



The **BACKBENDER'S GAZETTE**

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

Volume XXXIX - No. 6

June 2008



President's Message

*by Terrell William "Terry" Proctor
2008 HGMS President*

Can it be June already? Goodness how time flies when you are having fun. Good things have been happening at HGMS. My problem is that I have to spend so much time now on writing, planning, and making meetings that it is hampering my ability to go on field trips.

Have you ever thought about the fact that there are not many organizations that you can join, spend so little money, get so much in benefits, have so much fun, and have such good friendships over the years, as you do at Houston Gem & Mineral Society? Probably few of you play golf, or you wouldn't have time to be here. Have you talked with your golf friends about what they pay for clubs, green fees, clothing, tournaments, and on and on? Some of you fish, but if you have a real fishing buddy, talk with that person about how much time and money they spent on a boat, motor, trailer, fuel, licenses, gear (lots of it). If you have a friend who goes to the opera, symphony, plays, trips to New York and elsewhere to see live theater, ask that friend how much they spend on tickets, transportation, accommodations, food, and financial support of these groups.



Continued on page 4

May 27, 2008 General Meeting Program

David P. Wilbur: Joel Bartsch was to be our speaker but he had to cancel, and he assisted by providing Mr. Wilbur for our program. Mr. Wilbur has been in rockhounding for 61 years, having been a hobbyist and a dealer at times, and he is now retired—somewhat. Mr. Wilbur lives in Tuscon, Arizona, but is assisting Joel Bartsch and the Houston Museum of Natural Science in a new lapidary and mineral display and program (Geopalooza) this summer, and he is also assisting in part of the expanded permanent mineral display at the HMNS. He will tell us how he has

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Every article published in the BBG is edited for grammar and content. No flaming is allowed.

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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 Web site address is <http://www.hgms.org>.

President's Message continued from page 1

Have a friend who is a sports fan, huh? Wow. Ask them what they spend on tickets for the family to one game, for fan gear, for food at games, how much time they spend glued to a TV watching grown-ups play and sometimes hurt each other—unintentionally or otherwise.

What do these folks get out of their avocation? Did you ever see a lady wearing a golf tee for a necklace? Ever see someone bring a song home from the symphony? Or bring home anything except a parking receipt from a ball game? Okay, so your friend brought home a crappie and actually fried it. The cost of the fish turned out to be only \$229.00 pound.

But you—if you are in lapidary or faceting, chances are you have jewelry you made yourself and paid only a few dollars per hour to use FREE equipment in your shop to make it or them (you may well have a jewelry box full). If you are in mineral or paleo, chances are you have some great minerals or fossils at home, either on display or actually going up in value year after year as your nature's treasure grows in value as many minerals and fossils do. Have you ever gone to an HGMS Show in the fall and recognized something just like what you purchased some years before. Chances are, the price is now higher and the item is rarer.

The opera may send you a fancy monthly publication along with a solicitation for support. But are the articles in that publication written by your own members, with things of REAL value to you in enjoying your avocation? Please don't get me wrong. I like most operas, I love the symphony, I have seen many plays (even acted in some and been on national TV. I have written several plays, one of which was produced at the Country Playhouse a few years back. I have even written some songs, one of which was performed twice at the Great Caruso restaurant before it burned some years back.) I really enjoy these other avocations. However, there is no other place where I can spend so little, participate personally so much, have so much equipment available, have lots of knowledgeable people to educate me, have so much fun, get out in an outdoor healthy atmosphere away of crowds, and make such good, long-lasting real friendships as at Houston Gem and Mineral Society.

One thing I brought up at the Board of Directors Meeting on May 6 was the matter of Life Memberships. You can read the Board Minutes where I mentioned this, but I want to suggest to my fellow Life Members, whether you are a paid Life Member like I am, or an Honorary Life Member as a number of you are. Life Members are no longer obligated to pay any annual membership dues. That seems wonderful in any organization. We are free, we can receive the benefits of HGMS and not pay a cent more—not even the approximately \$15.00 per year that HGMS pays to get this copy of the Backbender's Gazette to each of us twelve months of the year.

I reviewed how long I have been a Life Member and compared that with the annual dues I have saved, then reflected upon how much I annually receive in benefits from HGMS. That was when I decided that in fairness, I needed to send in a voluntary

additional payment to my Club for what I continue to receive without owing anything. This is not required, and no one is going to call a Life Member up and say, "Send in some money." However I know I am not the only Life Member who appreciates what I receive from HGMS, and so I ask other Life Members to think about this. The HGMS membership dues have not gone up in about eight years. Membership dues alone do not come close to paying what it costs a year to run HGMS. Most members do not know this.

HGMS uses the net income from the Show plus funds from classes, auctions, and sales to supplement membership dues in order to stay in the black.

If you believe that your membership in HGMS is benefiting you, and you realize that compared with almost any other avocation, we are getting by on the cheap for the fun and fellowship we receive, consider a voluntary donation.

Your Board of Directors is currently examining the sizeable increase in expenses that has occurred over the past eight years, and they are determining how much our dues intake is falling behind in handling our expenses. Their report will propose how much our dues need to increase, and the result will be brought to the membership later this year at a General Meeting.

I also have appointed a Facilities Committee to look into the needs of the Club for meeting space, parking, shop facilities, classroom facilities, and other physical needs of our Club. We may need no change, or we may need a new larger location, or we may need to acquire additional space right next to us, which apparently is available. With real estate values down somewhat, it would seem that if we need additional physical facilities, the time is ripe to acquire this before real estate prices start an upward trend again.

The goal of the Board of Directors is to keep the expense of being a member of HGMS to a minimum while keeping HGMS in the black. However after eight years of increasing expenses, it is likely that a small increase in dues in 2009 should be expected. If we acquire additional space, we need to know that we have been acquiring a larger membership, which in 2007 exceeded 600 and this year should grow beyond that. I know of about five or six former members who have or plan to rejoin HGMS, and at each meeting we seem to have a brand new member or two. I have learned over the years with various organizations that they either grow or decline. Organizations that become static do not last. So HGMS and its members will ultimately vote on the way you want our Club to go.

General Meeting Programs continued from page 1

spent decades in the mineral specimen hobby (and has collected MANY marvelous specimens), and after retiring he developed extensive lapidary interests. He will also tell us about his current connection with the HMNS in these new exhibits and program. He brought in six tons of fluorescent minerals to HMNS for their Geopalooza exhibit.

June 24 Program: To be announced

Those Strange Parallel Grooves Again

by Art Smith

Member of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society

artsmithite@msn.com

Smith, Roberts, and Bicknell (2007) described the unusual parallel grooves found on microscopic zircon crystals partly included in biotite that possibly formed as a result of both minerals crystallizing simultaneously. Those specimens are from the Badu Hill granitic pegmatite with some associated rare earth minerals. I have observed similar patterns to these, but no recollections could be made on when or on which minerals they were observed. However, now another mineral with them can be described that is also from a granitic pegmatite.



In August, 2007 Sam and Ann Koster, owners of Columbia Trading Company, made a buying trip to Brazil, and when the specimens obtained from the trip were viewed some time after that, a 10 by 5.5 by 4 cm black schorl crystal from Minas Gerais was of interest to me. The crystal is slightly flattened on one side that is parallel to the c-axis. Although more than half of this crystal shows a typical normal crystal development and with distinct hemimorphic terminations, the “back side” that is parallel to the c-axis has a parallel groove development that is remarkably similar to the Badu Hill zircons that

formed partly with that side included in biotite. There is no trace of any mica on the schorl specimen, but there is no doubt that both minerals, though considerably different in size, may have had a similar origin.

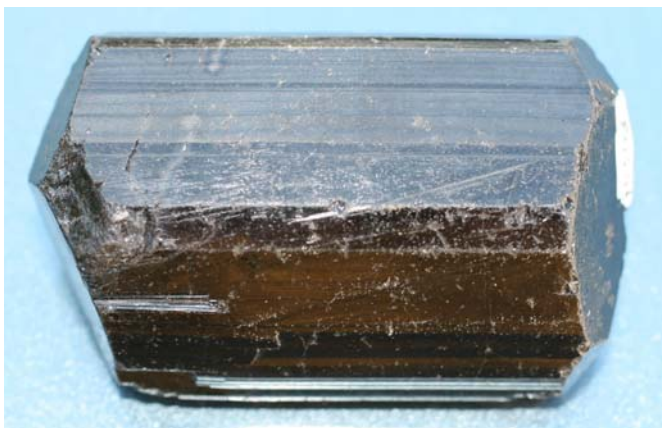


Figure 1: Schorl crystal, 8 cm long on normal face.
Minas Gerais, Brazil.

