



The **BACKBENDER'S GAZETTE**

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

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President's Message

November, 2008

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

The HGMS 55th Annual Show is now in the history books. It did not end in a whimper in spite of the spanking Hurricane Ike gave Houston. The Houston Metropolitan Area is a great area. It has never ducked responsibilities nor sat around and complained and waited for someone to come help them. This area suffered great devastation, and it is doubtful that any HGMS member in this area escaped without some damage—if nothing else but to trees and fences. Unlike some other areas of the U.S. that have gone through this type of cataclysmic disaster, the Houston area sprang back in weeks instead of years. While there still is a long way to go in some areas, our citizens immediately moved forward to put things back as close to normal as possible.



I am also extremely proud of our HGMS members. They didn't let Ike get in our way or even slow us down much. A number of our members worked day and night to try to keep the train on the tracks, and they succeeded.

The AFMS President, Shirley Leeson, cancelled the official participation of the AFMS in the Show in an effort to protect the older members who were coming in from all over the USA. Her concern was that upon arrival, they might well discover that their re-

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General Meeting Programs

October 28: Gina and Dennis Giadrosich of Amber Way Jewelry will present a program on amber jewelry.

November 25: Nathalie Nicole Brandes with Lone Star College—Montgomery who will present Geologic Events and Human History.

December 13: Christmas/Holiday Season Party at the clubhouse. Meat will be furnished, and members are asked to bring sides, salads, and desserts.

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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 \$40 for an adult membership, \$60 for a couple, \$75 for a family (including all children aged 5-18), \$25 for a youth membership (ages 5-18), and \$500 for an adult life membership. 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 which is 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>.

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served hotel rooms, rental autos, and gasoline were unavailable. That's understandable since their 40 hotel reservations did shrink to 10, and even those were questionable. Even my efforts to line up private HGMS homes (some of whom did not themselves have power restored when they committed) to take in the incoming visitors made it understandable why President Leeson was concerned about formally continuing with the AFMS participation.

The South Central Federation stuck with us however, and they did not cancel any of their events. The Texas Faceters Guild had to cancel as the hotel where they were to have their symposium became unavailable. HGMS members, including those working on the National and Regional portions of our Show, are to be highly commended for staying the course, working beyond the call of duty, and succeeding in ensuring that we had a Show that turned out to be not far from what it would have been had Ike not paid us a visit. Thanks to everyone in HGMS and SCFMS, to our guests, and to the VIPs from AFMS who did come to the scheduled functions and stood by us in the aftermath of Ike.

One of the things needed for the Show meals and programs was an American Flag and a Texas Flag. Rather than rent these for the Show, the Board of Directors authorized the purchase of a set of flags and stands. These will now be part of the permanent fixtures in our Meeting Room.

The Nominating Committee is hard at work lining up a 2009 slate of officers who agree to serve and who are qualified for the positions for which they will be nominated. These nominations will be announced at the October 28 General Membership meeting, and nominations from the floor will also be accepted at that time.

However, if you would like to be nominated, please contact the Nominating Committee and work out a nomination slot for 2009. If there are no contested positions, then the Bylaws provide that no ballot has to be mailed out, thereby saving expense and members' time in mailing them back in. That is why it is important that you speak with someone on the Nominating Committee if you are interested in becoming a 2009 officer or in being Show Chair or Assistant Show Chair. The Election of 2009 Officers and Show Chair and Assistant Show Chair will occur during the November 25, 2008 General Meeting.

Again, thanks to all of you HGMS members who have worked hard and tirelessly this year to make 2008 programs and Show such a great success.



Recollections of an Unrepentant Rockhound

by Albert L. Kidwell

with comments by Art Smith

Al Kidwell died on August 16, 2008. What follows is one of the last talks he gave in the early 1990s to the Hot Springs Geology Club and earlier to the Houston Gem & Mineral Society. In his earlier talks, Al seldom used more than brief notes. It was only with his later talks that a complete text was created before he gave the talks, and I feel fortunate to have several of them. This titled talk was given several times in completely different versions. This version is primarily on his Arkansas experiences and on the naming of kidwellite.

Why the title? By the 1960s and 1970s professional mineralogy looked down on mineral collectors and rockhounds and particularly professionals who collected. Mineralogy became very technical, and the work on minerals at times could be considered technical minutia. Some of these studies were done on minerals, and the professional had no idea from where it came. It was finally realized that variations in minerals occurred when they were from different localities. So knowing the locality was important because this data might pertain only to this mineral from its originating locality, and the data might vary in other localities. So by the 1980s, those professionals who collected and preserved important location data and who wrote articles on their finds gained a new prestige that continues today.

First let me explain that if members of the Houston delegation look long-suffering, it is because they have heard some parts of this talk before. However, it is never the same talk, and tonight the entire thrust will concern Arkansas.

I grew up in the southeast corner of Missouri which by all rights should have been Arkansas. The story goes that when the boundary line was to be drawn, a cranky old woman who owned several thousand acres in what is now the boot-heel swore that she would not live in Arkansas, so they drew the line around her.

My first mineral trip to Arkansas was in 1934, soon after I became interested in minerals. We drove over to the Hot Springs area in our Model A Ford, camped out in Hot Springs National Park, drove out to Crystal Springs where I was shown an area good for picking up loose quartz crystals, and we visited Magnet Cove where a small company was concentrating alluvial rutile in the area that later became a residential district (*Cove Creek Estates*). That rutile concentrate became one of my prize possessions, along with specimens from the alkaline pegmatite exposed at Cove Creek. I also bought my first mineral specimen, a nice quartz crystal cluster, at the National Park souvenir shop. That \$3.00 purchase cleaned me out and impressed my parents as being very extravagant.

In the summer of 1941 after my first year of geology graduate school at Washington University (St. Louis), I got a job as Junior Geologist with the Army Corps of Engineers and was assigned to the Blue Mountain Dam project near Boonville, Arkansas. I had my own car, and one weekend I drove down to Magnet Cove to see what might

be available. I was pounding on a syenite outcrop when a car stopped and a portly gentleman got out, stuck out his hand and said, "Hello, I'm Hugh Miser with the Geological Survey." We visited for a few minutes and finally he said, "Here, you need a heavier hammer" and handed me a sledge out of his car. "I'll be back in about half an hour," which he was and recovered his sledge. I met him a few times later in my career and he was always most courteous and helpful. It was easy to understand why he was called "The Sage of Pea Ridge." His hobby was collecting quartz crystals, and Ocus Stanley used to save the more unusual ones for Dr. Miser to choose from. *His quartz collection was eventually donated to the Smithsonian Institution.*

My next serious encounter with Arkansas was in the summer of 1948. I was working on my PhD at the University of Chicago and desperately needed to make some money. I also needed to collect samples for my dissertation, which was to be on the Mesozoic igneous activity in the northern coastal plain. Unbeknown to me, an angel of mercy was on the way. Arkansas Power and Light Company was ready to finance a survey of possible economic mineral deposits in Arkansas, and the job had been farmed out to Midwest Research Institute of Kansas City. The director of the project would be Dr. W. B. Mather with whom I had worked at the Missouri Geological Survey, and he was a close personal friend.

