



The **BACKBENDER'S GAZETTE**

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

Volume XL - No. 9

September 2009



President's Message

by Terrell William "Terry" Proctor

2009 HGMS President

E-mail auraman@swbell.net



It is my hope that by the end of this year, many of you will have this Rockhound Sticker in the upper right hand, rear window of your vehicle. Why, you may ask?



#1 Those of us who have been on field trips where we played follow-the leader into a dig area well know how difficult it sometimes is to tell whether the vehicle you are following is one of us or someone on their way to California.

#2 We need to let as many people as possible know that the Rockhound avocation is alive and well and gathering strength, not dying off.

Continued on page 4

Upcoming General Meeting Programs

September 22, 2009--Ron Gibbs on Agates: Ron is a man of many talents--newsletter editor and webmaster of the Charlotte, NC Gem & Mineral Club; he teaches how to make composite cabochons (they resemble intarsia) at the William Holland school; he's a graphic artiste extraordinaire, an extremely talented mineral photographer, and the author of a new book on agates. Ron will be explaining his technique for photographing agates and showing off his book that was published in March.

October 27, 2009--Gemstone Inclusions, Good and Bad: Norman Lenz will give a presentation on inclusions that sometimes can be found in faceted gems. He will be bringing a friend who is an appraiser and a certified GIA member to answer more technical questions about some of the inclusions in precious gemstones to be viewed and described during the presentation.

Contents

President's Message	1
Upcoming General Meeting Programs	1
Purpose of HGMS	3
The Excitement of a Dig ©	8
HGMS Results in AFMS Bulletin Editors' Contest	9
HGMS Web Site is Also a Winner	10
My Impressions of the AFMS Show in Billings, MT--A Great Show	11
Do something • Learn something	15
Day Light Section	16
Paleo Section	16
Ways To Receive the BBG	17
Art Smith Update	17
General Meeting Minutes	18
El Nino and Safety!	20
Needed Information About the SCFMS Convention and Show	21
Honey for Healing	22
Fossil Preparation	24
Show Time 2009-2010	26
Calendar	27

Permission to use material originating in this newsletter is given freely providing that credit is given to the author and the source. Articles without a byline are considered to have been written by the editor.

Every article published in the BBG is edited for grammar and content. No flaming is allowed.

Editor: Phyllis B. George

22407 Park Point Drive

Katy, TX 77450-5852

Phone: (281) 395-3087

Copy is due for the October 2009 issue by Wednesday, September 9, 2009.

*E-mail the Editor and Webmaster at
pgeorge4@comcast.net*

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

#3 when you are at Wal-Mart and don't remember where you parked, VOILA there is your vehicle with the lovely yellow Rockhound sticker beckoning to you.

These Rockhound Stickers are \$1.00 and are to be put on the exterior of the window (don't place it where it provides a blind spot for the driver. They will be available from your Section Chair and at General Meetings. Funds from sales will go back into the HGMS General Treasury which paid for the stickers.

On Tuesday, August 4, 2009, I met with U.S. Dist. 7 Rep. John Culberson. Rep. Culberson has worked for years to try to prevent the so-called "Paleontological Preservation Act" and its former names. This Act, packaged with a huge number of other measures and presented by the leaders of the present Congress, was voted on and passed so quickly few Representatives or Senators had a chance to read it. Both of our U.S. Senators from Texas and Rep. Culberson voted against the Bill, but with many goodies loaded in, it passed. (P.S. Rep. Culberson has been a member of HGMS and intends to be again. He found a Pleistocene wolf jaw on a float trip on the Brazos River a couple of years back. He is one of us and deserves our support in this battle to allow rockhounds to collect).

I suggested to Rep. Culberson (which I'm reasonably sure was his position already) that at present and maybe never, will we be able to undo this measure. However, we can accept it as it does have some good intent, and we can tweak it in a manner that should meet the approval of the proponents of the Bill. The problem is that the present law virtually prevents collecting fossils on Federal Land and with entangling legislation, that can well mean State lands also. When I dug dinosaur fossils in Wyoming with Dr. Robert T. Bakker in 1999 and in conversations with Peter Larson and other well-known paleontologists over the years since, it is well understood that fossils that aren't collected are fossils that will become dust. In short, the end result of the ill-advised "Paleontological Preservation Act" is exactly the opposite of what the name states. Dr. Bakker told us that many if not most fossils that wind up in museums and other places of public display are found by amateurs—not by PhDs.

Florida passed some State legislation that provided that Rockhounds could collect fossils on Florida State lands with the following conditions:

1. with a \$15.00 fee permit;
2. with an accounting to the State on a form with photos or documentation of items collected, at the end of the year;
3. the State has the right to any fossil collected which they deemed to be of significance (they say you are requested to donate—but that means you **will** donate);
4. If within 60 days after filing your annual report you have not been asked to donate a given item, then you are permitted to dispose of the items "in any manner," which means to sell, give away, or keep forever what you found.

Rep. Culberson advised that the U.K. has a similar law that he has already been looking into. The law in the U.K. has the provision that the U.K. would pay you for what they took.

Therefore, Rep. Culberson, I, and others will be working on this idea and on a Bill to tweak the "Paleontological Preservation" Act to again allow Rockhounds to collect—and with some new authority be able to keep what you collect after the government determines what they want from what you found. The basis for the compromise is still to stop the commercial land robbers who come into a site and tear it up, sometimes with bulldozers and other heavy equipment, without properly documenting the site and pirating the public lands for their own often very large profit. This modification would still leave the small collectors, like us Rockhounds, able to legally collect and keep what we find—after reporting it and allowing significant finds to go to public viewing. This is a balanced approach, and we commend the State of Florida on this approach taken years back.

