



The **BACKBENDER'S GAZETTE**

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

Volume XLII - No. 8

August 2011



President's Message

by Steve Blyskal

Well, we are now breaking records for dry days and hot temperatures. I never thought I'd see fall after living through the summers of 1980 and 2009. I hope you are having some luck keeping your plants, lawns, and trees watered in this drought. The Chronicle gardening section on 7/9/11 really opened my eyes about the stress our trees are under, despite looking fine to most of us. Check it out online if you don't get the newspaper, and start getting those drip lines and soaker hoses going on your trees!



We have two very important events coming up in August, and I'd like to say a bit about both of them and why you should participate. Most people in the club know who Art Smith was and what he meant to the club as a member for over 40 years. However many of the newer club members, or those involved solely in the Paleo, Faceting, Lapidary, or Beading Sections may be unfamiliar with some of the things he did that made him special. I'd like to mention a few of them as a prelude to talking about the auction to be held at the August General Meeting, the proceeds from which will be used to fund our donation in September to *Rocks and Minerals* magazine for the Color Fund of the Connoisseur's Choice column for 2012. We will make this donation in memory of Art, who for almost 20 years made this same donation in our name, never

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Upcoming Programs

July 19, 2011: Jade Stone of Heaven: Ray Kizer will give a brief description of the two types of "Jade" with some examples. You will see a Power Point slide show of a private jade collection he toured during a recent visit to Quebec City, Quebec. The 250-piece collection spans primitive Neolithic artifacts from British

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

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Copy is due for the September 2011 issue by Wednesday, August 10, 2011.

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Purpose of HGMS

The objectives of this Society are to promote the advancement of the knowledge and practice of the arts and sciences associated with the collecting of rocks, minerals, fossils, artifacts, and their identification and classification; the general lapidary art; the collecting and identification of gemstones; the designing and execution of jewelry or metalcraft; and to provide the opportunity to obtain, exchange, and exhibit specimens and rough or finished materials.

Membership dues are \$40 for an adult membership, \$60 for a couple, \$75 for a family (including all children aged 5-18), \$25 for a youth membership (ages 5-18), and \$500 for an adult life membership. Advertising rates: \$70 for 2 months, ¼ page; \$150 for 6 months, ¼ page.

MEMBER: American Federation of Mineralogical Societies & South Central Federation of Mineral Societies.

All meetings are held at the Clubhouse which is located at 10805 Brooklet near the intersection of Highway 59 (Southwest Freeway) and Sam Houston Parkway (Beltway 8). See the calendar inside the back page for when the different Sections meet. The General Meeting is the fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:30. The HGMS Web site address is <http://www.hgms.org>.

President's Message continued from page 1

seeking recognition for himself. Please see the articles on Art in the January 2010 issue of the BBG on www.hgms.org for more information about him than I can share here.

How many of you know he was the club librarian and historian for many years, taking over a small library and expanding it into one of the finest club libraries in the country? He donated many of the books and articles to the library, assembled complete bound collections of important periodicals, and set up the lending library for books and DVDs. He also started the School Collections program which I now carry on, and he kept it funded for many years from Conoco donations. This program has brought samples of rocks, minerals, and fossils to 100s of schools in the Houston area and thousands of children.

Here is how YOU can help with this important project. Donate to the auction something from your collecting, cutting, or crafting specialty. We welcome donations of minerals, fossils, lapidary rough, slabs and cabochons, beaded items, and faceted stones. Finished jewelry is also welcome. These items will be displayed in the case at the front of the meeting room, and also online at www.hgms.org. Sigrid and I will be collecting, cataloguing, and photographing these items in July and hope to have them in the display case after we get back from vacation on August 3. Our goal is to raise \$1000 in this auction for the donation, so if you can't donate anything, bid on the items that others put in. We hope to have high quality items that will receive many bids.

Our other important August event will be the new member orientation on Saturday afternoon, August 13th. All new members who joined since the last orientation, or who have never been to an orientation are urged to attend. There will be short presentations by the officers about the club, and by the Section heads discussing their different activities. Our annual show and the need for volunteers there will be another topic discussed. There will also be a tour of the shop and classrooms to see our facilities. The policies of the shop and classrooms and the pricing of shop use will also be discussed. This is an opportunity to get active in your club and meet a lot of people who use the clubhouse on a regular basis.

I guess that's enough for now. It's too hot in Texas to field collect now, so use our shop to work on past finds or head out on field collecting adventures up north, where it is cooler and wetter. We are off to New Jersey, Vermont, and Colorado in the next month and then off to Calgary in western Canada. Don't know if we'll have a chance to do anything other than silver picking while we are traveling, but it will be nice to get away from the heat and drought for a while.

Upcoming Programs--Continued from page 1

Columbia and New Zealand through intricate carvings of the Hongshan Culture (5000-3000 BC) and Ming dynasties to modern day examples. Come and be awestruck.



August 23, 2011: Nathalie Brandes

Old Geezer Even More Remembrances

by John Emerson

Member of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society

Skiing in Italy: Rob (older son) had a trick of dismounting from his skis at the restaurant on the slopes. He would approach at full speed, unfasten his skis, and jump out of them just before they hit the restaurant, then casually go in for coffee or snack.

I was still learning to ski and had little control. One day I fastened my skis on while on a slight slope near the ski lift and started, involuntarily, going downhill slowly, out of control. There was an Italian lady in her skis that had stopped and was applying lipstick. She said as I skied across the front of her skis, "Prego!" (Italian for thank you.)



