The BACKBENDER'S GAZETTE

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

Volume XXXIX - No. 2 February 2008

President's Message

January 12, 2008
by Terrell William "Terry" Proctor
2008 HGMS President

Do we run the air conditioner or the heater? Seems like normal Houston weather to me. Just plan a field trip, and you will quickly find out how the weather guy or weather gal changes the forecast into a disaster on the way for the time of your field trip.

Of course there are great things to do at HGMS other than field trips. There are interesting, instructive, and enlightening meetings, classes, silent auctions, a new abrasive room ready for use, repairs underway to secure the stability of the shop, a great September 26–28, 2008 Show Committee underway, and a lot of other good things that you will learn of in time.

The first Board Meeting of the Year was very encouraging. Work is underway on a number of fronts to expand HGMS in membership, public recognition, interesting meetings, expanded or new facilities to take care of our membership growth, and expanded facilities for members.

The attitudes of the Board and of others in relationships with the Board have improved more than I have seen in some time. This bodes well for a productive year that can result in every member of HGMS enjoying his or her membership in HGMS more; in members wanting to bring their friends, family, fellow employees, and oth-

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January 22, 2008 General Meeting Program

DVD on Tucson 2007 Highlights: What's HOT in Tucson (2007): In preparation for the huge Gem/Mineral/Fossil shows that will be taking place in Tucson in February, a DVD highlighting the 2007 events will be presented. This DVD is hosted by David Wilber and gives a true insider's look at the shows. He talks with some of the biggest dealers in the industry, and they share their stories and show their hidden, behind-the-scene mineral specimens. You won't want to miss this!

Contents

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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

ers interested in Earth Science to the club; and with all of us increasing our knowledge of this wonderful Earth we live on (and over and under I guess in modern times).

This issue of the BBG has an ad for an Executive position to be filled. We need a good man or woman who would like (with help as needed) to line up our programs for the General Meeting (main club meeting) and fill in when the President is absent. The pay isn't great (we will buy you a Dr. Pepper if you beg), but the title is great: "First Vice-President" of one of the nation's greatest gem, mineral, and fossil clubs. WOW you say. Seriously, this is a very important job and one we need to fill. We aren't going to suffer for programs in the interim, but we hope there will be someone who would enjoy this job and will contact me as soon as possible.

Winter will draw to a close before long (that's the optimist in me speaking), and that means every Section that takes field trips will begin planning their trips. Ask your Section Chairman or Vice-Chairman what is planned, and then jump in and enjoy going along on a fun trip. Just be sure to learn what a "leaverite" is if you don't already know, so that your spouse doesn't become disgruntled with a full garage.

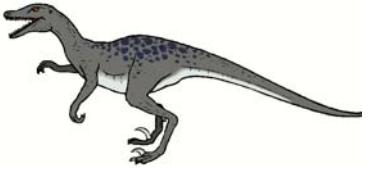
In case you aren't aware, this year at our September 26–28, 2008 Show, HGMS is hosting our regional federation, South Central Federation of Mineral Societies (SCFMS), and our national federation, American Federation of Mineralogical Societies (AFMS). Nationwide this year the eyes of gem, mineral, and fossil folks will be on Houston and on the Houston Gem & Mineral Society. If you aren't already doing something on the Show Committee for 2008, contact Scott Singleton. We need all the help from HGMS members that we can get to make this a truly outstanding year in the history of HGMS. Thanks for thinking about how to help and then volunteering.

The Most Precious Gem

from Yakima Gem & Mineral News 01/2001
via The Stone Chipper 09/2007 and Rok Tok 1/2008

Rockhounds who have been in the hobby for some time begin to realize that the most precious gems they have collected are the friends they have made along the way. Some are still in the rough, and some are dull and colorless unless viewed in the right light.

And like every gemstone in nature, they also have inclusions, sometimes referred to as flaws. If we enjoy them as they are, realizing that their warmth and beauty make up for their imperfections, if we concentrate on their better aspects, the flaws become insignificant and merely make up their individuality.



Identifying Microscopic Minerals from Mapimi, Durango, Mexico

by Arthur Smith
Member of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society
artsmithite@msn.com

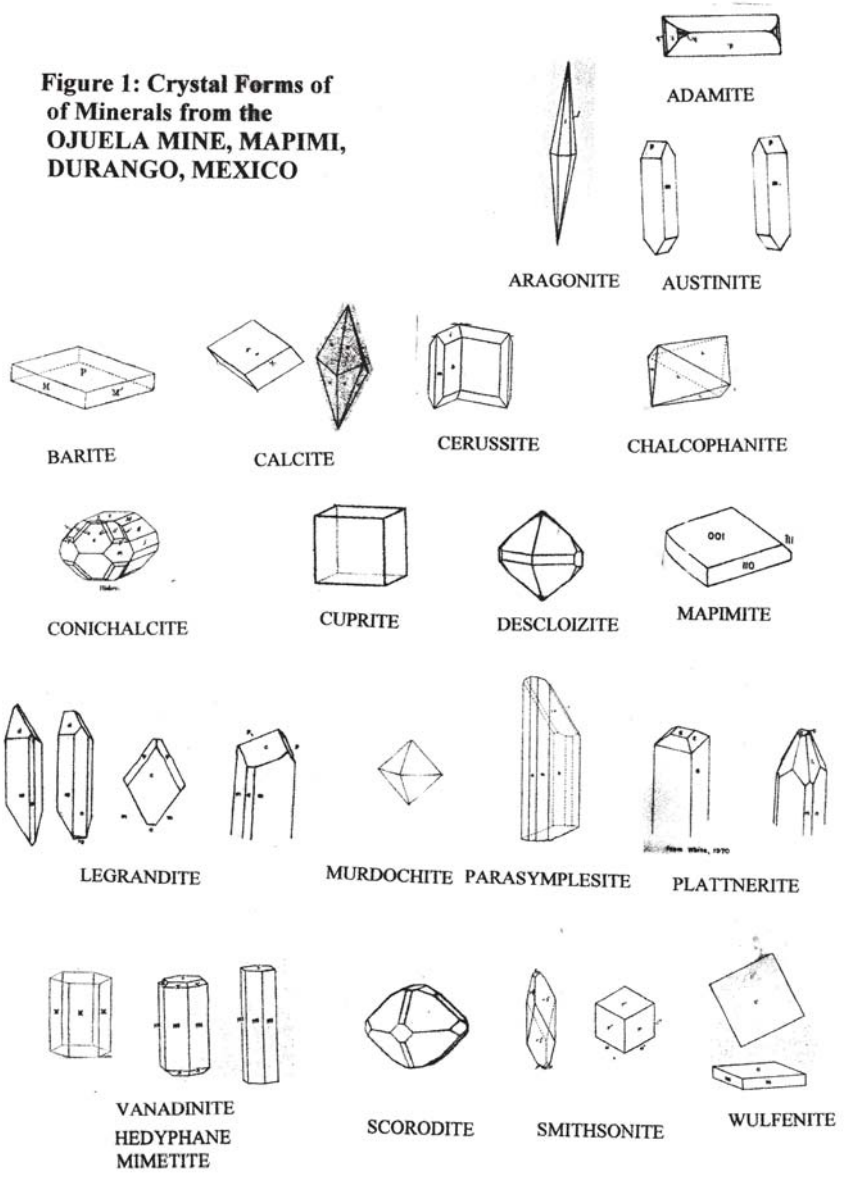
Since I arrived in Texas in 1963, the Mapimi colorful secondary minerals were readily available to collectors from dealers, flea markets, and recycled collections. They were particularly abundant in the 1970s and most of the 1980s, but since then supplies are more sporadic. But they still can be relatively plentiful and inexpensive if you know what you are looking at. True, outstanding specimens and rarer minerals with larger than microscopic crystals are now quite expensive, but there are a lot specimens available including spectacular microscopic specimens of common and some rare minerals. Specimens from "old garage collections" are usually battered and dusty, but if they contain unexposed cavities or undamaged areas, treasures may be found making them worthwhile. Often a specimen with more than one or two minerals on it is usually sold under the name of the most dominant or easiest to identify or even misidentified mineral. So a close look may be warranted for the unexpected rare mineral or super microscopic specimen.