I was given my choice of the part of the state where I wanted to work—which was basically the Ouachitas and the southern Arkansas Valley. Mather was the advance agent who talked to the local civic clubs, explained our mission, and asked people to bring any samples and information to the local Chambers of Commerce where a geologist would come by and check them out. I was the geologist. My wife and two children (as of that time) spent the summer with me, and we stayed for almost a month in each of three places—Malvern, Mount Ida, and Mena. I can truly say that this summer was one of the most enjoyable I have spent as a geologist. Harold Foxhall was State Geologist, Joe Kimzey was secretary of the Malvern Chamber of Commerce, and Ocus Stanley was slowly building his quartz crystal empire.

One day I was looking at mineral samples which had been left with the Mount Ida office, and I found something completely new to me—samples of iron oxide with crystals and aggregates of pink, yellow, and green minerals in a novaculite breccia. I had never seen this assemblage before, and I was certain they had no commercial importance, but as a mineralogist I had to follow up on them. The next day I drove out to visit Isom Avants, who had brought in the specimens. It had just rained, and I got stuck in the creek—they had not built too many of the Forest Service slab bridges yet. So Isom had to hitch up his mules and pull me out.

That was the beginning of a long and interesting association with the Avants family. Isom, his brother, and his sister lived together and none of them had married. They knew everyone for miles around and would do anything for you. Every year when the crops were laid by, Isom and his brother would go prospecting. If anything looked interesting, they would drill a hole and set off a stick of "dynamite." The yellow mineral looked a little like gold, which Isom was afraid it wasn't but hoped it was. At the end of the summer I took a generous suite of the iron phosphates back to the Univer-

sity of Chicago and gave them to Dr. Jerry Fisher, who was mineralogy professor at the time, and he put them in a drawer with my name on them. A few years later he wrote a short paper on the cacoxenite. *(It is the yellow iron phosphate mineral.)*

Some years later when my friend Col. Jenni, Mineral Museum Curator at the University of Missouri, and I were going down to do some collecting, we wrote to Isom and had him and his brother hand-drill a few holes for us. Col. Jenni would pick up a few sticks of dynamite and would do a little blasting. Most of the specimens ended up in the mineral museum at the University of Missouri. *(One of the areas where they blasted and collected was on the Isom Avant's homestead at the now abandoned community of Shady. The Avants' house, though abandoned, was still standing there when Al and I visited the location in the late 1970s and we visited them in Mena. The other was in an area south of Buckeye Mountain just west of the north-south road. Both areas contain iron phosphate minerals in Arkansas Novaculite and are situated in Polk County).* In 1949 I got my degree and went to work for Carter Oil Company Research Laboratory in Tulsa, Oklahoma and got involved in all sorts of interesting research projects.

One person who came by in the mid-1950s was Charles Milton of the U.S. Geological Survey. Charles was gathering core material from the Uinta Basin, Utah, for one of his mineralogical projects, and the Carter Oil Company had cored through some of the hypersaline interval in which he was interested. I showed Charles some of my Arkansas iron phosphates samples and asked if he was familiar with them. He suggested that I contact Mary Mrose, one of his co-workers whose passion was describing new phosphate minerals. I contacted Mary, and she agreed to stop by Tulsa on her next trip west. Marian and I farmed out the kids and took her camping at Bard Springs, which was one of our favorite spots, and Mary and I spent two days prospecting. The last night we were sitting around the campfire and Mary said, "Al, I think we have a new mineral here, and if it is, I would like to name it after you." Naturally I expressed my appreciation and offered to help in any way I could. Following that we corresponded about once a year, but obviously little or nothing was being done on the new mineral. This was in the mid fifties.

In March, 1968, I received a letter from Dr. Paul Moore who was the new mineralogy Professor at the University of Chicago, saying that he and Don Pecor (University of Michigan) were bringing some students to Arkansas over Easter break and could I tell him how to find the location from which the samples collected in 1948 and left in the drawer at the university of Chicago might be found. It happened that he was undertaking crystal structure studies on basic ferric phosphates, which these samples appeared to be. I called him and explained that the location was very remote and hard to find, but that if he would meet me at Ocus Stanley's in Mount Ida at a certain time, I would take him to all the locations I knew. We spent two days collecting iron phosphates and camping out at Bard Springs. The last night we were sitting around the campfire and Paul said, "Al, I think we have a new mineral here, and if it is I would like to name it after you." I replied that Mary Mrose had made the same promise about ten years earlier and nothing had come of it, so she should be contacted to see if anything had been accomplished, which was nothing.

The material that he used as the type was the Fodderstack Mountain specimens that Mary and I had collected and some that I collected in 1948. Paul had difficulty getting the X-ray crystallographic data he needed to work out the crystal structure, and finally he put a sample in the camera and irradiated it for three weeks while he was away on a trip. When he returned, he had the data that was needed. Publication was in the *Mineralogical Magazine* of Great Britain in March, 1978—almost 30 years after I collected the first sample.

You may logically ask why it took so long to recognize this as a separate mineral. The answer is that with the development of more precise nondestructive methods of analysis, it is easier to recognize a mineral as being distinct from other similar minerals. Also, during the earlier days of mineralogy, more than one mineral was often lumped together as a single species. This was particularly true of the so-called basic iron phosphates as explained in a paper by Clifford Frondel entitled “The Dufrenite Problem” (*American Mineralogist*, 1949). He showed that several different iron phosphates had been lumped under the name dufrenite. He broke out the material that occurs in the early-day iron ore deposits of Rockbridge County, Virginia and called it rockbridgeite, which is also common in the Arkansas deposits. In the same paper, Frondel proposed the name laubmannite for another Arkansas phosphate that resembles andrewsite but contained no copper. The type locality given was near Buckeye Mountain in Polk County, Arkansas. It has always been difficult for me to distinguish laubmannite from the other iron phosphate minerals, and even the X-ray diffraction was not too helpful. Then, as some of you are aware, Pete Dunn officially discredited both andrewsite and laubmannite (*American Mineralogist*, 1990) as being a mixture of other iron phosphate minerals. The type laubmannite was shown to be a variable mixture of dufrenite, kidwellite, and beraunite. However, Dunn points out that a specimen given to Paul Moore by Kidwell is considered by Moore to be a non-described species which also occurs at a Swedish locality. If by any chance you are thoroughly confused by now, join the club!

Now please let me confuse you a little further. There is still another secondary mineral, presumably another iron phosphate, which occurs occasionally with kidwellite but gives an entirely different X-ray diffraction pattern. I have sent samples to Paul Moore and Pete Dunn, both of whom agree that it is a new mineral but would be very difficult to work with, and neither of them wishes to tackle it at this time. Charles Milton, true to form expressed an interest in working on it, but was just a few years too late. So you see that we still have a good possibility for at least two more iron phosphate minerals in Arkansas. There is also a need for a comprehensive, in-depth study of the basic iron phosphate minerals in the Ouachita Mountains. The results would have immediate applications in other areas such as the early Paleozoic rocks of eastern Alabama and adjacent Georgia.

Let us shift for a few minutes to a lighter subject—the formation and preservation of the Coon Creek Group, sometimes more formally known as the Coon Creek Mining and Recreational Society. We jokingly refer to it as a non-organization which has no officers and has non-meetings each year at which completely unofficial papers and discussions take place.

It began with Henry deLinde bringing some mineral specimens to the annual show of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society in the fall of 1971 because he had heard we had a free identification service. The specimens were iron phosphates and were better quality specimens than most I had seen in Arkansas, and I was not familiar with this locality. I was so excited about this new locality that I arranged to meet Henry in Arkansas as soon as possible, which I did, only to find that heavy rains had floated logs across the road and that we would have to walk five miles each way. Being somewhat younger and in good shape, we walked in, collected as much as we could carry out and walked out.

