



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

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

**Volume XL - No. 5**

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## **President's Message**

*by Terrell William "Terry" Proctor  
2009 HGMS President*

**F**or many years, some members of Congress have tried to curtail your right to collect on Federal lands. Each time the stand-alone bill failed. Now they have learned how to pass laws that drastically affect your rights as a rockhound: put that law into an Omnibus package of bills so voluminous that no member of Congress can read the Bill; throw in some things that are good and needed so no one can safely vote against the Omnibus Bill; add some pork for many or most of the folks in Congress to take home to their States (Senators) or Districts (Representatives) to tout what they did for their State or District; and have a President who makes a pledge not to sign any law for five days after it passes Congress to allow citizens time to notify the White House what they don't like about the Bill—and who then ignores this pledge and signs it into law promptly without the promised waiting period.



Will this law affect you? You bet it will. For instance: If you have collected Pleistocene bison and horse teeth and leg bones on McFaddin Beach, a State Beach, you may still

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*Continued on page 4*

## **General Meeting Programs**

**M**ay 26, 2009 **Nathalie Brandes—Rock Stars, Pioneers of Earth Science:** Nathalie will discuss the lives of notable people who studied geology, from ancient Greece to Victorian times, and show how their thoughts influence our modern understanding of the earth. She says there are some REAL characters in geology!

**Nathalie Nicole Brandes bio:** She earned her B.S. and M.S. in geology from New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, also earned minors in history and biology. She did her Ph.D. work at Michigan Technological University. She taught at

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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.

### HGMS Officers

### HGMS Section Chairs

### HGMS Appointed Positions

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*

be safe. However, only a few feet from the Gulf is the place where (before Hurricane Ike) there was a wire that demarked where there was a bird sanctuary. Here is what the Texas Parks & Wildlife says online about McFaddin Beach: “McFaddin NWR is a unit of the National Wildlife Refuge System, administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior. It is part of the Texas Chenier Plain Refuge Complex, which also includes the Anahuac, Texas Point and Moody NWRs.” What has the purpose in this bird sanctuary been prior to HR 146 passing? “McFaddin NWR is managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, with a primary establishment purpose of protecting and managing habitat for migratory birds. Management is also aimed at conserving native biological diversity and ecosystem functions, while providing the general public with compatible wildlife-dependent recreational and educational opportunities and the scientific community with research opportunities.”

In short, as long as you didn't bother the birds, no one cared if you collected teeth and bones which would only turn to dust eventually between the tide, hurricanes, the sun, the rain—natural forces that destroy most fossils if they aren't collected. So what happens now? If you read this Bill, you will see such things as the fact that if you mislabel a fossil, you violate the law (see penalties later). If you are on Federal Land, you better not have any mineral or fossil that you collected on private land, because the burden is no longer on the Government—as you thought the U.S. Constitution and State Constitutions required—to prove you guilty. No, the burden is on you to prove that the mineral or fossil didn't come from Federal Land. Are you forgetful? The penalties provisions were altered by amendment to purportedly do away with seizure of your vehicle and property. However, I am trying to read through the 281 pages on Thomas (Library of Congress), that is the official online register of the actual law passed (and that is just the portion dealing with the Paleontological Preservation Act, not the entire Bill that passed and was much, much larger. It appears that there are still seizure provisions in the Bill, including seizing what you have, and there are civil penalties.

The main concern is that this new law that allows local Federal land managers to allow the issuance of “casual collecting” licenses for “common invertebrate and plant fossils” **has no provision whatsoever to allow the collecting of vertebrate fossils**. So if you go into that bird sanctuary just north of the beach on McFaddin Beach and dare to pick up a worn-out horse or bison tooth, you could now be in serious trouble.

The folks who have tried unsuccessfully for years to get this law passed as a stand-alone law have now packaged it with lots of goodies and gotten it passed. They will be out to reduce your rights further in the near future. So—what can we do?

Start now to organize in HGMS, and I will be encouraging others nationwide to do the same with every Fossil, Gem & Mineral Club and many others to review what damage this so-called “Paleontological Preservation Act” has done to fossil preservation. Instead of amateurs finding fossils as they have always done—many if not most of these eventually winding up being taken to museums and other places for the public to view and scholars to study—they now will remain for the elements to eventually destroy.



Preserve fossils? I think this Bill will do the exact opposite. There are not enough PhDs to begin to find all vertebrate fossils and get them to museums and other places for public display. Famous paleontologists like Robert T. Bakker, PhD and Peter Larson, who found “Sue,” the most perfect T.-Rex, have come out publicly for amateur collecting, as they know that is the way fossils are found and that many if not most such fossils wind up where they can be studied. Denials of this, as this Bill has done, means more and more great fossils turn into piles of dust in the badlands and on just a few feet on McFaddin Beach.

We must mount a nationwide uprising to get this Nation’s 100 Senators and 435 Representatives to recognize the folly of what they have done. If they really want to preserve fossils, especially vertebrate fossils, they must review and rewrite the laws in this area. Not two years from now, but RIGHT NOW, while this has just happened.

Patrick Lynch, a man who contacted me a few weeks back and who collects regularly at McFaddin Beach, found this entire Mammoth tooth with roots out in the surf when the tide was out (hence it wasn’t on U.S. Government land). But note that marine boring invertebrates have partially eaten this tooth by boring holes in it. It is a great find, but it also shows how natural deterioration destroys fossils little by little if they aren’t collected and preserved—mostly by amateurs. See photos.



Patrick Lynch’s whole mammoth tooth—both sides—found in the surf at McFaddin Beach in April, 2009.



Briefly on HGMS's responsibility (according to our Charter) to provide Earth Science education, your HGMS Board of Directors approved a plan to divide the county into eight districts that overlay the same eight Precincts as our J.P. and Constable Precincts. In each district we will be asking for HGMS volunteers to start a group and work together to provide outreach educational programs in YOUR district.

My church has consented to make their Fellowship Hall available two or three times a year for HGMS to bring out portable equipment and to show children and adults how to cut and polish stones. We probably will take along some fossils to show too. We will be carrying to these eight Districts information and orientation about HGMS with "hands on" demonstrations, and our learned members will be able to discuss their questions and stir up enthusiasm.

We have placed a form on our HGMS Web site (accessible through the Current Info button on the home page) for you to fill in and mail to HGMS or e-mail to me at [auraman@swbell.net](mailto:auraman@swbell.net). We will put you in touch with others in your District so you can together make contact with libraries, churches, civic centers, schools, and other places who will host us FREE to put on a FREE program for them in return.

HGMS is working on grant programs where your employer may provide matching funds for donations, either a donation of money or of your time to HGMS. Sigrid Stewart just obtained a \$1,000 donation from Chevron for her time donated as Show Chairperson and other services to HGMS. Go thou and do likewise—PLEASE. Thanks to Sigrid and thanks to you for contacting the folks at your place of employment also.

### ***Program Information*** *continued from page 1*

Michigan Tech, University of Wisconsin Eau Claire, University of Nevada Las Vegas, and currently is a professor of geoscience at Montgomery College. She's also lectured at Oxford University and worked as an advisor for the National Science Foundation. She says she can't seem to find a research focus because she finds all sorts of geology interesting. At various times she has worked on volcanoes, rift system geology, regional geology of the Colorado Plateau, economic geology, and currently finds herself looking at geoarchaeology and climate change. She is a professional member of the Geological Society of America; Society for Mining, Metallurgy, and Exploration; Institute on Lake Superior Geology; and the New Mexico Geological Society.

**June 23, 2009: Neal Immega on Diamonds at HMNS:** "The Nature of Diamonds" will be on display at HMNS from May 8, 2009 to September 7, 2009. The display takes visitors through the amazing transformations of these precious gems.

Neal is getting expert help from wife Inda on the mineralogy and from Jill Rowlands on the jewelry aspects. Neal says, "Since I am a paleontologist, you are going to get paleo at the same time ( I bet you cannot figure out how I am going to do that). As a door prize, I am going to ask Beverly to give away a vial of 100-mesh synthetic diamond (we use it to recoat wheels in the shop). It looks like really sparkly sugar but in octahedrons.

"Bring your own diamonds, and you will look at them under my excellent binocular



scope and check them for fluorescence. "We will also have a cleaning station with sudsy ammonia and a tooth brush. We are going to start BEFORE the meeting doing examinations and continue after it is over as needed."