Certainly Moore (2003) wrote the seminal article on the location, and it can be very helpful when identifying micro minerals from the location. However, the emphasis is mostly on the larger crystal specimens, and in some cases the inconspicuous mineral hidden in a larger specimen may be of the most value. I would further caution you that if you are just guessing at a mineral name for labeling your specimen, you have a good chance of being wrong. So examine your specimens with a loupe or under a microscope. See if the label is correct, and possibly find additional minerals. Smith (2001) tackled the problem of identifying three green minerals, copper-rich adamite, copper-rich austinite, and conichalcite from Mapimi when good crystals were not available and there were no significant associations. The analyses showed that my species labeling and the labeling of others that were analyzed were previously labeled incorrectly more than 50% of the time. Analyses of the green specimens covered the whole range of species with some rich in certain elements such as zinc rich conichalcite. However, all the errors were for the wrong species name, and specimens rich in some additional element were considered bonus data and not considered in the correctness of the mineral name. However, if you use caution, once you get a certain type of occurrence analyzed, you might be able to carry that identity to similar occurrences on other specimens from a similar occurrence. A common example is what was called "barthite." Analysis shows it consists of a green crystal coating of conichalcite over a paler green copper-rich austinite. Generally neither has a distinctly crystal form to help with identification in this association, but the occurrence is common, and so the two minerals are easily named correctly when observed.

I have grouped minerals of the same color so that might be a place to start, but remem-

ber that many minerals at Mapimi have more than one color. I have not included some of the rarer minerals because their occurrence was limited, and they are adequately covered in Moore (2003). See this reference for the list of mineral formulas for determining their composition.

Figure 1: Crystal Forms of of Minerals from the OJUELA MINE, MAPIMI, DURANGO, MEXICO



YELLOW MINERALS:

Name:	ADAMITE	PARADAMITE	LEGRANDITE
Form:	prisms, spheres, pinwheels, druses	crystals sheaves, equant(?)	acicular, elongate, sub parallel groups
Crystal System	orthorhombic	triclinic	monoclinic
Assoc.:	chalcophanite lotharmeyerite	adamite	smithsonite
Keys:	crystal form	crystal form	bright color, crystal form

BLACK MINERALS:

Name:	CHALCOPHANITE	PLATTNERITE	MURDOCHITE
Form:	masses showing triangular faces	acicular or elongate blades, prisms	equant, octahedrons
Crystal System	trigonal	tetragonal	cubic
Assoc.:	adamite	calcite, scutinyite, wulfenite rosasite, hydrozincite	plattnerite, calcite
Keys:	form and assoc, minute	form, color	octahedra, lustrous,

WHITE MINERALS

Name:	HEMIMORPHITE	CERUSSITE	CALCITE	ARAGONITE
Form:	Thin-thick blades, botryoidal	crystals, usually twinned	crystals, coatings on other minerals	stalactite, needles crystals
Crystal System	orthorhombic	orthorhombic	trigonal	orthorhombic
Assoc.:	aurichalcite, calcite, plattnerite	calcite	conichalcite and most other minerals	goethite
Keys:	crystal form, hemimorphism	twinning	reacts to HCl, form	reacts to HC cave formations

Name:	HYDROZINCITE	BARITE	SMITHSONITE	HEDYPHANE
Form:	powdery, laths, spheres	crested crystals also tabular	botryoidal and rice-grain crystals	prismatic
Crystal System	monoclinic	orthorhombic	trigonal	hexagonal
Assoc.	hemimorphite, rosasite	many	legrandite, plattnerite	mimetite, bindhemite
Keys:	Blue-white fluor.	form	form	looks like mimetite, color

GREEN MINERALS:

Name:	Copper rich ADAMITE	CONICHALCITE	Copper rich AUSTINITE
Form:	crystals, crusts, drusy coatings	spheres, micro xls(equant)	pale, tiny, radiating acicular groups covered by conichalcite
Crystal System	orthorhombic	orthorhombic	orthorhomic
Assoc.	goethite	austinite	conichalcite
Keys:	crystal form only	crystal form, color smooth spheres	crystal form only

Name:	DUFTITE	DUSSERTITE	MAPIMITE	BAYLDONITE
Form:	botryoidal, encrustations	rosettes of flat micro crystals	tabular crystals to 4 mm	crystals, druses, mam. concretionswith fibrous struct.
Crystal System	orthorhombic	trigonal	monoclinic	monoclinic
Assoc.	wulfenite, calcite, mimetite	arseniosiderite, carminite	ojuelite, adamite smithsonite	wulfenite, goethite
Keys:	associations pale olive	associations	crystals, associations	crystals, assoc.

YELLOW MINERALS

Name:	WULFENITE	JAROSITE	MIMETITE	ARSENIOSIDERITE
Form:	tabular crystals thin and thick	masses showing, thin crystals	botryoids, elongate crystals	radial fibrous aggregates, pseudos after legrandite or kottigite, scorodite
Crystal System	tetragonal	trigonal	hexagonal	monoclinic
Assoc.	mimetite, duftite	goethite, bindheimite	wulfenite, calcite	scorodite, carminite
Keys:	crystal form	dissolves in HCl	crystal form, same as pyromorphite	associations, minute size

RED CRYSTALS

Name:	CARMINITE	LOTHARMEYERITE	SEWARDITE	CUPRITE
Form:	acicular to lath-like crystals aggregates	drusy encrustations, equant crystals	rosettes of subparallel crystals	cubes
Crystal System	orthorhombic	monoclinic	orthorhombic	cubic
Assoc.	arseniosiderite, scorodite	purple adamite	beudanite, segnetite	goethite, copper
Keys:	form, assoc.	assoc., color, form	form, association	form, color

BLUE MINERALS

Name:	ROSASITE	AURICHALCITE	SCORODITE
Form:	spheres, feathery aggregates & crusts	acicular and lath-like aggregates	pseudo-octohedral concretionary & aggregates
Crystal System	monoclinic	monoclinic	orthorhomic
Assoc.	hemimorphite, aurichalcite	hydrozincite, goethite copper-rich adamite	carminite suite of minerals
Keys:	color, form	pale blue, form	color (also gray green), form

BLUE-GRAY MINERALS

Name:	KOTTIGITE	PARASYMPLESITE	METAKOTTIGITE
Form:	elongated crystals resemble legrandite	elongated crystals	minute tabular crystals, oriented intergrowth with kottigite
Crystal System	monoclinic	monoclinic	triclinic
Assoc.	smithsonite, gypsum	smithsonite, gypsum legrandite	kottigite, smithsonite, adamite
Keys:	color, form	cannot be visually distinguished from kottigite	assoc., form

RED-BROWN MINERALS

Name:	WOODRUFFITE	SCRUTINYITE	OGENDSBURGITE	LEPIDOCROSITE
Form:	radiating needles	bladed crystals	bladed crystals	rosettes, play xls
Crystal System	tetragonal	orthorhombic	orthorhombic	orthorhombic
Assoc.	adamite	plattnerite	villyaellenite, green adamite, chalcophanite	goethite
Keys:	form, assoc.	color, assoc.	color, form, assoc	color, form, assoc.