One noted difference is that the smallest and most raised point on the previously included part of the zircon crystals are at or very near the center of the crystal face on the side when this grooved surface is either perpendicular or parallel to the c-axis. However, on this schorl crystal with the grooved face parallel to the c-axis, this point is 6 cm from one end of the crystal and 4 cm from the other end of the crystal. On the other two sides, this point is 2.5 cm from one side of the crystal and 3.5 cm from the



Figure 2: Schorl showing parallel grooves on the side that was probably embedded in some kind of mica. Minas Gerais, Brazil.

other side of the crystal, and so is a bit asymmetrical. The 6 cm distance indicates that the crystal grew 2 cm more in this direction than the other. This would tend to indicate that doubly terminated schorl crystals do not necessarily grow equally in both directions along the c-axis. Bi-colored elbaite crystals often

are color zoned along the c-axis indicating that the crystal grew more in one direction than the other. If one termination is flat or the crystal is attached, the direction of growth is in the other direction. So black, opaque, doubly terminated schorl crystals that are hemimorphic but have similar terminations can also grow more in one direction than the other. However, it is not always apparent without any color zoning.

Reference:

Smith, A.E., F. Roberts, and D. Bicknell 2007. Badu Hill pegmatite microcline-biotite sandwiches. *Mineral News* 23(9):1, 3.

June 4 Is Early Deadline for July BBG Articles

by Phyllis George
HGMS Editor

The June deadline for the July BBG needs to be moved earlier by one week. **It will be June 4.**

Why? Well my daughter and son-in-law have invited me to go on a week's vacation with them. It starts on the day I would normally start working to put the BBG together, and we'll be gone all the next week. Since telling them that I can't go is NOT an option, I can either do the BBG one week early, or I can do it two weeks late—in which case you won't get it until sometime in July. Didn't think you'd like that last option, so one week early it is.

The new deadline is June 4. This deadline change occurs in June only. The other months are not affected. If you are planning an article for the July BBG, be sure to mark June 4 on your calendar as the deadline for getting it to me.

I'll be thinking about you all while I'm on vacation. :o)

Christopher Garvie Receives National Recognition

Katherine Palmer Award Presented by

The Paleontological Research Institute

by Terry Brawner

Member of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society

The Paleontological Research Institute presented the Katherine Palmer Award to Christopher Garvie at the April 2008 Mid-America Paleontological Society's Exposition in Macomb, Illinois. The Katherine Palmer Award is presented annually to a nonprofessional in recognition of their significant contribution to the science of paleontology.

This is the second award Chris has received within the last year. In July 2007, he received the Strimple Award from the Paleontological Society. This was a well-deserved recognition for his significant contributions to the paleontology of the Paleogene of the western Gulf Coast.

Documentation of the paleontology of the western Gulf Coast was mainly described during the 1930s, 40s and 50s by Gilbert Harris, Julia Gardner, and Katherine Palmer as faunal studies of invertebrate macrofossils. Henryk Stenzel in the 1950s carried out detailed mapping and stratigraphy as well as faunal studies.

Chris Garvie, through his intensive systematic documentation of the paleogene macro-invertebrate fauna, is filling the gaps of the paleontological record and continuing the task of his predecessors. His work helps us to understand the paleontology and stratigraphy of the Paleogene of Texas Gulf Coast. His work includes monographs on the fauna of the Early Eocene Relaw Formation and on Eocene Pteropods.

Chris has amassed a collection of 160,000 curated and identified specimens plus another 20,000 waiting identification. His collection is not only from the western Gulf Coast, but it also contains comparative material from the eastern Gulf and Paris Basin. He has generously donated a large collection of Eocene fossils to the British Museum of Natural History. Chris's willingness to share his knowledge has made him the leading resource person for local paleontology and stratigraphy. Researchers seek out his assistance.

Well done Chris, we're very proud of you.

Resource:

"Presentation of the Harrel L. Strimple Award of the Paleontological Society to Christopher L. Garvie"; The Journal of Paleontology, Vol 81, No 4, July 2007, pp. 818-820.

**Clements High School Science Olympiad Team
Again Going to National Competition**

E-mail from Julia Wong

Thanking Steve Blyskal, Neal Immega, and Scott Singleton

From: Julia Wong [mailto:juliawong@yahoo.com]

Sent: Wednesday, April 30, 2008 12:38 AM

To: Steve Blyskal; Neal Immega; Scott Singleton

Subject: Washington, DC Bound!

Dear Mr. Blyskal, Mr. Immega, and Mr. Singleton,

How are you? We competed in the Texas Science Olympiad at A&M this past weekend and qualified for the national competition again! Our team placed second overall and will represent Texas with the first-place team at the National Science Olympiad in Washington, DC during the weekend of May 30–31. This is the fourth year Clements High School has taken part in Science Olympiad and the second time we are advancing to the national competition!

Thank you so much again for helping us with the “Rocks and Minerals” event! We placed eighth and hope to prepare better for National Science Olympiad. We greatly appreciate HGMS’s help and will keep you updated on our progress. Thank you very much for your time and generosity!

Texas Science Olympiad Web site:

<http://outreach.science.tamu.edu/scienceolympiad.asp>

National Science Olympiad Web site:

<http://scienceolympiad.gwu.edu/>

Sincerely,
Julia Wong

HGMS Show Is Mentioned in *Rock & Gem* Magazine

Excerpt from “On the Rocks” Column

by Bob Jones

from May 2008 Rock & Gem

Submitted by Scott Singleton

Permission to reprint granted by Bob Jones

Another important show will be held in Texas September 25–28, 2008. This worthy event is the joint American Federation and South Central Federation Show in Humble, near Houston. This is a show everyone should attend. The varied exhibits include wonderful minerals, choice lapidary pieces, fossils, and collections in many competition categories.

I always enjoy the competitive exhibits, as they give me a window into what mineral collectors favor and what is being produced by America’s great amateur lapidaries. Some of the finest objets d’art and personal jewelry have been created and exhibited at Federation Shows by amateurs like you...

Faceting Seminar—Inaugural Session

by Pat Gannon-Hildbold

Sunday April 27 was a good day to be a faceter and a great day to take advantage of the faceting workshop! There were 14 machines of various manufacture whirring away in the meeting room including the personal machines that several club members brought so they could join in the fun. Of the people cutting, four were novices while the rest had varying degrees of experience. Three of our group were first-time cutters, and under the direction of Wayne Barnett they completed the pavilions of their quartz stones. One person was cutting for just the second time, and she had the thrill of finishing her first stone!

The general consensus of those attending the workshop was that it was a great success and one which we will hopefully be repeating again in the near future. It was the perfect opportunity to share knowledge and experience, have an opportunity to try out a different



machine, or just spend an afternoon with people who share the same obsession.

You don't have to be a member of the Faceting Section to join in the fun of these special seminars. The only cost is \$10 for shop fees. You don't even need a dopped stone or faceting diagram; the Faceting Section has plenty of both available free of charge. Just let us know, and we'll be happy to provide you with one for our next gathering. When we schedule this again we hope to give plenty of advance notice, but due to the limited number of machines, you will need to get your name in early. Unfortunately, this time we had to turn people away because we just didn't have enough machines.

For those who didn't complete their stones on Sunday or those who had to be turned away, you will have another couple of chances to try your hand. Our regular Faceting Section meetings for both May 14 and June 11 are scheduled to be hands-on, giving members the opportunity to work on their three show stones. If you weren't able to attend last Sunday, you may want to think about attending one of these two meetings. I hope to come in straight from work which should put me at the Club about 5 p.m. or so, and this would give you a little extra time to sparkle up your work-in-progress.

I want to thank Wayne Barnett for his patience and expertise in taking the challenge to head up this workshop. I'd also like to thank Kathy Konkel for getting the event organized, along with her generosity of sharing her machine with me. And a special thanks to all the other attendees who turned this into a social event by answering the stray question, sharing experiences and materials, or by sticking around to assist with the break down at the end of the evening. We'll have to do this again soon!