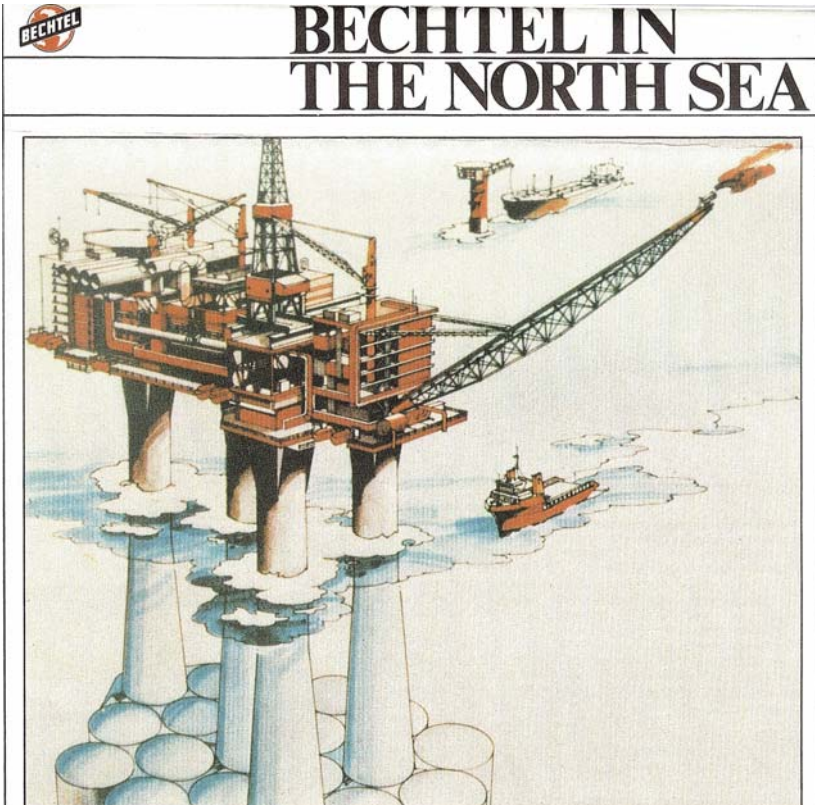
CHRONICLE FILE

PARK RESIDENT: A bighorn ram pauses for a moment at Big Bend Ranch State Park, near Lajitas.

Bighorn Rams in the Grand Canyon. Bobbie, the boys and I took a tour of the Grand Canyon in about 1965 on our way to California. It consisted of leaving our car at Lake Mead (formed by the Hoover Dam) on the downstream end of the canyon, bus trip back to the upstream start, a hike down to meet our guide at the bottom, and to board an inflatable raft with an outboard motor. We rode the raft, floating down the Colorado River through the canyon. All very scenic, beautiful, and in places very exciting when going through rapids where the outboard motor had to be used to control our route. Bobbie and I thought it was very dangerous, but the boys thought it was great fun! We camped out in tents and had our meals prepared by our guide over a campfire.

Along the way we watched two Bighorn rams fight. They faced each other over a distance of about five yards. They charged each other to butt heads so hard their rear feet left the ground. They then fell back to sit down and shake their heads, get up and charge again. The noise of the collisions echoed across the canyon. Finally they gave up and started to graze as if nothing had happened. We had no idea which one won or what the argument was about. What headaches they must have had! We continued the raft trip through the canyon to reach our car at Lake Mead.

In Egypt while Bobbie and I were driving to the Red Sea oil terminal that we (Bechtel) were building to receive oil from Saudi Arabia, we were stopped by police and taken to the police station in a small town to be checked out. Why were two foreigners driving alone in the Egyptian desert without a guide or escort of some kind? They finally cleared us by telephone from our office in Cairo. We were both somewhat concerned before we were cleared. Imagine the facilities of a jail in a small Egyptian town in the 1970s!



Editor's Note: I printed the wrong photo with John's July Old Geezer article. This photo is the one that should have been included with that July article.

On the same trip, we were driving along a desert road with nothing in sight but sand and hills, when suddenly we topped a low hill and there was a huge ship sailing along through the desert! We were somewhat startled until we realized it was in the Suez Canal/Red Sea and we could only see the top half of the ship, but not the Canal/Sea itself.

In Alice, Texas, in the 1930s and 1940s, the Hispanic children (wet backs?) all went to school through Jr. High at Nair School on the south side of town. They were taught in a mix of English and Spanish until they were fluent in English and were then sent to the only High School in town. They blended in very well with us and all went well – except when a new “Yankee” teacher (married to a sailor serving in Corpus Christi Naval Air Station during the war) first called roll. The name “Jesus” - pronounced “Hey-sus” in Spanish - came up and you guessed it, she pronounced it Jesus as in Jesus Christ. The class broke up and she suffered much teasing since we were all familiar with the “Hey-sus” pronunciation for our Latino friends.

Faceting Section

by Pat Gannon –Hildbold



August 10 – Orienting and Cutting Directional rough

Topic will be mostly about dealing with the A, B and C axis of Tourmaline, but we can discuss your other problem stones as well.

September 14 – Photographing Gems and Jewelry

Wayne will discuss the tips and tricks of getting that just perfect shot!

October 12 – Internet forum

Margo will be discussing the pros and cons of buying rough and finished gemstones from Internet sources such as online stores and eBay-type sources. Bring your own examples, good and bad, your favorite sources and vendors, and any that you’ve had a bad experience with. Share the knowledge!

November 9 – Inclusions

Inclusions are not always a bad thing, sometimes they can be the focal point of the cut. Bring in any rough that you’d like to learn to cut to enhance (or minimize) the inclusions. Don’t forget to bring in both your rough and cut stones to share with the group.

