



# *The* **BACKBENDER'S GAZETTE**

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

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**December 2009**



## **President's Message**

*2009—The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly  
by Terry Proctor*

**I**f you saw the picture by this title, it was an interesting and good Clint Eastwood western. However, I am referring to OUR year at HGMS.

Let's start with the negative first, as it is small.

### **The Bad:**

1. Recovering from Hurricane Ike, which Houston, as usual, bounced back from with much less complaining and looking for handouts than most other cities hit with a similar disaster;
2. A year of economic downturn which has hit some of our members hard, and we keep you in our thoughts and prayers to eventually come out on top more than ever.
3. Some of our HGMS stalwarts and others have been hit with serious health problems and a few deaths this year. Again we will keep you and your families in our



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*Continued on page 4*

## **Upcoming General Meeting Programs**

**N**ovember 24, 2009: Patrick J. Lewis, PhD will present, and you won't want to miss it! Dr. Lewis presented outstanding programs in 2007 and 2008 for HGMS' General Meeting.

In 2007 he told us of his trip to Egypt where his group discovered the oldest known primate and found the most pre-historic primates in one location.

In 2008 he described his trip to Botswana and his discovery of the oldest known black rhino. He also told us what he found during his digs in a cave in South Africa.

This year, Dr. Lewis will present "Driefontein: Life in an Early Triassic Lake." He dug in South Africa again this past summer, and he has located an early B.D. Triassic site (B.D. means before dinosaurs). He plans to return to that location next sum-

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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>.

## *President's Message continued from page 1*

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prayers and thoughts and ask that you let us, *your friends*, know of your needs and how we can assist you.

### **The Ugly:**

The only really ugly thing this year was the passage of the ill-named Paleontological Preservation Act, which doomed fossils to remain on and in the ground to be destroyed by erosion and other natural destruction because our Congress made it illegal to pick them up, even though in many instances they would be given or loaned to a museum for public display.

### **Now the Good,** and there is a lot of it.

1. In spite of the economic downturn, the HGMS members voted unanimously at the Public Meeting for the first dues increase in about 10 years, helping to ensure that HGMS stands financially sound.

2. Our Education Chair this year, Brian Honsinger, together with his great class instructors, has turned out a banner year of educational programs plus good revenue to HGMS, again to help keep us financially sound.

3. We started the OUTREACH PROGRAM this year, and so far we have had at least four educational sessions in three of our Districts. The Outreach Program provides FREE education to youth and adults, lets more people know about HGMS, and provides a basis to let grant sources know that we are indeed serious about education and that we can use some grants to help us carry out our HGMS educational programs.

4. James Burrell installed new motion detector light switches (to cut down on our electric bill), Robert Stevens and Matt Dillon got our new stop blocks installed in the parking area replacing the broken, dangerous ones that members have complained about for many months, and Robert replaced the ballasts and lights in our main meeting room to get us out of the dark.

5. Shop Supervisor Neal Immega and our other Supervisors continued to keep shop equipment running.

6. Phyllis George and Beverly Mace kept the BBG coming to us by Phyllis editing and creating it and Beverly mailing and e-mailing it. HGMS members wishing to receive it by e-mail (and saving on the postage of mailing a hardcopy) also now have that privilege.

7. Sigrid Stewart and Rick Rexroad along with a cast of hundreds (as least we can hope) have the 2009 Show ready to open on November 13–15 (and by the time you get this BBG, this probably will be another occasion added to our successful history).

8. Our New Member Orientation was a huge success with over 60 in attendance, including 40 new members. Shortly we will be announcing a new member SHOP ORIENTATION program to let our new members know the ropes—i.e. how to use

the equipment, rules for using the shop, fees for using the equipment, HGMS regulations, and an opportunity to meet the Supervisors who run the Shop. Supervisor badges are on the way, as is a list with photos of these Supervisors to be posted. Non-members are not allowed to use our facilities unless they join HGMS, and this will be enforced more stringently. The Shop Supervisors will be providing greater supervision of things going on in the Shop for member safety and to prevent damage or loss of equipment. See Neal Immega's article (page 6) regarding a near-disaster situation that Brian Honsinger recently discovered in one of the classrooms.

Actually the list of GOOD things and GOOD MEMBERS who see that good things happen could go on for a long time, but I have limited space. Failure to list your name here doesn't mean you are overlooked. If you are a trooper for HGMS, you are appreciated for your time, effort, interest, and contribution to the continued success of our great club. Thanks to all of you for a great 2009 as we sail into 2010 with enthusiasm. We're ready to have more fun and to provide more education in Earth Science and Lapidary Arts.

I received an e-mail today from Ike House, a Louisiana Dentist, who is the Chair of the South Central Federation of Mineral Societies (our regional federation of the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies). Here is one thing Ike said in his e-mail "Phyllis has to haul a wheelbarrow out of the AFMS and SCFMS awards ceremonies because of you and the other fine contributors to the BBG. You are to be commended as easily the most involved club in the SCFMS, perhaps the whole AFMS." This is high praise from our Regional Chair. We have had similar recognition from others in the AFMS and SCFMS, including Shirley Leeson, last year's President of the AFMS who is now Vice President of the ALAA.

For your information, I have been asked to be the Conservation Legislation Chair for the SCFMS and to be the Texas Representative to the ALAA (American Land Access Association) (which is supported by the AFMS) to try to get things to the point where we rockhounds can go onto public lands and dig within reason for minerals, fossils, and gemstones. Dick Pankey is President of the ALAA, and Shirley Leeson is this year's Vice President of the ALAA. We are fighting to regain your right to collect minerals, fossils, and gemstones on public lands.

Your Board of Directors voted for HGMS to join ALAA, which we have now done. Yes, you can join personally, and I will ask our webmaster, Phyllis George, to have that link on the Web site if it is not already there. We all need to support the ALAA in gearing up to make changes to the Paleontological Preservation Act that would allow us to again collect on federal lands. *Editor's Note: The ALAA logo has been added to the AFMS and SCFMS logos currently on the left side of the HGMS Web site page. Clicking on the ALAA logo brings up the ALAA Web site. For those interested in joining the ALAA, their membership form is located after Dick Pankey's article about the ALAA on page 29.*

In paying your HGMS 2010 dues, when you fill out the renewal form, we ask that you provide your JP Precinct # (which is on your Voter Registration Card) as this is also

your HGMS DISTRICT NUMBER. This year a number of HGMS members have indicated an interest in the OUTREACH PROGRAM, but they either didn't know their district number or didn't provide it. They didn't know who else was in their District. By obtaining your District number (i.e. your J.P./Constable Pct #), I can help put interested HGMS members together and get the OUTREACH PROGRAM rolling in your District. Neal Immega will take Genie rock grinding/polishing machines out, OR I can provide Natural Science videos, OR you can put together an interesting program with your own rocks, gems, fossils, minerals, etc. We want to let more people know what a great organization HGMS is and to provide greater Earth Science and Lapidary Arts education—then we will go to the companies who give out GRANTS and ask them to support us and this work. But we need HGMS members to contact me and let me know of your interest. Thank you.

In closing, Isn't it great to be a member of HGMS? Don't you wish more of your family and friends were? When was the last time you invited someone to a meeting, to the Shop, on an educational class or other HGMS activity to acquaint them with HGMS? To borrow from Wolf Brand Chili. "Well neighbor, that's too long."

### **Upcoming Programs for General Meeting** continued from page 1

mer and to do much more work on that site. You won't want to miss this interesting presentation, even if you aren't a paleo person.

