



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

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

**Volume XLIV - No. 08**

**August 2013**



## **President's Message**

*by John Caldyne*

**H**ello Rockhounds,

Well, I'm back. Yep, May was a busy month for me. I know you rockhounds were wondering what had happened. Some of you asked me when I was going to write another President's News Letter in the BBG. Well, I had a lot going on, getting business caught up for the association. We got the insurance on track; that was a big job. Next we got HCAD back on track as you read in the BBG. Clyde did a great job on the HCAD problem going into the month of June. And the Mineral Section fluorescent display trailers now have a home, THANK GOODNESS.



Well, June really had Clyde and me going. Clyde worked really hard helping the Lapidary Section get their donated rocks moved to a new storage place. Now that gives us more space in the big room next to the parking lot entrance. I want to thank Ed Clay for a great job.

I've been tied up with clubhouse business such as working with Charlie Fredregill on education—calling people trying to get the education department together. I'm working on building safety, working with Clyde on the handicap sign, and planning a security system. But my main concern right now is the Education Department.

Pulling in more money for the Club is what's needed right now—bringing in more

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## **General Meeting Dates**

*by Clyde McMeans*



**August 27, 2013: To be announced**

**September 24, 2013: 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>.

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students. I'm in the field during the week talking to young people about earth science and to the adults and retirees who might want to learn how to make jewelry to sell in a business, or to just learn the craft as a hobby. So I've been on the go.

Next month (August) I will be out in the community campaigning on behalf of HGMS about what we have to offer to the local community. I will keep you up to date for the next three months. Well, my thoughts at the desk are done. Check me out next month, everyone. So ROCK-N-ROLL, YOU ROCKHOUNDS. John Caldyne

### **The Miner—Diving for Gold in the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range**

*by John Anderson*

*Member of the Houston Gem and Mineral Society*

**T**his story from the Miner is about diving for gold in a river in the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range. I lived in Torrance, California which was close to the Redondo Beach area where my friend Mel Fisher owned a Scuba Dive Shop and sold a variety of gold dredges. This was before Mel found the Spanish gold-laden galleon, the *Atoscha*, in Florida—estimated to have a gold value of \$450,000,000. I knew Mel because he had paid me a few times during the past year to give seminars to his dive store club.



One day when Mel and I were talking at his sales counter about a new model of a gold dredge that he had just received, a customer walked into his dive store and up to where Mel and I were standing. After Mel and I finished our conversation, Mel asked the gentleman if he could be of help. The man asked Mel if he remembered him. Mel took a closer look at the man, and he said, "Yes, you bought a gold dredge from me a little over a month ago." The man said, "Yes," and then then I thought he was next going to ask if he could bring back the broken gold dredge. But that was not the case for next he said, "I would like to tell you a story."

His story was that a week after he had purchased the dredge, he and his wife drove to a river in the Sierra Nevada Mountain range. He said that when they arrived, they carried and sometimes dragged the equipment until they dropped from exhaustion; they had gone less than one-half mile. They both agreed that this was as far as they would go.

They began to set up their equipment when his wife slipped and fell on her left arm, hurting it badly. At that point they did not know if the arm was broken, but what was evident was that her arm did not have just a simple bruise. They both knew that they had to head back to their auto and drive to a hospital for some medical help. They sat for a few minutes after the accident, just talking about all of the trouble that they had in

carrying and sometimes even dragging the equipment to this spot when his wife said, "We are not going back—not just yet. But we are going to try to accomplish something here. Get set up to do some gold dredging, and then you have one hour to operate the dredge before we head back to our car." He said she was in great pain, but she felt that they both had to at least give it a try.



After he completed that story he pulled out of his pocket three large Alka-Seltzer jars that were over one inch wide and over 3 inches long that were full of big gold nuggets. The nuggets were so large that some of them were almost impossible to remove from the jar opening for closer inspection. After Mel and I had both looked at the nuggets closely and made comments like "WOW," we put the nuggets back into the jars. He then pulled out his checkbook. He said, "What is the cost of the largest gold dredge that you can get me?" Mel opened up his catalog and found the price which was well over two thousand dollars, the man wrote Mel a check and asked when he would be able to pick up the new gold dredge. Mel promised that the dredge would be in his shop by the end of next week, and added, "Please call before coming in." As the man turned to leave, he said over his shoulder that he and his wife were going back to that same spot to try their luck again, "But we will not be breaking any bones this time."

I have tried the gold dredge operation, but had limited success. I have talked to some people recently who had some luck with gold dredging, but it is like fishing—someone standing next to me will catch lots of fish, but I probably would not get a nibble.

A number of problems must be dealt with when gold dredge diving, and one is the cold water temperature. A hookah unit (provides an air supply to the underwater diver) allows the gold dredge diver greater latitude in working the stream bottom, but it has some disadvantages. I was using a hookah unit in a very remote area in Mexico with my wife, Lee. I had more than 35 pounds of extra weight on my weight belt, so I could remove my swim fins and walk on the bottom and be more effective covering the bottom. I was working in more than 15 feet of water when the Briggs and Stratton gas motor (which has a diaphragm air compressor attached to it) ran out of gas and stopped. This unit that I was using did not have a storage tank to store the excess air from the compressor so when the motor stopped, that was it. I did not know that day if I was going to make it to the surface, but I am here today, so I must have made it.

Getting the dredge and other equipment to a dive location is always exhausting, and you can run out of energy long before you even start the dredge operation. A gold dredge permit is required now in some states that allow gold dredging, and there are states that do not allow gold dredging or any other kind of dredging

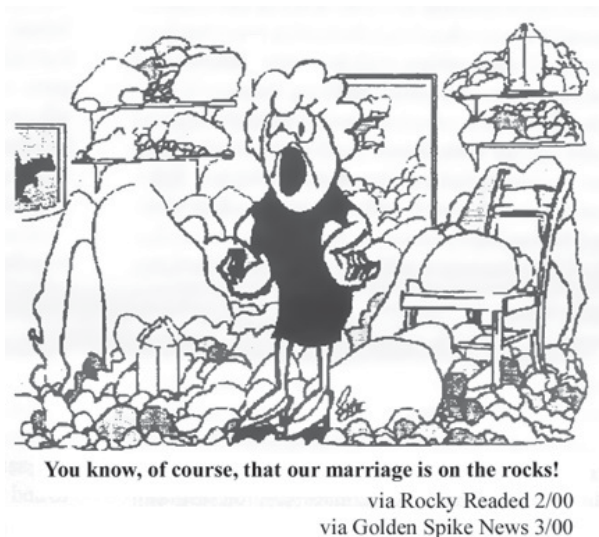
The older I get, I receive more joy and satisfaction not from a gold nugget in my gold

pan, but from a beautiful mineral or lapidary piece of agate or jasper.

