



The **BACKBENDER'S GAZETTE**

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

Volume XL - No. 10

October 2009



President's Message

by Terrell William "Terry" Proctor

2009 HGMS President

The New Member Orientation Program on August 29, 2009 at the HGMS Clubhouse has to be one of the high moments in my soon to be two years as President. As President of any group, one can wonder whether their efforts and vision for the group are worthwhile and succeeding. When I looked out at the most crowded room full of people I can ever recall in my over 20 years with HGMS, I knew HGMS was moving in the right direction—and in spite of the economy, the acts of government which could stifle this avocation, and a few naysayers, that the Rockhounds in the greater Houston area are alive, well, and growing.



I do hope that some of the 40-plus new members at the orientation program (and they are only part of the 109 new members signed up by HGMS since last year's HGMS Show) along with more of our older members, will become active in the OUTREACH program of HGMS.

Let me say it again. Take out your Voter Registration Card; turn it over; look at the various districts and when you see J.P. that is your J.P./Constable Precinct AND IT IS ALSO THE HGMS DISTRICT NUMBER in which you live. The OUTREACH program's goal is to get a few folks in each HGMS District to talking with each other to start a nucleus, find a location (library, church, school, business, civic center—whatever) that will let you meet there three or four times a year for FREE. Then HGMS will put on a FREE program for citizen in that District.

Continued on page 4

Upcoming General Meeting Programs

October 27, 2009 --NASA

November 24: To be announced

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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, 1/4 page; \$150 for 6 months, 1/4 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

Neal Immega will see that a couple of HGMS Genie machines can suddenly appear for your meeting, along with FREE agate for kids and adults to learn how to grind and polish. I have about 100 PBS type videotapes which can be shown on Earth Science, minerals, fossils, gems, etc. You can also put on "Show and Tell" programs with HGMS members in your District doing the showing and telling at a program.

We want to reach outside our clubhouse and put on community programs in EIGHT DISTRICTS in Harris County. Surrounding counties have asked to be included, and our answer for the moment is to work with the Harris County District nearest you in your county, and eventually we can spread on out. First we need a nucleus in each of our eight districts. OUTREACH programs have already been put on in Districts 1, 3 and 4. That is East, Central and West. The only thing lacking at present is HGMS members learning what District they are in (and that is easy—go back to the third paragraph and read it again) and then communication with several other people in your District.

If folks will contact me with your District, I will start matching you up with others in your District. Many places are quite willing to provide you a FREE place to meet a few times a year and in return they get a FREE program. What comes from the HGMS OUTREACH program?

1. We are fulfilling one of the requirements of our Charter and of the obligation under our IRS 501(c)(3) status, to provide education to youth and adults
2. We are helping create more geologists, gemologists, and enlightened hobbyists for the future
3. We are letting more people know about HGMS and therefore increasing our membership and support in the greater Houston area
4. We are providing proof to grant-givers that we are serious about education and therefore deserving of grants from them to HGMS.

Please give the OUTREACH program your serious consideration and get in touch with me and say YES, I think it's a great idea for HGMS, and I will help start a group in my District. You can call me at my law office (about 18 hours a day, six and half days a week, (713) 453-8338 or on the Proctor Museum of Natural Science phone (713) 453-8363 or send me a FAX (713) 453-1300 or send me an e-mail auraman@swbell.net.

The sale of the Yellow ROCKHOUND stickers is going even better than I expected. We have now sold 63 of the 100 stickers HGMS purchased last September. We may have to order more, if they are still available. Also I have strips with five small ROCKHOUND sticker (about 1" across) per strip, just like the larger stickers. The strips are 50 cents per strip (of 5 which is 10 cents each) or \$7.00 for 20 strips (i.e. 100 stickers). Just contact me and I will see how we can get them to you. These

would be neat to seal an envelope or put on the top of a letter or maybe on your phone or cell phone or 1,000 other uses. Let everyone know you are a Rockhound.

A reminder. As a Boy Scout, I learned to leave things as I found them or better. Monthly I remind members to clean up what they mess up, turn out lights, carry out trash, lock doors when they leave etc. Recently on several occasions, a member has come to the clubhouse and found that the door was not locked and that lights have been left on—sometimes for days. Recently I purchased six motion-detector lights for the HGMS clubhouse. They will go into each of the two libraries; each of the two restrooms; the kitchen and the office. They don't work on three-way switches so we can't use one in the main meeting room, and folks from the Shop have a question about putting them in the shop, which will be discussed further. We probably need to put one in the entry area and in classrooms and the air abrasive room in the future. However, you still need to turn out lights in those areas which do not have automatic lights, once we get them installed. You will certainly be able to tell which ones are the automatic lights as they look nothing like regular switches.

Please do make sure our outside door is locked. We have a lot of equipment for our members' use which we cannot afford to lose just because some HGMS member forgot to lock up.

Mineral Section

by Steve Blyskal, Chairperson & Dean Lagerwall, Assistant Chairperson

Well, we hope you had a good summer break and are ready to once again join the Mineral Section meetings on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month.

Upcoming Meeting Topics

October 7: to be announced via E-Mail

October 21: National Mining Museum, Leadville, CO. Steve Blyskal will report on this unique museum. Refreshments will be available.

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 comments on what we did right and what we can improve upon. Also bring in your show purchases and let us drool. We will discuss any specific topics that members would like to have presented.

December 2: to be announced via e-mail.

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

Day Light Section

by Frances Arrighi

Fifteen members attended the 10th August, 2009, meeting of the Day Light Section. We continued to work on making the stamps. Everyone accomplished some part of the procedure. Val Link attended, and he helped us. One of the easiest ways to make circle stamps is to use a lathe. Aligning is easier and more precise. Tom Wright felt well enough to join us, and he used his lathe to align and center the steel rods and then drill a hole for the circle. The circle is one of the easiest stamps to make.

Val Link will not be with us in September, but will join us again in October. In September we will continue to work on our stamps.

Remember that our annual birthday luncheon is the date of our November meeting. We will meet at noon that day and everyone is to bring what they brought last year.

Happy and safe Halloween.

Paleo Section Meeting Notice

October 20, 2009

by Scott Singleton

After a protracted illness, John Fischner, career paleo-artist, will return to the Houston Gem and Mineral Society for a rare slide show and lecture. Mr. Fischner's statues of dinosaurs and other prehistoric creatures are on permanent exhibit in national museums around the world as well as in many institutions and private collections here in the USA.

At the October meeting, he will be giving a slide show and open-ended discussion on his different techniques for creating dinosaurs and other even more exotic creations using "low tech" materials. His methods speak for themselves with life-like results both in extinct animals and in those who have never existed at all. Recently one of his "Trophy Mount" Dragon Heads appeared on an episode of the detective series *Bones*. So come and have a look at this unusual craft at the Paleo Section October meeting.