## Setting The Record Straight on Texas Mineral Organizations

by Arthur E. Smith  
Mineral Section, HG&MS  
artsmithite@msn.com

**T***o Members of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society: The letter below has been sent to the Mineralogical Record because it published a supplement entitled "Texas Mineral Collectors," and it completely left out anything that the Mineral Section of the HG&MS has done as mineral collectors. So the letter is not intended to tell what the HG&MS has done as a whole— that is generally well-known and well accepted by other societies. Please read it in that context. Art*

Before beginning to state my concern, let me say that I have nothing negative to say about the Dallas MAD group or the Houston HAMS group or anything bad to say about any of their members. I have friends in both and know they are serious mineral collectors, and they enjoy their activities and opportunities with these groups. The groups' recently published supplement to the *Mineralogical Record* illustrates the top-quality specimens in their collections. The photography is first class, and the writing was well done. To me, any reason that makes you want to collect minerals is good for all other collectors. How serious you are about minerals is a personal choice as is joining a group to learn about minerals, to socialize, and to share other members' knowledge of minerals. I wish the best for both groups and their members.

However, a sentence in the introduction to the supplement makes me question the writer's or writers' true knowledge of Texas mineral organizations. This statement is made: "Of these (Texas Gem & Mineral Societies) the two most important organizations representing exclusively the serious mineral collector of Texas are the Mineral Association of Dallas (the MAD group) and the Houston Area Mineral Society (HAMS group)." It is also implied that the MAD group may be a continuation of the Texas Mineral Society that was headquartered in Dallas in 1943. Its newsletters discussed interesting Texas minerals and localities. Did I see even one Texas mineral illustrated or discussed in the supplement? Or did I miss it ?

Well, I do not know about the other Texas Gem & Mineral Societies, but I do know that the Mineral Section of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society probably fits in that "exclusive group" possibly better than the two groups mentioned. I will give reasons why in our past 45 years or so of existence. We as a group have been exclusively concerned with minerals but have the advantage of being under the umbrella of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society which gives us more assets including a fine clubhouse that has equipment to clean and trim minerals, an extensive mineralogical library that is indexed and is far more extensive than any of us could have individually, plus in our library is a preliminary Texas mineralogy. This association also allows us to have enough money and additional manpower to put on a first-class annual show.



The Mineral Section started in the early 1960s when Al Kidwell moved from Tulsa to Houston. First he started identifying rocks and minerals that people brought to the show. Connections from this started the Coon Creek Association that was prominent in Arkansas minerals for 30 years. Having a free identification booth still continues at our shows. A separate mineral-study group was started that became the Mineral Section of the Society with its own officers, meetings twice a month, and a representative on the HG&MS board. A sampling of our list of people who have given programs at our Section meetings is long and includes John S. White, Jeff Scovil, Paul Desautels, Rich Whiteman, Joel Bartsch, Dave Wilbur, Ewald Gerstmann, Ed Raines, Allan Mitchell and many more. Our influence with the Society brought first-rate mineral dealers to Texas starting with the Lidstroms in the early 1970s and included many other top dealers such as Herb Oboda, the Zweibels, Ken Roberts, Kristalle, and continued into the 1980s. We were supported in this endeavor by the mass migration of the MAD group members to the shows in September, and that was appreciated. However once the Denver show got organized, we again became a good regional show with fewer top dealers. Where would you rather go in September, to see the yellow aspen tries in the Rockies or experience a possible hurricane in Houston?

The Mineral Section has one member who designed and constructed our portable dark room and display cases for the fluorescent minerals that we use at our shows. As a group we have put in display cases of faked mineral specimens, altered mineral specimens, self collected minerals, etc. Now if we are not too involved with the show, we put in individual cases too. The Mineral Section has supported *Rocks & Minerals*, *Mineralogical Record*, and other publications by selling subscriptions and publications from our booth plus money donations for special articles.

Our clubhouse has a unique display of minerals in cores from Gulf Coast salt domes that were assembled by the late Texas Gulf Chief Geologist Dudley Rainey who was also a Mineral Section member. We have two shelves of Texas minerals on display but have run out of room to display more. For over 15 years with the support of Conoco-Phillips, we have assembled and distributed labeled basic mineral, economic rocks and minerals, and rock sets to local teachers and classrooms at the rate of about 100 a year. We have put mineral displays in local libraries and schools. The Houston Gem & Mineral Society has a Youth Section, and the Mineral Section supports them along with the rest of the Society. We encourage any youths interested in minerals to come to the Mineral Section, and we have given cash prizes to any youth that displays minerals at our show. This is how our Houston Museum of Natural Science President Joel Bartsch got his start.

There are few mineral collecting areas in the Houston area, but members have done significant collecting in the Texas Hill Country, Arkansas, New Mexico, and Oklahoma. Minerals unreported from many locations in these areas have been collected and identified. Minerals new to the location and some new to science have also been discovered. Mineral Section members have contributed many articles to all of the major mineral publications. The Houston Gem & Mineral Society's prize-winning Newsletter, the Backbender's Gazette, is an excellent place to hone your writing skills, and



many have taken advantage of it to start writing on minerals and mineral experiences

I think about the only thing that the Mineral Section has not done is make a supplement to the *Mineralogical Record*. Perhaps we were too busy with other worthwhile things to think of it. I notice that eight of the 29 contributors to the supplement—or almost 30%—have been or are current members of the Mineral Section of the Houston Gem and Mineral Society. This shows the wide influence we have had in Texas

We supported the Houston Museum of Natural Science even before the Sams' collection was purchased through volunteer work, specimens, and money. I think our record for the past 45 years or so is very significant and speaks well for our influence as a group. I am sorry that I had to toot our horn to be recognized for what we are, but please do not forget us and what we mean to minerals and mineral collecting in Texas.

How do you become a member of the Mineral Section? Just join the Houston Gem & Mineral Society and then come to the Mineral Section meeting—and you are in and welcomed.

### Taking Maximum Advantage of a Business Trip

by Owen Martin

*Member of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society*

I wasn't sure about it, but at the last minute my business trip to Tampa did happen. So on Friday, since I had about six hours between the end of my conference and my due time at the airport, I decided to head south and a bit east.

I was armed with my Garmin GPS and a printed yahoo map of a spot on the Peace River that Neal Immega had given a presentation on about two years ago here in Houston. So with a strainer in hand and a Frisbee to use as a shovel, off I went.

I suspected when I finally got there I was at least in “a” right spot, if not “the” right spot since there was a car in the lot with two big “meg hunter” decals on the windows. I walked about and came across a lady with some boys looking for teeth in the river. She fooled me at first since she was sitting down in two feet of water, and I thought she was in at least twice that. Either way, I was committed to getting wet at that point. Rose showed me a couple of her finds and then told me that she had a guide and was there with some other folks.

The guide was none other than Mark Renz ala *Cash and Treasures* on the Travel Channel 🏠. He had moved up-river on a kayak though, so I kept hunting in the area where I was. Digging with the Frisbee was proving problematic, and although I did find a few teeth, the going was slow. After a bit I wandered a little further up the river and came to a group of four folks digging and screening away. I introduced myself and thus met Mark.

We talked for a good bit, and he did me the **great** favor of loaning me a long-handled shovel. Truly this was a God-send since my productivity then sky rocketed. At least a couple of teeth per scoop was the norm. Most of the final haul is in the attached pic-



ture. Nothing incredible, but for my first time, I was pretty happy with the results. The broken hemi is pretty big, and the sand dollar fossil part was unexpected.

Overall a great side trip, and I even made it to the airport with 10 minutes to spare before boarding!!!



## Day Light Section

*by Frances Arrighi*

**T**he March report of the meeting of the Day Light Section was reported in the April BBG. This was possible because the second Monday fell before the second Saturday (which is when the Editor starts putting the next BBG together).

Professor Val Link will direct our summer program during the months of July, August, and September. We will be making stamps out of steel bit stock rods. The following is a partial list of materials needed. This information came from the Rutland Tool Supply Catalog, phone 713-937-4787.

1. Round drill rod stock, 1/4 inch, water hardened, catalog # 23440016, \$2.95 ea.
2. Round drill rod stock, 3/8 inch, water hardened, catalog #23440024, \$5.81 ea.

These rods are 36 inches long, and one rod will probably be enough for two people.

3. Round file 6 inches, bastard cut, catalog # 20609106      \$2.62 ea.
4. Round file 6 inches, 2<sup>nd</sup> cut, catalog # 20609206      \$3.58 ea.
5. Square file, 6 inches, 2<sup>nd</sup> cut, catalog # 20607206      \$3.71 ea
6. Square file, 6 inches, ?????? catalog # 29697208      \$4.31 ea

I do not have source or catalog # for the following, but you will need a good ball and peen hammer and various sizes of separating disks. One disk should be fine, and several others should be increasingly coarser.



**Biggs Jasper**  
from SCRIBE 2006 CD



## Bobbie Emerson—Her Musical and Twirling Careers

*Remembrances by John Emerson*

**B**obbie passed away January 14, 2009. Terry Proctor wrote an *In Memoriam* piece on her that was printed in the March 2009 BBG. John Emerson has provided information on her early years that Bobbie's HGMS friends may not have known.