**December 12, 2009, Saturday—6 p.m. Annual Christmas party:** The Club, as usual, will provide the meat (turkey and barbecue cooked by Patricia Hildbold and assistants) with members to bring sides, salads, desserts, and other things. We will have an auction again this year with HGMS member James Wark, a licensed auctioneer, so bring your items early so they can be given a number and placed on tables for pre-auction inspection.

**December 22, 2009—NO General Meeting tonight**

### **Please Don't Blow Up Our Clubhouse—Treat Gas Bottles with Respect**

*by Neal Immega  
HGMS Shop Supervisor*

One of our eagle-eyed Shop Supervisors spotted a situation with some really explosive potential. Look at the picture of our oxygen tank.

**1<sup>st</sup> Problem:** Brian Honsinger found that the valve of the oxygen tank in the metal-working shop was left open. It was forced so hard to the open position that it required a wrench to close it.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Problem:** The handle on the gas regulator on this oxygen tank was forced full on, putting 50 pounds of pressure in the oxygen line.

**Safety Hazard:** Our shop uses natural gas as delivered from the street at 6 ounces of pressure. You probably could not get the torches to function with 50 pounds of oxy-

gen, but if you could, you might force pure oxygen into the gas line. I do not know if the gas meter would prevent the oxygen from getting into the trunk line, but it give me the creeps to think of mixing oxygen and methane. This sounds really explosive.

### Bad Practice: It

is *never* necessary to jam gas valves to the extreme of open or closed. The valve has a seat that seals at ordinary hand tightening. This applies to the acetylene, propane, oxygen, and water valves we have at the shop.

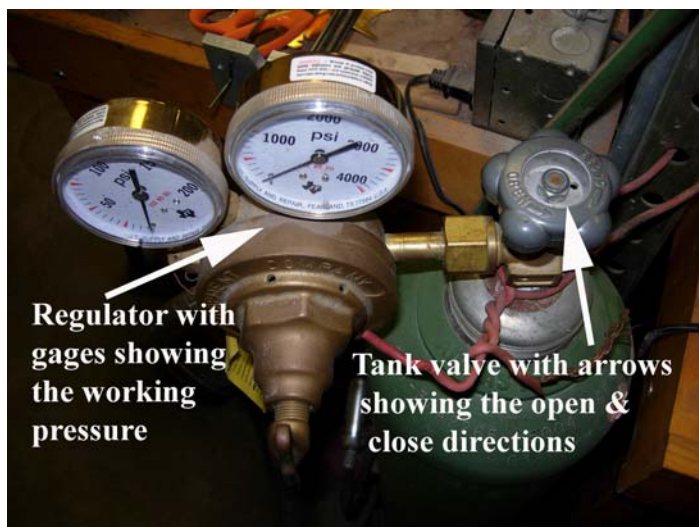
**Read the label:** Notice that the valve has arrows on it that show the directions for open and closed. The regulator has 3-inch dial gauges showing the pressure you are putting on the line. I find that people frequently ignore the signs in the grinding shop saying “Do not adjust this valve,” but no one dies from water. Why am I surprised that people ignore the signs on high pressure gas bottles?

**Preaching:** When you are in the shop and don’t know how to do something, ASK. If something breaks, **report it, don’t just sneak off**. You know—follow the rules you learned in kindergarten, and things will be much better for all.

**Solutions:** I do not expect anyone to “fess up” to this problem, and so I invite the members to comment on the proposed solutions.

1. Require people to sign into a room and pick up a badge showing that you have signed in.
2. Allow only people whose skills are known to the Supervisor to work alone in a classroom.
3. Don’t let anyone work in a classroom without a Supervisor present.
4. Put locking caps on the oxygen and acetylene gas bottles. Only Supervisors would be able to open them.
5. Ask people to read the signs.
6. Ask people to ask the shop Supervisor for help.
7. Emphasize this potential hazard in the required shop safety classes.

Please, help us find a solution before our lawyer president either welds the door shut to totally eliminate risk or makes us all join the Beading Section.





## A Rockhound Christmas

*No author given.*

*via the Roadrunner 12/2008*

**T**was the night before Christmas,  
And in my rock room  
My unfinished projects  
Filled my heart with gloom

I started them all  
So that I could send  
A piece of my hobby  
To all of my friends.

I'd start on one project,  
Then get something new.  
I'd start on another,  
What else could I do?

So now I am faced  
With these unfinished things,  
And I cannot describe  
How much sorrow it brings.

But no! I'm not beaten!  
My time isn't gone!  
I'll finish these things  
If it takes until dawn!

A jewel box for Sara,  
Bracelets for the twins,  
Earrings for my boss,  
And now my fun begins.

A crystal for Bobby,  
A cab for Aunt Sue,  
A necklace for Cathy,  
Now I'm almost through.

A gem tree for Grandma,  
A ring for my wife.  
(She'll cherish its beauty  
The rest of her life.)

Now just one last project  
For under the tree.  
A tough piece of work,  
But this one's for me!







I'm finished and hope that  
Dear Santa is fleet.  
The project I've just done  
Is a filled order sheet!

It's been a long night,  
But it sure has been fun.  
Merry Christmas, you all!  
Now get YOUR projects done.

## Creating the DinoDig Flats

*article and photos by Nancy Fischer*

On Sunday, November 1, a hardy troop of volunteers met at Tom Lammer's shop to make the flats for the Dino Dig in preparation for our show. Tom provided the tools, wheelbarrow, concrete mix, and excellent supervisions.

The others worked diligently to prepare over 120 flats. Lexy Bieniek, Joan Riley, Nancy Fischer, and Lorraine Singleton delicately and deliberately placed dinosaurs, jewels, and



Planting Dinosaurs



petrified wood into the poured wet concrete. Lorraine placed a hand print and a stem of leaves in each flat.

Neal Immega, Scott Singleton, Mike Dawkins and Jim Kwolek expertly mixed and poured the concrete into the flats. Donuts fueled the whole endeavor.

Left: Tom Lammers supervising

## Remembrances Of An Old Geezer

### *Korean War, Chapter Two*

*by John Emerson*

**A**fter the timing gear problem at De Funiak Springs, FL, Bobbie and I started on to Ft. Belvoir. To quote from Bobbie's notes on our travels: "Little did I know that my gypsy-like way of life was just beginning and the tourist just emerging! Driving through the Great Smoky Mountains followed by the Blue Ridge Mountains was enchanting. Pictures in History and Geography books didn't do them justice. I just stood in a parking lot in South Carolina savoring my first snow fall."

It was my first snow too. Of course later, when we lived in Norway, we got sick of it!

Upon arriving in the Ft. Belvoir area (very near Washington DC), we rented an apartment on the second floor of a private home in Occoquan, VA. It was not very private, and after I reported to the Engineer OCS at Belvoir and was "locked in," Bobbie found an apartment in Lorton, VA. Much closer to the Fort and consisted of one and one half remodeled tourist cabins. The owners had split the middle cabin into a series of three and made a kitchen and dining area in each half. Very small, but quite comfortable for when I could get out of the Fort.

Having just been married, I was very careful to not receive any demerits requiring me to stay in the Fort over the weekends! Again my experience at A&M was a great help. Also one of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Cadre was a "Fish" at A&M while I was a sophomore! Fortunately we had been friends, and I had not hazed him! Bobbie became friends with his wife, who showed her "the ropes" of being a military wife.

