



The **BACKBENDER'S GAZETTE**

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

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December 2007



President's Message

November 8, 2007

by Matt Dillon

2007 HGMS President

Now this is more like it! Cooler weather and turkey are suddenly popular again. Thanksgiving and Christmas are times for renewing our hopes and our many friendships, for being thankful for all we have, for seeing more of our relatives than usual, and for showing off things we have collected or created during the year.



Don't pass up these wonderful opportunities to warm up your world. Pay a visit or two to the HGMS clubhouse. Offer to help those people who are always there working hard to ensure that everyone has a good experience and enjoys their hobbies.

Our new air-abrasives room is nearing completion, and I am sure that many of our club members are looking forward to using it. Putting the window in the door of that room was a great idea, and Tom Wright suggested putting windows in some of the

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November General Meeting Program Christmas Party--December 8

November 27, 2007: **Election of 2008 Officers** plus a program on **A World of Discovery on a Calcite Surface** presented by Kevin Davis, one of this year's recipients of an AFMS/SCFMS scholarship. He will show us how imperfections on calcite surfaces create beautiful growth spirals that can be used to decipher the physics and chemistry of mineral formation. Movies of molecular-scale calcite growth give insight into how organisms produce calcium carbonate biominerals and demonstrate that knowledge of mineral surfaces at the smallest scales is necessary for a geochemical understanding of weathering and crystallization.

December 8, 2007: HGMS Christmas Party. There will be no General Meeting--the party takes its place.

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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>.

President's Message continued from page 1

other doors too. Our members and visitors could then see what is going on inside certain rooms without having to open the door and unnecessarily bother people busy working on their projects or taking classes.

His suggestion was well-received, and we will all benefit from his efforts and from the efforts of others as we have so many times in the past. I encourage all members to speak up when they see a need for change in any part of our great club, or when they just have a new idea that could add to the many facets of our facilities and activities. Please don't hesitate to put a written suggestion in the President's box or in any other message box if you don't have the opportunity to bring it up in a club meeting or you are not comfortable doing so.

Over the next few months you will find our great volunteers working on projects to repair different areas of our clubhouse that are already in deteriorating condition and in need of immediate attention. Some of these deteriorating areas are in the saw and grinding room, which I like to use and am sure many of you do also. Please be patient with us—certain areas of that room will be closed down due to ongoing repair work. We will all benefit from the work when it's finished, and help is always needed. Many hands make light work—and complete the project more quickly.

I hope you and your families all have a wonderful holiday period, and I look forward to seeing you at our clubhouse.

Christmas Party Information continued from page 1

Social hour starts at 5:30 p.m., and the dinner begins at 6:30. The HGMS Board is hosting the dinner and providing the meat and standard beverages. Members are invited to bring dessert or vegetable dishes. There will be a silent auction but no regular auction. Come join us for a lot of fun!

**October 12-18 Trip to Arkansas**

by Art Smith

Member of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society

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Having a need to get away and see some rocks and minerals, I scheduled a trip to Arkansas. It being the weekend of the Mt. Ida Quartz Festival could be advantageous for making some new contacts and possibly seeing some good quartz crystals. It was not disappointing in either case, but the chance of doing any actual digging for quartz would not be good because there would be many people participating in the digging contest at most of the mines. That became obvious even when visiting some of the Garland County mines. I also planned to do some Magnet Cove collecting, but the rain twice wiped out those possibilities, so this article will be



mostly about quartz and a bit on some of the other minerals.

One thing was apparent when visiting the roadside dealers and the dealers in the Mount Ida Quartz Festival. Inexpensive lapidary and fossil material, probably from Tucson, was pervasive, particularly Brazilian amethyst, "citrine," and clear "over-polished" quartz crystals, Moroccan fossils, Pakistani onyx, and a smattering of inexpensive Chinese minerals, particularly fluorite. Seeing good Arkansas minerals other than quartz was not the norm. However, careful and diligent searching and examination could yield a few things if you know the true localities because many are mislabeled as to mineral species and correct location.

When buying quartz crystals in Arkansas and particularly at the Festival, remember there are two types of dealers, wholesale and retail. All the dealers at the Festival were retail, but in some cases when buying more than one crystal or crystal group, you could possibly get a discount. Most of these retail dealers buy from individual diggers or buy from wholesalers. Their prices reflect the amount they paid for it. So of course they will be more expensive than the wholesaler. However they often get first pick, and the price they pay per pound can be a bargain if they pick wisely, and hopefully it is passed along to the discriminating retail buyer. This first pick from the wholesaler can include some exceptional pieces, odd-shaped pieces, twins, phantoms, and included crystals. Two such dealers at the show this year were Sonny Stanley and Ponderosa Quartz Crystals. Sonny always has some small (2 to 4 cm), often very bright, unusual pieces. He also had a 7 by 9 cm mottled with white point from Magnet Cove. No small rounded brookite crystals, but it probably came from the Hardy-Walsh or more likely from Moses Hill on the eastern edge of the Cove because parts were gemmy black. I have collected some just to the east of the brookite diggings on Moses Hill. Previously, I had some of the lustrous black quartz faceted—it made an excellent gemstone. There were also a lot of black irradiated quartz crystals seen throughout the trip, but this was not in that category. The irradiation can take a so-so crystal or group of slightly milky crystals and turn them into lustrous black specimens. Ponderosa had many larger pieces and many unusual, clear, and bright specimens. I got a nice large crystal with a phantom and one group of crystals with the rhombohedral faces frosted. The frosting consists of extremely fine quartz pieces with some elongated doubly terminated crystals up to about a millimeter. I also got three small clusters of two intergrown completely terminated crystals.

The down side of this type of dealer is that you have to trust the dealer's integrity or memory, which may or may not be reliable, for information about from which mine they came. Most will have forgotten but often will give you a guess. I usually do not press them on this because incomplete locality information, like just the county, is better than erroneous detailed location data.

The Sweet Surrender mine near Story is located near the northwest end of Lake Ouachita. It was formerly operated by Randy Skates and Stuart Schmitt, but now is owned just by Randy. A planned collecting and buying trip there was aborted because we could not make cell phone connections on a very foggy morning, so we ended up going to Wegner's fee collecting area and picked up many small crystals for mounting

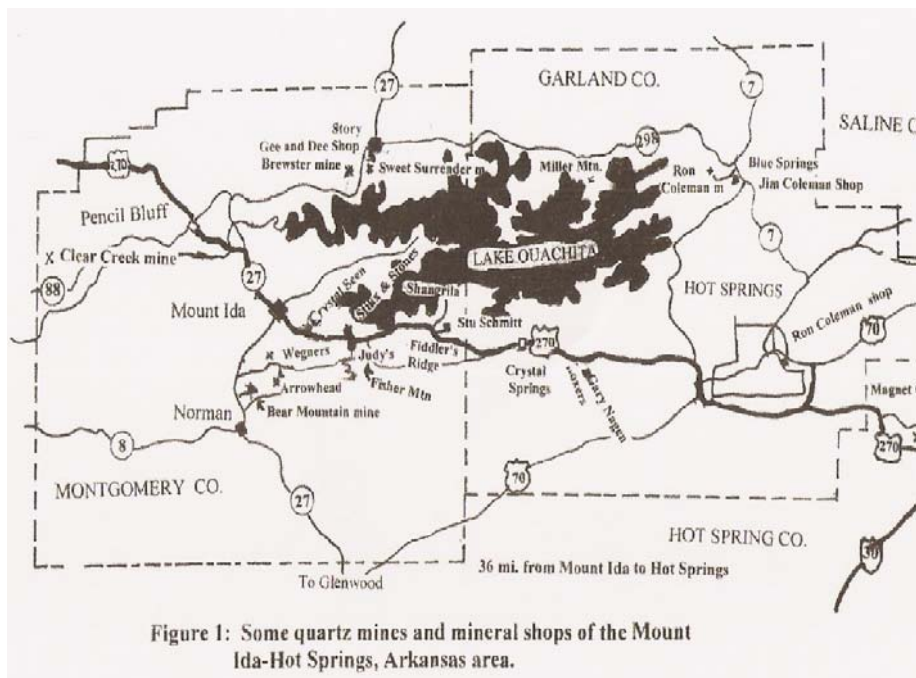


Figure 1: Some quartz mines and mineral shops of the Mount Ida-Hot Springs, Arkansas area.

on cards and labeling to sell to the kids at the Houston Show. We might have done better buying a bucket of mine-run quartz and cleaning it at home. These run from \$40 to \$100 from different dealers with the smaller crystals and groups being in the lower end prices.

Start Schmitt and Joe Castoral are now mining the Clear Creek Crystal mine near Oden, west of Lake Ouachita on the Ouachita River. The brightness and clarity of the crystals from this deposit is outstanding and quiet impressive. Stu thinks they are better than Sweet Surrender mine, and he is probably right. Stuart is a true wholesaler and usually has a large inventory. He is located east of Mount Ida at Joplin but off the highway. Call him at 870-867-2243, stu@arcystalmine.com.

A visit was made to the Ron Coleman mine at Blue Springs. This is probably the largest and deepest mine in the Ouachita Mountains. It is located north of Hot Springs off highway 7, and signs just beyond Jim Coleman's store will lead you to the mine, camping area, and shop. Also known as the Old Coleman mine, I first visited the mine which was just a series of small pits in 1958 when Ron's grandfather, Charles, was selling crystals on the highway. It cost 50 cents to collect at the mine, and then you went into it, and collecting was not just from the tailings brought out from the pit as it is today. However, now the deep pit is extremely dangerous for anyone who does not know what they are doing. Personally, I think Ron's shop on the south side of Route 70 just east of Hot Springs where the Gulpha Gorge road connects route 70 east of Hot Springs with Highway 7 north of Hot Springs is better stocked and has more to offer the average mineral collector than the shop at the mine. I always spend more money

there than I expect to spend to because of finding some choice items. This time a few quartz crystals were purchased, but the nicest is a small group of quartz crystals coated with a thin covering of brown goethite over which some white calcite blebs have been deposited, also some clear acicular aragonite crystals up to 1 cm in small bundles between the calcite. I rescued it from the wholesale area and consider it one of the prizes of the trip. The shop also had some wonderful slabs of petrified wood from Nevada plus a lot of lapidary material from elsewhere including some minerals of interest but nothing outstanding.

