

The BACKBENDER'S GAZETTE

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

Volume XLIII - No. 4

April 2012



President's Messageby Charlie Fredregill

our president was so late in submitting his message that he might miss the BBG deadline. I like to wait until after the Board of Director's meeting to write the Presidents message just in case we have "breaking news." Well, everything is running relatively smoothly, which blows that excuse.

HGMS is blessed with a number of hard working people who keep our club house and organization going. People seem to find their niche and fit in comfortably. These include our shop helpers, our Section Chair people, our teachers, and numerous



others. I often see people who will drop their own projects to help out a relative new-comer. But right now, we need a very special volunteer to be the 2012 Annual Show Chairman (or Chairwoman). Now I know that you (whoever the **you** is) personally don't want the job. However, maybe you know someone whom you think will be a good candidate. If so, please let me know. Chris and Theresa Peek did a marvelous job last year. Unfortunately, they are now being pressed into double duty. They are taking care of questions and problems that the Show Chairman should handle as well as the job of publicity for the show. If we are going to maintain a high quality annual show, we need everybody's help.

Continued on page 4

Upcoming Program

arch 27, 2012: Sigrid Stewart has recently spent time in Indonesia on business. But she also learned about the 14,000 (!) islands and their geology. Fascinating stuff. Don't miss it.

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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, ½ page; \$150 for 6 months, ½ 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

On the matter of our club house expansion, I checked with the realtor of the building that has the "for sale" sign. Asking price of that building is \$350,000. Our building fund is not large enough for even a down payment on that amount. And we would still have other ongoing expenses of the building. When we bought our present building, we were coming off of several extremely successful shows (money-wise) that made financing our present building possible. Even though our last few shows have been successful ones that support our present club house very well, we don't have enough extra money for an expensive expansion. So we are back to the drawing board. Stay tuned for further developments.

Old Geezer in Mexico

by John Emerson Member of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society

y last out of the country assignment with dependents—1985—was in Mexico City. I was consulting for PEMEX (Mexican National Oil Company) for an offshore platform for drilling, production, and pipeline to shore in the Gulf of Mexico. I was the only Bechtel man and the only US American on the project in Mexico. I was called in from London to replace another Bechtel man who had developed cancer and had returned to Houston for treatment. Bobbie and I were pleased to get that much closer to home. I was chosen because of my experience with offshore construction and my supposed ability with Spanish. There was close engineering and procurement backup from the Bechtel Houston office.

Bobbie and I arrived in Mexico City April 5, 1985. One of the first things I did after finding an apartment was to take a "refresher" course in Spanish. My high school course in Spanish (1944—over 40 years before) and "Tex-Mex" spoken in South Texas and "Spanglish" in Argentina were not satisfactory when dealing with the PEMEX technical personnel. The routine was, if meeting in my office, English was spoken. All of the PEMEX engineers went to university in the US. When we were in their offices or conference room, only Spanish was spoken. They had lots of fun with my language proficiency. I was not offended and joined in with the laughter. If all else failed, English was used to translate a few words.

Bobbie and I became very good friends with the PEMEX Project Manager, Oscar Ruiz Carmona, and his wife Ginny. We played bridge with them at their home quite often—in English!

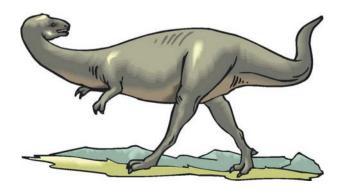
Bobbie had no problems with Spanish. She took two years of Spanish in high school, several courses in college, and spent part of the summer of 1945 in the university in San Luis Potosi, Mexico. Her parents did not explain why they sent her there. Possibly to get her away from me? In any case, she was very fluent in Spanish. It also came in handy when we lived in Argentina where she played bridge in an Argentine bridge club.

Getting ready for our return to Houston starting on August 23, 1985, we first rented what the Mexicans called a "combi" or a van to load our belongings to take back to our home in Houston. Our first day out, we drove from Mexico City to San Luis Potosi. On the way we were stopped by a Mexican motorcycle cop who demanded a bribe not to arrest us for hauling freight (our baggage) without a proper license! I don't remember how much we paid, it was all of the pesos I had in my pocket. Fortunately, Bobbie had all of our dollars and most of our travel pesos in her purse. I didn't put it on an expense report.

Talk about busy! After our return from Mexico to the Houston office on August 26, 1985, I left for a field trip—Houston to San Francisco, to Hong Kong, to Singapore, to Kuala Lumpur on August 30, 1985, to scout and choose a route for a pipeline from Kuala Lumpur to Singapore. I returned to Houston September 11, 1985. Bechtel did not win the bid for the construction of the pipeline, I am happy to say! I am not sure that we would have wanted to live in Kuala Lumpur at that time. Or any time for that matter. Plus it would have meant another language (Malay) to fight through.

We missed the magnitude 8.1 earthquake in Mexico City on September 19, 1985—23 days after we left. Later on a business trip back to Mexico City, I saw that the outside wall of our bedroom (when we lived there) was gone. It was on the eighth floor of an apartment building, and our bed was still visible from the street. The quake was early in the morning, and I think we both would have been in bed if we had still been living there.

All of these stories seem unreal now but at the time, of the Bechtel and other American companies' families that we knew, all were doing the same type living, traveling, and working that we did. We may have done more "touristing" than some of the others. While traveling by air on business trips in Europe, South America, Africa, and the Middle East, it was not at all uncommon to see another Bechtel man in the airport, recognizable by the Bechtel lapel pins we all wore while traveling. There were at that time, including local hires, over 80,000 Bechtel employees world-wide. At one time, I added up the number of miles that I had flown, and it was over 250,000 in the 21 years I worked for Bechtel. And I was only hijacked once! I must admit that some of my memories of the work done overseas are backed up by desk diaries. I do have quite a library of them.



