



The **BACKBENDER'S GAZETTE**

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

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President's Message *by Terry Proctor* *2009 HGMS President*

2009 is winding down with a great year under our belt. Thanksgiving is almost on us, followed closely thereafter by the Christmas/Hanukkah season and other observed dates during the month of December, and New Year's Eve and Day. My second term as President is coming to a close in a few weeks, and I would like to reflect upon what has happened this year, what is happening, and what is coming up or remains to be done in the near term.



What has happened in 2009: Dues for 2009 were increased somewhat in most instances and considerably for lifetime members (the first increase in something like 10 years). This has helped HGMS to remain in good financial condition for this year and (it appears) into the near future. In spite of some comments at the time, the increase was proposed at the General Membership Meeting last fall, and the vote was unanimous for the increase. Thank you for your confidence that

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Upcoming General Meeting Programs

November 24, 2009: Patrick J. Lewis, PhD will present our November program, and you won't want to miss this presentation.

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 summer and to

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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

this was needed.

The **HGMS Educational Committee**, with Brian Honsinger as Chair, has done wonders in seeing that HGMS this year has scheduled and carried out numerous educational classes. These classes have very successfully educated many HGMS members in the lapidary arts, and the classes have provided much-needed revenue for HGMS to continue to operate in the black.

The **New Member Orientation** was a huge success with 64 HGMS members, including over 40 new members, in attendance. Now that our new members know more about HGMS, **you are extended an invitation to join the various Sections, Committees, and activities of HGMS.**

The **Show Committee** needs many helpers NOW, as the HGMS Show is only weeks away. Contact Show Chair Sigrid Stewart (281) 239-0377 (long distance from some numbers) or sigrid.stewart@gmail.com OR Asst. Show Chair, Richard "Rick" Rexroad at (713) 647-6533 or rrexroad@brwncauld.com OR the HGMS Show person lining up volunteer help at the Show, Mary Ann Mitscherling at (713) 957-2001 or maryann@hal-pc.org.

Our **Outreach Program** was started with the plan to have an HGMS nucleus in eight districts in Harris County. These are the same as the eight JP/Constable Precinct numbers. We have had four programs so far with something approaching 300 people in attendance who are new to HGMS. This is a very important program, and I would like all interested HGMS members to contact me and let me know which district you are in so I can match you up with others in that district to get the ball rolling. Neal Immega has taken HGMS Genie machines out for children and adults to try their hand at making cabochons by grinding and polishing agate rough supplied by HGMS. In one program 150+ girl scouts learned about "The Bone Wars" and the collecting of dinosaur bones a century ago. The interest and response to these Outreach Programs has been great. We hope more HGMS members will participate and spread the word on Earth Science and Lapidary Arts.

ROCKHOUND stickers were purchased, and almost 100 HGMS members now have this bright yellow sticker on their rear window so they can tell who is in a caravan of members on their way to a dig site. More are to be ordered when the supply is gone shortly.

Congress slipped one over on the public in the name of the Paleo Preservation Act, when a grouping of Bills was passed and signed by the President making it illegal to pick up or even to possess a vertebrate fossil on or from any Federal land. So instead of amateurs or anyone else finding and collecting such fossils (and a great many of these fossils then going to museums), the fossils will now be left where they lie to eventually turn to dust and be lost. Congress has geniuses who provide names for Bills that do the exact opposite of what the name says.

Congressman John Culberson of the Texas 7th Congressional District (who has been a member of HGMS and has gone fossil collecting with HGMS) has steadfastly opposed this legislation in the past, and he fought it this year. I met with Congressman Culberson and talked with him about working together with others on future legislation that would allow amateurs and others to collect fossils along the lines of laws currently in Florida and in Great Britain. These laws require the reporting of fossils that you find on government land and then provide the government a reasonably short time for letting you know whether they wish to claim your fossil find for science (in Florida there is no compensation, but in Great Britain the government compensates you for what they take). After that time period if the government does not claim it, the fossil is yours to do with as you wish and you are the legal owner of the fossil. This makes much greater sense than to leave all fossils lying on the ground to be destroyed by deterioration because no one dares to pick them up, and there are not anywhere near enough people possessing PhDs in Paleontology to collect the huge number of fossils that erode out of the ground every year.

HGMS has continued to grow in spite of the economic turndown, and it remains fiscally sound. It has provided great programs at the General Meetings and in Section meetings, has provided lots of education for members and the public at relatively little cost, and has continued to put on great annual Shows (even in spite of the Hurricane last fall).

Recently your Board of Directors had six motion detector light switches installed to ensure that lights are turned off when members leave the clubhouse. We will be looking into something similar on our air conditioning system. The HGMS Board continues to find ways to cut costs. They are looking into a less expensive electrical energy provider, into better and lower priced insurance, the wise investment of HGMS funds and the funding of our Scholarship program. They are also looking into ways to improve the Shop, improve our programs and our classes, and to improve all other aspects of our HGMS facility and our membership.

Coming Up: The Show is upon us, and it will be a great Show.

The Christmas/Holiday Season party is scheduled to start at 6 p.m. on December 12, 2009, and you will be notified as the party plans develop. 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.

Entertainment will be furnished by three HGMS members—newly-weds Stephen Blyskal and Sigrid Stewart and with musician Charlie Fredregill added this year for good measure.

New stop blocks have been purchased and will be installed very shortly in our parking lot so we can get rid of the broken concrete and rebars (Matt Dillon has already

cut some of those off to keep members from tripping or getting hurt).

We are also putting into place some new policies and controls in our Shop. We will provide better notice of who our Shop Superintendents are, and better controls will be in place for the proper, safe, and thoughtful use of Shop Equipment. One of the first steps is to plan a New Member Shop Orientation session as a logical follow-up of our successful New Member Orientation on HGMS in general.

The nominating Committee has been at work in October preparing their 2010 slate of officers for announcement at the October 27 General Membership meeting. The Bylaws provide for nominations from the floor to be made at the October 27 meeting, after which time nominations close. The election will be held at the November 24 General Membership Meeting. Swearing in of the new officers will take place at the December 12 Party, and they will take office January 1, 2010.

At the last Board Meeting, I discussed the need for input from HGMS members and suggested that we might have a questionnaire for members to let us know their thoughts, comments, complaints etc. Of course it would be less expensive for YOU to just drop us an e-mail and let us know what you think. My e-mail address is auraman@swbell.net. It might be interesting to see how many (if anyone) reads the President's Column anyhow.

We lost several HGMS members last year who are sorely missed. Several HGMS members are currently very ill, and if you are a person who prays, you may want to keep them in your prayers. and if not, I know you will be pulling for these members also. Tom Wright has been the top Shop Superintendent for a long time. For a very long time Art Smith has been our Librarian and conducted our silent auctions at General Membership meetings. Phyllis George underwent successful knee replacement on one knee six weeks ago and is to have a knee replacement on the other knee right after our Show. Several others of us have had less severe things like Swine flu, stomach virus etc. which laid us out for a few days or a couple of weeks.

In closing, isn't it great to be a member of HGMS? Don't you wish more of your family and friends were? Well, have you invited them to a meeting, to the Shop? Give it a try—you might be surprised at the results.

Upcoming Programs for General Meeting *continued from page 1*

do much more work on that site.

You won't want to miss this interesting presentation, even if you aren't a paleo person. Patrick Lewis presents most interesting programs for us.

