



The **BACKBENDER'S GAZETTE**

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

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January 2013



President's Message

by John Caldyne

Despite all our differences, most of us share certain hopes for our Association's future. We want it to continue to grow in the 21st century; that's why I'm asking everyone for their input—their ideas. I want fresh minds. As a business owner, I believe in modern technology, skills, education, and most of all, communication with people.

By the way, I will be calling and looking up long-lost members that the Club has forgotten about. One thing I do NOT want to see is our Club starting to deteriorate over a period of time as have a number of other clubs I've witnessed. They didn't grow, and soon over the years, they fell apart. I'm committed to seeing HGMS succeed, grow, and gain new height in the world of earth science and geology. I look forward to working with all of you. God bless you, and God Bless HGMS.

General Meeting Programs

by Bill Moore

January 22, 2013: To be announced

**HGMS Youth
Group Show
Stones being
judged during
November 2012
Annual Show**

Photo by
John Mitscherling



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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>.

Houston Museum of Natural Science Triceratops: The Best Herbivorous Dinosaur in the World

by Neal Immega, Ph.D., Paleontologist

Member of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society

This Triceratops named “Lane” in the new Paleo Hall is the best large herbivorous dinosaur displayed in the world. Lane is more than a collection of bones!

Mounting: By “best,” I mean it is a display that improves our understanding of the species. Ever since I read Dr. Bakker’s book *Dinosaur Heresies*, I have known that he HATED every other Triceratops mount in the world because they all showed the animal as a slow, dumb, dinosaur mounted as if it was a lizard that could not straighten its legs. On the Permian dig in Seymour, he mentioned that he wanted to show the animal galloping across the plains, *i.e.* as a hot-blooded dinosaur. He said that the huge nasal cavities just HAD to be for sucking in lots of air. This is just what we have in the hall now: this elephant-sized beast has two legs off the ground, its head down, and its horns pointed forward as it gallops toward a poor doomed *Tyrannosaurus*. Remember, the horns that are showing are just the bone core. The actual horns would be 50% longer because they would be covered by HORN (like a cow’s).

Completeness: Lane is 85% complete, a new world record for 3-tops. For a dino that is so popular—that appears in every tube of plastic toys—you would think there would be more skeletons of them in existence. There are lots of skulls, but even last year, “*Animal Planet*” made a program saying that no complete skeleton existed (<http://animals.howstuffworks.com/dinosaurs/triceratops.htm>).

Feet: While sitting in the New Maverick Cafe in Seymour, Dr. Bakker mentioned (scornfully) that the Triceratops in the American Museum of Natural History had hadrosaur feet. It has always been a problem finding appendages (heads, tails, feet) of fossils because the smaller critters tend to chew them off. Our beast has real feet.

These reasons would be good enough to support my claim, but here is the best:

Skin: See the rocks mounted on the wall behind the skeleton? This dinosaur is a fossilized mummy and those rocks are SKIN. This is the first Triceratops with skin—ever! But wait, there is more! The skin shows a pattern of scales,





and there is a bump in the center of each rosette pattern. The current interpretation is that there were tufts of quills or barbs coming out of each bump. Yes, this means that our Triceratops had FEATHERS. Talk about changing ideas!

Over by the raptor is an artist's interpretation of what it looked like.

To top it off, Pete Larson (of Black Hills Institute) is doing research on the skin. He has evidence that some of it (not on display) has been preserved in an inch thick 3-D matrix. I hope we get his data to put on display when he is done. He plans to look for elemental residues using the Stanford U. synchrotron radiation facility (the same one used to show that Archaeopteryx left elemental residues in the feather impressions).

Conclusion: Best in the World: *Triceratops horridus*, indeed. It should be the magnificent 3-tops, instead!

The Miner

by John Anderson

Another story about one of my first days while working at a depth of over 2,700 feet for the Sunshine Mining Company.

I still had not gotten used to working in the high 90°F temperature and high humidity, so here is my story about the strength of one of the miners who was working in those conditions with me. I will be using the name **Timberman** as a person's name and also as a mining position.

The **Stoaping Mining method** is used when you are mining a shaft area, and it becomes difficult to reach the ceiling. You build a stage below the ceiling with heavy timbers, and that lets you mine the ceiling.



