



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

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

**Volume XLII - No. 5**

**May 2011**



## **President's Message**

*by Steve Blyskal*

**H**ow many of our members love that wild and blustery outpost of West Texas (WT), known as the Davis Mountains? I visited the area myself for the first time on my honeymoon, at Sigrid's urging. She had lived in WT for many years and enjoyed the wide open spaces, the sculptured mountains of volcanic tuffs and the vast open skies. And the agate collecting! She was first introduced to agate prospecting with the Midland club, and she knew how much I enjoyed collecting, especially since I often collect the wonderful petrified woods and agates of Texas in lieu of the mineral specimens available in other states.



I too fell in love with the Western character of the small towns and the mountains—how many Houstonians even know that Texas has real mountains? And that the area has an interesting botany totally different from that of East Texas? And that the stars at night in this region are more than a few hazy spots? That's why the McDonald Observatory was sited near Ft. Davis, to take advantage of the dark night skies.

So it was with dismay that I heard of the disastrous wildfires that hit the area in April. The Rockhouse fire started near Marfa, and within thirty minutes high winds had driven a 40 foot wall of flames to crest over the ridge into Ft. Davis, burning range, brush, and homes, even into town, destroying an historic home right across from the courthouse itself. 700 acres of the popular 2700 acre Davis Mountains State Park were torched as

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## **Upcoming Programs**

**M**ay 24, 2011: To be announced.

**J**une 28, 2011: To be announced.

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

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## Purpose of HGMS

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

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

well. The McDonald Observatory briefly served as an evacuation center for campers hastily evacuated from the park.

It may take a long time for this area to recover, and some planned visits may have to be put on hold. I know a few people will make the trek into Alpine for the Big Bend Gem & Mineral Show to show their support for that club, just like the loyal supporters who managed to come to the Houston Gem & Mineral Show despite the damage and outages caused by Hurricane Ike. Please join me in wishing the people of the region a speedy recovery from this tragedy.

Another tragedy much in the news is the destruction in Japan; thousands dead, hundreds of thousands displaced, many more in fear for the future of their country.

And while you're at it, think about your own life. In the space of 30 minutes so much can happen—give thanks for all the times that it does not, when your life can proceed at an orderly pace of your own choosing, and you can go about your business in heedless safety.

While we will put off our agate collecting trip to the Alpine area, we were able to make a brief foray to South Texas to hunt for petrified wood. Despite the drought that is still plaguing much of Texas, there was a fair show of wildflowers that was good to see, and the area actually did look much greener than the first time we visited George West. At that time two years ago the land was gray and desolate and ranchers were selling off their herds.

So perhaps instead of collecting more agates, we'll just spend some time in the clubhouse cutting some petrified wood and agates, and enjoying the company of fellow club members. There is a lot to look forward to—the clubhouse fabrication room ceiling has been repaired and classes have resumed, the Fine Mineral Show is coming April 30–May 2, and there is the Mineral Section Swap and Sale coming up June 1st. And look for good talks for the meetings, great activities in the Sections, and there's always fun to be had in the shop. I hope everyone is enjoying the Texas spring, and preparing for the hot summer to come.

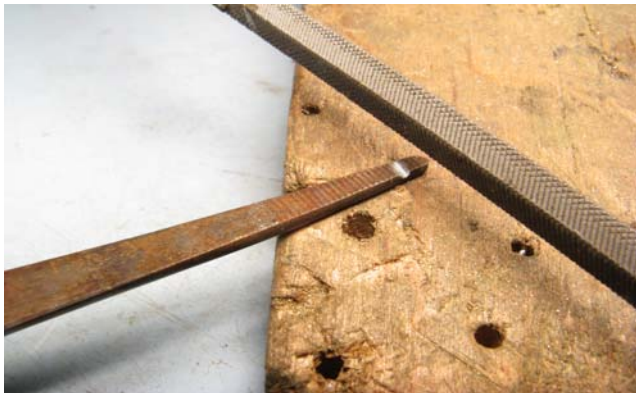
### **BenchTips**

*by Brad Smith*

*More BenchTips by Brad Smith are at [groups.yahoo.com/group/BenchTips/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/BenchTips/)  
Or [facebook.com/BenchTips](http://facebook.com/BenchTips)*

**S**oldering Earposts: I don't solder enough earposts to develop the dexterity for holding the wire by hand. So I modified a set of locking tweezers to help with the job. It's quick and easy.

Use a triangular file to make a notch at the tweezer tip to keep the wire from moving around, and file a groove in the tweezer body to rest the tweezers on a stand that keeps the earpost wire at the right angle. The stand is just soldered up from scrap copper or nickel.



This way the tweezers act like a see-saw that's weighted just a little bit more on the soldering end.

I felt that if the tweezers put too much pressure on the earpost wire, it could buckle when the wire gets up to soldering temperature.

### Lowering the Noise

A simple way to cut down the noise when you're hammering on your mini anvil or bench block is to place it on an old mouse pad or other similar rubber material.



### Mineral Section

*by Paul Brandes*

**A**pril 20: Steve Blyskal will present the geology, mines, and minerals of the Santa Eulalia District in Mexico. Members are reminded to bring to the presentation any minerals they might have from this most famous mineral locality to share with the group. Refreshments will be provided.

**May 4: AUCTION** - Specimens from HGMS members will be auctioned with a portion of the proceeds going to the Mineral Section. This is the same auction format practiced the past few years; please read the accompanying announcement for further details. Refreshments will be provided. - **Also on May 4th**, The Houston Fine Minerals Show (April 30–May 2) will be discussed. Bring in your recent acquisitions, and let us drool over them.