HGMS Christmas Party: Be sure to save Saturday, December 12 for our annual Christmas party. Social time starts at 6 p.m., look over the auction items, dinner at 6:30, auction after. Entertainment by Steve Blyskal, Sigrid Stewart, and Charlie Fredregaill. Auctioneer is James Wark. Watch for additional information on the Web site.

Rockhound Honeymoon

by Sigrid Stewart

What happens when two rockhounds get married? Well, they don't just tie the knot or jump the broom, they go on rock hunts together! Steve Blyskal and Sigrid Stewart went all legal September 26, and after a day or two of recovery, headed out west. The objective was a low-stress driving trip to somewhere without traffic lights or freeways, and lots of wide-open space littered with rocks instead of paper cups. The Davis Mountains are a long-time favorite of Sigrid's, and Steve wanted to experience the scenic West Texas mountains of the Alpine area too. Many other club members are familiar with agate hunting on the Woodward Ranch or with guided trips to other ranches in the area. We had e-mailed Terri Smith at the Antelope Lodge, and after we arrived, we were able to set up a hunt with her on the Ritchie Ranch just south of Alpine.

We stayed in Castroville the first night at a refurbished inn just outside of town on Hwy 90. The Alsatian Inn and Spa was really nice and highly recommended. Castroville is still a small town despite being close to San Antonio, and it was originally settled by immigrants from Alsace-Lorraine. Apparently names like Haby and Tschirhart take up several pages in the phone book. We drove around the town a bit the next day and saw lots of shops and places to explore at a later date.

After a fast drive across the endless landscape of Cretaceous limestone outcrops, canyons, and mesas, we finally arrived at outcrops of Paleozoic rock tilted vertically. This told us we were in the Marathon Basin and getting close to Marathon, one of the gateways to Big Bend National Park. We checked our geological map of Texas, and it said we would be seeing the volcanic rocks of the Davis Mountains. These soon appeared along with a great sunset display of clouds. This slowed our journey to Alpine, since Steve has never seen a great sunset that he hasn't wanted to capture with his Nikon DSLR (this was supposed to be a photographic trip as well as a geological/rockhounding one).

The next day, Wednesday, we decided to drive up to Fort Davis. We stayed true to our original idea—no schedule—and stopped at every interesting road cut and took all the side roads. We checked out Miter Peak, down the Girl Scout Camp road, and stopped at the Chihuahua Desert Research Institute. They have several nice hikes of various intensities, so we tried one—but before we'd gone too far, fat white clouds boiled up over the mountains to the west, and when we lost the sun and felt the first drops of rain carried by the wind, we turned back.

The Institute is highly recommended as a place to visit, and they have a very nice gift shop where we found sotol walking sticks (from a plant that looks like a yucca, but every year it produces a 9–12 foot tall light-weight but strong bloom stalk), lots of neat nature-themed T-shirts (including a mineral one! Guess who got that one?) Plus they had mineral specimens! Both of us got nice clear Mexican selenite clusters of good quality and minimal damage. For those with an interest in geology, they have an outdoor exhibit of all the rock formations found in the Davis Mountains, from the

Pre-Cambrian through the Quaternary gravels that create the flat plains between the mountains. In town we looked at a couple of shops, and learned to our dismay that the ice cream sundae shop Sigrid had fond memories of had closed down. We drove on through Fort Davis itself, thinking we would perhaps visit the Fort later, and turned left on Hwy 118 onto the scenic loop behind Fort Davis. The



Photo taken in Ft. Davis State Park.

The road cuts in the Alpine-Marfa-Fort Davis area are really spectacular! With a copy of Roadside Geology of Texas, you can traverse the section of a volcanic caldera, puzzle out a faulted area, or just enjoy incredible picture rhyolites. The terrain is enough to excite any geologist: rhyolites, trachytes, granites, basalts, and ash flow tuffs, cut by dikes and faults. Interestingly, the appearance of the Davis Mountains illustrates the possibility of

climate change (or pine bark beetle damage). Thirty years ago, there were many pine trees in the scenic loop behind Ft Davis. Twenty years ago, they all seemed to be distressed. Now they're gone! But it's still beautiful.



Sigrid in the Ritchie Ranch jasper area

The weather was great, the skies were clear, and the air was dry. Check out this link for details: <https://cdri.org/Discovery/News.html>. With the truck a few pounds heavier,

we headed back to Alpine for the evening.

The Antelope Lodge had a country singer duo staying there also, and they did a free concert Wednesday evening in exchange for lodging. Steve joined in!

The next day we met Terri Smith and headed to the Ritchie Ranch. Armed with hats and sun block, we walked the hills and dug in pits, and came up with specimens of seam agate, tube agate, jasper, and chalcedony. Unfortunately to find any big pieces of jasper we had to dig, and we weren't in the mood for that much hard work. The Ritchie Ranch is quite large, and there are probably other places on it that are productive other than the four we visited. That night was our last in Alpine, so we headed west after dinner and went to the roadside stop on 90 where the city of Marfa has set up a viewing area for the "Marfa Lights." Despite the nearly full moon, we were rewarded with dancing lights of different colors far out on the dusky horizon. We both saw the same thing, though Steve is convinced we actually saw the "Lights," and Sigrid still isn't sure.

Friday we headed up to the Davis Mountains State Park and the Indian Lodge where we had a reservation. This Lodge is one of those built by the CCC in the 1930s when Texas created the State Park system, and it is worth a visit and stay on its own. We traveled there by way of Marfa, a pretty little town, with a fine courthouse and square and lots of neat small churches of every denomination. Most of the trip from Alpine to Marfa is flat, but you do cross through outcrops in the Paisano Volcano which from a visual and geological standpoint are some of the most spectacular we have ever seen.

Driving north to Fort Davis from Marfa, the road stays mainly on the flat plains. We did make a short side trip west on 166 to Point of Rocks, a roadside park about 10 miles west of the main road. The attraction here is spheroid weathered boulders of porphyritic rhyolite. They were fun to climb on, and of course Steve took lots of photos in the late afternoon sunlight. Finally getting to the Lodge, we checked into our room and promptly went on a hike before dinner on the hill behind. It was an interesting hike, since we found a recent deer kill, agate seams in the rhyolite, and great views of weathered rock outcrops in the setting sun.

We enjoyed dinner at the Black Bear restaurant, and then went up to the Davis Mountains McDonald Observatory for a star party. It was cloudy, so we hoped for a weather change, but after watching a couple of presentations, settled for an early evening. The next morning we made a quick drive up the aptly named Skyline Drive, which allows you to see in all directions for at least 30–40 miles, then we checked out and made a last tour of the lodge. We found a very interesting large scat on the patio that had the staff scratching their heads and calling for the naturalist. Opinion was divided as to whether a cougar had visited the lodge the night before.

On our way out through Fort Davis, we stopped at Donna Trammel's rock shop, looked over her specimens, and learned that you could find Balmorhea Blue-type agate north of town. As if we needed another excuse to check out road cuts. The area north of Fort Davis, especially the Boy Scout Camp road, is also spectacular. The

truck got a little heavier before we left the Davis Mountains after several successful stops. Farther north on Rt 17, we hit the rain that had stayed away most of the week, and Sigrid had to show Steve the Balmorhea State Park and the large pool there while it was misting and raining. We stayed in Sonora for the night and then followed the rain home past mesas covered with wind turbines and flooded streams and rivers in the San Antonio area.