We were working using the stoaping method and using fresh-cut pine timbers to make a stage above the mine shaft floor. When you drill and blast, the ore falls on the stoaping stage which is then directed by a mining **Mucker** (who is a helper) into a hole in the stoaping stage area and then into a rail car. I was having difficulty even moving around at this temperature when the Timberman said, "We are going to build some stoaping tables." There was a fresh green pine timber that was about 12"x12" by 12 feet long. The Timberman wanted to use this timber to build a stoaping table above the floor of the shaft where we were presently working.

Miners use a unique tool that is called a **pricker**, and it is much like an axe. The pricker has a long handle and a flat head, but instead of a blade for chopping wood, it had a long sharp point. If you embedded this point into a log or timber, you could then drag or lift the timber with this tool. The Timberman said he would get in the front, and I would get in the rear, and we both would drive the prickers into the timber, lift it, and walk the timber down the shaft about 80 feet to the work area. I said under my breath, "Oh yeah," because that seemed like an impossible physical task.

The Timberman drove his pricker into his timber end, and I likewise drove mine into my end of the timber. The Timberman raised his end and started down the mineshaft towards our goal, dragging the timber and me. I could hardly stand up, let alone pick up my end of the timber because of the heat and humidity.

When we (ha ha) had moved the timber about 80 feet, he said, "Now you get up above in the stoaping table area, and I will be handing this timber up to you." I was up above in the stoaping area table area when I saw the end of the timber start to rise up through the opening of the stoaping table. The Timberman kept pushing the timber up until the timber was all the way into the stoaping table area. I saw this miracle first-hand of the strength of one human being. Remember, the timber was fresh green, just cut, and weighed in the hundreds of pounds. The Timberman had to climb up the steps of a wooden ladder—step by step from the floor of the shaft, pushing the whole weight upward for about 12 feet.

In the beginning during the first week, I was losing almost a pound a day, but after starting to eat from four to six sandwiches a day for lunch and doing extreme physical labor, I began to feel a lot better even though I was still working in those extremely hot and humid conditions at over 2,700 feet underground.

I might mention that when I signed up for this miner position, I elected to stay in the mine dormitories and to eat my meals there. It was a good deal because the three big meals a day plus lodging only cost about \$12 per day. The Mining Company did this to keep the miners at the mine area and to make getting to work as easy as possible. The meals furnished were family style, and lots of it. They would ask me at breakfast time how many sandwiches I wanted that day for lunch. I usually got between four to six sandwiches plus some fruit for lunch. They packed it into a paper bag that they gave me at the conclusion of my breakfast meal that day.

The dormitory was only about 100 feet from the mine entrance, so it was a very convenient place to live if you did not need to hit the town life. From the dormitory, when going to work you walked over a small creek that was about 10 feet wide. I mention this because that will be another story from the mine.

John A. Anderson 10-16-2012 The Miner

I See the Beauty, I do*by Edward Clay**Member of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society*

I see them, I do,
The flash of white shimmer
in the heart of Mother of pearl,
The bright red or green fire
in a brown, black,
or white colored stone,
The lined fibers
reflecting back bright lights
in the form of an eye.

The beauty
even in the rough is there,
I see it, I know its ways
It moves me
deeply.

But I consider,
Do I have skill enough,
Patience enough,
Heart enough,
to do justice
to this beauty, this wonder?

I can but try
truly and surely
from years of effort
from my soul's center
to do so.

I see the beauty,
I do,
with hopes to share it
with others,
To help them see it,
understand it just a little,
then wonder that such
can be found in the world.

Archeology Section Meeting Minutes

December 6, 2012

by Terry Proctor, acting Secretary

The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chairman Terry Proctor in the absence of Chairman Garth Clark. There were ten HGMS members in attendance: Gary Anderson, Marlyse Kusik, Clyde McMeans, Robert Moore and wife Nancy Engelhardt-Moore, Vice-Chairman Terry Proctor, Peter Ragusa, Jerry Tillman and daughter, Katharina Tillman, and Rod Underwood.

Jerry Tillman and Katharina Tillman were here for the first time as was Gary Anderson. Katharina is in the business of making jewelry.

Peter Ragusa moved to approve the November minutes as printed in the December, 2012 issue of the Backbender's Gazette. The motion was seconded by Rod Underwood and passed unanimously.

Terry had brought with him and returned to Robert and Nancy Moore the Chinese terra cotta noble woman's head and Chinese spear point which the Moores had loaned the Archeology Section for the HGMS Show in November. Thanks for the loan of these to the Section for a case at the Show. Also Terry brought Jon Hart's case of AmerIndian points, also in a case at the HGMS Show, but Jon was ill and could not come to the meeting to get them. Terry and Jon will work out the return of the case.