As a Sergeant First Class (three strips up and one down), my pay was \$135.00 per month. To back up a tad, after the auto accident I sued the estate of the other driver. His attorney settled for \$15,000. Of that my attorney got \$5,000, and I gave Dad \$5,000 to cover my hospital bills. I was rich! This was 1951 and \$5,000.00 was a lot of money, so we could live comfortably on the \$135.00 plus our joint savings and as back up, the wreck money.

I was one of 64 in the class for the six-month course of the third class of Engineer Officer Candidate School. Only 36 of us made it to graduation, and that was the largest graduating class at that time.

This six-month "semester" explains why I spent so much time in California after the 40th Division left for Japan. I was in a "holding pattern" waiting for an opening at the school. No mention was made of the broken neck, and I was not about to point it out! Here was at least another six months out of Korea.

Bobbie amused herself by watching the House of Representatives and the Senate make fools of themselves.

Since her mother trained her in keeping house, washing dishes and ironing, but not cooking, she bought a copy of "The Joy of Cooking" in Washington and set about

learning. I still have that original book. Since she turned out to be a real chef, I had a weight problem all of our married life! It was a real break from the Army grub at the Fort.

As I mentioned, our apartment was close to the Fort. At night on the weekends we could hear the machine guns on the obstacle course. Very romantic!

For some reason near the end of the course, the Commanding General's wife took a liking to Bobbie and invited her to attend the Officers wives club meetings. It made her very nervous to be the only wife of an officer candidate at the meetings with so many wives of high ranking officers, but of course, she could not refuse.

I graduated as top of the class and was given a commission as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant and a "Diploma of Graduation With Distinction" on April 8, 1952. As a prize I received a one year's membership in the Fort Belvoir Post, Society American Military Engineers and an offer to be made a Regular Army Officer. I tried to be graceful when I refused the Regular Commission. I wanted to be a Petroleum Engineer, not be in the Army. That was the first clue I had that I had been chosen to be a Cadre for the next class of OCS. Hallelujah!!! Another six months delay to Korea! My pay was increased to \$250.00!

We now moved to an apartment in Alexandria, VA. It is to Washington DC as Bellaire is to Houston. With our new-found freedom and wealth, we started "touristing" the North East including New York City where we found a classmate of ours from dear old Alice High who got us tickets to one of the more famous plays. (Forgive me—I cannot remember which one it was). His name was John Moore, and he had lived about a block from my parents house in Alice. He had become a successful women's clothes designer. His roommate was an older, already well established, successful designer.

When we left Alice, my father-in-law gave us a small TV which we had not turned on while living in Lorton, VA, since we had no antenna. The Alexander apartment had one that we could use. I would come home from the Fort, take my uniform off in front of the TV while watching one of the three channels available in Washington. We would continue to watch this marvel while we ate and until we went to bed.

When the 4th class of Engineer OCS graduated, I received orders for Treasure Island again to go to Korea. I couldn't think of anything else to delay it, so we drove to Alice for a "delay in route" to California.

**Again I quote Bobbies Remembrances:** "Before leaving me in Alice and reporting for a tour of duty in Korea, John purchased a new, 1951, beautiful, two-tone brown Chevrolet for me. He had leave, and we drove from Alice to his port of departure (Treasure Island) in California. Along the way we toured the Grand Canyon and rode mules along the Bright Angel Trail to spend the night at Phantom Ranch on the Canyon floor. I remember exquisite scenery and very sore muscles! Los Angeles was next and a short ferry trip to Avalon, Catalina Island. For some reason what I remember most about Catalina was the exotic birds in a zoo. California Hwy 1 through the

Big Sur was just beautiful trees. However, the best trip I made in that 1951 Chevy was the drive from Alice to Austin, Texas, Airport to collect my husband back from Korea!"

What I remember most about the mule trip was the mules insistence about walking on the outside edge of the trail and the soreness on the front of my a## going down and the back of it coming up.

To be continued.

## Susan Lenz Update

*by Norm Lenz*

**D**ear Fellow Rockhounds,  
Susan continues to do well since my last update May 17. Her latest MRI, of September 8, indicates that she is still in remission. The news of Ted Kennedy's death from this Glioblastoma Multiforme brain cancer last August reminded us just how blessed we are that Susan has been one of the exceptions to the rule. She has reached and maintained remission status.

We enrolled Susan in the TIRR Challenge program.

<http://www.memorialhermann.org/locations/tirr/forconsumers/content.aspx?id=3888>

It is an intensive team therapy program designed only for traumatic brain injury patients. It runs 6 hours per day for 3-4 days per week. They have specialized equipment and access to a pool for water therapy. It doesn't get any better than this. If TIRR cannot get her back on her feet, nobody can. She starts Monday morning at 9:00 a.m.

We are moving forward with building our Hill Country retirement home in San Marcos TX. Our house plans have been approved by our Property Owners Association and sent to prospective builders for bids. I've asked for their bids by November 15. The new house will be constructed with wheelchair or power chair access in mind.

### Positives:

- Susan's latest MRI indicated she continues to be in remission.
- She has maintained the improvements I mentioned in my last update (alertness is good, mood is usually good, memory is almost normal again, verbal communication is normal, feeding herself with only minor assistance from us)
- Seizures remain few and far between—two since my last update
- Medication changes have been minimal.

### Negatives:

- Susan can still only walk with our assistance and now only about 10 feet or so.
- She has left side neglect. That means she forgets to involve her left side in activities. She sometimes doesn't notice food on the left side of her plate or that she is holding something in her left hand. This is another area where we hope the TIRR Challenge program can help.

- Susan still cannot coordinate her left arm and right arm to propel and steer her wheelchair. A power chair test drive proved dangerous to her, other people, and to our home. She doesn't have the fine motor skills to control the chair safely. We hope the TIRR Challenge therapy and a custom home will solve this problem.



- Tremors continue. We have decided to fight other battles for now and worry about this problem later.
- Susan has her own laptop, e-mail address, and Facebook ID. However, her attention span is far too short for her to use these tools. She is easily distracted by advertising or sidebar links presented to her. We have encouraged, and nagged, her to communicate with you. She just doesn't have the focus.

Susan's condition is stabilizing. I plan to send updates in the future only as we observe major changes. I hope this is okay. I don't want to be an e-mail pest.

**Photo:** Susan at Wonder World in San Marcos last June. She was riding the train and feeding the Axis deer. FYI, this picture doesn't measure up to her standards, but it is the only recent one I have showing her out in public doing the things she likes to do.

Thanks for your encouragement and prayers. They keep us going. Norman

## Tom Wright Update

*by Phyllis George*

**T**om Wright was finally able to return home November 3 after 73 days in the hospital. He still gets out of breath and is very weak. He and Beverly wanted to attend the Day Light Section meeting November 9, but it's still premature for such an outing.

Home-based physical therapy will begin shortly for three days a week, and their goal is to get him built up and ambulatory again. Currently Tom uses the walker and wheelchair.

Beverly said that he misses his friends terribly and really wants to be able to come to the Club again. He would love to have friends call him on their house phone (the cell phone disappeared somewhere between the hospital and their home).

## Art Smith Update

by Nancy Smith

*Posted on M.D. Anderson CarePages for Art Smith 11/8/2009--8 p.m.*

I hope you have all had a good day~it sounds like it's been pretty warm where you all are - so Houston isn't the only place that can produce balmy temps in the late fall!