All in all it was a great trip—a perfect honeymoon for two rockhounds/geologists. We got to scratch our “geological itch” big time! Steve also got lots of great photos, particularly of outcrops and the Davis Mountains. While Steve went on the trip never having hunted for agate, he can’t claim to be “a novice” any longer since he found several of the largest pieces! Catch us in the shop for the next several months and see how our finds shape up.

My First Rock Hounding Trip

August 3, 2009

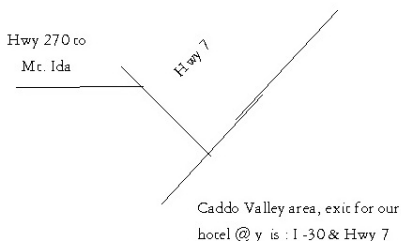
by Alice F. McNulty

Member Houston Gem & Mineral Society

After dropping off my oldest, Dawn, at her new home away from home—her O.B.U. dorm in Arkadelphia—I checked into my hotel in Caddo Valley. Alyssa (my other daughter and HGMS member) and I checked out the brochures between the glass doors. We originally planned to go to Hot Springs N.P., but since we’ve “been there done that,” I knew that Alyssa would love visiting The Wegner Crystal Mines of Mt. Ida, AR while we were waiting to pick up Dawn. They advertised further away than any of the other Crystal Mines of that area, and by the way, she loved the idea!

Even in Caddo Valley there are rock shops to visit, but that is just to get you going! The first shop we stopped at was Miller’s Rock Shop at Hwy.7 and I-30. I had fun there and picked up carved animals made of different stones! Now I would like to give you a bit of travel advice if you don’t mind so you do not make the same error I did: We were driving past Miller’s Pond sign when we looked at each other, and I said, “You know how many times we have passed that Pond already?” My daughter said “Three! Mom, will you please pull over and ask for directions?” So I stopped at a local liquor store, went in with my Atlas under my arm, and the storeowner says, “You’re not lost. I know right where you are at! Continue on this road, and it will take you where you need to be, back to Caddo Valley!”

It turns out that the “Junction 7” turn that I thought I needed was not a turn. It was a regular road sign for the road we were already on! Oh my goodness. I was frustrated and ticked at myself—especially for the time we had lost. No matter what you do or to whom you pray, you can’t turn back the clock.



Okay, you are driving down this beautiful backcountry Arkansas highway, and you are unfamiliar with it. The first thing I want you to do is to pick up this wonderful resource guide called *Montgomery Co., AR 2009 Visitor & Relocation Guide*, *Welcome to Mt. Ida, Quartz Capital of the World*. In the middle of the Resource Guide is a great map. A much better one than I could ever draw you. In addition, this Guide has so much more information: abundant camping sites, digging tips, a Quartz, Quilts & Crafts Festival, and Fishing/boating in Lake Ouachita. They even have a World Championship Crystal Dig! I believe you can pick up the Guide at most shops along route 270.



One of the signs we saw upon entering the town limits was one that read Mt. Ida, Quartz Capital of the World! We both looked at each other with raised eyebrows and surprise. Of course, we did not know it was the Quartz Capital of the World. We found out that and a lot more from the Guide. At one of the shops we stopped at on the way back, the man said "Not the best place to go to for crystal digs." Well that was just his opinion, and the fact is Wegner's advertised the farthest away (I-30 Caddo Valley Exit) and got our attention! You must make your own decision on where you want to go. Please see the Guide for all your choices!

I took photos of the dig at Wegner's, and they came out nice. Of course, I had to rewash my quartz finds at



home, but that is okay with me. Wegner is one of the locations that will provide you with some basic supplies such as buckets and a rock hammer. While true, they are indeed all different sizes, I love my quartz finds even though that man said, "It is not the best place to go." They are still beautiful to me, and that is all that matters! At Wegner's they had a place for us to rinse off the red Arkansas dirt, but that is nothing to the eye-opening beauty you will see at home when you soak and gently scrub with an old toothbrush!

We took in shops going both ways: We stopped at Miller's Rock shop on I-30 and Route 7, Fiddler's Ridge Rock Shop (this is where we picked up our copy of The Guide), and Stanley Rock Shop, just to name a few that I really liked and remembered.

If I could go back again, I would really love to! The reason is not just to try another crystal mine, but one Rock shop owner I spoke to said that they don't do the "show circuits." I was disappointed to hear this, and I would really like to find that shop again. The only problem is I did not get the name of that particular shop. I would like to pick up an awesome pendant I have never seen anywhere else! I believe he called it "Angel's Tears."

I learned a lot in my first trip out rock hounding. Make sure you have a whole day to devote time-wise, and access to a computer with an Internet connection would have been nice. I called home and got a little advice from my spouse, which was the next best thing. Of course, there are always your locals and then your maps. So overall it was a fun trip though I thought it was too short. Oh yes, I got some nice photos of my trip and some beautiful quartz.

Going rock hounding? Make a checklist so you *don't* forget something important! Here are a few suggestions for you: water, camera, maps (with directions), sunscreen, cooler for picnic lunch and snacks, a wide-brimmed hat, and a tote bag or grocery bags for your finds. And last but not least, if you pack a lunch in, please pack it out. Happy Hunting! Alice

References:

Mont. Co. AR 2009 Visitor & Relocation Guide Welcome to Mt. Ida,: Published by the Mt. Ida Area Chamber of Commerce

Swap Area at the Show

by Steve Blyskal

There will be a swap area at the show this year. It will be located as usual in the glass wall annex on the east side of the convention center, in the same room as the Youth Section booth and activity area. We plan to have our tables follow the curve of the wall across from where the Youth Section will be set up. There are plenty of floor outlets in this area, so swappers can have lights at their tables.

The swap area will operate on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday this year as it has in the past few years. We expect to have many children at the show on Friday, and many of the swappers have minerals suited for beginning collectors. The swap area will be open from 9–6 on Friday, 9–6 on Saturday, and 10–4 on Sunday.

As in past years, those who have minerals, fossils, or polished stones they would like to swap can bring them to the area and attempt to trade them with the swappers who have set up. Swap dollars will also be available for those who do not have an item to trade.

Swap dollars work like this. One of the swappers has a piece of petrified wood that you want. You work out a price of \$15.00. Then you go to the booth where swap dollars are sold, give them the \$15.00 in cash, and get 15 swap dollars. The 15 swap dollars are given to the swapper and you get the petrified wood. So what does the swapper do with the swap dollars, you ask? He has until the end of the show to go around to the dealers and find items that he wants. Then he pays for the item with the swap dollars.

How does this benefit everyone? You, the customer, get a good deal—you might save some money buying in the swap area. The swapper gets rid of the material he has on hand—stuff he has found, or cut, or traded for, for example. The dealer gets the money that might not have been spent otherwise.

The swappers can use up to two tables, if available, at a charge of \$6.00 per table for the show. Material that can be put out at the swap area includes minerals, rocks, fossils, and equipment, also cabochons, faceted stones, and jewelry made by the seller. No commercially made jewelry is permitted. Swappers can reserve a place at the swap by calling or emailing the Chairman, Steve Blyskal. Table space is limited. There are rules for using the swap area, and violators may not be given table privileges. Swappers are expected to help man the booth to sell the swap dollars, and volunteers from the Show Committee are also asked to help. This is one of the more popular volunteer activities since you get to sit down and talk to friendly people. Instructions are provided on how to handle the exchange of cash for swap dollars and how to handle other situations that might arise.