Education

by Brian Honsinger

HGMS Education Chair

Here we go again, folks; lots of classes, lots of fun, learning is about to begin. This may be the last wave of classes before the club show, so let's sign up now. Beginning Jewelry Making will start Sunday September 20, and run until October 18. That is 5 Sundays with 5 hours each day with 5 completed projects for only \$375.00. We are limited to 6 students.

The Add Hoc Casting Class begins Saturday September 26 and concludes October 3. Both classes meet 9:00 a.m.–Noon. The cost of this class is \$120.00 and provides

everything except your silver to cast your project. We can have up to 8 students. If you have never been around molten silver—let me tell you that is where the action is!

Wayne Barnett will be the instructor for both of these classes.

We are going to have one more Beginning Wire Wrapping class for three hours on three Sundays beginning very soon. That will be followed with another Ring Making class if we have time before the show. Charlie Fredregill who has trained 27 students so far this year in beginning wire wrapping and ring making. What a great year we are having!

One of our other instructors, Patty Scott, will be ready to do an Enameling class in the Spring so look out for that as it will be upon us very quickly if this last year is any indication of how fast things go.

OOPS! Yes we have had a failure to report also. After many attempts at cleaning our torches up so they could make glass beads it has been determined that maybe our piping system may be what is throwing off the contaminants, not just the torch heads. It is impossible to make pretty beads with our torches!

Sorry for getting your hopes up, and most sorry for not being able to use the services of one of our more talented members Rikkie Mitman. She is at the club most Wednesdays and is happy to talk with anyone about glass bead making.

Please respond to me at this address if you want to take any of these classes, and state whether you have already sent in a deposit: texbay@sbcglobal.net, Brian Honsinger, Education Director, 281-777-0552

An Old Geezer Reminisces

by John Emerson

Member of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society

Editor's Note: I'm proud to announce that John has agreed to provide the BBG with a monthly (or whenever) column. I have found his reminiscences to be quite interesting, and I thought that you might too. Many of you know John. He is a Life Member of HGMS and was Assistant Show Chairman in 1992, Show Chairman in 1993, Secretary in 1994, President in 1995, and Past President in 1996 and 1997. John and his wife Bobbie (now deceased) wrote or collaborated on several books published by the Paleo Section that are still being sold.

In late 1995, John asked me to be Editor of The Backbender's Gazette. I told him I'd do it starting in January 1996 until he found someone else, and definitely no longer than three months. I'm still here.

I started out as an "oil field brat." My first memories were in the little oil boom town of Freer, TX. When we first moved there, Mom, Dad, and I lived in a tent. It had a wooden floor and about three-foot high walls with a canvas roof. Mom cooked on a kerosene stove with two burners. She had an "ice box" that Dad could fill

by buying ice at the ice store in town.

After our one bedroom house was built on the oil lease, we lived about three miles from town. No telephone, no electricity, a windmill for water, a “No Squat, No Stoop, No Squint” Philco battery-powered radio with a wind charger to keep the battery charged. We did have natural gas from the oil wells to run the four -burner gas stove and the gas-operated refrigerator. At first we had an outdoor toilet and a wash tub in which to bathe. But Mom made Dad add a bathroom and my bedroom to the house.

There was only one church in town. It was Baptist, and services were held in the basement since the basement was all they could afford to build (1932-1934) at that time.

All roads were either dirt or caliche (a local calcium carbonate hardpan). That included the 30 miles to the nearest pavement in San Diego, TX.

When I was five years old, Dad made the school accept me by threatening to cut off their gas supply. The school was one room, all grades, one teacher. It was built up on stilts so it would be cooler in the local heat. It had a wood stove in the middle of the room for the winter. It also had two outdoor privies—one for girls and one for boys. There was a hand pump on the water well that the older boys operated at recess for other children who had to bring their own cups. The first year I attended, the teacher split us into two groups. Those who could read went outside under the building to study while those of us who could not read had to stay in with the teacher. Everyone worked hard to learn to read so they could go outside under the building.

My grandmother and uncle lived across the road from the school. When he could, Dad drove me to their house in the morning and picked me up in the evening. When he couldn't, I (at five years old) rode my horse, which he saddled before he left, and I left it at grandmother's house while in school. In order for me to get on the horse, Mom held him while I stepped off the back porch. At grandmother's house, either she or my uncle helped me off.

The second year, two more rooms and two more teachers were added. Still two outdoor toilets and the water well pump. The third year a new brick school was built in town with running water, indoor toilets, and electric lights!!! Of course no cafeteria. A hamburger stand opened across the road from the new school. If I didn't take my lunch, I was given 15 cents to buy a hamburger for 5 cents, a Coke for 5 cents and an “Eskimo Pie” for 5 cents. Of course the “Great Depression” was in full swing.

We followed the oil booms in South Texas. From Freer we moved to Benavides where, while I was in school at midterm, the State had all grammar school kids take an SAT-type test. We were all in the assembly hall and all given the same test (third to 7th grade). On a time basis it would be announced “all third graders stop now”—then “all fourth graders stop now” etc. I was in fourth grade, but I thought it simple, so I just kept going. I passed 6th grade except for math where I passed the eighth grade. They moved me to fifth grade at midterm.

After that year in Benavides, we moved to Alice where I skipped the 8th grade. Since I started when I was 5 and skipped two grades, I graduated High School and started A&M at the age of 15.

At A&M, I crammed a four-year course in Petroleum Engineering into eleven years! I ran out of money and had to work every other semester, and I spent three years in the army during the Korean unpleasantness. We had a saying that I was infected with “gonetokorea.”

Well, enough of memory lane. All this is very clearly remembered, but I am not too sure what happened yesterday! John

Old Geezer—More on Early Days

by John Emerson

Member of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society

At Freer, our house was built on stilts to help cool it during the summer and keep the rattlesnakes out. One summer Dad killed seven rattlers inside the fence around the house.

For fun I would crawl under the house with a hammer and swat Black Widow spiders and their egg sacks. It drove my Mom crazy—she never knew when or where I would strike next under the house.

Dad made a “rubber gun” for me at age 5 and bought a Benjamin Pump air gun for me at age 6. It could be pumped up to near the strength of a 22 caliber gun. I would go out in the brush on the oil lease and shoot tarantulas, snakes, rabbits (never got one), and other moving objects.

For my eighth birthday I received a 22. After we moved to Alice, for my tenth I got a 410 gauge shotgun with the stock shortened, and for my twelfth a 30-30 carbine rifle. I killed my first deer that year. With all the training from Dad (we hunted together), I was able to hit White Wing Doves in flight with the 410. It amazed his buddies (who all used 12 gauge shotguns) when he took me with him during White Wing season, and we both got our limits. This training helped me while in the Army.

In the early days no one Bar-B-Qed. You went on a “wiener roast.” A group would drive in late evening to a deserted spot, gather firewood, build a fire, and use sharpened sticks to hold the wieners over the fire. For dessert, marshmallows replaced the wieners on the sticks and would be held over the fire. One marshmallow that I held caught fire, I jerked it out of the fire. It flew off the stick and landed on the back of my right hand. The back of my right hand is still scarred darker than my left.