A basic list of the equipment that is needed for a gold dredge operation:

1. A flotation device which is usually a huge inflated truck tire with a Briggs and Stratton gasoline engine attached to the truck tube. A diaphragm air compressor supplies the air to the diver through a second-stage breathing mouthpiece. A water pump is used in the Venturi action in picking up your sand and gravel. Twenty feet of a very flexible large-diameter fire hose will be connected to the water pump exit, and it also connects to a metal tube that is attached to some kind of riffle into which the picked-up sand and gravel are discharged. This results in the classifying of the heavier sand, and if you are lucky, gold would be in its riffles.
2. A wet suit to help deal with the frigid water temperature.
3. Fins, mask, neoprene insulating gloves, a personal floatation device such as a BC (buoyancy compensator), and lots of extra weight for a diver's weight belt so the diver can remove his fins and be more stable, and also to allow the diver to get closer to his work on the bottom. It also helps the diver to remain standing upright instead of having to lay on the bottom.
4. Rope to help position the diver when the current is strong.
5. Hot coffee or soup and some food to help the diver recover from the effects of the cold water.
6. First Aid kit for treatment of scrapes and bruises.

John A. Anderson





## Slab Happy

by your friendly (?) shop foreman, Neal Immega

I have some suggestions to make about how you can keep your Shop Foreman (me) happy, and you **really** “don’t want to make me mad.” [The Hulk]

**1. Clamping.** You probably have seen people clamp their rock and then try to rip it loose. This might seem crazy, but there is a reason. If you cannot pull the rock loose, maybe the saw will not rip it loose either. To clamp an oddly-shaped rock, use wedges. We use black PVC boards to line the jaw because they seem to grip the rock better than oak (suggested by Matt Dillon).



Use wedges when clamping irregular rocks

**2. Hangover.** No, not that kind. When the rock hangs below the edge of the saw clamp, it will hit the saw flange and chew off metal, making a horrible noise. So, if you hear loud, squealing noises coming from a slab saw, TURN IT OFF! Do this whether your rock is the culprit or not. The picture below shows the aluminum flanges removed from our 20-inch saw. They started off the same size, but someone tried so hard to finish their cut, that they ruined the flanges and the blade. When the saw hits the flanges, the rock will try to rotate in the clamp, dishing the blade. See the picture on the right of an 18" blade being turned into a candy dish.



The overhang will prevent this



An overhanging rock milled one of these flanges before the blade was bent.



The rock hit the flange, rotated in the clamp, and dished the blade by 1/4 inch.

3. **Glued up rock.** Gluing a rock onto a 2x4 board is a really great way to slab it. You need to use a strong glue. I suggest Elmer's White or Carpenter's glue. You need to allow complete drying by putting the glued-up rock in a sunny window for a WEEK, or in a crockpot for a day. Though School Glue is easy to remove from the rock, it is much too weak. Gorilla or Monster glue is great for the set time of about an hour, but we have had bad results with it letting go when saw oil gets on it. So, ***use name-brand Elmer's and not some cheaper off-label glue!*** One of our shop foremen will give you glue if you need it.

Fresh Elmer's glue will dissolve off a rock with hot water, but ancient glue will not. Very old (several years old) glue does get soft in boiling water. Remember, use a NEW piece of wood. I get scraps from numerous construction sites in my area. A shop foreman will give you a board if you need one.



Rock glued to a board. The rock extends beyond the board on the right and is a potential overhang. Clamp it with the point on top.

**Disaster with a trim saw.** - Trimming slabs is easy and trouble-free, but cutting lumpy rocks is more difficult. Suppose you are cutting open agate nodules. Rest the nodule on the trim saw table, orient it the way you want, and gently push it into the blade. You must **NOT** try to hold the rock above the table because it is too easy to twist the rock, bind the blade, and have it torn from your hands. This will surely bend the blade. If the motor slows down, you are pushing too hard.



This is what happens when the rock gets away from you and bends the blade. Let me show you how to "sort of repair" the blade from this disaster. (See the four figures at the top of page 9.)

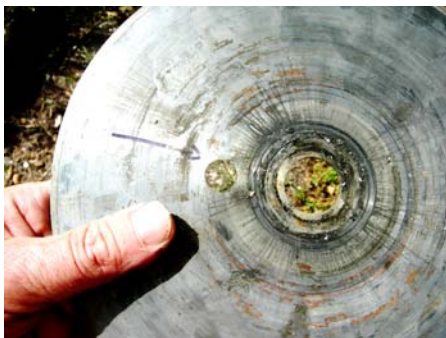
The problem is that you canNOT just beat out the dent. The metal has been stretched and is larger than it was originally. Somehow you must provide space or your blade will never go back to the original shape. One of our members (Tom Wright) is a machinist, and he showed us how to correct for this problem. For this trim saw blade, I just drilled out most of the damaged metal and gently hammered the remainder flat. You do not actually need to get the blade perfectly flat because trim saw blades are used so roughly that they are always wobbly.

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





The arrow is pointing to a ½-inch wide and 1/8-inch deep dent.



I have removed most of the dent by drilling a hole.



I use the top of my cast iron table saw for repair work.



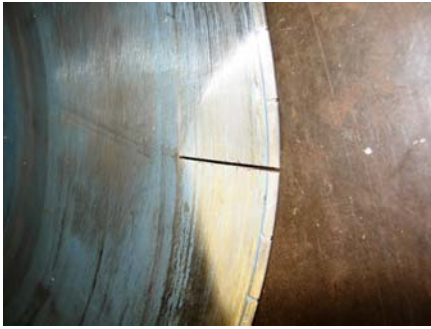
Flattening of the blade is done on a ¼-inch plywood surface.