Our next visit was in February, 1973 and is considered to be the first official Coon Creek trip. It consisted of Art Smith, Henry deLinde, and me. Soon after that we started branching out to other localities and invited other people to attend. Over the years the attendees ranged from 10 to 20 at each meeting. The first couple of years we camped out, then leased a primitive deer hunter's shack, and we then graduated to Shangri-La and other motels. The group has been purposely kept small to maintain our flexibility although no one has ever been turned away. Our collecting efforts and good contacts with the United States Geological Survey mineralogists has led to the description of three minerals new to science—delindeite, lourenswalsite, mahlmoodyite—and I am sure there will be others. Our most illustrious and beloved member was Charles Milton, whom we lost in 1990 at the age of 94.

Since Al wrote his talk, an additional new mineral, artsmithite, can be added to the list. Not mentioned by Al is the long list of minerals new to Arkansas that the group collected and identified from the iron phosphate localities, the syenite at Granite Mountain near Little Rock, the wavellite deposits, and Magnet Cove. The Coon Creek group met continuously for 30 years but has had no meeting since the fall of 2002. Several collectors from the group are still actively collecting in Arkansas. So even without the inspiration and direction of Al Kidwell, our unofficial leader, the interest in Arkansas mineralogy still goes on, new finds are made, new minerals are identified, and new articles are written on Arkansas mineralogy.

Wire Wrapping Tip—Using Braided Wire

by Frankie Mayo

Midland Gem & Mineral Society member

Midland Gem & Mineral Society Newsletter 9/2007

Several of you have seen some of the wire wrapped cabochons I've done with wire that looks as if it were braided. It's a simple technique to get that particular effect; the only thing that one has to be careful of is when bending it. *Slow and easy* keeps the braid from breaking.

Twist 2, 3, or 4 strands of wire together.

Using a small hammer and anvil, place the twisted wire on the anvil, then gently flatten with the hammer.

Now use it as the center of a bail or as a replacement for the two strands of wire around the edge of a cabochon when wire wrapping. With a little creativity, it could be used in silversmithing.

Post-Show Thank You to the HGMS

by Scott Singleton

HGMS 2008 Show Chairman

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my thanks to the HGMS membership for a job well done. During a period when some of us, including me, had no electricity in our homes, we all decided that it would take more than a little hurricane to shut us down. I was quite thrilled that the membership showed up in great numbers to volunteer their time and energy at the show. We depend on your volunteer spirit to carry out such a large show as ours.

To let any interested parties know how the show went, including Federation members who may have decided not to attend our show, Phyllis George put the following text on the Web site:

“The HGMS is happy to announce that Hurricane Ike, occurring as it did two weeks prior to our combined AFMS/SCFMS/HGMS Annual Show, failed to put a damper on our spirits or on the show despite massive damage in the Houston/Galveston area. We were more than happy to share the overflow parking lot at the Humble Civic Center with CenterPoint Energy, our local electricity provider, while they sent out waves of repair trucks to restore electricity to the surrounding area.

“We are also thrilled that Hurricane Ike failed to diminish public support for our show. Paid attendance was about 75% of a non-hurricane year, and everybody had a wonderful time. Our main casualty was the School Daze program which saw the loss of all of our public schools because they were just returning to their classes after being shut down for nearly two weeks. Also a casualty was the AFMS, which cancelled their annual meeting. However, the SCFMS annual meeting was held, as was the AFMS/SCFMS competition and awards ceremony and the AFMS/SCFMS Bulletin Editors annual meeting.”

One of the reasons for our success was a bit of persistence and enthusiasm by one of our Publicity Committee members. Pat Smith works the weekend desk at Fox News, and she managed to get a cameraman out on Friday to film the kids going through the School Daze program. We have now purchased the footage from this shoot and can use it in our future publicity. Well, Pat then coerced the Friday news editor to splice together a 45-second spot for the 9 p.m. news. Pat wrote the script. We have this spot TiVo'd for our future use. She then worked the same magic on the weekend news editor, and we got another (different) 45-second spot on the Saturday 9 p.m. news (which we also have TiVo'd). My hat goes off to Pat for a remarkable bit of work for our club.

So, thanks to you all for helping make this happen. To those of you who didn't make it—you don't know what a great time you missed!

Post-Show Field Trip

by Scott Singleton

2008 Show Chairman

As per notice in the BBG and two e-mail distributions, we held a post-show field trip on October 4 to the Jasper petrified wood beds just south of Sam Rayburn Reservoir. These trips are always popular, and this was no exception. We had 24 people attend, not including our two hosts. I believe everyone had their fill of petrified wood, and none went home empty.

I've included some pictures taken by field trip participants Mike Sommers and Tamsin Jacky, including a wonderful group shot (first time I can remember taking one of these on a Jasper trip!) However, as might be guessed, not included in this picture are Tony Lucci and Carol Thompson, who decided to go down the opposite side of the parking area to another stream and were an hour late getting back to their car. You can bet they weren't empty-handed when they re-



turned. You can also bet Ron Ducote, our host, was waiting for them with his arms crossed and tapping his foot.

I went upstream to my research localities and “dug some more dirt,” as was appropriately described by Dean Lagerwall. Several people came by to keep me company. I understand that my northernmost site was guarded by a 2 ft-long water moccasin, bravely scared away by our intrepid SCFMS Safety Officer Owen Martin.

Congratulations go out to Pat Smith, who showed up appropriately attired for a field trip (yea!), even sporting cute pink rubber boots!

Stay tuned – we’ll have to go out again in the spring for another fun trip!



Where Has Our Show Banner Gone?

*by Scott Singleton
2008 Show Chair*

The Show Committee cannot find the large show banner that we have used outside of the Humble Civic Center for several years. It is a white canvas banner, 7 feet tall and 30 feet long, but it is rolled up into a cylinder 7 feet high. It used to have a canvas cover for storing it in, but I think the last we saw it, it was out of the cover. Clubhouse wizard Beverly Mace thinks that she saw it earlier this year in the clubhouse office, but it was bent (because it was too tall) and so someone might have put it in the clubhouse attic. But when the Show Committee loaded up everything for our 2008 show, it was not found. It may be there but just tucked away behind things.

What we are asking is for any word on where it might be. When was the last time anyone saw it? Has anyone seen it in the attic or anywhere else? Does anyone remember putting it up there? If so, where do you think it might be? The Show Committee thanks you very much for your help in this matter because it cost a bit of money to make that banner.

If you know of its whereabouts, please call or e-mail the crimestoppers tips line at 281-347-3646, beverly_mace@att.net (Beverly Mace) or 713-664-9033, fossilwood@comcast.net (Scott Singleton).

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.

In Our Library

by Art Smith

HGMS Librarian

I finally got the DVDs organized, and they are on the shelf in the second room. Instead of filing them with the VHS tapes, they will have the same number as the corresponding VHS tape, but they will be filed separately in numerical sequence on the first rack in the door. I found that they do not fit very well on the VHS racks, so I have replaced one and eventually will replace another as more DVDs are acquired and the VHS tapes are disposed of or put into storage. Again, sign the DVDs out on the sheet on the desk, but use the cards in the VHS tapes.

I have ordered some additional DVDs and some books but will not mention them here until we have them in hand. Like most of the other facilities at the clubhouse, our space has shrunk, and so I am always trying out different ways to utilize it the best.