Jim Coleman owns the Shop on Route 7 at Blue Springs, just north of Hot Springs Village. It is fairly well stocked with quartz and has lots of outdoor and under the shed tables. I usually find something of interest even though it may not be quartz. The Miller Mountain mine and small shop to the west, also owned by Jim Coleman, was a disappointment. Much of the material was obviously from Collier Creek where Jim is also mining. I tried to get a photo of the pit and mining operations but could not see where any active mining is taking place. This mine is well known for its calcite and quartz, orthoclase (variety adularia), and brookite, but none was available except one poor piece of adularia on one of the outside tables.

In the past I always found good things from the Manley's who took a break and moved to South Dakota for several years. They are back and operate Stikx and Stones on the N side of U. S. 270 about 9 miles east of Mount Ida. Again I found a few things of interest in quartz from the Collier Creek mine. I bought two single clear and bright individual crystals with smaller branching crystals extending at an angle from near the base of the largest crystal. One has a 2.5 cm mold of a rhombohedral calcite under the base. Also from this mine were some black goethite crystals pseudomorphing pyritohedral pyrite crystals in small groups on or from quartz. Individual crystals averaged about 0.5 cm across. I also purchased a plate of pale yellow-brown calcite crystals with darker red-brown phantoms from the Santa Eulalia mines, Chihuahua. Don Burrows, a former quartz miner, is working in Mexico. He has connections with many of the other Arkansas quartz dealers, so it pays to examine any of the Mexican material closely—some nice specimens at fair prices turn up.

While I was at Stuart Schmitt's place, I noticed some small crystals and groups with included and associated blades of brown brookite. Those not mostly included are generally broken, but one brookite up to almost 1 cm was observed. Stu said he got them from Fecho (Fiddler's Ridge Rock shop) on the North side of 270 about 7 miles east of Mount Ida. I eventually stopped at the Fiddler's Ridge Rockshop which is well stocked and has a good supply of Arkansas quartz. They are mining at Bear Mountain that is north northeast of Norman in Montgomery County. I found several more brookites in and with quartz, and bought two of them. I am quite pleased with them because this adds another location for the bladed brookite crystals. I assume they came from the Bear Mountain mine, but no one was available to confirm or deny this. A word of caution when picking the brookites—the included crystals were generally the best. However, two of the three I picked from Stu's stock were black shale inclusions, and a specimen I got at Fiddler's Ridge was also a shale inclusion. An unexpected bonus in one crystal without brookite, were some very thin hairs of rutile extending

into the clear quartz from a white (clay mineral) included area. These are the first rutile inclusions I have seen except for those from near Jessieville in Garland county where they are associated with chlorite and cookeite.

Judy's Crystals and things on the south side of 270 about 6 miles east of Mount Ida usually has some interesting things, but this time all I could find were some Argentina rhodochrosite frogs. One has some greenish-gray material with the rhodochrosite that is of interest, but I have not yet determined what it is. The quarry they had with the chlorite included quartz near Hollis was sold to Rodney Moore of Georgia amethyst fame, and he is working it. There was not time to check it out on this trip. He is getting what looked like green jasper that may have some good lapidary potential.

As you can imagine prices were extremely variable on quartz, but if you have a chance to buy good quality crystals wholesale at \$10 or \$15 a pound, and the specimens have not been seriously high-graded and do not have dinged terminations, you can do well—but you may have to buy a certain poundage or dollar amount. On the high end of the scale, small jewelry points go for about \$150 a pound which is down \$50 from the mid 1980s. Also if a water-clear undamaged point of about 12.5 by 7 cm. point completely terminated and weighing less than 0.3 of a pound is priced at \$30 or less, you also have a good bargain, unless of course you were lucky enough to find one in your wholesale picking. So price is somewhat relative to what you can buy at what price from a given dealer. Large groups have a big price range from \$30 a pound to over \$100. The nicest group I saw on the trip was at Judy's, and it was \$3500. I doubt that it weighed 10 pounds, but it has several clear crystals in the 10 by 6 cm range and is very aesthetic. It will actually be a bargain for someone looking for a compact group of stout clear crystals.

Arkansas wavellite is always of interest to me, and previously this year I purchased some yellow wavellite plus some turquoise or planerite said to be from Polk County. However, the person who dug them assured me that they came from Saline County in the Crows area in the Blakely Sandstone—which is probably 70 to 100 miles to the northeast of Polk County. The material is better overall than the wavellite previously mined from this area, and it contained some exceptional pieces ranging from white to yellow to orange, but it was not that much better than I already had so I did not buy any more. There also were some nice Mauldin Mountain specimens with good coverage of green wavellite spheres but about half the normal size (less than 1 cm in diameter).

Stuart Schmitt has obtained the mining rights to the de Linde wavellite prospect. It is located in the vicinity of the famous Dug Hill deposit, Garland County and was mined briefly in the middle 1970s. Wavellite, variscite, and crandallite after wavellite were mined along with some of the gray amorphous phosphate nodules. The wavellite was of good quality and in a variety of colors but mostly greens with some bluish. Stu hopes to start mining in 2007, but dealing with several government agencies may take more time than expected. So expect some good material to be available, possibly by Tucson time.

At the show and elsewhere there were some cabochons and spheres made from Saline county bauxite that was attractive if you like earthy tones of browns and yellows. Bauxite is an ore of aluminum that was mined for many years and consists of several aluminum-rich clay minerals that have a pisolitic structure. The pisoliths are larger than oolites and also are spheres averaging 4 mm in diameter with an internal concentric structure of varying colors.

There is a good supply of Arkansas diamonds for sale in stores in and around Murfreesboro. Prices range from about \$20 for small, irregular, non gem-quality crystals to about \$500 to \$700 dollars for a good 0.5 ct stone. Color, shape, and gem quality are all factors to consider on the price. A 1.15 ct. diamond, gem quality, yellow, and one of the nicest rounded dodecahedron I have seen, was offered for \$2500. A school girl from Houston found a 1.2 ct. stone on the 20th or so of October, and the TV here said it was valued at \$850. From the picture of it on the TV, I would say that the price would be a bargain for buyers in the Crater of Diamonds area in Pike County, Arkansas. They said it might be worth 10 times that if cut, which I seriously doubt, though there is always such a possibility. Many Arkansas diamonds are set naturally if they are of good color, gem quality, and have a good shape.

On the way up through Murfreesboro I did stop at the Funderburke mercury mine and picked up a few rocks, but none look promising, and the place I wanted to dig had a major fire ant nest in the middle of it so that discouraged any digging. I did not have time to go back to town to get an insecticide plus dig, so that will have to wait. Six nights were spent at Shangrila which is on Lake Ouachita between Mount Ida and Hot Springs off highway 270. It is not fancy being basically a fishing camp, but the view is good, it is quiet, and the people are friendly. The rooms are furnished mid-1950s style but with colored TV sets. The asphalt tile floors add to the '50s aura, but the rooms are clean and neat. The restaurant is open every day and you will find as many locals there as there are those staying in the motel or cottages, the food is good, service is good and you cannot find pies better than Mrs. Carr's pies anywhere. A nice place to rest up and sleep after a day of quartz digging and buying.

Lucy in Texas

by Neal Immega

Member of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society

What a great turnout we had for the Houston Museum of Natural Science touring show on Lucy, the 3.1 million year old Ethiopian ape fossil (*Australopithecus afarensis*- A a.). I presented a program on the significance of this fossil at the September General Meeting, and we hosted a tour at the museum the next Sunday. It was most pleasing to have 65 people come from the Houston and Clear Lake Gem and Mineral Societies.

Where: Lucy is from the Afar depression of Ethiopia, which has the dubious distinction of having the highest average temperature of any place on earth. Most of Ethiopia has a pleasant climate. Where the fossils are found, the temperature commonly ranges from a daytime high of 136 Fahrenheit in the shade (and there is no shade) to a nighttime low of only 100. These people really work for their fossils!

Excavation: People give fossils informal names because it is easier to remember “Lucy” than “AL-288-1,” the catalog number. Her Ethiopian name is “Dinkenes,” which means “beautiful.” Lucy is a wonderful transition fossil between the knuckle-walking apes from 5 million years before present (mybp) and early biped humans (*Homo habilis*) about 2 mybp. Lucy is an ape but she is also a biped, and we know this because key parts of her skeleton were preserved. She was found weathering out of the side of a gully, with more than half of her bones already in the talus below. Dr. Johanson found key parts of her skeleton loose in the debris 200 feet below where the bones were weathering out of the sandstone. The next big rain would have washed most of her away into the Awash River.

Size: Let’s get the paleo-anthropologists and anatomists to work and put together a composite skeleton to fill in where Lucy is missing parts. I will call this *A.a.*, for *Australopithecus afarensis*. It looks like there are 4.5-foot tall males and 3.5-foot tall females (females have a wider pelvis).

Foot: Although Lucy’s feet are not preserved; there are other remains that have the foot bones. Modern apes have feet that look like hands, where their big toe is a functional thumb. The foot of *A.a.* (and the footprint found at Laetoli) looks contemporary except that the big toe is separated from the rest of the toes by about ½ inch (i.e. divergent).

Knee: *A.a.* has much bigger knees than apes such as chimps. The big ends of the bones are sufficient to allow the ape to stand upright by locking its knees.

Femur: The end of the femur connects to the pelvis with a ball joint. In chimps, the ball joint is right up against the shaft of the femur, which means that chimps have to stand with their feet spread to the width of their pelvis. Humans have the ball joint extended out from the femur, and this allows them to stand with their feet together.