Bobbie started as a Majorette in 1937–38 for St. Mary's Hall when she was in the 3rd or 4th grade in San Antonio. She took up piano lessons.

When her family moved to Sinton, TX in 1941, she started the French Horn in the High School Band and took up twirling. Again she was appointed Drum Major of the Band.

It was war time and her father was an electrician and in great demand for the war effort, so they moved to Nederland where again she was Drum Major. Her family then moved to Alice, TX, in 1944 where once more she was a twirler in the band.

She graduated from Alice High School in 1945. We met on a blind date the next weekend! I had just come home from my freshman year at A&M. We were both 16 years old. I think the uniform got her.

She was second French Horn in the Texas Arts and Industries band and played in the School Orchestra in her Freshman year. Texas A&I was located in Kingsville, TX. Starting in her Sophomore year she was one of the two twirlers in the Band. She graduated with a BA in Education. In recent years Texas A&I was absorbed into the Texas A&M System. When that happened, Bobbie laughed and said "Now I am an ex-aggie!"

It was during her senior year that the University of Texas Band director saw her twirl and offered her a scholarship if she would be the UT Featured Twirler. Bobbie is in the middle of the front row in the photo below. She was the only girl in the 100+ boy band!

She twirled for the UT band in 1949 and 1950. She earned a BS and an MA in History.

### LONGHORN BAND





## James Wark: Former Arcola Mayoral Candidate Survives

by Diane Tezeno, Staff Writer for Fort Bend Sun  
from Fort Bend Sun, February 19, 2009  
Permission granted to reprint this article

**F**ormer Arcola resident (and HGMS member) James Wark died nine times last year. But thanks to the use of innovative new medical technology and what his doctors describe as “the divine intervention of God,” he has lived to tell about it.

Seven months after an unsuccessful run for mayor of Arcola, Wark collapsed and died after suffering a major heart attack and stroke while teaching a real estate investment seminar.



Photo by Diane Tezeno/Sun Staff

But Wark’s story did not end there. One of the students in the class—a retired firefighter—began administering CPR, and another student called 9-1-1. After being resuscitated, Wark died again in the ambulance and was again revived.

In the two weeks following his admission to the hospital, he suffered a series of additional strokes and heart attacks and died an additional seven times in the hospital. Wark describes the accounts of his ordeal, shared with him by family and medical personnel, as “unbelievable.”

The former resident of Arcola, who now resides in Houston, was sharing real estate investment tips with students on Election Day, November 4, when he suddenly collapsed and died. “I only remember waking up in the hospital 10 to 12 days later,” Wark said.

Doctors at the West Houston Medical Center, where he was admitted, are still shaking their heads at the 58-year-old’s amazing survival and recovery. Wark credits a call from a friend announcing that Barack Obama had won the election as the call that saved his life. “I had been teaching a class of about 100 students for about 30 minutes when I just fell over,” Wark said of the incident. When Wark’s friend called, EMS personnel were then able to contact his wife, a nurse at West Houston Medical Center. “My wife was able to talk with paramedics and request that they transport me to the hospital where she works,” Wark said.

“I knew that WHMC was an approved stroke center and that it had received a five-star rating from Health Grades in 2007–2008 in several areas of cardiac care,” wife Sharon



Wark said. "Otherwise they would have had to follow the normal rotation and take me to Ben Taub," Wark said.

In good health most of his life, Wark had never been hospitalized other than following a car accident. His only family history of heart disease included a grandfather who had died of a heart attack, Wark said.

Once in the hospital, doctors began the arduous task of keeping him alive. **"I kept dying so many times, the doctor in charge just told my family that even if he lives, his brain will be gone,"** Wark said.

The former mayoral candidate's condition became so critical that priests were called in to administer last rites. In the face of his erratic and deteriorating condition, doctors decided to use a medical device called a hypothermia blanket that freezes the body. Wark's body was frozen for eight days, giving doctors the time they needed to stabilize his body functions. A hospital nurse later told Wark that he was the only patient that she knew of who had survived after use of the hypothermia blanket.

A 30-year-veteran in the nursing field, Sharon Wark believes that several key factors influenced a favorable outcome for her husband. Among them, immediate administration of CPR from the retired fireman attending his class, EMS personnel's quick arrival and use of a device called the "Auto Pulse," and administration of the hypothermia blanket. The cooling blanket puts the body into a state of hypothermia and lowers the metabolism in an effort to decrease swelling and loss of brain function, according to Wark's wife.

The nursing professional also credits her husband's amazing survival and recovery to the care he received at West Houston Medical Center from a team of top doctors and nurses and his "very positive and genuine 'can do' attitude."

A week before her husband's collapse, a friend who served as a groomsman in the couple's wedding suffered a heart attack. "Although he survived, he is dealing with physical and mental disabilities. He lives in a small town and received delayed medical intervention," Sharon Wark said.

Dr. Irfan Iftikhar, the attending cardiologist, described the former Arcola resident's survival as "a miracle occurring by the divine intervention of God." During the medical ordeal, doctors discovered that all of Wark's major heart arteries were blocked.

Within a week of regaining consciousness, Wark began on the road to recovery and within a short time was on his feet—walking the halls and stairs of the facility. After a stint of rehabilitation and physical therapy to strengthen his body, doctors scheduled Wark for quadruple bypass surgery to unblock his heart arteries.

Two days after Christmas he was released from rehab, and in early February doctors gave him the "all clear" to return to a regular routine. Family members and doctors remain amazed at his survival and swift recovery.

The experience has given Wark a new perspective on life. "I stopped smoking, I eat healthier and take time to enjoy life," Wark said. He believes his hectic jack-of-all-trades lifestyle and former eating habits contributed to his condition. A demolition



worker for most of his life, Wark also wears multiple hats as an auctioneer, electronics and precious metal recycler, freelance writer, and actor. "I was always on the go and traveling here or there," Wark said of his former lifestyle.

As a young man, Wark was encouraged to enter a Tom Selleck look-alike contest, and he won first place. He then began pursuing a career in acting and has appeared in



James running the 2008 Christmas Party auction after "coming back from the dead" and before going in for his quadruple bypass.

Photo by Steve Blyskal

several TV shows including an episode of *Unsolved Mysteries*, *Hunter*, *Dallas*, and *Falcon Crest*. He also was featured in an ESPN *Gunslinger* and Church's *Chicken* commercial.

Wark considers his involvement in a movie entitled "The Man Who Came Back" ironic. "I worked as a prop man in a movie called 'The Man Who Came Back' two years ago, and then all of a sudden [I'm] the man that came back," Wark said.

With no lingering effects from his medical ordeal other than remaining soreness from his surgery, Wark has his eyes on the future. Several people have encouraged him to write a book about his unusual medical experience, something Wark is considering. "I am just very happy to be alive, and I know that God has something in store for me, he just hasn't said yet," Wark said.

The former political candidate hasn't ruled out another run for office as he weighs his options. "I ran for mayor and only about 130 or so people voted, and I received 34 percent of the vote," Wark said. "It depends on where this nine lives thing takes me," Wark said. He also has received several invitations from local churches to share his story. "My goal may be just to save lives through speaking and talking to people about



thinking about their health and strength and not a pity party,” Wark said.

“If this happens to anybody, you just have to think of the four things that helped me through—prayer, health, strength, and laughter,” Wark said.

### **In Our Library**

*by Art Smith, Librarian*

I am well pleased with the disposal of the VHS videos so far. I will probably leave them on the table for only another two weeks or so and then will store them. The sale will help the Library get back on budget.

Nancy and I set up a new book shelf where the middle VHS cabinet was, and this allowed us to expand the periodical section that continues to get new volumes each year. I am hoping this expansion will take care of things in the periodical section for the next five years or so. I have other plans for other topics in the front room and hope to be working on them soon. I hate to put things in storage or dispose of them if there might be a need for them in the next few years.

Margo Bedman gave me an index to *Gems and Gemology* on flash drive. I will have that printed and will have the magazine soon. Our set is not complete, but the more recent ones since 1990 are generally the most valuable in terms of articles in them. Alice Keller, who used to be married to Peter, has been the editor for many years, and she does a fine job. Alice and Peter used to come down to Houston from Austin in the early 1980s to display specimens from the Barringer Collection of the University of Texas at our shows.

Still working on plans to upgrade the library and how we shelve things. Suggestions are welcome but if you make a good one, I may ask you to help implement it.

### **Attention Library Users**

*by Terry Proctor*

Our long-time Librarian Art Smith has converted our large quantity of VCR tapes to DVD disks to both reduce space and to transfer them to a digital format for preservation. We owe him a great big THANK YOU for this monumental job.