BROWN MINERALS:

Name:	DESCLOIZITE	VANADINITE	HYDROHETAEROLITE	GOETHITE
Form:	tabular crystals to 4 mm	prismatic crystals	elongated crystals, grains	pseudos of pyrite hemimorphite, smithsonite, etc.
Crystal System	orthorhombic	hexagonal	tetragonal	---
Assoc.	barite, wulfenite many others	wulfenite, calcite	cryptomelane	all minerals in oxidized zone.
Keys:	form, assoc.	form, color	in Mn ores	dominant mineral in the zone

References:

Moore, T. P. 2003. The Ojuela mine, Mapimi, Durango, Mexico. *Mineralogical Record* 34(5):5-91.

Smith, A. E. 2001. Through the 'scope: Austinite and other microminerals from the Ojuela mine, Mapimi, Durango, Mexico. *Rocks & Minerals* 76:128-29.

The HGMS Beading Group – 2008, Here We Come

by Michele Marsel

Beading is a craft that can be broken into slowly and built upon as experience grows. Beading craft is considered an economical craft work. Beading is an art form throughout the ages which has been passed on from one generation to the next. **Beading** is a hobby, craft, and an art form. Beading is an ancient craft. Beading is the new do-it-yourself excitement for creative grown-ups. Besides being one of the most fulfilling and flexible crafts around, beads and beading is also one of the easiest crafts to get started with." (http://www.artisticbeading.com/beading/)

Beaders and their beads come in all shapes and sizes. Some prefer to work with small seed beads, while others favor big, bold, gemstone beads. And it's not just about jewelry! Many beaders work on decorative items such as boxes, bags (amulets/handbags), lamp shades, and art murals.

Our HGMS Beading Group was formed to promote this ancient craft in a relaxed, social atmosphere. No experience required! There are demos and hands-on opportunities at every Beading Group meeting. Beginning in January 2008, our meeting time moved to the 3rd Saturday of each month from 1:30–3:30 p.m.

We got our feet wet in 2007 as a new HGMS group. We had from 4-10 participants at each meeting, including several brand new beaders. Diane Sisson will lead us in new and exciting projects for 2008. We hope you'll stop by to see what we're doing.

Some of our 2008 Plans:

- Learn/improve your peyote stitch skills – the HGMS Beading Group will have a case at the 2008 Show featuring peyote stitch items made by our members. Beginners will work on small amulet bags, and more experienced (or ambitious)

beaders will try their hand at beaded boxes. This will be an ongoing project beginning in January.

- Field Trips!! – the Stafford Bead Show, also Johnson's Rock Shop in Indian Springs (they have great rough and slabs too, and HUGE petrified wood specimens you have to see to believe).

- Drop In Beading – informal sessions outside the monthly meeting to work on projects and get a little extra help. Watch the HGMS Web site for dates/times.

Don't miss out on all the fun! Contact Michele Marsel at mamarsel@earthlink.net to have your name added to the HGMS Beading Group e-mail list.

Mineral Section

by Steve Blyskal, Chairperson & Dean Lagerwall, Assistant Chairperson

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

Upcoming Meeting Topics

February 6—Work Party & Social: Come and help put together the ever-so-popular mineral kits given out to the teachers. Refreshments will be provided.

February 20—Tucson Show & Tell: For those lucky enough to attend the most famous mineral gathering in the world, bring in your recent acquisitions from the many Tucson Shows, give us your impressions of "Tucson 2008," and regale us with your experiences. For those who could not make it, come and see what you missed. Refreshments will be provided.

Wednesday, March 5—Clear Lake Show & Tell: Bring in your recent acquisitions from the Clear Lake Show (February 23–24). Let us drool over your acquisitions. Refreshments will be provided.

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

Judges' & Exhibitors' Seminar

by Ron Carman

Hi folks! Last night at the Arlington Gem & Mineral Society (AGMS) Board meeting we discussed the fact that so far we have received no applications at all for the Judges' & Exhibitors' seminar to be held the 2nd weekend of March at the AGMS clubhouse. On the next page is a copy of the registration form, if anyone wants to come. Persons who want to attend should fill out the form and return it with the fee as soon as possible. I hope you will announce this fact at your next club meeting. If you need more forms, feel free to copy and print this one, or contact me. Thanks!

HGMS Shop Is Missing a Genie (but not the bottle)

This is a piece of grinding equipment for making cabochons, and it belongs in the HGMS Shop. It is assumed that some member borrowed the Genie and forgot to return it to our shop. Do you have the Genie or know where it presently is located? If so, please return it promptly to the shop or notify Tom Wright, Neal Immega, Wayne Barnett, or any Officer or Section Chairman. No apology is necessary. The HGMS shop just needs the Genie back so other members can use this piece of equipment. Thank you.

The **AUSTIN GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY**
in Conjunction with
the **SOUTH CENTRAL FEDERATION of MINERALOGICAL SOCIETIES**
will Host a

EXHIBITORS AND JUDGES SEMINAR

Topics Include
Preparing a display for exhibiting
AFMS Uniform Rules regarding exhibiting
How exhibits are judged
What makes a good display

WHO: **EVERY MEMBER** of American Federation of Mineral Societies
WHEN: March 8 & 9, 2008 Saturday & Sunday
WHERE: Austin, Texas 6719 Burnet Lane 78757
TIME: Begin Promptly at 8:30am
COST: $15 Covers refreshments and printing costs

For additional information or copies of this announcement and application forms, contact the Austin Gem & Mineral Society at:
Web site: www.austingemandmineral.org
Telephone: (512) 458-9546

EXHIBITORS AND JUDGES SEMINAR APPLICATION
March 8 & 9, 2008 in Austin, Texas

Name _____
(As you want it to appear on your certificate)
Address _____
City _____ State _____ ZIP _____
Phone Number: _____ E Mail _____
I am interested in (circle one): Exhibiting Learning to Judge
Primary Area of Interest MINERALS FOSSILS JEWELRY LAPIDARY _____ OTHER
Please submit one application per person with fees attached. Multiple applications may be mailed together.
Mail applications to: AGMS, Attn of Exhibitors & Judges Seminar, 6719 Burnet Lane, Austin, TX 78757

THIS FORM MAY BE COPIED

Executive Needed

The salary is lousy, but the benefits are great!!!

Qualifications: Be an HGMS member; have a desire to obtain good programs for HGMS General Meetings; have some knowledge of what "good" meetings consist of, or be willing to accept help from other Officers and Section Representatives. The position of First Vice-President was not filled in the 2007 Election, and HGMS needs to fill that position by appointment. Call HGMS President Terry Proctor at 713 453-8338 if you are interested.

In Our Library

by Art Smith, Librarian

The year 2007 was another successful year for our library. We had a donation of $670 allowing us to complete our set of the *American Mineralogist* up to 2005 when we discontinued getting new volumes because most of the data and information in it pertains not to mineralogy but to crystal chemistry. We have our binding caught up and up to date as of now with four volumes being bound. Our shelves are pretty full, but we managed to get some significant new books, particularly in Mineralogy and on Agates. We are trying to be selective in the new books we obtain and have started storing some of our important but seldom used books in plastic boxes in the loft. I expect to do the same with journals and magazines, and space gets scarce.

The library's finances for 2007:

Income:	$316.69	Carried over from 2006
	$1094.82	Soda sales, cost of soda donated
	$724.25	Book sales
	$330.30	Show sales from Mineral Section split
	$26.75	Columbia Trading sale of mineral cards in Austin

Total Income $2492.71

Expenses	$1620.00	thirty-six volumes bound @$45.00 per volume
	$648.36	Books and Journals from Lithiographie
	$ 92.00	Book copied from the Internet on stones, 2 volumes
	$ 80.00	Books bought at show, Moldovite, Banded Agates
	$139.00	Rocks of Ages, used books
	$157.00	Other Books

Total Expenses $2736.36
Less income: $2492.71
Deficit ($243.65)

This is not the first time we have ended the year in a deficit. We certainly will not have the volumes to be bound next year, and so we should easily make this amount up. These figures do not represent books, subscriptions, and other things donated to the library by Sections and individuals. It is just the cash that the library handles. Thanks to those who buy drinks, donate books, or donate subscriptions.