Pelvis: Humans have a wide pelvis for attachment of the muscles that support the back, just like *A.a.* Chimps have a tall and narrow pelvis.

Skull: The great apes hold their head at an angle to their spine because their spinal cord enters the skull at the back. The heads of humans and *A.a.* have a central attachment to the spinal cord, indicating an upright posture.

Bipedalism: We have listed five features of *A.a.* skeletons that indicate that they were bipeds. Bipedalism is a radical body design that has not often occurred before on earth except in birds and dinosaurs. Four legs seem to be the standard (except for arthropods) and a very successful one. Mammals have been on earth for more than 70 million years. Why did bipedal mammals appear in the last five million years? There are lots of theories, but not many answers. We do know that Africa was much wetter seven million years ago and has been drying up ever since, reducing the amount of forest where the great apes live. There have been periods of extreme drought that may have forced the apes out to the savanna where they might have to adapt. See <http://tinyurl.com/2uz9d9> for more ideas on this subject.

1. Tools—Darwin proposed about 1860 that man became a biped so he could use tools. That theory cannot be proven because Lucy did not use any cutting tools that could be preserved such as a stone ax.
2. Carrying infants—Chimp babies hold on with all four hands. Lucy probably did have to carry her infants around in her arms because they could no longer cling securely with a walking foot.
3. Covering ground—Lucy evolved an extremely large jaw with powerful muscles. Her lack of canine teeth indicates that she was not fighting or killing with her jaws. She might have used them to crack seeds and may have had to walk long distances on the savanna to do so. Bipedal walking is more energy efficient than knuckle walking on all four limbs. Now all we need to do is find a fossil of Lucy's ancestor who is half biped!
4. Carrying stuff—The social structure of a pack (?) of *A.a.* might have had the large males walk out on the savanna to gather food that they would carry back to the females and their young. Dogs do this by eating and regurgitating the food back at the den. Chimps depend on everyone getting to the food source, with the mothers carrying the kids. It is fun to think of *A.a.* filling a sack with nuts to bring home, but there is no evidence to prove this.

We have lots of interesting ideas and not many answers. The discovery of Lucy helps fill the gaps in our knowledge of human evolution. There are never enough fossils, particularly primates.

Dr. Johanson has an excellent Web site: <http://www.becominghuman.org/> with much more information on early man.

Cultural: I have slighted all the wonderful cultural items that were brought over along with Lucy for display. There are churches carved out of solid rock, monolithic grave stele bigger than those in Egypt, all sorts of Christian crosses and books, angels, and

musical instruments.

Forewarned is forearmed! Come and see for yourself, but do not wait until the last moment—April 20, 2008—or you will wait in line FOREVER!

Ask Your Gemologist

Birthstones—Traditional and Alternates

by Mark Villanueva G.G., C.S.P., A.J.P.

Member of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society

Contact me at Gemologist@hgms.org

There are many variations of birthstones dating back to early civilizations. Over thousands of years, with the passing of time and fashions, different gemstones have been assigned to different months. During the eighteenth century, the relationship between birthstones and their assigned months received a wave of popularity, and many different lists came into being. In 1937, the (British) National Association of Goldsmiths (N.A.G.) organized a uniform “official” list which seems to have more or less become internationally recognized. The modern birthstone list is the official list from the American National Association of Jewelers, Jewelers of America. These gemstones were officially adopted in 1912 (tanzanite was added in October 2002). In the US, this is the accepted list.

For thousands of years, man has used colored stones as amulets and talismans. In the past and present, people used gemstones to predict the future, to protect them from harm, and as healing aids. From early times religious traditions included gemstones as important elements in their ceremonies and practices. Many people believe that the planets influence different stones and that planetary birthstones transmit powers associated with those planets. It is thought that originally color was the major attribute that determined a person’s birthstone. Gemstones associated with the zodiac signs sometimes coincide with the birthstones by month.

January: Garnet

Once available primarily as dark, reddish brown stones, the gem marketplace now offers beautiful garnets in every color except blue. From bright green tsavorite, to neon orange mandarin spessartites, to pure spectral green tsavorites and raspberry pink rhodolites, garnets are available in a wide price range and many cutting styles. With a hardness ranging from 6.5 to 7.5 depending on the species, garnets are reasonably durable gemstones for most jewelry uses. Main sources include India, Madagascar, Russia, Australia, Sri Lanka, and the USA. As there are no gem treatments commonly used on garnet to enhance its color or other properties, it generally is safe to assume the stones are natural.

February: Amethyst

Purple quartz, or amethyst, is available in sizes from small to huge, and in colors from pale lilac “Rose d’ France” to strongly saturated “Siberian” purple with glints of red or blue (or both). As well as faceted stones, it is possible to find lovely amethyst cabochons, carvings, and beads. It is a durable gem (hardness = 7) for most jewelry uses. Brazil, Uruguay, and Zambia are major sources in today’s market. Most amethyst is

heated to enhance its color, and unless stated otherwise; you should assume stones have been treated. The heat-induced color change is stable.

March: Aquamarine/ Traditional Alternate: (Bloodstone)

Named for its resemblance to the color of sea water, beryl in hues of blue-green to blue in medium dark to pale tones is called aquamarine. It can be found in a variety of cutting styles and makes a brilliant and durable jewelry stone (hardness = 7.5). Virtually all aquamarine has been heated to reduce green tones and produce a purer blue, a change which is stable. Main sources are Brazil, Zambia, Madagascar and Nigeria

April: Diamond

With a hardness of 10 and the brightest luster of all transparent gemstones, diamonds have a unique place in the gem marketplace. Diamonds occur in colorless and near-colorless forms as well as rare fancy colors. Both color enhanced and synthetic diamonds are available as well as many diamond simulants—chief among them being cubic zirconia. Major sources include South Africa and Australia.

May: Emerald

Beryl with medium to medium dark green color contributed by chromium or vanadium content is called emerald. Although frequently visibly included, traditional oiling treatments enhance the clarity of most pieces. With a hardness of 7.5, they make reasonably durable gemstones. Oiled stones, however, require gentle cleaning with no solvents, steam, or ultrasonic. The world's highest quality gems come from Colombia, but Brazil, Zambia, and Russia also contribute stones to the marketplace.

June: Pearl—Traditional Alternates: Alexandrite, Moonstone

Pearls are one of the few gemstones of organic rather than mineral origin, and also one of the few identified almost exclusively with one sex (female). Today's pearls ("cultured") are joint products of mollusk and human cooperation and can be from fresh or salt water species. Another unique characteristic is that pearls are the only gem commonly worn unfashioned (not cut or polished). Pearls are delicate gems that must be worn and cleaned gently. Fresh and saltwater pearls in many shapes, sizes, and colors are available. Many different treatments might be used to enhance a pearl's quality or change its color, so unless otherwise stated, you should assume pearls have been treated.

Alexandrite is color-change chrysoberyl, and one of the world's most highly valued gem varieties. Few specimens of high quality are available, but the best of these show a color change from raspberry red to teal blue-green when the light source changes from incandescent to fluorescent or daylight. Cat's-eye forms occur. Synthetics and imitations are available at more modest prices. Alexandrite is generally untreated and makes a very durable jewelry stone (hardness = 8.5). Although historically associated with Russia, today's sources are Brazil, India, and Sri Lanka.

Moonstone is a type of feldspar that displays an optical phenomenon called "adularescence," a floating light over the surface, often called "shiller." They range from transparent to opaque and occur in a variety of colors. They are generally cut as cabochons or used for carvings, but especially transparent pieces are sometimes faceted. The most valuable type is colorless with strong blue shiller. Some moonstones

show a cat's-eye or, rarely, a four rayed star. About as fragile as opal (hardness = 6), they should be treated somewhat gently. Most moonstones are unenhanced.

July: Ruby

Red corundum is known as ruby (while all other colors of that mineral are called sapphire). Chromium is the coloring agent. Large fine rubies are the most expensive gems sold in today's marketplace, bringing prices considerably above that for diamonds of the same size and quality. The world's highest quality rubies come from Burma (Myanmar), although Kenya, Pakistan, Vietnam, Thailand, and Madagascar are important sources as well. Ruby is a very durable jewelry gem (hardness = 9), that has generally been heat treated. Some specimens show a "star" effect (asterism).

August: Peridot

Peridot occurs in shades of limey to olive yellowish green—unique in the gem world. Major sources include the USA (Arizona), Pakistan, Burma, and China. One of the minority of idiochromatic gem species, its color is derived from its inherent chemical composition rather than from impurities (allochromatic), like most. It is a reasonably durable jewelry gem for most applications with hardness of 6.5. There are no treatments commonly used to enhance peridot.

September: Sapphire—Traditional Alternate: Lapis Lazuli

Although commonly thought of as blue corundum, sapphire occurs in a wide color range as well as in phenomenal form as star sapphires. Currently sapphire is the world's most popular colored gemstone with the US leading in purchases. Sapphires, with a hardness of 9, are second only to diamonds in durability. Most sapphires have been heated to enhance color, but a large variety of more exotic treatments exist in the marketplace.

Lapis Lazuli is a blue rock made of several different minerals with an average hardness of about 5.5. One of the world's most historically important gems, its royal blue color often occurring with specks of golden pyrite is highly prized. An opaque stone, it is most often used for cabochons, beads, and carvings. Sources include Afghanistan and Chile. Most true lapis is unenhanced, but synthetic lapis and various simulants do exist in the marketplace.

October: Opal—Modern Alternate: Pink Tourmaline

Opal is one of the world's most popular and variable gemstones. It ranges in form and color from the bright red and oranges of Mexican opal to precious white, crystal, and black opals through matrix and boulder types and to the transparent crystal opals. Somewhat fragile, with hardness of 6, many precious opals are offered in the marketplace as doublets or triplets. Precious opal is distinguished by a phenomenon called "color play." This is caused by diffraction and interference of light rays as they pass through opal's ultramicroscopic structure of tiny stacked silica spheres. Australia, Mexico, Brazil, and the USA are major sources. Treatments to darken color and stabilize pieces are fairly common.