There was the usual excellent discussion of recent Archeological activities around the world, which always leads to experiences some of our members have had working on such digs or who know about them. Terry is renewing his own issue of *Archeology* magazine and the 2-year subscription for the Archeology Section which HGMS is providing, along with a subscription for each HGMS Section of a magazine of interest to that Section.

Robert Moore brought up that the Archeology Section should plan a field trip to the Houston Museum of Natural Science to see the Mayan exhibit. This was discussed and a date set for such field trip for Sunday afternoon, January 13, 2013 at 2:00 p.m. Neal Immega is to be consulted about arrangements for a group price, and an e-mail blast will be sent to all Archeology members and others on the e-mail blast list. This should make an interesting trip. (Late note: Neal was contacted on Friday, and in order to get the desired reduced price, we need 20 in a group to go, therefore, we need to immediately start taking confirmed reservations who must agree to pay in order that the number not drop below 20 when we actually arrive for the field trip.)

Peter Ragusa had donated three books for the Archeology Section to have an auction. At this meeting Marlyse Kusik donated some baskets, picnic basket etc. to go into the auction also. Members will be encouraged to bring things and turn them over to Vice-Chairman Terry Proctor, who will hold them in safe-keeping till the auction. We will ask to have an auction on a night of a General Membership meeting as some other Sections have done in the past. The purpose of the auction will be to put some

funds into a bank account for the Archeology Section that at present has no funds for the Section. Robert and Nancy Moore said they will donate some ancient carnelian beads, some Roman glass, and other things. Terry said he would donate one or more Safari dinosaur models for the auction, and several others indicated that they would also donate some items for the auction.

Terry Proctor announced in the Meeting Notice that he would bring refreshments for the meeting. Cookies, Hershey Chocolate Nuggets, and green grapes were provided. The meeting had been announced as being short, so adjournment was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously early this evening. Several in attendance commented on the way out, how very interesting the meetings always are and how much one can learn from others in these open discussions each month.

Respectfully reported by Terry Proctor, acting Secretary as Burton Dworsky was unable to attend tonight.

Beading Section Field Trip

by Nancy Fischer

The Beading Section is going on a field trip to shop for beads and findings at the shops along Harwin on Saturday, January 12, 2013. We'll have lunch at Bijan Persian Grill, 5922 Hillcroft Ave., Houston, TX 77036 at noon, then we will car pool to Harwin after lunch.

This is in addition to our regular meeting on January 19, one week later. Any member is welcome to join us. You don't have to come to the Section meetings to shop with the experts.

Beading Section Meeting

by Diane Sisson

The holidays are over, and we are ready for a new year of fun and learning with the Beading Section.

Last year we had some challenging patterns. We had a good time tackling them and have some beautiful pieces to show for it. This year we will try some new things—maybe some chain pieces and wire wrapping.



I want to thank everyone for their help, especially Phyllis George (it's great to have her back with us), and Jillynn Hailes for donating her hours as Section Representative to the HGMS Board meeting, helping at the show, and teaching us Kumihimo

(Japanese braiding). Anyone interested in having some fun while learning some new jewelry techniques is welcome to join us on the 3rd Saturday of the month at 1:30 p.m. See the projects on Upcoming Programs on our HGMS Web site.

Happy New year to you all!



In Memoriam display case at 2012 annual show in honor of Frances Arrighi, recently deceased member of the Beading Section and the Day Light Section

Day Light Section

by Karen Burns

Neal Immega led a group of members in a simple soldering project using the club torches. Several of these people were new to fabrication or had never used the club's torches. It was a great learning experience.

Karen Burns will present the program during the January meeting. She will be teaching a simple wire ring, both introducing members to working with wire and to making an "Endless Ring." Twelve inches of 21-gauge square soft wire and six inches of 21-gauge half round soft wire will be needed. Copper wire will be provided at a cost of \$1 for those who don't have any wire. Members will get a chance to learn to control the wire and also learn how to twist short lengths of wire. If this ring will be a gift, be sure of the ring size of the recipient because after it is complete, this ring is not adjustable.

Projects for the rest of the year will also be discussed during the meeting.