HGMS Entries for SCFMS 2012 Bulletin Editors' Contest

by Phyllis George HGMS Newsletter Editor

t's that time of year again when rockhound newsletter editors throughout the U.S. scour through their previous year's newsletter issues to select articles and newsletters to submit to their regional 2012 Bulletin Editors' Contest. The entries from HGMS are listed below along with their category. The SCFMS results will be announced August 26 at the SCFMS Annual Show in Jasper, TX. The top three winners in each category will be forwarded to the AFMS judges, and the AFMS results will be announced July 29 during the AFMS/MWF annual show in Wayzata, MN.

Name Category		Title	Month
Phyllis George Large Bulletin		The Backbender's Gazette	February & September 2011
Kamp Maer, Ph.D.	Advanced Adult Article	Geologic Stories Told by a Texas Gully	September
Albert J. Robb III	Advanced Adult Article	Some Interesting Paleozoic Sharks of Texas	November
Aliza Giammateo	Adult Article	Life Lessons from Rock Hunting	May
Chris and Theresa Peek Adult Article		Johnson's Rock Shop, a Texas Legend	February
Deidre D. Prince Adult Article		Rock Stars Shine in Sugar Land	August
Kemp Maer	Adult Poetry	The Arrow Point	October
Mary Ann Mitscherling Adult Poetry		Field Trip	September
LaVon Westfall Adult Poetry		Rock Hound's Lament	November
Noelle Skubal (10 years old)	Junior Article	Our Topaz Mining Adventure	January
Karen Burns Feature		Word Magic	February
John Emerson	Feature	Old Geezer—More Miscellaneous Memories	April
Neal Immega	Feature	Cruisin' the Fossil Freeway—by Kirk Johnson and Ray Troll. A Book Review	September
Terrell William "Terry" Proctor, J.D.	Feature	Archeology Group Field Trip to McFaddin Beach	July

Mineral Section Programs

by Paul Brandes

Date: April 4, 2012

rogram: The Famous Kelly Mine of New Mexico. When one thinks of the Kelly Mine, immediately the mind pictures the wonderful blue/green Smithsonite the mine is famous for, but the Kelly Mine is much more than just another mine in New Mexico. Paul Brandes will give a presentation on the geology of the western Magdalena Mountains where the mine is located, the history of the Kelly Mine as well as other nearby mines, and the minerals of the area including, of course, Smithsonite. Section members are encouraged to bring in their Kelly specimens for show-and-tell and also to support the presentation. Refreshments will be provided.

Date: April 18, 2012

Program: Section Auction. The Mineral Section will be hosting its annual auction to help raise money for the Section. Once again, we invite **all** HGMS members to bring specimens to the auction. This is how it works: all of the proceeds (100%) of at least one (1) specimen of your choice must be donated to the Section. Five (5) additional specimens are allowed for each donor with a portion of those specimens (10%) going to the Section and the rest going to the donor (i.e.: if a specimen sells for \$50, \$5 goes to the Section, the remaining \$45 to the donor). This is a great way for **all** HGMS members to thin out their duplicate specimens and benefit both yourself and the Mineral Section. You can put a minimum reserve bid on the more expensive pieces if you desire. Since this event will draw from all Sections, expect a variety of items to be auctioned as this promises to be a very interesting and entertaining evening. Set-up will begin at 6:30 p.m. with viewing from 7:00 to 7:30. After a short business meeting, bidding will begin and last until the final item is sold.

Date: May 2, 2012

Program: Houston Fine Mineral Show Wrap-up. Bring in your recent acquisitions from the Houston Fine Mineral Show (April 27–29). Let other Section members gaze at your shiny new specimens while telling us how you came about it and from what dealer. Also, please share your experience of the show, good or bad, with the rest of the Section; what did they do correctly or poorly in your mind? What did they do that could benefit our show in November? Etc... Refreshments will be provided.

Date: May 16, 2012

Program: To be determined.

Date: June 6, 2012

Program: 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 begins at 7:00 p.m., and the formal business meeting will be kept to a minimum to allow ample time for specimen exchange and socializing. Refreshments will be provided.

Date: June 20, 2012

Program: Workshop/How-to demonstration (to be determined)

Date: July 18, 2012

Program: Workshop/How-to demonstration (to be determined)

Date: August 15, 2012

Program: Workshop/How-to demonstration (to be determined)

Date: September 5, 2012

Program: Welcome back! Typically our first meeting after the summer hiatus, this evening's presentation will be a synopsis of each member's summer mineral collecting adventures. Plenty of time will be available 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.

Date: September 19, 2012

Program: Minerals of a particular state/region (to be determined)

Day Light Section

Upcoming Meetings by Nancy Fischer Day Light Section Board Representative

pr suj

pril 9, 2012 - Carving an onyx pendant. Two sessions. The onyx will be supplied by the club. We will be using the club's flexible shafts.

May 14, 2012 - Carving onyx - continuation

June 11, 2012 - Start of the summer program. Val Link will conduct a series of three sessions. We will be making pewter slotted olive spoons. Material and tool lists coming soon.

July 9, 2012 - Val Link, pewter spoon - Part II

August 13, 2012 - Val Link, pewter spoon - Part III

September 10, 2012 - Wire wrapping. Two sessions. We will wire wrap the onyx pendant we made in the Spring. Charlie Fregerill will lead the session and provide training for those who need it. Material and tool list pending.

October 8, 2012 - Wire wrapping, Charlie Frederill - Part II

November 12, 2012 - Holiday Party. Note: this meeting starts at noon. Ham provided. Everyone brings a side dish.

December - no meeting.

Archaeology Section

March 1, 2012 by Burton Dworsky

/he Archaeology Section held its monthly meeting on March 1, 2012 at the HGMS clubhouse with 17 members present. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Dr. Garth Clark at 7:40 p.m.

Old Business

The minutes for the previous month were approved.

In other old business, the details for the March 10 group trip to Chrisners Ranch near Temple, Texas for an arrowhead hunt were discussed. Details were reviewed regarding the March 24 trip to McFaddin beach to look for artifacts. For details on this trip, please contact Terry Procter at auraman@swbell.net.

New Business

The need for the group to raise funds was discussed. The decision was made to look into various ideas for fundraising, and these are to be brought to the group and decided upon at a later date.