Bad or Rejected E-mail Addresses

by Neal Immega

As you may know, I send out e-mail notices to club activities all the time. Some of our members have changed their addresses or have deliberately blocked mail coming from me. If you would contact me and let me know, I will get you back on the list or take you off of it! Please let me know at n-immega@swbell.net (substitute @ for **at**)

Amos,	Jeffery	Kidwell,	Al
Anderson,	John	Lenssen,	Charlotte
Barreto,	Elizabeth	Lester,	Patricia
Bary,	David & Susan	Maddigan,	Pam
Bierman,	Daniel & Mary	Maxwell,	Michelle
Campbell,	Jerdahn	Melancon,	Joseph & Rose
Cates,	Lindsay	Metzger,	Bob
Chapman,	Cathy	Murdoch,	Veronica
Clapp,	David & Marsha	Nzewi,	Temi
Clarkson & Van Yoder,	Sandra	Oliver,	Bridget
DeHart,	Thomas	Pote,	Jerry
Dickerson,	Stephanie	Prentice,	Jordan & Jadyn
Feeney,	Tara	Rigo & Canh D Dang,	Paula A
Foster,	Stephen	Schaer,	Carl & Liz
Grayson,	Wanda	Skubol,	Gary & Robyn
Hardy,	Sandra	Smith,	Celeste
Haussman,	Greg & Amy	Wunderlick,	Philip & Theresa
Hawkins,	R A	Young,	Sharon & Don
Hoffman,	Elizabeth	Zeller,	Richard & Myriam
Hudnall,	Patrick	Zielinska,	Barbara
Jack,	Cathi		
Jennings,	Bet & Chase		
Kevern,	Phillip & Emily		

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.

Wire Wrapping Classes

by Charlie Fredregill

I will be teaching wire wrapping classes during the next several months. If you are interested in taking one of the classes, call me at 713-729-0449 or e-mail me at cfred@hal-pc.org.

A wire wrapping class is starting the first Sunday in June, but that one may be filled. Seven people have expressed interest in that date. However if you are interested also, be sure to give me a call. Someone may have cancelled.

HGMS MANDATORY SALE & AUCTION PROCEDURE

To ensure fairness in all HGMS Sales and Auctions by giving adequate notice to all HGMS Members prior to a sale or auction and to provide for uniformity, the following mandatory rules have been established. *These rules do not apply to routine silent auctions at General Membership Meetings or to Section Sales and Auctions.*

NOTICES shall contain details about the sale or auction, including whether it is a SALE, a LIVE AUCTION or a SILENT AUCTION, what is being sold or auctioned, and if applicable, the source of the material or item(s) being sold or auctioned.

1. NOTICE shall be published in the Backbender's Gazette, and the sale or auction shall not take place until at least the 16th day of the month named on the issue of the Backbender's Gazette displaying the notice.
2. NOTICE shall be written on the club blackboard at least as soon as the notice appears in the Backbender's Gazette, with a notation not to erase the NOTICE until after the sale.
3. NOTICE shall be given to the webmaster to publish the information on the HGMS Web site at the same time that the notice is provided to the Backbender's Gazette.
4. NOTICE shall be provided to the person who sends out the e-mail notices to HGMS members at the same time that the notice is provided to the Backbender's Gazette.

In Our Library

by Art Smith, Librarian

Not a lot new in the Library. I am adding a copy of *American Mineral Treasures* that is a result of the special exhibit on important mineral localities in the United States in the last 50 years—the theme of the Tucson Mineral Society in the Convention Hall this year.

The locations chosen and those not chosen will spark debates for years, but I have read the book from cover to cover, and I am well pleased with the effort that went into it. Most of the locations are authored by the people most familiar with them, and some personal narratives make the write up even more interesting. Unfortunately the Ouachita Mountain quartz deposits are called “the Hot Springs quartz deposits”—the main belt of deposits goes north of Hot Springs and not through it. Plus the authors are not as familiar with it as many of us are.

Though the pictures selected are good and I cannot complain since two of my specimens are included, they do not typically show the various forms that are seen. Most shown are Japan Law twins that possibly are represented by less than 200 specimens, and there are no photos of the Pike county “Herkimer-like” crystals, the Jeffrey quarry quartz haystacks, a good photo of chlorite included phantom crystals, or even a good doubly terminated crystal. Despite these shortcomings, it does not seriously detract from the book, and most people probably will not miss them. Copies are available from the Mineralogical Record and www.Lithographie.org. Price is \$85 plus postage and well worth it.

Thanks to all who have put stuff on the table in the library. In many cases your note about it is not written or is lost, but these things will be added to the library.

Mineral Section

by Steve Blyskal, Chairperson & Dean Lagerwall, Assistant Chairperson

Mineral Section meetings occur on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month from September (3rd Wednesday only) through June (1st Wednesday only).

Upcoming Meeting Topics

June 4: Annual Swap & Sell: For the last meeting before our summer hiatus, we will be setting up tables in the clubhouse and having a social/swap/sell event. Come and improve your collection and enjoy the fellowship of other like-minded collectors. Refreshments will be provided.

We will meet again in September in preparation for the September HGMS show.

Any special meetings during the summer will be announced via the club e-mail.

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

Day Light Section

by Frances Arrighi

Twelve Members attended the 14 April, 2008 meeting of the Day Light Section.

We made agate doublets. Moss or plume agate was sliced 2- or 3-mm thick. The quartz for the agate doublet should be about 3/16 inch thick and for the opal doublet/triplet about 1/8 inch thick maximum. The agate was glued (using 330 jewelers epoxy) to synthetic optical quartz. The surfaces to be glued of both the agate and quartz were ground smooth by using a figure eight motion and by using water-moistened 600 mesh grit on a glass plate. It helps to grid these agate and quartz surfaces with a brass or aluminum scribe or an archival pen. When the grid marks are ground off, the surfaces should be smooth and flat. The two pieces are washed thoroughly and dried. Epoxy is spread on both surfaces, and the pieces are put together. Search for air bubbles, and remove any present with a pencil eraser or any other non-marring instrument by forcing them out the edge. Let dry overnight. The piece is now ready for forming the dome, polishing the back, and making it into jewelry.

This program was quite successful, and many people contributed to its success. First of all, Bill Cox contributed opal, slabs of quartz, and some moss or plume agate. Most of this will be used for the May meeting. Mary Ann Mitscherling donated a big hunk of moss or plume agate from which Brian Honsinger cut 2–3 mm slabs. Tom Wright cut the glass plates from glass that was given to us. Frances Arrighi purchased the synthetic optical quartz from Dean Lagerwall. Neal Immega cut the slabs from this. We thank all these members for help in making the meeting a success, and we thank Tom Wright for conducting the meeting.

In May we will begin preparations for our patina work. Val Link will not be with us in June as he will be conducting a workshop in California. He will be with us in July, August, and September. For the patina work, everyone will need at least three pieces of 3x1-inch 22-gauge copper and three pieces of 3x1-inch of 22-gauge brass. We will begin preparing these at the June meeting.

A Lapidary Lament

from The Rock Collector 2/2008 via The Rockpile 3/2008

With extra care, I chose the stone;
I sawed, preformed and dopped it.
Next I sanded it to mirror sheen,
And then, by dang, I dropped it!

Paleo Section Report

by Lexy Bieniek
2008 Paleo Chair

Where, OH Where has Paleo gone—sing this to the tune of Where, Oh Where Has my little dog gone. Well, let's forget about singing and talk about Paleo and where they have been for the last few months.

In February David Temple from the Houston Museum of Natural Science led us on a tour of the Dimetrodon diggings in Seymour.



March was the most exciting month of the year. Ann Molineux spoke to the group about the exciting happenings at the Natural Science Center of Texas. Then the group set off for a long field trip to Brownwood, Texas. Our trek through time began with a Cretaceous day.

Caravanning from Brownwood to Goldthwaite, we collected from a quarry behind the John Deere dealership. We harvested ammonite pieces, clam casts, several varieties of urchins, and the omnipresent oysters common to the Texas Cretaceous. Then we hopped back in our cars and headed for the church of the urch; well, the church actually has another name, but I forgot to write it down. The nickname is a natural because the ground is literally covered with urchins. There was a remnant of an oyster reef, but the overall paleo fossil population was sea urchins. We filled buckets and bags with urchins. Neal Immega kept saying, "Collect a few for our school collections."

Back in the cars, we stopped at just about every road cut on the way back to Brownwood. At the last Cretaceous stop one of our youthful members, Dallas Higgs, found a set of crusher shark teeth.

The next day we set out for the Pennsylvanian. We stopped at one of Irene Offeman's old sites. The Parks and Wildlife Department used to raise fish at this place, but nothing remains of the "old" days. Grass, weeds, and trees now cover the area, but this didn't keep us from finding fossils. The area was rich in the primitive gastropods strapolarus and the bellerophontids, as well as a conularid or two. Then back down the road, and we stopped at one site where there are thousands of prickly urchin spines and very little of anything else. We stopped by the roadside and harvested a few buckets of horn coral.

Then off to Wilson's Clay pit. Wilson's is a marvelous paleontological menagerie. Fossils in the clay pit range from multitudes of crinoid stems and pieces, to paleo shark's teeth, to trilobites. This year we added a new species to the list. We found pieces of fossilized shark cartilage. We scoured the hill where the initial piece was found and filled a bucket with pieces. Pieces ranged from a possible part of the skull to a magnificent piece of cartilage with a trilobite fossilized to it. Unfortunately the

piece with the trilobite disappeared. Bob Bakker confirmed the identification of fossilized shark cartilage and voiced the speculation that the one piece might be part of the skull. Another unusual finding at the clay pit was a piece of nautiloid or ammonoid aperture called an aptychus found by Krishna Karki. This identification has yet to be confirmed, but it matches the pictures that were found in books and on the Internet. The biggest hangup is that these structures are more commonly found in Mesozoic rocks.