**May 18:** To be announced, but more than likely a work night before the summer break.

**June 1: 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.

## Old Geezer in San Antonio

by John Emerson

*Member of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society*

While we lived in San Antonio (before I started to work for Bechtel), Bobbie and I took scuba diving lessons at the YMCA. About 1962/63 Bobbie, the boys, and I flew to Merida, Mexico and on to Cozumel Island (Quintana Roo State, Yucatan Peninsula). Because of the weight of our scuba gear, Bobbie and I wore our weight belts under our clothes so as not to have to pay for overweight luggage. The tourist facilities on Cozumel at that time were minimal. We stayed in small cabins with hammocks and screened porches with meals served outside on picnic tables—no choice as to menu, we ate what was served. There was a shop that rented air tanks for scuba divers. We were a tad nervous as to the purity of the compressed air—fear that their compressor's engine exhaust could contaminate the air. I checked it out, and fortunately the exhaust was diverted so that it didn't contaminate the compressed air.

Bobbie and I scuba dived while the boys snorkeled. One of us watched them at all times to be sure they were okay. We had a swimming pool in our back yard in San Antonio, and both boys could swim quite well and we trained them in snorkeling. The only problem they had was when they saw a colored fish they would forget to come up before they opened their mouths to tell the other about it.

I damaged the top of one of my feet on coral while scuba diving. I had kicked off in pursuit of a fish and hit my foot down on some pipe coral. A piece broke off and lodged in the top of my foot. The only doctor on the island removed it, closed the wound, and bandaged my foot. End of my scuba diving for that trip!

About 1963/64, Bobbie and I left the boys with some of our friends in Houston, drove to Miami, and took a seaplane to meet our cruise group aboard a "Windjammer"—a three-masted schooner. The seaplane taking off over the water at Miami was not too exciting, but the landing was! The plane had a high wing with the engine on it and with the body hanging down below. When landing, the plane's body was briefly partially covered with water! From the inside this was thrilling to say the least!

All able-bodied men on board the Windjammer had to help the small crew raise and lower the sails as needed. At one point, we entered into the harbor at Nassau, Bahamas, and docked under full sail. There was a large cruise ship tied up in the harbor as well. We saw all of the tourists on the ship lining the rails, applauding and taking pictures as we sailed by.

One of the other passengers on our ship was another Korean war veteran—a former army Captain and his wife who seldom came out of their cabin. He seemed to be a bit traumatized from the war, and they did not mingle with the other passengers. Or were they newly weds?

A Queen Trigger fish bit me on my leg while we were scuba diving off the Bahamas. "She" was mad because I had speared her and put her in my net bag. It took several

stitches to close the two inch cut. Fortunately there was a trained “medicine man” in the crew of the ship. I am not sure if he was licensed, but he could stitch and bandage my wound. Once again, the end of my scuba diving for that trip.

*Note:* I am **not** accident prone while swimming!

## Life Lessons from Rock Hunting

by Aliza Giammatteo

*For my late Uncle, Paul A. Giammatteo Jr.,  
who first got me interested in rock hunting.*

**H**ave you ever had your heart sink when the first question someone asks about a favorite find is “How much is it worth?” Have you gotten that “you’re crazy” look when someone sees the amount of “rocks” you’ve accumulated in your collection? Whether you’re into rocks and minerals, fossils, artifacts, or all of the above, most of us have had experiences like this with others who don’t share our passion.

That’s perfectly understandable. After all, not everybody wants to spend their free time driving out to the middle of nowhere to dig in the dirt, in rivers, in cliff sides, or whatever the case may be, only to have to lug home big, heavy bags of discoveries. When you look at it that way, maybe we are a bit crazy after all! Or maybe there is something more to these “rocks” that even we don’t immediately realize that keeps us so enthralled in this hobby. That begs the question, why *do* we do what we do? What is it that we see in these rocks\* that others don’t? I have a whole host of reasons why I collect, as I’m sure most of you do. But for me there is one reason that stands out from the rest: the valuable life lessons that some of my rocks have taught me.

One unforgettable lesson came from my first trip to Gem Mountain in Spruce Pine, North Carolina. The area is full of abandoned gemstone mines. Visitors can buy a bucket of rubble to sift through to hunt for treasures: rubies, garnets, emeralds, sapphires, topaz, etc. I was in my glory, bagging all sorts of goodies when, less than an hour into my hunt, a couple came and sat next to me with their buckets. Within minutes, I heard things like “What a rip-off! There aren’t any gems in here.” And “Just my luck! I didn’t get anything in my bucket.” I glanced at their ‘junk rock’ pile and saw a mound full of rubies, sapphires, and other precious stones. They were, literally, throwing out treasure!

That was the first lesson: Before any of us start complaining about the “bucket” we were handed, so to speak, maybe we should take a closer look at what we have. Yes, sometimes in life you do get a bad bucket. But other times the problem has nothing to do with the bucket at all. Sometimes our eyes just aren’t open enough to spot the gems.

I’ve been back to Gem Mountain a few times since that first trip and, sure enough, each time I go I encounter different people with those same complaints. And each time I’ve tried, mostly in vain, to show the nay-sayers what the stones look like in the rough and explained that they won’t come out of the ground looking sparkly like they do in a piece of jewelry. They usually only half-way pay attention before they go back to their speed hunting. I’ve found that most of them just want that instant gratification and



don't want to invest even five minutes of time beforehand to figure out what they should be looking for. (Exactly how can you find something when you don't know what you're looking for?) I don't know. But, by God, they were going to try. That was lesson #2: You need to know what you're looking for if you hope to find it. Not just in rock hunting, but in life.