Swap dollars are valid for purchases of merchandise from dealers at the show up until 6 p.m. on Sunday 10/15/09, at which time they become void. That is why the swap area closes early on Sunday, to allow the swappers time to go spend their swap “money.” Dealers redeem their swap dollars at the end of the show for cash. Therefore **all money** spent in the swap area eventually goes to the dealers in the show.

If you still have any questions about the swap area, want to participate and swap, or just want to help sell swap dollars during one of the 3-hour volunteer slots, you can call the swap area chairman, Steve Blyskal, at 832-264-1278 after 7 p.m. in the evening. Come help Steve and learn how the swap area operates! It's a great way to learn more about collecting, to meet people, and to help the club!

Show Events

by Sigrid Stewart

2009 Show Chair

By the time this BBG is in your hands, the Pre-SHOW Pizza Party and Auction will be history. I hope you found some wonderful things at the auction and hope you'll find even more at the Silent Auction at the Info Booth during the November show. Just to help make that little dream a reality, clean out your garage a little—find those extra specimens that didn't quite make the cut for your display case, or the slabs of rough that you're tired of because you have so much of it, and bring it with you for the Silent Auction when you come out to the Show. That will help make it a great experience for everyone, including our public. Remember, three or four thousand people need new geodes and cabinet specimens and cute presents for Christmas.

You do have your volunteer slots at the show already reserved, don't you? Mary Ann will be calling. Please help us fill those slots. Showing up to just help is nice, but it's even nicer when we know we can count on you to be there.

Before Load-Up, representatives from each Section should **mark all items needing to be transported to the show**. Beverly Mace has the tags—a different color for each Section.

Load-Up: Wednesday, November 11, 3 p.m.–6 p.m., at the clubhouse. On the Wednesday night before the Show, we will load-up the U-Haul and the volunteer vehicles with items to be transported to the Humble Civic Center. I've said it before, and it's still true—many hands make for light work.

Setup Day, Thursday, November 12, 8 a.m.–5 p.m., at the Humble Civic Center. We will need volunteers beginning at about 8 a.m. to unload the U-Haul truck and cases. Members of each Section must be prepared to set up their own booths. We will also need to drape about half of the dealer tables. At 11 a.m. the dealers start arriving to begin their own setup, but work on the Section booths will continue. We won't be able to set up the Swap and Youth Section areas until after lunch this year.

Volunteer and Dealer Appreciation Dinner, Thursday, November 12, 6:30 p.m.–7:30 p.m., at the Humble Civic Center. We host this dinner every year to show our appreciation to all of our volunteers and dealers. This year our speaker will be Will Heierman, who has agreed to speak on American Corundum.

Come out and support your club, and help out with some of the many tasks that are crucial to making a Show work. Have some fun, work with your friends, and find some cool stuff! Watch the kids' eyes light up as they survey the treasures! Please join us for all these events, and plan to attend the show.

Remembrances of an Old Geezer

Prelim to Korean War

by John Emerson

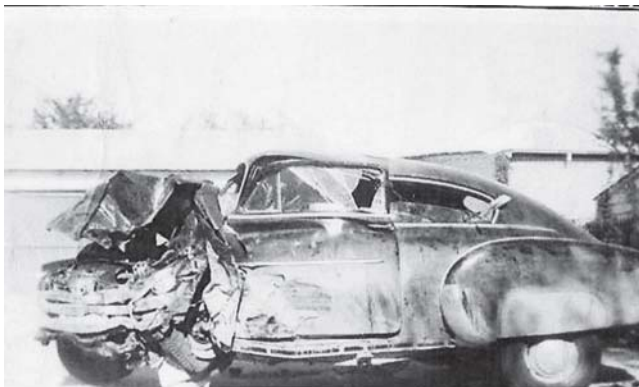
To start this, I have to go back to November 1949. What happened then colored my service in the Army.

I had been to Austin to visit Bobbie during her first year at the University of Texas (UT). She had just graduated from A&I at Kingsville with a BA in education. As mentioned in previous Remembrances, she had a scholarship at UT to be the Exhibition Twirler, and she was the only girl in the 100+ boy band. She earned a BS and an MA in History in two years at the University.

I was driving south between Three Rivers and Alice on Highway 281 going to Alice to get back to work. It was just about daylight on a foggy Monday morning. A %^\$#*^ idiot going north with three passengers passed a truck on a curve over a hill, and we met head on. See pictures of my car below.

Fortunately this occurred before seat belts. I had tried to avoid the crash, but obviously I didn't!! I evidently dove to my right, opened the passenger side door with my head, and landed in the ditch. If I had had seat belts, I would have wound up with the engine in my lap.

This was before cell phones, so a passerby drove to Three Rivers and notified the hospital. They sent two ambulances to pick up the three passengers in the other car—they pronounced the other driver and me both dead. All of this was told by the people who stopped to see the carnage. A witness said that after the ambulances left, I got up holding my head and staggered over to the other driver, kicked his body and evidently told him what I thought.



November 1949



November 1949

I say “evidently” because my lower jaw was torn loose and they could not understand me.

One of the witnesses loaded me into the front seat of his car and drove me to the hospital in Three Rivers. He said that I was holding my head up and trying to talk all of the way in. At the hospital they put me in a room where, when the Dr. got through treating the other three, he checked me, and again I was pronounced dead! They called my parents to come identify me and take my body to Alice. My dad drove up and asked to see my body. A nurse took him to my room only to find me gone! While they checked to see if it was the correct room, they heard the toilet flush and I staggered out. I don’t know what Dad said to the doctor, but the local people still talk about the blue fog around the hospital that lasted three days!

In Alice they took X-rays and found that I had fractured the “second and third cervical vertebrae with annular displacement.” Why I didn’t tear my spinal cord with all of the action I took just holding my head up, no one will ever know.

I was unconscious for seven days during which they literally sand bagged me down in the bed to keep me from moving. They brought a specialist in from Chicago who drilled two holes in my skull (I have holes in my head) and attached a clamp and a cable. They raised the head of the bed, put a pulley on the bed and hung weights on the cable in order to keep a tension on my neck. They had to do this because my jaw was so damaged they could not use a brace to hold tension on my neck. I was in the hospital for 41 days.

In those days there was no TV in Alice. Dad bought a radio for me which was the only amusement I had.

During the last few days, they brought a neck brace in to show me what I would have to wear when I left the hospital. I asked one of the nurses how long I would have to wear it. She said, “I know a man who broke his neck about 10 years ago, and he hardly ever wears his anymore.” I asked the doctor about it, and he said that the man had weak neck muscles and was more comfortable with it on. I decided that was not the way to go and started lifting the weights with my head to exercise my neck. A nurse caught me and gave me “what for” and said I would ruin all they had done for me. I decided “BS,” and just was more careful about being caught.

They put a brace on me that was VERY tight and uncomfortable to take me home in an ambulance. As soon as they left, I got a screw driver, went into the bathroom where there was a mirror, and loosened the brace to where I could lift my chin out of its cup.

I don’t remember exactly when, but I think it was in February, 1950, that I stopped wearing the brace and March when I went back to work for Lane Wells Oil Field Services. Another story here—When I applied for a job, the manager said “Sorry, but we don’t need—is that an Aggie ring?” I said “Yes,” and he said “Come to work Monday.”

All of this leads up to being drafted into the Army.