Art isn't able to communicate at all, but he never complains, and other than throwing his LONG legs around, he's pretty quiet. I said goodbye to Dick and Jan just a bit ago - they're leaving for home (New York state) at 5 in the morning. I'll miss them - it has been so good to have them here to share in this time. Art has always spoken so fondly of their childhood years - he was the oldest of 3 boys, and there were some great stories to be told. I know it was hard for Dick to say goodbye for the last time tonight, and it was a real reminder for me that this world will pass away, but we will all be reunited someday, and that is a day that I look forward to!

I'm very tired and am looking forward to a nice sleep - last night I woke up to my roomie with his nightgown plopped on his head and a very long skinny body stretched out the length of the bed. I had to smile in spite of myself. I truly don't know how long he'll be able to continue in this state--no food or water since his body can't absorb anything at all. God knows all and will take care of us. I just need to be by his side, and we'll go through this together. Sleep well, and I'll keep in touch.

Love, Nancy

## Victory at the Lake

by Matt Dillon

*Member of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society*

Many years ago, at the age of 14, I made a very important first step in overcoming some of my fears. Depending on your family environment and circumstances of where and how you grow up, every human goes through a period during their youth when they learn to deal with or overcome certain fears, most of which are natural, some of which are created within the family situation. How well you deal with those fears as well as the attitudes of others will certainly have an impact on your decision making when it comes to going on field trips, traveling far from home, and experiencing nature on a very personal basis.

One of those I had to overcome was the fear of darkness. Another was the fear of being alone. I attribute much of the difficulty I had in overcoming those fears to having watched way too much television and to going to certain scary movies with my parents.

Gradually, as I grew up, I overcame both of those fears. One of the major events in my young life was the opportunity my parents gave me when I was fourteen years old. I wanted to spend part of my summer vacation at lake property owned by a family



friend near Riverside, Texas. It sounds simple enough since I had been on scouting trips and other fun vacations with family and friends in the past. But there was a major difference in this particular event.

The family friend's house in which I was to stay was an old one that their parents had moved out many years earlier, and they lived in a new house about two hundred yards away. Also, the one where I was to stay was only a few feet from the lake where all kinds of creatures lived—snakes, alligators, beavers, and other animals with which I had little or no experience.

In addition, the oldest boy (about my age) in the family was out of the area on a trip of his own, and his two younger brothers were too young to be good companions. I decided to stay in that house by myself with only lights, water, and a ceiling fan to keep me company (I forgot to take my radio!), and there were no outside lights working during the week I was there. As you can imagine, at night there were sounds I had never heard before and creatures moving around—at least in my imagination—that could do me harm if I wandered about in the dark. This was a problem because I had also forgotten to take a flashlight, and there was no bathroom or toilet in this old house!

Of course, my parents took me to the house, and along with my two much younger brothers, we all enjoyed my first day there fishing and picnicking. Early that evening, the rest of my family loaded into our 1955 Chevy, and after asking me if I had everything I needed for the next five days, they drove back to Houston. I still recall the mixed feelings I had as I watched them drive away.

Each night, the sounds of crickets, small frogs, bullfrogs, and all kinds of other animals became almost deafening to a fourteen year old—in the darkness—in the woods—and next to that lake with its nearly black water and brushy shorelines.

The first two nights I spent there were not easy ones, and I did not get much sleep. However, I played all day long, everyday, fishing in that lake as well as in a nearby creek and looking for arrowheads and other rocks in an area known for Indian campsites. As you might imagine, by the third night, I was so exhausted that I finally got a good night's sleep.

A group of the older men of that area held a fish fry on the fourth night, which helped me get over the feeling of loneliness. After eating out of cans and consuming mostly junk food for three days, I sure enjoyed eating that fresh, fried fish (some of which I had caught myself earlier in the day) and French fries. One of the men gave me a beer to drink that really contributed to my ability to sleep well that night.

Needless to say, I enjoyed the following two days and nights a great deal more than I had the first three. By that time, I could go out for a walk at night without shivering and worrying as I made my way the short distance to the outhouse. I even tried a little night fishing and caught one bass, which satisfied my needs for that effort.

During the week I stayed at that fishing camp on the lake, I addressed my fears,

overcame some of them, and learned that I could survive on my own if I had to. I also learned to be better prepared the next time I decided to camp out or go on a long trip by myself. I made some mistakes and missed a little sleep, but I had some great memories and some nice arrowheads to take home and did not hesitate to tell my friends about my experiences of that summer.

I am certain those experiences played a role in my future rock collecting trips to the desert of west Texas and northern Mexico. I have since spent many nights camping out, miles from another person or habitation, and I have enjoyed it and learned a great deal from each of those experiences. As a result of what I learned and the great experiences I had, I took my sons and their friends on trips to the desert country and to the mountains of west Texas, as well as to some lakes and other Texas recreation areas to camp out. I also remembered to tell the boys a few scary stories, just before lights out, and I am certain those stories added greatly to their comfort as they went to their own tents to go to bed for the night.

### Mineral Section

*by Steve Blyskal, Chairperson & Dean Lagerwall, Assistant Chairperson*

**W**ell, we hope you had a good summer break and are ready to once again join the Mineral Section meetings on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays of each month.

### Upcoming Meeting Topics

**November 18: Social / Show Review:** Refreshments will be provided. This is our opportunity to review the show while it is still fresh in our minds. Bring your comments on what we did right and what we can improve upon. Also bring in your show purchases and let us drool. We will discuss any specific topics that members would like to have presented.

### December 2: to be announced via 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*

**A** small numbers of members attended the 12 October, 2009, meeting of the Day Light Section. I was unable to attend because of a sore foot.

**Val Link** gave the program and discussed in detail the tempering of our steel stamps. Tempering is an important step in the making of steel stamps and chasing and reposse tools.

The activity for the November meeting will be our annual birthday luncheon.



## Photos from New Member Orientation & Upcoming Shop Orientation Program

*by Terry Proctor*

**W**hen we told you last month that the turnout for the New Member Orientation was huge, words don't describe it like photos do. On this page are some photos taken during the Orientation Meeting on Saturday, August 29, 2009. Photos by Terry Proctor

An Orientation program on use of the Shop Equipment is being planned for the near future. To participate in the orientation and be able to use the HGMS Shop, you must be an HGMS member, have been instructed and checked out by an authorized Shop Supervisor, sign in each time you use the Shop, and pay for your shop time at the rather nominal fees to cover supplies and maintenance of equipment. This Orientation will be designed to assist you in becoming authorized to use the HGMS Shop.

A list of authorized Shop Supervisors will be posted in the



Shop in the near future, so you will know who they are. These are the only people who can authorize you to use HGMS Shop equipment. There are sign-in sheets and charge sheets that will be posted, so you will know where to sign in and the charges for your time in the Shop. We don't run accounts, so please be prepared to pay at the time you use the equipment and write down both your sign-in and sign-out time and the charge. Thank you. **HGMS Board of Directors**

### **General Meeting Minutes**

*September 22, 2009*

*by Regina Gorman, Secretary*

*Home: 281-829-6116; r4regina@gmail.com*

**T**erry Proctor called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Matt Dillon moved that the Minutes of the August 25, 2009, General Meeting be approved as published in the BBG. Sunday Bennett seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

Terry Proctor welcomed visitor Joan Ochoa, who saw the HGMS Web site and decided to visit tonight's meeting.

**Treasurer:** Terry Proctor stated that Treasurer Rodney Linehan had sent to the Board numerous financial records and reports, showing that HGMS was in good financial shape.

**Show Committee:** Rick Rexroad, Assistant Show Chair, reported that the Show Committee needs more volunteers for the Show. Mary Ann Mischerling reported that volunteer charts are now on the HGMS Web site. HGMS members should let her know what position(s) they would like to fill. Volunteers are especially needed to serve on the Hospitality Committee during the entire Show. All volunteers are allowed to use the Hospitality Room during the entire Show, even on days when they are not volunteering.