The longtime publication *Lapidary Journal* has ceased publication as such and is now under the title of *Lapidary Artist*. This occurred in April, 2007. I will probably continue filing them with the older journal name because the volumes and numbers correspond to and continue the sequence. The newer issues are on the shelf, but 2007 is at the binders. It should be back by the time you read this.

Will continue to look for new publications and videos at the show and will report on any of those next month.

Beading Group Becomes a Formal New HGMS Section

by Terry Proctor

2008 HGMS President

The HGMS Board of Directors has officially recognized a new Section—the Beading Section. The group has been meeting since February 2007 at the HGMS Clubhouse, and it is the first new Section to be added since the Day Light Section first began their meetings in August of 1993. The Beading Section meetings are held on the third Saturday of each month at 1:30 p.m. in the Clubhouse.

HGMS President Terry Proctor is reviewing the HGMS Bylaws to determine which sections of the HGMS Bylaws need amending due to the inclusion of an additional Section. This increases the makeup of the Board by one, and it perhaps modifies the number required for a quorum. The term duration of the new Representative must be set, plus there may be a few other changes. These Bylaw changes will be submitted to the membership—probably in the December BBG—and thus would be voted on at our Christmas/Holiday Season Party General Meeting. These are not major changes—just the changes necessary for recognizing a new HGMS Section.

HGMS 2008 Bulletin Editors' Contest Results

by Phyllis George

HGMS Newsletter Editor and Webmaster

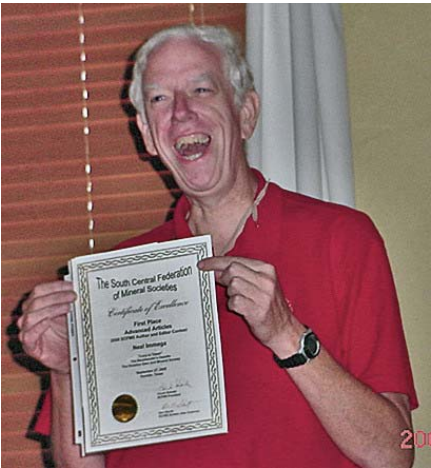
The results are in, and they are on the next page. HGMS has fantastic authors! But we have known that for years. Our sixteen entries in the SCFMS Contest earned nine trophies. Seven of the nine trophy-winning entries were then forwarded to the AFMS contest, and three won trophies at that level as well. The two entries winning trophies at the SCFMS level that were not forwarded to the AFMS were Large Bulletin and Webmaster. The BBG won first in the 2007 AFMS contest, so it cannot compete at the AFMS level for two years. And there is no AFMS Webmaster Contest, but we're working on it.

The table below shows the entry statistics for the SCFMS contest. It lists all the clubs that sent entries into the contest, shows the number of entries (every entry is awarded a certificate) from each club, and gives the total number of trophies won by those entries. Trophies are awarded to the top three entries in each category, and those entries are forwarded to the AFMS to compete at the national level.

Some Statistics

Club	Certificates	Trophies
Arlington G&MC	5	1
Austin G&MS	11	7
Dallas G&MS	2	
East Texas G&MS	4	
Fredericksburg Rockhounds	2	2
Hot Springs Geology Club	1	1
Houston G&MS	16	9
Lubbock G&MS	4	1
Paleontological Society of Austin	1	1
Pine Country G&MS	6	3
Pleasant Oaks G&MC	3	1
Total	55	26

Neal Immega wins 1st place in Advanced Adult Articles at the SCFMS level.
Photo by Bill Pattillo



SCFMS Bulletin Editors' Contest—HGMS Rankings

Advanced Adult Articles		
Rank	Name	Article Title
1	Neal Immega	Lucy in Texas
2	Mark Villanueva	Birthstones—Traditional and Alternates
3	Art Smith	Magnet Cove Rutile Sixlings and Eightlings
4	Paul V. Heinrich	The Mysterious Hico Structure, Hamilton-Erath Counties, TX
5	Scott Singleton	A Geological Investigation in East Texas
6	Terrell William Proctor	Third Best Place on Earth for Plant and Insect Fossils
Adult Articles		
1	Owen Martin	Don't Freeze When the Heat Is On
2	James Wark	Underwater Treasure Hunting
5	Denise Bicknell	The Many Varieties of Quartz
6	Matt Dillon	E rocking
Adult Poetry		
1	Terrell William Proctor	Rockhounds Come from Teachers
3	Mary Ann Mitscherling	Opal Again
4	Chris Peek	Extinction
Features		
4	Sunday Bennett	Cartoon—For All Who Are Not in the Know
Large Bulletin		
1	Phyllis George	The Backbender's Gazette
Web Site		
1	Phyllis George	www.hgms.org

AFMS Bulletin Editors' Contest—HGMS Rankings

Advanced Adult Articles		
Rank	Name	Article Title
2	Mark Villanueva	Birthstones—Traditional and Alternates
4	Art Smith	Magnet Cove Rutile Sixlings and Eightlings
HM	Neal Immega	Lucy in Texas
Adult Articles		
1	James Wark	Underwater Treasure Hunting
2	Owen Martin	Don't Freeze When the Heat Is On
Adult Poetry		
4	Terrell William Proctor	Rockhounds Come from Teachers
6	Mary Ann Mitscherling	Opal Again

Competition Exhibit Results

by Ron Carman

AFMS Uniform Rules Chairman

Here are the results from the SCFMS/AFMS show in Humble, Texas held September 26–28. Despite the difficulties after Hurricane Ike, eleven exhibits were entered in competition from three different regional federations.

(Editor's note: Ron gave all the competition results--both SCFMS and AFMS, but I'm listing only the entries from HGMS members.)

AFMS Exhibit Competition Results

David Gardner

Houston Gem & Mineral

Class BT-1

First level & Trophy 8

Ronald Carman

Houston Gem & Mineral

Class BF-3

First level & Trophy 12

Day Light Section

by Francs Arrighi

Sixteen members attended the 11 August, 2008 meeting of the Day Light Section. We worked with the patina. This particular solution needed to reach a high temperature. We had difficulty in obtaining that temperature, but the submerged metal did turn blue indicating the patina was working. By that time it was too late to start another try, but I think we could get it to work with a little practice.

For most of the patina work we used 1 x 3-inch copper or brass, 20 or 21 gauge. These pieces were cleaned very well, and the surface for patinating was not touched until the process was finished. We used recipes for the patina solutions from the book entitled, *The Colouring, Bronzing, and Patination of Metals*, by Richard Hughes and Michael Rowe. This is a very good book and is in our Library.

August was the Section's birthday month. Our first meeting was the second Monday of August, 1993, which was August the 9th. This was our 15th birthday, and we are going into our 16th year of existence. Initially we were not a Section, but several years later we were voted in as a Section. During these years we have covered a wide range of topics for our programs. Some of these were copper enameling, anticlastic forming, forging tools for chasing and repousse, keum boo, and we also tried mokume gane, inlay work, and some others. During these years we have had an almost complete turnover of members.

The September report will be in the next issue of BBG

Our November meeting will be our luncheon meeting. It will start at **12:00 noon**—earlier than our usual starting time. Bring what you brought last year. If you do not remember what you brought or are new to our group, please call me at 713-668-2576.