Tully Hair from Brownwood brought his fossils over and gave us a great look at a variety of very large fossils that can be found in Brown County. Most of us have only seen large-horn coral come out of Brown County, but Tully has lived in Brown County all of his life and has many fossils that are large, and many more that are unique.

The last site of the trip was to the spillway. There was only one problem. Rain! While the spillway was not really running, the formation was soaked, and it was too wet to go after the treasured archeocydaris urchins. David Wolf had visited the site the weekend prior to our official visit, so a few of us were satisfied with collecting his scrap. A couple of our collectors did venture down and attempt to coax fossils out of the mire. We had to satisfy ourselves with surface collecting. Tully pointed out a site that seemed to be crinoid calyx sand. The ground was literally covered with pieces of crinoid calyx. The bases of these fossils look like a five-petaled flower about the size of a dime. Then across the road were bits and pieces of fern fossils ranging in size from pinpoint to maybe the size of a pencil eraser—but nothing really fantastic.

Following the field trip, the Section met at the clubhouse. Neil ran a training course on using the abrasive tools while the rest of us cleaned and identified the fossils we found. We started a bucket of fossils to be given to kids during the show.

As a Section, we have had a marvelous first quarter of the year!

Tips & Hints

*Treatment for Special Stones
from Skagitt Gems 01/2001*

via Pickin's & Diggin's 09/2005 and Calgary Lapidary Journal 4/2008

Tourmaline and Garnet: Both chip. Grind carefully on well-dressed wheels. Both stones are fairly heat sensitive. Sand wet. Linde A on leather is a good polishing combination for these gems.

Moonstone: Will cleave. Be sure to grind it on a smooth wheel. It polishes nicely on felt with cerium oxide.

Tiger Eye: Always grind, sand, and polish tiger eye in the direction of the fibers of the material to eliminate undercutting and damaging the fibers at the surface.

Turquoise: Never use ammonia, soap, or detergent on turquoise. Ammonia will turn the turquoise white. A drop of ammonia on what may be a scrap piece is a good test to see if it is genuine.

Color Code Your Silver Solder

by Carol Hettenbach

In-Contenti Company Newsletter & Creations

via Laphound News 03/2008 and Calgary Lapidary Journal 4/2008

If you use sheet solder, color code it with a marking pen. Use red for hard, blue for soft, and black for medium. That way, if you find stray solder snippets on your desk or floor, you will know exactly what you have by the color. It also makes it easier to put different types on your solder station so you don't have to stop each time to change solders. A quick glance at the color tells you what you have.

HGMS General Meeting

April 22, 2008

by Nancy Fischer

2008 HGMS Secretary

Terry Proctor, HGMS President, called the meeting to order at 7:30.

The minutes of the March General Meeting were approved as published in the March BBG.

The Treasurer was not present to give his report.

Announcements and Introductions:

Astrea Fatica was welcomed to the meeting as a guest. She is an archeologist, and she came to the meeting to obtain information for herself and her husband and also for her son who wants to learn to cut rocks. (After the end of the meeting, she remarked that she found our group to be a virtual "treasure trove" of people and information, and she was quite excited about it.)

Phyllis George mentioned that she received a call from Astrea shortly before the meeting to verify where the clubhouse is located. Astrea had sent e-mails to various addresses on the club's Web site Contact Us list but received no answers. Terry was sure that he had never received an e-mail from her and that he absolutely answers all e-mails he receives as President. Terry said he would make it a point to include the Club's Web address in outgoing e-mails to persons who write about HGMS matters but are not HGMS members.

Terry Proctor announced that he appointed two people to work in conjunction with Rodney Linehan, Club Treasurer, on a dues analysis subcommittee comparing dues with expenses. Dues alone don't cover the current Club expenses which have remained the same for many years.

Committee and Section Reports:

Show Committee: Scott Singleton reported that several members of the Show Committee went to North Houston to visit the shop of Phil Nichols—"The **Fiendish Dr. Phil**"—who last year provided the dinosaur display at the entrance of the show. The

show Committee discussed with him what they would like to see this year. He will add a body to the casmosaurus head that was on display 1st year. He will also build chicken-sized raptors. The "cas" will be attacked by the vicious raptor "chickens" coming out of bushes.

The Show Publicity Committee meeting is tomorrow night (April 23). A new tri-fold flyer will replace both the flyer and the post card used in previous years.

The Show Committee party will be held at Scott's home June 21, and everyone is invited. There will also be a field trip to Jasper to collect petrified wood at Scott's research site to which only Show Committee members will be invited. It is not too late to join the Show Committee and so be able to join the group in Jasper.

The show shirts will be royal blue this year. The Show Committee will get theirs early so they can wear them to events where the show is being promoted.

Beading Group: Sunday Bennett said there were 12 people at the last Beading Group meeting. They made a bracelet. The picture is on the Web site. The group meets the 3rd Saturday at 1:00 p.m. The project and list of materials can be found on the HGMS Web site a week or two before the meeting. Sunday said it was a VERY social group. She also mentioned several men have begun to attend.

Daylight Section: Mary Ann Mitscherling reported that the Daylight Section is making doublets from agate. They will continue the project next month using opals.

Faceting: Phyllis George said a Faceting Symposium will be held this Sunday at the club house. Interested people should contact Wayne Barnett. Please bring your own faceting machine if you have one. If you do not have a faceting machine, call Wayne to reserve a club machine (if they have not already been reserved). The symposium will cover a whole range of skills, from beginner on up. It will also cover any problems experienced faceters are having and would like to discuss. *Editor's Note: See the writeup about the Symposium on page 10.*

Lapidary Section: Mary Ann Mitscherling reported that the Lapidary Section will be buying four new templates, and they should be available for sale by Show time. The Section will add one or two more templates next year.

Mineral Section: Dean Lagerwall announced that the Mineral Section will have its annual auction at their meeting the first Wednesday in May. Donating one item to the auction entitles you to have five other items for sale with a 10% reserve for the Section. The third Wednesday meeting will be a presentation by Steve Blyskal about the American Mineral Treasures.

Paleo Section: Mike Dawkins reported that at the last meeting Ann Molineaux, Invertebrate Curator at University of Texas at Austin, gave a presentation about collecting in Canyon Lake Gorge, a restricted access area.

Youth Section: Beverly Mace said there were 18 kids at the shop last Saturday. They decorated picture frames for Mother's Day.

Phyllis George said that she read in the recent SCFMS Newsletter that Bill and Lois Patillo (of Rock Table fame) nominated a Junior Rockhound of the Year at the Corpus Christi Club. She thought it might be a good idea for HGMS to nominate one of our Youth Section members too since we have such an active Youth Section.

Shop: Phyllis George said that Tom Wright volunteered to donate electroplating equipment. It needs a hood. The Lapidary Section might donate a hood to the shop.

BBG: Phyllis announced that the deadline for the June BBG is May 7. She will be on vacation the third week in June, so the deadline for the July issue will be June 4.

Old and New Business: Terry Proctor commented that we will not be concerned for the rest of the year about not having a First Vice-President. That position's main functions are to provide programs for the General Meetings on the fourth Tuesday and to take over when the President is unable to make a meeting. Terry said he is feeling fine, he has good programs lined up for many of the upcoming months, and he sees no problems with having outstanding programs for the rest of the year.

Terry also announced there is still a need for one or two people to handle the Education Chair. One person could organize classes and logistics, while the other could attend the first class meeting to take role and collect the money. A perk of the job is getting classes for ½ price.

Terry reported that the \$2500 scholarship award has been delivered to the University of Houston for our selected recipient, Carol LeDoux Locke. Ms. Locke plans to be present at the May General Meeting to tell us about her training and her after-graduation plans to go into the jewelry business for herself.

Terry is working on a Code of Conduct, and he will present a draft to the Board.

Terry stated that last year Matt Dillon appointed a committee to do some review of possible expansion of facilities for HGMS. Since we are already a quarter of the way into the year, Terry is appointing a new Committee for the same purpose, and Matt is to remain on the Committee to continue this Review. The review is to consider whether additional space is needed, and if so, whether to consider a new location or to acquire additional space next to the present HGMS clubhouse which might be available. HGMS had over 600 members in 2007, and the parking at times is inadequate.