Mineral Section Programs

by Paul Brandes

January 2, 2013

What's Hot in Tucson, 2012: Come get in the mood for the Tucson shows by viewing the DVD summary of last year's show. Narrated by Dave Wilber and Bob Jones, this DVD brings you the Tucson experience without the travel or expenses. For those who saw last year's DVD, you know the quality of this program is quite impressive. Refreshments will be provided.

January 16, 2013

Fluorite, Colors of the Rainbow: In preparation for the Tucson Gem and Mineral Show February 14–17, this evening's presentation will focus on the mineral fluorite in honor of this year's Tucson show theme "Fluorite, Colors of the Rainbow." Section Members will discuss such items as the formation of fluorite, the many locations around the world where fluorite can be found, and of course fluorite's rainbow of colors. All members are encouraged to bring and display fluorite specimens from their collection. Refreshments will be provided.

February 6, 2013

DVD of attendees' choice: Due to the plans of many Mineral Section members to be in Tucson, those not able to attend can chose a DVD from the Library to view (the tentative choice is to continue with another part of the 2012 "What's Hot in Tucson"), or attendees can discuss their possible collecting plans for the spring/summer. Refreshments will be provided.

February 20, 2013

Tucson Show & Tell: For those who were lucky enough to attend the most famous mineral gathering in the world, bring in your recent acquisitions from the many Tucson Shows. Give us your impressions and regale us with your experiences. For those who could not make it, come and see what you are missing. Refreshments will be provided.



Holiday Cheer at HGMS

by Michele Marsel

The Clubhouse was packed on December 8 for the annual HGMS Holiday party and auction. The club provided turkey and brisket, and members brought all kinds of sides and goodies. This was definitely the year for desserts—peppermint ice cream pie, red/white holiday iced donuts, cakes, cookies, and treats galore! It was a miracle everyone stayed awake for the auction after that feast.

This year's auction was handily managed by auctioneers Chris Peek, Neal Immega, Terry Proctor, and James Wark. They auctioned 180 items, the auction ended on time, AND we took a break in the middle. The auction included many highly sought-after items from Lapidary's estate donor and a very nice selection of high-quality materials donated by Dr. Zingula. The star item was a beautiful seafoam green chunk of natural turquoise rough which sold for a whopping \$400. Auction proceeds totaled \$2,939, and after splits to our donors, \$253 went to Lapidary Section and \$1,520 has been added to the HGMS Building Fund.

The holiday party is always a time to catch up with old friends and make some new ones. Thanks to all who joined in the fun.

Slab Saws and Misting Problems: A Solution

by Vern and Sylvia Cliffe

Pasadena Lapidary Society, Pasadena, CA

from Rockhound Ramblings 11/2012

The use of slab saws to cut rocks creates the problem of oil mist that takes upwards of fifteen minutes after the cut before settling inside the hood. Opening the hood shortly after cutting exposes the operator to possible health problems and "coats" clothes and equipment. Many rockhounds elect to wait fifteen minutes before opening the hood, slowing production, especially during club workshops. Now a simple solution to the problem has surfaced!

While talking to our friend Dan Stevens (of Caldwell, Idaho), he suggested an additive to the cutting oil that literally stops the misting. It's thick as honey and available from auto parts stores and Walmart. The product is "No Smoke + Stopleak", made by Bardahl. Dan adds ½ cup to his 18" and 24" saws. (*Editor's note: Neal, is this something the shop could use—or are you already way ahead of me and HGMS does not have the problem?*)

So, Rockhounds, you can get back to production cutting. I guess for every problem, there's a solution!

General Meeting Minutes

November 27, 2012

by Sarah Metsa

HGMS Secretary

The meeting was called to order at 7:36 p.m.

Visitors and New Members: New member Sandy Clarkson shared that she loves stones, has always been fascinated with the earth, and has been collecting since she was a little girl.

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

Show & Tell: There is a new rock shop in our area, the Katy Rock Shop on Pin Oak, which donated very nice items to the silent auctions for the show. We also received a nice note from San Juan Gems, a dealer at the show.

Drawing: David Hawkins won the door prize, a small geode with dark crystals.

Announcements: The majority of Art Smith's collection has been brought to the club, and Wheaton College (located outside Chicago, Illinois) will be coming to Houston to pick it up.

Rockhound stickers, bags, earrings, and tie tacks are available for purchase at the General Meetings. All are \$1 except the earrings which are \$5.