At Benavides my dog, “Pooches Puppy,” would use his mouth to pick up one end of a joint of 2” pipe, drop it and run around to the other end to catch rats, mice or whatever ran out. He wore down his bottom teeth a bit. One smart dog!

One day I was walking backwards through the brush behind our house pulling a large piece of lumber . I tripped and fell butt first onto a barrel cactus. Mom could hardly pick out the thorns for laughing.

One morning at the cattle guard at the junction of the lease road with the main road, several of us were waiting for the school bus. One of the older boys had a shotgun shell. He cut the end of f, emptied all of the BBs out, put a nail on the firing button and hit it with a rock. Ouch!! Big mistake! It exploded and damaged the ends of his thumb and forefinger. We took him to the of fice of the camp to get help. They took him to the Dr.'s office in Benavides, and I don' t remember seeing him after that.

I remember visiting several times with a friend who had diabetes. In those days in Benavides, there was not much that could be done for him. He was bedridden and had to be "home schooled." A teacher from the school volunteered to help his mother with the lessons at no cost. In those days everybody helped everybody else when they could. A product of the "wild west"? Too bad there is so much selfishness now . Too many Yankees?

One of the fun things to do was to go barefoot in town and pick up cigarette butts discarded on the streets and sidewalks with our toes, take them behind a store (secretly), cut them up and roll new cigarettes with newspaper . Made us a bit sick to smoke them, but fun (?).

Show—Information Booth Needs

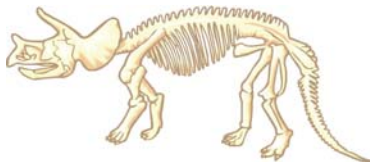
by Shiara Trumble

You know how much fun the silent auctions are at the Show . You've had your eye on something and run back to the Info Booth right before the bell to make sure your bid is still good. The Information Booth now needs your help to keep the silent auction going!

We depend largely upon your donations for what we of fer in the Silent Auction, so please look through your lapidary and faceting rough, your fossils and yard rocks, and even that jewelry that doesn' t go with your current outfits. Out with the old and in with the new! You're going to find new things at the Show , so donate something from your current collection!

If everybody comes up with a few nice pieces, we'll have plenty of variety to offer. We will provide a box for your donated items in the back of the clubhouse meeting room for your convenience.

Thanks for your past and future generosity in supporting the club.



November 13–15 Show time is getting closer!*by Sigrid Stewart**2009 Show Chair*

I know you feel like the Show ought to be just around the corner, but not this year! Thanks to a big bully named Hurricane Ike and his little sister Hurricane Rita, we have moved our Show date permanently beyond the ravages of hurricanes. We all pray that no such disaster as Ike revisits Houston in the future! There will be other benefits; the show is closer to Christmas, and hopefully that will translate to cooler weather and to a better market for our dealers, in these uncertain times. And we have quite a line-up taking shape! Some new offerings are on the plate that will really whet your appetite. Many of your favorites are returning as well. Please check out the revamped Show page on our Web site for details!

Since we do have this new date, I am asking everyone to help spread the word. Please do what you can to assist our publicity efforts. Let your friends know about the Show; take a flyer to work, and get your friends to post one at their office or favorite gathering place. Buy tickets and sell them (or give them away) to your friends. The Houston Gem and Mineral Society needs this public exposure to grow and thrive, and our public needs a good Gem and Mineral Show! Kids need new geodes! New jewelry beckons! And rockhounds always need new rocks, minerals, fossils, and gem materials.

It takes a lot to put on a show. Plan to come out for the day, look around, work a shift or two, and do something for your favorite Section as well. There are demos and section tables, fluorescent and case exhibits to set up, and the hospitality suite to be manned. Please say yes when asked to volunteer. And enjoy the Dealers and Volunteers Dinner with your friends, while anticipating the new treasures to be revealed.

October 10, Saturday, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.., Annual Postcard Labeling party at the clubhouse.

This year, as always, we will sort and label postcards for the mass mailing to our past attendees. Lunch and Door Prizes will be served to the faithful! We'll work on school collections too.

October 24, Saturday, 5:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Pizza Party and Auction at the clubhouse.

It's just plain hard to beat good pizzas, tossed salad, and the pot-luck dessert table. I'll make chocolate cake again if you promise to eat it all so I don't have to take it home! But desserts are a real weakness of mine, so you bring one too!

November 11, Wednesday, 3 p.m.–6 p.m., Loading Day at the clubhouse.

On the Wednesday night before the show, we load the U-Haul and volunteers' vehicles with items to be transported to the Humble Civic Center. Items must be marked for a particular Section to be loaded. Load 'em up, move 'em out, yee-hah!

November 12, Thursday, 8 a.m.–12 p.m. - SetUp Day 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.

November 12, Thursday, 6:30 p.m.–7:30 p.m., The Volunteers and Dealers Appreciation Dinner at the Humble Civic Center . We host this dinner every year to show our appreciation for all of our volunteers and dealers. We will have a dinner speaker.

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Nancy Fischer took these pictures of Lexy Bieniek at the Texas Home School Coalition's Conference (THSC), Friday August 7. Lexy also worked the conference Thursday and Saturday. She set everything up and took everything back down. Nancy only worked it Friday.



Life Templates

by Mary Ann Mitscherling

Member of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society

Clearly you have your life and I have mine.
Whatever draws us to our work and play?
The poet in us finds outlet in rhyme.
The sculptor is handy in stone or clay .

The farmer learns the value of straight rows.
The craftsman values using skill and tools.
We discover our heroes and our foes.
In every case we live and die with rules.

Each time I mark and cut a cabochon,
I discover and present something new .
We mark the boundary of our life if shown
Life templates with a richness we renew .

Our divergent views grow less outlandish
As our templates form and boundaries vanish.

Reserves

September 2, 2009

by Mary Ann Mitscherling

Member of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society

When I am tired but want to work or play
Reserves of energy well up within.
A silent bargain's struck for rest's delay
So fresh achievements can claim origin.

With every step another begs to fall
And I am carried forward to my goal.
Gigantic jobs crumble with each foot fall
And smaller pieces easily enfold.

Is this the familiar routine we know?
Or are we unaware how mind rewards?
Amnesia is a wind that cannot blow .
Mind as master can charm us without words.

The mind conducts reserves as in a play .
Alternate realms are a daydream away .

Imperfections

by Mary Ann Mitscherling

September 8, 2009

Member of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society

I keep the first practice opal I cut.
It was the first to stir the memory .
Great beauty can excuse the crack and rut,
While craftsmanship stirs to let beauty be.

For many hours I judged place and shape,
Only to compromise on bland from great,
Until perception switched just to dictate
Nature does not always cooperate.