December 14 – No meeting

A reminder to the Faceting Section – the theme of our show case this year is Pirate Treasure. Dorothy is already designing the layout and can take your items at any time. It’s no particular cut or stone – it’s all of them! E-mail her at dmwin@hotmail.com

Mineral Section

by Paul Brandes

July 20: Care and Maintenance of High Pressure Water Guns. Many of you know how useful a high pressure water gun is in cleaning minerals. The pressure can be adjusted to remove dirt / coatings without damaging the specimen. Unfortunately, when they stop working your cleaning plans come to a screeching halt. We will bring in several of these water guns and explain/show how to remedy the most common ailments to these guns. We will also discuss the general operation and control of these useful tools. If you have one that has ceased to function, bring it in and we will take a look at it. Refreshments will be available.

August 17: John Fender of Fender Natural Resources in Richardson, Texas has offered to give the HGMS Mineral Section a talk on mineral cleaning. John is one of the best mineral cleaners around, and this would be an excellent opportunity to hear him talk and to pick his brain. If you have specimens that you would like cleaned but just aren't sure what to use or how to do it, bring them to this presentation. Refreshments will be available.

September 7: Typically our first meeting after the summer hiatus, this evening's presentation will be more of a synopsis of each member's summer mineral collecting adventures with plenty of time for short presentations, show and tell, and socializing with other members. Attendees are encouraged to bring in their summer finds (clean or not) to display. Refreshments will be available.

September 21: Quartz Cleaning. Members familiar with quartz cleaning will discuss the methods/equipment they use. While we won't be mixing chemicals, we will show the tools used and discuss the many aspects of this skill. Members with experience cleaning quartz are encouraged to explain how they clean quartz and bring in some before / after specimens. Refreshments will be available.



Blanchard, New Mexico
fluorite

BenchTips

by Brad Smith

More BenchTips are at
groups.yahoo.com/group/BenchTips/
or facebook.com/BenchTips

Soldering Prongs

I often use prongs to hold an irregular cab or other object on rings and pendants. But they're a little tricky to solder. You have to find some way to hold them all upright while soldering, and what looks like a strong joint sometimes turns out to be a fake. There's nothing worse than having a prong break off when you're setting the stone *#~*!

I solved both problems with one little trick. Locate and centerpunch the location for each prong. Then drill holes just a little smaller than your prong wire. Sand a small taper on the ends of your prong wires and insert them in the holes. The wires support themselves, soldering is easy, and the joint is stronger because of the increased soldering area.

Twisting Wire

Twisting wires together can be done with an old hand drill, but it goes much faster with a power tool. My preference is to use a screw gun, although a Dremel or Foredom should do well. Just make a little hook out of coat hanger wire (or use a screw-in cup hook) and chuck it up in your screw gun. Fasten the ends of the wires in a vice and slip the other ends on your hook. Keep a little tension on the wires as you twist.

Note that a power drill is too fast a tool for this unless you have one with a variable speed control.

Smoothing Earwires

Any time you make your own earwires, the hardest part for me is to sand and polish the end that's inserted into the ear. Any sharp edge there is no fun. I've tried using sanding sticks, cup burs, and silicone polishing wheels. I've tried buffing on a Zam wheel, and I've tried spinning the wire in the Foredom to polish the tip. While all of these techniques do the job, none are very easy or fast.

Then it occurred to me—I could melt the wire smooth. One quick touch in the flame of the propane/oxygen Little Torch does the trick—not enough to form a bead on the wire, but just enough to round off the tip.

Rock Stars Shine In Sugar Land

by Deidre D. Prince

Member of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society

Houston Gem and Mineral Society rocked out at the Houston Museum of Natural Science in Sugar Land last Friday evening, June 24. Under the watchful eyes of Stan, the T. rex, and with the help of HGMS volunteers, kids became rock stars and got the chance to grind rocks, chop geodes, pick shells, wrap shark teeth, and swing rock hammers.

Volunteers struck a chord with the kids, who had to be plucked away from their activities and treasures and lured on to other discoveries and fun. Nancy Fischer, of HGMS, says, "Kids loved their polished rocks, couldn't wait to wrap a shark's tooth and a piece of malachite, then head over to George Wolf's collection to see the shark's teeth in all sizes and shapes. You could hear the geodes being cracked upstairs, while a mineral collection was being displayed on the Science on a Sphere globe."

The kids' "oohs and ahhs" were music to the ears. Adrienne Barker, Director and Chief Development Officer, Houston Museum of Natural Science at Sugar Land, sang praises about the club's participation. She said, "We got very good feedback from the patrons who attended... The HGMS activities were, by far, the most popular."

There is no doubt about that popularity when you consider HGMS member and Museum Docent Neal Immega's report that "... Inda (Immega) observed one little girl trying out various shark teeth by stabbing her finger. When she was asked what she was doing, the girl said that she wanted to get a really sharp tooth made into jewelry because her brother "bugged me a lot." Neal notes that this is yet another excellent use for paleontology.

Fischer echoes the sentiment of the volunteers and attendees when she says, "I thought it was great fun. We handed out a lot of HGMS cards to people who were interested in both the shop opportunities and the Youth Section." The clubhouse is so convenient to the Sugar Land area that parents seemed very enthused about the opportunity for their children to pursue their new interests.

This jam session was one of the museum's Friday Family Fun Night series which features snacks, activities, crafts, and fun in its beautiful facility that opened in Sugar Land in late 2009. Family Fun Nights are open to the public and to members of HMNS; themes for July include Chemistry and Dinosaurs. The City of Sugar Land and HMNS share a vision to support the community, one of the fastest growing in the U.S., with a quality museum featuring exhibits, activities, and experiences designed to explore the universe and "fire the imagination."

And it does take some imagination to picture the place as a prison. This facility was the site of the former Main Unit of the Central State Prison Farm and was popularized when Huddie "Lead Belly" Ledbetter recorded a version of the song "Midnite Special." But no one was singing the blues Friday night!

The gig's headliners included museum staff, docents, and HGMS volunteers including George Wolf, Clay Keiffer, Bauza and Annette Guevara, Neal and Inda Immega, Nancy Fischer, Steve Blyskal and Deidre Prince. (Please pardon the oversight of any members who are not mentioned; this is not intentional).