Auction Rules: The Board of Directors adopted a policy on auctions and sales that provides for fairness by giving better notice and by standardizing rules so everyone follows the same procedure. The Rules will be posted in the clubhouse shortly. These rules apply only to General Club live auctions and sales, not to the regular silent auctions at HGMS Meetings or to Section Auctions or sales at Section meetings. *Editor's Note: See a copy of the signs that will be posted on page 12.* The rules to be posted are:

- 1 The auction or sale notice is to be published in the BBG, and the auction or sale shall not take place earlier than the 16th day of the Cover month of the BBG in which the event is published.
- 2 The auction notice shall be written on the blackboard in the HGMS Meeting

Room.

3 The event shall be put on the HGMS Web site on the Upcoming Programs page.

4 The event shall be sent to those on the e-mailing list. Of course the event will also be announced at the General Meetings before the event.

Door Prize: Sigrid Stewart won a \$15 gift card donated by Mike Dawkins. Last month Mike won the drawing, but the winner from the month before failed to bring in a door prize for March. Terry Proctor emphasized that the winner each month should bring in a door prize for the next month's General Meeting.

Show & Tell: Sigrid Stewart brought in an assortment of interesting rocks from a rockhounding session in conjunction with attending a party in Gypsum, Colorado. She had samples of gneiss, jasper, and porphyry as well as sandstone with slicken sides and a possible lava flow structure.

Terry Proctor brought in some fossil bone he and Regina Gorman found on their trip to McFadden Beach last Saturday. *Texas Highways* magazine stated in an article that more Clovis Points have been found on McFadden Beach than anywhere else in North America. Clovis Points are still extremely rare, although HGMS member George Wolf has found two there. McFadden Beach starts at High Island and runs all the way east to Sabine Pass, near the Louisiana border. Terry stated that he was almost positive that one of the fossil bones he brought for Show & Tell was from a sabre tooth cat.

Program: Richard Zingula, PhD, gave an interesting and entertaining slide show, "What's Going on in the Oceans and How Ocean Fossils Were Created." Dr. Zingula has presented programs for HGMS and for the Paleo Section of HGMS for many years, and he has taught classes. He is one of the treasures of our Club. Dr. Zingula was with Exxon Oil Company for many years before retiring, and he is very knowledgeable and cordial to HGMS. He is very much appreciated.

Dr. Zingula covered fossils from microscopic specimens to dinosaurs. He said one weekend he took a field trip to the Paleozoic on Saturday and spent Sunday in the Cretaceous. He explained that conditions for the formation of fossils have to be just right, which is why there are few fossils compared with what there could be. Fossils are formed when just the right conditions exist. These conditions require a rapid burial so that the fossil is in an anaerobic environment where it isn't eaten up by various other life forms, and then it goes through a number of changes over time before it is turned into a fossil.

Dr. Zingula had a diversity of slides from the oceans to the mountains of the American west. He also discussed how mud from the Mississippi and other rivers creates conditions conducive to forming fossils. Dr. Zingula explained that the things coming down the rivers and into the oceans kill off life in the gulf and oceans such as the sponges and coral reefs by silting them and causing algae blooms which can use up the oxygen in the water, thus depriving other living things of oxygen and killing them.

It was a most enlightening program, and the HGMS members expressed their thanks once again to Dr. Zingula for taking his time to bring us another excellent program.

HGMS Board Meeting Minutes

May 6, 2008

by Nancy Fischer, Secretary

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:25 p.m. by Terry Proctor, President
 A quorum was present.

April 2008 Board of Directors Minutes were distributed via e-mail. Tom Wright moved, seconded by Phyllis George, that the March 2008 minutes be accepted as distributed. The vote was unanimous

Treasurer's Report: Rodney Linehan presented a Balance Statement and gave the Treasurer's report. He said quite a bit of money had been received from the auction as well as dealer's fees. Rodney handed out a financial report to the BOD members

Rodney brought up the unpaid bill of \$1,135.45 from Frank Salazar to HGMS for preparation of the 2006 tax return and adjustments that were discussed at the April, 2008 BOD Meeting. Terry Proctor spoke to Paul McGarry about Mr. Salazar's bill to HGMS. Paul said he paid for accounting services himself, and that he would see that this bill was paid. Terry said that since we now have an accountant on the BOD, we would have no further billing for services. Rodney Linehan said that he was not charging for his services, but that there were some things which he might not be able to do. Terry asked Rodney to make a list of what he would not be able to do so we can determine whether we need to continue with outside accounting services. Rodney agreed to do so, and went on to say that he has no experience with a Form 990, as an example.

Beverly Mace announced that currently there are 472 paid adult members and 81 paid youth members. Some of last year's members have not yet renewed. Terry said that if she would print out the nonrenewals, he would call them.

Rodney reported that Neal Immega requested funds from the Conoco Philips grant to reimburse the Paleo Section for books given to speakers at Paleo Programs. Denise Bicknell said that when HGMS requested the grant, the club gave Conoco Philips a listing of the items the money would be used to cover. Denise recommended talking to Steve Blyskal about which expenses the grant would cover. Money from the grant has been spent only for the school kit boxes and specimens. There was some discussion about the annual requesting of the Conoco Philips grant and how the received funds are used.

Committee and Section Reports:

- **Faceting:** Phyllis George reported that the Section had their Symposium Sunday, April 27, at the Clubhouse. Twelve to fourteen people attended. Each person had his or her own faceting machine or a club-owned faceting machine. Wayne Barnett was the instructor. Other members helped with advice when Wayne was unavailable because he was helping someone. Phyllis said that this was the first time she had faceted since 2000, and the Symposium was highly successful. She passed around her finished faceted stone.
- **Lapidary:** Karen Burns said the group worked on doublets. They had glued the pieces together and will complete the project at their next meeting by shaping the dome.
- **Education:** The position of Education Chair is still vacant. Mary Ann Mitscherling indicated to Terry at the General Meeting that she might be interested in assuming part of the duties. There was quite a bit of discussion about what kind of incentive would attract someone to the position. Tom Wright pointed out that of the fees collected, 1/3 goes for materials, 1/3 goes to the instructor, and 1/3 goes to HGMS. Therefore the incentive for a person to be the Education Chair of getting to take classes for ½ price, does not take into consideration the actual costs of class fees.
- **Paleo:** Rick Rexroad said there was a field trip scheduled to Lake Texoma Memorial Day Weekend, May 23–25, 2008. He discussed the ammonites and other fossils which should be found on this trip. Terry Proctor said he would try to plan another trip to Bryan before the weather becomes too hot. Matt Dillon said he had been to George West with another club member. There was new construction, so there was fertile collecting territory due to construction-exposed areas. He said he was not particularly interested in going again, but could provide directions if any one was interested.
- **Mineral Section:** Denise Bicknell said the auction would be tomorrow night, May 7. On May 21, Steve Blyskal will talk about American Mineral Treasures and show pictures he took in Tucson. June 4 will be the last meeting until the fall. There will be a swap and sell at that meeting.
- **Youth Group:** Beverly Mace said there were 21 “counted” kids last Saturday, plus several others who came in late. They made memory wire bracelets for the show. Phyllis George mentioned the Junior Rockhound of the Year Nomination.
- **Beading Group:** The twelve people in attendance made beaded bracelets. This was a change from the originally scheduled project, a chain maille bracelet, which was deemed too difficult for a large group to learn in the duration of the meeting. Phyllis George passed around the bracelet she made during the meeting. Karen Burns passed around the project she made at home—the original chain maille bracelet. She said she got the instructions for the original project from the Beading Group’s information that had been on the HGMS Web site, and said it wasn’t as difficult as she expected once she modified the directions.
- **BBG and Webmaster:** Phyllis George said the deadline for the May Board Minutes to be sent to her for the BBG would be this Saturday, May 10. The BBG has grown to 40 pages and usually takes about four days to put together. Phyllis said

that when she started, the whole process took about two days because the BBG was less than half as big.

She said there is a problem receiving e-mails sent to some of our Web site pseudo-e-mail addresses. Those that are forwarded to Comcast, AOL, and AT&T are not delivered, and the sender is not notified that delivery failed. Terry Proctor and Tom Wright do get theirs. Beverly Mace and Phyllis do not. Phyllis has been in contact with Infinology, our Web host, to resolve the problem. It seems to be Infinology's problem, although they're denying it. She will continue to pursue this by getting in touch with the company who bought Infinology. Beverly Mace said her husband does this sort of work, and he is sure the source of the problem is with Infinology.

During a discussion of e-mail received by officers, Terry commented that he receives and responds to a great number of e-mails, and he now puts in information about the HGMS Show and gives the dates. Terry was asked to add the HGMS Web site information to his e-mail too. He agreed.

Review of Action Items from last Board meeting: Many items are covered below. The remaining are included in the Action Items for this month.