One thing remains. Some of us have tapes that we borrowed and did not timely return, so those tapes have not been changed to digital disks. We need that done YESTERDAY. So if you just happen to have a VCR tape at home which you forgot to return to the HGMS Library, now is the time to do so. That way we can ensure that ALL of the HGMS Library tapes are on disk.

P.S. Once the tapes are transferred to disk, Art has been selling the tapes for \$1 apiece. There are still a few left. But please return any tape you have now. No fines, no jail time, just bring it back promptly so we can make it digital. Thanks.



## Mineral Section

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

**T**he Mineral Section meets on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays of each month at 7:30 in the HGMS Clubhouse. All are welcome.

### Upcoming Meeting Topics

**May 6: Auction:** Specimens from HGMS members will be auctioned, and a portion of the proceeds goes to the Mineral Section. This is the same auction format used during the past few years; please read the accompanying announcement for further details. Refreshments will be provided.

**May 20: Houston Fine Minerals Show Review.** Bring in your recent acquisitions from the Houston Fine Mineral Show (May 1–May 3). Let us drool over your acquisitions. Refreshments will be provided.

**June 3: Swap Night:** Back by popular demand, we will have a Swap Night where excess material from our collections can be bought/sold/swapped. This is an informal event and will be held inside. All Sections are invited to participate and swap. Setup is from 7:00 to 7:30, and the formal meeting will be kept to a minimum to allow ample time for specimen exchange and socializing. Refreshments will be provided.

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

## Mineral Auction Format

*by Dean Lagerwall*

**O**n Wednesday, May 6 at 7:30 p.m., the Mineral Section will be having its annual auction to help raise money for the Section. Once again, we are inviting ALL HGMS members to bring specimens to the auction, and they will be able to keep a portion of the proceeds. The proceeds of at least one of the specimens (your choice) must be donated to the Section. Five additional specimens are allowed for each person with a portion of each specimen (10%) going to the Section and the rest going to the donor.

This is a great way for HGMS members to thin out their duplicate specimens and to benefit both themselves and the Mineral Section. You can put a minimum bid on the more expensive pieces if you desire. Since this event will draw from all Sections, expect a variety of items to be auctioned and a very interesting and entertaining event. Setup and viewing is from 7:00 to 7:30 with bidding beginning at 7:45.

If you have any questions, call Dean at (979) 480-9373.



## Mineral Study Section Solicits Photographs from Members

*by Stephen Blyskal, Mineral Section Chair*

The Mineral Study Section has approved a fund raising project for the Section involving photographs of Texas, Arkansas, or United States minerals. We plan to make several series of note cards using the photographs. The Section would like interested photographers to submit images of minerals and lapidary materials originating in Texas or Arkansas. In addition, we are looking for mineral photographs from United States locations. If you have photographs of your minerals but did not take them yourself, that is okay as long as they can be published with a credit to the actual photographer.

The deadline for submitting images for consideration is May 20, the second Mineral Section meeting in May. Please bring your image to the meeting on a USB memory stick or CD, or send it to Steve Blyskal: [steve.Blyskal@gmail.com](mailto:steve.Blyskal@gmail.com) prior to the meeting.

## Education Update

*by Brian Honsinger*

*HGMS Education Chair*

Lots of conversation has been going on about the increased numbers of classes and the sizes of them at our club. At first it was thought to be caused by the economy. All the regulars in attendance have looked at it and ventured many opinions. It finally came to me one afternoon while looking back over the active students names—it's Gary's fault!

Lots of these new students are people to whom we had given the now-free cabochon cutting course. The main feature of this course is that after being shown the processes we know, the students are then introduced to one of our outstanding members and stone cutters, Gary Anderson. Gary, as he did with me over five years ago and with just about every other stone cutter in our club, has patiently guided them through many more skills for getting the perfect shine from their new treasure and hobby. Thus, I feel certain he is a major part of these wonderful increases.

### **Here is a list of other suspects in this mystery:**

Many of those shiny new stones are now mounted and made into jewelry in Wayne Barnett's Jewelry Fabrication class. Some have been wire wrapped in Charlie Fredregill's classes. I know at least one student is using her own stones in Tom Wright's Intermediate Jewelry Making class.

Patty Scott did her Introduction to Enameling class Sunday, and it was a great success with seven of us experiencing kiln temperatures that many had not seen before! It seems these enamels need 1450 degrees to fuse to the metal. Every student made a small dish and a pendant in this one afternoon course. When one mom had to participate in a dog show, her teenage daughter stepped in and made very lovely items in this class.



This host of great teachers are all working very hard, and they are why our class sizes are up and why many students are taking more advanced classes. Through the efforts of these teachers, new members and even our long-time members are learning new skills! I know because the students come to tell me how great their experience has been, and they are asking to go on to more classes.

One student, Elizabeth Smith in particular, has taken four courses since November, signed up four new members, and has seen to it that four classes were taken by most of those new members. Only her sister being sick Sunday caused that not to be five additional students. That is a sales record that will probably stand for awhile. Thanks, Elizabeth, and thanks to so many others for your efforts to improve your own knowledge. We have a great group of knowledgeable people in this organization; they are very willing to pass it on, so don't let these chance to learn from them pass you by.

We have some interest in setting up a Wednesday night wire wrapping class very soon, so get your deposits in. There are only two openings left in Patty Scott's next Enameling class which should be in May. It looks like we will have enough students, so I think the class has made for the first Introduction to Glass Bead Making. It starts April 23 for three Thursday nights 6:30 to 9:30 p.m.. That course is only \$155.00, and you get a pair of safety glasses to protect your eyes from torch work that produces UV level light, and you also get some beginning tools to keep.

Wayne Barnett wants to set up a Chain Making one-day class for May 17 for those who have at least completed Beginning Jewelry Making. This class is a Sunday noon to 5:00 p.m. meeting time for a cost of \$90.00, but all materials are furnished. Since we have only six jewelry tool boxes completely furnished as needed, the class size will be limited to that number.

Tom Wright will be starting another Wednesday class very soon, this time in Advanced Jewelry Making. His Ad Hoc casting group is scheduled for the last two Saturdays in April from 9:00 a.m. to noon. Your casting silver is all that casters must supply.

### **Improved Light Fixture**

*by John Martin*

*from CFMS Newsletter 10/2008, via Gem Cutters News 4/2009*

**F**or all of you using Diamond Pacific Genie or Titan Machines, here is a story you can relate to.

Have you ever been grinding away and had your hand slip and hit the rim of the light fixture? Ouch! Hot! That 75- to 100-watt incandescent light bulb is hot and really using up the electricity. Try to put one of the Compact Fluorescent Bulbs (CFB) in, and they stick out the bottom of the light fixture causing all that light to go everywhere and not on your work. Then after a few days of use, the bulb breaks at the seams from all that vibration. The bulb is dangling from wires, and the rest of the guts are still in the fixture with all that water splashing around.

I have found the best of both worlds. Try one of those small, halogen 35-watt mini flood lamps. It puts a really bright light right on your work, the rim of the light fixture stays cool, and you are only using 35 watts to get better light than the 75–100 incandes-



cent bulb.

When selecting the halogen bulb, there are two sizes: one has a short neck which will fit, but it requires some creative twisting. The other style has a longer neck that makes the installation of the bulb into the fixture a breeze.



So when that inefficient 100-watt bulb finally blows out, try a compact halogen spot lamp as a replacement. Your work area will look brighter, and you will be using less energy and running a lot cooler.

### **AFMS Endowment Fund and Raffle—Please Help**

*by Bill Pattillo*

**A**s you may or may not know, the American Federation has a raffle benefiting the American Federation Endowment Fund. Each of the Federations are asked to donate something to the raffle. The raffle will be at the AFMS Show, which this year is in Billings, Montana.

And also as you may or may not know, I have taken the position of Representative for the South Central Federation. This means I get to sell tickets and gather donations for the AFMS Endowment Fund and Raffle. At this time, the SCFMS has given three items to the raffle and a fourth item is forthcoming; these are valued at approximately \$125 each. These items can be donated by an individual or by a club.

There are good pictures of the raffle items on the AFMS Web site: [www.amfed.org](http://www.amfed.org). Go to the site map, and there are pictures of the raffle items received so far. At this time the SCFMS has another item that was donated by the Dallas Club. It is supposedly on the way to my address now. I have not seen it or a picture of it—it is a pendent—that's all I know.

This is my plea: I will mail you tickets which sell for \$5 each or five for \$20. You can resell them or give them away or keep them yourself. Our Federation is guaranteed to win one of the items. The way the drawing will be handled this year, we will put all the tickets that a Federation sells into a drawing box, shake them up, and draw one ticket from that Federation's participation. This guarantees one prize for each Federation. After the Federation drawing, all the remaining tickets will be put into a tumbler, and tickets will be drawn until all the items are given away.