I do all my saw repair work on a 1950s vintage Sears cast iron table saw because it is the only flat surface I can hammer on. I test the saw blade for flatness by tapping around the perimeter. To correct a slight warping up, I turn the blade over, put it on ¼-inch plywood, and gently hammer it at about ½ the radius of the blade. The wood will “give” a bit, causing the metal to be deformed. This saw blade is ready to be returned to service.

**Disaster with a slab saw:** This bend was caused by a badly-glued-up rock falling off the rock clamp. (See the next three images on the next page.) The first step on this repair is to cut a slot with a hacksaw to the point of the bend. This will make some space so each side of the bend can be independently hammered flat. Remember to use the plywood and hammer gently. You will soon get the feel about how strongly you must hit the blade to move the metal. Test for flatness by removing the plywood and tapping around the pe-



The saw only cut an inch before the glue joint broke.



Cut a slot in the blade to the point of the bend.



Gently hammer out the bend on the plywood.



Test for flatness by using your finger to tap around the perimeter of the saw.

rimeter of the saw. When you find a raised area, turn the saw over, put it on the plywood, and hammer on it gently. Repeat until flat. This saw is now back in service and works well.

**Dished Blade Repair:** Look again at the dished blade. (Page 7, bottom right) It cannot be fixed because many slots would have to be cut from the arbor hole outward, seriously weakening the arbor hole. We have two of these blades in identical shape, probably caused by the same user (#\$@&\*^%\$). It had to have made a terrible noise and I have to wonder why the

shop foreman did hear and step in? Naturally, no one has come forward to tell me how this happened.

**Rules**

- 1. Get a Shop Supervisor to check your clamping job. Check for overhangs.
- 2. Glue up rocks with Elmer's white or woodworking glue on new lumber.
- 3. Listen for SERIOUSLY unusual noises.

**Refreshments Scheduled for the HGMS General Meetings in 2013**

We have a donation jar—the “Sabre Tooth Kitty”—where members may make a contribution to help defray the cost of refreshments. So please remember to feed the “Kitty” while helping yourself to some sweet or savory snacks.

Name	Refreshment Months
Michele Marsel	July - August 2013
John Caldine	September - October 2013
Clyde McMeans	November 2013

## Archeology Section Meeting Minutes

July 11, 2013

by Terry Proctor, Archeology Section Vice Chairman

The Archeology Section met on Thursday, July 11, 2013—a week later than usual so as not to conflict with the July 4 Independence Day holiday. Nine people were in attendance: Douglas Dodds; Stephanie Foster; Jon Hart; Chase Jennings; Michele Marsel; Bob Moore, CPA; Nancy Moore, PhD; Virginia Murdoch; and Terry Proctor, JD.

The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chairman Terry Proctor in the absence of Chairman Garth Clark. Bob Moore moved that the minutes of the June 6, 2013 meeting published in the July BBG be approved as printed. There was a second by Jon Hart, and a unanimous vote of approval.

The Section Treasurer reported that the auction held by the Archeology Section at the beginning of the June 25 General Meeting raised a total of \$736.00. Half (\$368.00) is destined to go into the Archeology Section's bank account, and the other half (\$368.00) went into the HGMS Building Fund. HGMS now has over \$15,000 in the Building Fund, and the Archeology Section's \$368.00 donation will go into that fund. Photo of Terry Proctor, auctioneer, was taken by Mary Ann Mitscherling at the General Meeting.



HGMS Secretary Michele Marsel arrived a little late. She delivered to Robert Moore the \$368.00 in the form of her personal check #1657 drawn on her bank account where she had deposited the Section's funds following the auction so as not to carry that cash around until it could be turned over to the Archeology Section.

Vice Chairman Terry Proctor reported that he had turned over a copy of the Archeology Section e-mail Blast List to Chairman Garth Clark. He also reported that he would remain as Vice-Chairman for the remainder of the year, but he would cease acting as the Archeology Section Secretary; he would cease sending the Archeology Section notices; and he would also cease preparing programs for the Archeology Section. All of these duties that he had been performing would now be taken up by Chairman Garth Clark, M.D.

The Archeology Section was also reminded that Dr. Clark is now the Board Representative of the Section and that he had attended the July 2, 2013 HGMS Board Meeting

as the Archeology Section Representative. Dr. Clark will be expected to report to the Section on the Board meeting at the next Archeology Section meeting on August 1, 2013. The next HGMS Board Meeting is August 6.

Archeology display cases for the November HGMS Show were discussed briefly. The Section does want Jon Hart to provide a case of Amerindian Points (arrowheads) for display in one Section case. Another that the membership requested was for Bob and Nancy Moore to furnish items for an ancient Greek, Roman, and other civilizations case. The Section will request three cases this year.

Next on the Agenda was a discussion of upcoming Field Trips. There will be a 2 p.m. Sunday, August 11, 2013 Field Trip to the Houston Museum of Natural Science to see the Egyptian display. Terry encouraged members to join the Houston Museum of Natural Science, as the tour will be FREE to members. The reduced rate, if any, for a group tour, would probably make joining the Houston Museum of Natural Science a better bargain. Bob and Nancy Moore are docents, and they most likely will be our guides through this display. The Egyptian Display is a permanent display, which means FREE to members from now on. The Moores advised that the Houston Museum and other Museums will exchange Egyptian things from time to time, so the display will be changing over time.

Chase Jennings advised that he will try to set up a field trip to nearby lakes for an Amerindian artifact dig during the drought while the lakes are down, thus increasing the chances of things being found. Members will be notified by e-mail Blast.

Another dig at McFaddin Beach will be held after the hot part of the summer. Then in November, the Archeology Section will have its almost-annual dig at the Brazos River for middle-Eocene marine fossils. Following that morning and noon dig, members will enjoy a barbecued chicken and beans feast at Terry Stiles' Ranch nearby.