Pink tourmaline has gained in popularity recently. It is available from many sources world-wide and in many shades from pale baby pink to darker pinks tinged with red-

dish, brownish, and orangey hues. Tourmaline makes a durable jewelry gem (hardness = 7.5). Most tourmaline is heat treated and a few types are irradiated, but the colors obtained are stable.

November: Yellow Topaz—Modern Alternate: Citrine

Since the advent in the market place in recent decades of heated and irradiated blue topaz, many don't realize that, historically, the color associated with this gem was yellow. To distinguish this yellow color, the term "precious topaz" is used, with "Imperial" being reserved for specimens of precious topaz that show a particularly intense orangey to reddish color. It is a brilliant and durable jewelry gem (hardness = 8). The major source of yellow topaz in world commerce is Brazil. Yellow topaz is commonly heat treated.

Citrine is yellow quartz, and although it does occur in nature, the majority of the richly colored pieces in today's marketplace have been heated. Large, clean pieces are available, so this stone is popular with custom cutters and carvers and is often available in spectacular cuts. At hardness 7 it is a durable gem for most jewelry applications. The major source is Brazil.

December: Turquoise—Traditional Alternate: Blue Zircon. Modern Alternates: Blue Topaz/Tanzanite

December presents the widest range of alternates for birthstone choices:

Turquoise is an opaque blue to blue green gem often with black or tan matrix. Although once associated in the US almost exclusively with Native American silver jewelry, there has been a recent surge in interest in this gem by modern designers working in gold. Sources include USA, Mexico, and Iran. Somewhat fragile (hardness = 6) and sensitive to exposure to chemicals, it should be treated with care. In the gem marketplace you will find stones that have been enhanced by various treatments that seal the surface, fill cracks, or change color. A great variety of synthetic and simulants gems are offered as well.

Blue zircon has been heated to that attractive color from the natural orangey brown rough. Its saturated greenish blue color and top-notch luster and brilliance have led to recent increases in popularity and familiarity. It is a relatively durable gem with hardness of 7.5. The main source is Cambodia.

Within recent years blue topaz (irradiated and heated white topaz) and Tanzanite (blue-violet heated zoisite) have been promoted as alternatives to the traditional choices. Topaz is a durable jewelry gem (hardness = 8), but Tanzanite is rather fragile (hardness = 6.5) and requires gentler care. Most blue topaz originates from Brazil, and all Tanzanite comes from Tanzania.

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Gem Identification Made Easy, Third Edition: A Hands-On Guide to More Confident Buying & Selling by Antionette L. Matlins (Author), Antonio C. Bonanno (Author).

Third Best Place on Earth for Plant and Insect Fossils

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Member of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society

Curator Proctor Museum of Natural Science

Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument (FFBNM herein) was created in 1969. It is approximately 35 miles west of Colorado Springs, Colorado, on U.S. Highway 24, in Teller County. This is a beautiful drive in itself. When you get to Florissant on Highway 24, the FFBNM exit is to the South and is well marked. A short drive takes you to the Entrance of FFBNM and the Visitor Center. The FFBNM provides several tours to see the many interesting things in the National Monument. The world's only known trio of petrified redwood trees is there, and the massive petrified redwood stump known as the "Big Stump" which measures 38 feet in circumference. However, it is not the biggest stump as one other stump measures 41 feet in circumference.

The 300-foot tall redwoods were buried by early mudflows, but only the lower 14 feet of the stumps were preserved and fossilized. Silica from the volcanic ash was mobilized by ground water, and it penetrated the woody tissue converting it to petrified wood.

There is a huge cross-cut saw stuck in one of the petrified redwood stumps. It was used to try to cut this petrified redwood down to take it to the 1939 World's Fair in St. Louis, Illinois. The saw didn't make it, so the saw is imprisoned in the tree. I have seen this tree and saw several times in my four or five visits.

My first visit to Florissant was long before the Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument came into being. I think I was about 13 years old, and our family had taken a trip to Colorado. I might also mention that I had a broken ankle at the time and was climbing the mountains on crutches on the trip.

Florissant at that time was a tourist Mecca for fossil collectors. I recall there were trenches cut down into the layers of volcanic ash, and the fossils coming out of the Earth were amazing. Fossil collecting is not permitted in National Parks and National Monuments. I will tell you about a private land quarry just outside the FFBNM in this article.

Many years ago I learned that Florissant, Colorado's volcanic ash fossil beds were considered to be the third best place to find insect fossils. The only places considered better are the fine lithographic quality limestone of Solnhofen, Germany and the Baltic amber. At Florissant however, there are even more fossil leaves and other plant parts than there are insects.

The name "insect" comes from a Latin word meaning "cut into." This refers to the fact that an insect's body is sharply divided into a head, thorax, and abdomen. The head is made up of six segments, the thorax of three segments, and the abdomen contains from six to eleven or twelve segments. There is a single pair of antennae on the head, six legs attached to the thorax, but none on the abdomen. The legs have eight or nine joints, and on the end there is usually a claw foot. While the larvae or young of insects can be aquatic and breathe through gills like fish, the adults take in air through tubes which are much more complex than those of spiders. Fossil spiders have been found here.

There is mention in new material of an old story I heard years ago, which says "there was a fur trapper who was an early visitor to the Florissant area, who related that he saw a petrified forest of petrified trees, full of petrified birds, singing petrified songs." This isn't far from the truth however. A petrified forest was here along with all kinds of petrified plant parts. Even one or more petrified birds have been found. However there are also the petrified insects, fish, and some animals, making the truth greater than this fictional story. I confess that I have never heard a petrified song. However, I can tell you that some of the current purported music I have heard, does petrify me.

Since the first fossils were found at Florissant in the late 1800s, according to author Stephen M. Voynick in his book *Colorado Rockhounding*, "Florissant eventually yielded over 50,000 museum-grade specimens, including 1,100 different insect species, 140 plant species, and dozens of fossils of birds, small mammals, and fish." Half of all the butterflies found came from Florissant.

The FFBNM comprises nearly 6,000 acres, and the elevation today is much higher than it was then. Presently it is between 8,000 and 8,200 feet above sea level and is within view of Pike's Peak to the east, at 14,100 feet. Most of the literature over time has referred to the Florissant fossils as being Oligocene Epoch. On my last visit to the FFBNM Visitor Center, some of the National Park personnel were referring to the



Fossil Wasp



Leaf with veins

area as Eocene epoch. This may be because over time, some geologists and paleontologists have made changes in the age range of the various epochs. It could also be because part of the Florissant area is considered to be in the Oligocene epoch and part in the Eocene epoch.

Plant and insect fossils can be fossilized in several ways. However, both insects and plants are fairly fragile, and hence it is rare that they are preserved at all. The plant and insect fossils at Florissant were formed when massive clouds of volcanic ash and dust gently fell upon this land in incidents similar to Mt. St. Helens in our lifetime. A complex of composite volcanoes 18 miles to the southwest of Florissant began to erupt. The early eruptions sent volcanic mudflows into the Florissant area and buried the forest of giant redwoods and other trees.

A later mudflow formed a dam across the natural drainage forming the large Lake Florissant. Lake Florissant stretched 12 miles through this ancient forested valley with an average of about a mile or more in width. These volcanic incidents occurred over hundreds or thousands of years, over and over. The volcanic material built up to a thickness of forty-five feet (which is about 15 meters), in some places. The accepted age of the fossil formation of the Florissant fossils is between 34,000,000 to 35,000,000 years before the present. At that time this was a lush misty area much like Northern California where the huge redwoods grow today only a couple thousand feet above sea level.

Part of the Florissant area is a late Eocene Wall Mountain Tuff, dated at 36,700,000 years before present. The geological age of Pike's Peak, which can be seen from Florissant, goes back to the Cambrian, about a half billion years ago.

As the volcanic action threw up clouds of very fine volcanic dust, it knocked insects, leaves, and occasionally other living things into Lake Florissant, then sealed these things into the fine ash dust much like cement. Over time, mud can and did turn into shale. Then other mudflows followed, acting like a sealing concrete cap rock over the lake, as the lake dried and grew smaller. The fossils remained sealed under this cap rock layer for millions of years as a fine carbon reminder of the once living things. The Florissant fossils, much like the very fine limestone at Solnhofen, Germany, have maintained the intricate components of the leaves, insects, and other living things with the details intact.

Where the cap rock deteriorated and no longer remained, the shale eroded away. However, where the cap rock remained, the precious fossils remained protected for millions of years with intricate visible details such as hairs, delicate legs, mouth parts, and even scales on butterfly wings. Over time the entire area of Colorado was lifted up to a much higher elevation than at the time of Lake Florissant. Interestingly, the insects in the area today are much like those that lived in this area 35,000,000 years ago.

Samuel H. Scudder, an avocational student of insects who is recognized as the dean of American fossil insect specialists (paleoentomologists), came to the Florissant in the summer of 1877 on assignment. In this one summer he collected twice the number of insect fossils at Florissant as had been collected in thirty years at the famed Oeningen

deposit in Switzerland, previously considered to be the best place for insect fossils. Scudder's collection remains at the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard University, and contains some of the best fossil insects ever collected at Florissant.

If you are interested in collecting insect and leaf fossils from this area, you need to first know that collecting and prospecting is prohibited by federal law in all national parks and monuments, including FFBNM. However, there is a small private fossil quarry in Florissant, outside the boundaries of the FFBNM. It is or was called Nature's Treasure but is now I think called the Clare Quarry (or maybe both). I have previously dug in this quarry on several occasions. For a fee, the quarry lets you split shale given to you by the quarry operator, or you can buy a box of shale to split later at your leisure. This private quarry supplies digging tools in case you do not have your own.