If you would like to help the Endowment Fund, please contact me by:

E-mail: [bill@rockfoodtable.com](mailto:bill@rockfoodtable.com), Telephone: 361-387-5190

Snail mail: 619 Wright Street, Robstown, Texas, 78389-3815

Thank you, and I hope to see you at a Gem Show in the near future. I will also have tickets for sale, if you see me.



## General Meeting Minutes

March 24, 2009

by Regina Gorman, Secretary

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

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

Matt Dillon moved to approve the Minutes of the February General Meeting. Phyllis George seconded the motion, and it was approved by unanimous vote.

Terry Proctor introduced new members Cassie Haman and Jeff Short and welcomed them to HGMS.

**Treasurer:** Rodney Linehan reported through Terry that HGMS is in good financial shape.

**Show Committee:** Terry Proctor had talked to Sigrid Stewart, 2009 Show Committee Chair, who is on vacation. Sigrid reported that the Show Committee is on track for meeting deadlines and is doing a super job of advertising the 2009 Show. Sigrid secured a \$1000 grant from Chevron on a Matching Funds Policy in recognition of Sigrid's donation of time doing volunteer work for HGMS.

### Section Reports

**Lapidary Section:** Phyllis George stated that Ed Clay has agreed to be the Lapidary Section Program Chair, and the program for the Monday, April 20 Lapidary Meeting will be on Dopping a Stone Successfully.

**Education:** Brian Honsinger e-mailed a detailed report to the BOD on the status of HGMS educational programs to date. The two new jewelry classes were well attended, and he specifically thanked Tom Wright, Wayne Barnett, and Kathy Konkel for their contributions to the success of those classes. The beginning, intermediate, and advanced course cost is \$375 each with all tools and materials furnished. He also outlined plans for several new classes. Charlie Fredregill has been teaching wire wrapping, and a class on making a wire wrapped ring and bracelet will be starting. Patty Scott will conduct an enameling class starting March 29, and it is presently full. Another enameling class will be starting soon. Introduction to Glass Bead Making starts April 23. Gary Anderson has been showing many new members how to shape and polish a cabochon, and his students have then signed up to take additional classes. A silver casting class is scheduled for the last two Saturdays in April. A deposit of \$25 reserves your place in the class of your choice. For more information and prices, call Brian Honsinger, Education Director, at 281-777-0552.

### New Business

**Paleontology Field Trips:** The Jasper Trip on February 28, 2009 was a rousing success. Scott Singleton organized and led a group of 61 Rockhounds to Lake Sam Rayburn in a search for fossilized wood. No one was disappointed! Read our President's report and see the happy faces of all who went in the April 2009 BBG.



**Programs:** Matt Dillon reported that he has Norman Lenz lined up to speak about Inclusions in Gem Stones, and Dr. Nathalie Brandes will talk about Rock Stars, Pioneers of Earth Science—lives of notable people who studied geology. The Biography of Robert T. Help(sp?) was suggested by Terry Proctor as a topic for future programs.

**Drawing:** The prize was provided by Mary Ann Mitscherling and consisted of several rocks--five or six--for slabbing to make cabochons and a new pedometer for the exercise enthusiast. The lucky winner was Gary Tober.

**Show and Tell:** Terry Proctor brought the specimens he collected from the previous weekend at McFadden Beach—fossilized bison bones and other items of interest probably from the Pleistocene era.

**Snacks for April General Meeting:** Phyllis George

**Program:** Sam Stubbs, long-time rockhound and avid trilobite collector, presented the Legal Aspects of Providing for the Disbursement and Treatment of Collections After You Die. He spoke about why collectors amass large collections, how to determine the quality and worth of collections, and the people or entities (such as museums or other collectors) who might be interested in acquiring collections. Mr. Stubbs, an avid collector of trilobites, was very informative and helpful on all aspects of the topic. He stressed the need to accomplish such a task before it is dropped on heirs. He also showed us slides, photographed by Dr. Neal Immega, of the most unusual and beautiful trilobites in his collection.

After the program, the General Meeting was resumed by President Terry Proctor.

### Old Business

**Bill H.R. 146:** Terry Proctor reminded the membership to call or contact their respective congressmen concerning the vote scheduled for March 23, 2009, on **H.R. 146**. This is an Omnibus Bill containing many statutes on other issues before Congress. The language written in the statute that seriously impacts the future of HGMS members would nationalize control of vertebrate fossil collecting by casual collectors on Federal Lands. Terry stressed how important it is to let our Representatives and Senators know about our concerns.

**Ideas for Expansion Programs:** Terry Proctor proposed that the districts for the future HGMS educational expansion in the Greater Houston Area be drawn on the same lines as the Harris County Constable Districts. He also reported that Holy Trinity United Methodist Church has agreed to allow HGMS to set up an educational program at their facility.

**Swap Meet:** Matt Dillon reported that the Swap Meet held on the parking lot of the Club March 15 had a good turnout until it rained. A few people went inside. The event was productive even with the rain.

There being no other business to come before the Membership, the meeting was adjourned.



## HGMS Board of Directors Minutes

*April 7, 2009*

*by Regina Gorman, Secretary*

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

X	President	Terry Proctor	X	Faceting Rep.	Wayne Barnett
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.	Denise Bicknell
	Treasurer	Rodney Linehan		Paleontology Rep.	Rick Rexroad
X	Secretary	Regina Gorman		Day Light Rep.	Nancy Fischer
X	Beading Rep.	Diane Sisson			

A quorum was present, and President Terry Proctor called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Wayne Barnett moved that the February 6, 2009 Minutes of the Board of Directors meeting be accepted as printed in the Backbender's Gazette (BBG). Matt Dillon seconded the motion, and it passed by unanimous vote.

**Treasurer's Report:** Rodney Linehan, CPA, was not in attendance; therefore, he sent the Board members a copy of the 2009 First Quarter Financial Report for review and for filing in the official records of HGMS. After a review of the report, it was agreed by the Board that the Club's finances are in very good condition. Flood insurance, acquiring an Elevation Certificate, and hiring an electrical supplier were brought up for discussion. Since there was no new information regarding these items, further discussion and action were tabled, and decisions will be made at the May Board of Directors Meeting.

### Section Reports

**Beading:** Diane Sisson reported that seven people attended the March meeting—a good turnout since it coincided with a major annual Paleo Section field trip. Diane and Phyllis George are both signed up to take the new Introductory Glass Bead Making Class.

**Faceting:** Wayne Barnett reported that six people attended the Faceting Seminar held on Sunday, March 22.

**Lapidary:** Phyllis George reported that there is no chair person for this Section, but Ed Clay is the Lapidary Program Chair. Ed will present the April 19 program on How to Dop Stones so They Stay on the Dop (coming off only when appropriate). It will be a hands-on program.

**Paleontology:** The March Paleo meeting originally was cancelled because Lexy Bieniek and many Paleo Section members would be out of town at the Brownwood field trip, a very popular annual event. Terry Proctor stepped in and decided it would be good to have a meeting anyway for the paleo members who were not going on the field trip. He



sent an e-mail announcing that there would be a Paleo Section meeting on fossils found at McFadden Beach and for people to bring any for show and tell discussions. A number of people came with their fossils, and they had a good meeting and discussion.

**BBG:** Articles and items to appear in the April 2009 BBG are due April 8, 2009.

**Youth:** Sigrid Stewart reported that Steve Blyskal conducted the Saturday Youth program for the kids while Beverly was away on the Brownwood field trip, and he was a huge hit. Sigrid thinks Steve should do it more often.

**Anthropology:** Terry Proctor said that this new group is on hold until more interest is shown by HGMS members.

**Education:** Brian Honsinger, Education Chair, is doing an excellent job.

**Show Committee:** Sigrid Stewart commented that the next committee meeting will be a working one to assist the Houston Fine Mineral Show by mailing out their advertising flyers to the HGMS membership. HFMS is furnishing the postage and the flyers, and the Show Committee is furnishing the labor.

**Grants:** Sigrid was successful in getting Chevron to donate \$1,000 as a grant in matching funds in consideration of time she donates working as the HGMS 2009 Show Committee Chairman. Steve Blyskal gave Kathy Ferris, our liason with Conoco-Phillips and an HGMS member, the required paperwork for a grant that would pay for the mineral and fossil school kits the Mineral Section makes up every year. She is now waiting on the decision.

**Exhibits for show:** Sigrid commented on some ideas she was entertaining for interesting major exhibits at the 2009 Show and a discussion ensued. Possibilities include an exhibit from The Black Hills Institute, dinosaurs, a strip of dinosaur skin, Peter Larson's T-Rex named Stan, Ice Age Saber-toothed tigers, and oreodont skulls. Terry Proctor offered his dinosaur tracks as a repeat. Also, the NASA Moon Rock slated to be exhibited at the AFMS Annual Show in Billings, Montana and Mars rocks were mentioned as possibilities.