It is a pleasure to announce that the HGMS OUTREACH program is moving ahead with success. We don't have as many HGMS members as we intend to have involved before long, but here is the report to date.

#1. June 27, 2009—HGMS OUTREACH District No. 3. HGMS Genie rock grinding and polishing machines taken to Holy Trinity United Methodist Church for four hour session. We had trouble getting the kids off the machines (and adults also). Rev. Jose Cortinas and other members of HTUMC invited us back for another OUTREACH program session. HGMS members present were: Neal Immega, Regina Gorman, Terry Proctor and Gary Gray. This was a joint presentation of HGMS and the Proctor Museum of Natural Science.

#2 July 8, 2009—OUTREACH District No. 1. Neal Immega took Genie machines to the West University Library for an agate polishing session co-sponsored by HGMS and the Library. Neal reports that there were 52 kids and 12 adults at this event.

#3 July 14, 2009—OUTREACH District No. 4. I put on a program with the assistance of Regina Gorman who took photos, for the San Jacinto District 5, Girl Scouts of America. There were approximately 150 girls, senior girls, and about three or four leaders, who participated in one of the four presentations I put on. The topic was "The Bone Wars" about the battle between Cope and Marsh to find and name the most dinosaurs over a period of years, thereby providing dinosaurs for many museums in the U.S. and worldwide. In addition to the presentation, I took a number of fossils, fossil books, and HGMS materials for the girls and provided a hand-out for every girl mentioning HGMS. This was a joint presentation of HGMS and the Proctor Museum of Natural Science.

Therefore, we have now had OUTREACH programs in three of the eight HGMS Districts, since we started the HGMS OUTREACH program just a few months back. If we are going to provide more Earth Science and jewelry making education to Harris County, we need more of our HGMS members (now numbering between 600 and 700 I under-

stand) to see the need for this program and the benefit to HGMS and the greater Houston area where we live. Success in our program is a selling point to companies and individuals who give grants. HGMS needs their support to promote this educational program of HGMS.

Your HGMS District is the same as the J.P. Precinct shown on the back of your Voter Registration card. Turn it over, and the J.P. box has a number from 1 to 8 which is your J.P. Precinct and also your HGMS District. Call me, and we will try to match you up with others in your District with whom you can coordinate to find a location (library, church, civic center, school, business host, or other) and set up three or four events per year. I will provide PBS-type VCR tapes on Earth Science or jewelry making; or you can have some Genie machines brought out to allow kids and adults to learn how to grind and polish gemstones; or you can have a show & tell program where HGMS members bring jewelry they made at HGMS, minerals, fossils, or all of the above and tell about HGMS opportunities.

Thank you.



June 27 OUTREACH program-Holy Trinity United Methodist Church—Kids using Genie machines with HGMS members.



July 8 OUTREACH program-West University Library—Neal Immega with kids using Genie Machines



July 14 OUTREACH program—Girl Scouts San Jacinto District Dist 5 looking at fossils after program on “The Bone Wars” by HGMS member Terry Proctor.

The Excitement of a Dig ©*by Terrell William Proctor, J.D.**5 August 2009 10:45 P.M.**auraman@swbell.net*

To Rockhound friends everywhere
who know the excitement of a dig

The calendar date in red is marked,
and great excitement within me sparked.
Our trip leader picked a great site,
fluorite, smoky quartz, and pegmatite.

Only four more days till time to leave.
Gotta get busy, gear to retrieve.
Go over my check-list to make sure
the things I have and those to procure.

Check my maps and a good Roadside book,
then to my tool shelf to take a look.
Load up the first aid, flashlight, and snacks
put in my boots, long-sleeve shirt, and slacks.

Visions of things found, on prior trips,
often from a member's friendly tips.
Rockhound digs are wonderful events,
friendship, learning, and also suspense.

The Earth is such a wondrous place,
but sad that some folks choose to deface.
the beauty created to enjoy,
treated by some as their private toy.

Now the day is here and our trip starts,
we line up, and the first car departs.
Hitting the road with a heart of hope,
ready to get there and dig the slope.

HGMS Results in AFMS Bulletin Editors' Contest

by Phyllis George

HGMS Editor and Webmaster

On August 2, 2009 the results of the 2009 AFMS Bulletin Editors' Contest were announced at the Breakfast with the Editors and the Webmasters in Billings, Montana during the AFMS annual show and convention. HGMS was well represented with ten members receiving certificates and four of those receiving plaques. The results are below. The certificates and plaques will be awarded Tuesday, August 25, at the General Meeting.

BTW, anyone who reached the AFMS level of the competition got there by having placed **in the top three** at the regional federation (SCFMS) level. We'll learn exactly how our entries fared in the SCFMS competition on October 10 at the SCFMS show in Temple, TX.