The Christmas party will be December 8. Terry Proctor is rounding up the volunteers and auctioneers. Meat and turkey will be provided, but please bring a side dish for sharing in the potluck dinner.

Terry also announced the evening's auction plans and that a percentage of the auction proceeds for this auction will go to the Building Fund.

BBG Editor: HGMS will be receiving plaques for the 2012 SCFMS writing contest, but it will take a while. The initial order was never delivered, so a replacement order has just been placed with a different provider. The certificates were received in September and have been passed out.

Program: Steve Blyskal gave the program. Steve has been a club member since 1977, and he was the Mineral Section Chair for many years until he accepted the position of HGMS President in 2011. He also is a prolific specimen collector with over 3,000 mineral specimens. Steve is also a photographer, and he has taken the photos for our show posters for at least the past five years.

The program was about a visit to Alberta, Canada, with stops in Calgary, the Kananaskis Range, Canmore, and Banff in the Front Range, Lake Louise, then over the pass to Golden in British Columbia. We also saw Mt. Stephen and its trilobite beds and the

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

famous Burgess shale outcrop near Emerald Lake, then east from Calgary to Drumheller's erosional outcrops which have produced thousands of dinosaur, sea-going reptile, and flying reptile fossils, some of which are displayed along with both earlier and later fossils in the Royal Tyrell Paleontology Museum, the largest museum solely devoted to fossils and the history of life on planet Earth.

Adjourn: Terry Proctor moved and Gary Tober seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

12/8/2012 Addendum to November 27, 2012 General Meeting Minutes

President Charlie Fredregill reopened the November 2012 General Meeting at the start of the HGMS Holiday party/auction for the purpose of voting on the slate of 2013 Officers.

Terry Proctor moved and Libby Guynn seconded that the membership approve the 2013 Slate of Officers as proposed and shown below:

- President:** John Caldyne
- 1st Vice President:** Bill Moore
- 2nd Vice President:** Beverly Mace
- Secretary:** Michele Marsel
- Treasurer:** Rodney Linehan

The motion passed unanimously.

Terry Proctor moved to adjourn, Michele Marsel seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved. **And thus the Holiday party began.**

Board of Director's Meeting Minutes
December 4, 2012
by Sarah Metsa
HGMS Secretary

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

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

Previous Month Board of Directors Meeting Minutes: The minutes of the November 2012 Board Meeting were published in the December 2012 BBG. Mike Dawkins

moved to approve the minutes of the previous meeting as published. Nancy Fischer seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

Officer, Committees, and Section Reports

Daylight Section: The Board Representative for 2013 will be Mary Ann Mitscherling, and Karen Burns will be the Chairperson. Neal Immega will present the December program and will be teaching attendees how to do simple soldering using the club torches.

Lapidary Section: The November program was given by Ed Clay who explained how to fill small voids on cabochons using crushed matching material and epoxy and then polishing as usual.

Education Committee: Sarah Metsa reported she is trying to plan a casting class for January or February and hopefully a chain maille class along with other popular classes.

Youth Section: They had their Christmas party on December 1 where they passed out awards for the cabochons displayed at the show.

BBG Editor and Website: Phyllis George reminded all that articles are due the Wednesday before the second Saturday. She would like to get some photos from the December 8 Christmas party into the January newsletter as well.

Paleo Section: Mike Dawkins reported that they had a joint field trip to Whiskey Bridge with the Archeology Section, and the annual barbecue held at Terry Stiles' ranch was well attended.

Old Business

2011 Application for 2012 Funds: In 2011 HGMS submitted an application for a funds proposal to Conoco, but the club was never advised of Conoco's final decision. Steve Blyskal and Sarah Metsa will work on a similar request to be sent to Shell in order to obtain funds for making more school collections in 2013.

Chevron Grant Proposal: Sigrid Stewart will be turning in a request to Chevron for a \$500 donation. The 2013 President (John Caldyne) will need to send an official letter as part of the request. Sigrid will confer with the 2013 HGMS President about the request.

New Business

Art Smith Collection: Four club members picked up the remainder of Art's collection from his garage and brought it to the club. The collection is destined for shipment to Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois.

Year-Round Publicity Committee: Sigrid Stewart brought up the issue of needing a year-round publicity committee in order to promote the club on an ongoing basis. A goal of this committee would be to partner with local city organizations or with grade schools and colleges to promote the club.