Old and New Business

1. Terry Proctor presented a new draft of the Code of Conduct. He said he used the AFMS Code as a guide together with two previous versions he had prepared and presented to the BOD. The group read the Code and made comments and suggestions. Phyllis will edit and combine the suggestions, then e-mail the results to the Board for final comments. When she has it complete, she will publish it in the BBG. The goal is to print the revised draft in the June BBG so that the draft can be voted on by the HGMS membership at the July General Meeting. Karen Burns moved to accept this procedure and the resulting Code of Conduct. Matt Dillon seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously
2. Terry Proctor asked Beverly Mace to add Officer and Director contact information to this year's Roster.
3. The stop blocks in the parking lot have been repaired. The broken-away section of curb on the northwest portion of the west parking lot still needs repair. Terry thought someone could just drill a couple of holes and anchor the pieces into the driveway with rebar. Matt Dillon thought this might take a contractor. Matt will call building maintenance to see if they will fix it. Terry said to let him know if they said the repair is our responsibility, and he would try to come out and fix it.
4. There was a discussion of the Child Security Code. Matt Dillon commented that basically we need a policy statement so the public understands that we want to protect the children while they are at the Club. The presentation was discussed. Matt will contact Kathy to see exactly what she would present and to see if it can be shortened from three hours. It is the policy of the Youth Section that each child must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Terry will draft a document for

parents and guardians to fill out. He will also bring in the Boy Scout's policy for child security for its possible use as a go-by.

5. Terry presented a laminated Auction Procedure. There were a couple of minor changes needed, which were discussed. Phyllis will edit and make the suggested changes. She will distribute them to the entire Board so Terry can print and laminate a final version to be posted at the Club house. **Editor's Note:** *The modified version is on page 12 of this issue.*
6. The Dues Review Committee of Karen Burns and Rodney Lineham with assistance from Terry Proctor will report at the June Board Meeting. They will review eight years of financial reports. They will compare expenses between then and now and determine what percent of total expenses the dues covered then as well as the percent increase that may be required. The BOD members discussed that the dues were raised about eight years ago, and operating expenses have grown a great deal since then. It was mentioned that the BBG costs about \$1.00 per member per month to publish and mail.

Terry reminded people that the cost of a Life Membership has not changed for years. He said he is a paid Life Member, and he realizes that the sum of what would have been his annual dues during the years since becoming a Life Member has exceeded what he paid to become a Life Member. He voluntarily sent in an additional payment this year, and he thinks perhaps other Life Members might want to do the same. He said he would write an article encouraging Life Members to make donations since they pay no annual dues.

7. Terry appointed a 2008 Facilities Committee headed by Matt Dillon to review the Club's needs for physical facilities. The Committee will investigate whether we need new facilities, need additional facilities, or need no change. Tom Wright said the shop can handle current needs. Terry Proctor said that parking is inadequate.

Terry, Tom Wright, Phyllis George, and John Anderson will be on the committee, and Margo Bedman will act as a consultant. Terry will ask for volunteers from the general membership so both Board and non-Board members will make up the committee.

8. Terry announced that he contacted NASA, and they agreed to have a display at our show. NASA will bring Moon rocks, maybe Mars rocks, and possibly other extra-terrestrial rocks. They will also provide personnel to discuss these things with visitors at the show. NASA will also present a program on extra-terrestrial rocks for a General Meeting, possibly in June or July.
9. Matt Dillon has been invited to contribute his photos to two publications. One is for the *Houston Arboretum*. The other is for Johan Zinn's upcoming book.
10. Terry read aloud the article he is writing for *Rock & Gem* called "Houston Rocks." It extols the many rock-related institutions in Houston and encourages readers to be sure and attend our HGMS show in September. At his request, Phyllis George

agreed to read and edit the article for Terry.

Tom Wright moved to adjourn the meeting. Karen Burns seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Inaccurate Statement in May BBG

by Ed Tindell

2008 CLGMS Field Trip Coordinator

a.k.a. "The Official Cat Herder"

The following paragraph in the May 2008 Backbender's Gazette came from the "Old Business" section of the HGMS March General Meeting Minutes. It is not only inaccurate, it is libelous and many people are upset over it. People only hear what they want to hear. How my words could be so misconstrued is beyond belief:

"Karen Burns asked if there were any field trips planned. She related that the Clear Lake Club went to Llano, but they did not respect the rules set forth by the land owner so they are now banned at that location. Steve Blyskal said invitations had been sent to a private list. They wouldn't say where you would go or what you could collect. Terry Proctor mentioned that several years ago he wrote an article in which he said landowners are the most valuable asset for Rockhounds."

This statement is based on the field trip report which I gave at the March, 2008, meeting of the CLGMS which Karen attended. **What I said was that some non-CLGMS members attending our last field trip to Llano came back afterwards and trespassed at one locality, destroying fences and a museum grade specimen worth a lot of money.** Our guide had spent \$900 just on the tools needed to properly extract the specimen, and when he found it destroyed, he was exceedingly upset—and for good reason. I stressed that everyone needs to understand what is at stake when collecting in Llano. Our guide is basically the point man for a mining company that owns, operates, or controls access to virtually all the good collecting sites on private land in Llano. He is also a charismatic individual whom everyone likes and looks out for. If you get him mad, you are likely to lose access to virtually every site on private land in the Llano area. Why? Because the landowners trust him, not us, and if we cause a problem that causes him to lose access, then we also lose access. **Getting onto private land in Llano is very difficult, and anyone attending a field trip to Llano needs to act with exceedingly good manners and lots of respect for the rules.**

There is also a plan in the works to stop losing collecting sites and to start losing the stupid rockhounds who can't follow the rules. That plan consists of giving the landowners the names, addresses, and photos of known troublesome rockhounds. **If you are a troublesome rock hound, in the future it may not matter what club you try to attend a field trip to Llano with because the landowner will have a list, and if he identifies you, he won't let you in.** In other words, if you can't follow the rules, you won't get to participate, and enforcement will not be by the rockhounding com-

munity but by the landowners themselves. This way the landowners will come to know that not all rockhounds are bad, and only the bad ones will pay for their mistakes.

As a result of the trespassing incident after our last field trip to Llano, I, with the blessing of the CLGMS, have decided to ban all but “active” CLGMS members from future CLGMS field trips to Llano led by me. “Active” club members are those CLGMS members who regularly attend our meetings and who either hold an elected or volunteer office, write for our newsletter, give presentations, donate door prizes, help set up/run/take down our show, or do any number of other things that define our club and make it great. These are the “stakeholders” in the CLGMS, and they have something to lose if they don’t follow the rules. **All future CLGMS field trips to Llano will be “thank you” field trips for these active members only, much like the HGMS Show Committee field trips.**

The CLGMS is not banned from any locations in Llano. When going to Llano, I have to vouch for each person on the field trip, and I will no longer accept the responsibility for non-CLGMS members on our trips to Llano. I don’t want to lose any more collecting sites or have our club lose access to these sites which have taken me a considerable number of years to acquire. Our guide is still pretty upset (and I don’t blame him one bit!!!) and I have assured him that our active club members follow the rules. **It was non-CLGMS members who did not follow the rules and who are 100% to blame for the problems.**

Each person attending agreed in writing that they would follow the rules on the field trip, and the rules were still broken! They obviously think they have nothing to lose and don’t care about the consequences of their actions to other people. I hate to do this as it will hurt some people, but I have no choice. **The people who trespassed were people I know and trusted!** If the people you know and trust are going to act like that, just imagine what total strangers might do.

If there are no future problems, then I will allow other clubs to go with us once again to Llano. If I have more problems and I can’t even trust the “stake holders” of the CLGMS to follow the rules, then I will stop leading field trips to Llano for anyone.

Currently I have people from 13 different clubs in four states on my field trip list. I run what I call “federated” field trips for the CLGMS because they are a part of the SCFMS, and as part of that federation **we should all work together to further the hobby of rockhounding.** It is my hope that all of you will do that after reading this.

Anyone is invited and welcome to attend the field trips I lead for the CLGMS (except those to Llano, for now, as explained above) as our guest, and anyone can join my field trip notification e-mail list by contacting me at ed-tindell@sprynet.com.

Please print the above statement in the next issue of the BBG.

Thanks,

Ed Tindell
2008 CLGMS Field Trip Coordinator

AFMS President's Message (Excerpts)*by Shirley Leeson**2008 AFMS President**from AFMS Newsletter 5/2008*

Did you know that this is the “YEAR OF THE WEBMASTER?” Unknown to many of you until now, I have been honoring the regional webmasters at the conventions this year. Starting in November, 2007 with the Southeast Federation’s convention in Biloxi, MS, Jim Flora, Webmaster for Southeast, was honored with a plaque from me for his dedicated work for the Southeast. Fortunately Jim was there to receive the honor personally. In February we attended the Eastern Federation’s convention in Jackson, MS where Dan Imel, Webmaster for Eastern Federation was honored. Unfortunately Dan wasn’t there to accept, but Eastern’s 2nd VP accepted the plaque and promised to see Dan received it. (Did you know Dan does double duty as webmaster for SCRIBE, the bulletin editors organization?).