Show Committee members should bring auction items for the Pizza Party and for the HGMS Show. Also, volunteers are needed to help at the HGMS booth and to help at the InterGem Show October 9, 10 and 11 promoting HGMS and our Show. Show Chair Sigrid Stewart arrived after the Show Committee report was being made, and she added some of this information. HGMS members who will help with the Show and at the Intergem Show should contact Sigrid at (281) 239-0377 [from some areas this is a 1+ number], Rick Rexroad at (713) 647-6533, or Mary Ann Mitscherling at (713) 957-2001.

#### **Late-Breaking Club News**

Are you getting e-mails about HGMS activities? If not, contact [n\\_immega@swbell.net](mailto:n_immega@swbell.net) and let him know that you want to be on the list.

**Meet-up Group:** Sigrid Stewart reported that this group is moving along under the leadership of Theresa Peek who worked with Sigrid on this project.

**BBG:** Phyllis George announced that the deadline to submit items and articles for publication in the November BBG is Wednesday, October 7, 2009.

Phyllis had a successful right knee replacement in August and is to have the left knee done in November immediately after our show. Therefore items and articles for the December BBG will be due one week early—Wednesday, November 4, 2009. This is so Phyllis can get the December BBG out before our show and also before her second knee surgery.

**SCFMS Awards:** Phyllis George reported that the South Central Federation will have their annual show in Temple, TX October 10–11. Many HGMS members will learn how their articles and poems did in the SCFMS Bulletin Editors' Contest at the Breakfast with the Editors and the Webmasters to be held October 10.

## Old Business

**Outreach Program:** Terry Proctor reported that the OUTREACH PROGRAM is off to a good start, but we still need HGMS members in each of the eight districts to help form nucleus groups in each District so that all Districts can be having programs. Neal Immega reported that he had just held a fourth OUTREACH PROGRAM where HGMS Genie machines were provided for youth and adults to enjoy grinding and polishing agate furnished by HGMS. Terry reminded HGMS members that their HGMS District is shown as their Justice of the Peace Precinct on their Voter Registration card. HGMS members should contact Terry at his law office (713) 453-8338 to let him know of their interest in their District. He will help match up folks in each District.

**Field Trips:** Neal Immega reported that over 200 people came to the Damon Mound field trip. Neal announced two upcoming field trips sponsored by the Paleo Section. A Brazos River canoe trip is scheduled on Sunday, October 11, 2009, starting at 7:30 a.m. and meeting at the Exxon Station (exit Marker 723). If you don't have your own canoe or kayak, then pay \$20 and you will be provided a seat on a rented canoe. Call Neal for more information at (713) 661-3494.

The Paleo Section and Proctor Museum of Natural Science are sponsoring another joint trip to the Whiskey Bridge/Stone City formation on Saturday, October 3, 2009. The meeting time is around 8:00 a.m., and participants will meet on the North side of Texas Hwy 21 going toward Caldwell from Bryan, just west of Whiskey Bridge over the Brazos River. Park between the highway and the railroad tracks so as not to block others driving in. About 1:30 or 2:00 p.m. after the dig, participants will convoy back toward Bryan to the ranch of Terry Stiles, Administrator of the Texas A&M Veterinary Hospital, to eat Terry's barbecued chicken and beans. Participants should bring portable chairs, some portable tables, plastic dinnerware, napkins, drinks, dessert, salad, and/or sides to go with the chicken and beans provided by Terry Stiles. This is

our really neat trip each year. A HEAD COUNT IS NEEDED so that Terry Stiles knows how many chickens and beans to provide. Please call HGMS President Terry Proctor at his law office (713) 453-8338 to RSVP.

**Clubhouse Maintenance:** The automatic light switches have been purchased for the kitchen, office, both libraries, and both restrooms to help reduce our electric bill. They should be installed shortly.

### **New Business**

**Future Programs:** Matt Dillon reported that the October 27, 2009 program will be presented by Dr. Gary Lofgren, the Lunar Sample Curator for NASA's LBJ Space Center. Dr. Lofgren presented a program last August for HGMS and has accepted a return invitation as his program last year was so interesting. This year NASA has agreed to provide a Mars Rock for one day of our Show in November.

**Stickers:** Terry Proctor reported that a large share of the Rockhound Stickers have been sold already, and he may have to order more. He also has strips of five smaller stickers that normally sell for \$1 that he will sell 2 for \$1, i.e. 10 small stickers for \$1 making them a dime apiece. The stickers help Rockhounds to follow each other on Field Trips (like the October 3 trip to the Ranch) and also help you to find your vehicle in a shopping mall.

### **Other Announcements:**

A sale will be held in Tyler, Texas, at the house of Keith and Charlotte Harmon on September 12 and 13.

### **Steve Blyskal and Sigrid Stewart plan to marry September 27.**

**Door Prize:** Terry Proctor, who won the August drawing, provided a 300,000,000 YBP matrix plate of fern and scouring rush fossils. However, our Program Presenter for the meeting, Ron Gibbs, provided two more drawing prizes for the evening so that there were three winners. Terry Proctor won the first drawing which was one of Ron Gibbs' polished agates; Donna Dees won the second drawing which was also a Ron Gibbs polished agate; and Neal Immega won the third drawing, and got the fossil ferns. There was laughter, as Terry's prize brought for the drawing came in third, and Neal Immega probably already has as many of that type fossil as anyone, as he was also on the Tulsa Spine Hospital trip, where the fossils were collected.

**Award to Ron Gibbs:** Phyllis George presented a plaque to Ron Gibbs in appreciation for his design of the official logo for the AFMS 2009 Webmaster Contest of which she is the Chairman. He also created the animated logo that's on the HGMS Web site signifying the Web site's tie for third in the 2009 AFMS level of the contest. Ron stunned everyone present with his wonderful 3-D animation of the HGMS club logo, shown at the beginning of his presentation. We all look forward to receiving a copy of that animation so it can be placed on our Web site.

**HGMS Members are ill:** Terry Proctor asked that HGMS keep in their thoughts and

prayers a number of members who are ill at this time. He specifically mentioned Art Smith who has been undergoing chemotherapy; Tom Wright who is in a care facility recovering from surgery; Phyllis George who was present, but is recovering from knee surgery with surgery on her other knee scheduled in November; and Nathalie Nicole Brandies who is recovering from a severe stomach virus. Also, Terry Proctor has had swine flu and is pretty much fully recovered.

**Show and Tell:** Several HGMS members brought Show and Tell items to this meeting: Joan Riley, a teacher, brought rocks she collected over the years for her school classes. All of the rocks had googlie-eyes attached that made the collection into a fascinating group of rocks looking right back at us. Matt Dillon brought a rare piece of yellow petrified wood. He showed a piece of 30,000,000 YBP conifer pocket rot fossil wood. His specimens come from near George West, Texas in Live Oak County. Matt discussed several areas for agate, mentioning the Nueces River system where Uvalde Gravel is found and mentioned searching for specimens along country roads that are graded from time to time. The grading covers things up so you can't find much immediately afterward, but the rains wash the dirt off and new items often then show up.

The business meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m. for a short break before Ron Gibbs' program.