A Rock Is a Rock Is a Rock

To Rockhound Friends—Everywhere

by Terry Proctor

Member of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society

A rock is, well a rock, isn't it?
but that all depends, c'mon admit it.
At birth a part of the Universe
but eons later, something quite diverse.

Once created as a building block,
now some call it just a lowly rock.
A chunk of Earth's early creation
often now mixed with variation.

Your rock may be a mineral piece,
or something commercial from a lease.
Fire born of an explosive eruption
or new formed, of old rock corruption.

A rock may be an amalgamation
from subduction or sublimation
of earlier rock with heat and time
or buried forever in some slime.

Many a person just strolling by
would see only stones, which there lie.
Missing the rock's intrinsic value
as a worthless thing, laying askew.

A rock may become a precious stone
or you may find an ancient bone.
Perhaps the rock found is something new
and now it will be named after you.

A rock is only rock, to some who see
but that's not the case, for you and me.
We collect, study, and cherish our find
then share it with others, of like mind.

So You Think You and Your Right To Collect Fossils & Minerals Are Safe?

by Terry Proctor
2008 HGMS President

Think again. Congress, in its wisdom or lack thereof, is rumored to be poised to act on or about November 17, 2008 during a “Lame-Duck” Session for Land Bills, which previously was blocked by Senator Coburn. H.R. 554 is one of the bills anticipated to be included. H.R. 554 is called the Paleontological Resources Preservation Act (H.R. 554 or Act herein).

I have H.R. 554, the so-called Paleontological Resources Preservation Act, in my hand. I have also read some of the blogs about this Act. Some say the Act only spells out what is already law. Other blogs state that it protects Americans from having things taken from Public Lands which ought not to be taken. On the other hand, there are those who blog that this is but another action being taken by the U.S. Government to prevent citizens from enjoying Public Lands. They also state that the Act contains dangerous provisions that could entrap folks out collecting fossils as a family, as friends, or as groups, leading to seizure of their vehicles and their contents and to felony prosecution.

So let us look at some of the provisions and then, if you feel this Bill could end or greatly curtail us rockhounds from enjoying our avocation or possibly even bring our hobby to a halt or at least severely diminish it, you need to act promptly by contacting your own Representative and Senator and asking them to vote against H.R. 554.

The thing I notice in the very first part of H.R. 554 is that so much of the content is “subjective,” i.e. it uses words that the person or agency enforcing the Bill would be able to use in their determination of what did or did not meet the criteria of the terms used. That is bad law.

Casual collecting is purportedly okay. But looking at Sec. 2 of the Definitions, item (2) Casual Collecting, has about half dozen things which would be entirely subjective and subject to someone determining what each meant. Here is what I am talking about. Verbatim, here is what **Sec. 1 (2)** states “**CASUAL COLLECTING.**” —*The term “casual collecting” means the collecting of a reasonable amount of common invertebrate and plant paleontological (never mind that they can’t spell paleontological) resources for non-commercial personal use, either by surface collection or the use of non-powered hand tools resulting in only negligible disturbance to the Earth’s surface and other resources.* As used in this paragraph, the terms “reasonable amount,” “common invertebrate and plant paleontological resources,” and “negligible disturbance” shall be determined by the Secretary.

Later the term **Paleontological resource** is defined to mean “*any fossilized remains, traces, or imprints of organisms, preserved in or on the earth’s crust, that are of paleontological interest and that provide information about the history of life on earth,*”

except that term does not include..." (setting out archaeological resources and Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act items). It doesn't say who is going to determine what "paleontological resource" means.

This is a rather long Act and I won't even try to go too far into it, but let us just look at that first definition of "Casual Collecting." What is a "reasonable amount," and what are "common invertebrate and plant paleontological resources"? Does a reasonable amount mean boxes full in your SUV, or only what you can put in your jean's pocket? Is the Secretary of the Interior going to let you know before they seize your vehicle for forfeiture because you have 13 (a Baker's dozen and the law only allows a normal dozen, i.e. 12). Are we looking at annual limits like shooting ducks, and will there be a season?

What is non-commercial? If you ever traded one fossil on eBay, would that subject you to a felony conviction? What if you didn't trade but instead were paid \$1.00 for the fossil? Aha, that's different. Well, what does non-commercial mean? I am concerned that as different Administrations come and leave the White House every four to eight years and a new Secretary of the Interior comes and leaves at least that often, how would rockhounds know when they are just having fun or at what point they would need to learn which game to join in prison.

All tools, including hand tools, are powered. They are powered by muscles. So saying "surface collecting or the use of non-powered hand tools isn't possible. Tools don't operate by themselves without some power, including your hands, arms etc. What is "negligible disturbance"? I'm sure some firms, after taking out entire forests, would argue that when they reforested, they had done only negligible disturbance. In the Scouts I learned to "take only photos" and "leave only footprints." So if I take a 1-pound rock and leave a 1" deep depression, have I done more than negligible disturbance?

Finally, in my very short coverage of H.R. 554, let's look at what happens when you violate the law. **Sec. 7 Prohibited Act; Criminal Penalties.** What are some of the things you cannot do? **(a)(1)** sets out: *excavate, remove, damage, or otherwise alter or deface or attempt to do these things, to any paleontological resources located on Federal lands, unless done so in accordance with the Act.* **(a)(2)** You also cannot *exchange, transport, export, receive, or offer to do these things, if in the exercise of due care, the person knew or should have known such resource to have been excavated or removed from Federal lands in violation of anything in the Act* (not exact language to shorten it down). **(a)(3)** adds *sell or purchase or offer to do so and paleontological resource.* **(b)** provides you better not *falsely make a record or an account or a label for or any false identification of any paleontological resource.* Can even our best paleontologists in this nation always be 100% sure that what they identify as a given fossil will not be challenged by another well-educated paleontologist who disagrees? Come on, you members of Congress—surely you know that no one could expect rockhounds to be correct in their identification of fossils 100% of the time.

(c) Okay, now for the penalties. *A person who knowingly violates or counsels, pro-*

cures, solicits, or employs another person to violate subsections (a) or (b) shall, upon conviction, be fined in accordance with 18 United States Code or imprisoned for not more than 10 years, or both. But take heart, if the value of the item or the cost of restoration or repair does not exceed \$500.00, then you can only be fined under the same 18 USC or imprisoned for not more than one year or both. See—there is a break.

There is also a section for civil action and penalties. **Sec. 9** provides for Rewards to those who are “whistle blowers,” and more onerous is the forfeiture provisions including your “*vehicles and equipment of any person which was used in connection with the violation.*”

There are provisions to obtain a license. From my experience, even though personnel in charge of National Forests, Monuments, etc. are available, it is usually up to the manager of that U.S facility to determine if any licenses will be issued, and being over-cautious, the chance of getting a permit is virtually non-existent.

Another thought. Suppose you are only collecting minerals, but you are doing so in an area where the U.S. Government has determined that there are vertebrate fossils, making digging off limits. Could you be prosecuted for digging, even if you weren't collecting vertebrate fossils? I don't know, but is it a possibility? Probably could be.

If you wish to read the entire H.R. 554, go to <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/billtext.xpd?bill=h110-554> and read the Act yourself.

If you like what this Act will do to the rockhounding hobby, let your member of Congress know.

If you think this Act is not well written and would have the effect of putting honest rockhounds at great risk of their property being seized and of them being branded a criminal without intending any crime, then IMMEDIATELY NOTIFY YOUR MEMBER OF CONGRESS (BOTH REPRESENTATIVE AND SENATOR) AND TELL THEM TO VOTE AGAINST H.R. 554. There is no time to be lost in letting your members of Congress know of your concern.