The impression I got from these other hunters was that the stones would have to be so bright and sparkly that they screamed out "I'm a precious stone. Pick me up!" before they'd consider them a keeper. That's when lesson #3 hit me: Most opportunities in life don't scream our names. They don't announce themselves, and they certainly don't knock, contrary to the popular expression. Opportunities are there, but sometimes they are in a clever disguise, just like those garnets I found whose brilliance was cloaked in a thick coat of rust. To the untrained eye they just look like some seriously ugly rocks!

A contemporary of the famous impressionist painter, Claude Monet, once remarked that it wasn't so much Monet's ability to paint what he paints that he admired as much as his ability to *see what he sees*. Monet was able to perceive subtle changes in light that others might overlook. And that, in large part, is what made him such a master of his craft. A skilled painter could probably copy a Monet, but would they have seen what he saw in the first place? That is the question.

It takes wisdom and vision to recognize when we have something good on our hands. But seeing the opportunity is just the first part. These gemstones do have the ability to shine, but if we want them to shine, it's up to us to make them shine. That's lesson #4. The grinding, polishing, and cutting are what make the gems look like a gem (in the traditional sense, anyway.) Like most things in life, collecting treasures does take wisdom, but then it takes serious work. The advice columnist, Ann Landers, once brilliantly said "Opportunities are usually disguised as hard work, so most people don't recognize them."

As for my gem collection, with few exceptions, I've kept all of my stones in the rough. They have more value to me as regular, old rocks than they do as gemstones. They are wonderful reminders to always look for the positive, the potential, in every situation. I've brought them into schools with me to pass on some of these lessons to school kids. They were amazed at the striking difference between the rough and a faceted stone. You can see the wonder on the kids' faces upon realizing that something so ordinary looking could become something so extraordinary. When I see that magic in their eyes, that's when I explain that it's amazing what can be accomplished with a little wisdom and some work. The rocks illustrate that in a tangible way and the message is received loud and clear. It's a message that we adults are all aware of but could always be reminded of from time to time. When I'm having a bad day I pick up one of the "rocks" from those buckets.

Of course the kids do ask about values and wonder why I don't get them cut (as do many of my friends who probably think I'm nuts.) The answer is that in my mind, they're already as good as cut. I don't need to see the finished, shiny product. I can see that in my mind's eye, or in any jewelry store. But what you rarely see is the rough—evidence of the beginning of that journey from dull to dazzling. That's what I find most



fascinating, all that goes into making that treasure. (And I do believe that life's treasures are made just as much as they are found, if not more.)

Each gemstone in a jewelry store began as a rock that someone with a keen eye saw the potential in. I want to be that someone. I want to see the wonder and beauty in things, in people, in life, that others may not see. The next time someone asks why I collect all of these rocks, that will be my answer.

*\*For the sake of simplicity and keeping with the storyline, the term "rocks" is used generically here and can refer to all of those things that our non-collector friends often simply refer to as our "rocks"—rocks, minerals, fossils, etc.*



*Dr. Clark, Terry Proctor and Alan Morgan discuss a fossil catfish spine found by Alan Morgan as Aaron Clark strolls on the beach in the background.*

## **Archeology Group Enjoyed Their First Field Trip to McFaddin Beach on April 2, 2011**

*by Terry Proctor*

**T**he Archeology Group had their first field trip on April 2, 2011. The trip was to McFaddin Beach in hopes of finding some artifacts along with shells and some paleo items.

Ten people showed up for the trip—Chairman Dr. Garth Clark and son Aaron Clark along with a friend; Sarah Metsa brought two young friends who had a ball both finding things and getting muddy (see photo); Vice-Chairman Terry Proctor; new HGMS member Gloria Jean Carroll; Dr. Tony Ma; and HGMS member Steve Jackey. Some small pieces of bone and some Pleistocene shells were found, and Steve Jackey found a Mexican Peso which had been there apparently a long time. The weather was great, and everyone expressed a desire for more trips to McFaddin Beach.

Those who went on the trip were Archeology Group Chairman, Dr. Garth Clark, son Aaron Clark; and friend Alan Morgan; Group Vice-Chairman Terry Proctor, and new HGMS member Gloria Jean Carroll; Steve Jackie; Dr. Tony Ma; Sarah Metsa and two young friends, Julian and Finn (photo on next page).



Sarah Metsa brought two young friends (Julian and Finn) who had a ball both finding things and getting muddy

## Archeology Group holds April 7, 2011 Meeting

*by Terry Proctor*

**T**he Archeology Group had ten members present for the April 7, 2011 most interesting meeting. Jon Hart brought two cases of outstanding arrow points. The Archeology Group asked Jon to do a program in the future on the various area points in Texas and especially around the Harris County area, which he agreed to do. Also discussed were the controversial lead codices recently touted by the BBC that were found in Jordan a few years back.

Terry Proctor brought a good bit of material on these and will send out a list of Web sites where more material can be viewed by members who may be interested. There is a disagreement among experts as to whether these date from the first century, the third or fourth century, or are just fakes. It will be interesting to see if these codices throw light upon the Christian religion or in the future are determined to be fraudulent. Dr. Clark discussed with the group some maps that pin-pointed where Clovis Points have been found on McFaddin Beach. In the future, emphasis can be made on looking in those areas where the largest concentration of points have been found.

Two HGMS members who were new to visit the Archeology Group were Bob Moore and wife, Nancy Engelhardt Moore. Bob is an accountant, and Nancy is a Geologist/Paleontologist, but both are very well versed on archeology dates and items, and have been collectors for quite some time. They added a lot to the discussion of Archeology at the meeting.