HGMS Board Meeting Minutes

January 4, 2008
By Denise Bicknell
Filling in for Nancy Fischer, Secretary

X	President	Terry Proctor	X	Faceting Rep.	Phyllis George
	1St Vice President		X	Lapidary Rep.	Karen Burns
X	2nd Vice President	Beverly Mace	X	Mineral Rep.	Denise Bicknell
X	Treasurer	Rodney Linehan	X	Paleontology Rep.	Rick Rexroad
	Secretary	Nancy Fischer	X	Day Light Rep.	Tom Wright
X	Past President	Matt Dillon			

The meeting was called to order at 7:38 p.m. by T. W. "Terry" Proctor, President.

Approval of December Minutes was done via e-mail.

Treasurer's Report: Rodney Linehan presented a Balance Sheet and Profit and Loss Statement; it is attached to the minutes.

Committee and Section Reports:

- **Day Light:** The Day Light Section meets on the second Monday each month at 1 p.m. January's program will be presented by Jim Johnson. At the February meeting they will be working on doublets.
- **Faceting:** Faceting meets on the 2nd Wednesday of the month.
- **Lapidary:** Kathy Konkel is no longer the chairperson.
- **Mineral:** The first meeting in January was a DVD covering the 2007 Tucson Show.
- **Paleontology:** Lexy Bieniek is the 2008 chairperson. She has promised the group more field trips for Pennsylvanian fossils.

Programs: The January General Meeting will view a portion of the DVD entitled "What's Hot in Tucson in 2007."

Shop: Tom Wright reports that one of HGMS's three Genies is missing. A discussion followed about recording all serial numbers from all equipment, especially all newly acquired equipment.

There is no storage for heavy items upstairs except over the Air Abrasives room. Please contact Tom Wright for more information.

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

Old and New Business:

1. The issue of a First Vice President was tabled until February's Board meeting.

2. Matt Dillon is working on compiling a Committee to explore expansion.

3. Criteria for awarding Honorary Life Memberships were discussed. The Board felt there is no need for a revision in the way these are awarded at this time.

4. Membership rates and Lifetime Membership rates were discussed. The item was tabled.

5. Children's Issues were tabled until next month.

6. The method of handling grievances was discussed. No action was taken.

7. All Sections need to fill out a 2007 financial form and return it to Rod Linehan.

8. We have not received any quotes for a Fidelity Bond at this time.

9. A way to rotate the way our Certificates of Deposit come due was discussed.

10. Rodney Linehan provided a copy of his license.

11. Farrar Stockton will move forward with an audit.

12. The IRS requirements regarding 501(c)3 organizations and whether they need to charge and collect sales tax on auctions was discussed.

13. Rick Rexroad moved that HGMS's bank be Prosperity Bank for 2008 and that 1.) Rodney Linehan, 2.) Beverly Mace, and 3.) T.W. "Terry" Proctor be the designated signatories for the account. Matt Dillon seconded the motion: it passed.

14. Phyllis George moved that two of the three authorized signatures be required on all checks over $1,000. Tom Wright seconded the motion, it passed.

15. Denise Bicknell moved that the Certificates of Deposit be in the name of the club, and when they come due, it will require two of the three authorized signatures or a motion of the Board to cash them in or roll them over. Rick Rexroad seconded the motion, it passed.

16. Tom Wright moved that the Board adjourn, Rick Rexroad seconded the motion, and it passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:50.

AFMS-Access to Public Lands

by John Wright
AFMS Conservation & Legislation Chair
from the AFMS Newsletter 11/2007

Many of you have heard at club meetings or learned through the news media about all the new federal and state lands that have recently been added to "preserves" where rock hunting is prohibited or severely restricted and how many other areas of public lands have in other ways also had access to them limited and/or restricted. Proposals are constantly being considered to substantially increase these land preserves and to add more restrictions for access to almost all public lands.

The total acreages being placed off limits to us is in the millions, and primarily it is our own fault because with the exception of a very few people, we have done nothing to prevent it from happening.

The U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) requires permits in many areas, plans to increase the areas where permits are required, and they are considering raising the fees for permits. Their counterparts in some states have followed suit for state-owned lands or are currently working on legislative initiative and agendas along similar lines. Environmentalists and paleontologists, plus a host of other groups, are diligently working to limit access to public lands and restrict the removal of minerals, fossils, and almost everything else imaginable. Quite a number of bills are pending in Washington and many state capitols right now that will further restrict our right to use public lands, and they are virtually unopposed.

I know that many of the areas involved hold little interest to most of you. Well, you better wake up and get interested, because each time our adversaries win, they are encouraged to try for even more, and one day they may be plotting to close areas in your own neighborhood. Another and probably more important reason is that if we join with other clubs in our efforts to safeguard public access to federal and state lands, we all gain strength in unity and numbers and can stop a lot of these idiotic restrictions. At the 2007 AFMS annual meeting held in Roswell, NM, it was reported that we have 48,677 members, and that is a larger membership than any of the environmental groups have. Joining with other clubs will help us overcome the attitude that the situation is much too big for us as individuals to do anything about. Cooperation with other clubs will also help us keep more up-to-date and informed about the proposed changes in land usage and accessibility.

My wife and I recently attended a meeting conducted by the U.S. Forestry Service regarding road closures in a local National Forest area. We actually found out about the meeting from other AFMS members in California and Idaho. The meeting turned out to be either the worst-organized unprofessional event I have ever attended (I have actually seen Cub Scouts do better), or the meeting was a very carefully orchestrated "sham." Since the early 1900s the Forestry Service has spent "billions" of our tax dollars building roads in National Forest areas to act as "firebreaks" and to make areas more accessible to emergency equipment. With forest fires establishing new records in occurrence and destruction of public and private property all around the country, the sudden decision to close all these roads just doesn't make sense. Something is going on that smells a little bit "environmentally" fishy.

According to ALAA (American Lands Access Association) many of the agencies and governing bodies at local, state, and federal levels do not always keep the public informed about plans that could ultimately restrict access to public lands. When they do let you know, normally through public hearings, the plans are usually complete and the "mind set" is to prevail. Often changes are made without any prior notification or public input, and it's not surprising that this is done on purpose to prevent public interference.

I have just briefly touched on some of the problems that are confronting us, but I think it is enough to give you an idea of what needs to be done. We need to collectively (club petitions) and individually write our state and federal representatives. Writing these letters actually requires very little effort and could quite easily be turned into an interesting and enlightening club project. I might add at this point that "e-mails" and particularly "e-mail petitions" have little or no effect.

Remember, the majority of the representatives we send to our state and nation's capitol really like their job and want to keep it. They also know that keeping their job often depends on a very narrow margin of votes, so they are very keen on keeping their constituents happy. If we fail to let them know what is bothering us or what we want done about the varying legislation that affects our access to public lands, we shoot ourselves in the foot. Why? Because there are hundreds of organized groups with very dedicated members who are earnestly working to restrict the use of public lands, and you can bet they make their desires known.

Congressional Wilderness Proposals

by Jon Spunaugle, ALAA Director
from The AFMS Newsletter 11/2007

As promised, the following is a report on areas proposed to be included in the National Wilderness System in the current (110th) Congress. There are 17 bills introduced (plus additional bills for the inclusion of rivers into the Wild and Scenic River System). Thirteen states are involved with most of the states west of the Mississippi River. The exceptions are Georgia and Virginia.

The states with the largest proposed wilderness are Utah, California, and Alaska, with a three-state proposal bringing in Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming into the list of large acreages. Utah has the distinction of the largest amount of proposed wilderness acreage—9,351,840 acres—all of it in one bill (Senate Bill 1170 and House Resolution 1919) entitled "America's Red Rock Wilderness Act of 2007."