Jon Hart discussed pay digs and will provide additional information on those. Three members provided Show & Tell:

1. Jon Hart provided seven cases, rearranged into very neat and orderly groupings, basically by location, of Amerindian points (arrowheads) he had found and purchased. Jon continues to amaze members by his very large collection of such excellent Amerindian points. Some of these were from the "Blue Hole" at the Sabinal River. Photos are provided of some of these points in cases.
2. Chase Jennings presented points he had found and purchased also. Chase provided members with information on locations—some very local—where field trips can be planned. He will work up field trips and let the membership know of the projected field trips soon. Chase said that he liked to collect Amerindian tools as well as points, as he believed those told more of a story of the life of the various groups of Amerindians than just the points.
3. The second Show & Tell is listed last because of the amount of information given by Bob and Nancy Moore. They presented a valuable second-century marble head



of Aphrodite (Greek name; Venus is Roman name). Nancy said at the time that this marble head would have had the features painted on it. Bob Moore presented a case of ancient coins, some of which most folks know of, and others which were very rare. Shown, among many others, were some of the Greek and Roman gods. Females could be told by their hair style and males by their hands, i.e. what warriors' weapons they held. However the hands were broken off of almost all of the males, so one could not tell which god they represented due to the lack of the hand and weapon. A couple of interesting coins were the "widow's mite" in one of Christ's stories from the Bible. Another was a four-drachma coin like the one Christ used when he said "Give unto Caesar that which is Caesar's and unto God that which is God's." Bob also showed a tetradrachma, a five drachma coin from 336 B.C. All of the coins were very old. Some photos are provided. Douglas Dodd moved to adjourn at 9:25 p.m., seconded by Jon Hart, and the motion passed unanimously. Some members stayed for a time to visit with the four members who had the three collections of Show & Tell.



Above left: Jon Hart with case of Amerindian Points of the multiple cases presented at July 1 Archeo Meeting

Above right: Nancy Moore with the Marble Head of Aphrodite from 2nd Century BC



Left: Chase Jennings talking about one of his Amerindian points

**See more photos on page 15**

## Microfossil Collecting: The Most Fun You Can Have Indoors

by Chase Jennings

*Member of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society*

Imagine having the ability to travel to a plethora of fossil hunting localities from around the world instantly, cheaply, safely, and without ever having to leave the comfort of your own home. Sound too good to be true? With microfossil collecting you can do just that. No driving for hours and racking up a high gas bill, no extreme heat and risk of sunburn, no snakes, no digging, no risk of going home empty-handed, and it's safe for the little ones.

### Background:

So what are microfossils? Generally these are fossils measuring between 0.5 mm and 10 mm. Many microfossils can be seen easily without the aid of a microscope, but a microscope is suggested to collect the tiniest of these fossils. You can find these fossils in Microfossil Matrix. To collect microfossil matrix, someone will travel to a collecting site, collect chunks of fossiliferous strata, and break the strata down through various processes until all that remains are fossils, silt, and rocks. They will then sift and wash this "fossiliferous mud" through various screens to remove the large rocks and silt. The material that is sifted through a 1/4" mesh sieve onto the 1 mm sieve will be dried and called "Coarse Microfossil Matrix," this is the most popular matrix as most fossils can be collected without the aid of a microscope. The material that falls through the 1 mm mesh will be called "Fine Microfossil Matrix" and will require a microscope to look for fossils. All that is left to do is to sort through this processed material for all the small teeth, bones, claws, shells, corals, single-celled organisms, etc.

### Collecting Microfossils:

Collecting microfossils is inexpensive and fun for the whole family. You can generally buy an 8 ounce bag of fossil matrix for about \$5–\$15 (depending on the site) and find hundreds of fossils. Generally, microfossils are abundant and in much better condition than their larger counterparts. Further, many fossils such as whale shark teeth, sawfish teeth, small corals, etc. can only be found in microfossil matrix—not to mention that you can amass a huge collection of thousands of fossils and fit it all in a dresser drawer!

So you're probably wondering how to go about displaying these little beauties? There are many methods, and you'll have to decide what you like best. Some people use coin holders; some will use glass vials (put a push pin in the bottom of the cork, put a small ball of dental wax on the head of the pin, and seat your microfossil on top); some use "gem jars" filled with foam; and some use small "Riker Frames" with small-celled foam found at your local hobby store. You can always develop your own method as well.



Sometimes you will find an extraordinarily nice microfossil that you would like photographed. Some people like to post pictures of their microfossils on the Internet to share with others; others like to create prints to go with their microfossil display. The easiest and cheapest way to photograph your microfossils is with a digital microscope. These microscopes are often used to inspect circuit boards, but they work perfectly for small fossils. They can be found for around \$50–\$100 on eBay or other sites. Once you receive your digital microscope, you'll install the software, plug it into your computer via USB cable, and focus it on the fossil(s) you want photographed. From there, you can take photos instantly with just a click.

**Where to find Microfossil Matrix:**

Many fossil-collecting sites contain microfossil matrix. If you attend HGMS Paleo field trips to Whiskey Bridge, Midlothian, or Brownwood, you will have a chance to collect your own matrix (another benefit of being an HGMS member). You also will have the opportunity to buy microfossil matrix at future HGMS club auctions, so stay tuned and you can snag your own bag of matrix! Otherwise, you can visit [www.thefossilforum.com](http://www.thefossilforum.com) and look under General Fossil Discussion: Micro-Paleontology. Many members offer microfossil matrix for trade or sale in this section. If all else fails, you can always search for “microfossil matrix” on eBay, and I'm sure something will pop up!

**Additional Archeology Section Show & Tell Photos  
by Terry Proctor**



4th Century BC Philisto-Arabian Athenian Imitation Drachma Rare and valuable because from Yemen



Denarius given by Mark Anthony to his soldiers who fought against Roman Troops from silver given to him by Cleopatra.



Judean coin (30 AD) with Pontius Pilate on back. and Roman Denarius, the Tribute Coin from the Bible, with Caesar Tiberius 14AD-37AD

## General Meeting Minutes

*June 25, 2013*

*by Michele Marsel*

*HGMS Secretary*

**T**he Archeology Section held its first auction from 7:00–7:35 pm. Total proceeds were \$736 and will be split with half going to the HGMS Building Fund and half establishing a treasury account for the Archeology Section.

The meeting was called to order at 7:40 p.m. First Vice President Clyde McMeans presided in President John Caldyne's absence.

### **Visitors and New Members:**

Marlyse Kusick brought her friend Judy Keymolén. Dr. Frank Dixon, a geochemist, and Suzy Roberts were also first-time visitors. We were also joined by Jen Weddle whom some recognized as the lady who rescued a hawk out in front of our building on Saturday, June 22.