**PROGRAM**—Ron Gibbs presented a most interesting program that catalogued his journey in publishing a book on agates. He incorporated animated graphics into the presentation, making it a fascinating thing to watch. He detailed his method of photographing agate slabs—the lighting, the camera, the camera angles, the supports—all those things which one never thinks of but which greatly impact the quality of the final photo. Ron is the Editor and Webmaster for the Charlotte North Carolina Gem & Mineral Society and has served in several capacities in rockhound organizations. Many HGMS members purchased his beautiful 240-page book (with color plates on virtually every page) for the price of only \$35.00. This is a real bargain, and he autographed the books for members. We appreciate Ron's presentation and look forward to his coming back again.

The meeting adjourned at about 9:30 p.m.

## General Meeting Minutes

*October 27, 2009*

*by Pier Laird, sitting in for Secretary Regina Gorman*

**T**he meeting was called to order by President Terry Proctor at 7:30pm

New members Pat & Rosy Leache were present. John Emerson, long-time member who hadn't attended for a number of years, was present. John recently began writing the "Remembrances of an Old Geezer" column in the Backbender's Gazette.

**Show Committee:** Sigrid Stewart gave us a rundown on how preparations for the 56<sup>th</sup> HGMS Annual Show are coming along. It is scheduled for November 13–15,

2009. The NASA Mars Rock will be on display Saturday only.

### The schedule of Show Events is:

1. Meet at Club on Saturday, November 7 to tag those items needing to be transported to the show.
2. Load up on Wednesday, November 11.
3. Set up on Thursday, November 12
4. Thursday night the Dealer Appreciation Dinner is at 6:30. A speaker follows the dinner.

### 2009 Bulletin Editors' Contest and Webmaster Contest

Phyllis George awarded the certificates and plaques to the HGMS members who had won them in the 2009 Bulletin Editors' Contest. She attended the Breakfast with the Bulletin Editors and Webmasters held during the SCFMS show in Temple, TX October 10 and brought back the many plaques and certificates. See the complete list of who won what in the November issue of The Backbender's Gazette, page 23.

**Day Light Section:** Meeting and Annual Party November 9 at 12:00

### Old Business

Vic Helm has gold leaf for sale and is looking for a belt for a machine.

### HGMS Board of Directors (BOD)

The BOD has insurance that will cover fire and theft. However it's possible that current insurance does not cover field trips. HGMS has sent money to SCFMS for insurance that covers the Show and possibly field trips.

The BOD is considering purchasing a fire-resistant locking safe to be located in the office at the club house. This will allow us to keep valuable documents in the office.

**Speaker:** Gary Lofgren, PhD. NASA Johnson Space Center Lunar Material Curator

**Program:** "Back to the Moon, How and Why"

### HGMS Board Meeting Minutes

*November 3, 2009*

*by Terry Proctor, HGMS President*

X	President	Terry Proctor		Faceting Rep.	Sunday Bennett
X	1 <sup>st</sup> Vice President	Matt Dillon	X	Lapidary Rep.	Phyllis George
X	2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice President	Beverly Mace		Mineral Rep.	Not assigned
X	Treasurer	Rodney Linehan	X	Paleontology Rep.	Rick Rexroad
X	Secretary	Regina Gorman	X	Day Light Rep.	Nancy Fischer
X	Beading Rep.	Diane Sisson	X	2009 Show Chair	Sigrid Stewart

A quorum was present, and Terry Proctor called the Board Meeting to order at 7:32 p.m. There were two corrections to the October 6 Board Minutes: It was Diane Sisson and not Margo Bedman who seconded Phyllis George's motion that the minutes be



approved, and the Scholarship name is Elizabeth Smith in honor of Art Smith's now deceased former wife (the name was shown in error in the minutes). Matt Dillon moved to approve the minutes with these corrections, the motion was seconded by Phyllis George, and it passed unanimously.

Treasurer Rodney Linehan sent to all Board Members extensive financial records in advance of the meeting. Several financial matters were discussed, and Rodney was commended for doing such a diligent job in keeping good records and providing them to the Board each month. There was also some discussion as to what coverage the insurance policy that HGMS has with its insurance carrier provides for members and guests and also what coverage the SCFMS insurance covers. Terry Proctor said that he spoke to the SCFMS person about this insurance, and apparently it is somewhat like "Home Owner's insurance," i.e. it covers non-members who get hurt being around HGMS such as during meetings as visitors, or visiting in the Shop, or on the premises, but not HGMS members themselves. Terry suggested looking into some insurance coverage for our own members who might be injured on field trips or in the Shop etc. Terry and Rodney will check into this.

Terry brought a printout from the Web of 30 pages of electrical suppliers to see about getting a lower rate of electrical power for HGMS. The second page had fixed-rate suppliers, but there may be other conditions, so Terry and Rodney will check these out and report back to the Board. The State Web site to check on rates is <http://www.powertochoose.org>. Nancy Fischer moved and Matt Dillon seconded that Terry and Rodney be allowed to find a better rate and to contract for same. The motion passed unanimously.

Steve Blyskal, Chair of the Mineral Section, was present at the meeting. He said he was attempting to obtain a Board Representative from the Mineral Section to replace Denise Bicknell who has resigned from the Board. There were no other Section or Officer reports.

Sigrid Stewart reported on the Show Committee activities and the need for additional volunteers. She also suggested that she be allowed to do a pilot project of approaching the Chevron Employees Club (Sigrid works at Chevron) about purchasing a large number of tickets and giving them a reduced rate of \$6.00. A motion to grant this request was made by Matt Dillon and seconded by Phyllis George, and it passed unanimously.

Phyllis George discussed the software she had ordered from TechSoup at drastically reduced rates after contacting Board Members who routinely use their computers for HGMS business and would want the updated software for those efforts. Instead of Board members having to pay for this, since it is for HGMS usage that the software is provided, she asked that HGMS reimburse this item of expense which was \$144. Diane Sisson moved to reimburse Phyllis. It was seconded by Matt Dillon, and the vote was unanimous. There is a problem as only one key and one disk is provided for each software title, so Phyllis will have Board members bring their computers to the Clubhouse and she will load it onto their computers for them there, as Phyllis cannot give the keys to anyone else.

It was reported that Art Smith is in a hospice, and Nancy is with him much of the time. Terry reported that he had called to check on Tom Wright, and he had just gotten home from the hospital so he is hopefully getting better.

The Outreach Program was discussed. It is on hold until after our Show later this month. When memberships are renewed, members will be asked to add their HGMS District # (which is your Justice of the Peace Precinct # on your Voter Registration Card—just pull it out, flip it over, and that number appears in the line-up of various districts you are in). In order to seek Grant Support, we need to keep the Outreach Program growing by having all HGMS Districts set up starting the first of 2010.

The Clubhouse maintenance is rolling along. Ballasts and tubes have been changed in the main meeting room to provide better lighting, motion detector switches are now installed in the office, both restrooms, the kitchen, and both libraries. When you go into one of those rooms, if the light doesn't come on, push it to "auto" so it will turn itself off after a time when you leave. A study is underway to see about controlling the air conditioner to turn off automatically. However at present, signs are being made to put up on doors as members leave to remind them to:

1. Lock all doors
2. Turn off the air conditioning
3. Turn out all lights.

Every so often Board Members and others find that doors weren't locked, lights weren't turned out or left on auto to go out, and the air conditioning was left running. These things all can be and are costly to HGMS. It is hoped that signs will help all HGMS members to remember to leave the Clubhouse and Shop secured in all things.

