



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

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

**Volume XLI - No. 6**

**June 2010**



## **President's Message**

*by Terrell William Proctor, J.D.  
2010 HGMS President*

**N**OTE to Houston Weather. Welcome back to Houston with a little warmth. Hey now, don't overdo it. Don't just jump from the icebox into the frying pan, okay? Wow, it seems like we have gone from having to leave the heat setting on later than usual this spring, then suddenly we have to switch the thermostat from heat to cool daily for about a week or so. Now we have to leave the cool on from here on. What happened to our lovely spring season in Houston? It seemed about two weeks. It isn't global warming that concerns me as much as global switching. Getting into politics, we need to decide about the tea party. Do we want hot tea (couple of weeks ago) or iced tea (today and probably the rest of the year till at least November).



Okay, I will leave the attempts at humor to former President Bush and President Obama, at the press dinners where they have spoken. It is said that it is good for a President to

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## **Upcoming Programs for the General Meetings**

*by First Vice-President James Wark—in charge of  
HGMS General Meeting programs*

**M**ay 25: **Mineral Fakes, Frauds, and Phonies:** Jonathan A. Woolley, Geophysicist, will present an overview of some fakes, frauds, and funny-looking things (both confirmed and suspected) that have recently appeared on the mineral collecting market.

**June 22:** Charlie Fredregill will present the annual silver broom straw casting program. However, Charlie will do it outdoors to avoid noxious fumes from the casting process. Many of you probably will want one of Charlie's castings, so you will need to let Terry Proctor know in advance so Charlie will know how much silver to have on hand. The

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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

**T**he 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>.

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*President's Message continued from page 1*

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use some self-deprecation. But then, I don't want to fill up this column with things I could state in that area.

Next month I plan to start writing articles devoted to interesting and educational Web site links for HGMS members. There are so many, but some are important for you to have, some are entertaining, and some are good resource material. Since I know one by heart, without the research time this month, I will give it to you now. For 21 years the Proctor Museum of Natural Science, Inc. has been a wholly FREE museum, both the brick and mortar museum and the online museum (well over 1,500 pages) are worth a look. It is located at <http://www.proctormuseum.us>. It has biographies of famous contemporary and historical folks in science, field trips and eArt Scans and photos of things found, an interesting site for kids and adults called "What is it?" (there are multiple choices and a page to check your answer), a link page to many other scientific organizations, fossils, minerals, gemstones, dinosaurs, McFaddin Beach, Stone City/Whiskey Bridge, and way too many other things to try to even make a dent in the list. When you go to the HOME page, click on MASTER INDEX, and from there it is a breeze to find anything on the site. You can click on a State and go find out about that State OR you can click on any of the locations, right after the State and bypass the State page, going directly to that field trip or other information.

The Proctor Museum has approx. 35 members on the Board of Directors, including many members of HGMS. It has the most impressive Board of any small museum in the nation. The Board includes, among many others and besides prominent HGMS members, such people as Robert T. Bakker, PhD of Colorado (yes that Dr. Bakker, who is now assisting the Houston Museum of Natural Science in its Paleo expansion); Pete Larson at Black Hills Institute in South Dakota (yes, the man whose most perfect T-Rex wound up in Chicago's Field Museum, having brought \$8,600,000 (of which Pete, I understand, didn't receive a cent); Dinosaur George Blassing (yes the same George Blassing who has been at a number of HGMS Shows with his wonderful dinosaur and replicas and had the national TV programs); Patrick Lewis, PhD from Sam Houston State University, who has put on at least three programs for HGMS; Prof. Nathalie Brandes, of Lone Star College who has put on three very well received programs for HGMS. I could go on, but you get the picture. Please visit the Web site, and then again in a month as this Web site has been growing regularly for 8 to 10 years. There are too many HGMS members on the Board to start listing them, as then I would really be in trouble. I will mention that HGMS member and current HGMS officer Terry Brawner has been with me on two of my dinosaur digging trips to Montana and has been most generous in seeing that some specimens he found were given to me. Some appear on display at the PMNS and others will be. Unfortunately, a number of then Hadrosaurus bones were stolen, when my well equipped trailer full of equipment, tools, agate from the Yellowstone River in Wyoming and about 40 packets of dinosaur bone were stolen in August, 2009.

I have seen so many wonderful mineral, fossil, gemstone, and other collections and specimens by our HGMS members that one day I got to thinking about the value of all

of these valuable collections which belong to HGMS members. So many of these things are exhibited FREE at our annual Show and at other places for public education. Let's just hope that the Federal Government doesn't decide to reduce the national debt by confiscating our collections along with making us all in violation of the new Federal law if we should collect vertebrate things on public lands (and in time it will be other things too, I'm sure).

HGMS is a member of the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies and the South Central Federation of Mineral Societies. Both of those groups support the ALAA (American Land Access Association). ALAA and AFMS routinely work to try to keep land available to us so that we can collect minerals and fossils. You can personally join ALAA, and I encourage you to do so. I am the Texas Representative of ALAA and can put you in touch with them, if you send me an e-mail to [auraman@swbell.net](mailto:auraman@swbell.net). Or you can access their Web site directly by going to the HGMS Web site [www.hgms.org](http://www.hgms.org) and clicking on the ALAA logo that's on the left side of the screen.

I won't be redundant by going over things covered in separate articles in this issue of the BBG. I will only mention a few important items:

1. The feared roof leak is believed to be resolved with little expense to HGMS. It isn't the big deal we feared—see the photo of the football later in this BBG and
2. For years HGMS has won awards that were displayed haphazardly on the wall above the Lapidary Section displays on the west wall of the meeting hall. I think that by the next General Membership Meeting we will have that taken care of also. You should know that your HGMS Board meets on the first Tuesday evening of each month, and the meetings are open. If you wish to present anything to the Board, just let me know in advance of the meeting so we can put your concerns on the Agenda, allowing you to present ideas, problems etc. to your Board twelve times a year.

We are setting up a Maintenance Committee to assist our new Clubhouse Chair, Neal Immega, in taking care of problems as they arise. Neal, one very busy person already, shouldn't have to do it all. Please, please, please do leave the Clubhouse locked, all lights and the air conditioner off, and all inside doors that lock should be locked. The person in charge of each HGMS meeting and/or class and/or shop session is the person whose responsibility it is to see that the clubhouse is secured when that function ends.

Please encourage all new members to attend the June Orientation class and if you plan to use the Shop, attend one of the July Shop Orientation classes. See the article on Orientation classes in this issue of the BBG.

Now go have some fun and go on a field trip, take a class, create something in our shop, or clean that fossil in our air abrasive room. Also, be very thankful for the members who do spend large amounts of time each month, making your club work smoothly and providing the services you enjoy. P.S. You can help too, if you wish. Just let us know.

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

price of each casting will be based on the cost of the silver--roughly \$8 each--and will need to be paid in advance.

Other upcoming programs planned later in the year include Nathalie Brandes, Professor at Lone Star College has put on such interesting programs for the past two years that many members would like to have her come back this summer and again put on an Earth Science program for us. Her topic will be on "Geological Climate Changes."

Patrick Lewis, PhD has also been a well-received speaker at our meetings for about three years. This summer he is returning to South Africa to dig again, and he is willing to come put on a program and tell us about his finds this year. He is scheduled for November 23.

Be assured that a variety of programs are in the offing for this year, and we hope you will attend all General Meetings. Remember that the Silent Auction is active early in the evening before the meeting, and Neal Immega will announce about 7:00 p.m. that the auction is winding down so you can get in your last-minute bids before the evening's meeting starts at 7:30 p.m.

### **Summer New Member Orientation Reminder**

*RSVP requested please*

*by Terry Proctor*

*HGMS President*

**T**his is a reminder to **new members** that a free New Member Orientation will be held on Saturday, June 5, 2010 from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. at the clubhouse. You will receive a thumbnail introduction to the seven HGMS Sections (Beading, Day Light, Faceting, Lapidary, Mineral, Paleo, and Youth Section), information about the annual Show, the physical facilities including our Shop facilities and class rooms, Education program, Outreach Program, Membership communications (the Backbender's Gazette, HGMS Web site, and e-mail notices), our libraries, trips, rules, code of conduct, and many more things.