The Archeology Group is growing in new members, and any HGMS member interested should plan to attend the next meeting on May 5, 2011 at the HGMS clubhouse at 7:30 p.m. For more information, call Chairman Dr. Garth Clark at (832) 527-6916 or Vice-Chairman, Dr. Terry Proctor at his law office (713) 453-8338.

## HGMS Archaeology Group Minutes

*April 7, 2011*

*by Vice-Chairman Terry Proctor, J.D.*

The Archeology Group had nine members present for the April 7, 2011 meeting. Terry Proctor, J.D., Gloria Jean Carroll, Garth Clark & son Aaron Clark, M.D., Bob Moore, Nancy Engelhardt Moore, Mike Dawkins, Tony Ma, M.D., and Jon Hart.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Garth Clark, M.D. Terry Proctor moved to dispense with the approval of the minutes for the March 3, 2011 as they were not published. Notice of the March 3 meeting was not sent out by e-mail as usual, and the attendance was small. The motion was seconded by Mike Dawkins and approved unanimously.

There was a report of the first field trip, which was to McFaddin Beach, where 10 people showed up: Sarah Metsa with two young children—a girl named Julian and a boy named Finn; Tony Ma, M.D.; Garth Clark, M.D. with son Aaron Clark and a friend Alan Morgan; Terry Proctor and Gloria Jean Carroll; and Steve Jackie.

Photos were shown, including a photo of a Northern Gannet which Gloria Carroll found. Dr. Ma wanted to try to heal it, as it was apparent the bird was in distress. However, because there is a bird sanctuary nearby, it was deemed dangerous to try to take the bird for healing and probably its condition was not something which Dr. Ma could have corrected. In the end the Gannet was left on a grassy area.



Dr. Clark brought some maps showing concentrations of where Clovis Points had been found on McFaddin Beach in the past, so that in the future, we could know better where they had been found. The points appeared to have been found in about three locations, and in some areas of the Beach there were virtually none reported.

Jon Hart brought two cases of outstanding arrow points. The Archeology Group asked Jon to do a future program on the various area points in Texas and especially around the Harris County area, which he agreed to do.

Also discussed were the controversial lead codices recently touted by the BBC, which were found in Jordan a few years back. Terry Proctor brought a number of Web site print outs regarding the lead codices. He had created a page of the Web sites on information about these codices which he said he would e-mail to Archeology Group members. There is a disagreement among experts as to whether these date from the first century, the third or fourth century, or are just fakes. It will be interesting to see if in the future these codices throw light upon the Christian religion or are determined to be

fraudulent.

Two HGMS members who were new to visit the Archeology Group were Bob Moore and wife, Nancy Engelhardt Moore. Bob is an accountant and Nancy is a Geologist/Paleontologist, but both are very well versed on archeology dates, items and collectors for quite some time. They added a lot to the discussion of Archeology at the meeting.

Terry Proctor moved to adjourn, seconded by Jon Hart, and the motion passed unanimously. Per the HGMS new requirements, the clubhouse was checked upon entry and secured upon leaving, by Vice-Chairman Terry Proctor.

**HGMS/Proctor Museum Outreach Program**  
**Presented To 72 Harvard Elementary Magnet School Fifth Graders**  
*by Terry Proctor*

On Friday, April 8, 2011, HGMS and Proctor Museum members Terry Proctor and Gloria Jean Carroll put on an OUTREACH PROGRAM to 72 fifth graders at Harvard Elementary Magnet School in the Houston ISD. Fossils from the Proctor Museum were presented to the students along with Terry's talk on "The Bone Wars" of the late 1800s when paleontologists Edward Drinker Cope and Othniel Charles Marsh battled throughout the American West to see who could find and name more dinosaurs than the other.

Along with the talk, Dr. Proctor also discussed with the students what a fossil is, how they are formed, and the importance in finding fossils, then preserving and displaying the fossils or getting them to someone or museum which will.

Terry provided for the students such things to view as a foot bone from a Hadrosaurus, fossils from Brownwood, fossils from the Stone City formation near Bryan, and fossils from McFaddin Beach, all in Texas. He also gave each student a four-page handout on "The Bone Wars" and information on Proctor Museum Board members and famous paleontologists, Robert T. Bakker, PhD and Peter Larson. Each student was also given a fossil shark's tooth to take home. The presentation was made to three classes along with their 5th grade teachers: Barbara Smith, Barclay Armstrong, and Christina Shank.



Left: 25 of the 72 students  
listening to the presentation on  
fossils by HGMS & Proctor  
Museum OUTREACH  
PROGRAM



Left: Dr. Terry Proctor presenting "The Bone Wars" talk to students at Harvard Magnet School—Houston

Right: Harvard Magnet School 5th grade teachers Barbara Smith and Christina Shank during HGMS & Proctor Museum presentation



Left: Harvard Magnet School 5th graders looking at fossils from Proctor Museum

Gloria Carroll took photos and recorded the presentations to create this report and for permanent record of the programs. HGMS had provided three used backpacks, which Terry and Gloria brought with them. A drawing was held in each class and a backpack given in each class to the drawing winner.

### General Meeting Minutes

March 22 , 2011

by Sarah Metsa, HGMS Secretary

**T**he meeting was called to order at 7:32 p.m.

**Prior Month General Meeting Minutes:** There were no General Meeting minutes published for the prior month due to the BBG Editor being out of commission for a short time.



**Membership:** Dues were due in January. Please turn in to the office or Beverly Mace.

**Treasurer Report:** Rodney Linehan was not in attendance, but Steve Blyskal reported that the club is solvent and in good condition and that we have been seeing a good number of dues checks arriving.

**Shop Report:** The wheels and saws have all been rust proofed and are working well.

**Education Chair Report:** Charlie Fredregill is having a beginning jewelry fabrication class. Contact Brian Honsinger for information.