I will be honoring Jack Eads, Northwest Federation Webmaster at Ontario, Oregon in June and Don Ogden, California Federation’s Webmaster at the convention in Ventura, CA, also in June. I would have liked to visit with Midwest Federation’s Webmaster Cindy Root, who, as far as we know, is the only lady webmaster at the regional level. I’ll forward her plaque to be given to her by Joy Bourne, AFMS President-Elect who will be standing in for me. There will be two plaques in September when South Central Webmaster, Al Pennington is honored along with a special presentation to the AFMS webmaster Marty Hart. In November we will honor the Rocky Mt. Webmaster, Jim McGarvey, at their show in Tulsa, OK. If you haven’t taken the time to check out all the regional as well as the AFMS Web sites, please do. These dedicated people are doing all of us a huge service that we need to acknowledge. I have asked two people to work on a contest for club webmasters; more on this as we get nearer to the AFMS meeting in Houston.

Next, Ron Carman and his Ad Hoc Committee, who are looking into our various contests, have been at work. Members Bob & Kathy Miller of Midwest have put together a survey that was in the Midwest Newsletter asking what clubs and individuals think about the various AFMS contests, and if there is something preventing clubs or individuals from participating in them. Eastern’s rep, Mary Bateman, is doing the same for her federation members. If you have any thoughts on this, please contact a member of the committee or send me an e-mail or letter with your thoughts. All these programs are great; the focus is on can we make them better and get more participation, or is there something that is holding participation back???

Our AFMS Junior Programs chair, Jim Brace-Thompson, has done a fantastic job in getting the AFMS Junior badge program off and running. BUT, is your club participat-

ing? Right now we have 4,363 members in the Northwest; 7438 members in the Southeast; 9774 members in Eastern; 9415 in California; 6711 in Rocky Mountain; 7646 in Midwest; and 3330 in South Central for a total of 48,677 members. Unfortunately this doesn't tell us how many clubs in each federation, but the ratio of juniors participating in the program is definitely LOW. Consider this—there are scout clubs and other clubs who have requested information on this program. Jim has to refer them to a club in their area because they cannot participate unless they belong to a regional club. This is a perfect way to bring in new members to your clubs and to reach out to schools that have science programs, to scouts, and to home school programs. Be creative, and let's see if we can bring these students into our hobby. In the meantime, there are clubs out there with juniors. Please see that they are able to participate—it's such a worthwhile program.

Our new AFMS Rockhound of the Year chair, Loretta Ogden, mentioned in her article in the April 2008 AFMS Newsletter that she had only heard from two of the SEVEN regional federations regarding Rockhound of the Year honorees. Don't let her down; get your letters in the mail. I could personally list a group of people in each federation who deserve this honor, so please show Loretta that you support this program and want to honor your club's Rockhound of the Year.

And finally, HAVE YOU EACH WRITTEN A LETTER TO THE CITIZENS STAMP ADVISORY COMMITTEE, STAMP DEVELOPMENT, US POSTAL SERVICE, 1735 North Lynn St. Room 5013, Arlington, VA 22209-6432. Include in your letter your birthstone and where in the US it's found. (A list of the stones and the states can be found in the 2008 AFMS February issue, page 2—and also on the amfed.org Web site) Also, send a copy of the letter to your Congressman and Senator. Individual letters only—please do not send petitions as these only count as one letter no matter how many signatures.

Have you counted the number of times throughout this article that I used the word PARTICIPATE? The AFMS and the regional federations can only offer you programs, it's up to you to participate..... there, there's one more.... More thoughts next month.

Your AFMS President, Shirley Leeson

Note new e-mail for our Idaho ranch: <beauholland@centurytel.net>

Let's Get Birthstones On Stamps!

by Wendell Mohr
Commemorative Stamp
Committee

Have you taken the time to write the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee requesting that birthstones be used on our US stamps? There are over 50,000 members of our AFMS



affiliated clubs, and if every one of us writes to the CSAC, we believe our requests would be hard to ignore. Involve your friends and nonrockhounding friends too.

Pictured on page 28 is the poster that was displayed at the Tucson show this year. Although these images are photos of gemstones in the Smithsonian Institution collection, imagine how attractive stamps featuring ruby, topaz, peridot, garnet, pearl, amethyst, aquamarine, emerald, sapphire, turquoise, diamond, and opal would be!

Address your letters (no petitions please as these get counted as only one letter regardless of how many signers there are) to:

Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee, Stamp Development, US Postal Service,
1735 N. Lynn St, Room 5013, Arlington, VA 22209-6432

AFMS Quick Tips for Editors

by Linda Jaeger

*AFMS Club Publications Chair
from AFMS Newsletter 05/2008*

Breakfast with the Editors 2008

Did you know that the AFMS breakfast where awards are presented to winners in the Bulletin Editor's Contest is for EVERYONE? You do not have to be an editor to attend!

The 2008 SCFMS/AFMS Show & Convention will be in Humble, TX (Houston area), September 26–28. Our hosts are the Houston Gem & Mineral Society. If you are coming to the show (which promises to be outstanding!), be sure to join the editors for the awards breakfast.

Are you an editor? If you are notified that some of your entries are in the top 10 for AFMS, be sure to let those authors know they are in the top 10 nationally and invite them to attend the breakfast to accept their awards in person. And remember—you're invited to the breakfast, too.

Are you a club member? You do need to eat breakfast that day. Why not join other rockhounds for fun, fellowship, and to give a pat on the back to the people responsible for communication in our hobby? Need show information? The May issue of the AFMS Newsletter has the schedule of events and forms you'll need, or check the AFMS Web site at www.amfed.org/show2008.htm (or the HGMS Web site at www.hgms.org. Click on the 2008 Show Registration button.) You can download a show flyer from those two sites as well as download all the other show-related information available. To make reservations for the breakfast, you can click on the hot link, Advance Registration Form. It includes options for the meals, show admissions, and field trips.

I'm looking forward to seeing you there!

(Clip art above from Discovery Channel School Image Gallery, ©2003. Permission to use for educational, not for sale publications granted.)



AFMS Convention News*by Shiara Trumble, HGMS**from AFMS Newsletter 05/2008*

HGMs has been busy planning space and menus for the federation events to be held at our annual show, and special events and trips are scheduled for September 24–28. For those of you planning to attend the Editors' Breakfast, Awards Banquet, and the AFMS Officers Luncheon, venues and meals being planned are listed below. If you have special dietary restrictions, please let us know when you send in your registration for the various events. We will make every reasonable effort to accommodate your needs.

The AFMS Officers' Luncheon is scheduled for Friday (September 26) at noon. We will be meeting at Café East; 260 W. 1st Street in Humble. Café East Chinese Restaurant is among the largest buffet restaurants in town, and it offers a daily buffet with a soup bar serving a wide variety of delicious Chinese and international soups, a cold food bar serving an extensive selection of salad and cold foods, and a hot food bar with a wide variety of Chinese and international dishes. They also have sushi rolls, jumbo shrimp cocktail, and lettuce wrap. Their most popular dishes include mixed grille, General Tso's Chicken, Pepper Steak, and Grilled Chicken.

The Editors' Breakfast will be held at 8:00 a.m. Saturday (September 27) at the Humble City Café, 200 East Main St. in Humble. We'll be in their recently redecorated private room and will have a buffet including eggs, pancakes, sausage, bacon, dry cereal, fruit, coffee, tea, water, and orange juice.

The Awards Banquet is at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday. It will be held in the Humble Civic Center Hospitality Room, and will be catered by CW Smokehouse. We'll be serving a traditional Texas barbecue of smoked sliced brisket with barbecue sauce, smoked sausage, potato salad, baked beans, garlic bread, peach cobbler, coffee, tea, and water.

If you plan to attend, please send in your registration forms before August 24, 2008 in order to ensure your problem-free enjoyment of the various functions. HGMS is looking forward to a great show and Federation conference in September! The schedule for all meetings and show events can be seen at www.hgms.org. Click on the Show Registration button to view the schedules and to print the registration forms.