In addition, the group discussed what would go into the cases and table for the HGMS show.

Presentation

In preparation for the upcoming field trips, Terry Proctor had a short presentation on Texas Native American tribes. The Web site www.arrowheadology.com was brought up as one of the best online communities for Native American projectile point collectors. The site had a lot of good information and a very active forum.

Dr. Garth Clark talked on how there is now a genetic link between certain Native Americans and the peoples of specific parts of Asia.

Show and Tell

Jon Hart brought several artifacts beginning with an American Civil War Hotchkiss artillery shell. From the Native American realm, he had a restored friendship bowl from Arkansas and two frames of projectile points. One of the frames was representative of what could be found at Chrisners Ranch, and the other frame contained points he found on the Brazos river.

Terry Proctor brought several Native American pottery shards from the American Southwest.

Gary Campbell brought two excellent points that he had found on the Brazos and Colorado rivers.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00.

In attendance at the meeting: Gary Campbell, Aaron Clark, Billie Clark, Briana Clark, Garth Clark, Landan Clark, Douglas Dodds, Burton Dworsky, Jon Hart, Steve Jackey, Miss Deidre Prince, Terry Proctor, John Ragusa, Peter Ragusa, Tom Schwartz, Lisa Schwartz, and Rod Underwood.

Lastly, a reminder: the Archaeology Section meets the first Thursday of each month at 7:30 p.m. in the HGMS Clubhouse. The next meeting will be April 5, 2012. So if you have an interest in archaeology, would like to give a presentation, or you have some artifacts to show, please come out, join us, and have some fun.



Photos by Burton Dworsky

Left: American Civil War Hotchkiss artillery shell from Jon Hart's collection.

Below: Native American friendship bowl and points from Jon Hart's collection.



Photos by Terry Proctor



Secretary Burton Dworsky (I) and Chairman, Garth Clark, M.D.



Front row: Briana Clark, Garth Clark, M.D., Billie Clark, Landan

Clark, Aaron Clark, & Douglas Dodds.

Second row: J on Hart, Tom Schwartz, Lisa Schwartz and Steve

Jackey.

Third row: Gary Campbell, Burton Dworsky and Deidre Prince. **Fourth row:** Rod Underwood, Peter Ragusa and John Ragusa, a

visitor and son of Peter Ragusa.

General Meeting Minutes

February 28, 2012 by Sarah Metsa HGMS Secretary

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

Visitors and New Members: Andy Milan was a visitor with an in

Visitors and New Members: Andy Milan was a visitor with an interest in faceting and lapidary. Andy and Brenda Reinhart are new members who are interested in everything HGMS has to offer.

Prior Month General Meeting Minutes: Karen Burns moved that the January General Meeting minutes be accepted as published. The motion was seconded, and it passed unanimously.

Officer, Committee, and Section Reports

BBG: The SCFMS Bulletin Aids Chair running the annual Bulletin Editors' Contest is new in the job and is still working on understanding how it works. HGMS submitted 14 entries. The AFMS contest results will be announced at their annual show July 29, and the SCFMS contest results will be announced August 26 in Jasper, TX.

Faceting Section: The March program will be given by Wayne Barnett and will be about using GemCad to design faceted stones.

Beading Section: The March project is the Bombay bracelet. It uses two different sizes of seed beads, two different sizes of larger beads, and Swarovski crystals. The materials list and the instructions are on the HGMS Web site. Click on the Upcoming Programs button.

Paleo Section: There is a field trip to Brownwood on March 16 and 17 to look for Pennsylvanian fossils. The March program, to be given by Marce Stayer, a docent at HMNS, is about the collection and preparation of dimetrodons.

Lapidary Section: The Lapidary Section is hosting a cabbing competition with four required stones per entry this year. Entries are due by September 15, and the results will be announced at the HGMS annual show in November. The fee to enter is \$15. The first place prize is \$200, and the second place prize is \$100. The materials to be used in the competition are chrysoprase, imperial jasper, and spectralite. See the HGMS Web site for specific information.

Mineral Section: The first March meeting will be a show and tell of acquisitions made at the Clearlake Show. The second March meeting will be given by Steve Blyskal about the Naica mines in Chihuahua, Mexico. The first April meeting will be about the Kelly Mine in New Mexico as presented by Paul Brandes, and the second April meeting will have a mineral auction.

Archeology Section: Two field trips are scheduled for March.

Education: New classes are being scheduled. The jewelry making room has been cleaned up and organized. If you use this room, please put items back where they belong.

March General Meeting Program: Sigrid Stewart will describe some of her trip to Indonesia.

Drawing: Bob Fischer won a belt buckle set with five agate cabochons.

Program: Inda Immega, Margo Bedman, and Debbie Kirkpatrick did a presentation on the Van Pelt carved items on display now at the Houston Museum of Natural Science. On March 18 Inda will provide an in-person tour of the display.

Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 9 p.m.

Board of Director's Meeting Minutes

March 6, 2012 by Sarah Metsa HGMS Secretary

X	President – Charlie Fredregill	X	Beading Rep – Jillynn Hailes
X	1 st Vice President – Bill Moore	Х	Faceting Rep – Gary Tober
Х	2 nd Vice President – Beverly Mace	X	Lapidary Rep – Phyllis George
Х	Treasurer – Rodney Linehan	X	Mineral Rep – Sigrid Stewart
Х	Secretary – Sarah Metsa	Х	Paleontology Rep – Mike Dawkins
Х	Past President – Steve Blyskal	Х	Day Light Rep – Nancy Fischer
			Archeology Rep – Terry Proctor

/he meeting was called to order at 7:37 p.m. with a quorum of seven members present.

Previous Month's Board of Directors Meeting Minutes: The minutes of the February 2012 Board Meeting were published in the March 2012 BBG. Sigrid Stewart moved to approve the minutes of the previous meeting as published. Steve Blyskal seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Rodney Linehan was present. He provided an update on each bank account, and he reported that HGMS is in good financial condition.