There will also be **two (2) shop orientations**. One will be on Saturday, July 10, 2010 at 10:00 a.m. in the shop, and the other will be Sunday, July 11, 2010 at 1:30 p.m. We would like to limit the attendance at each to about 10, as the shop will not accommodate the crowd we had last time at the New Member Orientation. If we need to set up more Shop Orientations, we will do so after these two but it may be awhile, so please RSVP as set out below.

In order to anticipate the number who may attend, please provide an e-mail RSVP to President Terry Proctor at [auraman@swbell.net](mailto:auraman@swbell.net). A notice was given last month, and only three RSVPs have been received. Last year we had few RSVPs, but we had over 60 at the meeting, including 40+ new members. You can come even if you didn't provide an RSVP to Terry, but it makes it easier to plan the program (and refreshment), if you would please provide a written RSVP to Terry. Thank you.

## Old Geezer--Miscellaneous Memories

by John Emerson

*Member of The Houston Gem & Mineral Society*

**S**everal times during our travels, I have been accused of being a spy or CIA agent. Of course I was not and answered to that effect. (Note that even if I were an agent, I would have answered the same!)

### Some examples:

**Algiers**—Bobbie in Algiers and I in the desert talking on the phone when a man cut in and said “Mrs. Emerson, I will get you a better connection.” Was our phone tapped?

**Lebanon**—I Visited the Bechtel Office in Beirut in Lebanon for the first time ever. When I checked in at the hotel, the clerk said “Welcome back, Mr. Emerson. We haven’t seen you in quite a while!” I said, “It has been awhile.” When I got on the elevator, the young man operating the elevator greeted me with the same remark! By that time I had lived and worked in the Middle East long enough not to ask questions or make unnecessary remarks. I must have looked like the other John Emerson who was the British Jew and spy.

**Bagdad**—Bobbie and I were in a hotel in Bagdad when a clicking noise started in the ceiling over the door. I lifted the panel and found a tape recorder that had run out of tape! Were we bugged?

**Egypt**—Bobbie and I were in the Hilton Hotel in Cairo getting ready to return to Milan, Italy, (where we were living at the time) after the company Christmas party, when the phone rang. Bobbie answered and said it was for me. I answered and a man’s voice said, “Is this Mr. Emerson, Mr. John Emerson?” I replied, “Yes”, and then he said very slowly and distinctly, “Your six white shirts are ready.” I didn’t have, and have never had, six white shirts at any one time in my life! I said “What?” He again said, “Is this Mr. John Emerson?” I said, “Yes”. Then he repeated, “Your six white shirts are ready,” and hung up! It was later in Bagdad that I found out there was another John Emerson who was a British Jew and a spy. Spy for whom, I never found out. I have wondered what the message was that he did not get and did he get in trouble. Also I wonder if he ever found out about me and how our names were the same except my middle initial is “H” and his is “A.” “A” and “H” sound very much alike in Arabic.

**Teheran**—Every time I arrived at the airport in Tehran from a trip, I was escorted to the head of the passport line checking in, and my baggage was put by the exit door with a taxi ready for me to go. I have never figured out what VIP I was supposed to be.

**Algeria**—The driver/translator assigned to me by the Algerian Oil Company (Sonatrach) I found out later, was a secret service operator. He was very helpful and friendly—reporting all I did and where I went!

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**Algeria**—Before we were sent to Algeria, Bechtel gave me a brief course in French. After we arrived and I started to work, I did not inform the Sonatrach (Algerian Oil

Co.) personnel of my limited knowledge of French. At meetings in English when they did not want me to understand, they used French. Although my French was not good, I could get the gist of what they were talking about. One day when Bobbie and I were in the market, I was ordering a chicken from a merchant. He and I got into a discussion on the freshness of the bird, all in French. Unfortunately, one of the Sonatrach engineers was in line behind us and heard the discussion. After that, their secret discussions were in Arabic!

The next day I came home to find Bobbie upset and not cooking supper. I went into the kitchen to find the chicken on the drain board with a butcher knife stuck in it. She had started to cut the bird up to cook it only to find it was not cleaned out. She was too squeamish to clean it. After I cleaned it and supper was started, we decided that the butcher had cheated us by including the “guts” in the weight.

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**High School**—When I started my senior year in high school in 1943, I signed up to play football. I was 14 years old and a strapping 135 pounds, but again, Alice High was a small school and the big boys were off to the war. I played Left Out – Er – Left Guard. I also played “Tackling Dummy” in practice. I only got to play during the last few minutes of each game where we were well ahead or were so far behind that I could do little damage. In that year we played Benavides - about 25 miles southwest of Alice. Since Benavides did not have much in the way of “facilities,” we put on our uniforms before we left Alice. Our transportation was from some parents in their autos and an open, flat bed truck donated by an oil company in town. It was not too bad going, but after the game we were all wet with sweat, and on the open truck in winter, we were COLD!

The star of the Benavides team was a giant (to me) fullback. Their main play was to form a “flying wedge” in front of him and hit the center of the opposing line. Early in the game they broke our first string center’s hip, and in the last quarter broke our other center’s collar bone. So as not to lose any more good players, I was sent in as center. The next time they charged over center, I am not sure what happened—I think I must have tripped getting out of the way. In any case, I broke the wedge and hurt the giant! A football scout from Southwestern University in Roundrock (just north of Austin) was checking on the giant, but he changed his mind, and they offered ME a scholarship! I think they had checked and found out the giant was 21 years old and not actually attending class in the school. Benavides was penalized by having to forfeit all the games in which the giant played. (Note: Southwestern doesn’t play football anymore).

I turned down the scholarship for two reasons. First, I didn’t want to play with the Big Boys, and second, they did not have an engineering school.

Dad said I could go to Rice or A&M. I picked A&M mainly because at a spring dance held in the Alice High School gym, a former student came in his uniform. It was a regular Army dress uniform except the jacket had blue lapels. He was surrounded with girls!

As I mentioned before, I think Bobbie fell for **my** uniform the next year.



## Old Geezerette—Incidents Along the Way #1

*by Bobbie Emerson*

**M**ore than once courteous people have listened to some of my memories and said, “You ought to write a book.” Inwardly I cringe. A book needs a plot, intriguing characters, plenty of action, and a reason to be written. Voila! The following is NOT a book or autobiography attempt. Don’t others have just as many “incidents” to spice up their life, but maybe they fail to notice because they seem so ordinary? So much of my adult life revolved around traveling, moving house, indulging the tourist inside me, and meeting so many interesting people. (Did John blow in my ear so I would follow him anywhere?) In *My Life* the stories I want to emphasize are the happy and unusual ones. Sad and unhappy events are mine to call up at appropriate times.

### Majorette

#### **1937-1938 [estimate] First appearances. First Field Trip.**

I do not remember how or why I was placed in front of a band. The first time probably occurred when I was in the third or fourth grade at St. Martin’s Hall, Lady of the Lake, San Antonio, Texas. I was “sent” to appear with the St. Mary’s (Hall, High School, elementary, etc.??) band. Details are long forgotten, but I do remember the gorgeous blue satin cape I was allowed to wear!

Once a year St. Martin’s Hall School Band played a program for parents.

For some reason I became the majorette standing on the left side of the stage wearing a tall, plumed hat and a white blouse and pleated skirt. I do recall Sister Viola really wanted my hair loosened from my pigtails, but Ora Lee adamantly refused. I was so frightened she would create a scene about it. If she did, it was not in my hearing. One beautiful spring day I went on a field trip with the High School band to Castroville, Texas. I mingled with the crowd and was carefully watched over by Sisters Viola, Elaine, or Mary Charles, the three teachers I had at the Lake.