Name	Category	Title	Rank
Albert J. Robb III and George Wolf, Sr.	Advanced Adult Article	Neogene Sharks Teeth from Along the Texas Gulf Coast	4 th Place
Terry Proctor	Advanced Adult Article	So You Think You and Your Right to Collect Fossils and Minerals Are Safe?	Honorable Mention
Mark Villaneuva	Advanced Adult Article	Ask Your Gemologist—The Perfect Diamond	Honorable Mention
Denise Bicknell	Adult Article	Herb Bastuscheck	3 rd Place
Phyllis George	Adult Article	Visit to the Black Hills Institute—Home of Stan and HMNS's Wyrex	4 th Place
Wayne Barnett	Adult Article	The Care and Feeding of Diamond Saws	Honorable Mention
Terry Proctor	Adult Poetry	A Rock Is a Rock Is a Rock	3 rd Place
Neal Immega	Features	Lake Texoma 2008—Ammonites, Urchins, and Oysters on Memorial Weekend	1 st Place
Owen Martin	Features	Faux Pas, uhh, Rather Palm. "Faux Palm," that is.	3 rd Place

HGMS Web Site is Also a Winner

by Phyllis George

AFMS Webmaster Contest Chair

2009 is the first year for the AFMS Webmaster Contest, and the fledgling contest did quite well. Each of the regional federations had between four and twelve contest entries for a total of 46 contestants, and the first place winner in each region was forwarded to the AFMS Contest. The HGMS Web site found itself in the pleasant position of being a contestant on the national level. The results were announced during the Breakfast with the Editors and Webmasters at the AFMS/NFMS combined show on Sunday, August 2.

The HGMS Web site tied for third with the Northwest Federation entry. The second place and the fifth place were only one point apart, and the two third places were only a quarter point below second. Those four entries were very, very close. The final results are in the table below.

Rank	Region	Webmaster	Club Name	Club Location	Web Site
1	California	Terry Yoschak	Roseville Rock Rollers Gem & Mineral Society	Roseville, CA	www.rockrollers.com
2	Southeast	Mike Baldwin	Memphis Archaeological and Geological Society	Collierville, TN	www.memphisgeology.org
3	Northwest	Susan Appleby	Willamette Agate & Mineral Society, Inc.	Salem, OR	www.wamsi.org
3	South Central	Phyllis George	Houston Gem & Mineral Society	Houston, TX	www.hgms.org
5	Rocky Mountain	Bob Loeffler	North Jeffco Gem & Mineral Club	Arvada, CO	www.peaktopeak.com/njeffco/
6	Eastern	Joe Mulvey	Micromounters of New England	Nashua, NH	www.micromountersofnewengland.org
7	Midwest	Milton Michael Bamfield	Parma Lapidary Club	Cleveland, OH	www.parmalapidary.com

The top three places received an animated gif (graphic with a moving part) that is to be placed on the home page of the winning Web sites as a symbol of their quality. First place is blue, second place is red, and third is green. Check ours out on our Web site. Also check out the other six Web sites to see what the competition is doing.

The two judges for the AFMS portion of the contest were Wes Lingerfelt and Bob Keller (of Bob's Rock Shop fame). They gave us some very useful constructive criticism about our Web site. I've not had time to implement any of it yet, but I definitely plan to do so. One of Bob Keller's suggestions was to incorporate a search engine into the site, and he told me where to find the code for it. I look forward to getting that done.

My Impressions of the AFMS Show in Billings, Montana A Great Show

by Phyllis George

The ONLY reason I decided to attend the AFMS/NFMS annual convention and show was because I wanted to award the certificates and the first place plaque to the seven regional finalists in the 2009 AFMS Webmasters Contest. I was not looking forward to it—I couldn't even get a direct flight to Billings, Montana, for gosh sakes!

I flew out of Houston on a Continental flight Friday morning (July 31) after sitting an hour on the plane waiting for 20 other flights to take off first. I was going to miss my connecting flight in Denver—the layover was only an hour! But no, the connecting flight still had not arrived by the time I reached Denver. In fact, I waited an additional hour in Denver for the flight to Billings to arrive. But that was great! I would get to Billings that same day.

I attended the show Saturday morning. Initial impressions: very crowded parking lot, crowded show, lots of stunning cases (there were around 165 cases), lots of friendly people, lots of great things for sale. I took pictures of many cases because I knew a number of people in our club would like to see them: Oregon jasper, picture jasper, laguna agate, Fairburn agate, petrified wood, faceted stones, flint knapping, intarsia, stone carving, beading (the AFMS annual meeting has just approved adding Beading as a new classification in the Uniform Rules). One case contained a single specimen—a large angel wing agate. It was displayed by Doug True, the NFMS Show Chair. I have never heard of it or seen anything like it (see below).



This beading case was submitted by Cheri George. She is the lady who completed the rules for the new Beading portion of the Uniform Rules. Cheri was working from some initial guidelines set down by Sunday Bennett and Diane Sisson, members of the HGMS Beading Section.



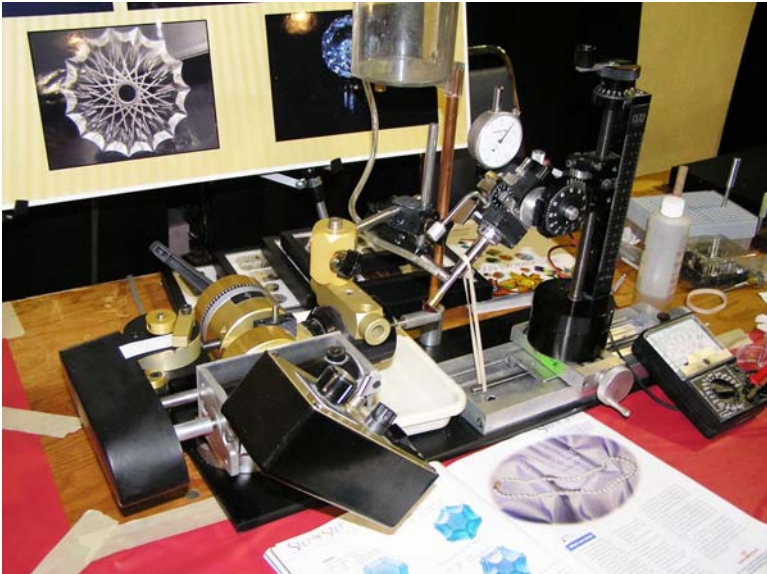
I was quite impressed by the Fairburn Agate display. Gorgeous rocks—and this is only the top half of the case!