**Prior Month General Meeting Minutes:** Karen Burns moved and Ken Aldridge seconded that the May 2013 General Meeting minutes be approved as published in the July 2013 BBG. The motion passed unanimously.

**Drawing:** David Hawkins won the door prize, and he took home a large chunk of cutting rough.

**Business:** No business items were presented during the meeting.

**Program:** HGMS Member Debbie Kirkpatrick presented a wonderful slideshow detailing her processes for gemstone carving. Debbie discussed tools—both purchased and handmade—as well as her carving method. The slides showed several different pieces, one of which was shown at multiple stages from start to finish. Debbie ended her talk with heartfelt thanks not only to those present at the meeting, but to all HGMS members for supporting our club and making facilities available to those with an interest in lapidary. Debbie explained that she would never have been able to do her carving work without the support of the club and its members.

**Refreshments:** Clyde McMeans reminded everyone to feed the Sabre Tooth Kitty with donations and thanked Phyllis George for providing the evening's snacks.

**Adjourn:** Sigrid Stewart moved and Michele Marsel seconded that the meeting be concluded. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

## Board of Director's Meeting Minutes

July 2, 2013

by Michele Marsel

✓	President – John Caldine	✓	Beading Rep – Jillynn Hailes
✓	1 <sup>st</sup> Vice President – Clyde McMeans	✓	Faceting Rep – Gary Tober
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice President – Beverly Mace	✓	Lapidary Rep – Phyllis George
✓	Treasurer – Rodney Linehan	✓	Mineral Rep – Pete Stassi
✓	Secretary – Michele Marsel	✓	Paleontology Rep – Mike Dawkins
	Past President – Charlie Fredregill	✓	Day Light Rep – Mary Ann Mitscherling
✓	Chris Peek, Show Chair	✓	Archeology Rep – Garth Clark

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m. with 10 members present--more than a quorum. Chase Jennings joined the meeting as a guest.

**Previous Month Board Minutes:** Mike Dawkins moved and Garth Clark seconded that the minutes of the June 2013 Board Meeting be accepted as published in the July 2013 BBG. The motion passed unanimously.

**Treasurer's Report:** Rodney Linehan sent June financials to all Board members in advance of the meeting. He noted some of the Club's bills may be paid late because mail had not been received at the Clubhouse for approximately 6 weeks.

### Office, Committee, and Section Reports

**Archeology Section:** Garth Clark reported the Section had a successful auction at the June 25 General Meeting, and the Section now has a treasury. The Section is looking at scheduling a trip to Butter Creek (Austin/Killeen) area. A trip to McFaddin Beach is also being planned. The July meeting will be held on July 11 due to the 4<sup>th</sup> of July holiday.

**Beading Section:** New projects have been sent to Phyllis George to post on the Club Web site. The Section had an outing to the Stafford Bead Show in June.

**Day Light Section:** Members are having fun trying new things, doing a lot of wire work, and using the rolling mill. Please check the BBG for upcoming programs.

**Education Committee:** No report.

**Faceting Section:** No report – no meeting last month.

**Lapidary Section:** The Section voted in support of the Club's proposed purchase of self-monitored surveillance equipment for the clubhouse. On Saturday, June 29, a group worked at the Section's storage unit to organize materials for sale. Ed Clay wants to rerun the cutting contest for this year's Show. Details will be published in the BBG. The Section is considering purchase of a 20" saw to recondition to donate to the Club. The July meeting will be on Intarsia, and August will feature a presentation on how to cut and shape Aventurine. Lapidary is also looking at donating several tall drafter's-type 5-legged stools for use in the shop for people using the grinders. Michele Marsel said she may have some to donate.

**Mineral Section:** In years past, the Section has held no meetings during July and August. However, this year they are holding workshops on the third Wednesday in July and August. The July Workshop will be "Introduction to Metal Detector Use." The Section swap was held at the June meeting. A field trip to Fender's shop in the Dallas area is planned for the last week of August.

**Outreach Committee:** No activity until school starts.

**Paleo Section:** Neal Immega gave a presentation on the evolution of whales and talked about his recent trip.

**Show Committee:** Chris Peek reported that the Humble Civic Center has raised our rates annually over the last two years. The Dealer Committee met and discussed options on how to grow the show in its current location, thus making it more feasible to move in the future to a larger and more expensive venue. The Show layout will be changing this year. The Show Committee wants to bring in several new dealers, raise income, and to use existing space more efficiently. A new Youth Art Exhibit is being featured this year to draw more school participation. A flyer will be created specifically about this. The aim is for dealer fees to cover costs and for ticket revenue to be our profit. The last increase to dealer booth cost was two years ago, and the Show Committee may consider another small increase for 2014.

**Youth Section:** No report.

**BBG Editor and Webmaster:** Due date for the August BBG is Wednesday, July 10. Phyllis George noted she had already received the President's message from John Caldine.

### Old Business

- **HGMS Insurance:** Clyde McMeans reported the quote for flood insurance was almost \$15,000. The Board discussed making plans to move library materials and valuable items off the floor when hurricane alerts are issued in lieu of obtaining flood insurance due to the unexpectedly high cost. Gary Tober moved to cancel the purchase of flood insurance. Pete Stassi seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.
- **2013 Budget:** Michele Marsel added June costs to date against the proposed 2013 budget. Several small adjustments were suggested by Treasurer Rodney Linehan. Jillynn Hailes moved to accept the 2013 budget as adjusted. Phyllis George seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.
- **Bylaws Update:** The Board discussed forming a subcommittee to complete the HGMS Bylaws updates as well as updates to amend the Club's Articles to be filed with the Texas Secretary of State. Secretary Michele Marsel volunteered to chair the subcommittee. Clyde McMeans moved and Jillynn Hailes seconded that the subcommittee be formed with Michele Marsel as chair and be staffed by her with two additional HGMS members to prepare updates for Board review. The motion passed unanimously.
- **HGMS Registered Agent:** The Board reviewed Secretary Michele Marsel and new member and attorney, Joshua Estes as possible replacement candidates for

Terry Proctor in this position. Gary Tober moved and Pete Stassi seconded that Michele Marsel serve as HGMS' Registered Agent with the Texas Secretary of Status and to train Joshua Estes in the duties until such time as the Board chooses another person to receive notifications on the Club's behalf. The motion passed unanimously.