### **Officer, Committee and Section Reports:**

**Daylight Section:** In the March meeting, they learned how to make boxes from old greeting cards and stock paper.

**Lapidary Section:** They made a flat Queen's Link Bracelet and boxes in the March meeting. They are placing a bulk order with Fire Mountain Gems in order to qualify for reduced pricing.

**Mineral Section:** Dean Lagerwall is taking the Section on a field trip to Richardson TX on April 16 and 17. This will be to go to *Fenders Natural Resources*, a retail and wholesale mineral dealer, and *The Arkenstone*, a retail mineral dealer. The April 6 program will be given by Jonathan Wooley about on-line resources to use in researching sites for field trips. The April 20 program is by Steve Blyskal on the Santa Eulalia Mining District in Chihuahua, Mexico. The May 4 meeting will be an auction. HGMS members will provide specimens to be auctioned with a portion of the proceeds going to the Mineral Section. The May 18 program is still open but the June 1 program will be a Swap & Sell.

**Paleontology Section:** 22 people went on the annual Brownwood TX fieldtrip. They also have a trip planned to Walker Ranch the weekend of April 15 to April 17.

**Archeology Group:** The group has a field trip planned to McFaddin Beach on Saturday April 2 to search for fossils and clovis points.

**Show Committee:** Al and Cheryl Lucas are moving, so the show will need a security chair. This position coordinates security with the Humble Police Department, police officers, and volunteers.

Volunteers are needed for the Intergem Show the weekend of April 15 to April 17 and for the Fine Mineral Show the weekend of April 29 to May 1.

### **Old Business:**

**Metal Working Classroom Ceiling:** The ceiling has been repaired and the total cost was under \$500 after the insurance payment.

**Mineral Specimen Displays for Teachers:** We have 30 sets completely done with a

lot of thanks to Jim Kendall. We are pending receipt of more boxes to fold and rocks still need gluing into boxes.

**Clean Up Day:** Clean up day on March 6 was a big success. There is still some work to be done, but a lot of progress was made in the attic, and the kitchen is almost complete.

### New Business:

**San Antonio Show:** Matt Dillon was a vendor at the show. They had record attendance for the 2011 show with over 40 dealers. He is also planning on being at the Victoria Show in October.

**Drawing:** There were three winners drawn tonight. John Emerson won a large chunk of pink quartz. Martha McGray won a set of boxes to hold beading items, and Joan Ochoa won agate nodes.

**Show and Tell:** Gloria Jean Carroll went to McFaddin Beach recently and found a bison leg bone, quahog clams, and various fossils that were available for viewing.

**Program:** Sigrid Stewart, a club member for seven years and a former Show Chair, shared wonderful photos of landscapes, sunsets, and of course, amazing mineral specimens, all encountered during her trips (for work!) to Rio de Janeiro.

### Board of Director's Meeting Minutes

*April 5, 2011*

*by Sarah Metsa, HGMS Secretary*

|   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| X | President – Steve Blyskal                     | X | Beading Rep – Jillynn Hailes                         |
|   | 1 <sup>st</sup> Vice President – Ray Kizer    | X | Faceting Rep – Gary Tober                            |
| X | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice President – Beverly Mace |   | Lapidary Rep – Phyllis George                        |
|   | Treasurer – Rodney Linehan                    | X | Mineral Rep – Sigrid Stewart                         |
| X | Secretary – Sarah Metsa                       | X | Paleontology Rep – Mike Dawkins in for Terry Brawner |
| X | Past President – Terry Proctor                |   | 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 March 1, 2011 Board Meeting were published in the April 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 could not be present. However, as usual, he sent to each Board member a detailed report of each bank account. The Board was satisfied that HGMS is in good financial condition.

### Officer, Committee and Section Reports:

**Beading Section:** Reminder that all projects planned for the year and their supply lists



are on the HGMS Web site making it easy to attend the meetings.

**Mineral Section:** Dean Lagerwall is taking the Section on a field trip to Richardson TX. Saturday April 16 they will go to *Fenders Natural Resources*, a retail and wholesale mineral dealer, and on Sunday April 17 the attendees will spend the morning visiting *The Arkenstone*, a retail mineral dealer also in Richardson. The April 6 program is by Jonathan Woolley about on-line resources to use in researching sites for field trips and also for documenting them with your GIS information. This will include US Photo Maps, the Mineral Resources Data System, and the Geologic Maps of US States, in addition to Google Earth. The April 20 program is by Steve Blyskal on the Santa Eulalia Mining District in Chihuahua, Mexico. The May 4 meeting will be an auction. HGMS members will provide specimens to be auctioned with a portion of the proceeds going to the Mineral Section. The May 18 program is still open but the June 1 program will be a Swap & Sell.

**Paleo Section:** The Brownswood trip was very successful. They are planning a trip to Lake Texoma over the weekend of April 23.

**Youth Section:** There were 15 children in attendance at the most recent Saturday shop day.

**Archeology Group:** Group had a fieldtrip on Saturday April 2, 2011 on McFaddin Beach. A reminder was made that the meetings are the first Thursday of each month. The April meeting will be discussion about recent happenings in archeology such as the revealed lead codices from Jordan and the recent discovery of items that may date Georgetown, Texas inhabitants as far back as 15,500 BCE.

**Show Committee:** New business cards are here and available for distribution. Help is needed for the April Intergem Show. Tony Lucci is the new Show Security Coordinator. A Ticket Booth Coordinator is still needed.

**Quartermaster Report:** A "Supplies Needed" box has been placed in the kitchen. If a kitchen or bathroom supply is needed please add the request to the box. It will be checked at least every two weeks. If something is needed sooner than that, please e-mail [quartermaster@hgms.org](mailto:quartermaster@hgms.org).