How much we find the flaws within ourselves
And miss engaging beauty of the whole.
We organize our thoughts as on long shelves
Unaware of our journey to our goal.

Imperfections can organize the form.
And beauty pops like lightening from the storm.

Show Time

September 9, 2009

by Mary Ann Mitscherling

Member of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society

What would we do without yearly show time?
No preparations, no deadlines to meet...
Something lost that is neither yours nor mine
Might give us pause and cause a quick retreat.

But then we have the clubhouse and the meets,
The section parties and the auction fares.
The friendly faces beckon us with greets,
And we are engaged again with our cares.

But nowhere are we one in separate forms.
We're pieces of a puzzle undefined.
The whole is hidden 'till the show transforms.
We become many single things refined.

Show time helps to define us to the world,
Like ships proclaim country with flags unfurled.

SCFMS Bulletin Editors' Contest News

by Phyllis George

HGMS Newsletter Editor and Webmaster

I recently received information from Don Shurtz that gives us a glimpse of how well HGMS members did in the SCFMS Bulletin Editors Breakfast. Don is the SCFMS Bulletin Editors Advisory Chair who is in charge of that contest.

The results will be announced at the SCFMS Bulletin Editors' and Webmasters Breakfast to be held in Temple, TX October 10 at 7:30 a.m. in the Frank Mayborn Center. Members who will be receiving a trophy from the SCFMS have already learned how they fared as national finalists during the AFMS Breakfast with the Editors and Webmasters in Billings, Montana on August 2, 2009.

Receiving an SCFMS trophy

Albert J. Robb III & George Wolf, Sr.
Denise Bicknell
Mark Villaneuva
Neal Immega
Owen Martin
Phyllis George
Terry Proctor
Wayne Barnett

Receiving an SCFMS Certificate

Art Smith
D.R. "Matt" Dillon
Nancy Fischer
Neal & Inda Immega
Scott Singleton
Sigrid Stewart

Great Turnout for New Member Orientation—64 Present

by Terry Proctor

On Saturday, August 29, 2009 HGMS held a New Member Orientation program at the Clubhouse from 1:30 to 3:00 p.m.. It was anticipated that there would be 15 to 20 new members turn out. Amazingly, the total turnout was 64 people, including well over 40 new members plus the HGMS speakers and others who helped with the orientation program.

The program was opened by President Terry Proctor who greeted the new members and had them introduce themselves. Terry then attempted to give a brief overview of HGMS, but found himself gonged by Time Keeper Shiara Trumble, with Terry's own gong for going over his time limit, which brought a laugh from the audience. Then each of the seven HGMS Sections provided information about that Section. Diane Sisson for Beading; Dr. Frances Arrighi for Daylight; Sunday Bennett for Faceting; Phyllis George for Lapidary; Stephen Blyskal for Mineral; Chris Peek for Paleontology; and Beverly Mace for Youth.

Sigrid Stewart then told the new members about the wonders of the HGMS Show, November 13–15 at the Humble Civic Center, and invited them to volunteer to work on one or more of the Show Committees. Phyllis George told the new members about The Backbender's Gazette, the HGMS monthly publication and of the many awards won by the BBG and by the HGMS authors of articles and poems at the South Central

Federation of Mineral Society and the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies level.

After a short break at which time refreshments were provided, Brian Honsinger discussed the educational opportunities at HGMS with the new members and set out some of the upcoming classes, fees, and what could be learned and created in these classes. Terry Proctor discussed the new HGMS OUTREACH program with the new members and how this program was intended to take Earth Science and jewelry-making education to eight districts in Harris County, to reach more new members, and to create a better basis for grants to HGMS.

Next Neal Immega took the 40+ new members through the entire shop and classrooms for a tour and explanation of what equipment is available for members to use—once they learn how to use it.

There was a brief overview by the President of the libraries, office, kitchen, restrooms, meeting room, and safety items at the clubhouse. This was followed by some information on dues and membership by Second Vice-President and Membership Chair Beverly Mace who also takes care of the cases for the Show, is Youth Chair, and sees that the BBG gets out each month to the membership. The President also went over the Code of Conduct and some rules, ethics, and procedures in the Clubhouse and on field trips. He showed the \$1.00 yellow “Rockhound” stickers for the outside rear window of vehicles to help HGMS members know whom to follow on field trips and to find their vehicle in the Mall. Over 15 of these were purchased at this New Member Orientation program. This brings to about 50 HGMS vehicles which now will have the large Yellow Rockhound sticker on their rear windows.

After a few more matters, such as the signing of “Assumption of Risk” forms to go on field trips, the meeting was opened to questions and then adjourned. Many of the new members expressed great satisfaction at this Orientation Program. Undoubtedly it will be repeated. The Board of Directors at their meeting right after the Orientation program also discussed having another similar program but aimed at letting new members, and others who haven’t yet become familiar with HGMS Shop equipment, to receive instruction on the various machines and equipment to minimize injury to members and to the equipment.

It was also noted that under HGMS rules and insurance, no one except an HGMS paid member is allowed to use HGMS equipment and the Shop. A certification program was discussed and certification of shop forepersons so that members will know who can check them out on equipment and therefore authorize use of HGMS equipment.

The consensus after this Orientation program was that the program was a huge success and should be repeated probably a couple of times a year for new members.

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.

Request for Help in Finding Stolen Museum Trailer and Contents

by Terry Proctor

President Terry Proctor's utility trailer and contents were stolen from his law office on the night of August 17–18. The trailer has been used for some years on field trips for the Proctor Museum of Natural Science and on HGMS Field Trips. More important even than the trailer are the numerous packets of dinosaur bones and agate from Eastern Montana, along with a large aluminum tool box, a home-made white chest of four plastic drawers with aluminum angle corners, numerous digging tools and camping equipment, all stored in this trailer. The trailer had what was touted to be a cut-proof cable through the wheels and a ball lock in the tongue so it could not be towed.



Photo of Proctor Museum Trailer

Apparently the trailer was dragged down the law office drive with the wheels and tongue still locked, leaving black marks on the driveway. It is my fear that the thief may just throw out the duct-taped aluminum packets of dinosaur bones and the rocks, all of which are more valuable to the Proctor Museum of Natural Science than the trailer. If you see or hear anything about this trailer or things dumped out, please call me, Terry Proctor, Board Chairman and Curator of the free Proctor Museum of Natural Science at the Museum's phone number of (713) 453-8363 or at his law office phone number (713) 453-8338. Terry is offering a reward.



Packets of wrapped dinosaur bones

The Proctor Museum just celebrated 20 years as a totally free museum. Thank you for any help or if you see anything online, on eBay or anywhere else.