[Family moved to Alice, Texas, followed by a move to Sinton, Texas.]

#### **1941-2. French Horn and Baton lessons. Majorette tryouts.**

The Sinton Band director, Pat Arsers, was pleased to have a new French horn player. The instrument’s difficulty usually caused a short fall in school Horn Sections. [In later years I realized I did not choose the French horn; it was chosen for me. A musical background of about five years of piano lessons and a determined band director with an instrument furnished by the school created a needed member in the French Horn Section.]

Unknown to me I was also “sized up” for a different job. The band’s twin majorettes had just graduated. No one was handy to fit their uniforms and no money left in the school uniform budget to purchase additional uniforms. I was indifferent when asked to take baton lessons, and certainly Ora Lee and Daddy were less than interested or

pleased. Pat's wife, Betty, an accomplished twirler and former student at Vandercook School of Music in Chicago, taught six lessons [three dollars] and furnished a baton.

Somehow Pat won the day to get me in the class, and my "world" began a different turn. Basics, counting twirls, and routine preparation were taught. That first "borrowed" baton was wood painted white with a red tip on the straight end and a red rubber ball on the other. I was very shy and had made few friends at the new school, so practicing twirling became fun and filled after-school hours. No one was more surprised than I when told, "You won!" My "partner-to-be," Mary Lou Chafin, was less than pleased and let everyone know it. She and her best friend, Jeanine, surely noticed I was not the best. Their great plans to take the twins' place were in ruins. If Jeanine had been 5'2", absolutely no doubt she would have been selected. However, more worrying to me was Ora Lee and Daddy's reaction—would they let me do it? I would need my own baton and white oxfords. The answer is history. [Moved to Nederland, Texas, (war job).]

### **1943-1944. Drum major.**

Graduation of Sinton High School's drum major led to try outs for the next year. I asked to try out for twirler, but was "entered" in the drum major try out. I was new to Nederland, did not know anyone, and had never seen the band perform. There was a mild catastrophe (for me) during the tryout. Once I miscounted the snare drums' routine and failed to signal for a left turn. Much to everyone's disgust the front ranks piled against a red brick building. Nevertheless, I "won" the position I didn't have in mind in the first place. [Moved to Alice, Texas.]

### **1944-1945. Drum majorette.**

I "slid" into being one of three twirlers with the Alice High School Band. Jerry —? remembered me from the beginning of my freshman year, lessons and experience in Pat Arsers Sinton Band, and the drum major experience in Nederland. I think I practiced a lot, but nothing exciting happened. My grandmother made my uniform, and I got my first pair of white boots. I missed twirling the Fall of my freshman year at Texas A.&I., Kingsville, Texas. An appendectomy caused Ora Lee and Daddy to believe all that exercise was not good for me. I had no say in it, and still secretly believe Ora Lee decided it would keep me from making good grades. However, I did hold down Second Chair in the French Horn Section and also began playing in the School Orchestra.

Sometime in the Spring of the Freshman year I "won" one of the two twirling spots. Once more my size (or lack of) entered into the mix; I fit the old uniform and was matched in size by the other choice, Marie Crane. A super twirler (better and faster than me) and the nicest friend I've ever had. We practiced a lot—and needed it. Standing as close together as possible without killing one another, accuracy was what we wanted. New moves, difficulty, and speed was our goal. A miscounted twirl or dropped baton by one involved the other and could cause "disaster" or at least another bruise. One thing we never presented for performance was trading four batons—but we did get not only a lot of bruises but also lots of laughs out of trying.

### **1949-1951. University of Texas. Featured Twirler.**

## Public School Teacher

### 1955. Classroom decor. Counseling.

The third try as a School Teacher was at Sweetwater, Texas, Junior High School. I don't even remember what I taught—something to 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders, I imagine. However, I do remember my room was the old high school chemistry lab: tall desk, no drawers, and the top outfitted as a science demonstration table. The only chair was a matching wooden stool where I perched with total lack of ease and comfort. One student was memorable. He had trouble staying out of trouble with the law. In keeping with local policy, he could ask for a teacher to be present when he was questioned—and I was it. On one arrest it was hard for him to deny his guilt—he went down an entire block of parked cars and slashed all tires EXCEPT mine and John's! My after-school assignment was to keep score and records for the games played by the Junior High Basketball Team. Games were played at night. Thank goodness John was there to keep up with the ball and scoring. [We moved; dust storms unhealthy.]

### Intimidation.

The fourth experience as a Teacher, I had a contract at Santa Fe Consolidated School District (Santa Fe, Texas) to teach 8<sup>th</sup> grade Texas Geography, Texas Civics, and Penmanship. Parents had decided this was an area of deficiency, so they told the school board to hire a suitable teacher. Many of the children's parents were probably employed at various gambling houses on the road to or in Galveston or were longshoremen. Discipline was left to the individual teacher; the principal told us not to go to him for help! The across-the-hall male teacher told me to go to him for any problems if I needed help. After-school detention was out because bussing was used. During class changes, I recall one rather tall male who hung around the doorway to my classroom with a large, not well-concealed knife. Girls' Pep Squad was one of my assigned after-school duties. During football games, to keep my nerves calmed down, John sat at the rear of the group and managed to stare down and put over the message to "that boy and his friends" to leave me and my class alone. I resigned my contract at the midterm. [John transferred.]

### Math exposure. Fatal heart attack.

The fifth teaching experience was in Corpus Christi, Texas, at Hamlin Junior High School. My assignment was 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade math. Goes to show how desperate the school system was for math teachers! Two outstanding events occurred:

1. John thought 15 hours of university math courses was poor preparation for my teaching math, so he insisted that I enroll for a summer semester of trigonometry at Del Mar College in Corpus Christi. What a nightmare that was.
2. The next year I was asked to return to teach all the 8<sup>th</sup> grade math classes. A genuine tragedy had occurred during assembly—the senior math teacher had a heart attack and immediately passed away. He sat but two chairs from me. There was nothing any of us could do. I can still see and hear him. He had been very understanding and helpful to me and his students. [John transferred.]

(This was as far as she got before becoming ill.)

## Field Trips 101

by Karen M. Burns

*Member of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society*

Spring has come, and with it opportunities for field trips. After long weary months of inclement weather, rock hounds are eager to walk fields, mountains, and riverbeds in search of that elusive find, that mineral or fossil that no human before them has touched.

Whether you are going to explore uncharted territory, scouted by trip leaders as promising for safe hunting and adequate supplies of material, on public lands, private land open to the public, or that choicest of all opportunities—the private gated property not open to the general public—a field trip is often the most convenient way to get there.

Often all of these types of localities are the result of diligent searches along hundreds of miles of country roads, personal friendships, or special relationships with owners of gated and signed property. When a leader is willing to share these locales with members of a club, the members must follow the rules established by the leader.

As a result of members not following the rules, we no longer give out maps and GPS coordinates for many of our trips. The reason for this is simple; the disappointment of members when the caravan arrives to find that an uninvited group has gone ahead and is now proudly displaying all their great finds in their filled buckets. The displeasure of the landowner when unexpected persons arrive unaccompanied by the leader who is a personal friend leads to restrictions upon the next trip, if there is ever one, because of illegal access to an area. This recently happened in the state of Washington. This disregard for others has caused leaders to control the number of those who will know the exact destination.

Federal restrictions, development, and thoughtless rock hounds have done their part in the closure of land to all of us, therefore leaders are becoming unwilling to allow thoughtless behavior by club members to further restrict precious access.

Here in Texas our field trip destinations are often a hundred miles or more away and may require an overnight stay before or after—or both—to enable us to have sufficient time to search and still justify the trip. So a meeting place is the only destination given.

A good caravan has two components, each with their own protocol: the leader with his follower, and the retinue. Here are a few hints for the leader who must make sure that all who start out arrive in time to be checked in at the site and those who have a problem are not left stranded.