### Old Business:

**Key Holder Signoff Sheet and Binder:** The sheet and checklist are completed and will be bound for key holder use.

**Metal Working Classroom Ceiling:** The ceiling has been repaired and the total cost was under \$500 after the insurance payment. Classes are already being held.

**Mineral Specimen Displays for Teachers:** The goal is to have 50 sets completely done, and we are well on the way to attaining that with a lot of thanks to Jim Kendall.

Get last-minute news about club events by sending a note to Neal Immega at  
[n\\_immune@swbell.net](mailto:n_immune@swbell.net).

Rocks still need gluing into boxes and assembly completed for some sets.

**Clean Up Day:** Clean up day on March 6 was a big success. There is still some work to be done, but a lot of progress was made in the attic, and the kitchen is almost complete.

**General Meeting Programs:** Terry Proctor will secure a presenter for the April General Meeting. Ray Kizer needs input about possible program topics that people would be interested in attending. Please contact Ray if you have suggestions.

**Roof Repairs:** Jorge Soriano is a roof contractor that has reviewed the roof before. Steve Blyskal met with him and a repair estimate was made. This will fix all roof leaks and has a one year warranty after completion of work. The total amount is estimated to be \$750.00 including materials and labor. Terry Proctor moved and Jillynn Hailes seconded that the work be done as presented. The motion passed unanimously. Steve Blyskal is going to verify that Jorge has insurance and if so, work will be done.

**Front Door:** A contractor looked at the door and advised that the current door is a functional one-way door. It cannot be opened from the outside. Part of the duties for key holders who open the club and lock up the club will be to unlock the front door and flip the sign to show locked or unlocked, then the door will function as intended.

### New Business:

**Library:** HGMS is in need of a person or a team of persons to manage the library. Sigrid Stewart and Steve Blyskal were managing but with new HGMS duties and work schedules, they are unable to continue. The library needs to have its cataloging completed, and it needs to be opened for lending as well as research. Decisions need to be made about what periodicals should be secured and financing arranged. Each Section Rep is to discuss with their Section for suggestions or volunteers.

**Glass Display Cases:** We have been offered an unknown number of glass display cases. The dimensions are unknown and the exact design of the cases is unknown. Steve Blyskal is waiting for the owner of the cases to provide further information.

### Action Items:

| Assigned to:     | Item:  |
|------------------|--|
| Sarah            | Contact carpenter to see what it would cost to have drawers installed/repared in kitchen. Member Andy Anderson is a potential. |
| Steve            | Contact the business park board and determine what paint color is required to repaint the door.                                |
| Steve            | Arrange a safety audit review with Owen Martin   |
| Ray              | Bind the key holder instruction manual and checklist and bring to clubhouse.   |
| Ray              | Check with Neal to ensure the acetylene tank has a check valve. Use the Rio Grande catalog, page 463, as reference             |
| Terry            | Locate a program presenter for the April General Meeting   |
| All Section Reps | Ask your section about a potential Librarian   |

**Adjourn:** Terry Proctor moved and Jillynn Hailes seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

## Comment and Opinion

*The House Committee on Natural Resources Hearing  
Ken Salazar's Secretarial Order Number 3310*

*Protecting Wilderness Characteristics on Lands Managed by the BLM  
by John Martin*

*CFMS PLAC-South Committee  
via CFMS newsletter 4/2011*

**Purpose:** This Secretarial Order (Order) affirms that the protection of the wilderness characteristics of public lands is a high priority for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and is an integral component of its multiple-use mission. The Order provides direction to the BLM regarding its obligation to maintain wilderness resource inventories on a regular and continuing basis for public lands under its jurisdiction. It further directs the BLM to protect wilderness characteristics through land use planning and project level decisions unless the BLM determines, in accordance with this Order, that impairment of wilderness characteristics is appropriate and consistent with other applicable requirements of law and other resource management considerations. The full text of the order may be read on the ALAA Web site <http://www.amlands.org/27112/56812.html>.

On March 1, 2011 The Governors of Idaho, C.L."Butch" Otter, and Utah, Gary R. Herbert, frustrated policy on designating "wild lands" in Bureau of Land Management areas, took their case to Washington DC, and asked lawmakers to insist that only Congress be allowed to establish wilderness areas. The testimony lasted over six hours and had a live feed over the Internet. Witnesses of some notoriety to Utah were Governor Herbert and Commissioner Mike McKee. Governor Herbert came across as cool, articulate, reasoned, and yet aggressive. Commissioner McKee really illustrated the significant harm Wild Lands would likely have on local economies and rural communities. Both Governors did an outstanding job defending their position that order 3310 was unnecessary, went around existing federal procedures, and would do more harm to western states than good. Both Governors stated the compliance to the order would hurt the public schools in both of their states and would burden the already stressed taxpayers with additional liabilities to cover the cost to re-inventory BLM Land that had been inventoried under current law. Both states have spent over seven years each to accomplish the required inventory of BLM lands for the "Wilderness Characteristics" within their states as required by current legislation. All of their points were well taken by the panel of House Representatives. Both governors said the secretarial order issued December 23 by Interior Secretary Ken Salazar demonstrated a disregard for a collaborative approach to managing public lands in the public interest. Herbert said he learned about the wild lands plan only a few hours before Salazar announced it, while Otter did not learn of it until after the fact (247 DER A-9, 12/28/10).