2010 Nominating Committee Named

by Terry Proctor

The HGMS Board of Directors has selected the Nominating Committee for finding and nominating 2010 Officers. The Committee consists of five members as provided in the HGMS By-laws. HGMS has six Officers and six Directors. The Officers to be nominated are: President, First Vice-President (in charge of programs), Second Vice-President (in charge of membership), Secretary, Treasurer, and Past President. The six Directors are selected by the six adult Sections (Youth Section does not have a Representative on the Board), and those Directors are then voted into office at the same time as the Officers.

Nominations are announced by the Nominating Committee at the October General Meeting, at which time nominations can also be made from the floor. No further nominations can be made later. The Election is held in November, and the new 2010 Officers and Directors are sworn in at the December Christmas/Holiday Season Party.

If you are interested in serving as a Director, contact your Section Chair and/or present Section Director to let them know. If you would like to be an officer, contact one or more of the five people on the Nominating Committee who are: Lexy Bieniek (936) 520-3907 [this may be a 1+ number from your phone]; Denise Bicknell (832) 704-2927; Charlie Fredregill (713) 729-0449; Phyllis George (281) 395-3087; and Brian Honsinger (281) 777-0552 or 0554.

HGMS Board of Directors Minutes

August 4, 2009 Meeting

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
	Treasurer	Rodney Linehan		Paleontology Rep.	Rick Rexroad
X	Secretary	Regina Gorman	X	Day Light Rep.	Nancy Fischer
	Beading Rep.	Diane Sisson	X	2009 Show Chair	Sigrid Stewart



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

The July 7, 2009, Minutes of the Board of Directors meeting were printed in the Backbender's Gazette (BBG). Beverly Mace moved that the minutes be approved as published. Phyllis George seconded the motion, and it passed by unanimous vote.

Treasurer's Report: Rodney Linehan e-mailed the Treasurer's Report to Board

Members before the meeting, and was unable to attend in person. Various portions of the Report were reviewed and discussed by the Board. HGMS financial status is good.

Faceting: Sunday Bennett reported that the Faceting Section elected her to be the permanent Board Representative of that Section for the rest of the year .

Lapidary: Sunday Bennett went to the last meeting and reported that Ed Clay gave a talk. The locks had been changed on a cabinet that Ed needed to get into, so he presented his program without the benefit of the materials in the cabinet. The Lapidary Section needs a key to that cabinet.

Show Committee: Show Chair Sigrid Stewart brought a piece of jewelry crafted by Angela Fowler, an HGMS member. Sigrid suggested that an item from Angela would be an excellent choice for a Grand Prize for the 2009 Show . Terry Proctor had contacted Amber Way and they had offered a generous gift of amber jewelry, but when it was learned that Angela's jewelry piece was also being donated to HGMS as a Grand Prize, it was agreed that Angela's jewelry donation would be accepted this year, as at least one Grand Prize. There was interest in having a dinosaur track Grand Prize again this year, and Terry said he would donate one if the Show Committee wanted a second Grand Prize. Sigrid said the Show Committee is proceeding with business on schedule, and the Dealers are all signed up. The next Show Committee meeting will be Tuesday, August 11, at 7:30 pm.

Terry said that last year he had obtained a Proclamation about the show from County Judge Ed Emmett, and he felt he could get one again this year so it can be used for publicity. Nancy Fischer said she could also get one from the City of Houston as she did last year.

Patti Scott is checking into procuring advertising space from publications. Advertising in the Houston Press for last year's Show resulted in only one person identifying that as the source for coming to the Show . Terry Proctor suggested that news stories in Houston Community newspapers are free and provide more publicity than paid ads.

Terry Proctor reported that the Humble Civic Center sent him a new contract for this year's HGMS Show since he noted that the rates shown were incorrect. He also questioned a charge for the HGMS food for dealers and members and was told that had been in the contract for years, but it was not enforced and so it will be marked out, as Terry doesn't want something in the contract, which isn't actually part of the contract.

BBG: Phyllis reported that items for the September BBG are due Wednesday, August 5.

Old Business

Shop: Sunday Bennett said the shop would be open on Saturday and Sunday .

Clubhouse Maintenance: Terry Proctor reported that Matt Dillon said that he and Wayne Barnett were going to rent a drill and install the new stop blocks purchased previously by Matt in the parking lot. However Matt, who was unable to be at this meeting, had told Terry that the date to do so was indefinite at this time until he and Wayne could get together on that.

HGMS OUTREACH Program: Terry Proctor stated there were three OUTREACH events in recent weeks. On June 27 an OUTREACH program was held in District Three at Holy Trinity United Methodist Church in the North Channel area. On July 8 Neal Immega held an OUTREACH program in District One at West University Library with 64 persons attending. On July 14 an OUTREACH program was presented to about 150 Girl Scouts at the Farm and Ranch Club in District Four. Terry said the OUTREACH program is of fun and running, but we need more HGMS members to get involved in their Districts this year.

Scholarship: Denise Bicknell created a proposed new Scholarship Application Form, which she e-mailed to Board members. This form was discussed at the Board Meeting, and members commented favorably on it. Nancy Fischer suggested that the line requesting an applicant's Social Security number be omitted, and the Board members thought was a good suggestion.

Programs: Terry Proctor stated that Matt Dillon had the programs all lined up until December with November a little iffy. Terry is to talk further with the two members of NASA about whether we will get a Mars Rock as it appeared earlier, or if the notice that NASA would only appear for one day is firm.

New Member Orientation: The date for the New Member Orientation will be August 29 from 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm. A sample agenda for the New Member Orientation was distributed at the July 28 General Membership meeting.

New Business

Success Recognition: Terry brought up that Program Presenters for the General Membership meetings should be given a nice certificate of appreciation. He asked for a vote to obtain such certificates, similar to the ones he personally gave out last year at the Christmas/holiday party. The consensus of the Board was for him to do so, and since the expense fell far below the level stipulated in the Bylaws that would need an official vote, no vote was necessary—only a notation in the minutes that the Board approved of it unanimously.

American Land Rights Association: The possibility of HGMS joining the American Land Rights Association was brought up by Sunday Bennett. This is a large, national land rights organization with chapters in 50 states. Membership would possibly give HGMS information and assistance in dealing with the objectionable issues of the new Omnibus Bill passed by Congress containing the Paleo Preservation Act. Sunday Bennett moved that HGMS become a member of the American Land Rights Association. The motion was seconded by Beverly Mace and the motion passed unanimously.

Meeting with Representative Culberson: Terry Proctor reported that he talked with U.S. Representative John Culberson today before this meeting. Rep. Culberson thanked Terry and the HGMS for their work in trying to prevent the so-called “Paleontological Preservation Act” from becoming law. Terry suggested that instead of trying to eventually reverse this Act, that Congress might be persuaded to tweak the Act in the same manner as the State of Florida does. In Florida, the State issues a license for a nominal fee that allows digging on State land. Then at the end of the year, the license holder must make a report of things found on Florida land, and the State has the right to claim those items for 60 days after the report is filed. After that time, the paleo item found belongs to the finder who can then do anything with it he or she wishes.