1. Meeting at the given time and place is mandatory. Remember, you won't have a map. The site chosen will provide ample space to meet and form up. If this is a business, it doesn't hurt if you go in for a cup of coffee, breakfast, or a few snacks as a way to say "thank you" for allowing us to use their space and facilities. If a time for departure has been set, the caravan should leave on time.
2. The leader should drive at a reasonable speed, usually about 5 miles BELOW the

speed limit. This is to accommodate members who are often older and no longer drive 10–15 miles above the speed limit and those who need to be careful not to pick up a traffic violation. It also encourages drivers who are not part of the caravan to pass us and not break the line.

3. Except when preparing to make a left turn, the leader should stay in the right-hand lane, or if on an Interstate the second from the right lane so that turning cars can cut through and not break the caravan line while preparing to turn. We don't want to accidentally get off because we forgot who we were following and instead follow a stranger. The leader should allow plenty of time for all the retinue to change lanes for the turn.
4. The leader should have someone riding shotgun to operate a walkie-talkie and a cell phone, to keep in contact with the Follower, but remember that a cell phone needs a tower to function so the walkie-talkie is a must. The Follower has another walkie-talkie to keep in touch and let the leader know if someone is in trouble—a flat tire or heaven forbid has a breakdown or is in an accident.
5. In developed areas with stop signs and/or traffic lights, the leader should not go further ahead than the next stop sign or light in order to allow the retinue to catch up, especially if there are traffic lights. The follower should notify the leader when all are through the light. This is especially important when turns occur in developed areas. If necessary the leader should turn and pull up just enough to allow several cars to line up behind him and then pull forward. I remember well coming up to a stop sign and seeing neither hide nor hair of anyone in the caravan and becoming lost, entirely missing the first stop of a three-stop trip and catching up only because my driver knew about where the next stop might be.

We who are part of the retinue, who may be as few as four or five or as many as thirty, also have obligations to help the field trip become a success.

1. It goes without saying BE ON TIME. Early doesn't hurt.
2. Listen to the leader's directions. He or she may give general directions so you can be watching for turns and the protocol upon entering the site.
3. If your headlights don't come on automatically, turn them on when you start your engine. Headlights make it easier to recognize the vehicle behind you and to see if another driver has cut into the caravan accidentally. Try to memorize the shape of the headlights and the front of their car/truck. Memorize the taillights and shape of the back of the car/truck in front of you for the same reason. If the car behind you slows down, you should slow down also. If he moves to the parking lane, stop with him and find out if there is a problem.
4. Do not pass another driver in the caravan—you are all going to the same place. Doing so will confuse the drivers ahead of you and behind you.
5. Finally, take out everything you brought in, and fill every hole you dig.

Following these few hints should make for a successful and rewarding trip.

## Mineral Section

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

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

### Upcoming Meeting Topics

**May 19: To be Announced.**

**June 2: SWAP-NIGHT:** Back by popular demand, we will have a Swap Night where excess material from our collections can be bought/sold/swapped. This will be an informal event and will be held inside. All Sections are invited to participate and swap. Setup is from 7:00 to 7:30, and the formal meeting will be kept to a minimum to allow ample time for specimen exchange and socializing. Refreshments will be provided.

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

## Day Light Section

*by Frances Arrighi*

**S**eventeen members attended the 12 April, 2010 meeting of the Day Light Section. Val Link gave the program on the sizing of rings. Three different members had rings sized; two gold and three silver. Val had the niftiest machine for increasing or decreasing the size of band rings. These rings can be stretched almost an entire size safely. The sizing is done in a stepwise manner.

The program for the May meeting will be making a pendent or belt buckle by using turquoise chips in a bezel with the shape of Texas.

## Remembering Art Smith

*by Terry Proctor*

**H**GMs members should know that the HGMS Board has provided a remembrance page for Art Smith on the Houston Chronicle Web site. This page allows Art's friends and acquaintances to post a remembrance of him and to read what others have posted. The Web site is <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/houstonchronicle/obituary.aspx?n=arthur-edward-smith&pid=135946942>.

Once you get to the site, you can post your remembrance and then click on the list of previously posted comments to read what others have said.

## Clubhouse Report

*by Terry Proctor*

Your HGMS Board of Directors has been concerned about a potential roof leak because a few ceiling tiles in the meeting hall and other places are showing water stains. On Thursday, May 6, 2010, I met at the HGMS clubhouse with Mike Skye, the insurance adjuster for America First Insurance company, the insurer of the HGMS Clubhouse. After he climbed up on the roof to see if we had hail or damage from Hurricane Ike, Mike tossed me a basketball from the roof and the small black football, pictured here. The football was lodged into the top of the downspout drain for the roof, on the corner above the parking lot and at the front of the HGMS building. He reported that there was an area containing debris that extended out from that corner of the building, making it appear that the football had acted as a stopper to back up water trying to drain off our roof. This appears to be why some water backed up and got into areas that normally would not have been affected. We need only a little minor roof patching in some areas around the air conditioners and one place where a joint needs resealing.



Therefore, our roof is still good and tight except for the minor touchup just mentioned. Phyllis George suggested putting some hardware cloth (like rabbit wire) to cover the top of this down spout, so nothing can get in to block the drainage again. Good suggestion which the Board can consider and act on to prevent future incidents. We will also look into replacing our stained ceiling tiles.

The various plaques won over the years by HGMS are hung haphazardly on the west wall, above the Lapidary Section display cases. Your Board of Directors has authorized a new framed 4-foot by 8-foot pegboard to be permanently affixed to that location, so that the plaques can be hung by hooks in an organized manner. Other plaques that have not yet been hung will also have room to be added.

The Past-President's plaque which has been hanging on this west wall and contains all Past Presidents since 1949 is now totally full. The last name added is the 2008 term of your present President. A new plaque, almost identical to the present plaque, has been ordered and it will have the 2009 and 2010 President names added. This should be ready by the May General Meeting. An error in two names and years has been corrected. Can you believe that it has been 61 years since our first President's name was put on the present plaque?

### Late-Breaking Club News

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



## Reminder To Secure Clubhouse In All Ways!!!

*by Terry Proctor*

**T**o all HGMS members, and especially to those who are Officers, Section Chairs, and who otherwise have a key to the HGMS Clubhouse:

Thursday when I came to the Clubhouse to meet the Insurance Adjuster, I found:

1. The clubhouse large meeting room was nice and cool. This is because someone left the air conditioner still running (probably from a meeting the night before);
2. The Paleo Library door was standing open instead of being securely locked (all inside doors which can be locked should be) after meetings;
3. The lights were left on in the Shop.

Your Board has spent a good deal of time, especially Terry Brawner, obtaining a favorable electric company kWh hourly rate. But it does little good to try to cut expenses by a good kWh rate when the lights and air conditioner are left running. This has been reported to the Board a number of times by different members who came to the HGMS Clubhouse and found lights or air conditioner running, unlocked doors, and other things that a responsible person with the key, who is leaving the building after a meeting, should know to check every door and every light and see that they are turned off. We work to try to cover the budget and provide a good comfortable place for all HGMS members to meet.

Please do your part, if you are the person responsible at a given meeting, to see that the Clubhouse is secured in all things before turning out the entrance area light and locking the outside door (and yes, even the outside door was reported one or two times as not being locked). Thank you. Terry Proctor, J.D.—HGMS President.

## HGMS General Meeting Minutes

*April 27, 2010*

*by Pier Laird, Secretary and Terry Proctor, President*

**P**resident Terry Proctor held off calling the meeting to order until 8:05 p.m., allowing Neal Immega to complete the live auction of minerals and fossils that began at 7 p.m. Conducting a live auction at the end of the month-long silent auction has proven to be an excellent way to increase interest in the auction and to generate additional funds for HGMS. The Auction netted \$1,669.00, half of which goes into the Building Fund and half into the General Operating Fund. The items auctioned off this evening for the most part were donated from the Estate of Robert Cross to HGMS. Those auction funds designated for the General Operating Fund will help fund the Robert Cross 2010 Scholarship.