California is a distant second with 1,652,844 acres in two separate Bills. The largest is the "California Wild Heritage Act of 2007," (S-483 and HR-960 which establishes 1,538,158 acres in 53 locations) and the other the "Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park Wilderness Act" of 2007" (S-1744 and HR-3022) with 114,686 acres as proposed wilderness.

Alaska is third with 1,605,031 acres in two bills: "Udall-Eisenhower Arctic Wilderness Act" (HR-39) with 1,559,538 acres in the Arctic National Wildlife Preserve, and the "Izembek and Alaska Peninsula Refuge and Wilderness Enhancement and King Safe Access Act of 2007" putting an additional 45,493 acres into wilderness.

The other large acreage proposal is a multi state proposal entitled "Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act" which proposed to connect all Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming wilderness areas with wilderness corridors. The total for this proposal is 2,155,433 acres of additional wilderness.

Other States with wilderness proposals are:

Idaho, 723,480 additional acres in three Bills (S-802) "Owyhee Initiative Implementation Act of 2007," 504,078 acres, (HR-222) "Central Idaho Economic Development Act," and (S-1802) "Idaho Wilderness Boundary Modification Act";

Colorado, 252,534 acres in (S-1380 and HR-2334) "Rocky Mountain National Park and Indian Peaks Wilderness Act," 252,534 acres.

Oregon, 142,512 acres in two Bills, (S-647) "Lewis and Clark Mount Hood Wilderness Act of 2007," 128,817 acres, and (S-2034 and HR-3513) "Copper Salmon Wilderness Act," and 13,700 acres.

Washington, (S-520 and HR-886) "Wild Sky Wilderness Act,"106,000 acres.

Arizona finishes the substantial wilderness proposals with (HR-3287) "Tumacacori Highlands Wilderness Act of 2007," at 83,300 acres.

The States of **Georgia** (HR-707), **New Mexico** (HR-2632), and **Virginia** (S-570 and HR-1011) have only small amounts proposed as wilderness.

Washington's Wild Sky Wilderness is scheduled for a vote in the US Senate and is expected to pass. This would send the then passed law to the President for signature. One hang up, however, is that all Bills passed in the U.S. Senate must provide for the Bills funding through the elimination of a like amount in the US Proposed Budget Bill. The two Washington Senators who sponsored the Bill are working to clear this last hurdle. Other Wilderness Bills that are likely to pass both the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House are: "Colorado's Rocky Mountain Indian Peaks Wilderness Bill," and Oregon's two bills. Alaska's "Izembek Wilderness" also looks to be passed. Effect on known collecting areas is not determined.

Not likely to pass is the very large Utah wilderness bill which lacks any support from the Utah Senators, the two California Wilderness Bills which lack support from one of the States Senators, and the Three-State Bill, "The Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act," which lacks any support in the States effected. These Bills would have an adverse effect on many collecting locations, especially the Utah Bill.

Other Bills could be introduced, but it is late in the session for any chance of passage.

[ALAA - The American Lands Access Association is a 501(C)(4) organization that was established to promote and ensure the right of amateur hobby collecting, recreational prospecting and mining, and the use of public and private lands for educational and recreational purposes; and to carry the voice of all amateur collectors and hobbyists to our elected officials, government regulators, and public land managers.

Membership for individuals is $25 per year. Visit the ALAA Web site <www.amlands.org> for more information about pending legislation and membership.]

Displaying Your Treasures

by Clay Williams
El Dorado County Mineral & Gem Society
from AFMS Newsletter 12/2007

Whether a case contains mineral specimen(s) or the product of any other related activity, the challenge is to display them to best effect. The author, who is struggling with the mastery of this art and has been for a number of years through successes and occasional failures, was asked by several club VIPs to share some of his insights.

A good place to start is the color scheme. The colors of all supporting elements of the exhibit should be relatively muted, and for the best effect should all blend with each other and with what is being displayed. The author took labels in colors that were appealing and that also blended with his specimens, along with a junk piece of mineral that matched those specimens, to a fabric store where he placed each next to liner fabric candidates. The store clerk must have wondered what was going on. When the winning fabric was finally determined, the only other limitation was could enough be purchased to cover all liner foam board and any potential fabric-covered risers?

The word "muted" cannot be emphasized enough when talking about the case, the liners, the mounts and/or risers, and the labels! All should be less eye catching than the object or objects of display. Various earth tone colors are an excellent way to execute this difference. Avoid bright colors—especially red—at all cost! That the last, when on cars, draws inordinate scrutiny from police should be a hint why. The bright purple liner that I saw at a recent show should probably go in favor of something much less attention getting—after all, the intent is to get people to focus on what is being displayed, not on the background.

Labeling is important and indicates that the exhibitor has taken the trouble to correctly identify his or her treasure. In most cases such as with minerals and fossils, it should definitely include locality and name information. This should be more specific than say, "Emerald, South America." A better effort would state that emerald is a variety of beryl, and at the very least give the country and province, region, or district of origin. It also might be nice to know where a lapped piece of tiger's eye, topaz in a jewelry setting, or turquoise in a belt buckle came from. Competitive entries have certain requirements which vary for different types of displays. Check the AFMS rules and CFMS Supplementary Rules Information. It would also be a good idea to ask for

someone's advice if you are contemplating such a move.

Even though not really muted, black, depending on the shade of your liner, usually makes a fairly readable label. Readability is an important issue and is one reason why the author tested a sample label at the fabric store. Readability also limits your choice of fonts. Making that font bold and of a reasonable size helps, as it must be assumed that not everyone can see or read well.

The author's labels are composed on a PC and then printed onto transparencies using an ink-jet. Each transparency page is then cut into individual labels, which may be further trimmed to fit in the spaces between specimens. Gloves are used whenever handling the finished label, as it fingerprints easily. This not-often-seen procedure gets lots of attention from those more interested in the process than in the item or items being displayed.

Layout within the case is, of course, a personal thing. However, too much clutter looks very unprofessional and should be avoided. It diminishes the overall impression. Also to be avoided is the placement of lower quality material among stars; the former detracts from the latter. This is easier said than done however, especially if one is new to collecting and therefore has a limited choice of what to include.

Labels should be of consistent type and not look as though they were just thrown in. The liner or liners should cover the entire area visible through the glass and not be stained or dirty. Avoid giving the appearance that your effort was lacking.

It is a good idea to try putting your case together pre-show. Such a dry run will get the kinks out, if any. It is the time to make final changes and is great practice, especially if the exhibit is at all complex. Also this can uncover any omissions while something can still be done. Good luck!

Note: Clay Williams has credentials behind his advice. He has entered his displays and won in competition at California Federation of Mineralogical Societies (CFMS) shows. He won the 1st Place Advanced Minerals Trophy for his copper minerals case and was also awarded the coveted Hamel Minerals Trophy at the 2005 CFMS Show in Roseville, CA. In June, he received the 1st Place Masters Minerals Trophy for his copper mineral case at the 2007 CFMS Show in Lancaster, CA. Photo by Merryan O'Neill

AFMS—Having Fun—Junior Activities

Gemstone Lore & Legend
by Jim Brace-Thompson
AFMS Juniors Chair
from AFMS Newsletter 5/2007

Precious gemstones have captivated and beguiled humankind from our beginnings. We use them to denote special occasions (a diamond anniversary), and we each know our own birthstones (mine is amethyst). Various cultures, right up to today's New Age, have invested mystical powers in gems of different sorts, and

some famous gems even come with their own legends and curses. Here are activities to consider in introducing your junior members to gemstone lore and legend:

Hope Diamond

• **Anniversary stones**: Visit a jewelry store to get a list of precious gems for different anniversaries. Such lists are often divided between Traditional and Modern. For instance according to Traditional, you mark a third anniversary with a leather gift, while according to Modern, you give cut crystal. Gems and precious metals are used to mark various anniversaries and include crystal, silver, iron, copper, bronze, tin, pearls, gold, ivory, platinum, brass, opal, jade, ruby, sapphire, emerald, and diamond. Work with your juniors to construct a list for anniversaries from 1 to 100.