When I first started digging at this quarry, you were allowed to dig in the quarry yourself for a half day or full day, paying the appropriate fee for the time you were going to dig. It was a great place to dig at that time, and I found a number of really good plant and insect fossils. At that time I understood that the quarry was run by the daughter-in-law of the lady who owned the quarry. She also sold some really good insect fossils for reasonable prices.

The last time I was at this quarry in about 1996, the quarry operation was under a hired manager, who reported directly to the mother-in-law/owner. The daughter-in-law still sold some insects at the location in her home. However, you can no longer dig in the quarry itself, but you are given fairly small pieces of shale to go through, and the fees had come up some. Perhaps this is all understandable. There is undoubtedly a finite amount of fossil material in the quarry. As the supply lessens, the market price goes up and the supply procedures tighten. If you wish to dig, I understand you may contact Nancy Clare Anderson at P. O. Box 126, Florissant, Colorado 80816. I believe the current phone number is (719) 748-1002.

The procedure for extracting and analyzing fossils from Florissant consists basically of two things. First get a good supply of single-edged razor blades. The Florissant shale splits pretty well when freshly dug, and you can split it over and over into thinner and thinner layers. Know when to stop splitting. When you have something worth keeping, don't try for one more split. I have ruined a good fossil several times—making another split because the piece of shale looked promising, only to ruin what I already had.

I recommend having a magnifying glass or loupe. Seeing a fossil with the naked eye is exciting enough, but when you look at a fossil with a magnifying glass, and see the fine intricacy of the legs, hairs, and other very fine details, it is really amazing. These small delicate things, with their minute details, are still intact after 35,000,000 years. Protect your fossils by putting them in Riker mounts (black boxes with white material inside and a glass lid). These are fragile fossils, but they are wonderful to collect and display.

If you would like to see a number of good fossils from Florissant, you can go to the non-profit Proctor Museum of Natural Science Web page on Florissant at

<http://www.proctormuseum.us/Colorado/Fossilbed-Natl-Mon/florissantfossilbed.htm>

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Underwater Treasure Hunting

My Colorado Adventure

by James Wark

Member of The Houston Gem & Mineral Society

Prospectors have a saying that "Gold is where you find it." Under water is where you can find the greater amounts of placer deposits. Back when the old timers were panning for the color, they did not have a way to get to the fissures and cracks deep in the rivers. But with the invention of the portable dredge, gold now can be found where it was impossible for them to get to back then. Be careful of boulders rolling down your way, swift currents, and underwater rock slides. Did I mention tree trunks? The larger ones can take you and your dredge out in one swift disastrous event—especially if you are underwater. It's always best to have a dive buddy with you.

The dredge I use is a Keene Engineering's Gold Dredge model 3500 series with a

5-horse power Briggs & Stratton gasoline motor, a diaphragm air compressor, and a 2" water pump. Let's not forget the sluice box with riffles and the pontoons on which it floats. Both the air pump and water pump are run with the motor. I picked it up at their warehouse



in California in 1975. Then I immediately drove to the ghost town of Cripple Creek, Colorado and proceeded to dredge for gold—that elusive yellow metal. Gas was only about 85 cents a gallon then. The motor would run for about 2½ hours on 1 gallon of gas.

The air compressor will deliver breathing air under water at one atmosphere (33) feet. It delivers a maximum of 75 psi. This is called the Hookah Dry Air System Diving. Ingenious isn't it. So as long as your motor is running, you have an air supply. It's vastly superior to scuba as far as gold dredging is concerned for several reasons—no bulky tanks that restrict the diver in tight spaces, and you don't have to get the tanks refilled as you do with scuba. To refill scuba tanks could be a 100 mile or more roundtrip every day.

Be careful of underwater currents. They can surprise you and drag you downriver before you know it. The compressor pumps air into a hose, then to a receiver tank that holds approximately 60 psi and floats a few feet from the compressor. Then there are about 50 feet of air line that the breathing regulator is attached to. The air line is constructed of special vinyl plastic with an inside diameter of ¼ inch. Let's not forget the harness that attaches to your back that keeps the regulator from being pulled from your mouth. Could save a few teeth as well. Don't want to spend your profits at the dentist. Another great feature of the reserve tank is that in case of motor or compressor failure, it holds about one minute of air. To be safe on ascending back to the surface, go one foot per second. Other equipment to bring along on the adventure is a diving mask and a diving suit. It gets cold in the water, as the stream or river water is usually from snow and ice melting way upstream. Another helpful hint: Don't drink the water when there's a herd of animals upstream.

The water pump works on the Venturi principle. The overburden never gets into the water pump. It's like an underwater vacuum cleaner. Suction and water pressure bring the material through the two-inch tube from the bottom and dump the material into the sluice box on top of the water. The inside diameter of the intake nozzle is 1¾ inches. If it were 2 inches, the hose would be continually clogged up. No surprise there. The pump delivers approximately 75 gallons per minute. Also remember to prime the pump. It's primed manually by rapidly moving the foot valve up and down under the water

line. Running the water pump dry for any length of time will put you in the market for a replacement.

You have to remove the overburden first from the bottom of the river. The gold will always be at the very bottom of the debris. Make sure your debris exit is on the other side of your dredge, or you will have unwanted rocks hitting you up side your head while you are underwater. And let the debris flow downhill so you will not have all the underwater dust in your way. No more than a yard—on a good day—can be worked with a hand-held gold-pan. A 2 inch dredge can easily do 2–3 yards in a hour.

Material is passed over a set of sluice boxes where the gold is trapped in the riffles and the lighter materials are washed back into the stream. The sluice box will trap about 95% of the gold that enters it. Gold is eight times heavier than the ordinary sand, magnetic black sand, and gravel found in your riffle board. It is found on and in bedrock, in the crevices, and in cracks, soft spots, and potholes. Any crack big enough for water to get into is big enough for gold to get into. A magnet will remove any magnetic material. Gold will not stick to a magnet and is given a rating of 2.5 on Mohs Scale of Hardness. This means that it is a soft metal. The miners of the past would use mercury (called also quick silver) to get the small placer and flour gold from the riffle board. This method is called amalgamation. Another is the scratch test. Take a pocket knife and see if it scratches the surface. If it does you have struck gold. Pyrite is harder and will not scratch.

At the writing of this article, spot on 24 carat gold is \$807.00 a ounce. (Monex Trading) When I was prospecting in the '70s, it was \$35 bucks a ounce. I may be unavailable this summer—busy in the mountains on another gold treasure hunting adventure if the price stays the same or goes up as some predict. One thing I am proud to say is that in the Lost Wax Casting division of the HGMS, I am the only person so far to have cast gold rings from gold that I mined personally from the jealous gasp of Mother Nature. My special thanks goes to my very knowledgeable instructors, Charlie Fredregill and Tom Wright. My hat is off to the wizards of casting.

For me there is no greater thrill than the sound of gold nuggets hitting the container. One thing I did learn was that if there is any doubt, it probably is not gold. Gold flattens out after being hit with a hammer, while pyrite shatters into a pile of broken fragments. Pyrite is also appropriately named Fools Gold. On your larger nuggets, don't test them by hitting with a hammer. You would have a chunk of gold that USED to be a very prized specimen. Ouch!! Another trick of the trade that old timers used was to drop the nugget into nitric acid. Gold looks like it's sitting in water. Pyrite starts bubbling, smoking, and disintegrating before your eyes. **IT IS NOT RECOMMENDED THAT YOU DO THIS!!**

I learned all of this and much more about gold mining from an old timer named Herb Boone. He was a genius at gold mining. He was my dive buddy, mentor, and a descendent from the prospectors of the 1880s in Cripple Creek's heyday. Unfortunately, he is no longer with us. He took a treasure trove of information about gold mining plus many tall stories to the grave with him with his unfortunate passing. Herb, I salute you

and thank you for sharing your vast knowledge so unselfishly with me. This article is dedicated to you. Goodbye, my dear friend.



Day Light Section

by Frances Arrighi



Eighteen members and three guests attended the 8 October, 2007 meeting of the Day Light Section. The program was a travelogue by Nancy Fischer, and it was a wonderful presentation. She and three friends traveled to Russia about a year ago. They got on a boat in St. Petersburg and sailed down rivers to Moscow. They also stopped at certain villages besides visiting Moscow and St. Petersburg.

The Day Light Section is going to assemble the names, addresses, and phone numbers to call in case an emergency occurs regarding an HGMS member. This will take some time to complete. The list will probably be kept on the door of the Day Light Section's storage cabinet.

The Day Light Section is planning to enter one or two cases at the next show. The items displayed will be articles made by members of the Section as a result of our programs. The members have made some lovely pieces of jewelry the last two years.

Remember—no meeting in December. Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year



Mineral Section



by Steve Blyskal, Chairperson & 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

December 5: Topic to be announced - Refreshments will be served.

December 15: Mineral Section Christmas Party: Lloyd and Adriana Weathers of 7502 Prestwick (at Dumbarton) in Houston, TX (77025) are kindly hosting this year's Mineral Section Christmas party. The party will begin Saturday evening at 5:30. Bring a dish/snack and a white-elephant gift exchange (mineral-related with a \$5–\$15 value) and be prepared to have an enjoyable time. The Christmas party takes the place of the second December meeting. Directions will be distributed at the December 5 Mineral Section meeting. For additional details, contact Steve Blyskal (832-264-1278) or Adriana (adriana5gem@yahoo.com).

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.

Late-Breaking Club News

Are you getting e-mails about HGMS activities? If not, contact n_innemea@swbell.net and let him know that you want to be on the list.

Grocery Rebates to HGMS

For many years, two of the major grocery stores have had a rebate program in effect that offers a rebate to the HGMS due to our non-profit status. However many members have forgotten about it and no longer think to show their Kroger card or their Randall's card as a means to sending a rebate to the HGMS.

The next time you're at the clubhouse, please remember to pick up the Kroger's card and the Randall's form that needs to be filled out. Drop the filled-out form off at the Randall's Customer Service counter. The next time you shop at Randall's and show your Randall's card, HGMS will automatically be sent a percentage of your purchase. When shopping at Kroger's, be sure to ask the cashier to scan your card before your purchase is rung up. Over time, small percentages can add up to worthwhile amounts donated to HGMS.