The new stop-blocks have been installed. There are EIGHT SHOP SUPERVISORS at this time: (in alphabetical order) **Gary Anderson; Wayne Barnett; Libby Guynn; Brian Honsinger; Neal Immega; John Mitcherling; Mary Ann Mitcherling; and Tom Wright.** Soon they will wear badges, and there will be a sign posted in the Shop with photos of these Supervisors. Look to them for help and instructions and do what they say. Certain things, like turning on and off bottled gas can be done only by a Supervisor.

The November 24 program will be presented by Patrick J. Lewis, PhD from Sam Houston State University. Dr. Lewis will tell us about his next trip to South Africa in the summer of 2010 and what he expects to find there.

The Christmas/Holiday Party will be December 12, 2009 at 6:00 p.m. The meat approved by the Board which will be provided by HGMS is turkey and beef brisket. The question of entertainment is under advisement as it has been suggested that folks may prefer to visit rather than have entertainment prior to and during the meal. In any event there will again be an AUCTION. Please bring your items EARLY so that numbers can be put on them, and they can be on display for review—before and during the meal—so that folks who wish to bid can jot down the numbers of the items that interest them. Bring minerals, fossils, gemstones, rocks, equipment, and everything else that you believe will provide some funds for HGMS. Half of the auction



funds go into the Building Fund and half goes into our General Operating Fund (including some, if needed, for the Scholarship).

Terry suggested that we install a large board of some type above the displays on the West side of the Meeting Room to have a place to put HGMS Club awards and other important framed documents for display to the membership. He suggested white peg board with hooks so items could be moved around and grouped in various ways. Several other Board Members suggested a frame around whatever is put up, and others suggested something better looking than white pegboard. There were a number of ideas, and Matt Dillon will go to a framing location and learn what alternatives may be available. He will report back to the December Board Meeting.

There was some discussion about the so-called "Paleontological Preservation Act" and what is being done to tweak this law so it again allows rockhounds to collect fossils on Federal Lands. Terry advised the Board that he has been asked by the SCFMS to be Chair of the Conservation Legislation Committee and that the ALAA (American Land Access Association) has asked him to be their Texas Representative.

Matt Dillon moved that we adjourn and Nancy Fischer seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, so the meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

### **Interesting Things About Honeycomb Calcite**

*No author given*

*from News & Views 6/2002, via The Rockhound Gazette 6/2003  
and Stoney Statements 9/2009*

**H**oneycomb Calcite is a beautiful and impressive form of transparent, translucent, luminous calcite mined exclusively in the State of Utah. Comparable to onyx and marble. Honeycomb Calcite can provide a colorful replacement or dramatic accent stone for architectural and artistic application.

### **History**

The discovery of the stone came about completely by accident while individuals in eastern Utah were removing topsoil. At the end of their workday, while preparing to leave the site, they turned to notice the pile of overburden glowing in the afternoon sun. Even though each stone has a chalky "white skin" covering the exterior of the stone, the afternoon sunlight refracting through the crystals caused the stone to "glow." The group, quite taken with the phenomenal happening, removed samples of the stone to have it tested and classified. The stone tested to be a new form of calcite, differing from other calcite as a result of its strength, stability, luminous qualities, and color. We find the color and consistency of the stone remains reliable after having been mined for two seasons. The stone is removed from the site in boulders ranging from fist-size to an average boulder size, approximately five feet by four feet by three feet. The largest boulder removed to date measures at seven feet by six feet by five feet. We feel we should have a good idea as to the potential to quarry the stone after the next mining season.

## Stone Qualifications

First impression of the stone in its natural form is of just another rock. Even to the trained eye—rockhound or collector—it appears as a chalky, irregularly shaped stone or just another rock they've seen many times before. Only upon further examination, and then again when the rock is cut, does one notice the “honeycomb like” cellular pattern of the stone. The “honeycomb look” is formed by the growth of long fibrous or tubular crystal cells of honey yellow calcite outlined by white membranes surrounding each cell. The name “Honeycomb Calcite” originates from the remarkable honeycomb appearance when viewing a polished surface.



## Description

Characteristics that set this stone apart are the color, varying patterns, translucency, transparency, and its ability to accept a high polish. Other characteristics include accessibility to significantly large pieces and the fact that it does not fade as readily in intense direct sunlight as do other forms of calcite.



The color ranges from a soft, pale sunshine lemon yellow to a deep rich honey golden amber, depending upon the thickness of the stone. The color of the stone is attributed to sulfur deposits at the time of formation. The color remains consistent with the thickness of the stone—the thinner stone produces a sunshine lemon yellow hue while the thicker stone yields a rich honey-golden amber color.

The stone pattern varies according to the point of origin of each cell. The cells grow in V-shaped structures and are individually bundled into groups where beginning cells appear as small closed hexagon shaped cells grouped closely together. This

pattern is similar to honey turning to sugar. As the cell matures, the pattern changes in accordance with the individual cell growth. When the cells reach their maximum growth, the membrane widens showing a much larger surface area with minimum cell walls. This creates a much larger surface area with minimum cell walls—giving an impression comparable to petrified honey.

The stone is transparent and translucent, offering a luminous glow when accented by artificial, direct, or indirect lighting. The transparency and translucency are apparent in thick sections as well as a thin cut.

The translucency is less in pieces with mostly beginning cell structure due to the tight cell formation. Honeycomb Calcite weighs approximately 192 lbs. per cubic foot. Concrete weighs -145 lbs. per cubic foot; granite -180 lbs. approximately. Honeycomb Calcite has four distinct cuts to the stone.

\*fleur cut -horizontal cut across the cell bundles ~ the honeycomb look.

\*vein cut - vertical cut 90 degrees to the fleur cut -shows the sediment/layer.

\*pineapple - 90 degree perpendicular cut - shows a layered cell look.

\*cross cut ~ 45 degree angle cut ~ produces layered cell pattern or a scale effect.

### Hints & Tips:

*from SCRIBE 2002-2008 DVD*

**E**ditor's note: Just a reminder! Shop tips that are featured in this bulletin have not been evaluated for safety or reliability and could be unsafe or could cause damage to your project. Please use caution and safety when trying out any new idea.

**Unknotting Knotty Chains:** from Amador Nugget 7/00 via Chips 7/00

A fine chain can be very frustrating when it knots. Put a drop or two of salad oil on a piece of waxed paper. Lay the knot in the puddle and work at it with two straight pins. The knot should come apart quicidly.

**Plastic Spray:** To get a better polish on material that will undercut such as sagenite, moss, plume agate, and porous wood, etc. try this:

1. Elevate the slice on a small object such as ajar ring. Completely cover the slice with water in a flat pan with some detergent and a shake of Comet cleanser. Boil about 10 minutes, keeping the slice covered at all tunes.
2. Remove the pan from heat, leave slice in pan until water reaches room temperature.
3. Go through fine sanding, clean well, and spray with a coat of clear plastic.
4. Let dry, fine sand again lightly with polish.

This 4-step process fills in the porous spots in the material enabling you to polish the surface. You will end up with a beautiful polished piece. For example, this thin coat over the iron in picture wood almost eliminates the shiny iron streaks.

## The ALAA Meeting at Billings

by Dick Pankey, President

American Lands Access Association

from the AFMS Newsletter 11/2009

For the Pankeys, this was an “interesting” summer. In case you didn’t hear, our trailer was totaled about 110 miles from home and two-and-a-half hours into our five-week trip to Yellowstone National Park and the AFMS Show/Meeting in Billings, MT. Our trip was canceled! Nobody was hurt or even shaken up, and nobody else was involved in our event, but we ended up with a totaled trailer and a smashed-up truck.