This case of faceted gems was displayed by Jon Spunaugle. Stunning!



A completely different type of faceted stone is the *concave faceted stone*. The machine shown below is a concave faceting machine. The display was by Charles ??--unfortunately, the last name was unreadable because of glare in the photo (not the photo I'm including here).



The rest of the day was taken up with the AFMS Officer Luncheon (I'm not one, but I attended anyway), a faceted stone auction (the highest-selling stone was cut by Wing Evans, Treasurer of the Texas Faceter's Guild, and it sold for over \$1,300), and that

evening I attended the Awards Banquet. I won the centerpiece on our table. It was a very heavy rock that served as the base for attractive dried plants and a tall carved chrysanthemum. I just had no space in my luggage for it, so I gave it to another lady at the table who had come in a car and could take it home.

Sunday was the whole reason I was there—for the Breakfast with the Editors and the Webmasters. I awarded the seven certificates and the first place plaque for the Webmaster Contest. When I awarded myself the third-place tie for the HGMS Web site, I blushed and told everyone that the HGMS Web site would not be in competition in 2010. I and all the regional contest chairs were given the official AFMS permission to enter our own clubs' Web sites in the contest because each region was judged by two judges, neither of whom was from the region he was judging. Nevertheless, I was embarrassed to be awarding myself a certificate and decided to take the HGMS site out of competition while I am in charge of the contest.

None of the other winners was there, but several people in attendance picked up the plaque and about three of the certificates to take to the winners. I've mailed out the remainder.

Next on the program was the awarding of the plaques and certificates for the Bulletin Editors' Contest. I was elated with the ranking of our HGMS members. We ended up with one first place, three third places, two fourth places (actually three because two men collaborated on one article), and three honorable mentions. I already knew about the top seven people, but the three honorable mentions blew me away. I was ecstatic! Just being in the AFMS contest means that those honorable mentions have also scored in the top three places at the SCFMS level! No small feat! Major success for HGMS at the AFMS show! I will be presenting the plaques and the certificates to their owners during the August 25 General Meeting.

My plane was due to leave for Denver at 1:25 p.m., so I stuffed all the "loot" from the breakfast into the bag I brought for that purpose and scrambled into the shuttle bus waiting for me at the front door of the hotel. The return flight was a repeat of the Friday flight—the plane I was to take didn't arrive in Billings for the return flight until around 3:30, messing up my connecting flight in Denver to Houston on Continental. United

found a spot for me on one of their flights, so I ended up arriving in Houston only one hour later than planned. Not too shabby—and I had a really great time.



Left: Laguna lace agate for sale at the show--lots of it! I bought a small slab.

Do something • Learn something
Share something • Change something
by Sigrid Stewart

That's the motto of **meetup.com**, the social networking site devoted to organizing real, live get-togethers. As in, in person! Not online!

Have you noticed that there has been a paradigm shift in how we gather information? That younger people no longer take the newspaper, use a telephone book, or read a map? Instead they gather information digitally, then act. Thanks to Theresa Peek, the Club has a new tool to connect to people interested in the Lapidary hobby.

Check it out! Go to **www.meetup.com**. On the first page, you can "Find a Meetup Group." If not, you can "Start a Meetup Group"! One night recently there were 402 Meetup groups going on "right now," and 99 starting in an hour. Groups can be located geographically, or by interest. Try searching on "Rockhounding" and put in your zip code. Search. Then expand the search radius (depending on how far you live from the club) to about 50 miles. It isn't hard to find us at all!

Our first event was one of our new Outreach efforts. Our next event is our New Member orientation to be held Saturday, August 29, 1–2:30 p.m. at the clubhouse.

Now, some Internet DO's and DON'Ts. Most of the precautions you should take when online are common sense. **Don't** give out your address. **Don't** reveal more personal information than you are comfortable doing. **Don't** use the same password for different applications, and make sure they are good ones! **Don't** click on unknown executable files. **Don't** give an online application access to your address book so it can e-mail all your friends.

Do make backups of your system and your file periodically. **Do** have antivirus software.

We have a Facebook group too! See if you can find us online!

Facebook has the following as a disclaimer on its own site.

Facebook aspires to be an environment where people can interact safely with their friends and the people around them. We have implemented many safety and privacy controls on Facebook as part of our goal to enable people to share their information with only the people they want to see it. And we are constantly improving our systems for identifying and removing inappropriate content and people from the site.



Day Light Section

by Frances Arrighi



Fourteen members attended the 13 July, 2009, meeting of the Day Light Section. We started making the stamps. The second class room was very noisy. Two belt sanders, a drill press, furnace, hammering on metal, and talking all contributed to the noise. Ear plugs may help at the next meeting. Also, one needs to wear a face mask of some type. The files, separating discs, and burrs may be needed too; therefore bring everything that you may need to the next three meetings.

These stamps are made from steel rod stock which comes in 36-inch lengths and various diameters. We are using 1/4 and 3/8th inch diameters, and we're cutting the rod into three- to four-inch lengths. The ends are sanded smooth. One end will have a design carved into it. The opposite end will be struck with a hammer. The design end will be placed on annealed metal which is on a steel block and the other end of the rod will be struck with the hammer. The design is now part of the metal. The metal can be copper, silver, or gold.