Houston Gem & Mineral Society
10805 Brooklet, Houston 77099-3501
Rocks and Fossils



Here's how the Share Card Program works:

1. Each time you shop at Kroger, present the card to the checker before they begin to ring up your order.
2. Ask the checker to "scan" the card.
3. Once this is done, your purchase amount is being recorded for your organization. A percentage of your purchase is refunded back to the organization listed on the front of this card. If you have problems or questions call Kroger at 1-800-745-GIFT for more information.

Checker Instructions:
FS Exception / Scan Card / Ring Order
(press "error clerk" and repeat steps if card doesn't scan)
Fund-raising Gift Certificates CANNOT be used with this order

REMARKABLE APPLICATION

FOR OFFICE ONLY
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STATE
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HOME PHONE
REMARKABLE CARD NUMBER:
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If you need to obtain a Continental Airlines OnePass account number, call 1-800-525-0273. See backside for details.
APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE
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GOOD NEIGHBOR PROGRAM

Complete this portion to link your Remarkable Card to the charity of your choice (you can choose to link up to three charities). Ask the courtesy booth for the GNP number of a particular charity. To learn about the Good Neighbor Program go to www.randalls.com.

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Charity to be added to your Card:
GNP Charity#
1. Charity # 5013
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3. Charity #
Charity to be deleted from your Card:
1. Charity #
2. Charity #
3. Charity #
APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE
DATE
HOUSTON

HGMS General Meeting

October 23, 2007

by Denise Bicknell

HGMS Secretary

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 by Matt Phillips, 1st Vice President.

Announcements and Introductions: Welcome to Regina Gorman, visitor, and Pat Cyr, new member.

If you shop at either Randall's or Kroger and do not already have a scan card, please pick one up at the clubhouse. This program earns us cash!

Steve Blyskal asks for volunteers to help with the School Collections on Saturdays. There are boxes to staple, boxes to fold, specimens to break up, and numbers to glue on. All help is appreciated.

Committee and Section Reports

Show Committee: Sigrid reports that the Financial Report is not complete due to outstanding receipts and invoices. A drawing for the Houston Museum of Natural Science (HMNS) tickets donated by David Temple, will be held at the next General Meeting. All members who either sold or returned show tickets will be entered in the drawing.

Education: Precious Metal Clay (PMC) and Casting are possible classes. Contact David Hawkins if you would like more information.

Daylight: The Daylight Section will be having their annual Birthday Luncheon at the Clubhouse. Please bring what you brought last time, or call Frances Arrighi for suggestions on what to bring. The Section normally meets at 1:00 p.m. on the second Monday of the month. However, due to the luncheon, the November meeting will start at 12 noon.

Faceting Section: The Faceting Section had a record 16 people in attendance at their last meeting. Their next meeting will be a continuation of Beginning Faceting.

Lapidary Section: Kathy Konkel says to be at the Clubhouse on the third Monday of the month at 7:28 sharp so you are not left out of all the fun! Their last meeting covered pine needle and broom straw casting.

Mineral Section: The Mineral Section's next meeting, Wednesday, November 7, will feature a program on Mapimi, Mexico as presented by Art Smith.

Paleontology Section: The Section's next meeting, November 20, will be their Christmas party, dinner, and auction. Bring a side dish of veggies or a dessert. They will not have a meeting in December.

Youth Section: for their next meeting, November 3, the Youth will be participating in Dino Day being held at the Houston Museum of Natural Science (HMNS).

Newsletter and Web Site: Phyllis George is putting new photos of the Show on the Web site. She has also instituted a puzzle program and would like feedback.

Library: Art Smith reported that a light in the Library is not working. He also reports that there will be some new books in the Library soon.

New Business

The Nominating Committee, made up of Phyllis George, Chair, Steve Blyskal, Sunday Bennett, Terry Brawner, and Joan Riley, presented the following recommended slate of officers for 2008 and asked for nominations from the floor.

President: Terry Proctor
 1st Vice President: No nominee
 2nd Vice President: Beverly Mace
 Secretary: Nancy Fischer
 Treasurer: Rodney Linehan

Terry Proctor nominated Neal Immega to fill the open 1st Vice President position. Neal immediately declined. Sigrid Stewart nominated Wayne Barnett for President. After the intermission, Wayne withdrew his name from nomination.

Show and Tell: John Cooper displayed some moss agate, jasper, and sapphires from his trip to Wyoming and Montana. He briefly described his trip and experiences.

Wayne Barnett shared a lovely California whalebone egg he cut and polished.

The program was presented by Inda Immega on "Treasures from Shanghai, 5000 Years of Chinese Art and Culture, Bronze Technology," a presentation to accompany the exhibition at the Houston Museum of Natural Science. Inda Immega, Ph.D., is a Master Docent with the HMNS Volunteer Guild.

The presentation featured photos detailing the Chinese progression of craftsmanship from simple to the elaborate and an explanation of the casting techniques that they used.

In Our Library

by Art Smith
 HGMS Librarian

The library had a successful show and netted \$372.30 for our share of the Mineral Section proceeds. We are almost caught up with our backlog of binding journals, but as the year ends more will need binding.

I purchased three books at the show for our library and was given a nice discount. *The Beauty of Banded Agates* by M. R. Carlson, 2002, Fortification Press has some outstanding photographs of agates from eight world-wide localities. The photos are better than any of the other recent agate books I have purchased for the library. *Moldavite: star born stone of transformation*. 1988, R. Simmons and K. Warner, Heaven and Earth Publishing. Moldovite is the green tektite or impact glass from the Czech Republic that is often used as a gemstone. *Secrets of the Gem Trade*, Richard Wise, 1966

is a book with descriptions and discussions of gemstones that at times takes a slightly different slant. I hope these books will be in the library by the time you read this.

We recently had some donations of books and magazines that I did not take to the show because of the small size of our booth this year. I plan to put them out for sale in the near future at bargain prices for club members. They are *Lapidary Journal*, *Mineralogical Record*, *Rock & Gem*, and a scattering of others.

October General Meeting Program

Inda Immega Presents Shanghai Bronze Technology

by Matt Phillips

Inda Immega, a mineralogist and museum volunteer, spoke on “Bronze Technology,” featuring artifacts from Treasures from Shanghai: 5,000 Years of Chinese Art and Culture, a traveling exhibit currently on view at the Houston Museum of Natural Science. Bronze casting began in China as early as 3000 B.C. Objects become more varied and elaborate during the Xia (2200–1600 B.C.) and Shang Dynasties (1500–1050 B.C.) as they were increasingly used in important rites, used to identify social status, and eventually used for everything from cooking vessels and tools to chariots. An excellent example is shown below. The presentation showed the mines and manufacturing sites of ancient China and discussed the unique casting processes that gave these pieces their precise forms and patterns.



You (Wine Vessel),
Bronze. Late Shang
dynasty
(13th–11th century B.C.)
from Houston Museum of
Natural Science

HGMS Board Meeting Minutes
November 6, 2007
by Denise Bicknell, Secretary

X	President	Matt Dillon	X	Faceting Rep.	Phyllis George
X	1 st Vice President	Matt Phillips		Lapidary Rep.	Karen Burns
X	2 nd Vice President	Beverly Mace	X	Mineral Rep.	Art Smith
X	Treasurer	Rodney Linehan	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 7:00 p.m. by Matt Dillon, President

Approval of October Minutes was done via e-mail

Treasurer’s Report: Rodney Linehan presented a written Treasurer’s Report. It is attached to the minutes.

Rodney Linehan will check on Fidelity Bond premiums and find out who it would cover.

Farrar Stockton will be asked if he will do an audit for the club.

Committee and Section Reports

Nominating Committee: Phyllis George presented the Nominating Committee’s recommended officers for 2008

- President:** Terry Proctor
- 1st Vice President:** No nominee
- 2nd Vice President:** Beverly Mace
- Secretary:** Nancy Fischer
- Treasurer:** Rodney Linehan

The 2008 Board will make an appointment to fill the 1st Vice President position.

Show: Sigrid Stewart reported that final numbers from the 2007 Show are not ready yet. She announced a \$750 Grant from Chevron that will be used to help cover the 2007 Show Educational expenses. She reported that the Show Committee will host a Field Trip the following Saturday.

School Collections: Steve Blyskal reported that the committee is working on filling fifty more sets. He reported that the grant check from ConocoPhillips should be forthcoming.

Shop: HGMS received a Facetron faceting machine donated by Lamont E. “Monte” Cole. Phyllis George moved that the machine be kept at the club building and be cared for by the Faceting Section. Art Smith seconded the motion. It passed.

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

Old and New Business:

1. There will be a sign on the new room reading "Air Abrasives Room."
2. The Beading Group will be moving their meeting time from the fourth Wednesday to the third Saturday at 1:30 p.m. in the main room at the club building. This change will take effect with the January 19, 2008 meeting.
3. Phyllis George moved that the annual Christmas Party be held each year on the second Saturday of December. Art Smith seconded it. The motion passed. This year's party will be held on December 8. The Social Hour will begin at 5:30 p.m. Dinner will be at 6:30 p.m. Art Smith will cook the meat. HGMS members are asked to bring a vegetable or dessert dish. The HGMS Board will supply everything else.
4. The price of HGMS badges will increase to \$10.00

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Rockhound Gremlins?

by George Chihacek

Editor of The Loup Scoop

via Backbender's Gazette 5/1986 and The Roadrunner 9/2007

One always does one's very best
When working on a stone,
But this by no means guarantees
It's perfect when it's done.

I'm sure that within many slabs
Some little gremlins lurk,
And take perverse and fiendish joy
In undoing my work.

How else could that unsightly crack
Appear across the face
Of the cab that I was very sure
Was bound to win first place?

Oh why would a tiny bug appear
When I begin to grind
A cab of rare material
That is very hard to find?