Kids as well as parents enjoyed themselves as they explored the many facets of the rock world with the help of these volunteers and in the words of Ms. Barker of the Houston Museum of Natural Science, "...thanks for your help Friday!"

Photos by Deidre Prince:

The Guevaras prepare a young lady to crack a geode.



A young man meticulously sifts through shells and sharks teeth imported from College Station.



Volunteers demonstrate the wire wrapping techniques.





Archeology Group

July 7, 2011 Minutes

by Vice-Chairman Terry Proctor

The Archeology Group held its July 7, 2011 meeting at the HGMS clubhouse with thirteen members present. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Dr. Garth Clark at 7:40 p.m., allowing a little extra time for members to visit before the meeting. Terry Proctor moved that the Minutes for the June 28, 2011 meeting be approved as printed in the Backbender's Gazette. The motion was seconded by Deidre Prince, and the vote of approval was unanimous.

New members keep joining HGMS through the Archeology Group. We welcomed at this meeting new members Tom and Lisa Schwartz. Scott Parker and his wife and family were on the June 11, 2011 dig where they found a number of fossils. They have joined as a family membership. Douglas Dodds also is a new member. June Berg was a guest of Terry Proctor. She wanted to come see what HGMS is about. June's Chinese name is Chun Hwa Berg, but she uses June as the Americanization of her Chinese name. June was born in Beijing, China, is a widow, and has been in the U.S. for many years as a business woman and corporation secretary of the corporation she works for.

George Wolf has invited the Archeo Group to go through his home collection, as he has both fossils and Native American points which he has found. Saturday, July 23, 2011 was set up for this trip, subject to George Wolf's confirmation of the date. Since there are more who want to go than George can handle at one time, two groups will be formed with RSVPs made to Terry Proctor at (713) 453-8338 to determine the exact number of each group as there is limited space to go through George's home. One

group will meet there at 10 a.m., and the second group at 1:30 p.m. subject to confirmation with George Wolf.

There was discussion regarding the success of the June 11, 2011 Field Trip to McFaddin Beach. Another field trip is planned for McFaddin Beach for Saturday, August 20, 2011. The Group will meet again at 9:30 a.m. at the Beach just south of the town of High Island on State Hwy 124 as it dead-ends into the Beach. From there the group will again attempt to locate the Clovis Point concentrations on the maps provided by Dr. Garth Clark previously. If you have signed an "Assumption of Risk" form, you need not sign another, but if you haven't signed a form, you must do so to be part of the Archeo Group trip. Forms are on the HGMS Website, and some will be on hand at the beach.

From now on, the signed sheet will be kept in a book and a list will be printed out for each trip on the Computer to show who has already signed a form.

Since our Archeo-elected Secretary has missed five or six meetings and has not contacted the Vice-Chairman in response to e-mail, the office of Secretary was declared vacated and nominations entertained by Chairman Dr. Clark. Burton Dworsky was nominated by Deidre Prince, seconded by Peter Ragusa. There being no other nominations, Burton Dworsky was elected Secretary by unanimous vote.

At Show and Tell, Scott Parker presented many items that he, his wife, and some other Archeo members helped dig at McFaddin Beach. Dr. Tony Ma showed some of the items which he dug near the location where Scott was digging. Peter Ragusa showed some artifacts he had collected in Mexico and gave away about eight of these to Club members. Terry Proctor showed the large horse tooth and 15 bison teeth that he, Regina Gorman, and Dianne Sisson dug on the McFaddin Beach trip. They also found 12 bison leg bones and 50 to 100 other bones. Two that Terry proudly showed were the right and left knee joints of a bison that articulated to about 80 or 85 degrees. These were very interesting since they showed how the knee worked, and they appear to be a matched pair from one bison since they were found essentially in the same location.

Jon Hart again brought some Native American points in cases to the meeting. These were large points and were very impressive. We appreciate him bringing different points in the wooden cases to the meetings for members to see and for his assistance in helping identify Native American points that members have.

Terry Proctor advised that members who wish to subscribe to *Archeology* magazine (which comes out every two months) could do so at a reduction of \$2.00 if they made out payment to the magazine but gave him their subscription so he could send them in together. The usual price of \$24.95 for a year would be reduced to \$22.95 for a year. The two year price is \$39.95 and it would also be reduced if someone wants a 2-year subscription.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m. upon a motion by Terry Proctor and seconded by Peter Ragusa. Those attending this meeting, in alphabetical order were June Berg;

Garth Clark, M.D.; Douglas Dodds; Burton Dworksy; Jon Hart; Tony Ma, M.D.; Bill Moore; Scott Parker; Deidre Prince; Terry Proctor, J.D.; Peter J. Ragusa; Lisa Schwartz; and Tom Schwartz.



Eight of the 13 Archeology Group members visiting after the meeting.
Photo by Vice-Chairman Terry Proctor, J.D.

General Meeting Minutes

June 28, 2011

by Sarah Metsa

HGMS Secretary

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m.

Visitors and New Members: Steve Pauly was a visitor with an interest in paleo. Tom and Lisa Schwartz visited from Tomball, and they have an interest in paleo, minerals, and lapidary. Carolyn Miller attended. She is a former Geology instructor and will be visiting Kenya soon. She is interested in paleo and gems.

Prior Month General Meeting Minutes: Terry Proctor moved that the May General Meeting minutes be accepted as published. Karen Burns seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer Report: Rodney Linehan was not in attendance but Steve Blyskal reported that the club is solvent and in good condition.

Program: Neal and Inda Immega jointly presented a program on the HMNS exhibit of gold jewelry and metalworking from ancient Ukraine.

Officer, Committees, and Section Reports

Daylight Section: Val Link taught part one of three small courses during the meeting. The June meeting was about riveting.