- **2014 Dues:** Mary Ann Mitscherling prepared information for review on potential revenue from an increase in dues as well as from other sources. She was not able to get exact membership numbers of each membership category from Beverly Mace in time for the meeting. The Board discussed looking at options to increase membership rather than increase dues and will revisit a possible 2014 dues increase later this year.
- **Club Renovations:** Pete Stassi reviewed the plan and rough estimate he had prepared and e-mailed in advance of the meeting to install plywood on the back window wall for displays and to paint the main meeting room. The cost of supplies was estimated to be about \$500. Jillynn Hailes moved and Michele Marsel seconded that the Board obtain a quote for labor to do the work, and for that quote to be reviewed at the August Board meeting. The motion passed unanimously. Pete Stassi suggested we check with Dunn Southwest to see if they have a list of recommended contractors.
- **Education Chair:** John Caldyne reported that a member who is a teacher has expressed interest in being Education Chair. The member is confirming with his wife before formally accepting the position, and John hopes to have the position filled by the end of July. John also noted that Charlie Fredregill has not been able to schedule any new classes due to his current eye problems.
- **Publicity Chair:** Peter Stassi presented a list of position duties. Several small changes were made, and Gary Tober moved that the duties be approved as updated. Clyde McMeans seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. Chase Jennings volunteered to act as initial or interim Publicity Chair, and he will discuss this with John Caldyne after the Board meeting for official appointment.
- **Ceiling Tile Replacement:** Clyde McMeans reported that we do have spare tiles in the attic storage area. Clyde will replace the tiles when he returns from vacation in August.
- **Exterior Lighting:** The lighting fixture on the back of the building that lights parking to which we no longer have access has been disconnected. The fixture could not be removed without leaving a large hole in the side of the building, so it was left in place.
- **Trophy Board:** Clyde McMeans made several attempts to contact W.A. Kimborough, and he has not had any response. John Caldyne took an action item to contact Mr. Kimborough and resolve the return of the board.

### New Business

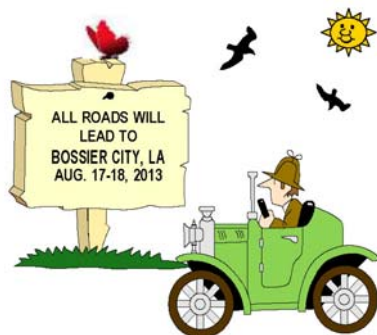
- **2013 Dunn SW Board Meeting:** The Annual Meeting is July 25. John Caldyne and possibly Michele Marsel will attend with Terry Proctor. There were no volun-

teers to replace Terry Proctor as a Dunn SW Board Member. Michele Marsel will contact Dunn SW to find out the process and the deadline for submitting a candidate.

- **2013 HGMS Scholarship:** Applicants for the 2013 Scholarship were reviewed. Michele Marsel moved and Jillynn Hailes seconded that the scholarship be awarded to HGMS Member Stephanie Foster. The motion passed unanimously. Stephanie is studying Earth Science and Archeology at Texas A&M University.
- **Safety:** Clyde McMeans reported he had a fire extinguisher inspection performed. All extinguishers were checked, and several were recharged and relocated to recommended locations in the Clubhouse. John Caldyne proposed that the club purchase a self-monitored security camera system to include 7–8 cameras with at least one positioned on the exterior. There have been several disappearances of Club property recently including Lapidary Section's R.O.L.E. plaque. The monitoring station will be in the office and will not be Web enabled. Cost was estimated between \$900 and \$1,000. Gary Tober moved and Jillynn Hailes seconded to purchase the system as described at the presented cost estimate. The motion passed unanimously.
- **2013 SCFMS Meeting:** Clyde McMeans and Phyllis George will attend this year's meeting to represent HGMS. Clyde is the HGMS Representative to the SCFMS Annual Meeting. Phyllis will be on hand to accept any certificates and plaques won by HGMS members in the Bulletin Editors' Contest at the Editors and Webmasters Breakfast. As the SCFMS Web Site Contest Chair, she will be presenting SCFMS Web Site Contest awards.
- **Mail Delivery:** John Caldyne updated the Board on the lack of mail delivery at the Clubhouse. John went to post office and inquired why we had not been getting our mail delivery. He picked up a backlog of mail being held, and the post office is investigating why delivery had stopped.

**Adjourn:** Jillynn Hailes moved to adjourn the meeting, and Mary Ann Mitscherling seconded. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:57 p.m.

## SCFMS Annual Convention and Show





## Bench Tips

by Brad Smith

*More Bench Tips by Brad Smith are at [facebook.com/BenchTips/](https://facebook.com/BenchTips/) or see the book "Bench Tips for Jewelry Making" on [Amazon.com](https://amazon.com)*

### Drill Breakage

Using a small drill is difficult for a beginner, especially if it is hand-held in a flexshaft or Dremel. They are easily broken if you push too hard or if you tilt the drill while it's in the hole.

Remember that drilling always goes easier with lubrication. A little wax or oil is all you need. Almost anything will work: Three and One oil, beeswax, mineral oil, injection wax, car oil, olive oil, or one of the commercial cutting waxes. The lubricant helps to move chips out of the hole and reduces friction of the drill against the side of the hole, keeping the drill cooler.



### Find the Balance Point



With odd-shaped pendants or earrings, it's often difficult to find the right place to attach a bail or loop so that the piece is balanced and hangs straight. A quick way to make a tool for this is to modify a set of tweezers. Any set of tweezers will work. Spread the tips, sharpen them with a file, and bend the tips at a right angle to point toward each other. To use the tool, suspend the pendant or earring between the two sharp points to see how it will hang.

### Finishing Pierced Patterns

After sawing patterns, there's always a little cleanup to do, and the smaller cutouts can be a challenge. Needle files (7–8 inches) can get into the larger areas, and escapement files (4 inches) can get into some of the corners. But I often find myself looking for even smaller files. Couldn't even find them at a watchmaker tools supply company, so I had to try something else. I ended up grinding down the tip of a 4" barrette file by using a separating disk (or cutoff wheel) in a Dremel or Foredom. Be sure to wear your safety glasses when using this tool. A flake of steel in your eye makes for a bad day.