Remembrances of an Old Geezer

Korean War Chapter One

The Korean War started June 6, 1950. On July 1, 1950, Bobbie and I decided to get married. We had talked about it for years, but at that time we were too young and had no way to support ourselves. Now we were both 21, and I had a good job. She still had a year to go at UT as Exhibition Twirler and to finish her MA in History. I thought I had better see if I would be drafted before we married. If so, I would rather be in the Air Force as a pilot rather be in a muddy foxhole. I drove to San Antonio to see if the Air Force would accept me. I passed the mental and physical exams until they read my medical history and saw that I had “fractured my 2nd and 3rd cervical vertebrae with annular displacement.” They told me that they would not take me as a pilot, but I could be a navigator, bombardier, or gunner. I said “No thanks. If I cannot drive it, I don’t want to ride in it.”

This told me I would probably be drafted. Sure enough, I received a notice to appear at the bus station in Alice. Along with about 20–30 others, we were greeted by an Army Sergeant and loaded onto buses to be taken to the Corpus Christi Naval Air Station to be checked out for the draft.

After our mental exam, we had our physical. I pointed out that I had broken my neck about 11 months before. The doctor said, “Can you wriggle your head?” I said, “Yes.” He said, “You pass.” I should have worn my brace!

One of the guys was classified 4-F because he had to have size 13 shoes, and the Army only had size 12 maximum size boots!

The process to return to Alice was held up when they called me out and put me in a room with two Naval officers. The problem was that I had received 100% on the mental exam. No one had ever done that, so they thought I had cheated. They gave me another version of the exam while the officers watched to see if I cheated. Again I made 100%.

When we boarded the bus, they made me get on first and announced to all that I had scored 100% on the mental exam. Of course I was addressed as “mister smart a***” all the way back to Alice. It was all in fun, and I joined in, calling the 4F guy “Big Foot.”

Bobbie and I decided that we would marry after I finished Basic Training and I could get a 30-day leave.

In October 1950 I was transported by bus to Ft. Sam Houston in San Antonio to be sworn in, get a GI haircut, be “fitted” with a uniform, get my shots, and be sent to Camp Cook in California by railroad. New draftees were called “Recruits.” I never understood that since I was not “recruited” but was drafted. In any case, in those days you were a “Recruit” until you finished Basic Training, and then you were “Private.”

I was assigned to Company L in the 40th Division National Guard which had just

been called up. It was vastly undermanned and was being filled with draftees from Texas and New York.

A few days after I arrived, the Company Commander had us all in one big formation in front of the barracks. He first said "All college graduates fall out and form up on the Sergeant at the end of the formation." He looked to see how many there were and then said "all with three years." He counted again and called for two years, then one year. He counted and said, "You are the Weapons Platoon. The rest of you dumb bastards get a rifle!"

After a few days, I was assigned as Squad Leader of one of the 60 mm mortar squads due to my training at A&M. I had a National Guard Sergeant and two Corporals in the squad. From after breakfast until about 5 p.m., I was acting Sergeant. Then I was Recruit again.

I was Squad Leader, 3rd Squad, 4th Platoon, Company L, 3rd Battalion, 224th Regiment, 40th Division Infantry, US Army!

It was at Camp Cook that I truly understood the meaning of the saying that "California is the land of fruits and nuts, and even the weather is queer!" I decided that I did not want to "go in harm's way" with those goof balls, so I started applying for every school or organization I could think of to get away from them.

I tried for Helicopter School—and was turned down due to the broken neck.

I tried for Rangers (thought they might be safe enough to be with)—and sure enough the broken neck ruled me out.

I tried for OCS—no answer before the 40th was ordered to prepare for shipment to Japan and the Commanding General canceled all schools.

The General had the entire Division (about 10,000 men) assembled so he could make the announcement. I'll never forget his speech and its reaction. He said over the loud speakers "You will learn to be killers and fight and die in your foxholes." One of the men in our Company yelled back "I ain't no killer. I am a lover." The Company broke up in laughter.

We were all packed up, sent our duffel bags to the ship at the Treasure Island Naval Station (I never saw mine again), and were bused to the ship with only our backpacks for clothes and gear. We were boarding ship when several of us were called out of line and sent back to Camp Cook. We had no idea why.

We found out that the Inspector General of the Army had heard about our General's canceling the schools and overruled him.

While waiting to find out if I would go to OCS, I was sent to "Leadership" school for enlisted men at Fort Ord, CA. Still no word after Leadership, so I was assigned as a guard at the military prison. It was now September 1951.

I applied for my 30-day leave and called Bobbie to set a date for our wedding. She set October 4th and made all preparations for our wedding to be at her parents' house in Alice. Invitations were sent out, the Episcopal Priest was asked to preside, gifts arrived. All was ready.

In California I was called to report to the Commanding Officer. I reported, saluted, and waited. He returned my salute and said, "Private Emerson here are your leave papers." He then tore them up and threw them in the waste basket! After a pause, he then said "Sergeant Emerson, here are your orders for Engineer OCS"! There was a provision for a delay en route so we could get married. Only problem was, I could not leave base until October 4. Panic! Call to Bobbie to delay marriage until October 6. She had to notify all of the guests about the change. The rest is history. We were married for 57 years, 3 months and 8 days. We never had an argument or fight in all those years. She knew who was boss, but she was a great boss and treated me well.

After the ceremony, my best man (he was the one that introduced us in 1945) and his wife drove us to Corpus Christi to the Driscoll Hotel for the first night and back to Alice the next day where we packed my trusty 1949 black Chevrolet and started to drive to Ft. Belvoir, Virginia via New Orleans for our honeymoon.

Just before we reached Edna on Highway 59, we had a flat. After emptying the trunk of all our baggage, we found that the spare was flat. BLAT! I hitchhiked in to Edna with the flat tire, had it repaired, and hitchhiked back to the car. In those days the uniform was rarely passed up. Everyone wanted to help.

The first night on the road we spent in Beaumont. Then on to New Orleans. Beautiful city and lots of fun. Then back on the road along the Gulf Coast.

Just before we reached De Funiak Springs, Florida, my "trusty" 1949 Chevy blew its timing gear. Again, I hitchhiked into town to see if we could get help. It was Sunday and all was closed. In desperation I called the night number for the Chevy garage. It turned out to be the home phone of the owner/manager. He sent a wrecker to take me back to pick up the car and Bobbie.

When we reached town, we found that the owner had opened the garage and had called in two mechanics. On Sunday! The owner took us to lunch while they repaired the timing gear. When we got ready to leave, he refused any payment! Ah, those were the days when the uniform performed miracles.

We made it to Ft. Belvoir, VA, without further trouble.

To be continued.

Late-Breaking Club News

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

Education Report

by Brian Honsinger

HGMS Education Chair

What a year it has been and I would like to thank so many for their help: **Charlie Fredregill** led the way with the most students at 34 if my math is still good.

Wayne Barnett with his very able assistant **Kathy Konkell** has taught Beginning Jewelry so many times those packed tool boxes have paid for themselves at least twice over. Wayne also taught Ad Hoc Casting to a group for good measure.

Tom Wright was in there teaching until sickness sidelined him for the last few months. His efforts are greatly appreciated as were those of Patty Scott with her Enameling Classes contributing to our totals.

The fine job of instruction by **Gary Anderson** in cabochon making produced us many motivated students in all sectors with the interest he created. For that matter the club contributed when so many did your broom straw casting this summer. We also got a boost from all the members casting through the year.

We would never have reached the great numbers I am about to show you without students like Elizabeth Smith who took five classes and saw to it that three others signed up for four classes.

- Education took in \$16,145.00
- Teachers were paid \$ 5,155.00
- Supplies paid to date \$2,498.98
- For total expenses \$7652.98

Education this year earned \$8492.02.