Mineral Section: The July 20 meeting will be about using and repairing water guns. The August 17 meeting will be presented by John Fender and will be about cleaning minerals.

Archeology Group: The board approved that during the August General Meeting a vote will be taken about making the Archeology Group into a full section.

Show Committee: We have lost several show dealers and we need to find new ones. We are also still in need of a ticket booth coordinator. The door prize has been ordered and will arrive shortly after July 4.

Shop Report: The big saw is still being repaired.

Old Business

Art Smith Auction: It will be held at the August 23 General Meeting. Donations should be nicer items that will bring strong bidding. Donations should be brought to the clubhouse before the first weekend in August so that Steve Blyskal and Sigrid Stewart have time to photograph all items.

Format Change of General Meetings: The board determined that there is no need to change the bylaws about the meeting format. The bylaws state the meeting order of business may be modified as occasion requires.

Supervisor Check In and Check Out List: The check in sheet is not being utilized consistently. It is important that it be used

HMNS night at the museum: The event had a very good turnout. Around 100 families came, and there were 10 HGMS volunteers including Nancy Fischer, Deidre Prince, Steve Blyskal, George Wolf, Clay Keefer, Neal and Ida Immega.

New Business

Day at the museum: A special day at the museum will be at HMNS on July 10 at noon. Admission is the same price as the museum member fee.

Drawing: Carolyn Miller won the drawing and received a nice palmwood cabochon.

Show and Tell: Terry Proctor brought a large collection of show and tell from the June Archeology Group field trip to McFadden Beach. He had a horse tooth, many bison teeth, and several bones, including complete knee joints. Steve Blyskal brought several nice quartz crystals, "faden tabbies," that he was working on cleaning. They had turned white after baking, perhaps from a clay in the mineral. Visitor Steve Pauly brought a

bison bone he found about a year ago at McFadden Beach.

Adjourn: Terry Proctor moved and Karen Burns seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

Board of Director's Meeting Minutes

July 5, 2011

by Sarah Metsa

HGMS Secretary

X	President – Steve Blvskal	X	Beading Rep – Jillynn Hailes
X	1 st Vice President – Ray Kizer	X	Faceting Rep – Gary Tober
X	2 nd Vice President – Beverly Mace		Lapidary Rep – Phyllis George
X	Treasurer – Rodney Linehan	X	Mineral Rep – Sigrid Stewart
X	Secretary – Sarah Metsa	X	Paleontology Rep – Terry Brawner
X	Past President – Terry Proctor	X	Day Light Rep – Nancy Fischer

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. with a quorum of seven members present.

Previous Month Board of Directors Meeting Minutes: The minutes of the June 7, 2011 Board Meeting were published in the July 2011 BBG. Terry Proctor moved to approve the minutes of the previous meeting as published. Gary Tober seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Rodney Linehan was present, and he reported that HGMS is in good financial condition.

Officer, Committees, and Section Reports

Daylight Section: The Section discussed which magazine subscriptions they would like. They determined that they would make a selection after the other Sections so that requests wouldn't be duplicated.

Archeology Group: Terry Proctor reminded everyone that the vote to make the Archeology Group into a section will be held at the General Meeting in August. Also the group selected *Archeology Magazine* as part of their allotted subscription allowance.

Education Committee: Charlie Fredregill is teaching a jewelry class, and Val Link's Intermediate Metalworking class is full. Val's class begins July 10.

Show Committee: We are still in need of a ticket chair. Also, we need to start looking for show chairs for next year immediately so they may begin learning now. The dates for all show-related parties have been set. The labeling party will be September 24, the pizza party and auction will be October 15, the field trip will be October 22, and the Show Committee party will be October 27. In addition to advertising the show on billboards, in printed material, and related Web sites, the show is also going to offer

discounted tickets on the www.goldstar.com site.

Quartermaster Report: Supplies are stocked, and order is being maintained.

Old Business

Librarian Replacement: Sigrid Stewart advises that the Chevron librarians have expressed interest in helping us reorganize the club library. Sigrid is still working on firming up the details. The desired goal is to redo all tracking using a standardized system such as the Dewey Decimal system.

General Meeting Programs: Ray Kizer will be giving the July program. Nathalie Brandes will be giving the September program. Tom Sheehy is slated to come and show flint knapping later in the year.

Sign In and Out Sheet: This sheet is still not being utilized effectively. Sarah Metsa is going to rework the current sheet in the hope that a simpler sheet will result in additional use.

Art Smith Fund and Auction: The auction is set for the August General Meeting. It is anticipated that it will be a large auction and so will be started earlier than usual pre-meeting auctions. Steve Blyskal and Sigrid Stewart will be photographing donations and posting pictures for review before the auction. Donations of all types, but preferably items that will bring high bids, should be brought to the clubhouse before the first weekend of August. There will be a donation box in the library.

Roof: Steve has been unable to meet with Mr. Soriano and get his insurance certificate. Terry Proctor will take this over so that the work can be authorized and completed.

New Business

Club Forms: The donated items receipt is missing. Terry Proctor will send the electronic file for the sheet to Beverly Mace so that some can be printed out and made available at the information station. Also there is an invalid Assumption of Risk form in circulation. Terry Proctor brought a corrected form and binder to the clubhouse for easy access and retention.

Orientation for new members: There are many new members, and the need to have a clubhouse orientation was brought up. Terry Proctor moved that an orientation be held on August 13. Jillynn Hailes seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Donations from two families: Two families have donated several items to the clubhouse recently. Their donations will be auctioned at the September General Meeting.

Education Chair: Current Education Chair Brian Honsinger has expressed a desire to find a new chair to replace him. Current Secretary Sarah Metsa is interested in the position but could not take over until next year due to current secretary duties. A list of education chair expectations can be obtained from Steve Blyskal if interested.