Remember one last thing. Houston Gem & Mineral Society isn't just a bunch of folks having fun. Yes, we do that—however, we have classes to educate folks on many things, including responsibility in collecting. This year we adopted a CODE OF CONDUCT for our Club which provides also for responsibility. Annually we have given scholarships to students in Science and jewelry design. Annually we hand out many fossil, mineral, and commercial mineral identification boxes to schools all over the area to further student interest and further their education in science. Annually we have a Show where HGMS and exhibitors, at great time and expense, set up educational displays so the public can learn about paleontology, geology, jewelry making, minerals, and other scientific endeavors.

Should Congress damage or destroy this meritorious avocation, with H.R. 554? It is up to you to tell your Members of Congress what you think.

Mineral Section

by Steve Blyskal, Chairperson & Dean Lagerwall, Assistant Chairperson

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

Upcoming Meeting Topics

November 5: To be announced by E-Mail: Refreshments will be served.

November 19: To be announced by E-Mail: Refreshments will be served.

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.

September Lapidary meeting

by Stephen Wilkerson

The September lapidary meeting was cancelled due to Hurricane Ike. I salute the dedication of the three members who showed up for the meeting. And I apologize for not being able to contact anyone and let them know the meeting was cancelled.

The Lapidary Section has several positions to be filled for next year—especially Section Chairman and Board Representative. We will be discussing this in the October meeting and voting in November. If you are interested in either of these positions, please speak up.

The program for the October meeting will be given by Karen Burns. We will be making wire-strung bead earrings. Materials will cost under \$15.

The program for November will be the delayed September program on fee mining. If anyone has done any fee mining, please bring your stories and any treasures you found and still have.

General Meeting Minutes

September 23, 2008

by Nancy Fischer

HGMS Secretary

Terry Proctor called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

The minutes of the July General Meeting were approved as published in the August BBG. Chris Peak moved to accept the minutes; Neal Immega seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Rodney Linehan, Club Treasurer, reported to the Board that the Club's finances are satisfactory, but dues must be raised and new sources of revenue explored. It was suggested from the floor that a copy of the financial report be posted on the Web site.

There were no visitors or new members.

There were no Section Reports with the exception of the Beading Group. Phyllis George said they were consistently getting about six beaders or more at each meeting, and the group is now ready to apply for full Section status.

Terry Proctor spoke with the manager of the Humble Civic Center who said they had power and there were no conflicts with electricity for RVs, so the Show can go on. The AMFS cancelled, but the SCFMS is showing great support and is continuing with all of their scheduled events.

Scott Singleton said there may not be as many kids on Friday because many of the Public Schools have been closed. He expects the Private Schools and Home Schoolers to come. He said he is expecting about half the attendance that we usually get.

Phyllis George said Shiara Trumble e-mailed her for inclusion on the Web site several Internet sites that search for hotel rooms. She also put a button on the site that says "click here if your hotel reservation was cancelled."

Mary Ann Mitscherling showed the new volunteer badges that are black-on-white with a name printed in red. She said volunteers are still needed. Mary Ann also said that the Lapidary Section will have two new templates for sale at the Show.

Beverly Mace received 22 competition pieces from the Youth Group this year for the Show.

Scott announced that the Show Volunteer field trip will be to the Jasper, TX area this year to collect petrified wood.

Phyllis George announced that the deadline for the October BBG will be September 10. She informed members that the deadline for the next issue can always be found on the inside cover of the BBG.

Old Business

Terry Proctor said it can take almost two months from publication of an item for membership consideration to when the vote occurs. Neal Immega moved and Mary Ann Mitscherling seconded the motion to allow a vote on an item published in the BBG to occur at the General Meeting being held in the same month as the date on the BBG. This passed unanimously.

Terry also reminded the members that an increase in dues is under consideration as published in the August BBG. He listed many benefits of being a member of HGMS and compared the increased dues for a year to other forms of entertainment such as one night at the theatre. Neal Immega moved to accept the dues increase as suggested by the Board. Mary Ann Mitscherling seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

The dues are changed to:

Individual	\$40
Couples	\$60

Family	\$75
Children	\$25
Life Membership	\$500

The air conditioner needs to be fixed. John Mitscherling put in a bid to fix the unit basically at cost. Matt Dillon moved to accept the bid and proceed with the work. Elizabeth Fisher seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

The Board of Directors requested a change in the Bylaws with regard to what constitutes a quorum. Currently Article 3 Section 2 says that if there is no Past President, the quorum will be six. Scott Singleton moved to change the bylaws so that if there is an unassigned officer's position, the quorum will be six. Phyllis George seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

New Business

Terry Proctor formed a nominating committee that will present a slate of officers at the October General Meeting. The committee consists of Steve Blyskal, Phyllis George, Chris Peek, Steve Wilkerson, and Tom Wright. Additional nominations can be made from the floor at the October General Meeting. The election will take place at the November meeting, and no additional nominations can be made at that time. If anyone is interested in being an officer, please contact Terry. The newly elected officers will be sworn in at the Christmas Party and take office January 1, 2009.

The Christmas Party will be Saturday, December 13. More information will follow.

Show and Tell: Phyllis George brought a necklace she purchased while on a trip to Orcas Island, Washington. It was made with three strands of 3 mm labradorite faceted stones supporting a sterling pendant set with blue moonstones and blue topaz. She also displayed a blue-green fluorite mineral specimen encrusted with pyrite crystals. It was purchased at the same time..

Door Prize: Sigrid Stewart brought in the door prize this month which was a flat-bottomed piece of black jade. Dallas Higgs won the door prize.

Program: Gary E. Longren, Lunar Section Samples Curator for the Johnson Space Center, talked about how NASA catalogs and maintains extra-terrestrial samples and distributes them to qualified scientists. Mr. Longren said he felt right at home at HGMS since he has 2,000 rocks that he has collected over 40 years.

He said that NASA has five types of samples:

- Apollo rocks and soil from the moon
- Antarctic meteorites (kept at the Smithsonian)
- Cosmic dust from asteroids and comets
- Solar wind from the Genesis Mission
- Comet and interstellar dust from the Stardust Mission

He described how each was collected and is cared for. He also talked about how the different samples are distributed to scientists.

NASA will have a moon rock on display at our Show.

HGMS Board Meeting Minutes

October 7, 2008

by Nancy Fischer, Secretary

X	President	Terry Proctor	X	Faceting Rep.	Phyllis George
	1 st Vice President			Lapidary Rep.	Karen Burns
	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 7:20 p.m. by Terry Proctor, President, and a quorum was present.

September 2008 Board of Directors Minutes were distributed via e-mail. Matt Dillon moved to accept the minutes as distributed. Rodney Linehan seconded the motion. It was unanimously accepted.

Treasurer's Report: Rodney Linehan e-mailed the September Financials to the Board prior to the meeting. Several Board members had questions about the Show financial details. Rodney said he did not have enough information yet since not all the bills have been submitted.

Committee and Section Reports:

Phyllis George is expecting 15 or 16 people at the next meeting of the Beading Group, Saturday, October 18.

Phyllis also reminded the Board that the deadline for the BBG is October 8. The deadline is always the Wednesday before the second Saturday.