Some small purchases still need to be made, but our net education profit will still be well over \$8000.00 for the year of 2009.

Thanks again to all!

Mineral Section

by Steve Blyskal, Chairperson & Dean Lagerwall, Assistant Chairperson

We have Mineral Section meetings on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month except during the summer when we do not meet.

Upcoming Meeting Topics

November 4: Show Preparation and topic to be announced via e-mail

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 com-

ments 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

Thirteen members attended the 14 September, 2009, meeting of the Day Light Section.

We worked on our stamps, but did not accomplish much. At the October meeting we will continue working on our stamps.

November 9, 2009, is the date for our annual luncheon. **Remember, we meet at 12:00 noon for the luncheon.** Everyone bring what they brought last year. I will purchase the ham.

We do not meet in December.

We understand that Tom Wright is slowly recovering. We are all very happy about this and wish for a continuous recovery.

Happy Thanksgiving.

Since I wrote this I found out Tom is back in St. Luke's.

Always Prepared! Are you sure?

A safety note by Owen Martin

AFMS/SCFMS Safety

from SCFMS Newsletter 9-10/2009

I like to think that I am always prepared to make a quick stop at any outcrop of opportunity that I encounter in my travels around the country. Rock hammer, bucket, loupe, I usually have all those things with me.

So it was this last month when we were picking up my daughter from a summer camp in central Texas. While waiting to check in at the hotel, I spied a beautiful looking road cut about a half mile from the hotel. I wouldn't be able to look at it that night, but on the way back home I was sure I could convince my wife to stop for a few minutes.

The following morning that is exactly what we did. My daughter even thought it looked good, so she decided to join me while the rest of the crew stayed in the minivan and listened to the Jonas Brothers or Miley Cyrus. I got pretty excited since within

about a minute on the outcrop I found my first loriola echinoid. It was a really cute little one and better than what I was hoping for. My daughter came over to see it, and we promptly found three more in the next couple of minutes. Things were going really well!

Or so they seemed—but then a few minutes later I heard my daughter scream. She was only about 10 feet away from me, so it gave me quite a shock! I was immediately on top of the situation (or so I thought) and discovered that she had just had her first encounter with a baby diamond back rattler. Luckily they scared each other and the snake quickly headed under a rock.

So as I picked her up and hauled her back to the van, it dawned on me exactly how “unprepared” I was to make such a stop. My daughter was wearing shorts and flip flops, and I didn’t have my medical kit! So I was definitely prepared to hunt, but not my daughter, and definitely NOT to deal with the consequences of something bad happening.

In the future I am going to give a good bit more forethought to my impromptu stops, especially if I have my kids in tow. And I would strongly encourage all of you to do the same. If she had been bitten by that little snake, it could have been very bad!

Be safe on your trips and travels, and always consider how you can better prepare for events you may encounter in the field!

Just One More Rock

09-24-09

by Mary Ann Mitscherling

I slip off the edge of the world to sleep.
Agates and jaspers cascade through my mind.
Forming, reforming, discarding to keep
The very best yield from slabs I can find.

How many before me have learned the name
Of instant favorites that claim my time?
The far away sites in mountain and plain
Become part of the neighborhood that’s mine.

We suspend the moments while we create
One more gemstone from a familiar rock.
There is happiness when we recreate,
But nothing equals finished gemstone stock.

We see the familiar in every stone
And sense the world’s reflections of our home.

HGMS Results in SCFMS Bulletin Editors' Contest (and AFMS too)

by Phyllis George

HGMS Editor and Webmaster

Just last weekend, the results of the 2009 SCFMS Bulletin Editors' Contest and the SCFMS Webmasters Contest were announced October 10, 2009 at the Breakfast with the Editors and the Webmasters in Temple, TX during the SCFMS annual show and convention. HGMS was well represented with seventeen certificates awarded to members, and ten of those received plaques. The results are below. It is very interesting to compare the rankings awarded at the SCFMS level with the rankings awarded at the AFMS level. The top three SCFMS rankings in each category were forwarded to the AFMS Bulletin Editors Contest for judging. Judges can have widely divergent views on what makes a good article or poem. As the old saying goes, "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder." ☺ "HM" stands for Honorable Mention. (The BBG will be able to compete at the AFMS level again next year. It won 1st place in the 2007 AFMS contest and was ineligible to compete for the next two years. Neal Immega will be ineligible to compete in the AFMS Features category during the next two years, but he will still be able to compete at the SCFMS level in the Features category.)

The results of the SCFMS Webmasters Contest are also below. It's nice to know that our Web site is a quality site, but I will not be entering it in any future contests as long as I am the Chair of the AFMS portion of the contest. Going forward, the contest's official name is the "AFMS Web Site Contest."

The SCFMS certificates and plaques will be presented to their owners at the General Meeting on Tuesday, October 27. The AFMS certificates and plaques were presented during the August General Meeting.

2009 Webmaster Contest Results

| Webmaster | Web site | SCFMS Ranking | AFMS Ranking |
|----------------|--|---------------|--------------|
| Phyllis George | www.hgms.org | 1 | 3 (tie) |

2009 Bulletin Editors' Contest Results

| Name | Category | Title | Month | SCFMS Ranking | AFMS Ranking |
|---|------------------------|---|-----------------|---------------|--------------|
| Phyllis George | Large Bulletin | The Backbender's Gazette | April & October | 1 | |
| Terry Proctor | Advanced Adult Article | So You Think You and Your Right to Collect Fossils and Minerals Are Safe? | November | 1 | HM |
| Mark Villaneuva | Advanced Adult Article | Ask Your Gemologist—The Perfect Diamond | January | 2 | HM |
| Albert J. Robb III and George Wolf, Sr. | Advanced Adult Article | Neogene Sharks Teeth from Along the Texas Gulf Coast | August | 3 | 4 |
| Neal and Ina Immega | Advanced Adult Article | Cavansite—An Easy Mineral Name to Remember | May | 4 | |
| Art Smith | Advanced Adult Article | Spring Collecting Trip to the Texas Hill Country | July | 7 | |

| Name | Category | Title | Month | SCFMS Ranking | AFMS Ranking |
|--------------------|---------------|--|----------|---------------|--------------|
| Wayne Barnett | Adult Article | The Care and Feeding of Diamond Saws | April | 1 | HM |
| Phyllis George | Adult Article | Visit to the Black Hills Institute—Home of Stan and HMNS's Wyrex | August | 2 | 4 |
| Denise Bicknell | Adult Article | Herb Bastuscheck | October | 3 | 3 |
| D.R. "Matt" Dillon | Adult Article | Quartzite | March | 7 | |
| Nancy Fischer | Adult Article | Mexican Agates | October | HM | |
| | | | | | |
| Terry Proctor | Adult Poetry | A Rock Is a Rock Is a Rock | November | 1 | 3 |
| | | | | | |
| Neal Immega | Features | Lake Texoma 2008—Ammonites, Urchins, and Oysters on Memorial Weekend | July | 1 | 1 |
| Owen Martin | Features | Faux Pas, uhh, Rather Palm. "Faux Palm," that is. | April | 2 (tie) | 3 |
| Scott Singleton | Features | Post-Show Field Trip | November | 7 | |
| Sigrid Stewart | Features | Show Committee After-Show Field Trip | January | 5 | |
| | | | | | |

September 2009 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Held August 29, 2009

by Regina Gorman, Secretary

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

| | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|----------------|---|-------------------|-----------------|
| X | President | Terry Proctor | X | Faceting Rep. | Sunday Bennett |
| | 1 st Vice President | Matt Dillon | X | Lapidary Rep. | Phyllis George |
| X | 2 nd Vice President | Beverly Mace | X | Mineral Rep. | Denise Bicknell |
| X | Treasurer | Rodney Linehan | | Paleontology Rep. | Rick Rexroad |
| X | Secretary | Regina Gorman | X | Day Light Rep. | Nancy Fischer |
| X | Beading Rep. | Diane Sisson | | 2009 Show Chair | Sigrid Stewart |



quorum was present, and President Terry Proctor called the meeting to order at 3:35 p.m.