Youth Section Shop Days: It was brought up that there are members using the saws and unused machines during the time the Youth Section is in the shop. A discussion about safety and appropriateness determined that the Shop Supervisor for the Youth Section, Libby Guynn, and anyone assisting her is authorized to allow or disallow machine use as appropriate during Youth days.

Shop Safety Class: Shop safety is very important, and we have many new members as well as other members who are unfamiliar with the machinery. This can lead to multiple problems varying from a ruined project to machine damage or member injury. It is reasonable that the club should have a shop safety class in order to familiarize members with the proper use and purpose of each machine. This may be a potentially mandatory class or proficiency assessment in order to be able to use shop machines. Several format ideas were brought up, and this issue will be revisited.

Adjourn: Terry Proctor moved and Sarah Metsa seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

SCFMS Safety Report

by Owen Martin

SCFMS Safety Coordinator

from SCFMS Newsletter 5-6/2011

Ahhhhhhhhh!!! Don't Panic!!!

Unfortunately none of my field hunting trip buddies (Mike, Neal, Chase, Trey, Lyla, etc.) have inspired a safety article so far this year. They are such a disappointment—however one of my neighbors has provided me the inspiration I need for this safety article.

A couple of weeks ago as I was driving my son to baseball practice, I came across an accident. It was just a half block around the corner from my house. A small sedan had apparently hit a fire hydrant, then blasted through a group mailbox sending it about 30 yards into someone's front yard before hitting a light pole where the car stopped. The air bag had obviously deployed, and EMTs were helping what appeared to be the driver.

I was running late for practice so didn't get to stop and gawk, however upon returning I was able to stop and talk to the lady who lives across the street from the damaged mailbox and light pole. The information she provided was quite interesting.

Despite what looked like an accident associated with drunk driving or some sort of seizure, the accident was actually caused by PANIC! A 17-year old girl was driving out of our neighborhood when a bee flew into her window. Her reaction resulted in erratic swerves, hitting the accelerator instead of the brake, and ultimately leaving the road and colliding with several objects.

Get last-minute news about club events by sending a note to Neal Immega at
n_immune@swbell.net.

Luckily she was okay although her car was probably going to be in the shop for a while.

The point of my article is to encourage you to NOT PANIC especially in situations where panicking will only make the situation worse. Screaming and running around like a headless chicken aren't going to do you or anyone else any good.

SO, take a deep breath and figure out a quick game plan. As an example, in medical emergencies first consider dialing 911. That will help get trained professionals en route to you quickly.

As the old saying goes, "cooler heads will prevail." Don't panic and be one of those cooler heads.

Thanks - Owen.

SCFMS Ginna's Gems

by Virginia Adian

SCFMS President

from SCFMS Newsletter 5-6/2011

As my friend from Virginia and I traveled across the Stockton Plateau toward West Texas in mid-April, we could see smoke rising from the mountains. It was coming from one of dozens of wildfires which have swept across our state the past month, burning thousands of acres of grassland, brush, forests, homes, electric lines, and fences. Despite the threat of nearby fires, the Chihuahuan Desert Gem & Mineral Club hosted a wonderful show for our annual SCFMS meeting. "Alpine Agate Festival" was an appropriate name for this show. There were dealers from West Texas, New Mexico, and Mexico, who had beautiful agates from their areas. It was good to see dealers whom I have not seen at other federation shows.

Gem club members took field trips and explored the nearby mountains to collect plume and other agates. Special thanks go to the Chihuahuan Desert club, and especially to Mary Brogan, show chairman, and Violet McLean, club president, for all the work they did. This is a small club, but they put on a great show!!!

Put August 25-26, 2012 on your calendars for next year when the Pine Country Gem & Mineral Society of Jasper, TX will host our SCFMS meeting. Far too many clubs have not sent a representative to our annual meeting in years. I want to again encourage you to help your club president or a delegate attend next year by providing travel expenses. I hope you will not just attend the show and meeting, but will also have Breakfast with the Editors and Webmasters and attend the Awards Dinner. Learn about our federation and its programs. Meet and visit with members from other SCFMS clubs. You will become a more effective officer. I know this from my own experience.

I want to again thank Ruth Cress, who faithfully served as our SCFMS secretary for 11 years. Not many members can say they have served that long or as efficiently. I am so

thankful that we have people in our Federation who willingly accept the responsibilities of vital positions. Ann James, who has served as District II VP, stepped up to not only serve as our secretary for our meeting in Alpine, but also to serve for the next year.

Fred Brown replaced Ann to become VP for District II. Don Shurtz also deserves our gratitude for serving several years as chairman for Bulletin Aids and Club Publications, as well as the new Web Site Contest. Don turned over the materials for Bulletin Aids and Club Publications to Rhonda Taylor. I am so thankful that Rhonda, who is editor of two different club newsletters, has accepted this very important position. I encourage all club editors and writers to give Rhonda your help, cooperation, and support. We still need someone to accept the position of chairman for the SCFMS WEB SITE CONTEST. I know there is someone out there who has the ability to do this job. PLEASE LET ME KNOW IF YOU WILL DO THIS OR IF YOU HAVE A PERSON TO RECOMMEND.

The latest list of SCFMS officers and SCFMS committees is now posted on our Web site: <http://www.scfms.net>.

You will find the contact information for the above individuals along with other officers and chairmen. I need to fill the position of Chairman of the Juniors Program as soon as possible. I firmly believe that the future of our clubs and federation lies with the youth. We have some clubs with some active junior programs and activities, but there is a great need to develop more. I will be working with my own club this year to find ways to share our knowledge and love of rocks with young people. We need someone who can lead and encourage all of us in this area. PLEASE LET ME KNOW IF YOU WILL DO THIS OR IF YOU HAVE A PERSON TO RECOMMEND. To get started, perhaps your club will consider some subscriptions to a magazine written and published specifically for junior rockhounds. The cost is \$9.95/year for an e-mailed PDF version and you can find information about it at: <http://www.diamonddanpublications.net>.