Officer, Committee, and Section Reports

Beading Section: Jillynn Hailes reported that they planned on making a button bracelet. The March project is a Bombay bracelet. A materials list is on the Beading Section's page of the HGMS Web site.

Faceting Section: For the March program, Wayne Barnett will be giving a presentation about using computer-aided design (GemCad) for designing faceted gems.

Lapidary Section: The Lapidary Section's upcoming cabochon cutting contest has been getting a lot of attention. Ed Clay has given the contest information to many Web sites, some in other countries. The Section has recently been contacted by two people in Australia wanting to purchase cabochon templates.

Mineral Section: Sigrid Stewart reported that the February meetings were focused on the Tucson show and the acquisitions people bought while visiting. The first March meeting will be show-and-tell of purchases from the Clear Lake show. The second March program will be presented by Steve Blyskal and will be about the Naica Mines in Chihuahua.

Paleo Section: There is a field trip to Brownwood planned for March 16 and 17 to hunt for Pennsylvanian fossils. Contact Mike Dawkins for information.

Archaeology Section: The March 10 trip to the Chrisner Ranch near Temple was cancelled due to anticipated rain all weekend. The McFaddin beach trip is still on at this time.

Youth Section: Paul Robles has been teaching wire wrapping, and it has been going well.

Education Committee: Education Chair Sarah Metsa discussed various marketing ideas with Board members. Some of the recommended venues were Facebook, Houston Press, Houston Visitor's Council, Meetup, etc. Sarah will begin exploring these sites in order to market HGMS classes to a broader base of potential students.

Upcoming Programs: Bill Moore advised that the March General Meeting program will be presented by Sigrid Stewart, and the topic is Indonesia—14,000 Islands. Also, Bill has obtained a list of potential programs that are available through the SCFMS Program Library. He will review the list to determine if there are programs that he would like to request from this resource.

Show Committee: Steve Blyskal provided budget information. The show came in under budget last year, and this year's budget was approximately the same as last year's budget. Gary Tober moved that the budget be approved, and Nancy Fischer seconded. It passed unanimously. Additionally, Charlie Fredregill signed the contract with the Humble Convention Center, and Rodney Linehan will provide a check to be sent in with the contract. Finally there was a little discussion about having meal tickets as a tracking method for dealer's meals. This idea will be discussed further at a later date.

BBG & Web site: March 7 is the due date for submissions to the BBG. Photos from the Archeology Section's meeting and for the Beading Section's meeting have been received by Phyllis George for publishing in the BBG.

Old Business

General Meetings: Nancy Fischer asked if the General Meeting's order of business could be presented as follows: call the meeting to order, recognize guests and new

members, introduce the speaker and have the program, have the drawing, take a brief break, then complete with the business meeting and Show 'n Tell. This meeting format would be used only when important business items are not on the agenda, and using that format is subject to President discretion.

PayPal for credit cards: There was discussion about arranging for some club payments to be made using PayPal. In the case of education and class registration, using PayPal would allow students to pay for classes right away and ensure that the student's spot is guaranteed in a class. This would also help avoid instances of lost checks, mail delivery delays, and other issues. Gary Tober moved to allow the Education Chair to establish a PayPal account for the purpose of receiving class registration payments, with the potential of other Sections also utilizing the PayPal account in the event it would prove helpful to them. Phyllis George seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously. The Education Chair will secure a PayPal account for HGMS and will work with Rodney Linehan to connect it to an active checking account. Phyllis George will then add link information to the HGMS Web site.

New Locks on Doors: Charlie Fredregill researched keys that could not be easily replicated in order to better control the number of people who can unlock the club exterior doors. He found a company called Medeco that makes keys which locksmiths will not replicate and Medeco will not replicate unless instructions are received from an authorized account signer. Charlie will begin compiling a list of people who should get keys, and the Board members will review the list at the next Board meeting. Once locks are replaced, the keys will be numbered and issued, and the Secretary of the Board will be responsible for maintaining the list of key holders and their assigned key.

Install grab bar, repair broken curb: Neal Immega has repaired the broken curb in the parking lot. Thanks Neal!! Charlie Fredregill is going to see if Neal could also install a grab-bar just inside the club's back door in order to provide stability for members needing such assistance.

New Business

Collection Donation Contact: Tony Lucci and Charlie Fredregill were talking about collection donations the club receives for fundraising or club retention. Tony advised Charlie that he would be willing to go out and secure the collections and bring them to the club for storage and safekeeping. After discussion the Board determined that this was a great offer and would be very helpful to the club, as well as to donors looking for a contact person in regard to their collections. Charlie will advise Tony that the club will take up his offer, and Phyllis George will add an e-mail address to the club Web site—collections@hgms.org—that will route to Tony's attention for handling.

Adjourn: Gary Tober moved and Steve Blyskal seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

AFMS Show—A Celebration of Agates

by Sandy Fuller, Convention Chair from AFMS Newsletter 3/2012

gates, agates! Almost every area has some type of local agate; a distinctly banded chalcedony quartz.

This July, agate enthusiasts and novices are gathering at A Celebration of Agates, an international symposium and show in Minnetonka, Minnesota. The event is being held in conjunction with the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies' annual convention.

Festivities begin on Thursday July 26 in the Lindbergh Center at Hopkins High School with a day of seminars. Those attending the AFMS meetings scheduled for the same day can still attend a half-day of presentations. Register by April 1 for the early bird discount.

The facility is not your typical high school. When the Hopkins school district upgraded their facilities, they created state-of-the-art space for major community events. Seminars, meetings, the banquet, and the show are all scheduled at the same location. The only off-site event is the Uniform Rules Committee meeting on Wednesday afternoon at the nearby Marriot Minneapolis West Hotel.

A Celebration of Agates is a unique event, featuring some of the top agate collectors from around the world. Here is a chance to personally meet some of the collectors profiled in *Agates II* by Johann Zenz. Thursday's keynote speaker Dr. Jens Gõtze keeps abreast with the latest research and is considered the world's foremost authority on agate formation and genesis. Meanwhile, his personal collection of worldwide agates continues to grow.