Terry Proctor mentioned that getting an article published in *Texas Highways Magazine* would be good advertising for the Show.

### Old Business

**Library:** Terry Proctor will put a notice in the BBG advising members who have borrowed tapes from the library to bring them back. Art Smith is converting the tapes to DVDs and selling the tapes once they've been copied.

**Clubhouse Maintenance:** The saw in the shop was worked on and is now in good shape and working great. Beverly Mace reported that the Youth Section paid for and donated eye-protectors to the shop at the suggestion of Neal Immega. The door lock and the back door have been repaired by Tom Wright, and both are now working properly—no need to purchase a new door. Matt Dillon talked with Wayne Barnett



who said he is willing to help with the installation of the stop blocks for the parking lot. Phyllis George stated that the office door needed two more wide boxes to accommodate the mail. Terry Proctor volunteered to make the new labels.

**AFMS Endowment Fund:** Terry Proctor reminded the Board that the AFMS had sent an invitation to HGMS to donate items to be auctioned off for charity. The minimum value of the items should be at least \$50 to \$75 and could be something made in our shop by a member. Matt Dillon moved that HGMS furnish \$300 for either the purchase of a finished item or for the materials to make an item that would be donated to the AFMS Endowment Fund. Phyllis George seconded the motion, and it passed by unanimous vote.

**TANO & Grant Station and Building Fund:** A discussion of how to grow this fund by matching funds and by applying for grants was opened by Terry Proctor. He also stated that he will write an article in the BBG about TANO and the grants available through TANO for the Building Fund.

**Scholarship Fund:** Terry Proctor suggested that HGMS award \$2,500 each year from the fund to a Junior College student or students because the money would go much further. He added that some Junior Colleges in the area had geological and earth-sciences courses. Matt Dillon moved that \$2,500 be donated each year by HGMS for scholarships to Junior College students. Phyllis George seconded the motion, and it passed by unanimous vote.

**Programs:** Matt Dillon reported on upcoming General Meeting programs:

- April .....** Norm Lenz on inclusions, good and bad, in gemstones--a GIA appraiser will assist with his presentation and answer questions
- May .....** Nathalie Brandeis—Rock Stars, Pioneers of Earth Science—to discuss the lives of notable people who studied geology.
- June .....** Neal Immega on the Diamond Exhibit scheduled to open at HMNS later this year
- July .....** Sam Stubbs to talk about his trilobite collection (may be put off to next year)
- August .....** Amber Way (tentative) if not, backed up by either Tom Wright on casting or by someone else
- September ..** Ron Gibbs discussing his book on agates, his methods of photographing agates, etc.
- October or November** Patrick J. Lewis, PhD, from San Houston State University, possibly to talk on his trip to Africa (will find suitable backup if he cannot do it)
- December ...** Christmas Party

There is a new rockhound club this year in Huntsville, and it is known as the Piney Woods Gem & Mineral Society. Welcome!

**Outreach and Expansion Project:** Terry Proctor passed out maps showing the Constable Districts in Harris County and suggested that we target each district for venues to use for the educational programs, demonstrations, and displays in each district. He



announced that the Pastor of Holy Trinity United Methodist Church said HGMS is welcome to set up a program two or three times a year in their Fellowship Hall. The districts were discussed as to where the greatest interest in our message might be found, and we discussed the possibility of talking to the Clear Lake Club about partnering with us in the outreach program. Terry will write a blurb on Education Outreach. Phyllis mentioned having seen an ad in the *Houston Chronicle* where the Chronicle in Education was applauding Hess Corporation's activities that help children and teachers explore earth science and learn about the earth. She thought there might be a good opportunity to perhaps apply for a grant or even partner with them—or both. Terry said there is a refinery on Federal Road that has done that for years, and he will find the name and contact information.

As there was no other business before the Board, Wayne Barnett moved to adjourn the meeting, Matt Dillon seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned by the President at 9:45 pm.

### **I'm Petrified**

*by Dick Stata - Dec. 2007*

*via Calgary Lapidary Journal 3/2009*

Look at me, I'm a tall and stately tree,  
straight and healthy as I can be.  
The ground is quaking, Why am I shaking?  
Darn, my neighbor fell on me.

A hot wind is blowing, ash falling like it's snowing,  
Oh no! I think the breakup has started.  
Over I go, I'm slammed to and fro,  
my lovely limbs and I are soon parted.

We lay there for awhile, a very huge pile,  
for miles we carpeted the ground.  
Then came the flood and that layer of mud,  
that's when all of us drowned.

I cannot see what's piled on me, no oxygen;  
under this mud I must die.  
I didn't decay, the mud turned to clay,  
how long in this earth must I lie?

I feel a trickle, a sort of tickle;  
something's invading each cell.  
I feel a change, actually, I feel kind of strange,  
I think I'm starting to gel.

I hibernate under an inland sea, with its sediment piling  
up on me, and I never got to feel a wave.  
Nature piled on the dirt and it really didn't hurt,  
but it trapped me deep in this grave.



For eons I've waited, time goes on unabated;  
this old tree has turned to solid rock.  
Some years there's moving and shaking, into slices I'm  
breaking, I'd scream if I could talk.

Then came the day when the dirt went away,  
now I'm back in the sunshine again.  
There's no place to hide, I just lay there, petrified;  
That freezing and thawing is a pain.

Then along came this creature, a geology teacher,  
and he took a slice of my trunk.  
He says I'm the best example, a Pet Wood Sample;  
I make all the rest look like junk.

He carried me back to some kind of shack,  
where he tortured me with a wheel.  
He ground out my dings, polished my rings,  
to bring out my glorious appeal.

Now I sit on a shelf, all by myself,  
all polished and gleaming in colorful pride.  
I'll never be the same, but here I will remain,  
More handsome than that day when I died.

They named me Aruacariaxilon Arizonicum;  
you can read it on that sign by my side.  
I'm in the museum of the Petrified Forest;  
that's where my old forest buddies reside.

### Hobby Hints

*from Breccia 4/2009*

**T**he Breccia has not tried these hints unless otherwise noted, and advises caution when trying any new procedure or products. Comments or questions welcomed.

**Rock polish:** If you don't have time to polish a rock you want to display at our show or at home, add a little water to liquid dish detergent and paint your rock or slab with it. [This works.]

**Burp that tumbler!** If your tumbler keeps burping gas and making a mess, it's due to gas generated by acids and metals such as the iron in a stone reacting with the weak acids formed by grinding other rocks. Drop a couple of antacids into the tumbler, and the problem will be reduced or go away!



## AFMS Conservation & Legislation

### *Words of Caution*

*by John Wright, RPG, AFMS Conservation & Legislation Chair  
from AFMS Newsletter 4/2009*

**B**ack in October 2008, I planned to write about “Conflict Stones” sometimes better known as “Blood Stone,” but decided that the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act was a much more immediate problem. My “crystal ball” indicates that by the time this article appears, the Omnibus Package which also includes the Paleontological Resources Preservation Act will more than likely be history, and I can move on to other matters of concern that you will probably appreciate more since it’s just an advisory and you will not be asked (heaven forbid) to exert yourself to do anything.

Numerous items are banned from being imported into the United States, i.e. cocaine, opium, etc., but I want to concentrate on things that pertain to us rockhounds. Most of us are well aware that importing ivory or ivory products into the United States has been banned for a couple of decades. Until recently there were very few restrictions on importing gemstones, precious metals, or fossils if these properties were declared, documented properly, and the appropriate tariffs paid. Well, this is quickly changing as one vocal segment of our population has suddenly decided that the methods used to mine and manufacture jewelry items are cruel and inhumane (yet they are more than quick, ready, and proud to wear exquisite jewelry when in the limelight). They also want to apply the same rules being forced on us here in the United States to fossils obtained in others areas of the world.

In 2002 restrictions were placed on importing gemstones and minerals from Myanmar (which used to be Burma) because of the inhuman way in which the people were being treated by the country’s military regime. The 2002 restrictions were changed to a complete total ban effective October 1, 2008. This ban means that gemstones and jewelry items originating in Myanmar (rubies, sapphires, jadeite, etc.) can no longer be imported into the USA even if the actual jewelry was made in another country.

Items falling within this restriction must have documentation proving they were obtained prior to the implementation of the law or that the origin of the item was other than Myanmar. Since approximately 90% of the world’s gem quality natural rubies come from Myanmar, this law is effectively going to shut down their availability in the United States.

Yangon gem sellers dismissed the sanction against their government as a symbolic gesture unlikely to have much impact on their lucrative trade. “Our buyers are almost all from China, Russia, the Gulf, Thailand, India, and the European Union, and we can barely keep up with their demand,” said Theta Mar of Mandalay Jewelry, a store in the museum gem shop located in the capitol of Myanmar.