**1983–2013 = 30 Years of Displaying***Bill & Lois Pattillo's Food Table**by Bill and Lois Pattillo**www.rockfoodtable.com**from SCFMS Newsletter 5-6/2013*

**A**fter visiting a Gem and Mineral Show in Portland, Oregon and digging thunder eggs at The Richardson Rock Ranch in October 1982, I decided to fix a table for our March 1983 Corpus Christi Gem and Mineral Show. With my muffins and items from club members, we had a Food Table. Not really a table of food, mainly a lot of dishes with a few rocks.



As we were set up at our March show, San Antonio Club members came and invited us to their show the next week. Houston saw us in San Antonio and invited us to their show in September. Jackson, Mississippi saw it in Houston and invited us to their show in February. We were off and running.

At Houston we were offered a loaf of bread. At show's end we went to return it, thinking it was to be used just that weekend. You don't want it? Yes indeed. It fit just right in a bread basket.

In the next few years, invitations to shows grew, and so did the table. One year we did twenty-two shows. That's lots of packing dishes so as not to break them with rocks. Lots of rocks. Many donations varying from a small piece of candy to a 12-pound round loaf of bread. Now donations make up most of the table.

A young girl in Denver gave us a fried chicken drumstick. We asked if she didn't want to keep it. No it was for us. A little boy donated a piece of fruit. I asked him if he didn't want to keep it and start his own collection. "No, I want you to have this one, then I will start my collection."

In over the last 30 years, the Food Table has grown from a standard 8-foot table to a false top to make it 9 feet by 4 feet, and then later we added the breakfast table.

Because of the Rock Food Table, we were honored with a Certificate of Achievement by the National Rockhound & Lapidary Hall of Fame in Murdo, South Dakota in December 2005.

Rock Food Table articles were in the Rock and Gem Magazine in



November 2000 by Laura Dow of Austin, and also in August 2009 by Lari Carter of Atlanta, Georgia.

This year at the Corpus Christi Gem and Mineral Society Show during the first weekend of March, the Rock Food Table was thirty years old. That's a long time for an exhibit that started with a lot of dishes and a few rocks.

*Editor's Note: The Pattillos and their Food Table have participated in the HGMS annual show many, many years. And I'm delighted to learn that they will be coming to this year's show too!*

### A Visit to Poor Boy Rock Shop

by Kimberly Brannon

from *The Redstick Rockhound* 11/2012

Undoubtedly, the best part of being connected with other rock hounds is the pre-cious gems they drop in the form of information. Mining for the information doesn't require heavy equipment or a shovel, but simply making yourself available as a student of those with more experience. Ray Duplechain dropped one such nugget when he suggested that my boyfriend Mattson and I make a trip to Poor Boy Rock Shop, adding that it's in Flatwoods "somewhere" and we WOULD get lost. We certainly did!



Having just relocated to Alexandria, LA, one of my first tasks was discovering where to hunt for stones in the area and who to connect with to discuss what might be found. Following Ray's recommendation, we drove up I-49, but soon discovered that finding Poor Boy Rock Shop is about as elusive as finding Louisiana Opal. Flatwoods is a beautiful area, we saw most of it by driving up and down every road until we determined it was an impossible task and called Ray.

He encouraged us to keep searching and reassured us it would be worth it in the end, but my search soon turned to Google. Of course, you won't find Poor Boy Rock Shop online. You won't find it in the list of "things to do in Flatwoods." What I did find after much frustration was one blog. One blog of a biker who'd passed by when the shop was closed. He got out, looked around outside, and took a photo of the sign out front. The photo of the sign included a phone number, the phone number made it possible to do a reverse look-up in the white pages. The reverse look-up revealed that the address is 107 Tom Edwards, Flatwoods, Louisiana. We finally had a destination and a new label as stalkers! No one answered our call, but undeterred, we continued until we arrived.

Ray was absolutely correct, it was worth the trip. We couldn't have imagined that such

a place was hidden just thirty minutes from us. We were greeted warmly by Cheryl George, who proceeded to unlock the house (which is more a museum to her husband's love of palm wood) and allowed us to look inside. I can't begin to describe the amount of time and dedication it must have taken to create this palm wood wonderland! The walls are adorned with slab after slab of palm wood, all of which he'd found in the area. He's created a table, covered it completely with palm wood and epoxy. Every place you look is covered in stone, from the floors to the beams, to the walls, and every available surface. His obsession with petrified wood and stones in general is evident and is finely displayed in every corner of the house. Cheryl jokes that she wouldn't have agreed to the decor, but the project began before they were married. She also mentioned her secret to keeping him "at home" was not keeping a stitch of food in there for him or he might never come back. Who could blame him though? I didn't want to leave; you could spend days in there and still uncover something you hadn't seen before.

The "stone palace" is a shrine to his personal collection, but the best was yet to come. Following a path lined with more stones and huge petrified logs, she brought us out to the shed where everything is for sale. I stood dumbfounded with a thunderegg in my hand when Mattson pointed to a bucket full of them. Cheryl pointed just beyond where I was standing to reveal bin after bin ... full of every variety I could wish for. The garage is packed, from top to bottom with dusty boxes of jaspers, agates, petrified woods, fossils, and knick knacks. Some of the boxes hadn't been touched or moved in what seemed like decades. At first the cobwebs made me timid, but eventually I was knocking them aside to dig in. Be prepared to leave dirty and satisfied!

J.H. George is a personable fellow, very much like Santa Claus and is known around town as "the rock guy." He began collecting sometime in the 60s and was fortunate enough to acquire much of his petrified wood during the building of the I-49 corridor. He heads out to Tucson and Quartzsite for several months of the year, but his prices have somehow stayed where they might have been when he began collecting. Once you get him talking, you'll hear the back stories of how many people it took to put a certain heavy piece in place, where such a wonder came from, and after a few visits, you begin to hear the equally interesting stories of his life. He laughed so hard telling the tale of the raccoon that slapped his father-in-law that it worked him into a coughing fit.