Paleo Section

by Scott Singleton



Our meeting in September will be September 15, the third Tuesday of the month, at 7:30 p.m. We plan on kicking off the Fall season with a combined presentation and hands-on session. Our speaker is Greg Vardilos who is the owner of his own company called TPS Enterprises. He is a petrographer, which is the art (or science) of making thin sections. He will give a presentation on this technique and will use as his illustration several sections he is making for Scott Singleton for use in his wood research. He is sectioning one of Scott's wood specimens from Kerr County (the famous terredo-bored wood locality) where he will show how a specimen is oriented and cut. He will also section three carbonate specimens from this locality, and they will be stained for iron and manganese detection (this is a technique where artificial stains are applied to the thin section in order to determine the mineral content of the specimen). He will photograph the procedure he uses on these sections and present it via PowerPoint. He will also bring some of his equipment to show during a hands-on portion of the meeting.

Neal Immega will bring his scope eyepiece projector so everyone can see some of the actual sections projected live on the screen. Scott Singleton will describe what is being shown during this live presentation.

Ways To Receive the BBG

by Terry Proctor

If you are signing up as a member of HGMS, you may designate that you do not want the BackBenders Gazette (BBG) delivered to you by postal mail but only want to receive it by e-mail OR not receive it at all. If this is the case, you must notify Beverly Mace of this choice at beverly_mace@worldnet.att.net or phone her at (713) 728-9052. Also you need to let Neal Immega know that you have an e-mail address so he can add you to his e-mail list for news during the month, at n_immega@swbell.net or (713) 661-3494. If you do not tell us the format in which you wish to receive the BBG, it will automatically be sent to you by postal mail.

Art Smith Update

by Nancy Smith

from the MD Anderson CarePages site.

8/11/2009 7:40 p.m.

Hello!
Just got back from our “home away from home”—things went a little better than last week! Our appointment was with Support Care, and I thought, “well, here goes, some more blah, blah, blah” (am I developing an attitude?) I wasn’t in the mood to sit around with some other people in a support group and try to sound interested in their situations and “share” without really sharing, you know? Art felt the same way, but we went anyway, and it wasn’t anything like that.

The oncologist had set this appointment up, and we met with a doctor who wanted to manage the junk that goes along with all this stuff. He couldn’t believe that Art hadn’t been put on an antibiotic. He prescribed two of them to help with the big sores that have been plaguing him. He also didn’t feel like the morphine was the only answer, and put him on methadone twice a day, saying a long-acting pain killer would really help settle things down, then changed his constipation management meds, saying this should work much better and make him feel a LOT better. All in all, I was much encouraged, as was Art—we both felt that he should have been in this program a long time ago. But what do we know!

We see the oncologist on Friday, and as usual I hope we can get some questions answered—like when is his treatment going to get out of the starting gate! We’ve waited and waited for something to happen that will finally stop the growth of the cancer and start him on the way to recovery. Talk about learning what patience is, and when to effectively use it and when to say “ENOUGH ALREADY—GET GOING!”

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.

Art's brothers arrive next Tuesday—we're really looking forward to having them here for a few days—Art for the camaraderie of his brothers, and me for the chance to cook for someone. Hope I haven't forgotten how! We're keeping the faith, accepting that God has something special for us, and being so glad that we're together. Hope you're all doing well. With love and thanks for your cares and prayers,

Nancy, and for Art

General Meeting Minutes

July 26, 2009

by Regina Gorman, Secretary

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

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

The Minutes of the June 23, 2009 General Meeting were not initially approved as published in the BBG—the name of the winner of the Door Prize for June, Robert Stevens, was omitted and should be added. The minutes were then approved as corrected by unanimous vote.

Terry Proctor welcomed visitors and new members present: Jill Hunter, Merry Maynard, Jim Kwolek, Cheryl Przygocki, and Matt Schwartz.

Treasurer: Terry Proctor reported that Rodney Linehan, Treasurer, who was not in attendance, had stated that HGMS is doing well financially. Terry also commented that HGMS was fortunate to have as our Treasurer a CPA who does such an excellent job keeping the accounting records and providing extensive reports to the Board of Directors.

Show Committee: Rick Rexroad reported that the Show Committee was on track for the 2009 event. He expressed the need for volunteers and made a special plea for new members to sign up to work the Show. Also, he asked that members who had never worked the Show to consider volunteering because it was definitely fun as well as work, and volunteers would have time to see all the show.

Lapidary: Mary Ann Mitscherling reported that eight people attended the last Section meeting. She stated that the lock was changed on a cabinet used by the Lapidary Section, and she had not been given a key, so Ed Clay was not able to properly demonstrate the program he presented that evening. Mary Ann will need a key before the next meeting.

Shop: Wayne Barnett reported that the shop and equipment were in good order, and Neal Immega is doing a fine job of keeping the machines up and running. He also called for help from members who use the Shop to remember to clean up before leaving. Terry Proctor mentioned that the Club would be getting automatic light switches to save on electricity. Terry reiterated Wayne's plea by stating that HGMS does not hire a cleaning crew for the Clubhouse.

Old Business

Outreach Program: Terry Proctor displayed pictures from the June 27 District 3 event showing attendees cutting and polishing agates with the expert help of Neal Immega.

Neal Immega sent a picture from the Library where he put on another program in District 1 on July 8. There were 52 children and 12 adults present.

Terry Proctor made a presentation on the Bone Wars to about 150 Girl Scouts from the San Jacinto Council in District 5. It was held at the Houston Farm & Ranch Club near Highway 6 and the Katy Freeway on Wednesday, July 15, 2009. Copies of the handout were made available at the front table.

He also stated that additional HGMS members were needed who want to attend the first District Meeting with ideas and suggestions on how the program works.