Congressman Culberson said he had been looking at a similar law in Great Britain, but there the government paid the finder for the item or items which the government then claimed. Terry showed the Board the letter he sent Florida, the report form, etc. and said that he would work with Rep. Culberson on this in the future.

Beverly Mace moved that the HGMS Board of Directors support Rep. Culberson in an amendment or in new legislation to effect the “tweaking” of the Paleo Preservation Act. Sunday Bennett seconded the motion, and there was a unanimous vote to support the motion.

Rockhound Window Decals: At last year’s HGMS Show, Terry Proctor purchased a quantity of ROCKHOUND exterior stickers to go on windshields. These were paid for by HGMS and are for sale for \$1.00. Terry reported that 11 were sold at the July 28 General Membership meeting. He will get some to each Section Head and said that by year’s end he would like to see a Rockhound sticker on every vehicle of those HGMS members who go on field trips. By putting a sticker on their right rear window, members can then follow each other to dig sites and not become confused whether another vehicle moves into the line.

Board of Directors Meeting Change for September Meeting: Board members were reminded that the September 1 Board Meeting will be held instead on Saturday, August 29, at 3:30 p.m., following the New Member Orientation program.

As there was no other business to come before the Board, Nancy Fischer moved to adjourn the meeting and Sunday Bennett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

General Meeting Minutes

August 25, 2009

by Regina Gorman, Secretary

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

Gary Gray moved that the Minutes of the July 26, 2009, General Meeting be approved as published in the BBG. Neal Immega seconded the motion, and they were approved by unanimous vote.

Terry Proctor welcomed visitors and new members. Don Cooper , recently retired from Shell Oil, introduced himself as a first time visitor and would like to become a member.

Treasurer: Rodney Linehan had reported to Terry Proctor that HGMS was in good financial shape.

Show Committee: Mary Ann Mischerling announced that the Volunteer Sign-up List is on the BBG Web site. Anyone wishing to work at the Show this year can see what slots are still open online, decide when they wish to work, and send Mary Ann an e-mail or call to reserve the slots. She mentioned that a variety of jobs are still available to be selected.

Sigrid Stewart reminded attendees that the Show Committee Party is scheduled for Saturday, August 29, and she will have the volunteer sheets available. She also stated that a volunteer does not need to be a member of HGMS to sign up, and there are many things for everyone to do.

Max Washburn brought a 23-pound meteorite he believes was found in Brazil. He is loaning it to Terry Proctor for display at the Dinosaur Track Exhibit at the Show .

Meet-up Group: Sigrid Stewart stated that the Meet-up Group will be given information about the upcoming HGMS Orientation.

BBG: Phyllis George announced that the deadline to submit items and articles for publication in the October BBG is Wednesday, September 9, and the deadline for the November issue is October 7.

AFMS Awards: Phyllis George reported on her trip to Billings, Montana and the AFMS Annual Show where she attended the AFMS Editors' and Webmasters' Breakfast. Phyllis stated that the HGMS Web site tied for Third Place in the first annual AFMS Webmasters Contest.

Phyllis presented the AFMS Bulletin Editors' Contest awards to the HGMS winners:

Advanced Adult Article:	4 th Place	Al Robb and George Wolf
	Honorable Mention	Mark Villanova
	Honorable Mention	Terry Proctor
Adult Article:	3 rd Place	Denise Bicknell
	4 th Place	Phyllis George
	Honorable Mention	Wayne Barnett
Poetry:	3 rd Place	Terry Proctor
Features:	1 st Place	Neal Immega
	3 rd Place	Owen Martin

School Project: Steve Blyskal handed out small boxes for some of the members to fold during the meeting. These boxes will be used to hold mineral specimens in the school mineral sets sponsored by Conoco.

Old Business

Outreach Program: Terry Proctor reported that the program started out doing very well, and more people are needed in each district to find a location in their District to have a program. Neal Immega said he would be there with the machines and plenty of rocks for polishing. Terry said he would have a sign-up sheet for anyone interested in leading an Outreach event in any of the Districts.

Field Trip to Damon Mound: Sunday, August 23, a group of rockhounds from HGMS and other local clubs searched for coral and other items at this salt dome location south of Needville, Texas. It was very hot, and the humidity was high which required a good deal of sun and heat protection along with plenty of water .

Clubhouse Maintenance: In order to help save on the electricity expenses at the Clubhouse, Terry Proctor bought six light switches with motion sensors that turn off the light in a room when there has been no movement for a set period of time.

New Business

Future Programs: Terry Proctor reported the following programs had been scheduled for the General Meeting:

September 22 Ron Gibbs

October 27 NASA

Stickers: Terry Proctor reported that the Rockhound S tickers are selling quite well (\$1 each). He sold a good number to people on the Damon Mound Trip. He suggested that the Section Heads take the Rockhound Stickers to sell to their respective groups. The Stickers are especially useful when attending field trips. The yellow Rockhound on your rear window identifies you and your vehicle to the other Rockhounds.

Upcoming Trips: Beverly Mace announced that the landowner of the property near Jasper has extended their lease for one more year , and HGMS is invited to schedule another field trip to this popular spot to search for petrified/fossil wood.

Other Announcements:

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

Steve Blyskal (Mineral Section Chair) and Sigrid Stewart (2009 Show chair) plan to marry in September.

Door Prize: Margo Bedman provided the Door Prize, won by Terry Proctor. Terry will bring the Door Prize for the September General Meeting.

Show 'n Tell:

Terry Proctor brought "green rocks."

Beverly Mace brought jade.

The business meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m. for a short break before the night's program was presented.

Program: Amber Way Jewelry presented by Dennis Giadosich

Dennis Giadosich brought an exiting and very informative program about the formation of Amber. He passed around many fine examples of Amber in all its color variations for us to touch and look over. He talked about the countries where Amber is found and the individual characteristics of the Amber from each locale. We learned how to spot a fake and how to identify a piece of Amber with an insect "implanted" after it was mined. He explained polishing techniques and prices.

AFMS-Quick Tips for Editors

by Linda Jaeger

Bulletin Editors Advisory Chair

from AFMS Newsletter 9/2009

If you have a question (or suggestion) about editing or writing or the bulletin contest or something related, send it to me by e-mail: <LjgrAlg@aol.com> or at home address: 3515 E. 88th S t., Tulsa, OK 74137. If I cannot find an answer to your question, we'll publish the question and ask the readers for their answers.

Congratulations to all our winning editors, authors, and webmasters!...Then take a little breath and start looking at entries for the next contest. Remember that you can find sample score sheets online at the AFMS Web site, <www.amfed.org>, as well as good information on editing a newsletter.



WHICH or THAT—How do you know?

As I read judges' comments on this year's entries in the articles and features categories, I noticed several comments about using "that" instead of "which" and vice versa. **So how do you know when to use each one?**

Let's look at a couple of examples:

1 - "We found limestone and sandstone, which are sedimentary rocks."