Those who are able to come early are also invited to attend Moose Lake Agate Days on July 21–22. You won't want to miss the agate scramble in downtown on Saturday, the two-day show, or the opportunity to collect at area gravel pits. The fireman's steak dinner fundraiser and "Art in the Park" round out this community-wide event.

Host Minnesota Mineral Club has invited other clubs in the state to sponsor field trips during Monday through Wednesday, July 23–25. Details will be posted as they become available.

Marriot is providing host accommodations at the Marriot West Hotel (just one mile from the show site) and Spring Hill Suites (two miles). Both facilities are \$79 a night per room, and event rates will be honored from July 20–30.

Remember to mention "A Celebration of Agates" to qualify for this special rate.

Event registration forms and hospitality information are available online at <minnesotamineralclub.org/2012show.htm>. Inquiries can be submitted through the Web site or sent to 2012agates@gmail.com. Want to talk to a live person? Call Sandy at 651-459-0343 or Phil at 763-717-1641.

Multi-Federation Field Trip

by Doug True, Chair from AFMS Newsletter 2/2012

Your Input Is Needed!!

he next multi-federation field trip is scheduled for June 13–15,2012. We will have four (4) trips to collect petrified wood in the Twin Springs area south of Ontario, Oregon. We're planning on collecting wood in the Grassy Mountain area, Hoodoo Basin, several white plume areas, and others.

So here's a question for all of you: Where would you like to camp? There are some options.

Option #1: I have made arrangements for the fairgrounds in Ontario, Oregon at \$10 per night dry camp. There is also water and electricity available as well as restrooms and showers. This is a great spot, but about 45 to 60 minutes from the collecting site.

Option #2: Twin Springs camp ground is located in the middle of the collecting area, 13 miles into back country. This is a dry camp with no water or electricity. There is an outhouse, but it's quite a way into back country. BUT it's in the middle of all of the trips for the 4 days, 10–15 minutes to all locations. We will bring in more toilets.

What's your preference? **I need to know your interests as soon as possible** as I need to apply for a permit if we want to camp at Twin Springs since it's on BLM land. E-mail me ASAP at <dtruefossils@ yahoo.com>.

Tidbits of SCFMS History

Compiled by: Mignon Wagnor, 1943-1992 Paul W. Good, 1993-2012 from SCFMS Newsletter 1-2/2012

The South Central Federation had its beginning in December, 1943 in San Angelo, TX, in the home of Mr. and Mrs. W. E. (Bill) Curry. The organization was named "THE STATE MINERAL SOCIETY OF TEXAS." W. E. Curry was elected the first President, and Mrs. Viola Block was the first Secretary/Treasurer. The first convention and show was held in 1944 in San Angelo, TX, in the Ball Room of the Plaza Hotel.

The annual conventions and shows were held alternately between San Antonio and Austin from 1947–1951. Finally the tradition was broken, and The Fort Worth Gem & Mineral Club, Fort Worth, TX hosted the 1952 convention and show.

The Federation Slide Program Library was officially established in 1962. Thirty-one clubs were now affiliated with the Federation. At the AFMS/TFMS show in Fort Worth, TX, June, 1970, the name was changed to SOUTH CENTRAL FEDERATION OF MINERAL SOCIETIES, INC., (SCFMS). One special exhibit at this show was "The Moon Rock."

At the Federation convention, May 1972, plans were made to improve the Federation bulletin and to have a judges training seminar in the future.

In 1973 the SCFMS was presented with a 100% plaque for their contributions to the American Federation Scholarship Foundation. This was the year the Federation had 42 clubs with over 3,000 members.

In 1982 the combined AFMS & SCFMS show was held on July 8–11, 1982, in Houston, TX. By this time the SCFMS had given more, percentage wise, to the AFMS Scholarship Foundation than any other member Federation.

In 1992, Mignon L. Wagner, Past President of the SCFMS, was the second person to receive the SCFMS Gold Sparkplug Award.

During the year of 2002 the SCFMS met in Tyler, TX, for its annual Convention and Show. Due to the generosity of several clubs and individuals, the Endowment Fund went over the \$100,000 mark. At the AFMS/NFMS Show, eight clubs brought home Awards in the Bulletin Editors' Contest. The Federation brought home the Trophy for the most entries percentage of clubs/members per Federation for the third year in a row. Four clubs were presented with awards from the AFMS All-American Clubs Awards program.

In November, 2002, Ron Carman, SCFMS Past President and HGMS Past President, became the sixth person from the SCFMS to be elected as the AFMS President.

February, 2003 the SCFMS Convention and Show was hosted by the Clear Lake Gem and Mineral Society at the Pasadena Convention Center, and it was a great success. The Federation celebrated its 60th year.

This brings us up to 2012. The Annual Federation Show will be held in Jasper, TX on August 25–26. The show will be hosted by the Pine Country Gem and Mineral Society. So mark your calendar and plan to be there for that show. You won't want to miss this one.

Water - Part II.

by Richard Peterson from Pick & Shovel 3/2012

he last time we talked, the Helpful Tip began our discussion on what to do if, in an emergency, you had to drink stream or river water. Your best bet to minimize gastrointestinal problems is to boil, chemically treat, or filter.

BOILING: This method will kill **any**, repeat any, organisms in the water. No matter at what altitude you find yourself, or the time it takes to bring the water to a rolling boil, the temperature is sufficient to kill E. coli, Giardia, Cryptosporidium, and any other water-borne pathogen. Don't be in a hurry; boil the water for a full two minutes. Boiling is dependent on having fuel to burn. Remember, you need a fire, some way to start the fire, a metal container in which to boil the water, and the patience it takes for the water to come to a rolling boil.

CHEMICAL TREATMENT: Chemicals having the ability to disinfect water are known as halogens, and include iodine and chlorine. Their effectiveness is directly related to their concentration in the water, the time the halogen is in contact with the water, and the water temperature.