*The thing you need to be aware of is that efforts are well under way in the US Congress to have these same restrictions placed on a variety of gemstones and minerals*



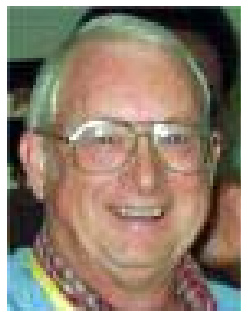
from other countries in the world. I wonder how many of us still have the receipts for the jewelry items we purchased many years ago that might fall into the restricted categories. At the present this will not be much of a problem unless you travel out of country and happen to take along some of your jewelry or maybe find some really outstanding buys you can't live without while abroad. Coming back into this country could present a real challenge.

I've often heard that an elephant is a mouse built to government specifications, and now with the current trend towards political correctness, I fully expect to see these efforts at restricting gemological imports grow into a real monster. Will these embargoes which penalize our citizens in order to punish other governments with whom we disagree work? Not really—just like the restrictions on rubies from Myanmar, with the Americans and a few European consumers out of the picture, buyers from other countries will be more than happy to take advantage of a great opportunity. Who will lose? Unfortunately, we Americans citizens will.

### **AFMS Inter-Regional Rockhound Rendezvous**

*by Richard Pankey, Inter-Regional Field Trip Chair  
from AFMS Newsletter 4/2009*

**T**he Davis Creek/Lassen Creek area of the Modoc National Forest in northeastern California is truly a unique and beautiful place. And for rockhounds, its most unique feature is OBSIDIAN! It is abundant and of great quality. It is easy to find and collect. It comes in a wide variety of colors, sheens, and shapes. And best of all, our rendezvous will be held there in late May. If you like obsidian, if you like rock collecting, if you like meeting other interesting rockhounds, join us for this Inter-regional Rockhound Rendezvous, May 20 to 25, 2009.



Now is the time to get your name on the signup list. Sign up early and bring some friends. We are relying on the bulletin editors and field trip chairmen to help get the word out about this unique adventure. The two-page Field Trip flier is available on the AFMS and CFMS Web sites. This flier has all the details about the trip, directions to our campsite, and other useful information.

There were two activities mentioned in the flier that I would like to explain in more detail. On Friday and Saturday afternoons, we will conduct our Tailgate Displays. We will have rockhounds from all over the western United States that I am sure have collected some unique and interesting material from their home

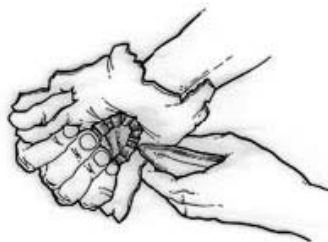


Rainbow Obsidian—Lassen Creek, CA



area. Bring along some specimens to show and share at the tailgate display. This will also be a good time to conduct the “map exchange.” Map exchanges are easy—to get a map, you have to give a map. Before you leave home, prepare a good, detailed map of a good, unique or little-known collecting area with which you are familiar. The map should be a detailed hand or computer-drawn map with accurate mileages; GPS coordinates are very desirable, and be sure to note collecting site details and campsites where appropriate. Bring along as many maps as you would like to receive. I plan to bring 100 copies of my map. I am sure there will be a lot of informal exchanges of collecting sites, GPS info, and sharing of great places to go and see. There are a lot of other rockhounding opportunities within 100 miles of our Rendezvous site: sunstones, opal, petrified wood, other obsidian sites, geodes, and more. The Rendezvous is a good way to start your summer collecting tour.

We have arranged for several knappers to demonstrate and teach various knapping techniques. If you are already a knapper—beginner or experienced—bring along your tools and join the “Knapp-In.”



Although we are camping in a National Forest, it is best that we bring in our own wood for our campfire. If everyone would bring some firewood, we should have enough for a campfire each night. And don't forget about the happy hours and the two potluck dinners.

This trip is open to members and guests of all of the Federations of the AFMS, but I expect most of the attendees will be from the Northwest and California Federations. Everyone who agrees to adhere to the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies Code of Ethics, abide by the direction of the field trip leaders, and practice safe rockhounding is welcome to attend.

Please notify your respective Federation leader early, but no later than May 16 if you plan to attend. E-mail (or call) if you have questions or need more information. Don't wait—do it now. This will be a great opportunity for rockhounds from all over the west and from all of the Federations of the AFMS to meet one another, to share stories, and share information about collecting in their home areas. Be sure to bring material from your favorite collecting sites to show and share.

Come join us for a great Inter-Regional Rendezvous of collecting, fun, and fellowship.

**Dick Parks**

Northwest Federation  
<packrats2@msn.com>  
360-892-3716

**Richard Pankey**

California Federation  
<dickpankey@juno.com>  
925-439-7509



## AFMS Safety Report—Be Safe—Be Well

*by Don Monroe*  
*AFMS Safety Chair*  
*from AFMS Newsletter 10/2007*

### Sun Exposure—Changes Through Time

**A** few things that we consider as safety issues have actually changed, but not very many. Most hazards remain constant and are still bad for you, but our attitude and our knowledge about sun exposure has really changed over time.

When I was young (no snide comments please), I remember the social implications of having a suntan. Men were regarded as “red necks” if they had a tan face and hands but were whiter over the rest of their body. Women who had a tanned complexion were thought of as farm women or farm workers and were thought to be of a lower socio-economic class. Many of the girls from the “city” were extremely careful about exposure to sunlight.

All of these attitudes changed in the mid-1900s when it became stylish to have a “tan.” The health effects of sun exposure and the positive aspects of Vitamin D created emphasis on the tanned appearance. Everyone wanted a “tan,” and we all got one and tried to keep one.

Well, now we are paying for those tans as the pendulum swings back toward sun protection. I won’t say that skin cancer is rampant, but it is a major concern particularly for the fair skinned. It was not very long ago when a popular money-making scheme was to own a tanning studio or to sell tanning beds for home use. Now I see many more advertisements for sun creams, sprays, and other forms of protection from the sun.

Until recently, I did not know what SPF meant and how sun protection was rated. A very tiny little black speck which turned out to be a melanoma absolutely changed my life, and now I am seeing many of my friends learn the same hard lessons.

I am not in the medical profession, but I will share with you some thoughts that I share with my children and grandchildren.

1. Visit a dermatologist on a regular basis, more often if you have a fair complexion.
2. Minimize your sun exposure. I simply am afraid to stay out in the sun because it is not worth the risk. Dress sensibly wearing hats, sun glasses, long sleeved shirts, and light-colored clothing outside.
3. Use an appropriate sun screen following your physician’s advice.
4. Try to convince the younger generations that it is not “macho” to fry in the sun.
5. Don’t forget the little children or grandchildren. I have been told that sun damage is a cumulative thing, and we do not want the kids to start too young.



## AFMS Junior Activities

*Having Fun: Highlighting Earth Resources for Kids*  
by Jim Brace-Thompson, AFMS Junior Activities Chair  
from AFMS Newsletter 4/2009

**A**t some of the shows I attended in 2008, I entered a display entitled “The Earth Resources Challenge!” In it I had 16 rocks and minerals numbered and arranged in four rows on the bottom of the case and 16 everyday products, each given a letter of the alphabet from a to p, arranged in four rows pinned to the back of the case. Outside the case, I had a quiz and pencils for folks to match the mineral to the everyday object that was made from it. Kids who completed the quiz were awarded a free tumble-polished stone from a “Pirate’s Treasure Chest.”



This has proven to be a popular display, and I’ve had clubs ask if I could list the “ingredients” I used so that they might make one of their own. Here goes: kaolinite and a ceramic mug; copper nuggets and a section of plumbing pipe or pennies; crystals (quartz, aquamarine, tourmaline, peridot) and faceted gemstones; hematite and steel nails; galena and a lead fishing weight; coal and a model of a factory with a smoke stack (purchased at a model train store); talc and talcum powder; sulfur and matches; bauxite and an aluminum can; halite and salt; a borate mineral and laundry detergent; cinnabar and a mercury thermometer (these are hard to find nowadays!); pumice and Lava brand soap; fluorite and fluoride toothpaste; limestone and a photo of a building made from limestone blocks; and garnets and sandpaper.

I encourage all clubs to put together a collection like this because it can serve as a valuable educational resource. If you’re using the AFMS/FRA badge program with your pebble pups and junior members, such a collection will help your club’s kids earn their Earth **Having Fun: Highlighting Earth Resources for Kids** by Jim Brace-Thompson, AFMS Junior Activities Chair Resources badge. In addition, the collection comes in handy if your club helps Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts earn their earth sciences merit badges or loops. And it’s a fun, informative display for school presentations. The minerals and products I included in my display are just a few of many possibilities.