**Visitors and New Members:** New member Sam Williamson said he came to Houston in 1984 and knew about us, so tonight he got around to joining HGMS. A couple who were visiting tonight were Kevin and Susan Small, who also joined during the meeting.



Welcome to all three of these new HGMS members.

**Minutes:** The HGMS minutes for the March 23, 2010 meeting were published in the April BBG. Karen Burns moved that the minutes be accepted as published, seconded by Joan Riley. The motion passed unanimously.

**Treasurer's Report:** HGMS Treasurer Rodney Linehan reported at the Board meeting that HGMS is in good financial shape, and during the last few months Neal Immega's been auctioning off collections from former member who left them to HGMS when they died. The Building Fund and General Operating Fund both have benefited from the generosity of Art Smith and Robert Cross.

**Show Committee:** Rick Rexroad presented a report from the Show Committee. HGMS members were asked to volunteer to man the HGMS Table at the Fine Mineral Show at the Embassy Suites near the Galleria April 30 and May 1–2. Several members signed up to help. Rick reported that the field trip for Show Committee members and volunteers will be May 8. The trip will be to the Tessman Ranch which is near Karnes City, Southeast of San Antonio. There members can find yellow gold colored highly silicified wood. The Intergem Show is June 11–13, 2010 and Rick asked for volunteers to work the HGMS table there also.

**Lapidary Section:** Karen Burns reported that the Lapidary Section purchased a Pele Jump Ring Maker. There will be a demonstration and orientation class on using the jump ring machine at the next Lapidary Section meeting. Anyone using the machine will have to purchase their own saw blade. Mary Ann Mitscherling is taking orders for the blades which she can get for a dollar less than the price at Gemco. The blades are expensive—more than \$10 each.

**Beading Section:** A large number of members attended the April meeting and made bracelets of jump rings and large beads. Each Beading Section meeting instructs the attendees in how to make the beading project for that month. These meetings are free, and information about their upcoming meetings, their planned projects, and directions on how to make the projects are on the HGMS Web site. Just click on the Upcoming Programs button and scroll down to the Beading Section information.

**Mineral Section:** Steve Blyskal reported that the Section is having an Annual Auction on Wednesday, May 5, 2010. You may bring minerals and fossils to the auction. Their second monthly meeting on May 19 will be a talk about micro mineral oddities.

**Paleo Section:** Mike Dawkins announced that the Section is having a Mother's Day field trip to the Houston Museum of Natural Science on May 9, 2010. There will be tours to the new prehistoric flying raptor display. Inda Immega's group leaves at 12:55 p.m., and Neal Immega's group leaves at 1:00 p.m. Neal says if you get there at 1:05 p.m., you are left behind. Mike also announced a May 15, 2010 trip to Jasper, Texas to collect some more of the really good fossil wood there. The trip is on a tight time schedule going into the location at 8:30 a.m. and out at 3:30 p.m. The group is to meet at the Stump Restaurant before going to the dig location together.

**Faceting Section:** Sunday Bennett announced that the program on May 12, 2010 is

"How to create a buff-topped faceted stone." Sunday, June 13, 2010, the Section is putting on a Beginning Faceting Class for which the fee is \$75.00. You will learn how to cut the base and then facet the crown.

The Education classes are rolling along. A new class was started on April 24 with 7 students; another starts Sunday, May 2 with 9 students. Charlie Fredregill is starting a wire wrap class on May 8, 2010.

### OLD BUSINESS

The OUTREACH PROGRAM is still working on lining up HGMS members to find locations for programs and participants to help put on the programs. Neal Immega is putting on an OUTREACH PROGRAM at San Jacinto College, Central Campus in about two weeks.

### NEW BUSINESS

**Scholarships:** HGMS Main Club has two scholarships to award: the 2009 Art & Elizabeth Smith \$2,500.00 scholarship and the 2010 Robert Cross \$2,500.00 scholarship. An application and requirements appear in the HGMS Web site. The Paleo Section has an Irene Offeman \$1,000.00 scholarship to award. The application and requirements of the Paleo Scholarship appear in the Paleo Section of the HGMS Web site.

Members were reminded that there is an ART SMITH MEMORIAL page on the *Houston Chronicle* Web site. It will be available for one year from Art's death. It appears at <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/houstonchronicle/obituary.aspx?n=arthur-edward-smith&pid=135946942>. Members can go and read other people's comments and leave their own comments about Art for others to read.

**Building Fund:** Terry Proctor discussed with members the in-kind funds available from many companies, grants from companies, and said that if any member wanted to include HGMS in a will, as an attorney, Terry will help provide the language for their attorney to put into a Will.

The Board for some time has been considering the need for additional space that may become available. To that end, a Building Fund was started many months back. Funds have been going into the fund, and hence any other donations, grants, and funds that may be available are being solicited for this purpose.

Terry Proctor also mentioned that Greg Neubauer presented a program on gold mining to the Paleo Section, and he told us that the silver he recovered from the gold was sent to a mint and he had his own custom 1 ounce, .999 pure silver, coins minted from that silver. Terry purchased some of the coins for \$25 each, and he has made those coins available to members at the same price as long as he has some left. Several members purchased the coins at the meeting. Terry also reminded members that the Rockhound car rear window stickers were available at the meeting for \$1 (they are \$2 at the Show). A couple of members purchased a sticker tonight.

**Door Prize Drawing:** Robert Stevens won the prize which was a stone frog provided by Rick Sceppan.

**Roof Leak:** The last roofing contractor gave HGMS a warranty. However, apparently the contractor now is out of business. Terry Proctor sent a letter from his law office by certified mail to the contractor, but it was returned showing the address as no longer good. The HGMS roof appears to have some leaks. The insurance company will again be contacted about repairs under our insurance policy.

**Orientation programs:** There will be a New Member Orientation on Saturday, June 5, 2010 at 1:30 p.m.. to last two hours. There will be a Shop Orientation for July 10, 2010 (Saturday) starting at 10:00 a.m. and for July 11, 2010 (Sunday) starting at 1:30 p.m. Please contact President Terry Proctor to let him know of your interest, especially for the Shop Orientations as there is a limited space so we are scheduling two sessions, hopefully with a maximum of 10 people in each. Send an e-mail to [auraman@swbell.net](mailto:auraman@swbell.net) to let Terry know which Orientation class(es) you wish to attend. There is no charge.

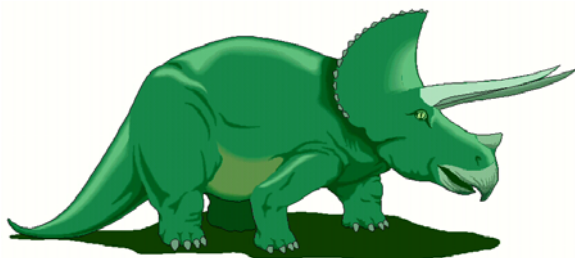
**Show and Tell:** Steve Blyskal and Sigrid Stewart were in Arkansas on April 16, 2010 when Art Smith's ashes were spread on Thunderbird Mountain. This is the location where Art found the mineral Artsmithite that was named after him. After the ceremony, they had a luncheon at the Shan Gala resort in Washita where Art liked to stay. Steve and Sigrid did a bit of rockhounding and visiting dealers while there. Robert Stevenson showed some beautiful agate he got south of Marfa.

Wayne Barnett showed some limestone that had clams in it. He also showed some chert that was close to being flint attached to some limestone.

**Refreshments:** These were furnished at this meeting by Phyllis George and Beverly Mace. Moulon Joubert volunteered to provide refreshments for the June meeting. If you would like to volunteer to provide refreshments, please contact Pres. Terry Proctor, 713 453-8338—and thank you.