I was very disappointed that I missed all the events at Billings, especially the ALAA meeting. A big Thank You goes to VP Shirley Leeson for stepping up to run the meeting and get the many items on the agenda accomplished. The approval of the revised Bylaws and implementation of the new Operating Procedures are significant accomplishments for ALAA’s structure and workings. Dee Holland and Shirley did an excellent job on the Bylaws and Operating Procedures.

We held our first election in two years. Congratulations to our Officers and Directors, and thank you for accepting your positions and committing yourself to the goals and mission of ALAA. Thank you also for having faith in me and for electing me your President. I look forward to serving and to working with all of you.

Be ready for action. The challenges and the needs are great. The opportunities for us, for ALAA, to make a difference are there for us to seize. We are a national organization, and our Officers, Directors, and members are from throughout the US. All of our Officers and Directors and members need to be involved and need to be active. We want your ideas. We need your support and participation.

To meet our goals and mission, we are focusing on membership. Not only on numbers, but also on involvement. (See the membership Application Form above.) I encourage potential members to join now rather than wait until December to join for 2010. We revised the dues structure to allow for new member dues that are **paid after July 15 to be considered as paid in full for the following calendar year**. If you know of individuals or societies who are waiting to join ALAA, tell them that there is no reason to wait. Join NOW and become part of the team.

When it comes to legislation affecting our public lands, things seem to move slowly, slowly with no apparent activity for a long time and then—when we tend to become complacent—the legislation is put onto the fast track. Monitoring and communicating status and needed action are very difficult.

At this time the ALAA newsletter is only published every three months. If we wait for the newsletter, it will probably be too late to respond and take action. E-mail is a great way for rapid and inexpensive communication. ALAA is setting up an “e-mail tree” so that we can quickly and effectively get the word out about pending legislation or regulatory activity that require the response of our members. If you have an e-

mail address, make sure that you provide it to our treasurer so that you may be included in the e-mail tree.

Another great source of timely information is the ALAA Web site: [www.amlands.org](http://www.amlands.org). It is full of a lot of great, up-to-date information and is a major communication source between newsletters. I would recommend that all members check it out at least once a week for the latest news and information. It is also a great source of information about ALAA, and it includes the last few issues of our newsletters. If you know of someone interested in ALAA or that should be interested in ALAA, please refer them to our Web site.

**The ALAA Officers are:**

Dick Pankey, President: <[dickpankey@juno.com](mailto:dickpankey@juno.com)>

Shirley Leeson, Vice President: <[shirleyleeson@cox.net](mailto:shirleyleeson@cox.net)>

Anne Cook, Secretary: <[secretary@amfed.org](mailto:secretary@amfed.org)>

Ruth Bailey, Treasurer: <[Rba51825@att.net](mailto:Rba51825@att.net)>

## AMERICAN LANDS ACCESS ASSOCIATION – MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

*Protecting the Public Lands for the Public*

Please enroll me as a member of the ALAA. Annual membership fee is \$25.00

Annual membership fee for clubs is \$50.00

\_\_\_\_\_ New \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

PLEASE PRINT

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Club Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

Hobby Interests: \_\_\_\_\_

Remit fees to: ALAA

Ruth Bailey  
2857 Addison Place  
Santa Clara, CA 95051-1705

*The A.L.A.A. is a 501(c-4) organization. Its purpose is promoting and ensuring the right of the amateur hobby collecting, recreational prospecting and mining, and the use of public and private lands for educational and recreational purposes; and to carry the voice of all amateur collectors and hobbyists to our elected officials, government regulators and public land managers. Contributions to the A.L.A.A. are not deductible as charitable contributions for Federal Tax Purposes.*

**Show Time 2009-2010**

November 21-22	Mesquite, TX	Dallas Gem & Mineral Society Resistol Arena Exhibition Hall David Pirnie, 972-278-4845 dpirnie@yahoo.com
November 27-29	Terlingua TX	Chihuahuan Desert Gem & Mineral Club Big Bend Motor Inn Conference Room, Rte. 118 and Rte. 170 Mary Brogan, (432) 837-3824 marybrogan@rocketmail.com
December 05-06	Round Rock, TX	Paleontological Society of Austin "Fossil Fest" Old Settlers Park next to Dell Diamond Linda McCall, lndmccall02@yahoo.com www.texaspaleo.com/psa/fest.html
December 12-13	DeRidder, LA	DeRidder Gem & Mineral Society Beauregard Parish Fair Exhibit Hall Adam Valin; avalin1@bellsouth.net

**Show Time 2010**

January 10-25	Quartzsite, AZ	Large International Show; lots of dealers
January 16-17	Fredericksburg, TX	Fredericksburg Rockhounds Pioneer Pav., Lady Bird Johnson Muni. Park Jeff Smith, jeffbrenda@windstream.net
January 22-24	Tyler, TX	East Texas Gem & Mineral Society Rose Garden Center, 420 Rose Park Dr. Keith Harmon, kharmon1219@sbcglobal.net
February 20-21	Plainview, TX	Hi Plains Gem & Mineral Society Ollie Liner Center, south I-27 Mildred Matlock, (806) 293-3476 jmmatlock@suddenlink.net
Jan. 24-Feb. 15	Tucson, AZ	Huge international show; lots of dealers
March 6-7	Big Spring, TX	Big Spring Prospectors Club Howard County Fair Barn, Jerald Wilson (432) 263-4662 or (432) 263-3340
June 18-20	La Habra, CA	AFMS/CFMS/NOCGMS Convention & Show So. California University of Health Sciences 16200 E. Amber Valley Rd.; Mike Beaumont (714) 510-6037; diamond.crest@yahoo.com www.networkingwave.com/afms2010/index.html

2009		December				2009
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 7:30 Board Meeting	2 7:30 Mineral Section 0-5 Shop Open	3	4	5 10-5 Shop Open 10-12 Youth Section
6	7	8 7:30 Show Committee	9 NO Faceting Section 0-5 Shop Open	10	11	12 10-5 Shop Open 6 p.m. Christmas Party
13	14 NO Day Light Section	15 NO Paleo Section	16 NO Mineral Section 0-5 Shop Open	17	18	19 10-5 Shop Open NO Youth Section 1:30 Beading Section
20	21 NO Lapidary Section	22 NO General Meeting	23 10-5 Shop Open	24	25 Christmas	26 10-5 Shop Open
27	28	29	30 10-5 Shop Open	31 New Year's Eve		

2010		January				2010
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 New Year's Day	2 10-5 Shop Open 10-12 Youth Section
3	4	5 7:30 Board Meeting	6 7:30 Mineral Section 0-5 Shop Open	7	8	9 10-5 Shop Open
10	11 NO Day Light Section	12 7:30 Show Committee	13 7:30 Faceting Section 0-5 Shop Open	14	15	16 10-5 Shop Open 10-12 Youth Section 1:30 Beading Section
17	18 7:30 Lapidary Section	19 7:30 Paleo Section	20 7:30 Mineral Section 0-5 Shop Open	21	22	23 10-5 Shop Open
24 31	25	26 7:30 General Meeting	27 10-5 Shop Open	28	29	30 10-5 Shop Open



# ***The BACKBENDER'S GAZETTE***

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

10805 BROOKLET

HOUSTON, TEXAS 77099

(281) 530-0942



## **SCFMS**

1998 - 1st (Large)  
2000 - 1st (Large)  
2003 - 1st (Large)  
2005 - 1st (Large)  
2006 - 1st (Large)  
2007 - 1st (Large)  
2008 - 1st (Large)  
2009 - 1st (Large)



## **AFMS**

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



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