BBG: Phyllis George announced the names of the seven writers who were entered in the AFMS Bulletin Editors' Contest. They are Albert Robb III, George Wolf Sr., Denise Bicknell, Phyllis George, Terry Proctor, Neal Immega, and Owen Martin. All the winners will be announced at this year's AFMS Breakfast with the Editors and Webmasters to be held Sunday, August 2, in Billings, Montana.

The dates for submitting items to the BBG will be as follows:

September BBG August 5, Wednesday

October BBG September 9, Wednesday

New Business

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

August 25 Amber Way

September 22 Ron Gibbs

October 27 NASA (or Norm Lenz)

Terry said he would talk to NASA in an attempt to firm up their participation in the 2009 Show in November.

Door Prize: Robert Stevens provided the door prize which was won by Margo Bedman. Margo will bring the door prize for August.

Show 'n Tell: Phyllis George brought crazy lace agate purchased in Quartzite, AZ, fluorite spheres purchased in Sedona, AZ, a geode slice from Brazil, and a specimen of petrified wood that was purchased near the National Petrified Forest. She also showed us several unopened Mexican geodes purchased at the same location.

Steve Blyskal and Sigrid Stewart had been to Colorado along the Front Range and brought back boxes of rocks for the school children. They stopped along the way in a

canyon to see exposed granite and took pictures. They stopped in Leadville, Colorado, to visit the National Museum of Mines, and spoke with Jack Frost in the Mineral Gallery. Jack is scheduled to do a talk for the Mineral Section.

Vanessa Parker visited Dinosaur Valley in Glen Rose, Texas. She reported that the Park was not as well kept up as in the past, and the water level is very low exposing a normally submerged track way. She commented that if the tracks remain exposed too long, there will be permanent damage.

The business meeting ended at 8:30 p.m., and the group adjourned to the Shop area to observe and participate in making broom straw, salt, and pine needle castings in silver.

Program: "Cast Away Your Silver"

Tom Wright, Wayne Barnett, and Brian Honsinger set up the Shop for a fun evening of casting silver in a choice of broom straw, pine needles or salt. Silver was purchased for \$6 per 1/3 oz. by all those who wanted to participate. A few onlookers soon procured silver and joined in the fun. Watching participants dig through the straw and needles to find the finished product is exciting. Every casting is unique, and many would lend themselves well to having a faceted stone mounted on them. This is the second time silver casting has been scheduled as one of its General Meeting programs. The first time was such a big hit, Program Chairman Matt Dillon set up a repeat performance. It did not disappoint!

El Nino and Safety!

by Owen Martin

SCFMS Safety Coordinator

from SCFMS Newsletter 7-8/2009

Government scientists have recently confirmed that this summer we are officially in an El Nino weather pattern.

What does this mean to you and why does it impact safety?

The changing weather patterns may have dramatic and sometimes beneficial effects on areas where we "hunt" for fossils and minerals. Creeks dry up, lake levels drop, or conversely, flash floods occur in normally calm little creeks.

I usually don't let the hot summer sun impact my hunting in Texas, however since May, it has been almost completely dry in our area.

The heat index exceeded 110 degrees in all of my favorite spots! So I've not been quite so interested in getting into the field.

Heat stress is obviously a critical concern during these situations. If you are going to hunt, plan accordingly with the right clothes, exact knowledge of where you are going, plenty of water or Gatorade, buddies to go with you, and an emergency plan in place in the event that someone does get a heat illness.

In mild cases, sit down in the shade and make sure you take your hat off. Most of our

heat is lost through our heads. In more severe cases, packing the underarms, back of the neck, and groin with ice can also help bring down the body temperature quickly. AND if even for a second you think that it would be good to call 911, that is a good indicator that you need to do it ASAP!

As I alluded to above, dry heat is not the only problem. The drought may also put normally docile animals on the move. An encounter with a starving coyote for example may offer risks that we usually would not expect. Also, stay aware of the fire conditions in the area, and make sure there aren't any current problems.

Of course, my drought may equal someone else's rain. This past spring, North Texas and Oklahoma both were pounded with wave after wave of rain, literally for close to two months. The creeks surged, and lake levels hit flood stage and generally flooded out a lot of the spots where we usually like to hunt. So as things dry out, keep in mind that things may have changed, so work cautiously and keep an eye out for new dangers.

El Nino will pass, and hopefully before it does, it will help expose more stuff for us to find. But while he is here, make sure you are keeping on top of the weather since the conditions may not be what you normally expect for this time of year.

Be Safe!



Needed Information About the SCFMS Convention and Show *from the SCFMS Newsletter 8-9/2009*

If you noticed the "ROADSIGN" (above), the Tri-City Gem and Mineral Society is hosting the South Central Federation of Mineral Societies 2009 Convention and Show. The Tri-City GMS will be celebrating their 40th Annual Show. The show will be held at the Frank Mayborn Civic and Convention Center at 3303 North Third Street in Temple, TX.

If you are TRAVELING Interstate Highway 35, you will want to exit 303 to get to the Convention Center. Hotels are close by. The HOST HOTEL for their show will be the Quality Inn at 1610 W. Nugent, just off IH-35, Temple TX. Phone (254) 770-1100. Please reserve your room by September 10, 2009 for Preferred Rates.

Other OPTIONAL HOTELS are: Best Western Temple, 602 N. General Bruce, (254)-742-1127; Red Roof Inn, N. General Bruce, (254) 739-8800; Eagle Inn, 1600 N. Third St, (254)788-0889.

ADVANCE REGISTRATION PRICES: Per person; Admissions for two day = \$4.00; Breakfast with the Editors (Buffet) = \$15.00; Awards Banquet (Roast Beef) = \$20.00.