I am convinced these impish elves
Mess with my template, too.
Although I mark so carefully,
The cab will fall right through.

Of course, it is just possible
That I might be to blame
For some shoddy work to which
I wouldn't 'sign my name.

But, rather than believe that
The fault lies in my skills,
I'll blame those little creatures
With their destructive wills.

Rockhounds Come from Teachers®*To Rockhounds Friends**Everywhere**by Terrell William Proctor, J.D.**14 October 2007 10:99 P.M.**Houston, Texas*

Over the river and through the wood,
But not to grandma's house I go;
In shorts and tee shirt, or coat and hood,
In rain or shine, and maybe in snow.
We hardy humans in our pleasure,
Go out and hunt for earthly treasure.

What made us think this hobby was fun,
We know we get aches and dirty too;
Wet in the rain and hot in the sun,
Out with a group or maybe just you.
Rockhounds know why we go to the field,
For great treasure the Earth has to yield.

At some time in life, we did not know,
That rocks walked over were not just stone;
Beneath our feet lay much more below,
Maybe rare mineral or ancient bone.
When did you become intrigued my friend?
In this hobby our time we do spend.

A superb teacher opened my mind,
To wonders of this amazing Earth.
She challenged me, for new things to find;
Earth and science now had a new worth.
From this tutor, my interest then grew,
Did some teacher create your interest too?

AFMS Ad Hoc Competition Study

by Ron Carman, Chair

from the AFMS Newsletter 11/2007

Our AFMS President, Shirley Leeson, has asked me to chair an Ad Hoc Committee to study the decline in participation in various contests and competitions. The goal is to see if each contest warrants the expense and effort to continue as is, determine whether changes are needed to meet current needs, or decide if it should be eliminated because of lack of interest. Each contest and competition will be evaluated on its own merits.

The committee consists of representatives from all seven federations, selected by the chair. I will be the representative from the South Central Federation and of course Chairperson. The other members from the other six regional federations are as follows:

California - Dorothy Beachler

Eastern - Mary Bateman

Midwest - Bob & Kathy Miller

Northwest - Dorothy Lee

Rocky Mountain - Richard & Linda Jaeger

Southeast - Buddy Schotts

The committee is appointed for a two year period—November 1, 2007 through October 31, 2009. We will study all AFMS-sponsored contests and competitions to see if enough interest exists to continue them as they are currently set up. If not, the committee may make recommendations for improvement, encourage more participation, or, in cases where improvement or participation may not be feasible, recommend that a particular contest or competition be discontinued. The committee will present an interim report at the AFMS Convention in 2008 with recommendations for action on those contests that have had their evaluations completed. A final report with additional recommendations will be made at the 2009 convention.

Some programs to be studied include but are not limited to Club Publications, Program Competition, Uniform Rules and Competitive Exhibits, AFMS Rockhound of the Year, and Education - All American.

Comments and suggestions are welcome from all members of all AFMS affiliated clubs nationwide. If you have any suggestions, please feel free to contact either me or the committee member(s) listed above for your federation. If you believe a particular competition should be continued, by all means say so and include any suggestions you may have for improving participation.

Thank you in advance for your thought and ideas.

Ron Carman, Chair

209 Smoky Mountain Dr

San Marcos, TX 78666

<rrcarman@centurytel.net>

AFMS-Coming to a Library Near You...

(Made Possible By an AFMS Endowment Fund Allocation!)

by Marge Collins, AFMS Program Chair

from the AFMS Newsletter 11/2007

In addition to "*Agates Close-up*," this year's Program Competition Winner, each Regional Program Library will receive nine other programs in VHS format and on DVDs. The list includes six segments from the "*Paleo World*" series. VHS - 30 minutes each (in alphabetical order).

"Amber Hunters" – Dominican amber is studied and highly prized because of the varied species perfectly preserved in fossil resin – so well DNA can be extracted.

"Dino Doctors" – Non-invasive medical scans reveal not only anatomy but also help scientists learn about the genesis of diseases common to dinosaurs and humans.

"Monsters on the Move" – Trackways – fossilized footprints reveal a wealth of dinosaur behavior and habits to those who can decipher the clues.

"Mammoths" – A North Dakota site reveals clues about the lives and extinction of these creatures that roamed parts of North America, as recently as 11,000 years ago.

"The Legendary T-Rex" – Was this the perfect predator or a lowly scavenger? The answer isn't conclusive, but more clues are revealed as intimate details are revealed.

"Treasure Island" – Madagascar was once inhabited by extraordinary and weird creatures. David Krause's team seeks to resolve natural history mysteries found there.

ALSO:

"Kentucky Agate Hunting," a 30-minute DVD, shows examples of this colorful gemstone, how it's collected, and how the author cuts and polishes them.

"Umoona" – a 26-minute DVD in two parts that shows the history of (Australian) opal hunting and depicts an aboriginal folk tale of how opal was created.

And **"Geology – Why Bother?"** a 26-minute DVD reveals that geology isn't about things that happened millions of years ago. It's about events going on around us every day!

* Information about the 2007 AFMS Program Competition winner was published in the August AFMS Newsletter. Your Regional Program Librarian can give you more information as well.

All these programs will be soon be available from your Regional Program Library. Watch your Regional Newsletter for details or contact the Program Librarian.

NOTE: 2008 Program Competition information will be published next month. Or go to <www.amfed.org/prog_comp.htm> and refer to the 2007 information. There will be minimal changes made for 2008.

Editor's Note: HGMS makes very little use of the many, many programs that have been winners in the AFMS Programs Competition over the years. This competition began in 1977, and each year the winning entries are copied and distributed to all the regional federations for loaning to their member clubs. If the people in charge of finding programs for the HGMS General Meeting or for our various Sections are having difficulties finding people to give programs, I strongly recommend that you get in touch with Lester Wetherell, the SCFMS Program Competition Coordinator. Contact him at (512) 258-7227 or at icwii@texas.net, or write him at 6502 Jennings Drive, Austin, TX 78727-6942. Your difficulty in finding programs might be over.



Santa Is a Rockhound

(A Lapidarist's version of the Night Before Christmas)

Original author unknown

via Hy Grader and Coastal Waves

and Calgary Lapidary Journal 12/2006

'Twas the night before Christmas
and all through the house
Not a Rockhound was stirring—
I felt like a louse!
For the lapidary gifts I was making this year
Lay down on my bench, UNFINISHED, I fear!

The pendant my dear wife wanted so much
As I polished the cab, it fractured with a touch;
And the lovely jade brooch for Grandma so sweet,
Just wouldn't polish—it looked terribly beat.

As for Sister's new bracelet
with baroques dangling lightly,
I ran out of bell caps after the stores were closed tightly.
Then the tie clasp for Uncle that would make such a hit,
After I cut the cab, no mounting would fit!

And even Junior's new crystal growing set
Though I'd sent for it months ago, had not arrived yet!
So I tossed and I turned as though caught in a trap.
I could not settle down for a "long winter's nap."

When all of a sudden I heard such a clatter,
I sprang from my bed to see what was the matter;
I raced for the door then saw with a flick
a red suited man I was sure was Saint Nick.

As I reached for my robe and was turning around
Down the basement stairs, Santa went with a bound.
He went straight to my workbench to see what I lacked,
Then with a nod of his head, he opened his pack.



Out tumbled such mountings and bell caps without stop,
I was sure Santa must own a Lapidary Shop!
He said not a word but went straight to his work,
And finished each piece, then grabbed his pack with a jerk.



And shaking his white-bearded face with much glee,
Took out some new slabs I knew must be for me!
Then, laying his finger aside of his nose,
With a nod of satisfaction, up the stairway he rose.

Went straight to the door, to his team gave a whistle
And away they all flew like the down of a thistle.
But I heard him exclaim 'ere he drove out of sight,
"Merry Christmas, Dear Rockhounds,
and to you a good night.



Mounting Specimens

by Don Peck

*Editor of the New Jersey Mineralogical Society newsletter, Chips & Deposits
from Chips & Deposits 10/2007*

I like to mount my mineral specimens so they present the best aspect, side, or angle for viewing. Over the years I have tried a lot of ways to do this, most of them proving to be not very satisfactory.

I have tried mounting minerals on Styrofoam (gets filthy dirty), and wood (too dark and time consuming). For the past few years I have been cutting flat ovals from 1/8 inch Lucite. Lucite is easy to work, but shaping it was taking too much time. I found a way! I made 3/4 inch thick patterns from wood. Mounting a short flush-cut bit in my router table, I can run the wood pattern against the bearing on the end of the bit and turn out a Lucite base in about two minutes. Wooden handles glued on the top of the patterns keep my fingers away from the bit.

I have tried a number of kinds of glue to hold the mineral to the base. Most were not very good. Recently, a mineral dealer suggested and sold me LectroStik MCB Adhesive Wax. It is the wax used by printers and advertising agencies to "paste-up" copy. It is inexpensive; very little is used with each specimen; it is stable; it doesn't discolor or stain the specimen; and it peels cleanly away when it is removed. If the specimen has a tendency to tip, I use methylene chloride to cement a small Lucite support behind or under the mineral. Methylene chloride is a solvent for Lucite and is available at hobby shops and some electronics or hardware stores.

I think I have found my answer – Lucite, a pattern, a router table, and adhesive wax!

AFMS President's Message

by Shirley Leeson

AFMS President

Greetings to you all,

As this is my first message as your president I'd like to share with you some important things for the coming year. My first concern is communication between the regional federations and the AFMS. I want you all to know that I am just a "click" away.

I'd like to see everyone attend a regional show outside of their own. Let's get to know each other. As you read this, I'll be at the Southeast Federation's convention and show in Biloxi, Mississippi. I had hoped to attend each of the regional federation shows this year, but the Midwest and Northwest federation conventions are on the same weekend. A dilemma. Each regional President will receive shortly a letter regarding your current and future show dates from the new Show Consultant, **Bob Livingston**. Please work with him so that this dilemma can be avoided in the future. If dates are known ahead of time, there might be some wiggle room to change them.