The August 4, 2009, Minutes of the Board of Directors meeting were e-mailed by the Secretary to the Board of Directors. Phyllis George moved that the minutes be approved as received. Nancy Fischer seconded the motion, and it passed by unanimous vote.

Treasurer's Report: Rodney Linehan reported that presently there is \$50,000 in the C.D., and \$50,000 in the checking account. He stated that of the \$50,000 in checking, approximately \$28,000 was from Show Committee proceeds, and \$12,000 from payment of membership dues. Also, Phyllis George noticed that the cold drink cash

can in the refrigerator for members to pay \$.50 per drink on the honor system had not been emptied recently. Denise Bicknell stated that all of the cash collected in the can was used to restock the drinks. Denise Bicknell volunteered to take care of transferring the cash to Art Smith, the person who has been restocking the drinks for years.

The President asked if there were any Section reports and there were none. The Show Committee Chair was not in attendance.

BBG: Phyllis announced that items for the October BBG are due Wednesday, September 9.

Old Business

Clubhouse Maintenance: Matt Dillon reported to the President that he has tried to install the stop blocks, but it turned out to be more difficult than anticipated. The blocks will be installed, but a heavy drill must be rented. Terry Proctor stated that six light fixtures with motion sensors were ready to be installed in the kitchen, both rest rooms, and the two libraries. There were no plans to use these in the shop areas, but there may be a need to install them in the meeting hall. A new utility provider and related insurance issue will be discussed at a later meeting.

The Education OUTREACH Program: Terry Proctor reported that this program got off to a good start, but activity has slowed down. He called for more support from the Board.

Scholarship: Phyllis George mentioned that students applying for grants and scholarships might encounter a conflict that should be considered. Students at large schools who apply for scholarships frequently discover that the value of any smaller scholarship they have received (such as the HGMS scholarship) might be deducted from any scholarship awarded by the school they are attending. Denise Bicknell stated that the Scholarship check from HGMS was paid directly to the university for tuition. She also said that the HGMS Scholarship Application Form has been amended by deleting the blank for an applicant's Social Security number as advised, and she is considering making a few other minor adjustments before she e-mails it to the Board for approval.

Programs: Terry Proctor stated that Matt Dillon has programs lined up through November and December. Gary Longren with NASA confirmed that he would do the October program on Lunar and Extra-terrestrial artifacts. Our Annual Christmas/Holiday Season party and auction will be held the second Saturday in December—December 12. There will be no General Meeting on December 22.

New Member Orientation: The orientation was held immediately preceding this Board Meeting. Attendance was much larger than anticipated, and it was a rousing success. A large number of new members, some visitors wanting to become members, as well as other members interested in learning more about HGMS showed up. Terry Proctor passed out a brief History of Houston Gem and Mineral Society and introduced all the new members. Beverly Mace kept a record of everyone who attended

and conducted the raffle. All the Section Heads gave a short talk about their respective activities as to what, when, and where. Neal Immega then conducted a tour of the shop facility.

New Business

HGMS Charter 501(c)(3) Not-for-profit Corporation: Terry Proctor reported that he had received a copy of the HGMS Charter. The Board will be reviewing language in the Charter to determine if any changes need to be made. Terry will scan and distribute to the Board a copy of the HGMS Charter for their information, review and recommendations.

Rockhound Stickers: Terry Proctor reported that 25–30 of the Rockhound stickers for the back window of our cars have been sold so far. Before year’s end, he hopes we can have at least 100 vehicles with a Rockhound sticker.

Nominating Committee: The five HGMS members who have accepted an appointment from the Board to serve on the 2010 Nominating Committee are:

- Alexia Bieniek
- Denise Bicknell
- Phyllis George
- Charlie Fredregill
- Brian Honsinger

Education and Safety: Nancy Fischer proposed that HGMS consider starting classes for members who want to learn how to use the shop equipment. Denise Bicknell moved that classes be organized to teach members safe operation of HGMS shop equipment and machines. Beverly Mace seconded the motion, and it passed by unanimous vote.

As there was no other business to come before the Board, Phyllis George moved to adjourn the meeting. Regina Gorman seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote. The meeting was adjourned by the President at 5:00 p.m.

October 2009 Minutes of the Board of Directors

October 6, 2009

by Regina Gorman, Secretary

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

| | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|----------------|---|-------------------|-----------------|
| X | President | Terry Proctor | X | Faceting Rep. | Sunday Bennett |
| | 1 st Vice President | Matt Dillon | X | Lapidary Rep. | Phyllis George |
| X | 2 nd Vice President | Beverly Mace | | Mineral Rep. | Denise Bicknell |
| 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 President Terry Proctor called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

The August 29, 2009, Minutes of the Board of Directors meeting (the September meeting was held early) were sent to the Board Members by e-mail for their changes and approval. Phyllis George moved that the minutes be approved as e-mailed. Margo Bedman seconded the motion, and it passed by unanimous vote.

Treasurer's Report: Rodney Linehan reported that HGMS is in very good financial condition, and he stated that the 2009 Show in November will affect our finances positively for this year.

Show Committee: Sigrid Stewart reported that Patty Scott resigned as Publicity Chair for this year's Show, and Patty wanted to sell HGMS the 2009 Show poster she designed. Instead, Sigrid presented a beautiful new design for the 2009 Show poster which will be used, and she will now be doing more work on publicity. Sigrid also reported that the small flyers were out in the Club and for us to take some to pass out at work, etc. Also, she suggested that members could download the new flyer from the HGMS Web site and e-mail it to friends and family and to anyone else whom we thought might be interested. Schedule of events below:

- ◆ The Labeling Party will be held Saturday, October 10, and Sigrid's expecting 50 people.
- ◆ InterGem will have a show on October 9, 10, and 11, and HGMS needs to supply experienced member volunteers to man the HGMS table there.
- ◆ The Pizza Party and auction will be held October 24; James Wark will be auctioneer.

Mineral Section: Terry Proctor announced that Denise Bicknell notified him of her decision to resign her position as Board Representative for the Mineral Section. Beverly Mace moved that the Board accept Denise Bicknell's resignation as Mineral Section Representative for 2009. Sunday Bennett seconded the motion, and it was passed by unanimous vote. Steve Blyskal, Mineral Section Chair, was present at the time, and he said he would ask for a replacement volunteer for the position at the upcoming Mineral Section meeting.

Clubhouse Maintenance: Beverly Mace reported that James Burrell, HGMS member and electrician, installed the motion sensor-light switches and set their timers. The new switches will be installed on the light fixtures in the main meeting room next. Installation of stop-blocks has been contracted by Robert Stevens.

BBG: Phyllis announced that items for the November BBG are due Wednesday, October 7, 2009, and items for the December issue are due Wednesday, November 4.