**Program:** HGMS member Neal Immega presented an enlightening program on Charles Darwin and genetics and how they impact evolution. Neal gave a PowerPoint presentation with numerous pictures and tables to demonstrate various portions of his program. The program was well documented with scientific support for the points in the presentation. HGMS members had questions which Neal answered. HGMS members appreciated this well presented program. Neal commented on how well Darwin did without knowledge of DNA, double helix, and other modern scientific knowledge gained only recently.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.



## Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

May 4, 2010

by Pier Laird, Secretary, and Terry Proctor, President

X	President	Terry Proctor	X	Beading Rep.	Diane Sisson
X	1st Vice President	James Wark	X	Faceting Rep.	Sunday Bennett
X	2nd Vice President	Beverly Mace	X	Lapidary Rep.	Phyllis George
X	Treasurer	Rodney Linehan	X	Mineral Rep.	Sigrid Stewart
X	Secretary	Pier Laird	X	Paleontology Rep.	Terry Brawner
	Past President	Matt Dillon		Day Light Rep.	Nancy Fischer

President Terry Proctor called the meeting to order at 7:25 p.m.

Sigrid Stewart moved to accept last month's Board minutes as printed in the May BBG. Terry Brawner seconded the motion which was accepted unanimously.

Treasurer Rodney Linehan sent out the March and April Financial Reports, and they showed the Club had substantial funds on hand. The funds from the April Auction brought in \$1,667, classes are booming; and the funds from dealers on the Show are coming along fine.

### Section Reports:

**Beading Section:** Diane Sisson reported that they had a large crowd at their April 21, 2010 meeting for the chain maille with focal beads bracelet project.

**Lapidary Section:** Phyllis George reported that the *Lapidary Section* has just purchased a machine to make jump rings. Anyone wishing to use the machine must purchase their own saw blades because they are expensive (over \$10 each) and break easily. Mary Ann Mitscherling will have some blades for sale and will be demonstrating how to use the new jump ring maker during the May meeting.

**Mineral Section:** Steve Blyskal reported that the Mineral Section will have an auction on Wednesday, May 5, 2010 at the 7:30 p.m. meeting

**Paleo Section** Terry Brawner reported that the Paleo Section is taking a field trip on May 9, 2010 to the Houston Museum of Natural Science for a tour of the new Archaeopteryx display. Inda Immega will lead the first group, followed by Neal Immega leading the second group a few minutes later. The fee is \$5. The Paleo Section also is taking a trip to the fossil wood collecting area near Jasper, Texas on May 15, 2010. The group will meet at the Stump restaurant just before going as a group to the timber company property to collect fossil wood for a limited time period and then leave as a group. The last trip had something like 40 vehicles and was a very successful collecting trip.

**Youth Section:** Beverly Mace reported that they will not have a meeting on the third Saturday in May as some of the leaders are going on the Jasper fossil wood trip.

**Education Committee:** A number of classes are in progress and others are just starting.

This includes classes in beginning jewelry making, intermediate jewelry making, and wire wrapping. To sign up for a class, a person must be an HGMS member. Contact Brian Honsinger at [texbay@sbcglobal.net](mailto:texbay@sbcglobal.net) to learn what classes are available, when they will start, and the fee for the class—which usually includes material.

**Show Committee:** Rick Rexroad, 2010 **Show Committee** Chair, was out of town, and he asked Terry Proctor to report to the Board that:

1. the trip for Show Committee members and volunteers will be May 8, 2010, to the Tessman Ranch in the Karnes City area, Southeast of San Antonio, to collect yellow/gold highly silicified fossil wood;
2. HGMS was well represented at the Fine Mineral Show HGMS table, and a number of HGMS members were present at the Show;
3. Volunteers are needed for the Intergem Show June 11–13, 2010;
4. to the best of Rick's knowledge at this time, all of the 2009 dealers will return (however some Board members commented that one dealer, Larson, had their trailer and all contents stolen and therefore is now out of business, so Larson won't be at the 2010 Show).

**HGMS Communications:** (Backbender's Gazette and Web site) Phyllis George discussed the due dates for the BBG. Copy for the June 2010 issue is due Wednesday, May 5. The due date for the July issue is June 9.

Phyllis and Beverly Mace are working on getting the 2010 Roster out as soon as possible (Phyllis is to have some additional knee surgery and therefore is trying to get that out of the way before her surgery on June 2).

### Old Business:

**Roof Leaks:** Terry Proctor reported that since his attorney letter to the contractor was returned indicating that the contractor is no longer in business, he then contacted the adjuster for America First Insurance. The adjuster and Terry will meet at the clubhouse on Thursday to check out the roof for damage in an effort to determine what is causing the stains on the meeting room ceiling and elsewhere and also to determine whether our insurance covers that problem.

**Grants:** Terry Proctor brought to the Board meeting a number of printouts from Grant Station and the National Science Foundation in an effort to review which grants are available for HGMS application. He handed out material copied from the NSF and requested assistance from other Board members in reviewing offers from the NSF and Grant Station. The goal is to attempt to collect as many grants, donations, legacies, and other sources of funds to put into the Building Fund so that HGMS can expand or relocate in the future, preferably without incurring a mortgage to do so. Terry stressed that this is one of reasons why the OUTREACH PROGRAM was started, both to provide education to youth and adults AND to document what we are doing as a means of demonstrating to the givers of grants that we are worthy to receive such grants.

**HGMS Scholarships:** Terry Proctor is putting together a letter to go out to Harris County Junior Colleges to advise their science departments of our 2009 Art & Elizabeth Smith Scholarship and the 2010 Robert Cross Scholarship.

**HGMS Publicity Committee Needed:** There was a discussion that the Board needs to have someone in charge of HGMS-related publicity who also will see that shows for other organizations where we are allowed to have a presence are staffed with HGMS volunteers. This responsibility by tradition has fallen on the Show Committee, but it needs to be handled separately from the show. Board members will be talking and getting back with the Board on a possible Chair for that Committee and people to work on that Committee with the Chair.

**General Meeting Programs:** First Vice-President James Wark reported on upcoming programs. The May 25 meeting will be a program by Jonathan Wooley on fake minerals and identifying them. The June 22 meeting will be given by Charlie Fredregill and will take place outside, with our annual silver pouring program using broom straws, pine needles, or rock salt to make a rough jewelry piece for later work. HGMS members will pay a small fee to purchase silver if they wish to participate, but otherwise the program is free. The HGMS member should reserve the silver by RSVP to Program Chairman, James Wark at jameswark55@aol.com or to President Terry Proctor at auraman@swbell.net. An e-mail giving the price for the silver will be sent out by Neal Immega as soon as that amount is determined. The amount of silver used in the casting, at the current price of silver, should then cost HGMS members who want a casting about \$8+ per casting. Later in the year, Prof. Nathalie Brandes of Lone Star College in Conroe will again put on a program for HGMS, and Prof. Patrick Lewis, PhD will report on his 2010 summer trip to Africa.

**Fireproof File Cabinet:** Since no used fireproof filing cabinet has been located at any auction or otherwise, the Board again approved going forward with the purchase of such a file cabinet to permanently store our important documents at the HGMS office. In the past some prior Presidents and other officers have stored documents off-premises, so now the location of some past documents is unknown. This will solve that problem and also protect HGMS's important documents from damage due to theft and fire.

**Framed Pegboard to be Mounted on Wall:** The Board previously approved a 4' x 8' framed pegboard to put above the Section displays on the west wall of our meeting hall. Terry Proctor will follow-through with that soon and get it installed. Also, the President's plaque is now full with 60 Presidents names and year of service on small brass plates, starting in 1949 and ending in 2008. He will try to get a matching plaque so that additional President's names and years can be added starting with 2009.

**Document Updates:** The Board is going to update several documents:

1. The yellow information folder on HGMS, with new membership fees and with the new Beading Section added. Phyllis George and Beverly Mace will work on this and not create an expensive new folder, but will update our old tri-fold brochure and have some printed.