Click on Mini Miners Monthly. To find out more about the program of Future Rockhounds of America, go to the American Federation Web site at <http://www.amfed.org> and click on KIDS CORNER. Although any federation club can participate in this, we have only 4 clubs which are currently a part of this program. It just takes ONE kid to join.

We have more than a year until our next SCFMS meeting. I see this as an opportunity to concentrate on improving many of our SCFMS programs and revitalizing our clubs before we meet again. Please do not hesitate to contact me or any of our SCFMS officers and chairmen if you have questions.

Virginia Adian

AFMS Code of Ethics
from AFMS Newsletter 6/2011

- I will respect both private and public property and will do no collecting on privately owned land without the owner's permission.
- I will keep informed on all laws, regulations of rules governing collecting on public lands and will observe them.
- I will to the best of my ability, ascertain the boundary lines of property on which I plan to collect.
- I will use no firearms or blasting material in collecting areas.
- I will cause no willful damage to property of any kind—fences, signs, buildings.
- I will leave all gates as found.
- I will build fires in designated or safe places only and will be certain they are completely extinguished before leaving the area.
- I will discard no burning material—matches, cigarettes, etc.
- I will fill all excavation holes which may be dangerous to livestock.
- I will not contaminate wells, creeks, or other water supply.
- I will cause no willful damage to collecting material and will take home only what I can reasonably use.
- I will practice conservation and undertake to utilize fully and well the materials I have collected and will recycle my surplus for the pleasure and benefit of others.
- I will support the rockhound project H.E.L.P. (Help Eliminate Litter Please) and will leave all collecting areas devoid of litter, regardless of how found.
- I will cooperate with field trip leaders and those in designated authority in all collecting areas.
- I will report to my club or Federation officers, Bureau of Land management, or other authorities, any deposit of petrified wood or other materials on public lands which should be protected for the enjoyment of future generations for public educational and scientific purposes.
- I will appreciate and protect our heritage of natural resources.
- I will observe the "Golden Rule," will use "Good Outdoor Manners," and will at all times conduct myself in a manner which will add to the stature and Public "image" of rockhounds everywhere.

Does Your Society Exist?

Embracing the Online World

by Jim Brace-Thompson

from CFMS Newsletter, 5/2011 via AFMS Newsletter 6/2011

I've read some depressing articles lately. One set was best summed up in an article entitled "Out of the Wilderness." It was about a decline in outdoor activities. Did you know that compared to 1987, Americans spend one-fourth less time engaged in outdoor pursuits such as hunting, fishing, camping, and visiting parks? The National Academy of Science has called this a "fundamental and pervasive shift."

The second depressing set of articles revolves around another documented decline: Americans are less likely to be involved in civic and community organizations than at any time in our history. Some folks have lamented our "disintegrating collective bonds," with people less likely to participate in organized groups, such as the PTA or Kiwanis, or even in Friday night poker or bridge games, bowling, or community picnics.

One study has pegged both declines directly to the emergence in the 1980s of widespread use of desktop computers and the rise of the Internet. Declines in outdoor activities, for instance, have averaged one percent a year in per capita participation, a decline that mirrors the rise in Internet usage, videogames, online movie viewing, etc. (And gas prices haven't helped much, either!) We increasingly live in a world where people are insulated and seek entertainment and connections sitting in front of a machine, "friending" people they may never meet via online "virtual" communities.

I don't believe we can fight these trends, but it's worth a try, and one way is by embracing rather than fighting that third trend. My own son is a perfect example of our new generation: born in the 1980s and having lived his entire life in an "Internet world," if he can't find it online, it doesn't exist. By this standard, does your society exist? I'm always surprised when I turn to club directories of regional federations. Time and again, I find undeliverable outdated e-mail addresses—or I find no e-mail address at all. I find local society Web addresses that are inactive. And some active ones aren't much help—some haven't been updated in years, some contain inactive links or incorrect contact info, or no contact info. And a really big thing: some lack photos showing real people having real fun.

We can't turn back the clock. With increasing numbers of folks turning to computers and "virtual communities" of interest, what has your society done to build up its electronic profile that would make it vibrant and attractive and filled with info about this great hobby of ours? Is your society's Web site easy to find? Is it a "destination" site that's chock full of info and fun images that invite a viewer in? If not, a place to begin is by examining the rules of the CFMS and AFMS Web site contest to see the sorts of features that make for an excellent site. Connect your society webmaster to those webmasters who have competed in the contest and connect them to your regional federation contest chair for advice and suggestions. (If you don't have a society

webmaster, appoint one—now!) In today's world, the image you project on a computer screen is as important as the atmosphere you provide at your monthly meeting, workshops, field trips, and other events. It's the first step—the doorway in—for so many of today's prospective members. Can we reverse those “fundamental and pervasive” shifts away from outdoor activities and civic engagement?

I don't know. But the first step is clear: make sure they know we exist!

The Great Agate and Mineral Locator

by Jim Marburger

from Pick & Shovel 7/2011

What is up with this picture? How is this item used in the rock hobby?

The most obvious use for this sprayer is to wet rocks. But did you know you could also use it to wash off light dirt from them to expose the colors and other clues as to what they are? Most agates and other stones reveal themselves in bright sunlight and a wet condition. I have found the 1- to 2-gallon sized sprayer to be the best size to carry to the agate beds or sand bars. When deciding what size to take, remember that a gallon of water weighs 8.5 pounds. The weight will limit how far you can, or want, to carry it. Yes, it is going to get lighter with use, but your pockets or rock bag will hopefully be getting heavier with treasures found.