- > IODINE: This is available in tablet or liquid form. Tablets are easier to carry and use. Iodine kills bacteria, viruses, and most protozoan cysts. The recommended dosage of 2 tablets per quart of water is sufficient to kill Giardia. Three tablets should be used if the quality of the water is suspect. Once placed in the water, the tablets should be allowed to sit for at least thirty minutes, then the water shaken, and let sit again. This will ensure thorough mixing. Iodine tablets deteriorate when exposed to heat, humidity, and moisture, all three of which reduce their effectiveness. Over time, opening the bottle repeatedly to remove tablets results in the normally gray-colored tablets changing to a greenish or yellow color. Always use fresh iodine tablets. Read the fine print on the brand you decide to buy. Advantages: Easy to use, lightweight, and inexpensive. Disadvantages: Some people are allergic to iodine, people with thyroid problems should not use them, and some popular brands don't protect against Cryptosporidium.
- CHLORINE: Several products on the market release chlorine when added to water. Do not carry a small container of common household bleach in your survival kit to disinfect your water. There are many variables when using liquid bleach; the concentration, number (and size) of drops to add, the time needed to let it sit, and the water temperature. With so many variables, the water you think you're disinfecting may not really be safe to drink. Carry fresh chlorine tablets and follow the manufacturer's instructions. Advantages: No after taste and unlike iodine, kills Cryptosporidium. Disadvantage: Four hour contact time with the water necessary to disinfect.

FILTRATION: Sounds simple, but there is a lot of confusion as to how effectively filtration devices really disinfect. Some filters only remove the "big stuff," like Giardia and Cryptosporidium, while others remove smaller organisms such as viruses. Some filtration devices are pumps; some are bottles that require you to force (usually by sucking) the water through a filter, while others rely on gravity. If you are interested in such devices, read the fine print; there are many products from which to choose. Search the Internet or visit the nearest outdoor sports store for the appropriate products. Store personnel are frequently, but not always, very knowledgeable. As in any purchase, do your homework so you know the questions to ask.

For all the methods of disinfection discussed, you will have to decide what extra gear to carry in your backpack. Words of advice: Carry plenty of water with you so you don't have to drink the water available. For more information, check out http://www.outdoorsafe.com/safewater.htm.

On The Rocks—Torch Safety

Tips, Ideas, Questions, and Answers on Anything Relating to the Hobby Author's name not given

from The Agatizer, January 2012, via Gem Cutters News 2/2012

Oxy-Acetylene Torch Safety

he advantage of collecting rocks and minerals is that no upkeep or maintenance is required. You might have to dust them off occasionally, but that's about it. Everything else seems to need some periodic maintenance. Not even editing the bulletin goes without maintenance. I finally had to duct tape my old dictionary back together!

If you're into lapidary or jewelry fabrication, it seems there is no end to maintenance required by the many tools you need. After a long hiatus from jewelry making, I finally found the time to re-start a few weeks ago. First, I had to attend to a little startup maintenance. The oil in my slab saw had thickened up, one of the wheels on my Genie had lost its mojo, cabs were falling off their dop sticks, my propane air torch nozzle was all gummed up, one of my cans of dry acid pickle had eaten through its container, and many of my steel tools had a fine dusting of rust on their surfaces.



Not all tools show evidence of needed repairs though. The other day I was lighting my Little Torch to melt some scrap silver on charcoal for a design I was working on when it "back flashed" and ruptured the acetylene line, setting it on fire. I immediately dropped the hand piece to the floor because I could feel the heat radiating from a flame where the hoses connect to the hand piece. I instinctively went for the oxygen turn-off valve on the tank since it was the closest to me. By the time I cut off the oxygen, the acetylene line had burned through the tubing creating a six-inch smoke and flaming volcano, emanating toward my

work bench. I immediately kicked the line outside the garage and then quickly turned off the acetylene. Slightly shaken (not stirred), I decided to call it a day.

At first I thought I may have caused the failure when I improperly turned off the torch prior to relighting it. With Oxy/fuel torches, you should turn on the fuel first, light the torch, and then turn on the oxygen. When you turn it off; you are supposed to **turn off the oxygen first and then turn off the fuel.** If you turn off the fuel first, you will hear a snap (a tiny explosion) as the burning fuel tails off inside the fuel line. I rarely make that mistake, but to my dismay over the years, I haven't been able to completely eliminate it.

After a little consultation with Brad Smith and Google, I discovered another possibility. My 12-year old gas lines might be drying out and getting brittle. Sure enough, they did seem to break apart easily when bent to extreme.

The torch failure unfortunately came at a very bad time. I was in the middle of making lapis pendants on an industrial scale for the holidays. So, I foolishly decided to take what I thought was a reasonably safe risk while waiting for the new gas lines I had ordered. I reconnected the hoses, lit the torch, and proceeded to go to work. It wasn't long before the properly set flame began to shrink, then pop!

Once again the acetylene line blew off at the hand piece. This time I got a burn on the tip of my left hand, ring finger. Burning acetylene, even in air alone, creates a toasty 4500°F plume, way too hot for a reflexive response to save you. Fortunately, it was only a first degree burn, no visible damage, but it still hurt like Hell for half an hour. Ah, I sensed the smell of burning flesh!





This incident could have been avoided had I properly read the clues I was provided. For one, the needle on my low pressure acetylene gauge has for some time stopped at the 5-pound mark on the scale instead of going to zero with the gas turned off. I just assumed it had somehow just repositioned there, and all I had to do was to subtract five pounds from whatever the needle pointed at to get the correct pressure. Wrong!

I had removed the gauge after the first incident in an attempt to replace it with another one I had, but the thread size didn't match. So I opened the faulty gauge to see if I could see what was going on inside. Here again, I failed to recognize an important clue. The Bourdon tube was slightly distorted ("ballooned") rendering the gauge, at best, nonlinear.



Ballooned Bourdon

The gauge works on a simple principal similar to those New Year's noise makers we are so fond of. Gas under pressure slightly inflates the sealed metal Bourdon tube, causing it to want to straighten out. A lever and gears attached to the end of the tube translate that angular motion to a needle on a linear, circular scale.