Phyllis reported that Scott Singleton thought that the paid "walk-in" Show attendance was about 75% of last year's attendance.

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 asked for an update on establishing the Building Fund. Rodney Linehan asked if it would be possible to open the account for the Fund at the International Bank of Commerce (IBC) which is in his office building and would be much easier to administer. Tom Wright moved to allow the IBC be the repository for the Building Fund. Matt Dillon seconded the motion. It passed unanimously. Terry Proctor will write a resolution for the bank to name Rodney, Beverly Mace, and the president as authorized signatures.

There was a discussion about moving the remaining accounts. Rodney said he

would see if it made sense to move the other accounts. Matt Dillon moved to authorize moving all the accounts to IBC. Phyllis George seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

2. Tom Wright inquired about the status of bonding the Treasurer and possibly other officers. Rodney will check on the cost.
3. Rodney said he had the information ready for audit. He will get in touch with Farrar Stockton, a Club member who has agreed to perform the audit.
4. Terry Proctor wrote a letter to Bill Rogers to tell him about the change in the Education Chair. Terry had tried to reach Bill by phone and e-mail with no luck.
5. John Mitscherling reported that the price of the part he needed to repair the air conditioner has doubled, so he would not be able to make the repair at the bid price. It was decided that since it was getting cooler, the other unit will be able to keep the building cool while the Board and John explore other places to get the part. The feeling was that part of the increase may have been due to Hurricane Ike. Matt Dillon will get the details from John.
6. Tom Wright wrote a letter to the Board suggesting that the Club change the date of the Show so it no longer is during hurricane season. He included a survey of the average number of hurricanes by month since 1926. September had the most. October only had one. Matt Dillon said he had conversations with a few of the dealers, most of whom were in favor of changing the date. One of them mentioned that in light of the cancellation two years ago and the uncertainty this year, if it happened again, they would not return.

Several things were discussed, such as when schools were in session and conflicts with other established shows. It was decided possible dates were from the beginning of October to the middle of November. Terry Proctor will check with the Humble Civic Center about open dates. Rick Rexroad will send exploratory letters to the dealers to see what effect changing the date would have on the Show and which dates would be preferable to most dealers.

7. The membership application from a special needs person was discussed.
8. Terry Proctor reported that shipping the stop blocks costs almost as much as the cost of the blocks themselves. Matt Dillon said he would check on several local dealers.
9. Denise Bicknell asked that the front door be left unlocked during meetings to be in compliance with many levels of law. Tom Wright will change the lock on the side door. The lock on the front door is fine.
10. Tom Wright will take care of the copier starting in January. Supplies will be paid for from the Club's general fund.
11. Getting a multi-year contract from the Humble Civic Center to lock in rates was discussed. Rick Rexroad moved that the Club negotiate with the HCC in this re-

gard. Phyllis George seconded the motion. It was approved unanimously. Terry Proctor will proceed.

12. Phyllis George requested that the Club consider adding the Beading Group as a Section. Matt Dillon moved to form the Beading Section. Denise Bicknell seconded the motion which passed unanimously. It will take effect in January. Tom Wright and Terry Proctor will go over the Bylaws to make the necessary changes.

Matt Dillon moved to adjourn the meeting. Phyllis George seconded.

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

A Hurricane Cancels the AFMS Meetings!

*by Shirley Leeson
2008 AFMS President
from AFMS Newsletter 11/2008*

Hurricane Ike struck Texas on Friday, September 12, 2008. Anyone watching the devastating pictures on TV was shocked at the destruction. I began trying to reach HGMS club members on Sunday, September 14, 2008. Power was out big time which in turn affected phone and e-mail service. I spent the next few days calling those club members I could reach as well as our host hotel and many nearby hotels to ascertain whether they would be open and able to accommodate our group.



Initially, the news was good, but by Thursday things began to unravel. When I called the host hotel manager for perhaps the third or fourth time (he never returned my calls), I learned that he could not guarantee our rooms because they were required to fill the needs of FEMA and of the emergency responders. I checked with several others in the area and received similar news—or news that they were heavily damaged and could not guarantee that repairs would be finished in time for our arrival. The AFMS Bylaws (Article V, Meetings, Section 4) specify that “In the event of ...or other great national emergencies, the annual meeting of the Board ...shall not be held.”

At this point I spoke to Steve Weinberger, our Central Office administrator, and asked him to send out a blanket statement that the AFMS meetings were cancelled. This action was not taken lightly. I weighed all the problems that would arise from this decision, but in the end it was necessary. I could not ask people to fly or drive to Houston only to be met by “no rooms at the Inn.” In a subsequent e-mail to everyone who had preregistered, I asked each to decide if they would donate their preregistration fees to help with expenses. The response was overwhelming.

While I was making this agonizing decision, Shiara Trumble, the club’s liaison to the AFMS, Scott Singleton, Show Chair, and others were working feverishly to get the show up and running. Frustration was running high since they had to renegotiate contracts for the various functions—the caterer’s power was down and refrigeration was out, and of course, the AFMS meetings were cancelled. Through lots of hard

work and long hours, the club finally was able to determine that the show would go on as planned, and the South Central Federation meetings would be held as well.

Carolyn, Steve, Dee and I began contacting everyone we thought might be attending and let them know. E-mails by the hundreds were sent and received. Calls were made to those from whom we had not yet heard but knew had preregistered to see if they had received the message. The last person finally contacted us on Tuesday, September 23rd!

Some alternate plans for AFMS activities were made. I authorized Ron Carman, the AFMS Uniform Rules Chair who would be attending the show, to judge exhibits that qualified for AFMS and those that might come in as direct entries. Awards for these were presented at the Banquet on Saturday evening...

In consultation with Joy Bourne, our AFMS Endowment chair (and also AFMS President-elect), it was decided that Joy would delay the Endowment drawing until October 15 to allow for receipt of ticket sales that were going to be hand delivered to her in Humble. She will announce the results next month after members of her home club make the drawing. Prizes will be mailed to the winners.

Results of the Bulletin Editors Competition are listed elsewhere in this newsletter. *(Editor's Note: Only the HGMS results are included in this BBG.)*

Your elected officers and directors will vote on the New Business from the meeting agenda by mail. In addition, non-controversial items from the annual Uniform Rules meeting will be voted on by URC members via a mail ballot, as will items from the Scholarship Meeting agenda. Results of the votes will be reported in the December AFMS Newsletter.

While there was not a physical presence of the AFMS, we were all there in spirit. My personal congratulations to Shiara Trumble, liaison to the AFMS; Scott Singleton, Show Chairman; Phyllis George, a lady of great insight and determination; Emerson Tucker, AFMS 1st Vice President and resident of Lubbock, TX, who was helping get the word out; and to the members of the HGMS Show Committee and club members of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society for their determination and their undying commitment to putting on the show. Again, my heartfelt sympathy to the Houston Gem & Mineral Society who were ready to put on the best darn AFMS/SCFMS show in Texas. The show went on as scheduled; we applaud them.



AFMS—Greetings from the Endless Mountains of Pennsylvania!

*by Joy Bourne, 2009 AFMS President
from AFMS Newsletter 11/2008*

It is my great privilege and honor to have been elected to serve in the office of President of the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies for 2008–09. I will do my very best to fill the very big “shoes” of Shirley Leeson, who has left a raft of new committees and ideas for the growth of our American Federation. This also means, among other things, that you will not be subjected to my newsletter articles touting the annual AFMS Endowment Fund Drawings for awhile! Dee Holland will be taking up the reins for the Endowment Fund, and I am sure we could not have found a better person for the job!