I use the sprayer wand with a sweeping motion in front of me. I try to limit the motion to a 3 to 4 foot sweep. This sweeping motion helps to train the eyes to do a systematic sweep of the area. Combining this with walking towards the sun to utilize all available light reflections really helps. Many times, 1 gallon of water will provide 1 to 2 hours of collecting time, depending on use. A trip back to the car to empty the collection

bag or to get lunch is a good time to reload the sprayer with water.

If collecting on or near a river and the water in the river is fairly clean, it can be used. If silt is present in the water, it could clog the adjustable sprayer tip. The tip on this type

of sprayer can be taken apart and a light squirt will usually dislodge the plug. Reinstall the tip and continue collecting.

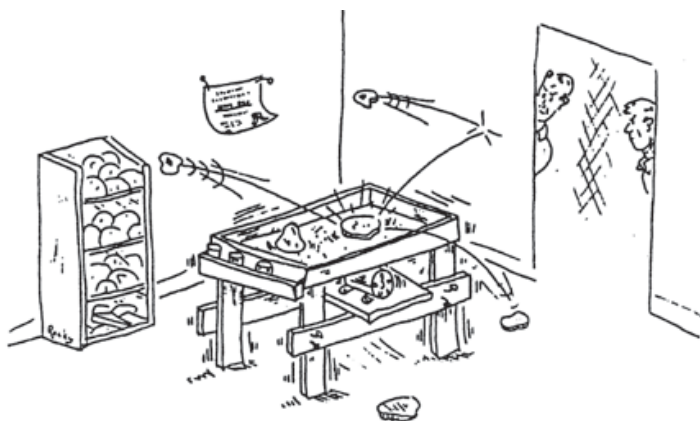
For safety's sake, mark the sprayer as a rock washer or agate locator so it is not accidentally used for chemicals.

This sprayer also works great when digging crystals like the hourglass selenite near Jet, Oklahoma. This location requires more water than does agate hunting, so one will want to carry extra water and some additional equipment. A wagon to carry the extra equipment such as a shovel, boxes for laying out crystals, food and drink cooler, tarps, and sun screen, is almost a necessity.



I am ready to go collecting on the salt plains with my agate and mineral locator. With the hole dug, it is time to start washing the sand away to expose crystals. And now the agate and mineral locator is a crystal locator as well!

Good luck and have fun with this new hobby tool. May this common sprayer help you to bring home the big ones!



YOU'RE RIGHT FRANK ---
YOU HAVE GOT A PROBLEM !

By Harlan "Rocky" West
From T-Town Rockhound 11/61 & 7/98

Show Time 2011

August 13-14	Baton Rouge, LA	Baton Rouge Gem & Mineral Society Fraternal Order of Police
August 20-21	Bossier City, LA	Ark-La-Tex Gem & Mineral Society Bossier City Civic Center
August 27-28	Jasper, TX	Pine Country Gem & Mineral Society Events Center
September 3-4	Arlington, TX	Arlington Gem & Mineral Society Arlington Convention Center
September 3-4	Denison, TX	Texoma Rockhounds Denison Senior Center
October 8-9	Temple, TX	Tri-City Gem & Mineral Society Mayborn Civic Center
October 13-15	Mount Ida, AR	25th Annual Quartz Crystal Digging Contest Montgomery County Fairgrounds Maureen Walther, Mt. Ida Ch. of Commerce 870 867-2723; www.mountidachamber.com director@mountidachamber.com
October 14-16	Victoria, TX	Victoria Gem & Mineral Society Community Center, 2905 E. North St.
October 21-23	Austin, TX	Austin Gem & Mineral Society Palmer Event Center
October 29-30	Glen Rose, TX	Paleo Society of Austin Somervell Expo Center, Hwy. 67
November 5-6	Amarillo, TX	Golden Spread Gem & Mineral Society Amarillo Civic Center, Exhibition Hall
November 11-13	Humble, TX	Humble Civic Center, 8233 Will Clayton Pkwy. 5 miles east of Bush Intercontinental Airport 1 mile east of Hwy. 59; www.hgms.org Chris&Theresa Peek; ladyt682@hotmail.com
November 19-20	Mesquite, TX	Dallas Gem & Mineral Society Resistol Arena
December 3-4	Round Rock, TX	Paleo Society of Austin Old Settlers Park Next to Dell Diamond
December 10-11	De Ridder, LA	De Ridder Gem & Mineral Society Beauregard Parish Fairgrounds

2011		August				2011
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 7:30 Board Meeting	3 NO Mineral Section 10-5 Shop Open	4 7:30 Archaeology Group	5	6 10-5 Shop Open 10-12 Youth Section
7	8 1:00 Day Light Section	9 7:30 Show Committee	10 7:30 Faceting Section 10-5 Shop Open	11	12	13 10-5 Shop Open
14	15 7:30 Lapidary Section	16 7:30 Paleo Section	17 7:30 Mineral Section 10-5 Shop Open	18	19	20 10-5 Shop Open 10-12 Youth Section 1:30 Beading Section
21	22	23 7:30 General Meeting	24 10-5 Shop Open	25	26	27 10-5 Shop Open
28	29	30	31 10-5 Shop Open			10-5 Shop Open

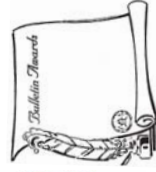
2011		September				2011
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 7:30 Archaeology Group	2	3 10-5 Shop Open 10-12 Youth Section
4	5	6 7:30 Board Meeting	7 7:30 Mineral Section 10-5 Shop Open	8	9	10 10-5 Shop Open
11	12 1:00 Day Light Section	13 7:30 Show Committee	14 7:30 Faceting Section 10-5 Shop Open	15	16	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	

The BACKBENDER'S GAZETTE

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

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