Apparently, my gauge was permanently distorted by one of my "back flashes." A faulty gauge, aging gas lines, and in general, simple ignorance put me in harm's way. Don't let it

happen to you. Keep your equipment in good condition.

Follow-up

I opened the gauge one more time and took a long look at it. I noticed the Bourdon tube had a quarter-inch crimp on the end where the linkage is attached and instantly got one of those moments of "enlightenment." *That's how they set the zero point!*

I took one of my needle nose pliers and put a tiny crimp in the tube. The brass tube was thin and annealed soft, so very little effort was required.

I noticed the dial now rested at 2.5 pounds, so I did it again and it came to rest at zero. I then tested it with a little air pressure,



Normal Bourdon

using a solder sucker bulb inserted into the input tube, then giving it a gentle squeeze. It seemed to work. Now if I could only verify its accuracy with a couple of calibrated pressure sources.

A Salvage Dig at Lodgepole

by Kenneth Quinn, mosasaur47@msn.com from Paleontograph, 2/2012, via MWF News 3/2012

Lodgepole, you would have little indication that you are at the site of a significant fossil discovery. I spent several weeks in the summer of 1970 excavating a herd of Galapagos-sized tortoises, horses, a mastodon tusk, and a primitive dog from the right-of-way about one mile east of the Lodgepole exit. When federal funds are involved in highway construction and items of scientific or historical interest are threatened by the construction, the federal government will provide funds to rescue such items in the same proportion that federal funds are involved in the construction itself. For interstate highways, this is 90%, with the state needing to kick in the other 10%. Nebraska has a program to provide those matching funds, and for several years I was the paleontologist who examined construction sites for fossils and salvaged any that I found; these were deposited in the University of Nebraska State Museum.

When I got the call from my supervisor to hurry down to Lodgepole, I was in the general area and was able to be there in a few hours. The contractor excavating the roadbed was having a hard time. The material was a sandy silt, but it was very well cemented by calcium carbonate and was almost like hard limestone. Each pass by the "scrapers" only lowered the surface by a fraction of an inch, but that was enough to expose little circles of bone—the tops of tortoise carapaces! A quick survey showed about 10 spots where fossils had been exposed, and who knew how many more would show up? I had an unpaid but enthusiastic helper—my wife—but clearly I needed help. I called back to the museum and reported the situation.

There was good news. About 100 miles away was a crew of four geology students who had been working at a known fossil deposit of Tertiary vertebrates, excavating additional bones from that site. With time being at a premium at Lodgepole, they were told to pack up and assist me. One day later, they were at Lodgepole.

There is a standard method for excavating and removing vertebrate fossils. You expose what you can of the surface of the skeleton—or more often, the single bone—and then dig around it to form a pillar. The bone is usually rather fragile and needs several coats of shellac to strengthen it. After the shellac dries, tissue paper is placed over the exposed bone. Next, you undercut the pillar somewhat. Then, you soak strips of burlap in plaster of Paris and wrap the strips around the block containing the fossil. After the plaster dries, you detach the block from the pillar, roll it over and cap it with more burlap and plaster. We started doing that to every tortoise, digging as fast as we could in order to delay construction as little as possible. The machinery worked on other sections of the roadbed, sometimes passing within a few feet of us as we dug frantically.

Several facts became obvious as we uncovered the tortoises. Each carapace was tilted, with the head end upward, but no skull bones were there. We did find one fragment of one skull, but that was it. The limb bones were all there, and even the dermal armor was preserved—something that I understand is very rare.

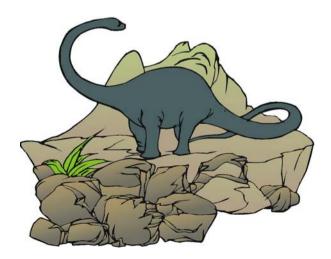
Along with the nature of the enclosing sediment, I could reconstruct what had happened to preserve this herd of tortoises. The area must have been something like the modern Platte River, shallow but wide, with areas of silty sand that had properties similar to quicksand. Mammals could struggle out of such areas, but the tortoises,

clumsier and with a higher density, would become trapped. They would slowly sink lower, keeping their heads above the surface. Carnivores and scavengers would then trot out and scavenge the heads, dragging them to the banks before eating them. The identity of one of these carnivores was revealed when we found the skull of a primitive canid (a type of dog) that had died and become entombed in the riverbed. The worn teeth in that skull indicate the animal may have died of old age, a rare way for an animal to die!



In all, we recovered around 35 tortoises, the canid, and scattered bones of some mammals. Some horse remains allowed us to place a date on the sediments; they were of Late Pliocene age. After a while, the rich deposit of fossils played out and the four students returned to their former endeavor. I stayed at the Lodgepole site longer, seeing if anything else turned up. My patience was rewarded when the machinery uncovered a mastodon tusk from a shovel tusk mastodon. Some mastodons had the tusks in their lower jaw, and they modified to enable them to dig up tubers and such in swampy areas. This was such an animal. Its presence confirmed my conclusion about the area having been a riverbed, or at least a swampy area. In later years, I would remind my wife that she was the only woman on the block to help dig up a mastodon tusk! Such spectacular finds are rare.

My career was cut short due to health problems, and I was lucky to have participated in such an event.



West Nile Virus

by Mark Nelson, Emergency Medical Technician Pasadena (CA) Lapidary Society from AFMS Newsletter 3/2012

est Nile Virus (WNV) is a concern for rock collectors during field trips, and knowledge of the causes and prevention can help us all enjoy our hobby more fully! WNV is a mosquito-borne disease that was originally found in Africa. In 1999, it was detected in the eastern United States. Since then the virus has spread throughout the United States and is well-established in most states. WNV is spread by the bite of a mosquito that becomes a carrier ("vector") when it feeds on infected birds or squirrels. Infected mosquitoes can then spread WNV to humans and other animals when they bite.