By way of introduction, my home Federation is EFMLS for which I served as 2nd Vice-President and briefly as 1st Vice-President. As First Vice-President, I was called upon to fill the President's position when, after only 19 days in office, the elected President regretfully resigned in order to attend to an unexpected family emergency.

In 2001, I was elected to my own term in the office of President. So, the business of coordinating presidential responsibilities is not entirely foreign to me. I actually served two terms in that post for EFMLS. Other offices which I have filled for EFMLS include Bulletin Advisory Chairman, Geology Chairman, and Wildacres Functioning Committee member. For AFMS, in addition to serving as Regional Vice President several times, I have served as AFMS Endowment Fund Chairman since 2004.

I am delighted to note that Past President Shirley Leeson has in place a terrific slate of officers and committee chairmen, most of whom will remain on board to continue to do the real work of the Federation. I thank all of these fine people for their past performance, and look forward to working with each and every one of them.

We currently have three Ad-Hoc committees working on committees that are evaluating existing programs and implementing some new trial programs. These latter will be evaluated and voted upon to add new programs to those now being offered to benefit the Regional Federations and clubs of our organization.

These committees include the Ad Hoc Contests & Competitions Study, chaired by Ron Carman; an Ad Hoc Inter-Federation Field Trips program chaired by Dick Pankey, and a brand-new Ad Hoc Webmaster's Contest headed up by Phyllis George.

In addition to the expertise of all these special people, I have the additional advantage of having access to experts Shirley Leeson and Carolyn and Steve Weinberger, who have both indicated that they are willing and able to provide advisement to keep me on the right track, should I stray. How lucky can one person get?

Until next month, Joy

Slogging and the Safe Alternative to Bending Over and Hurting Your Back. BUT... Prepare to get dirty!

by Owen Martin

SCFMS Safety Coordinator

from SCFMS Newsletter 9–10/2008

Slogging is the art of searching for fossils like a kid—you know, three feet tall with perfect vision.

After all, how many times have we been somewhere and those “close to the ground” little kids are just making a killing on small rocks and fossils.

Okay, so “slogging” is not so much art as it is crawling in the mud, dirt, sand, or even shallow water.

The benefits are many and should be considered:

- Not straining your vision
- Not straining your back
- Finding more stuff
- Getting excited and thrashing around like a fish out of water
- Looking like the loser of a mud-wrestling match
- A really clear-looking complexion
- Spa treatments like this usually cost \$100 or more!

All really good things in my mind.

So, slogging can be a fun and easy way to rockhound, but keep in mind that long clothes, heavy duty shoes or boots, gloves, and knee pads are still recommended to keep you safe. Broken glass, sharp rocks, scrap metal, snakes, spiders, fire ants, etc. need to be considered when slogging. Know where you are!

Thus, as I've written before, situational awareness is ALWAYS important. Several years ago I was scuba diving in the Pacific and looking for shells. As I was cruising over the reef, I looked up to see where I was going and was face-to-face with a 6½-foot long Moray eel with a head about the same size as mine. We were less than a foot from each other, and it looked closer due to magnification of the water. Luckily my mask looked like one big huge eye, so it didn't attack me—that would have made it a very bad day. I do have scars from some scrapes with some smaller moray eels. They have teeth like a barracuda, but jaws like an alligator. My situational awareness was poor on that occasion, and it almost caused me a big problem!

So if you try slogging, have fun and stay safe.

On a side note, the most dangerous part of slogging is when your spouse sees how dirty you got the car. So be careful out there!

2008 Show Photos Taken by John Mitscherling

Thursday night Dealer Appreciation Dinner: Top--Scott Singleton addressing the group. Bottom: Shiara Trumble is applauded for the great job she did in coordinating the participation of national and regional federations following the devastation of Hurricane Ike.





Beverly Mace and ???
working in Youth Booth



Art-N-Nature
booth



A NASA moon rock on left; Kathy Konkell preparing for a casting demonstration on the right.



Kids having a great time at the Dino Dig

Steve Blyskal and Wayne Barnett analyzing the results after the Swap Area closed.



Walt Whittington, owner of Dinosaurs Rock, demonstrating the oarge bite of one of his collection.



Terry Proctor educates Scouts about fossils and what they are.



The nationally recognized Rock Food Table

Bill and Lois Pattillo originated this display years ago, and they add to it constantly.

Terry Brawner discussing Paleontology with a group of Scouts.



ShowTime 2008

November 1-2	Midland, TX	Midland Gem & Mineral Society Midland Center, 105 N. Main St. (corner of Wall and Main); Sharon Musselman, (432) 687-2177; mgms@mgms-tx.com;
November 7-9	Pascagoula, MS	Mississippi Gulf Coast Gem & Mineral Soc. Civic Center Bldg, Jackson County Fairground Short Cut Road; John M. Wright 228-875-9192; osjbw@datasync.com
November 7-9	Tulsa, OK	Rocky Mountain Federation Show Tulsa Rock & Mineral Society; Tulsa County Fairgrounds, 21st & Yale; Richard Jaeger 918 481-0249, RjgrSci@aol.com; www.TTownRockhound.org
November 8-9	Round Rock, TX	Paleontological Society of Austin Fossil Fest 2008 at Old Settler's Park Next to the Dell Diamond; 512-422-2322 Linda McCall, www.texaspaleo.com lndmccall02@yahoo.com
November 8-9	Amarillo, TX	Golden Spread Gem & Mineral Society Amarillo Civic Center, 401 S. Buchanan Dee Hawkins, 806 372-3949 jimsgems56@yahoo.com
November 8-9	Leesville, LA	DeRidder Gem & Mineral Society Beauregard Parish Exhibit Hall, next to Hwy 171 North; Adam Valin (337) 585-3693 and Dan Venazi (337) 463-9567
December 5-7	El Paso, TX	El Paso Mineral & Gem Society El Maida Auditorium, 6331 Alabama Jeanette Carrillo, (915) 533-7153 gemcenter@aol.com

ShowTime 2009

January 17-18	Fredericksburg, TX	Fredericksburg Rockhounds Lady Bird Johnson Municipal Park
January 24-25	Tyler, TX	East Texas Gem & Mineral Society Rose Garden Center
Jan. 31-Feb. 1	Panama City, FL	Panama City Gem & Mineral Society Bay Cnty Fairgrds, US 98 & Sherman Av Al Zar, 850 784-0740; aquezpie@aol.com

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

2008		December				2008
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 7:30 Board Meeting	3 7:30 Mineral Section	4	5	6 10-5 Shop Open 10-12 Youth Section 1:30 Beading Group
7	8 NO Day Light Section	9 7:30 Show Committee	10 7:30 Faceting Section	11	12	13 10-2 Shop Open 5:30 Christmas Party
14	15 NO Lapidary Section	16 NO Paleo Section	17 NO Mineral Section	18	19	20 10-5 Shop Open NO Youth Section
21 Hanukkah	22	23 NO General Meeting	24	25 Christmas Day	26	27 10-5 Shop Open
28	29	30	31			

The BACKBENDER'S GAZETTE

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

10805 BROOKLET

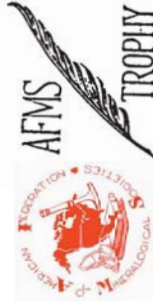
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