2. Terry Proctor will work up four donation forms:
  - a. a thank you to a person making a donation to HGMS;
  - b. a notice to the person honored for whom a donation was made, giving notice of the donation (without stating the amount).
  - c. a notice to the family of a person in whose memory a donation was made, giving notice of the donation (without stating the amount)and
  - d. a receipt/thank you form to the person making the donation in honor of or memory of the donation. Frances Arrighi brought the matter of the donation notice to the Board's attention a short time back, alerting us that our forms need to be updated and sent out. Thank you, Frances.

### **New Business:**

**Maintenance Items to be fixed:** Frances Arrighi, Chair of the Day Light Section, brought up several matters in a phone call to President Terry Proctor. He presented her concerns to the Board in an e-mail. The Board discussed these matters and took action on some items. Others had been considered and appropriate action already taken.

1. Problem with HGMS parking lot door. This had already received Board discussion and action was voted on previously to replace the door and lock.
2. & 3. Problems with the ladies' rest room door into the meeting room and the stall doors. Again the main door was checked during the meeting, and it did not stick. However, the door will be checked occasionally to see if the problem presents itself again. The stall door locks will be sprayed lightly with WD-40 which should take care of that problem.
4. The suggestion of some type of overhead cover over the side door was considered to be a good idea. The Board will look into some type of awning to be attached to the wall that braces against the wall lower down. There can be no projection to the ground because that could be run into or cause someone to trip. This will be looked into before the next Board meeting if possible and prices obtained to be approved by Board members.
5. This was a suggestion on the thank you cards, addressed above in old business. Terry said there may have been another item or two, but he was trying to write down what Dr. Arrighi was saying, and those five are the ones he managed to get recorded in his note.

**Action Items Return:** There was a suggestion that action items should again be identified during Board meetings and e-mail notices sent after a Board meeting to remind everyone who was to take action and what they agreed to do. All Board members considered this a good idea, so it will be restarted now.

**HGMS May Be Reimbursed for Parking Lot Stop Blocks:** Terry Proctor advised the Board that in his conversation with the managing firm for our center, he was told that HGMS may be entitled to reimbursement for the stop blocks and for the portion of the lighting which replaced the bad lights. But the lighting of our sign would not be



reimbursed as that is our expense. This could replace a good bit of funds that HGMS paid out for these items. Terry also said he inquired about the annual meeting of the Center, and was told that it should be in August as it was last year—or possibly July. The managing company will let him know.

**Facilities Available for Purchase:** Terry Proctor also has been checking out property in the area for sale. In talking with a realtor who is selling one piece of property in the same center in which HGMS' building is located and who knows of another, it appears that the price for a space of about our size would run between \$350,000 and \$400,000. This is why there is an effort to build up the Building Fund as rapidly as possible. This is a buyer's market for additional space, but none on the Board wants to consider incurring a mortgage to do so. The Building Fund now has probably at least \$5,000 to \$7,500 in it. However, it was only started about a year and a half ago, so we are doing fairly well getting funds into a building fund. However, we need to really start strong efforts to obtain grants, donations, matching funds from companies that have that program for employees, and legacies in Wills. It is important to continue the OUTREACH PROGRAM to have the photos and letters from those folks we put on programs for, to show to potential grant providers.

James Wark moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 p.m. Diane Sisson seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

### **AFMS Inter-Regional Field Trips**

*by Richard Pankey, Chair  
from AFMS Newsletter 4/2010*

There are two Inter-Regional Rockhound Rendezvous planned for 2010. In the December–January AFMS Newsletter Doug True from the Northwest Federation announced a trip for Blue Forest petrified wood in south-west Wyoming over Labor Day weekend. This is a well known and classic petrified wood collecting area with distinctive and easily recognized material. My wife and I have wanted to collect there since we became rockhounds and it looks like this is the year that we are finally going to get there. There is more than just petrified wood in this part of Wyoming, so plan to visit some other sites before or after the Blue Forest experience.



The other trip is to New Mexico for AGATE. Last week Yonis Lone Eagle from the Rocky Mountain Federation sent me his flyer for AGATE Rendezvous 2010 that will be held August 28 to September 6. During this 10-day outing, you will have an opportunity to collect many different agates, geodes, jaspers, obsidian, and more. People who have attended previous AGATE Rendezvous had great praise for the material collected and for the trip organization. In addition to the outstanding collecting, there are several museums, a county fair, 600-year-old petroglyphs, rock shows, and lots more to see and do.

Details for both of these trips will be available in future AFMS and other Federation



newsletters. What better way to start and end the summer than to spend these holidays at an Inter-Regional Rendezvous with a bunch of rockhounds at two great collecting areas?

The AFMS ad hoc committee for Inter Regional Field Trips was established to promote and conduct interaction between the members of the Federations of AFMS. And when I say members I don't mean the clubs or the officers, I mean the people. The rockhounds! Prior to establishing this committee the interaction between Federations typically only happened at an AFMS combined meeting and show. And this basically has been limited to the Federations' officers and the committees. While the stated purpose of this committee is to hold and promote field trips, I think the scope could be expanded to include rock swaps, seminars, classes, and the like. To start, we will focus on field trips.

A difference between an "Inter Regional Field Trip" and a Federation field trip or a club trip often comes down to who is invited, how the trip is promoted, and where it is promoted. The last few years I have received and diligently read several other Federation newsletters and have become aware of a number of field trips and related events that could easily fit the criteria of an "inter-regional trip." By its nature, an inter-regional field trip is probably bigger than most other field trips and therefore requires more thought and planning. Since the purpose is to attract a broader geographical attendance, the collecting opportunity should be for material that is of good quality and good supply, and easily obtainable by both experienced and inexperienced rockhounds. This event can and should offer those attending more than just collecting. It should provide opportunities for socializing and interaction: potluck dinners, happy hour get-togethers, and evening campfires. There can be other attractions and activities such as speakers from BLM/Forest Service/local experts, map exchanges, home material swap, special sightseeing attractions like a National Park, and other collecting sights in the area or on the way.

Over the next few months I will be talking more about the considerations and planning for an "Inter-Regional Field Trip." If anyone has any thoughts or ideas about what we should consider when holding a trip, please send me an e-mail.

*Excerpts from Dick Pankey's AFMS Inter-Regional Field Trips article in the 5/2010 AFMS Newsletter:*

When this Committee was first formed, I requested recommendations from all the Federation Presidents for members to serve on the committee. We had a lot of communication problems, a canceled AFMS meeting, and for the most part a committee never congealed. And I take a lot of the responsibility for that. It was easier to do it myself than to involve others, and I was very involved putting on the first two trips. For the future of the committee, this has to change. We need more involvement—from more people and from more Federations.

At the AFMS Meeting in La Habra, CA the AFMS Officers and Directors will be asked to vote on the future of the ad hoc Inter Regional Field Trips committee. I support and recommend that this committee continue and be strengthened by more involvement—from more people and from more Federations. Please help by sending/e-mailing me your comments and ideas.

## Welcoming New Members and New Member Orientation

by Beth Myers

from CFMS Newsletter, 3/2010, via AFMS Newsletter 5/2010

Once a new individual attends one of your General Membership meetings, how do you “make them feel welcome” and make them excited about joining your society? Here is how one society has developed a process that is VERY impressive:

Prior to each General Membership meeting, the society conducts a New Member Orientation at which all new members (as well as current members) are invited and encouraged to attend. At the start of each orientation, each new member receives a 3-ring binder containing 77 pages of information including:

- \* A brief history of the Society
- \* Junior Program
- \* A list of Officers, Directors, and Committee Chairpersons
- \* Education Program
- \* Field Trip information and schedule of trips • Rock and Gem Shows
- \* Lapidary information, shop location, and hours
- \* Scholarship Information
- \* Camp Paradise and Zzyzx information and photos
- \* Quartzsite and Tucson information, etc.
- \* AFMS and CFMS information

And, just recently, the entire program was placed on a CD and is projected on a screen during the orientation. It doesn't get any better than this!

Finally, once the new members begin attending the General Membership meetings, each of this society's officers are encouraged to sit next to them to help them feel “welcomed.”