Mackay Emerald

• **Birthstones and the Zodiac**: Each month is marked by a birthstone, and as with anniversary stones, lists vary between Traditional and Modern. For instance, the Traditional March birthstone is bloodstone, but Modern is aquamarine. There are also lists of "Mystical" birthstones arranged according to the Zodiac rather than the traditional calendar. While a stone is sometimes the same (July has ruby according to Traditional, Modern, and Mystical lists), it is usually different (for instance, April has diamond according to Traditional and Modern, but opal according to Mystical). Have junior members learn about their own birthstones and see if they can find out what sort of mystical powers they supposedly possess. As with anniversary stones, a jewelry store is a good place to begin in assembling a list of birthstones.

Star of India

• **Fabled gemstones**: Some especially large and valuable gemstones have been lost, stolen, or vested with supernatural powers or curses. One of the most famous is the Hope Diamond, currently residing under heavy protection in the Smithsonian. According to legend, it was stolen from the eye of a Hindu idol, and various owners have suffered ignoble fates ever since—being torn apart by wolves, beheadings, suicide, even death by starvation! Have your juniors explore legends behind this and other fabled gems—the Pearl of Lao Tzu, the Koh-i-Noor (or Mountain of Light), the Mackay Emerald, the Queen's Opal, the Star of India, and others.

• **Gems in religion**: You'll find special mention of gems and minerals in the religious texts of the Bible, Koran, Torah, the Hindu faith, Buddhism, etc. For instance ruby, carnelian, onyx, lapis, and gold receive repeated mention. Have juniors explore reli-

gious texts for mention of gemstones and their significance.

• **Mystical minerals**: There are literally volumes of information on classical, medieval, aboriginal, and New Age beliefs about the properties of different gems and minerals. I visited a shop selling "healing stones," and they had no less than a dozen books on the subject. Assign a different stone to each of your juniors (for instance, a quartz crystal, a ruby, an amethyst, a bloodstone, etc.) and have each explore what legend and lore says about the mystical use of the assigned stones versus what contemporary science says. For instance, legend says wearing an emerald cures such ailments as a low I.Q. and poor eyesight, and while improving eyesight, it also allows the wearer to gaze into the future. (Roman Emperor Nero would wear emerald glasses when watching gladiator matches—perhaps all-the-better to predict the outcome?) Furthermore, emeralds are said to melt the eyes of any snake that gazes upon them. Sounds like a good science fair experiment to me!

Gemstone lore and legend is a wide-ranging, fascinating realm, a realm with a long history and ample opportunities for having fun!

Alibates Flint a Texas Treasure

by John L. McCraw, Jr.
from Rok Tok 1/2008

My wife was reared in Dumas, Moore County, Texas, and for the past 40-plus years I have made many Texas Panhandle trips. Always the high point of the trip was rock hunting along the Canadian River breaks. Charlotte has many childhood friends in this area, and they were most hospitable in allowing my family to rock hunt on their ranches. Finding Alibates flint was the objective of these hunts.

Alibates flint is also known as "agatized dolomite," "Alibates chert," and "Alibates agate." It is found in relatively localized spots, mostly in the Texas Panhandle near Lake Meredith, concentrated on the Moore-Potter county line along the Canadian River extending east to the Borger, Texas area. This area is noted on military maps of the War Between the States period as the "Agate Bluffs."

Alibates is pronounced *Al-uh-bates* and is a contraction of the name of a Texas cowhand, Allen or Allie Bates, whose dugout shelter was located on a dry creek—Allie Bates Creek that runs into the Canadian River. Alibates is a dolomite-based flint. Alibates may range from small inclusions in the dolomite to a complete replacement in large rocks.

The formation of alibates is not well understood. Dolomite, an Alibates base component, is a sedimentary carbonate rock and a mineral, both composed of calcium magnesium carbonate, CaMg $(CO_3)2$. Noted Amarillo geologist, C. Don Hughes, theorized regarding the formation of Alibates that "dolomite deposits were formed by the shallow Permain seas, uplifted, and sometime later underground waters laden with siliceous material seeped up through crevasses in the hard dolomite. By this process and over eons, the highly mineralized waters dissolved the dolomite and replaced it with an ultra-hard, richly colored rock mineral called flint."

Since Alibates flint is dolomite-based, it is a unique flint. Other flints have a limestone formation base. Dr. Hughes further notes that, "in no other place in the world has flint like Alibates been found." Because of Alibates flint's beauty, hardness, and its subjectivity to conchoidal fracturing leaving very sharp edges, Native Americans used this flint as source material for their tools and weapons. Alibates flint artifacts have been used as trade material and have been found in many areas throughout the United States in sites dating as early as 11,500 years ago.

I have collected Alibates in almost every color of the rainbow with bands and dendrites. Alibates rough takes a high polish, but larger pieces will have freeze cracks which must be worked out. Also in conjunction with Alibates, I have found a multicolor fossil wood. This fossil wood has been identified by **Scott Singleton, the fossil wood expert from Houston Gem & Mineral Club**, as Araucarioxylon from the Dockum formation of the Triassic period (180 MYBP). This is the same general age as Panhandle fossil wood which is a similar specie to that found in the Chinle formation in the Petrified Forest National Park in Northeastern Arizona.

Fossil wood found in conjunction with Alibates has the basic same colors as Alibates and will polish with some undercutting. I theorize that the secondary formation of Alibates and this wood fossilization were at approximately the same time—180 million years ago in the Triassic period.

It is suggested that on any Texas Panhandle trip that you make time to see the Alibates National Monument—northeast of Amarillo on State Hwy. 136 near Fritch, Texas. The monument is a poor example of Alibates deposits compared to a larger out-cropping that is under private ownership. Places to hunt Alibates are very hard to come by; most of the Alibates areas are located on private ranches or government parks. One ranch has a posted sign on the gate which reads, "Trespassers will be shot; if missed, will be prosecuted." I would not test these ranch owners.

However, there are several area rock shops with good selections of rough Alibates and fossil wood material at very fair prices. Two shops are located in Amarillo and one in Pampa. E-mail me for directions (cogmc@hotmail.com). Every true Texas rockhound needs a unique Texas treasure—an Alibates cab.

Walking on Stardust

from Achates 8\2007 via Cedar Valley Gems 12/2007

The Earth sweeps up several hundred tons of mass a day in the form of micrometeoroids or meteoritic dust. Some of these miniscule particles contain stardust that is older than our sun. As such they are unique archives of the earliest history of the universe, and scientists are diligently collecting them in the Arctic, Antarctic, Australia, the Sahara Desert, Greenland, etc. A lot of the space dust we walk on comes from the moon—ejecta from all the potshots that the moon has received. A lot of it is from disintegrated meteorites.

Late-Breaking Club News

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

On Location

Adventures of James Wark
HGMS Member
from Our News
(Local newspaper for Almeda, Fresno, and Arcola, TX area) 9/2007

How is a movie produced? It starts with a writer who writes a script. Then a production company must be found to front the cash to produce it. Major studios will send the script back unopened if they don't know the author. That way, they don't have to worry about the writer saying later that the studio stole the script from him.

The Man Who came Back was written by a friend of Eric Braddon. Eric called on a few of his friends to see if they wanted to play in a western. George Kennedy, Sean Young, Billy Zane, Peter Jason, and Armand Assante all said, "Yes." Mr. Zane even flew in from England to play Reese Paxton's lawyer. Reese was Eric's name in the movie.