Rep. Rob Bishop (R-Utah), chairman of the committee's public lands subpanel, was in top form as he made statements and questioned witnesses. All of Utah's Public Lands Recreationalists and Rockhounds are lucky to have Congressman Bishop and his ex-

ceptional staff on our side. Mr. Bishop submitted written testimony to the committee from Recreational user groups (AMA, BRC, USA-ALL and others) opposing the Secretarial Order. There were also many other county commissioners and other experts. All did well. It really was great to see so many members of Congress who seem to be on our side and who really grilled BLM Director Abbey and Wilderness activist Peter Metcalf, owner and CEO of Black Diamond Equipment in Salt Lake City, UT.

After more than four hours of testimony from Western governors, county commissioners, legal experts and the CEO of an outfitting company, BLM Director Abbey defended the policy before a skeptical GOP majority in the House Natural Resources Committee. Rep. Rob Bishop (R-Utah), chairman of the committee's public lands subpanel, grilled Abbey on how the order would affect BLM resource management plans developed over the past decade in Utah and recently completed under the George W. Bush administration. Interior Secretary Ken Salazar "arbitrarily" threw out those management plans in Utah with the attitude "'I don't like the answer, I'm going to start over again,'" Bishop said.

Abbey replied that field managers were under no obligation to amend completed land-use plans but rather must review them to make sure they comply with the secretary's order. "We don't necessarily have to amend anything," he said.

Director Abbey was pressured even harder by Alaska Rep. Don Young (R), who suggested BLM's implementation of the policy in his state was illegal and would be met by lawsuits. "This committee should file a lawsuit, too," he said. "You're thumbing your nose at Congress; you're going against the law. Your administration stinks right now."

During testimony by Governor Otter and Herbert, it was stated that over 65% of the land in their states was owned by the federal government and managed by either the BLM or the USFS. Out of this land only 2% was designated "Wilderness." Over the last two years no additional public land had been designated as "Wilderness" was a comment made by the Rep Markey (D-MA). Is there some mandate that requires a percentage of public land be designated as "Wilderness" each year? Written testimony from both governors may be found on the ALAA Web site under their respective state page. <http://www.amlands.org/6652/index.html>

By the end of the six-hour session, both sides had had their chance to state their case before the House Committee on Natural Resources, and BLM Director Abby had stated Secretary Salazar's position and reasons for issuing Secretarial Order Number 3310—Protecting Wilderness Characteristics on Lands Managed by the Bureau of Land Management. Committee Chairman Hastings stated more hearings are being scheduled to bring to a conclusion this important issue on Public Land Management. More information on the hearings may be found on the House Web site <http://naturalresources.house.gov/Calendar/EventSingle.aspx?EventID=226023> A webcast of the hearing is available on the ALAA Website and on the House Web site above.

## Public Lands Travel Management Plans Hits Snag in Courts

*by John Martin*

*CFMS PLAC South Chair*

*via CFMS Newsletter 4/2011 and Breccia 4/2011*

Several lawsuits have been filed by various environmental groups against both the Bureau of Land Management and the US Forest Service over their Travel Management Plans. These Travel Management Plans have been going through their development and approval stages for several years, and most of them have been released in their final version by the respective government agencies. In most cases the environmental activist groups felt that the government agencies did not do enough to protect the environment to the extent of the agencies own policies and procedures.

One of the long-running dispute centers on a Civil War-era mining law, known as R.S. 2477, which granted rights-of-way across public land until it was repealed by Congress in 1976. Existing rights-of-way, however, were grandfathered in, and now these environmental activists want most of these roads (Rights-of-way) across our Public Lands closed.

A large number of these roads and trails have been used for years by hunters, fishermen, and off-road users, and yes, even rockhounds use some of these roads to get to our favorite collecting areas or campsites. Congress has enacted legislation requiring agencies responsible for the management of our public lands to establish and implement a Travel Management Plan identifying for the multipurpose usage of roads, trails, and access rights-of-ways through the public lands they manage. They must take into consideration the recreational and commercial value of these roads and the environmental impact the roads and users of the roads may or may not have on the public land they manage.

The environmental activist groups have been active for several decades trying to achieve their agenda of having no unpaved roads through our public lands, or as they call it "A Roadless Wilderness," where the only way to gain access is on foot or horseback. This will kill most all rockhounding as we know it today.

What these lawsuits have accomplished, whether ruling in favor of the OHV users, the Government Agencies, or the Environmental Activist Lobby, is allow time to return to the negotiating table and reconsider and replan the usage of these roads across our public lands. Now we in the Rockhound community have a chance to let our voices be heard and our wishes be known on these matters. If we speak long enough and loudly enough and with a unified voice, we may just be able to keep our access roads open to mechanized travel now and for future Rockhounds to enjoy.

It will take several years to redraw the Travel Management Plans, so the fates of our collecting sites are ours to lose. Please get informed and become proactive in the process. A good way to start is to contact your Federation, Federation Director, and check often the American Land Access Association (ALAA) Web site. The CFMS Web site [www.cfmsinc.org](http://www.cfmsinc.org), the AFMS Web site, and all of the Regional Federation Web sites can be accessed through the ALAA Web site [www.amlands.org](http://www.amlands.org).

## Field Trip Updates

by Doug True

*Inter-Regional Field Trip Chair*

*from AFMS Newsletter 5/2011*

**WARNING- The Rules** for fieldtrips and collecting are changing on public lands.

Actually these rules are for any organized group using our public lands. The rules are open for interpretation, but most districts are saying that if there is a planned trip by two or more people and the schedule of your trip is published or posted, you must apply for a recreation permit.

You must find the local district you are going to collect in, determine if it is run by the BLM or USFS, and then request a recreation permit form 2930-1. In the application you will have to furnish maps (topographical, a written plan of your function, area where you are camping and what you are collecting, and the estimated number of attendees. You will also be required to show a certificate of insurance naming the BLM or USFS as insured. In some cases they may require you to supply Porta Potties.