The Georges are warm and generous, both with their time and their collection. You can tell they love visitors as much as they love showing off the years of accumulated stones. They offer the opportunity to peek into their lives free of charge, allowing elementary schools to come and tour the location and opening their arms to complete strangers, like us. Mr. George's health isn't what it used to be, and one has to wonder whether his family will recognize the value in his life's work and continue the tradition. It's evident that he enjoys sharing his vast experience with anyone eager to listen and learn, with any-



one who smiles and can appreciate the lifetime it took to painstakingly find, cut, and place every piece. I would highly recommend making yourselves available ... I can't say enough to describe the place. You must see it (more than once) to fully take it in. Oh, and an aside, I wouldn't expect to find much petrified palm wood in Flatwoods, Louisiana—it's just two miles from his current location, and I'm certain he has every piece!

### Location:

Poor Boy Rock Shop  
J.H. and Cheryl George  
107 Tom Edwards  
Flatwoods, Louisiana 71427  
(318) 793-8686

## AFMS/SFMS 2013 Annual Meeting

September 18<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup>

Sponsored by the Jacksonville Gem and Mineral Society, Inc

<http://www.jaxgemandmineral.org/> A 501(c)(3) not for profit organization



All AFMS and SFMS meetings will be hosted at the:

Marriott, Jacksonville, 4670 Salisbury Road  
Jacksonville, FL 32256, 904-296-2222 or 1-800-962-9786  
(Mention AFMS meeting for \$82 room rate. Offer Expires August 5, 2013.) (This rate is good from Sep 15<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup>)

AFMS Uniform Rules - Wednesday 7pm

AFMS Annual Meeting - Thursday 9am

AFMS Scholarship foundation- After Annual Meeting

You are invited Thursday Night to Hanna Park at the beach. Star Gazing with Northeast Florida Astronomy Society members and Telescopes (Saturn will be spectacular!) Cook out provided by Host society JGMS.

JGMS Annual Show and Sale Starts - Friday 1pm

SFMS Cracker Barrel Meeting - Friday 7pm

SFMS Annual Meeting - Saturday 9am

ALAA Meeting - Saturday 2:30pm

Awards Banquet - Saturday 6pm

Editors and Webmasters Breakfast - Sunday 9am

40+ retail dealers, Fantastic exhibits and speakers from around the country. See the NASA Moon Rock, Lectures on near earth bodies, meteorites, demonstrations, workshops, hourly door prizes, silent auctions and more. Enjoy the Annual Jacksonville Gem Show!!!

## Heavens and Earth

Jacksonville Gem and Mineral Society,  
25<sup>th</sup> Annual Gem & Mineral Show and Sale  
September 20-22, 2013 Morocco Temple





## Show Time 2013

August 10-11	Baton Rouge, LA	Baton Rouge Gem & Mineral Society Baton Rouge Marriott; 5500 Hilton Ave. Diana Martin, (225) 931-7543; Cajunladi@cox.net; www.Brgemandmineral.org
August 17-18	Bossier City, LA	SCFMS Convention & Show Ark-La-Tex Gem & Mineral Society Bossier City Civic Center larockclub@gmail.com; www.larockclub.com
August 24-25	Jasper, TX	Pine Country Gem & Mineral Society Events Center, 6258 Hwy. 190W earthscache3@yahoo.com www.pinecountrygms.org
September 14-15	Grapevine, TX	Arlington Gem & Mineral Club Grapevine Convention Ctr., 1209 S. Main St. show@agemclub.org www.agemclub.org/events.php
September 21-22	Denison, TX	Texoma Rockhounds Denison Senior Center
September 28-29	Mesquite, TX	Dallas Gem & Mineral Society Rodeo Center Exhibiot Hall
October 12-13	Temple, TX	Tri-City Gem & Mineral Society Mayborn Civic Center, 3303 N. 3rd ddunn2199@yahoo.com www.tricitygemmineral.org
October 12-13	Fort Worth, TX	Lockheed Martin RA Stone Steppers LMRA Picnic Area, 3400 Bryant Irvin Rd. steve.l.shearin@lmco.com www.facebook.com/#!/groups/132202050142082/
October 18-20	Austin, TX	Austin Gem & Mineral Society Palmer Events Center, 900 Barton Springs Rd. www.austingemandmineral.org
October 19-20	Amarillo, TX	Golden Spread Gem & Mineral Society Amarillo Civic Center 400 S. Buchanan, Regency Room finfran@midplains.coop



2013		August				2013	
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
				1 7:30 Archeology Section	2	3 10-5 Shop Open 10-12 Youth Section	
4	5	6 7:30 Board Meeting	7 <b>NO</b> Mineral Section 10-3 Shop Open	8	9	10 10-5 Shop Open	
11	12 1:00 Day Light Section	13 7:30 Show Committee	14 7:00 Faceting Section 10-3 Shop Open	15	16	17 10-5 Shop Open 10-12 Youth Section 1:30 Beading Section	
18	19 7:30 Lapidary Section	20 7:30 Paleo Section	21 7:30 Mineral Section 10-3 Shop Open	22	23	24 10-5 Shop Open	
25	26	27 7:30 General Meeting	28 10-3 Shop open	29	30	31 10-5 Shop Open	

2013		September				2013	
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
1	2 <b>Labor Day</b>	3 7:30 Board Meeting	4 7:30 Mineral Section 10-3 Shop Open	5 7:30 Archeology Section	6	7 10-5 Shop Open 10-12 Youth Section	
8	9 1:00 Day Light Section	10 7:30 Show Committee	11 7:00 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 <b>First Day of Autumn</b>	23	24 7:30 General Meeting	25 10-3 Shop open	26	27	28 10-5 Shop Open	
29	30						

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

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

10805 BROOKLET

HOUSTON, TEXAS 77099

(281) 530-0942



## **SCFMS**

1998 - 1st (Large)  
2000 - 1st (Large)  
2003 - 1st (Large)  
2005 - 1st (Large)  
2006 - 1st (Large)  
2007 - 1st (Large)  
2008 - 1st (Large)  
2009 - 1st (Large)  
2010 - 1st (Large)  
2011 - 1st (Large)  
2012 - 1st (Large)



## **AFMS**

1998 - 2nd (Large)  
2004 - 3rd (Large)  
2007 - 1st (Large)  
2010 - 2nd (Large)  
2012 - 3rd (Large)



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