Reese was the overseer of a group of ex-slaves. He is wrongly accused of hanging one of his friends. He is taken to a prison, but he escapes determined to seek revenge on the people who put him in jail. How does it end? Well, you will just have to wait until it is released in December to learn that.

Casting was done by Yankee Grant. A casting director reads the script and puts the actors who fit the look on film. Bea Rouse was the production coordinator. She kept the production running smoothly. Hats off to these ladies. They work 14–18 hours a day. Tremendous energy level. Keep up the good work, girls.

Chuck Walker was one of the producers. He had an Olympic boxing background and was charged with the task of bringing a big-name boxer to the set. Ken Norten answered the call. He played a grandfather who was an ex slave. It was a real pleasure to work with Mr. Norten.

For three weeks, the production was filmed in Fernland, an historical area in the Conroe area complete with Sam Houston's hunting lodge. Two other weeks were spent in Brackettville TX. Alamo Village is located there. It still looks like a town straight out of the 1800s, complete with a mission, chapel, saloon, and of course the Alamo.

Transportation: Actors need to be driven from the airport and to the set. Also included are the trailers where they stay when on location. We had an 18-wheeler that hauled around the trailers for the wardrobe. Remember—it was a period piece. Most of the actors did not have 1870s clothes. Construction had its own 14-ft. box truck just for driving around to all the lumber and material suppliers for building signs and coffins—and for pulling stuck vehicles out of the mud.

Sam Cable, Steve Bowen, and Chuck Walker formed an independent production company and decided to spend $1.5 million on the project. The movie trailer was shown at the Cannes Film Festival in France. We got a favorable response, Walker said. They

are now spending all their time in Hollywood editing. Can't wait to see the final product.

SCFMS President's Message

by Chuck Schuler
from SCFMS Newsletter 11-12/2007

The past six weeks have been a very hectic time for me, but out of it I observed a few interesting things. I have been to shows in the Federation and outside the Federation. The interesting thing I noticed at almost all the shows was the number of young new club members helping their club to have an outstanding show. For any club to succeed, it needs new members willing to accept different club assignments. Looks to me like there are some very solid clubs now and for the future. With the new members I see a new optimism and renewed energy from the older club members.

The holidays are upon us again. I hope everyone had a Happy Thanksgiving and is looking forward to a very Merry Christmas. Let's all keep in mind and in our prayers our sick and disabled friends, and especially our troops overseas. Looking forward to a bigger and better New Year.

SCFMS Safety Report

by Owen Martin, SCFMS Safety Chair
From the SCFMS Newsletter 11-12/2007
Oops, Something Bit Me in the Field, So What Do I Do Now?
Critter Bites and How To Keep Them from Getting Worse.

As anyone who has spent any time in the field can tell you, even the most innocent looking locales sometimes have hidden surprises for us—some good and some bad. Several years ago my wife went to a resort/spa in New Mexico. She said it was incredible until she got scabies from the linens...

On any given trip we have the potential to encounter annoying or dangerous critters: Fire ants, spiders, chiggers, mosquitoes, ticks, scorpions, sand fleas, bees (killer bees, wasps & hornets), snakes and even wild animals (and of course angry rednecks who want to know why you are on their hunting lease during deer season!). I'll include poison ivy, oak and sumac too.

Knowing the risks where you are going will help you prepare for your trip—long pants, boots, long-sleeved shirts, gloves, hats, insect repellent, etc. However when that ounce of prevention doesn't work, do you know what can help?

What follows is a list of recommendations that can be considered when handling different types of bites, stings, or exposures. This list is by no means all-inclusive, but it is designed to help you plan how to respond to bites, etc. that you may get in the field. Web sites like www.webmd.corn also offer guidance on treating these types of ailments.

Mosquitoes: Commonly known as the state bird of east Texas. There are dozens of

ointments that are sold for treating mosquito bites; however, I have found that the little round green tins of Burt's Bees are very effective for people (like my youngest daughter) who have extremely sensitive skin.

Chiggers: If I haven't been bitten by a chigger at least once a month, then I'm not getting in the field enough. In the last year we've started to use a spray called Ivy Dry. Just as it sounds, it is made to treat poison ivy, and we saw it do wonderfully on a large inflammation on one of my kids. I thought I would try it on my chigger bites. Works really well there, too, and I found that if I spray my ankles and belt line immediately after cleaning myself up from the field, that it even works as a preventive measure. Apparently I missed one though after last Saturday's trip to Bryan, TX since I am scratching and typing at the same time. Ivy Dry comes in a brown spray bottle, roughly 5 ounces, and it can usually be found at CVS or Walgreens.

Fire ants, scorpions, bees, and spiders: Does anyone remember in the movie *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* that the father would always spray Windex on everything? Well there is a method to that madness. I prefer to use a **10:1** diluted water to bleach solution compress on my bites, but I've heard both will work pretty well. Windex uses ammonia. In effect these bites are in the surface layer of the skin, so a compress of the diluted bleach solution soaks into the surface layer of skin and breaks down the enzymes of the poisons. I have used this time and again on fire ant bites for the kids. Of course, use caution when using bleach as it will "bleach" anything you spill it on while treating the bites. I recommend washing the area off with clean water after the compress has been applied for 10 minutes or so. A HOT compress will also work similarly to break down the poison enzymes and is more effective for deeper stings. It's also a good option if you are allergic to bleach.

With that being said, in the case of a bite from an obviously poisonous spider like a black widow or brown recluse, **seek immediate medical attention**. Applying a compress quickly may significantly mitigate the effects of the bite.

Additionally, I would recommend that everyone pack Benadryl or a similar antihistamine in their field packs. Even for those of us who are not allergic to bee or ant stings, in the case of a multiple bite situation there is always an increased chance of anaphylactic shock. An immediate dose of the antihistamine can nip it in the bud.

In the case of a large bee attack, run until you are out of the attack zone, then 911 should always be called immediately and antihistamine should be given to the victim. It has been suggested in the past that jumping into water will help. This is not likely unless you are jumping into a raging current that rapidly removes you from the attack zone. Bees have been known to stay over the water waiting for you to come up for air. Distance or separation is the key to getting away.

Snake bites and animal attacks: This can be a completely different and violent circumstance when compared to most insect bites. Anything you can do to get away from an aggressive animal must be done. This does not necessarily mean that you should always immediately run since that can trigger an aggressive response. This situation highlights that in most circumstances, you should never go into the field

without a buddy. Panic can also be a worse enemy than the animal. If attacked, call 911 or other emergency services ASAP!

Snake bites typically should be treated in two fashions. In order for the treatments to be made, you will need the following in your field packs: a venom removal kit and Ace bandages.

Venom removal kits can be found at outdoor supply stores and some pharmacies. Essentially they are two-pronged plastic syringes inserted into the bite wounds and then used to suck out as much venom as possible.

Secondly, if possible a "pressure wrap" should be applied. This is called Pressure immobilization (PI), and it means applying a wide, firmly wrapped Ace bandage(s) to the bitten limb in a similar fashion to how you would wrap a sprain. This is not a tight arterial tourniquet and should not occlude or limit blood flow. Start below the bite and wrap upward toward the torso. The wrapped limb is then splinted and kept below the heart. Application in this fashion lessens the amount of poison absorbed into and transported throughout the body.

Emergency response personnel should be contacted prior to moving someone in this case. On average there are only 4 or 5 snake bite fatalities per year in the U.S. Large snakes are more likely to dry bite than not—this is their way of firing a shotgun in the air to scare you off. Younger snakes are actually more likely to use venom.

With respect to animal attacks, there are no guarantees on how to prevent them other than to keep distance between you and them. Getting chased up a tree by a feral hog may seem like a big deal at the time, but as long as you aren't bitten, you'll probably be just fine. Just remember that those tusks, even on a little hog, are like scissors and can open up nasty wounds. As we learn in basic first aid, applying direct pressure to such wounds is the best way to stop the bleeding. Bites from dogs, wild cats, raccoons, opossums, etc. should be treated as potentially infected with rabies. Seek medical attention immediately even for minor bites.