DEADLINE for all Advance Registration Forms and Applications To Exhibit Forms is: September 10, 2009. NO refunds for cancellation after September 10, 2009.

ALL FORMS = "Advance Registration Forms" and "Application To Exhibit Forms" (non-competitive or competitive) are available on the SCFMS Web site, www.scfms.net.

Note: For a SCHEDULE OF EVENTS see the Web site. Most of all, have a SAFE TRIP and enjoy the time together with fellow Rockhounds. C U THERE.

Honey for Healing

*from Gems of Note 11/2006 via SCRIBE CD 2006,
via The Pineywoods Rooter 7/2009*

When Jennifer Eddy first saw an ulcer on the left foot of her patient, an elderly diabetic man, it was pink and quarter-sized. Fourteen months later, drug-resistant bacteria had made it an unrecognizable black mess. Doctors tried everything they knew and failed. After five hospitalizations, four surgeries, and regimens of antibiotics, the man had lost two toes. Doctors wanted to remove his entire foot.

"He preferred death to amputation, and everybody agreed he was going to die if he didn't get an amputation," said Eddy, a professor at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health. With standard techniques exhausted, Eddy turned to a treatment used by ancient Sumerian physicians, touted in the Talmud, and praised by Hippocrates—honey. Eddy dressed the wounds in honey-soaked gauze. In just two weeks, her patient's ulcers started to heal. Pink flesh replaced black. A year later, he could walk again.

"I've used honey in a dozen cases since then," said Eddy. "I've yet to have one that didn't improve."

Eddy is one of many doctors to recently rediscover honey as medicine. Abandoned with the advent of antibiotics in the 1940s and subsequently disregarded as folk quackery, a growing set of clinical literature and dozens of glowing anecdotes now recommend it. Most tantalizingly, honey seems capable of combating the growing scourge of drug-resistant wound infections, especially methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, or MRSA, the infamous flesh-eating strain. These have become alarmingly more common in recent years, with MRSA alone responsible for half of all skin infections treated in U.S. emergency rooms. So-called superbugs cause thousands of deaths and disfigurements every year, and public health officials are alarmed.

Though the practice is uncommon in the United States, honey is successfully used

elsewhere on wounds and burns that are unresponsive to other treatments. Some of the most promising results come from Germany's Bonn University Children's Hospital, where doctors have used honey to treat wounds in 50 children whose normal healing processes were weakened by chemotherapy.

The children, said pediatric oncologist Arne Simon, fared consistently better than those with the usual applications of iodine, antibiotics and silver-coated dressings. The only adverse effects were pain in 2 percent of the children and one incidence of eczema. These risks, he said, compare favorably to iodine's possible thyroid effects and the unknowns of silver—and honey is also cheaper. "We're dealing with chronic wounds, and every intervention which heals a chronic wound is cost effective, because most of those patients have medical histories of months or years," he said.

While Eddy bought honey at a supermarket, Simon used Medihoney, one of several varieties made from species of *Leptospermum* flowers found in New Zealand and Australia. Honey, formed when bees swallow, digest and regurgitate nectar, contains approximately 600 compounds, depending on the type of flower and bee. *Leptospermum* honeys are renowned for their efficacy and dominate the commercial market, though scientists aren't totally sure why they work.

"All honey is antibacterial, because the bees add an enzyme that makes hydrogen peroxide," said Peter Molan, director of the Honey Research Unit at the University of Waikato in New Zealand. "But we still haven't managed to identify the active components. All we know is (the honey) works on an extremely broad spectrum."

Attempts in the lab to induce a bacterial resistance to honey have failed, Molan and Simon said. Honey's complex attack, they said, might make adaptation impossible. Two dozen German hospitals are experimenting with medical honeys, which are also used in the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand. In the United States, however, honey as an antibiotic is nearly unknown. American (drug company brainwashed) doctors remain skeptical because studies on honey come from abroad and some are imperfectly designed, Molan said.

In a review published this year, Molan collected positive results from more than 20 studies involving 2,000 people. Supported by extensive animal research, he said, the evidence should sway the medical community—especially when faced by drug-resistant bacteria. "In some, antibiotics won't work at all," he said. "People are dying from these infections."

Commercial medical honeys are available online in the United States, and one company has applied for Food and Drug Administration approval. In the meantime, more complete clinical research is imminent. The German hospitals are documenting their cases in a database built by Simon's team in Bonn, while Eddy is conducting the first double-blind study. "The more we keep giving antibiotics, the more we breed these superbugs. Wounds end up being repositories for them," Eddy said. "By eradicating them, honey could do a great job for society and improve public health."

Fossil Preparation

by Marc Behrendt

<http://www.fossilnews.com/1999/prep/prep.html>

via Pick & Shovel 5/2009

You have been collecting really great fossils all day. You get home, set the box on a chair, and spread your treasure onto the kitchen table to look at it closer. It's pretty neat stuff, but wouldn't it look better if all that mud and rock still stuck to it were gone?

Fossil preparation or cleaning can be done in the home or in a fancy lab. Sometimes all it takes is a toothbrush and water. If the fossil is sturdy, like coral and many brachiopods, this method will remove all the mud and loose matrix. However, if your fossil has any cracks in it, if it is fragile, or if it sits on soft shale, do not try to brush it off with water. Fossils like trilobites, bones, and fragile brachiopods will dissolve or fragment and leave you with an empty rock and memories. To make something fragile look better, you need a different method to clean your specimen.

If you have access to the right equipment, you are in good shape. Or you could send your specimen to a fossil preparation lab. Let's assume you have a complete trilobite and would like it cleaned. Part of it is buried in the rock and part is exposed but covered with a thin layer of shale.