Name Badges: Brand Ex, who makes our Texas-shaped name badges, is going out of business. Beverly Mace asked if we would like to find another vendor or prefer to discontinue offering name badges. Charlie Fredregill advised that he would like to continue them if possible, and he will check on finding other vendors.

Adjourn: Jillynn Hailes moved and it was seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

AFMS President's Message

*by Don Monroe
The Way I See It!*

During the last several years I have written quite a few articles, some good and some bad. This has been a tough article to assemble, and what you are getting is about the 3rd or 4th draft. Early attempts were too weak and did not deal with the major problems that many of us are facing.

First, for the benefit of those of you who do not fully understand how our AFMS publication and communication material is put together: my deadline is the first of the month preceding publication. I certainly am not being critical, just stating how things work, which is a system that I have worked under for several years. My reason for bringing this up at this time is to assure all of you that I know that the news I am bringing you is almost out of date, but I still feel the need to tell you about it. Many of our members, our clubs, and our federations at this moment are still reeling from the onslaught of Hurricane Sandy which is now known as Super Storm Sandy.

This is my guesstimate as to what the situation will be when you read this article in the A.F.M.S. Newsletter. Rescue efforts will be complete, and we hope that all missing people have been found. Money will have been made available from various sources to provide everyone with a place to live.

We rockhounds will know the current situation of our comrades who live or lived on the East Coast, Northeast, Southeast, and Midwest. If things are anything like what they were after the Gulf Coast hurricanes of recent years, many of our people will have lost gem and mineral collections, reference books, and the tools and equipment to continue the hobby. We also know that many if not most all of these losses will not be covered by any form of insurance.

The thrust of this message is that all of us should begin thinking now about how we can help our friends to "get back into the hobby." I ask each of you to inventory what you have that could be of assistance to those who have lost so much. Ann and I will go through our shop and make a list of equipment and supplies that we can share. Will you do likewise? If the response is what I hope it will be, your leadership at all



levels can start thinking about how we can distribute the material we identify. If Rockhounds don't help fellow Rockhounds, who will? Do you think we can expect assistance from any level of government or from BLM or any other organization?

Since this is the last AFMS Newsletter of the year, let me wish each of you a Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukah, and a healthy, happy, and safe 2013.

Bench Tips

by Brad Smith

More Bench Tips by Brad Smith are at www.facebook.com/BenchTips/ or see "Bench Tips for Jewelry Making" on Amazon

Adjustable Chuck for Dremels: Many of us have a Dremel motor tool to use at home or when out to a class or workshop. The one thing that makes this tool much more productive is the addition of one inexpensive option, an adjustable chuck. (See photo below)



The basic motor tool as sold typically comes with a collet chuck.

This means you have to use a wrench to change every tool bit, you have to switch collets to use different shaft sizes (3/32 or 1/8 inch bits), and you can't use ordinary drills at all—only the special ones that have a 3/32 shaft.



A simple and inexpensive (\$10) adjustable chuck solves all of this.

It's available in most large local hardware stores or model making outlets. Tightening the chuck is done easily by hand to any size shaft. No key is required.

Avoiding Solder Lines

After finishing a soldered joint on say, a bezel, have you ever seen it reappear when you solder the bezel to a base plate? What's happening is that every time you heat a soldered piece to the temperature that solder flows, the liquid solder dissolves a little bit more into the base metal. This leaves a small furrow where the solder had been sanded off flush at the joint. To get rid of the furrow, you have to re-sand the joint area down to the bottom of the furrow.

To avoid this when I have another soldering operation to follow, I try to leave a little extra solder on my joints. For instance, when trimming off excess base plate from around a bezel, I leave a paper thickness of excess plate material whenever possible until I'm done with all soldering.

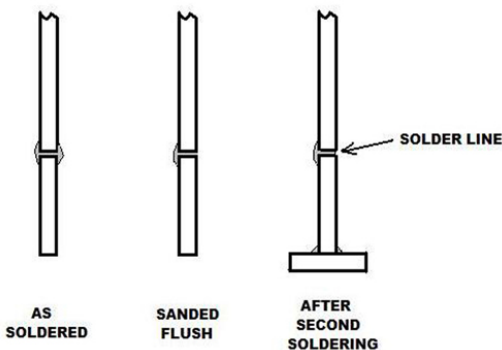
Of course, this isn't always possible as when a soldering operation will prevent you from gaining access to an area for final sanding and polishing. In that case I coat the finished solder joint with ochre to prevent a furrow.