The phrase "which are sedimentary rocks" describes **all** limestone and **all** sandstone. In other words, limestone and sandstone are members of a group called sedimentary rocks. When nouns that are members of a group are being described by naming the group, we use a phrase beginning with "which."

If we left the "which" phrase out of the sentence, it would not change the meaning of what it was we found. The "which" phrase just gives extra information about **all** sandstone and **all** limestone (they are sedimentary rocks)—this information could even go in parentheses.

2 - "We found a geode that was filled with amethyst crystals." In this example,

notice we **cannot** say that all geodes have amethyst crystals. In other words, not all geodes are members of the group that has amethyst crystals. Only **some** geodes have amethyst crystals. When the descriptive phrase is a group that contains only **some** of the nouns being modified, we use a “that” phrase and no comma.

Consider the question, “**which one** (of the noun being modified)?” If the answer is “**that one** (referring to the modifier phrase),” then use a “that” phrase. If the answer does not make sense, it’s time to use a “which” phrase.

Okay. Test yourself with these sentences :

- A. We have sapphires that came from Helena, Montana.
- B. We have sapphires, which came from Helena Montana.
- C. Oklahoma is one of the states that has dinosaur remains.
- D. Oklahoma is one of the states, which has dinosaur remains.
- E. Our club belongs to the RMFMS that is a regional federation of the AFMS.
- F. Our club belongs to the RMFMS, which is a regional federation of the AFMS.
- G. A collection of petrified wood that has absorbed iron during petrification is inside the front door.
- H. A collection of petrified wood, which has absorbed iron during petrification, is inside the front door.

How’d you do?

- A. **yes** – only some sapphires come from Helena, Montana; *which sapphires? – the ones from Helena*
- B. **no** – to use “which,” all sapphires must come from Helena, Montana
- C. **yes** – only some states have dinosaur remains; *which states? – the ones with dinosaur remains*
- D. **no** — to use “which,” all states must have dinosaur remains
- E. **no** – to use “that,” only some of the RMFMS can be a regional federation of AFMS; *which RMFMS? – this sounds like there is more than one RMFMS and does not make sense!*
- F. **yes** – all of RMFMS belongs to a regional federation of AFMS
- G. **yes** – only some petrified wood has absorbed iron during petrification; *which petrified wood? — the wood that absorbed iron*
- H. **no** – to use “which,” all petrified wood must have absorbed iron during petrification

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AFMS Uniform Rules Committee News

by Barbara Jacobsen, URC Chair

from AFMS Newsletter 9/2009

At the annual meeting of the Uniform Rules Committee, a proposal for the establishment of a new Division for Beading and Beadwork, Division I, was considered and adopted. Several proposals regarding CC-7, Creative Cabochons, were also considered. The URC Committee decided to delete the creative class definition and change the Modern definition to "Modern and Creative", thus allowing them in all classes that allow the Modern cabochons.

Proposed changes to S-I-P-II-2-2009 were adopted, including the timing of regional submissions of proposals for changes to the Uniform Rules and the providing of such changes and an agenda to URC members.

The Committee also approved a proposal for rewriting and combining of the first and second sections of the Uniform Rules to reduce repetition and confusion about regional and AFMS competition.

The Committee examined editorial revisions to the AFMS Reference List for Fossils. The AFMS Mineral Competition List was discussed and its scoring was clarified. Finally, several changes to the AFMS Mineral Classification List were approved.

All changes will be available and take effect as of January 1, 2010.

Members of the Uniform Rules Committee are Josie Middleton, Barbara Jacobsen, Barbara Sky, Anne Cook, Betty James, Bob & Kathy Miller, Joe Slouber, Tom Burchard, Jay Bowman, Dee Holland, and Bob Carlson.

AFMS Safety

Ted's Safety Corner

by Ted Reith, AFMS Safety Chair

from AFMS Newsletter 9/2009

Radioactivity and You

Itaught military students about nuclear weapon effects and defense against same for my two years US Army active duty service many moons ago. My feeling at the time was that few outside the nuclear physics or health physics world had any meaningful understanding of this topic. I fear that the general knowledge has not improved much since then.

When the term "radioactivity" is used in general conversation, I feel most thoughts focus on Three Mile Island and Chernobyl. I know scores of people who would take a wide berth around an operating nuclear power plant (out of safety concerns) rather than take one of the fascinating tours some of them offer.

Radioactivity and fluorescence are somewhat related, in that neither can be detected by any of the five senses; specific electronic devices are necessary to know their

existence. However, fluorescence can't hurt you, while radiation can be a hazard.

There are three types of radioactivity that may be emitted by the unstable nuclei of certain minerals. Borrowing on the Greek alphabet, they are:

- Alpha: structurally a helium nucleus. This form of radiation has very low penetrating power (can be stopped by a sheet of paper), thus is no hazard outside the body. Internally, however, it poses a risk if an alpha emitter would be inhaled or ingested.
- Beta: structurally, a stream of electrons. Beta has some penetrating power, though it can be stopped by a thin piece of aluminum. It is more of an external hazard than alpha—prolonged skin contact will produce a sunburn-like effect. Internally, it's of lower hazard than alpha, but eating is not advised.
- Gamma: essentially similar to X-rays. These, depending on energy level, have great penetrating power, and can be stopped only with generous amounts of high-density materials such as lead. They may pass through the body without doing damage, or may chip electrons of atoms and cause great damage if the energy is high and the exposure time is long.

How may one identify such species in their collection? To start, some of the more common radioactive minerals are: Uraninite, Torbernite, Autunite, and Gummite—all uranium-containing species. To detect them, a Geiger counter (military Radiac instrument) is needed. eBay lists quite a few devices in the \$20–\$60 range; most are Civil Defense items. Many of them measure Gamma dose rate and detect Beta, such as the CDV 700 device used by Civil Defense. Alpha detectors are unusual and harder to find. If you have a local CD unit, they may be willing to lend you a device. In any event, you need one used for personnel monitoring (lower dose rate) rather than one for survey.

So, you determined part of your collection is radioactive...what to do. Common sense takes over. Don't eat, drink, or smoke while handling these materials. Wash your hands after handling. Store them further away from your living areas (dose rate decreases with the square of the distance). Avoid mechanical processes which may put fine debris in the air. Consider that lead-lined box for fairly strong Gamma emitters (but not for Beta). Like many other hazards in life, one can generally control them with knowledge. Handled safely, you'll get more radiation in a CT scan, from normal background (always present) radiation—cosmic rays and naturally occurring radioactives, and from the radioactive Potassium 40 present in your own bodies than you will from your mineral collection.

Free safety P.S.: The US Dept. of H&HS offers a household product safety site, which may be reached at <http://householdproducts.nlm.nih.gov/index.htm>. This site includes many specifically named commercial products commonly found around the home and discusses topics such as health effects, symptoms of exposure, first aid, physician notes, and many others.