Old Business

Education OUTREACH Program: Terry Proctor requested more suggestions on getting support for our Outreach program. He mentioned several ideas such as the

possibility of direct mailing to new members, a tear-out section in the BBG, announcements in the General Meetings, flyers, etc..

Education, Shop Management and Safety: Terry Proctor invited Neal Immega, Wayne Barnett, Brian Honsinger, Mary Ann Mitscherling, and Libby Guynn to participate in an open discussion at the Board meeting as to shop management in the classroom and shop equipment areas. There were several issues discussed at the meeting which addressed training forepersons and what their titles should be, safety procedures, certification of shop personnel, and several security and safety concerns.

Neal said that currently an experienced shop foreman trains a new foreman who is a club member and who is experienced in the use and safety of shop equipment. Brian Honsinger mentioned a problem that occurred with oxygen tank pressure when someone turned the wrong handle. Phyllis George and Rick Rexroad suggested that a lock-out/tag-out system could be implemented to keep people from repeating that kind of error. Sigrid Stewart said she could get the information on how to implement that procedure. Also Owen Martin from the Paleo Section would be knowledgeable, and Neal will discuss safety solutions with him.

Sunday Bennett suggested that the Shop Forepersons might wear some sort of a Badge as identification. Neal Immega agreed to provide the Board with a current list of all members designated as HGMS Shop Forepersons. Mary Ann Mitscherling has in the past observed children without safety glasses using the grinding machines. Neal stated that this type of safety violation must be corrected immediately when first noticed. Also suggested was a lock-up list to be placed on the inside of both exterior doors.

Scholarship: Terry Proctor confirmed that students graduating from a 2-year College will be eligible for a scholarship from HGMS to be paid to a 4-year college for continuing study toward a degree in earth-science and related courses. Phyllis George stated that this information is on the Web site under "Current Info," and one can scroll down to it. Also, a member had asked about getting an application for a scholarship for her daughter, Kristine Finnerty. Beverly Mace suggested that the scholarship availability information should be sent to Houston area colleges this Spring for students to have enough time to apply for the Fall Semester 2010. There was a discussion about designating an area within which to offer our scholarship, and the dollar amount of the scholarship.

Motion No.1: Diane Sisson moved that the designated area in which the student applicant must currently live be called the "Houston Area." Nancy Fischer seconded the motion, and it was passed by unanimous vote.

Motion No. 2: Phyllis George moved that the Nancy Smith Scholarship would be awarded in the amount of \$2,500. The motion was seconded, and it was passed by unanimous vote.

Programs: Terry Proctor reported that Gary Longren with NASA is confirmed for the October 27 General Meeting to present a program on Lunar and Extra-terrestrial Artifacts. November's program is still open, and December will be the Christmas/

Holiday Party with a dinner, entertainment, and auction scheduled for Saturday, December 12.

Charter Amendments: Terry Proctor reported that amendments to the HGMS Charter will be compiled by year end and an updated set of the Bylaws will be available to members by the first of 2010.

2010 Nominating Committee: The committee members are Alexia Bieniek, Denise Bicknell, Phyllis George, Charlie Fredregill, and Brian Honsinger. Phyllis George reported that the nominees for the 2010 HGMS Officers will be announced and posted on the chalk board at the October General Meeting.

New Business

Rockhound Stickers: Terry Proctor reported that most of the Rockhound Stickers have been sold, and he would like to order more. The large size has proven to be by far the most popular, so there is still a good supply of the small ones. Nancy Fischer moved that Terry Proctor purchase additional large Rockhound Stickers. Sunday Bennett seconded the motion, and it passed by unanimous vote.

Christmas Party: Beverly Mace and Nancy Fischer reported that the Christmas/Holiday Party in December is in the planning stage. So far, the entertainment is lined up, and James Wark will be the auctioneer. Beverly and Nancy will do the decorations. Members should bring their choice of a vegetable dish, salad, dessert, bread, etc. Back by popular demand will be Patricia Hildbold and Karen Bell to cook the meat which is furnished by the Club. Paper plates, cups, napkins, and utensils also will be furnished. Cold drinks are in the fridge at 50 cents.

Equipment Purchase: Terry Proctor asked that HGMS purchase a 4-drawer, fire-proof filing cabinet for the office to store official documents, such as the Club Charter, IRS papers, Insurance Policy, HGMS history, etc. He priced one at Lowes for less than \$1,000. He was asked to check out various stores for the going rate for such equipment.

HGMS Policy Reviews: HGMS policies on sales, auctions, swaps, and use of the HGMS clubhouse were reviewed as they apply to members, visitors/non-members, and members of other like organizations. Terry Proctor explained that HGMS carries liability insurance that covers accidents resulting in injury to anyone—members or non-members—who attend any event on the premises. There was further discussion pertaining to who was authorized to give non-members and organizations permission to use the HGMS facility. Rick Rexroad moved that the President and/or a board member must grant such permission. Beverly Mace seconded the motion, and it passed by unanimous vote.

As there was no other business to come before the Board, Rodney Linehan moved to adjourn the meeting. Nancy Fischer seconded the motion, and it passed by unanimous vote. The meeting was adjourned by the President at 9:45 pm.

Show Time 2009-2010

| | | |
|----------------|----------------|---|
| November 07-08 | Midland, TX | Midland Gem & Mineral Society Midland Center, 105 N. Main St. Craig Tellinghuisen, (432) 697-7668 www.mgms-tx.com |
| November 07-08 | Amarillo, TX | Golden Spread Gem & Mineral Society Amarillo Civic Center, 401 S. Buchanan Dee Hawkins, (806) 681-0960 |
| 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 |
| 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 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 |
| June 18-20 | La Habra, CA | AFMS/CFMS/NOCGMS Convention & Show |
| November 13-14 | DeRidder, LA | SCFMS/DGMFC Convention & Show |

| 2009 | | November | | | | | 2009 |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|--|--------------------------|--|------|
| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 7:30 Board Meeting | 4 7:30 Mineral Sect. 10-5 Shop Open | 5 | 6 | 7 10-5 Shop Open 10-12 Youth Section | |
| 8 | 9 1:00 Day Light Section | 10 7:30 Show Committee | 11 3-6 p.m. Load up Show 7:30 Faceting Section | 12 8 a.m.: Setup Day 6:30-7:30 p Appreciation dinner | 13 1st day of Show | 14 2nd day of Show | |
| 15 3rd day of Show | 16 7:30 Lapidary Section | 17 7:30 Paleo Section | 18 7:30 Mineral Sect. 10-5 Shop Open | 19 | 20 | 21 10-5 Shop Open 10-12 Youth Section 1:30 Beading Section | |
| 22 29 | 23 30 | 24 7:30 General Meeting | 25 10-5 Shop Open | 26 | 27 | 28 10-5 Shop Open | |

| 2009 | | December | | | | | 2009 |
|------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|-----|-----|---|------|
| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat | |
| | | 1 7:30 Board Meeting | 2 7:30 Mineral Section 10-5 Shop Open | 3 | 4 | 5 10-5 Shop Open 10-12 Youth Section | |
| 6 | 7 | 8 7:30 Show Committee | 9 7:30 Faceting Section 10-5 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 10-5 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 | 26 10-5 Shop Open | |
| 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 10-5 Shop Open | 31 | | | |

The BACKBENDER'S GAZETTE

*The Newsletter of the
Houston Gem & Mineral Society*

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2009 - 1st (Large)



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2007 - 1st (Large)

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