To get still more, turn to the Web site of the Mineral Information Institute, or the MII, at [www.mii.org](http://www.mii.org). Hit the “For Teachers” tab at the top of the page, then scroll down to “Packets for Download” and click on “Everyday Uses of Minerals—Our Dig a Little Deeper Series” Teacher Packet #3. To the left will be a series of ready-made packets with info and activities of all sorts to illustrate to kids the mineral sources of many everyday objects.

One MII packet I especially like is “How Many Minerals Does it Take to Make a Light Bulb?” Well, per the MII sheet, the bulb is soft glass made from silica, trona, lime, coal, and salt. The filament is made from tungsten. The lead-in-wires are made of



copper and nickel. Tie wires are made of molybdenum. Wires contained in the glass stem press are made of a combination of a nickel-iron alloy core and a copper sleeve. The fuse is made of nickel, manganese, copper, and/or silicon alloys. Support wires are made of molybdenum. The button and button rod are glass, made of the same minerals as the bulb, plus lead. The heat deflector is made of aluminum (from bauxite ore). The base is made of brass (copper + zinc) or aluminum. And finally, the bulb is filled with a gas that's usually a mixture of nitrogen and argon. All this in a little light bulb. Who woulda thunk it? So to dramatically illustrate to kids just how many minerals go into their everyday life, you can prepare a full collection and display as I described above, or you can look no further than a single light bulb! It's a bright idea for educating, while as always, having fun!

## SCFMS Rockhound of the Year Award

*A Reminder*

*by Edith Guenther*

*SCFMS Rockhound of the Year Chair*

*from SCFMS Newsletter 3-4/2009*

**T**he AFMS set up this program to honor a rockhound when a club or an individual in the club believes that a person is worthy of recognition because of what the rockhound has done or is doing to promote the club.

A husband and wife are considered to be one nomination. This is not a competition.

Sometimes we have good intentions to nominate someone, but we put it off until another day, and that day doesn't come. Why not sit down at this time and nominate that special someone today? We have a lot of good people in the SCFMS who should be recognized for what they do.

These nominations are passed on to the editors of the SCFMS and AFMS Newsletters and are published as time and space permits.

Information that should be included in the nomination:

1. The name of the Club's outstanding rockhound.
2. The name of your club and where it is located—be sure to include city and state.
3. Name of the Federation. (SCFMS)
4. Name of the person or persons making the nominations. Any club member can nominate another club member.
5. A brief statement to publish with the name as to why this club member is so special. Statements can be 50 words or less. In 50 words or less, describe why this rockhound deserves recognition for what he or she (or both if a couple), do to promote your Club.
6. Mail to: Edith Guenther, P.O. Box 791, New Llano, LA 71461.

Certificates will be presented—one for the rockhound and one for the club history—to honor those nominated.

If two different nominations are received from the same club, the second nomination will be held over until the following year.



## SCFMS Safety Report

### *Preparedness*

*by Owen Martin, SCFMS Safety Coordinator*

*from SCFMS Newsletter 3-4/2009*

**J**ust when you thought it was safe to go back into the field... Some lessons on “preparedness” for your spring field trips.

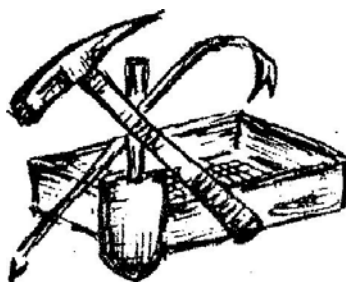
As I sit here pondering whether I’m going to need to get some stronger medicine for my poison ivy, I figured I would and should pen my next safety article.

With spring upon us, a lot more folks will likely be looking at doing more fossil hunting. So with that in mind and as the Boy Scouts are fond of saying, “Be prepared.”

This past week while on a business trip, I had the opportunity to do a little fossil hunting after work. As my note above indicated, I got into some poison ivy. Also I was “bitten” several times by the ever-present green briar vines that line most of the creeks I visit. A long-sleeved shirt would have provided simple protection from both.

I’m also recovering from a big gash in my palm as a result of turning over a big chunk of limestone and having it break apart in the process. A sharp oyster shell cut a nice slice through the skin. Oh no, if I hadn’t left my garden gloves in the Jeep!!!

The second day in the area, I took my tools out to try and knock some big ammonites out of the limestone. Hooray, my protective eye wear worked. Unfortunately I forgot my backpack and had to haul everything out in my arms. One trip for the tools: 3 lb. maul, chisel, rock hammer, and crowbar, and another two trips for the 13" and 16" ammonites. The backpack would have saved me an extra half mile of hiking.



Finally on the third day it started raining, so I figured I’d hit a spot where the fossils really pop out at you (visually) when wet. Unfortunately a cold front had just blown through and the temperature dropped to 39 degrees, roughly 40 degrees lower than the previous two evenings! Luckily, I had wading boots so dealing with the mud wasn’t a problem; however, all I had to keep me warm was a flannel shirt. Luckily after my cheeks and hands turned numb, I was able to spend a couple of hours on the outcrop and found a couple of nice echinokls to prep at home. Of course, any of the following items would have been greatly beneficial to my comfort—my army field coat, a rain shawl, gloves, extra socks, and a knit cap. Did I mention that a chill can lead to a cold??? Sniff, sniff, cough, cough.

I suppose I could say that I was “partially prepared,” but at the end of the day, I did not do a good job of being prepared for my forays into the field.

I hope everyone will take time to think things through as you prepare for your spring hunting trips and take special care to consider safety on these trips.

Happy Hunting, and BE SAFE OUT THERE!



**Show Time 2009**

May 1-3	Houston, TX	Houston Fine Mineral Show Embassy Suites Hotel near The Galleria 2911 Sage Road, Houston, TX www.finemineralshow.com
May 16-17	Lubbock, TX	Lubbock Gem & Mineral Society Lubbock Civic Center Archie Scott: asscott3@windstream.net
May 23-24	Ft. Worth, TX	Fort Worth Gem & Mineral Society Will Rogers Memorial Center Steve Hilliard: fwgmc@embarqmail.com www.fortworthgemandmineralclub.com
July 30-August 2	Billings, MT	AFMS/NFMS show; Billings G&M Club Montana Trade Center, Holliday Inn Grand Montana, 5500 Midland R. Doug True, dtruefossils@yahoo.com
August 8-9	Baton Rouge, LA	Baton Rouge Gem & Mineral Society Fraternal Order of Police
August 15-16	Bossier City, LA	Ark-La-Tex Gem & Mineral Society Bossier City Civic Center
August 22-23	Jasper, TX	Pine Country Gem & Mineral Society VFW Hall, 7 miles W of Jasper FM 2799 & 1747
September 5-6	Arlington, TX	Arlington Gem & Mineral Society Arlington Convention Center
September 19-20	Richardson, TX	Pleasant Oaks Gem & Mineral Club EMGI at Brookhaven College
September 26-27	Denison, TX	Texoma Rockhounds Denison Senior Center
October 10-11	Temple, TX	SCFMS/Tri-City Gem & Mineral Society Mayborn Civic Center, 3303 N. 3rd St.
October 16-18	Victoria, TX	Victoria Gem & Mineral Society Community Center
November 13-15	Humble, TX	Houston Gem & Mineral Society Humble Civic Center, 8233 Will Clayton Pkwy. 5 miles east of Bush Intercontinental Airport 1 mile east of Hwy. 59; www.hgms.org



2009		May				2009
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 10-5 Shop Open 10-12 Youth Section
3	4	5 7:30 Board Meeting	6 7:30 Mineral Section	7	8	9 10-5 Shop Open
10 Mother's Day	11 1:00 Day Light Section	12 7:30 Show Committee	13 7:30 Faceting Section	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	21	22	23 10-5 Shop Open
24 31	25 Memorial Day	26 7:30 General Meeting	27	28	29	30 10-5 Shop Open

2009		June				2009
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
7	8 1:00 Day Light Section	9 7:30 Show Committee	10 7:30 Faceting Section	11	12	13 10-5 Shop Open
14 Flag Day	15 7:30 Lapidary Section	16 7:30 Paleo Section	17 7:30 Mineral Section	18	19	20 10-5 Shop Open 10-12 Youth Section 1:30 Beading Section
21 Father's Day	22	23 7:30 General Meeting	24	25	26	27 10-5 Shop Open
28	29	30				



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

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

10805 BROOKLET

HOUSTON, TEXAS 77099

(281) 530-0942



## **SCFMS**

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2005 - 1st (Large)  
2006 - 1st (Large)  
2007 - 1st (Large)  
2008 - 1st (Large)



## **AFMS**

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



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