"Bring me that little shovel out of the car."

via Golden Spike News 8/00

AFMS Conservation—Words of Caution*by John Wright**AFMS Conservation & Legislation Chair**from AFMS Newsletter 05/2008*

There are two major bills which at present are working their way through Congress that you need to be aware of as they could severely restrict access to public owned lands:

The first one is HR 2016, National Landscape Conservation System. If passed, this bill will essentially place 26 million acres of public lands controlled by BLM under a “National Park” type system which will eliminate or severely limit any type of recreational mining. This bill could also open the door for BLM under the influence of special interest groups to add millions of additional acres in years to come. More information on this bill can be found online at: “Lands Rights Network” <alert@landrights.org>. Subject: House Mark-Up, Wednesday 3–12, On National Landscape Conservation System. (For more information go to American Land Rights Assoc. Web site - <www.landrights.org>).

The second bill that we should be concerned about is HR 5610, Designation of Wilderness Areas, which according to a Blue Ribbon Coalition Action Alert dated Wednesday, March 19, 2008, Subject: Shades of things to come?, <bralerts@sharetrails.org>, “the bill would designate just about 500,000 acres of Wilderness in West Virginia, Arizona’s Tumacacori Highlands; the Redwood Mountain Grove in California’s Sequoia, and Kings Canyon National Park; the Sabinoso Wilderness in New Mexico; Oregon’s Copper Salmon area, and the South Fork of the San Jacinto River Canyon in Riverside County, California.”

With these lands being designated as “Wilderness Areas,” public access will be almost completely eliminated. (For more information, go to the Blue Ribbon Coalition Web site <www.sharetrails.org>).

Once the 26 million acres of public lands controlled by BLM are placed under a “National Park” type system by HR 2016, it is very reasonable to assume that at some date in the not too distant future, these sites will also be designated “Wilderness Areas” by a bill similar to HR 5610. The public may be allowed to visit certain parts of these areas to look but not touch. The really disturbing part about all of this is that the millions of acres covered by these two bills are only a small portion of a grandiose plan by special interest groups to eventually join numerous areas like these into plots far larger than your wildest dreams.

While we rest on our laurels, our adversaries are very diligently working to have public lands placed “Off Limits.” They know that this is an election year, and “Green” is definitely a popular theme with politicians lately. Who knows, perhaps they think there could be another Oscar or Nobel Prize waiting out there. Remember, we also have a vote and should certainly let our desires be known.

AFMS: A Word About Safety*by Mel Albright**AFMS Safety Chair**Source and date not identified, via The Roadrunner 11/2007*

LIONS AND TIGERS AND BEARS? HECK NO! ARACHNIDS!!!!

Arach-what? Well, SPIDERS, if you weren't scared by the motion picture starring a few million of them. SPRING and FALL are prime times for people and spiders to interact—not always to the spiders disadvantage. Spiders love warm, indoor places—quiet ones—and wood, brush, and ROCK piles. Shoes, seldom-used closets, rock storage, under tables and chairs, outdoor stone piles, wood piles (like firewood), debris piles (like from the garden or yard), unused cabins, laundry piles, and the like are the domain of the three spiders that people should look out for. The three are the BLACK WIDOW SPIDER, the FIDDLEBACK SPIDER, and one that may be new to you, the HOBO SPIDER.

The renowned BLACK WIDOW is a hairless shiny black spider with a red or yellow hourglass on her belly. (Yes, I know, I don't wait to turn them over, either.) The females are 12 to 18 mm in body diameter, so they aren't too hard to spot—except they place their nests under things and out of sight. They rarely kill anyone, but their bite may leave you thinking they have. From 10 minutes to an hour after a bite come muscle spasms, burning, cramps, nausea, and dizziness. Vomiting may also occur. Stone piles, log piles, rarely used sheds, and other debris piles are favored by this one. (In the old days, it was on the underside of the outhouse seat—especially dangerous for men).

The FIDDLEBACK or BROWN RECLUSE is a pale brown to reddish with a dark violin shape on its back. Its body is 8 to 14 mm. It is the most dangerous spider. Its venom is stronger than a pit viper snake's venom. Its bite may cause fever, chills, headache, and sometimes - death. The bite may also ulcerate and cause tissue loss and doesn't heal—even causing permanent damage. If you find a bite with a reddish spot in the middle and a whitish halo around it, go directly to medical help. Basement crannies, clothes piles (even in bed with you), and other dark places are preferred spots. (Mine was under my riding mower seat with the mower in a dark, rarely used barn.)

The HOBO SPIDER is an import and has spread from ports. It is considered the most common indoor spider in the U.S. They are brown and their body is from 10 to 15 mm. They attack where other spiders run. Their nests are funnel shape. Their bite leaves a spot and a halo like the Fiddleback's bite and can cause 2 to 6 inch blister that take up to 6 months to heal and sometimes require surgical removal before healing. They are most likely to move indoors with you when the weather starts changing in the fall. In the fall they mate and are especially touchy and aggressive. They like wood piles, crawl spaces, barns, haystacks, and undisturbed clutter.

All three occur in every continental state. The fiddleback is most common in the south

and the Midwest. The Hobo is very common in the Pacific Northwest. The Black widow is everywhere except in Alaska.

If you are bitten: light bites require light use of ice packs and cortisone cream. Bulls-eye bites or those with other symptoms require IMMEDIATE medical care. If you're bitten, try to kill the spider and take it with you for identification.

Reference: Center for Disease Control, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture

“Candle” Your Agates

by Trudy & Mel Martin

Calgary Rock & Lapidary Club

from Lapidary Digest 2/2005, via others and Stoney Statements 5/2008

We work almost exclusively with the AGATE we collect at the World Famous gravel pit in Souris, Manitoba.

Using the “Candle” method, we are able to “see” the color and the pattern in the agate so we know which way to slice it to get the best results. To “candle” your agates, build a small box—4 sides and a top—NO BOTTOM. Cut a small circular hole in the center of the top. Place the box over a source of light; we use an electric trouble light. Plug in the light, place your agate over the hole and rotate it slowly—this way and that—so you can see the pattern and any fractures. Then mark (with a felt pen) the side you want to cut first.

Eliminating Flats

by Ted Robles

from The RockCollector 2/08

via Stoney Statements and The Pineywoods Rooter 3/2008

A while back, someone was saying that he was having problems with getting “flats” on his cabs, that there was insufficient “give” in his wheels, and it didn't seem to make any difference no matter how much pressure he applied. That was his first mistake.

Diamond and corundum are two different animals—relatively speaking, about the same difference as between quartz and chalk. If you “lean into” a diamond wheel, you will get lousy results (flats, etc.) on your stone, and your wheels will wear out long before their time. On diamond, you try to do your cutting (and-everything else) by almost not touching the wheel. Use essentially no force. Don't “grind” the stone, let the diamond wear it away, but keep it spinning. The technique is simply to use the whole face of the wheel, and keep your cab moving. Any time you stop, you just bought a “flat.” Can't help it! It's the same principle as sharpening a knife on an emery wheel. If you don't want notches in your blade, you keep it moving. Do almost *all* of your cutting on the coarsest wheel you have. If you leave any flats on the preform, you're going to have them on the final piece...can't help it.

ShowTime 2008

May 24-25	Fort Worth, TX	Fort Worth Gem & Mineral Club Amon Carter Exhibit Bldg Will Rogers Memorial Center 3401 W. Lancaster; fwgmc@embarqmail.com www.fortworthgemandmineralclub.com
June 20-22	Houston, TX	Intergem Show Reliant Center--Hall E, One Reliant Park www.reliantpark.com http://www.reliantpark.com/en/cms/?132
August 16-17	Bossier City, LA	Ark-La-Tex Gem & Mineral Society Bossier City Civic Center 620 Benton Road; Edna House 318-949-9765 edna.house@gmail.com
August 23-24	Jasper, TX	Pine Country Gem & Mineral Society VFW Hall, 7 miles west of Jasper
August 30-31	Arlington, TX	Arlington Gem & Mineral Society Arlington Convention Center
September 20-21	Richardson, TX	Pleasant Oaks Gem & Mineral Club EMGI at Brookhaven College
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; www.hgms.org Scott Singleton, fossilwood@comcast.net
October 9-11	Mount Ida, AK	World Champ. Quartz Crystals Digging Con- test; Mount Ida Area Chamber of Commerce Montgomery County Fairgrounds, Fairgrounds Rd.; Maureen Walther, (870) 867-2723 www.mountidachamber.com director@mountidachamber.com
October 11-12	Temple, TX	Tri-City Gem & Mineral Society Mayborn Civic Center
October 17-19	Victoria, TX	Victoria Gem & Mineral Society Victoria Community Center
October 24-26	Austin, TX	Austin Gem & Mineral Society Palmer Events Center
November 1-2	Midland, TX	Midland Gem & Mineral Society

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

2008		JULY					2008
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
		1 7:30 Board Meeting	2	3	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 7:30 Paleo Section	16	17	18	19 10-5 Shop Open 10-12 Youth Section 1:30 Beading Group	
20	21 7:30 Lapidary Section	22 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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