Dragon Crossbow

It's always fun to make something that's functional. Sometimes it's a handle for your favorite hammer, other times it's a custom stamp or punch for a special task, but if

you're heading out to slay a dragon, you might need a cross-bow. Here's how Hans Meevis built his Dragon Bow:

<http://ganoksin.com/blog/meevis/2012/07/12/the-dragon-bow-start-to-finish/>



South Central Federation News *from SCFMS Newsletter 11-12/2012*

Annual Show: The ARK-LA-TX Gem and Mineral Society, Bossier City, LA, will host the SCFMS Show in 2013, to be held on August 17-18, 2013. So, mark your calendar and plan to be there for that show. We will be having more information about the festivities as time goes on, which are being planned at this moment.

Annual Meeting: The Federation's next annual meeting will be held August 17, 2013

Annual Silent Auction:

The annual silent auction will be held during the SCFMS Show and Convention, August 17-18, 2013. Donations are greatly welcomed and needed. Rocks, fossils, minerals, jewelry, and hobby-related items are among the items needed. Bring or send these items to the show. Proceeds from the silent auction go into the South Central Federation Endowment Fund.

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What Does Being a Club Participant Mean?

Author unknown, via many bulletins

There is attending the meetings, taking classes, participating in the open work shop hours. There is bringing items for show and tell, food for the picnics. These are all the easy, totally fun parts. However, there is so much more to it, and most of that is fun, too. It is all what we as the individual participants make it.

There is showcasing your items in a display case or volunteering at the Annual Show. This is great advertising for us and generates interest for the club. There is giving a presentation about something that interests you—preferably about rocks, minerals, jewelry making, etc., but we can stretch that a bit depending on the subject. It's all about education, opportunities, and so much more.

There is being in charge of certain committees that are vital to having an enjoyable club experience:

- the Social committee that organizes the holiday party and picnic and setup and clean-up before and after;
- the Show committee that contacts all of the vendors and organizes everything that has to be done to ensure a successful show;
- teaching! We need people willing to teach the classes. The more the merrier, because the more quickly people are taught, the faster they will be able to take a turn at teaching;
- the Library: someone to tend to the cabinet during the meetings, check out books for members and contact those whose books are overdue; scout out new books or DVDs for purchase, and then listing the new books plus any donated items;
- Historian: Someone to keep our historical records. Like to make scrapbooks? This is for you! Collect photos and any other memorabilia as the Club progresses, and preserve it in albums.

There are the board members – President, Vice President, Recording and Corresponding Secretary, Treasurer, and Directors who are responsible for making sure we adhere to AFMS/EFMLS (*Editor's Note: AFMS/SCFMS in our case*), insurance, state, federal and club rules and regulations, that the mail gets picked up and read, that the bills get paid and deposits get made, that the minutes get taken, etc. These are all necessary parts of the whole to have a successful and enjoyable club experience.

Many of us have very busy lives, and we joined the club for the fun parts—the meetings, the classes and workshop, etc. And we definitely want people to participate in these things. However, we need to also be willing to take our turn and help with the other responsibilities.

It is a team effort. We are a club, not just a group of individuals. The people on the board and heading the committees are totally supportive and will always be there to help in whatever position you might take. We have an excellent group of team members!

My point is that our club is only as good as we make it. Sure it is fun to make new friends and to share our common interests, to eat food and participate in workshops. However, there is much more to it.

Someone has to organize things. Someone has to make sure the bills are paid. Someone has to keep track of the class schedule, social events, and workshop schedule to accommodate the classes. These are necessary parts of the whole to keep it running smoothly. And to keep it fun!

Let's each of us look at what we get out of our club. And then see if there is some way we can also give back: showcasing items in the display case, bringing food for the picnics, signing up to help with setup and clean-up duties, being on a committee, becoming a committee chair, or maybe offering to assist a committee chair. It takes a lot of participating to create a great club.

We already have a great club, but we can make it better if more of us would step up and get involved by being an active participant.

