th & Pine Sallie Lightfoot, 325-692-4642 slightfoot@aol.com
April 13-15	Houston, TX	International Gem & Jewelry Show Reliant Center, 301-294-1640 info@intergem.com, www.intergem.com
April 20-22	Marfa, TX	Chihuahuan Desert Gem & Mineral Club Am Vets Building Paul Graybeal (432) 729-4526 paulgraybeal@moonlightgemstones.com
April 28-29	Waco, TX	Waco Gem & Mineral Club Heart of Texas Fair Complex 4601 Bosque Blvd., Kay Langston 254-863-0206, jdodson@aenbb.net
April 28-29	Memphis, TN	Memphis Archaeological & Geological Soc. Pipkin Bldg, Fairgrounds, Central & E. Pkwy. James Butchko (901) 743-4839 rockclub@earthlink.net www.memphisgeology.org
May 26-27	Fort Worth, TX	Fort Worth Gem & Mineral Club Amon Carter Exhibits Bldg.; Will Rogers Memorial Center; 3401 W. Lancaster Steve Hilliard (817) 925-5760 Kay Anderson (817) 597-8912 wkanderson@sbcglobal.net
June 5-10	Roswell, NM	Chaparral Rockhounds -- AFMS & RMF Roswell Convention and Civic Center 912 North Main Street
September 21-23	Humble, TX	Houston Gem & Mineral Society Humble Civic Center, 8233 Will Clayton Pkwy. 5 miles east of Bush Intercontinental Airport 1 mile east of Hwy. 59 sigrid.stewart@chevrontexaco.com

2007		APRIL				2007
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3 7:30 Board Meeting	4 7:30 Mineral Section	5	6	7 10-12 Youth Section 10-5 Shop Open
8	9 1:00 Day Light Section	10 7:30 Show Comm	11 7:30 Faceting Section	12	13	14 10-5 Shop Open
15	16 5:00-7:15 Shop Open 7:30 Lapidary Section	17 7:30 Paleo Section	18 7:30 Mineral Section	19	20	21 10-12 Youth Section 10-5 Shop Open
22	23	24 7:30 General Meeting	25 7:00 Beading Group	26	27	28 10-5 Shop Open
29	30					

2007		MAY				2007
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27	28	29	30	31		

The BACKBENDER'S GAZETTE

***The Newsletter of the Houston
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