## Rock Collecting Essentials

from SCFMS Newsletter 3-4/2010

What makes up a simple collecting kit? Beside a good geologist's hammer, heavy cloth or leather gloves, a coal chisel, a magnifying loop or glass, a pocket knife (to check hardness), old news paper to wrap samples, and a surplus heavy army pack make a good start.

Do not forget a pad and pencil to record information on your samples since information like collecting location is sometimes very important to identification. A canteen is also a good idea since you are usually out a long time, away from your vehicle.

**My bags are packed and ready to go.**

**SCFMS President's Message (Excerpt)**

*by Ike House, 2010 SCFMS President*

*from SCFMS Newsletter 3-4/2010*

**I**t won't be long until we will be having our SCFMS annual meeting, so make your plans now while you can. Remember that the SCFMS is YOUR organization. If you are asked to help/assist with a committee, chair, etc. please say yes! It seems like every year conditions change that prevent some from serving so we always need new helpers. If you know of an area in which you would like to participate, please let me know. Remember, the early bird gets the worm so if you volunteer, you'll get better choice. I hope all is going well with everyone and that you are enjoying the last of your inside work.

Best regards, Ike



## Golden Rules

### *Tips for Purchasing Gifts of Gold*

*from Mountain Gem 11/1997 via The Calgary Lapidary Journal 5/2010*

**I**t is beautiful, it is flattering, it is precious, and it never goes out of style. That is what makes gold jewelry a popular gift, year after year.

Classic designs can be found in 14K, 18K and even 24K gold. To help you get the most for your money, as well as a whole lifetime of pleasure, the World Gold Council offers some “golden rules” for purchasing.

### Know your Karats

- Always look for a karat mark when purchasing gold jewelry. It is usually stamped as 10K, 14K, 18K or 24K, but could also be stamped 417, 585, 750, or 9999, which are the European equivalents.
- The karat mark indicates the percentage of pure gold in the piece. 24K is 100 percent gold. Gold is often alloyed with other metals, like copper, silver, nickel and zinc, to give it strength and durability. The higher the karats, the more gold in the piece.
- Different proportions of metals added to pure gold give gold alloys their yellow, rose, green and white coloration. Most gold jewelry contains a mixture of at least two other metals.

### A Wealth of Difference

- **Gold Filled:** A layer of gold backed with another metal such as chrome, nickel, copper, or silver.
- **Gold Plate:** The process of placing a base metal, such as copper, in a bath and sealing the two metals through electroplate.
- **Gold Leaf:** A sheet of gold varying from 4 to 5 millionths of an inch in thickness used for gilding and other purposes.
- **Liquid Gold:** Finely divided gold suspended in a vegetable oil and used for gilding ceramics.
- **Vermeil:** 14 Karat gold overlaid on sterling silver.
- **Sterling Silver:** Silver of a purity of 925 parts per 1,000. The content is 92.5 percent silver and 7.5 percent of another metal, usually copper.
- **Silver Plate:** Silver that has been coated over a base metal such as copper, nickel-silver or brass in a dipping process that included sealing the two metals through electroplating.

All that glitters is not gold. Sometimes it is “fools gold” or pyrite.

**Diet Rock**

*by: Gail Trigg*

*from The Rockytier 12/2008, via The  
Roadrunner 12/2009,  
and SCFMS Newsletter 3-4/2010*

I am a little diet rock,  
As cute as I can be,  
Although I'm sweet to look at,  
I'm both fat and sugar free.

Please place me on the table,  
At the place YOU plan to eat,  
And remember I am watching what YOU do  
And everything you eat.

When you are serving up your plate,  
Please leave my section free,  
I'll reduce the calories,  
By the space you saved for me.

After you have eaten,  
Although I'm just a rock,  
Please slip me in your pocket  
And take me for a walk.

If YOU do this faithfully,  
Then in a month or two,  
Although I'll still be just the same  
YOU'LL be a slimmer you!

### Show Time 2010

May 29-30	Fort Worth, TX	Fort Worth Gem & Mineral Society Will Rogers Memorial Center, Amon G. Carter Exhibit Bldg., 3401 W. Lancaster <a href="http://www.fortworthgemandmineralclub.org">www.fortworthgemandmineralclub.org</a>
June 11-13	Houston, TX	International Gem & Jewelry Show Reliant Center at Reliant Park, 1 Reliant Park <a href="mailto:info@intergem.net">info@intergem.net</a> ; <a href="http://www.InterGem.com">www.InterGem.com</a>
June 18-20	La Habra, CA	AFMS/CFMS/NOCGMS Convention & Show So. California University of Health Sciences 16200 E. Amber Valley Rd.; Mike Beaumont (714) 510-6037; <a href="mailto:diamond.crest@yahoo.com">diamond.crest@yahoo.com</a> <a href="http://www.networkingwave.com/afms2010/index.html">www.networkingwave.com/afms2010/index.html</a>
August 7-8	Austin, TX	Austin Bead Society, Palmer Events Center 900 Barton Springs Rd. <a href="http://www.austinbeadsociety.org">www.austinbeadsociety.org</a>
August 21-22	Bossier City, LA	Ark-La-Tex Gem & Mineral Society Bossier City Civic Center; Charlie Johns (318)687-4929; <a href="mailto:cwsejohns@bellsouth.net">cwsejohns@bellsouth.net</a> <a href="http://www.larockclub.com">www.larockclub.com</a>
August 28-29	Jasper, TX	Pine Country Gem & Mineral Society Events Center, 6258 Hwy. 190 W 5 miles west of Jasper; Contact Jonetta Nash (409)384-3974; <a href="mailto:jonetta.nash@yahoo.com">jonetta.nash@yahoo.com</a>
October 7-9	Mount Ida, AR	Annual Quartz Crystal Digging Contest Montgomery County Fairgrounds Fairgrounds Rd. <a href="http://www.mountidachamber.com">www.mountidachamber.com</a>
October 22-24	Austin, TX	Austin Gem & Mineral Society Palmer Events Center, 900 Barton Springs Rd. <a href="http://www.gemcapers.com">www.gemcapers.com</a>
November 12-14	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; <a href="http://www.hgms.org">www.hgms.org</a> <a href="mailto:Rick.Rexroad@brwnccald.com">Rick.Rexroad@brwnccald.com</a>
December 3-5	El Paso, TX	El Paso Mineral & Gem Society El Maida Auditorium, 6331 Alabama <a href="mailto:gemcenter@aol.com">gemcenter@aol.com</a>

2010		June				2010
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 7:30 Board Meeting	2 7:30 Mineral Section 10-5 Shop Open	3	4	5 10-5 Shop Open 10-12 Youth Section 1:30-3:30 New Member Orientation
6	7	8 7:30 Show Committee	9 7:30 Faceting Section 10-5 Shop Open	10	11	12 10-5 Shop Open
13 12-5 Beginning Faceting Class	14 1:00 Day Light Section	15 7:30 Paleo Section	16 7:30 Mineral Section 10-5 Shop Open	17	18	19 10-5 Shop Open 10-12 Youth Section 1:30 Beading Section
20 Father's Day	21 7:30 Lapidary Section	22 7:30 General Meeting	23 10-5 Shop Open	24	25	26 10-5 Shop Open
27	28	29	30			

2010		July				2010
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3 10-5 Shop Open 10-12 Youth Section
4 Independence Day	5	6 7:30 Board Meeting	7 7:30 Mineral Section 10-5 Shop Open	8	9	10 10 a.m.- New Member Shop Orientation Shop Open to 5
11 1:30 p.m. New Member Shop Orientation	12 1:00 Day Light Section	13 7:30 Show Committee	14 7:30 Faceting Section 10-5 Shop Open	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 10-5 Shop Open	22	23	24 10-5 Shop Open
25	26	27 7:30 General Meeting	28 10-5 Shop Open	29	30	31 10-5 Shop Open

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

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

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