During my budget proposal at Roswell, Ed Romack, AFMS Past President asked to speak about our continuing "deficit budget." His suggestion of raising the AFMS dues to cover this deficit budget that has been going on for years was hotly debated. At one point it was moved to increase the dues. And it might have passed then and there but it was out of order. So we are asking all the Federations to strongly approve of increasing the AFMS dues by 25 cents. It will be brought up under New Business at Houston, TX in September, 2008. A dues increase has not been made since 1993 when it was raised from 25¢ to 50¢ per person. Because of a deficit budget for many years, many of the officers and chairs have not submitted their expenses, or only submitted partial expenses. That is asking a big sacrifice to those who serve. In addition, we all know that expenses for things like postage, printing, and travel are increasing rapidly so our budget, like yours, is becoming even more strained.

Now, on a lighter note I have some important news:

I have appointed **Bob Jones**, Senior Editor of *Rock & Gem* magazine and long time friend to the post of International Relations and have added "Goodwill Ambassador" to the title. If you have had a chance to read his article in the November issue of *Rock & Gem* magazine on pages 88 and 89, you'll see that Bob is already hard at work.

Another appointment is **Fran Sick**, recently President of Eastern Federation, who will be taking over the Public Relations committee. Watch for her articles.

Two new Ad Hoc Committees were approved at my request, at Roswell. The first is Inter-Federation Field Trip Coordinator. **Dick Pankey**, recently President of California Federation, was appointed to this chair. Dick successfully ran the Tri-Federation Field Trip to Texas Springs, NV in 2002. Dick will be recreating that event again over Memorial Day weekend, 2008. Watch for his articles.

The second Ad Hoc Committee is a Study of AFMS contests and competition. Why has there been a huge decline in interest? Have some of these contests become obsolete? Can we update them and bring interest back? This will be chaired by **Ron Carman**, AFMS Past President. Ron is currently getting his committee together. He will be interviewing both present and past chairs of the various committees. If you have some thoughts on any of these committees, please contact Ron, or a member of his committee. WE NEED INPUT!

Money has been allotted in the 2008 budget to the Program Competition Chair **Marge Collins** to save our early slide programs before they are lost. This will be done digitally. Marge is looking into ways to do this and the costs involved. If you have had success in doing this, please contact Marge.

Money has been allotted in the 2008 budget to the Junior Activities Program, Chair, **Jim Brace-Thompson** for six new badges. You can read about these new badges in the October AFMS Newsletter. Please get your juniors involved. If your club doesn't have juniors, you might consider "adopting" a Scout group into your local club and assisting them in these "rockhound badges," as well as their own badges.

Now comes my most important goal for 2008. ALL EDITORS PLEASE COPY. I have asked **Wendell Mohr**, Commemorative Stamp Chair to change his proposal of U.S. Gemstone Stamps, to U.S. GEMSTONE BIRTHSTONE STAMPS. That would be a collection of twelve stamps. Wendell and Bob Jones are teaming up to put this information before the public. YOU can help. If your club is having a show, please copy the flyers. You can get them from the AFMS Web site: <http://www.amfed.org> and distribute them at your show. If your show includes "Kids Day," please be sure and give the teachers and students work sheets as well as the flyer, and ask for their help. You, personally, can take the flyers and teacher/student worksheets to a school in your area and get them involved. We've had mineral stamps and they were successful. Let's go for gemstone/birthstone stamps. If you have some suggestions on how to get this before the public and generate interest, please contact either Wendell Mohr or me. Teachers like to get students involved in government; this is a chance for students to help with the process of selecting a set of stamps. Just think of the money these stamps could generate for the Post Office—maybe they could improve their service—but again, that's a whole different story.

Good news for all: Our new President-Elect, **Joy Bourne** will continue this coming year as Endowment Fund Chair, along with her new duties as President-Elect. So when she contacts YOU, asking for a donation for the Endowment Fund, give generously. The Endowment Fund works for YOU. A number of our important programs wouldn't be funded if it weren't for the Endowment Fund.

There are other exciting things coming in 2008. **Cathy Gaber**, Chair of AFMS Club Rockhound of the Year, will be issuing AFMS Certificates to those rockhounds chosen after November 1, 2007. These certificates will be given out at each of the regional convention/shows during 2008. Watch for Cathy's articles regarding this.

Let me introduce you to **John Wright**, the new Conservation and Legislation chair. He will be following a long list of dedicated people who have worked tirelessly to

keep our collecting areas open. John is from the Southeast Federation and is a retired geologist. His first article is in this issue, please read it carefully.

We have several other new chairs, but I'll mention them in the next issue. Till then, I leave you with this information—to contact me, please use both of the following e-mail addresses: shirleyleeson@msn.com and beauholland@salmoninternet.com. If I don't answer you within a day via e-mail, then I'm probably "on the road." If it's important, please contact Carolyn and Steve Weinberger, they will know where we are. If you have SURFACE MAIL you want to send me, please send it to P.O. Box 23, Tendoy, ID 83468-0023. This is because the Post Office in the La Mesa/San Diego area can't keep things straight and things are sent back or lost. The Tendoy postmaster will see that we get the mail, wherever we are.

Till next month, Your AFMS President,

Shirley

Rock & Gem and the AFMS

by Carolyn Weinberger

from the AFMS Newsletter 11/2007

With the recent changes made to *Lapidary Journal* from the format we've known for years, rockhounds are left with only one true outlet for listing their club or club show – *Rock & Gem Magazine*. Our own International Relations Chair *Bob Jones* serves as the Sr. Consulting Editor for the magazine, and its pages are filled with collecting and "how to" information, club show listings etc. We still have *Rocks & Minerals* and *Mineralogical Record* magazines for the more technical mineral-oriented collectors, but R & G not only deals with minerals, but lapidary and fossils as well. Articles are written in an easy-to-understand manner that almost everyone can understand. They also have a section for kids—the future of our hobby!

Are you aware that you can have your club show listed in *Rock & Gem*? The magazine has a 3-month "lead" time, so you'll need to notify them far enough in advance, but all you need to do is send the show information to:

Rock & Gem Show Dates

290 Maple Ct, Suite 232

Ventura, CA 93003

<editor@rockngem.com>

or fill out the electronic form on the Rock & Gem Web site <www.rockngem.com/showdates.asp>.

Do you also know that *Rock & Gem* maintains a listing of clubs and that your club can be included at no charge? Mail to Rock & Gem Club Listing at the same address as above or e-mail it to <editor@rockngem.com>.

ShowTime 2007

- Nov. 30-Dec. 2 Austin, TX Austin Gem & Mineral Society
Palmer Events Center, 900 Barton Springs Rd.
Susan Postlethwait (512) 458-9546
gemcapers@austin.rr.com
www.austingemandmineral.org
- Nov. 30-Dec. 2 El Paso, TX El Paso Mineral & Gem Society
El Maida Auditorium, 6331 Alabama
(877) 533-7153; (915) 533-715
gemcenter@aol.com.

ShowTime 2008

- January 1?? Big Spring, TX Big Spring Prospector Club
Howard Co. Fair Barn, behind Rodeo Arena
Lola Lamb, (432) 263-3340
rockhound11@yahoo.com
- January 19-20 Fredericksburg, TX The Fredericksburg Rockhounds
Pioneer Pavilion, Lady Bird Johnson Park
Jeff Smith, (830) 895-9630
jeffbrenda@krc.com
www.fredericksburgrockhounds.org.
- January 23-27 Quartzsite, AZ 42nd annual show, "QIA Pow Wow"
Quartzsite Improvement Association
235 E. Ironwood Dr., Diane Abbott
(928) 927-6325; powwow@qiaaz.org
Web site: www.qiaaz.org.
- January 26-27 Tyler, TX East Texas Gem & Mineral Society
Rose Garden Center, 420 S. Rose Park Dr.
Keith Harmon, (903) 581-4068
kharmon1219@sbcglobal.net.
- February 2-16 Tucson, AZ Annual show: Arizona Mineral & Fossil Show
Multiple venues in Tucson
- February 16-17 Plainview TX Hi Plains Gem & Mineral Club
Ollie Liner Center, I-27S; Mildred Matlock
(806) 293-3476
- Pasadena 23-24 Pasadena, TX Clear Lake Gem & Mineral Society
Pasadena Convention Center
7902 Fairmont Pkwy.; Mike Reves
(281) 282-6117, demmikeer@hotmail.com
www.ghg.net/gpenning/index.htm

2007 DECEMBER 2007						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 10-12 Youth Section 10-5 Shop Open
2	3	4 7:30 Board Meeting	5 7:30 Mineral Section	6	7	8 10-5 Shop Open Christmas Party 5:30 p.m.
9	10 Day Light Section No meeting	11 7:30 Show Committee	12 7:30 Faceting Section	13	14	15 Youth Section No Meeting 10-5 Shop Open
16	17 Lapidary Section No meeting	18 Paleo Section No meeting	19 Mineral Section No meeting	20	21	22 10-5 Shop Open
23 30	24 31	25 Christmas Day	26 Beading Group No meeting	27	28	29 10-5 Shop Open
2008 JANUARY 2008						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 New Year's Day	2 7:30 Mineral Section	3 7:30 Board Meeting	4	5 10-12 Youth Section 10-5 Shop Open
6	7	8 7:30 Show Committee	9 7:30 Faceting Section	10	11	12 10-5 Shop Open
13	14 1:00 p.m. Day Light Section	15 Paleo Section	16 Mineral Section	17	18	19 10-12 Youth Section 10-5 Shop Open 1:30 Beading Group
20	21 5:00-7:15 Shop Open 7:30 Lapidary Section	22 5:00-7:15 Shop Open 7:30 General Meeting	23	24	25	26 10-5 Shop Open
27	28	29	30	31		

The BACKBENDER'S GAZETTE

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

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HOUSTON, TEXAS 77099

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