To summarize, know where you are going and what the likely risks are. Prepare accordingly, take a buddy, and make sure you know how to contact emergency services.

Finally, in the case of the angry redneck, apologize profusely and offer to buy them a case of beer. No other ointment should be necessary.

Free Online Gemology Course

(Author's name not given)
via Rockhound Rambling 7/2007, Salinas Valley Rock and Gem Club Newsletter 7-8/2007, and Breccia 11/2007

If you're interested in learning about gemology from a scientific (rather than a commercial or artistic) viewpoint, then you might enjoy this Web site. Included there is a series of lessons developed by Barbara Smigel, PhD, GG, and Emeritus Professor at the College of Southern Nevada. You don't need to register to use the materials contained on the site; however you can opt to register and take the full

distance learning, online course for college credit. Web Lectures include the following lessons:

Lesson 1: Basic Terms
Lesson 2: Naming and Measuring Gems
Lesson 3: Physical Properties of Gems
Lesson 4: Optical Properties of Gems
Lesson 5: Magnification and What it Reveals
Lesson 6: Optical Phenomena in Gemstones
Lesson 7: Gem Fashioning
Lesson 8: Gem Enhancement
Lesson 9: Synthetics and Simulants
Lesson 10: Gem Formation

Also included on the site are Web Essays - one-topic, pictorial essays that enrich the Web lecture for each lesson and include information on specific rocks and minerals. You can follow a link to "Ask the Teacher" specific questions and actually receive an answer in response. There's also an audio pronunciation guide, an A-Z Survey of Gemstones downloadable as a PowerPoint presentation, and suggested textbooks and reading assignments if you're interested in learning more. Simply visit http://www.bwsmigel.info/ Check it out!

Tips & Hints

Paint It Red! *from The Petrified Digest, via others, and Arrowhead News 12/2007.* To identify and grind out pits in a cabochon, spray the rough cab with red enamel from an aerosol can, then grind the paint off with a light touch. Pits and lines will stand out as bright red spots, making it unnecessary to wipe the cab to see if the pits are out. This is especially helpful when grinding free-form cabs from fire agate.

Working Out a Flat Area on a Cab: *from Petrified Log, others, via Roadrunner 1/2008.* We all know this hint, but maybe we've forgotten to put it into practice. To work out a flat area in the center of a cabochon mark the pre-form with intersecting lines forming a cross at the center. When you have ground and shaped the stone to its proper curve, the cross will have disappeared and the flat spot along with it. (Sounds easy since flat spots are the curse of making a good cabochon.)

Krishna & Apurna

Photos Taken at the December 8, 2007 Christmas Party

Photos by Steve Blyskal

Tim & Denise Bicknell

Fred Brueckner

Sam Altman with grandson Jonathan Maislin

Cheryl & Sam Norwood

Margo & Bill Bedman

Kathy Konkel & Wayne Barnett

Kathy Konkel presents HGMS with a defibrillator from the Lapidary Section and a donor.

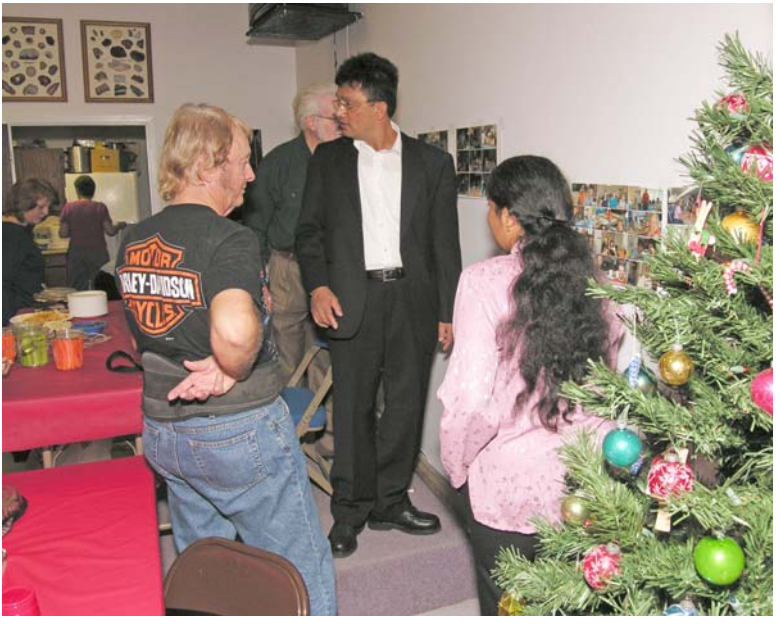
Art Smith presents Matt Dillon with a plaque from the HGMS in appreciation of his service as 2007 HGMS President.

Let the feast begin!

Matt Dillon (right), 2007 HGMS President, presents Terry Proctor, 2008 HGMS President, with the gavel to start his year off right.


PEARLS


EXIT


HARLEY-DAVIDSON

ShowTime 2008

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
February 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
March 1-2	Robstown, TX (Corpus Christi)	Gulf Coast Gem & Mineral Society Richard M. Borchard Regional Fairgrounds 1213 Terry Shamsie Blvd U.S. Hwy. 77 & Rte. 44 Jerold Simpson (361) 851-8788
March 1-2	Big Spring, TX	Big Spring Prospector Club Howard Co. Fair Barn, behind Rodeo Arena Lola Lamb, (432) 263-3340 rockhound11@yahoo.com
April 12-13	Abilene, TX	Central Texas Gem & Mineral Society Abilene civic Center, N. 6th & Pine Sallie Lightfoot; slightfoot@aol.com (325) 692-4642 www.txol.net/rockclub
May 3-4	Lubbock, TX	Lubbock Gem & Mineral Society Lubbock Civic Center, 1501 Mac Davis Ln. Archie Scott (806) 894-1584 Ed Ries (806) 799-2722
September 26-28	Humble, TX (Houston)	Houston Gem & Mineral Society hosting the 2008 AFMS and SCFMS Shows Humble Civic Center, 8233 Will Clayton Pkwy. 5 miles east of Bush Intercontinental Airport 1 mile east of Hwy. 59; Scott Singleton fossilwood@comcast.net; www.hgms.org

2008		FEBRUARY				2008
Sun	**Mon**	**Tue**	**Wed**	**Thu**	**Fri**	**Sat**
					1	2 **10–12** Youth Section **10–5** Shop Open
3	4	5 **7:30** Board Meeting	6 **7:30** Mineral Section	7	8	9 **10–5** Shop Open
10	11 **1:00 p.m.** Day Light Section	12 **7:30** Show Committee	13 **7:30** Faceting Section	14 Valentine's Day	15	16 **10–12** Youth Section **10–5** Shop Open **1:30** Beading Group
17	18 **7:30** Lapidary Section	19 7:30 Paleo Section	20 **7:30** Mineral Section	21	22	23 **10–5** Shop Open
24	25	26 **7:30** General Meeting	27	28	29	

2008		MARCH				2008
Sun	**Mon**	**Tue**	**Wed**	**Thu**	**Fri**	**Sat**
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23 / 30	24 / 31	25 **7:30** General Meeting	26	27	28	29 **10–5** Shop Open

The BACKBENDER'S GAZETTE

The Newsletter of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society

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(281) 530-0942

SCFMS
1998 - 1st (Large)
2000 - 1st (Large)
2003 - 1st (Large)
2005 - 1st (Large)
2006 - 1st (Large)
2007 - 1st (Large)

AFMS
1998 - 2nd (Large)
2004 - 3rd (Large)
2007 - 1st (Large)

DATED MATERIAL - PLEASE DO NOT DELAY !