The first step is to stabilize the specimen. When the rock dried after it was dug up, all the water evaporated leaving countless microscopic cracks both in the rock and in the fossil. Apply super-thin super glue under a microscope by dipping the tip of a pin into a drop, then touching the pinpoint to a crack which sucks up the glue instantly. The glue hardens, filling in the crack and holding everything together. If too much glue is used, such as with a single regular drop, then the glue will have to be cleaned away before the matrix can be cleaned from the trilobite.

Now the fun begins! To expose the buried portion of the trilobite, pneumatic hammers will be used. These are just like the loud jackhammers road workers use to dig holes through the roads, except fossil preparing hammers are so small they must be used under a microscope. Ever so carefully the hammer's pounding chips away tiny fragments of the matrix hiding the trilobite. Usually the matrix touching the trilobite shell pops right off after most of the upper matrix is removed. Great care must be taken not to touch the trilobite with the hammer, because a hole in the fossil is not pretty.

Before micro-air hammers were used, fossils were exposed using small steel picks like dentists use (this process is still used in many labs today). The method works very well, as you can see in any older museum collection, but it takes a long, long time to accomplish what an air hammer can do in a short time!

Okay, the trilobite has been totally exposed, but is still covered by a thin layer of shale. It is time to pull out the micro-sandblaster. Also known as air abrasive machines, these instruments, using high air pressure, shoot a tiny regulated amount of powder through

a hose and nozzle onto the fossil, eroding the soft rock away while leaving the harder trilobite shell intact.

Depending on the type of rock and the hardness of the fossil, changes can be made to the air pressure, the amount and type of powder, and the size of the nozzle to meet the situation. Imagine this—you have a big rock, and you want to break it in half. You first choose your hammer. Will it be small and delicate, or big and heavy? Should it be made of rubber or metal? Then, do you swing it really hard, or gently tap the rock? Too much hammer or too much swing and your rock is dust. Too little hammer or tiny taps may crack the rock in a day or two. The right hammer with the right swing will cause the right impact to break the rock in a controlled manner in a short time.

The same concept is used with the air abrasive machine. With experience or careful experimentation, the air pressure and powder flow are adjusted to remove the matrix from the fossil without “burning” the trilobite’s shell away along with the rock. All the work is done under a microscope with the watchful eye of the preparer who is alert for new or previously unnoticed cracks in the shell that will need to be stabilized.

Although it is important to clean the entire trilobite carefully, the eyes need special attention. Many kinds of trilobites have the lenses still in the eyes, and these are very fragile. With delicate and precise micro-sandblasting, the entire eye is cleaned so each lens is perfectly exposed without being damaged!

Finally, the rock itself is spruced up. All the chisel marks from the hammers are ground away using either a combination of air hammer and air abrasive, or with a grinder like a Dremel tool. The matrix is shaped into a form that best displays the trilobite. Occasionally, new fossils are discovered under the matrix during this step. These are cleaned up and make nice surprise additions for the piece.

When it’s all done, sit back and admire your trilobite. It’s no longer grey and covered with rock—it is a beautiful black or brown color, looking like it will crawl off the rock any moment.

There are many other techniques available for preparing fossils. Several books are available that describe these different methods. Three of the many are:

Paleotechniques edited by Rodney M. Feldmann, Ralph E. Chapman, and Joseph Hannibal. Published by the Paleontological Society at the Department of Geological Sciences, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN 37996.

Handbook of Paleo-preparation Techniques by Howard H. Converse Jr. Published by Florida Museum of Natural History, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611

Fossil Preparation Manual by Tom Whiteley and Gerry Kloc. Published by the authors, 1995. Volume 51 Issue 9 May 2009

Show Time 2009-2010

August 22-23	Jasper, TX	Pine Country Gem & Mineral Society The Event Center, 6258 Hwy. 190 West Jonetta Nash: jonetta.nash@yahoo.com
	Note changed location!	
September 5-6	Arlington, TX	Arlington Gem & Mineral Society Arlington Convention Center 1200 Ballpark Way cessnak@ont.com; www.agemclub.org
September 19-20	Richardson, TX	Pleasant Oaks Gem & Mineral Club Show Cancelled for foreseeable future
September 26-27	Denison, TX	Texoma Rockhounds Denison Senior Center
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
December 12-13	DeRidder, LA	DeRidder Gem & Mineral Society DeRidder, LA. Fairgrounds
January 16-17	Fredericksburg, TX	Fredericksburg Rockhounds Lady Bird Johnson

2009		September				2009
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 No Board Meeting Tonight	2 7:30 Mineral Section	3	4	5 10-5 Shop Open 10-12 Youth Section
6	7	8 7:30 Show Committee	9 7:30 Faceting Section	10	11	12 10-5 Shop Open
13	14 1:00 Day Light Section	15 7:30 Paleo Section	16 7:30 Mineral Section	17	18	19 10-5 Shop Open 10-12 Youth Section 1:30 Beading Section
20	21 7:30 Lapidary Section	22 7:30 General Meeting	23	24	25	26 10-5 Shop Open
27	28	29	30			

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 10-5 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
25	26	27 7:30 General Meeting	28	29	30	31 10-5 Shop Open

The BACKBENDER'S GAZETTE

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

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

BELLAIRE, TX 77401
PERMIT NO. 303

10805 BROOKLET

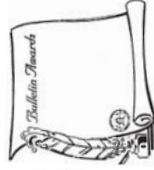
HOUSTON, TEXAS 77099

(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)



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED²

DATED MATERIAL - PLEASE DO NOT DELAY !