California's first case of human infection for 2011 occurred in Santa Barbara County in July. Infection with WNV can produce serious, life threatening, illness and should be taken seriously. While most people (80%) who are infected with WNV will not show any symptoms, the other 20% will display symptoms. In its mildest form, these symptoms can include fever, headache, body ache, nausea, vomiting, and sometimes swollen lymph glands or a skin rash on the chest, stomach, and back. Symptoms generally last for just a few days, although even previously healthy people have been sick for several weeks.

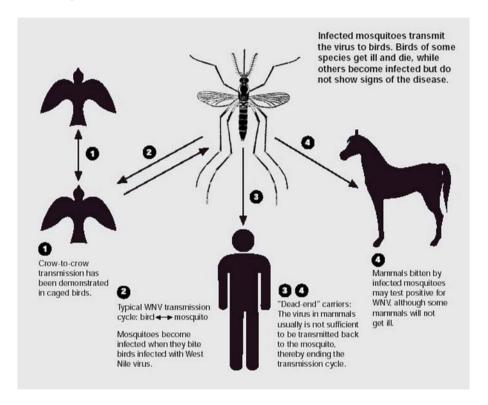
Residents are cautioned to take precautions NOW to avoid mosquito bites and eliminate standing water sources to break the mosquito life cycle. The CDC and the California Department of Public Health recommend the "4 Ds."

- DEET Apply insect repellent containing DEET, picaradin, oil of lemon eucalyptus or IR3535 (according to label instructions) on exposed skin when you go outdoors. Repellants keep the mosquitoes from biting you. DEET can be used safely on infants and children 2 months of age and older.
- > DRESS Wear clothing that reduces the risk of skin exposure to mosquito bites. Wear long-sleeves, long pants, and socks when outdoors. Mosquitoes may bite through thin clothing, so spraying clothes with repellent will give extra protection. Don't apply repellents containing permethrin directly to skin. Do not spray repellent on the skin under your clothing.
- DAWN AND DUSK Mosquitoes bite in the early morning and evening so it is important to wear repellent at this time. Make sure that your doors and windows have tight-fitting screens to keep out mosquitoes. Repair or replace screens with tears or holes.
- > DRAIN Mosquitoes lay their eggs on standing water. Eliminate all sources of

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

standing water on your property including flower pots, old car tires, rain gutters, and pet bowls. If you have a pond, use mosquito fish (available from your local mosquito and vector control agency) or commercially available products to eliminate mosquito larvae.

You can help track down the West Nile Virus by reporting all dead birds and squirrels, which often die as a result of the WNV infection. To find the WNV reporting agency for your state, call the U.S. Center for Disease Control, which was the source of the information contained in this article, at (800) CDC-INFO (232-4636) or go online to www.cdc.gov/westnile.



Hidden Treasure

Cubic Zirconia or Diamonds...how can you tell? from Roc-Tok 2/1997, via The Rock Prattle 5/2000, and Rock Rattler 6/2000

- 1. CZ (cubic zirconia) doesn't have the sharp edges of a diamond.
- 2. A line drawn on a sheet of paper is visible through a diamond.
- 3. CZ will be transparent if dropped in water; a diamond will remain visible.
- 4. Take it to a Jeweler!

Show Time 2012

April 14	Little Rock, AR	Central Arkansas Gem, Min. & Geology Soc. Burns Park; Elder Johnson Pavilion Mike Austen (501) 868-4553 steelpony@aol.com
April 14-15	Abilene, TX	Central Texas Gem & Mineral Society Abilene Civic Center; N. 6th and Pine St. Linda Hollowell, (325) 721-4477 Web site: www.txol.net/rockclub
April 20-22	Alpine, TX	Chihuahuah Desert Gem & Mineral Club Alpine Civic Center, Hwy. 90 West Mary Brogan: (432) 386-2340 mary brogan@rocketmail.com
April 28-29	Lubbock, TX	Lubbock Gem & Mineral Society Lubbock Civic Center; 1501 Mac Davis Ln. Archie Scott, sarchie32@yahoo.com www.lubbockgemandmineral.org
May 26-27	Fort Worth, TX	Fort Worth Gem & Mineral Club Will Rogers Memorial Center 3401 W. Lancaster Steve Hilliard, fwgmc@embarqmail.com fortworthgemandmineralclub.org
June 2-3	Stafford, TX	Intergalactic Bead & Jewelry Show Rebekah Wills, rebekah@thebeadmarket.net www.thebeadmarket.net
August 11-12	Baton Rouge, LA	Baton Rouge Gem & Mineral Society Marriott Hotel; 5500 Hilton Ave., off I-10 Diana Martin, (225) 931-7543 cajunladi@cox.net
August 25-26	Jasper, TX	Pine Country Gem & Mineral Society The Event Center; 6258 Hwy. 190 W Lonnie Stalsby, (409) 382-5314
September 29-30	Murfreesboro, AR	Crater of Diamonds State Park Diamond Discovery Cntr.; 209 State Park Rd. margaret.jenks@arkansas.gov; www.craterofdiamondsstatepark.com
November 9-11	Humble, TX	Houston Gem & Mineral Society Humble Civic Center, 8233 Will Clayton Pkwy. 5 miles east of Bush Intercontinental Airport 1 mile east of Hwy. 59; www.hgms.org

2012)		Ар	2012		
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3 7:30 Board Meeting	4 7:30 Mineral Section 10-3 Shop Open	5 7:30 Archaeology Group	6	7 10–5 Shop Open 10–12 Youth Section
8	9 1:00 Day Light Section	10 7:30 Show Committee	11 6:30 Faceting Section 10-3 Shop Open	12	13	14 10–5 Shop Open
15	16 7:30 Lapidary Section	17 7:30 Paleo Section	18 7:30 Mineral Section 10-3 Shop Open	19	20	21 10-5 Shop Open 10-12 Youth Section 1:30 Beading Section
22	23	24 7:30 General Meeting	25 10-3 Shop Open	26	27	28 10–5 Shop Open
29	30					

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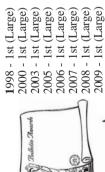
The BACKBENDER'S GIVITHE

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