In your report you should indicate the specific areas where you plan on collecting and indicate if you will be digging or surface collecting. You have a much better chance of getting a permit if you plan on surface collecting. If you're digging, the selected area will be scrutinized by a number of different departments: Archeological, Paleontology, Endangered plants, etc, etc.

After a review of your proposal, all or part of your request might be turned down. You need to work with the recreation officer and plan your trip together as this gives you a better chance of being successful.

In talking with different BLM districts, their numbers seem to vary as to what constitutes a group. There will also be a processing fee of around \$100 dollars. If you are planning a trip to public lands, **please check to see if your group trip is good to go.**



### Show Time 2011

|                |                  |   |
|----------------|------------------|---|
| April 30-May 1 | Lubbock, TX      | Lubbock Gem & Mineral Society<br>Lubbock Civic Center   |
| May 28-29      | Fort Worth, TX   | Fort Worth Gem & Mineral Society<br>Will Rogers Memorial Center   |
| July 7-10      | Syracuse, NY     | AFMS/EFMLS Federation Show<br>Gem & Mineral Society of Syracuse<br>New York State Fairgrounds<br>Center of Progress Bldg.<br>cathypatterson@verizon.net; www.gmss.us  |
| August 13-14   | Baton Rouge, LA  | Baton Rouge Gem & Mineral Society<br>Fraternal Order of Police  |
| August 20-21   | Bossier City, LA | Ark-La-Tex Gem & Mineral Society<br>Bossier City Civic Center   |
| August 27-28   | Jasper, TX       | Pine Country Gem & Mineral Society<br>Events Center   |
| September 3-4  | Arlington, TX    | Arlington Gem & Mineral Society<br>Arlington Convention Center  |
| September 3-4  | Denison, TX      | Texoma Rockhounds<br>Denison Senior Center  |
| October 8-9    | Temple, TX       | Tri-City Gem & Mineral Society<br>Mayborn Civic Center  |
| October 13-15  | Mount Ida, AR    | 25th Annual Quartz Crystal Digging Contest<br>Montgomery County Fairgrounds<br>Maureen Walther, Mt. Ida Ch. of Commerce<br>870 867-2723; www.mountidachamber.com<br>director@mountidachamber.com                            |
| October 14-16  | Victoria, TX     | Victoria Gem & Mineral Society<br>Community Center, 2905 E. North St.   |
| October 21-23  | Austin, TX       | Austin Gem & Mineral Society<br>Palmer Event Center   |
| October 29-30  | Glen Rose, TX    | Paleo Society of Austin<br>Somervell Expo Center, Hwy. 67   |
| November 5-6   | Amarillo, TX     | Golden Spread Gem & Mineral Society<br>Amarillo Civic Center, Exhibition Hall   |
| November 11-13 | Humble, TX       | Humble Civic Center, 8233 Will Clayton Pkwy.<br>5 miles east of Bush Intercontinental Airport<br>1 mile east of Hwy. 59; www.hgms.org<br>Chris&Theresa Peek; <a href="mailto:ladyt682@hotmail.com">ladyt682@hotmail.com</a> |



| 2011 |                                | May                           |  |                                |     | 2011   |
|------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|-----|--|
| Sun  | Mon                            | Tue                           | Wed  | Thu                            | Fri | Sat  |
| 1    | 2                              | 3 7:30<br>Board<br>Meeting    | 4 7:30<br>Mineral Section<br>10-5 Shop Open      | 5 7:30<br>Archaeology<br>Group | 6   | 7 10-5<br>Shop Open<br>10-12 Youth Section                       |
| 8    | 9 1:00<br>Day Light<br>Section | 10 7:30<br>Show<br>Committee  | 11 7:30<br>Faceting<br>Section<br>10-5 Shop Open | 12                             | 13  | 14 10-5<br>Shop Open   |
| 15   | 16 7:30<br>Lapidary<br>Section | 17 7:30<br>Paleo<br>Section   | 18 7:30<br>Mineral Section<br>10-5 Shop Open     | 19                             | 20  | 21 10-5 Shop Open<br>10-12 Youth Section<br>1:30 Beading Section |
| 22   | 23                             | 24 7:30<br>General<br>Meeting | 25<br>10-5 Shop Open                             | 26                             | 27  | 28 10-5<br>Shop Open   |
| 29   | 30<br>Memorial<br>Day          | 31                            |  |                                |     |  |

| 2011 |                                 | June                          |   |                                |     | 2011   |
|------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|-----|--|
| Sun  | Mon                             | Tue                           | Wed   | Thu                            | Fri | Sat  |
|      |                                 |                               | 1 7:30<br>Mineral Section<br>10-5 Shop Open     | 2 7:30<br>Archaeology<br>Group | 3   | 4 10-5<br>Shop Open<br>10-12 Youth Section                       |
| 5    | 6                               | 7 7:30<br>Board<br>Meeting    | 8 7:30<br>Faceting<br>Section<br>10-5 Shop Open | 9                              | 10  | 11 10-5<br>Shop Open   |
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| 26   | 27                              | 28 7:30<br>General<br>Meeting | 29<br>10-5 Shop<br>Open                         | 30                             |     |  |

# **The BACKBENDER'S GAZETTE**

*The Newsletter of the  
Houston Gem & Mineral Society*

10805 BROOKLET

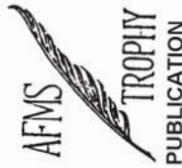
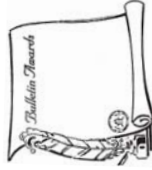
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