Additional information may be found at www.hedegaard.com/Minerals/Groups/

Radioactives.html. This link is fairly well written and may be included for those who wish to do additional reading: [I've enjoyed sharing safety thoughts with AFMS people over this past year; hopefully, you found these articles different, interesting, and informative. -TJR]

AFMS—Words of Caution

by John Wright, RPG

AFMS Conservation & Legislation Chair

from AFMS Newsletter 9/2009

In the past six months, several important pieces of legislation that will have a drastic impact on our hobby were bundled into a couple of major packages and passed by Congress. There seems to be a lot of apathy and lack of interest on the part of our membership about legislative matters, but the main problem is that **our members are just not well informed**. Pending legislative matters that could adversely affect recreational activities on public-owned lands have been covered by articles in the AFMS Newsletter for many years. The newsletters are available online and copies are sent to officers in every member society and area federation, but that is where the information seems to stop. Most of our members have never seen an AFMS Newsletter or their Federation's Bulletins, and important pending legislative matters are seldom mentioned at meetings or published in bulletins.

There is currently more legislation pending that could affect our hobby, and their sponsors are working hard to bring them to the floor of the House and on to the Senate for a vote prior to the 2010 midterm election cycle. There are three in particular that I think we need to be aware of:

1. Hardrock Mining and Reclamation Act of 2009.

This is a massive bill (just the summary is 100 pages) that is going to be devastating to many rural areas and small communities that depend on mining for their livelihood. Most of the problems for activities like rockhounding are going to be the result of collateral damage. (This means we are going to get zapped even though the bill does provide for recreational activities like rockhounding.) This "Act" is going to affect both **"public and private"** lands. Not only is this going to limit a lot of desirable materials, it will also limit a lot of prime areas for outings. The bill is out of committee and on a fast track for passage this fall. By the time you read this article, it will probably be too late for contacting your Representatives, but we still have an opportunity to write our Senators and stop this insane legislation.

2. Clean Water Restoration Act (S787) (Wetlands).

This bill is still in committee as I write this article, but remember I'm working a little more than a month in advance and it may well be on fast track for passage by the time you read this Newsletter. In my opinion this bill is one of the largest power-based and massive land grabs in decades. The sheer scope of this proposed legislation is mind boggling. Every body of water from little streams to the Great Lakes and boundary lands **"public and private"** are going to be placed under government control. Millions of acres considered to be seepage areas that replenish subsurface aquifers are

going to be severely restricted. "Wetlands" are going to be significantly expanded to include massive areas considered marginal under previous criteria. Even mountain, high plains, and desert runoff areas are going to be controlled and protected. The few things I've mentioned here are just the tip of the iceberg, so to speak.

3. Antiquities Act of 1906: Major Acts of Congress and Act 58 of 1967.

Effort to up-date this law is in the very early stages of committee work. This situation could change quickly as it has a lot of bipartisan support. Don't pick up any arrow heads, pottery shards, or anything else that looks old and manmade, particularly on any state or federal lands. If this law is up-dated, it will more than likely include private property also.

There was not much effort made by our members to stop the recently passed legislation and while there seems to be some growing concern, there probably will not be much opposition to the pending legislation on our part in the near future unless there are some dramatic changes. A lot of effort to research and glean the information needed by our members is being done at all levels within AFMS and ALAA, but if this information is not passed on to the membership, we will never get the grass-root support needed to promote, change, or defeat legislative matters that affect our hobby.

Hints and Stuff

via Rock Chips 8/98 & others
via the SCRIBE 2002-2008 DVD

When polishing, mix a tablespoon of Crisco with the same amount of Linde A or other polishing compound and apply it to a felt polishing wheel or lap. Its viscosity prevents the powder from falling off or traveling to the edge of the lap. *via Sooner Rockologist*

Try making a doublet of obsidian (translucent gray or black) and abalone. Use clear epoxy to glue the two pieces together, making sure the colorful side of the abalone is next to the obsidian. Grind off the bottom of the abalone to about 2 mm thick, which will be the bottom. Cut the doublet like you would a cabochon. Sand with 600 grit paper and polish with oxide on felt. The result will look like black opal. *via Rocky Rose*

There are two types of iridescent obsidian. In cutting both correctly, the orientation of the color is most important. One type of obsidian is banded, and the color lies in the bands. The banded type will have several colors or shades while the unbanded type will have only one color. Cut the banded material parallel to the bands to get the EYE effect. To get the RAINBOW effect, cut the stone at approximately 50 degree angle across the bands. Most Glass Buttes, Oregon, iridescent obsidian is banded. *via Rock Rollers*

Show Time 2009-2010

September 26-27	Denison, TX	Texoma Rockhounds Denison Senior Center
October 8-10	Mount Ida, AK	Quartz Crystals Digging Contest Montgomery County Fair grounds Fairgrounds Rd.; Maureen Walther director@mountidachamber.com www.mountidachamber.com
October 10-11	Temple, TX	SCFMS/Tri-City Gem & Mineral Society Frank Mayborn Civic Center, 3303 N. 3rd St.
October 16-18	Victoria, TX	Victoria Gem & Mineral Society Community Center
October 23-25	Austin, TX	Austin Gem & Mineral Society Palmer Events Center
November 07-08	Midland, TX	Midland Gem & Mineral Society Midland 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
November 21-22	Mesquite, TX	Dallas Gem & Mineral Society Resistol Arena Exhibition Hall David Pirnie, 972-278-4845 dpirnie@yahoo.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
December 12-13	DeRidder, LA	DeRidder Gem & Mineral Society DeRidder, LA. Fairgrounds

Show Time 2010

January 16-17	Fredericksburg, TX	Fredericksburg Rockhounds Lady Bird Johnson
June 18-20	La Habra, CA	AFMS/CFMS/NOCGMS Convention & Show
November 13-14	DeRidder, LA	SCFMS/DGMFC Convention & Show

2009		October				2009
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3 10-5 Shop Open 10-12 Youth Section
4	5	6 7:30 Board Meeting	7 7:30 Mineral Section	8	9	10 10-1 Postcard Labeling Party 10-5 Shop Open
11	12 1:00 Day Light Section	13 7:30 Show Committee	14 7:30 Faceting Section	15	16	17 10-5 Shop Open 10-12 Youth Section 1:30 Beading Section
18	19 7:30 Lapidary Section	20 7:30 Paleo Section	21 7:30 Mineral Section	22	23	24 10-5 Shop Open 5:30-9:30 p.m. Pizza Party & Auction
25	26	27 7:30 General Meeting	28	29	30	31 10-5 Shop Open

2009		November				2009
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3 7:30 Board Meeting	4 7:30 Mineral Section	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 Section	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	26	27	28 10-5 Shop Open

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

The Newsletter of the
Houston Gem & Mineral Society

10805 BROOKLET

HOUSTON, TEXAS 77099

(281) 530-0942



SCFMS

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



AFMS

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



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