Tips and Hints

via Stoney Statements 8/2012

Highlight the Grain: You can highlight the grain of black petrified wood by soaking it in bleach for 3 or 4 weeks—replenish bleach as necessary. When the desired grain contrast is reached, remove the pieces, wash, sand, and polish. Some very interesting pieces can be obtained by using this method. *From NFMS Newsletter 2/1993, via The Calgary Lapidary Journal 10/1999, via SCFMS Newsletter 11–12/1999*

Clean rubber rollers on your tumbler with lacquer thinner. It will also prolong the life of windshield wiper blades—it keeps them pliable and eliminates drying. *Via Gems of the Rogue 3/1999, via The Conglomerate 4/1999*

Cracking geodes: Soak a string in kerosene, tie it around the geode and burn the string, then plunge it into cold water. In many cases this will develop a crack, and a light tap with a hammer will finish the job. *CFMS Newsletter, via The Conglomerate 4/1999*

Is Gold Leaf Made of Solid Gold? Yes! A gold block is pounded into a thin sheet by machine. Then, it is reduced to transparent thinness by hand! It can be beaten so thin that 1200 sheets of gold leaf are thinner than a sheet of writing paper! *Via T-Town Rockhound, Via The Template, Via Slab & Gab 7-8/1974*

Be Safe – Be Well

by Don Monroe and Linda Behr

from the Lodestar, 6/2012, via Gem Cutters News 11/2012

Shop Tools Revisited

Previous articles have discussed shop tools, their operation and potential hazards. Things that have occurred in and out of class have convinced me that we really need to review some of the basics relating to tool usage.

I am convinced that a review of safety basics is really important. I am always fascinated by Norm Abrams (I hope I got the name right) and his woodworking TV program. He always, in the early part of his show, makes it a point to discuss a few safety issues. I think this is such a good idea that I try to follow his lead in our silversmith classes.

One of the first questions usually deals with the danger of using torches for soldering. My reply often goes like this. “All of us learned about the age of 4 that fire is hot and will burn you.” There are other tools in the silver studio that cause more injuries than torches. I have seen far more injuries involving the use of buffing and polishing equipment than almost anything else.



In my opinion the most dangerous piece of equipment is a flexible shaft which we usually refer to as a “Foredom.” There are many manufacturers that produce this type of machine, and most of them are excellent. The problem arises from the user and not the machine. If you are using a small buff or a small cratex wheel and let the wheel get over the edge of your piece of silver, it will try to take your silver piece away from you. The result often is that the shaft of the machine will wind up in the palm of your hand and can quickly cut you. A similar situation can occur when you are using a cabinet-type buffer.

The machine often seems to have a mind of its own and will snatch the piece you are working on and sling it in some direction. The piece is often bent or damaged, and if you are not very careful how you hold your work, you can definitely get hurt.

Almost everything we do in our shop or studio has the potential to cause an eye injury. Most of us do not use proper eye protection. I really do not know why this is so, but it is. I must admit that I am not without fault in this matter and often realize that I am not wearing my goggles or face shield and often tend to rely on my prescription glasses. Now this has worked out fine for a long time, but now I must face the fact that since I had cataract surgery and do not wear prescription glasses very often, I have become careless.

Last but not least, we are hopefully becoming more aware of acids and other chemicals that wind up in the studio. I have reached the point that anything I find in the classroom that I cannot identify, I throw away. We really cannot afford the risk, and I am pleased to announce that the management of our school totally supports this approach.

A Rock Hound's Story of a Lost Log

by Paul James

from *The Pineywoods Rooter* 11/2012

While hosting our annual show and the SCFMS meeting at the same time, a (good) friend of mine and I were field trip co-chairmen for our club, the Pine Country Gem and Mineral Society of Jasper, TX. We were excited about the participation by so many hounds, even though we didn't get to go on all of the trips since we had other duties at our show. Now this is where my naiveté and my story begin.

While using my vehicle (and gas), my (good) friend and I decided to ride down one of the logging roads that had been dozer-cleared by another member. This member was responsible for us being able to search on this large tract of property and even led the groups on some great treks. We can't thank him enough. I digress, but felt that I needed to say that.

Getting back to my story, I looked off to my left (I was driving, remember) and saw what looked like a nice piece of wood that had been exposed by the blade of the dozer. I made mention of what I was looking at, and before I could get my vehicle in park, "friend" was astraddle the piece in what I now know as an analysis of the whole picture.

He returned to my vehicle and replied that it was too big to fool with after I asked him about it. That should have been a red flag since my (good) friend has more petrified wood than anyone. I don't want to identify my (good) friend, but it's important to know that he resides about 2½ hours west of Jasper near Huntsville, or to be more precise, about 13 miles north of Huntsville. Well, anyway, I said we needed to get back to the show since "we" had a lot of work to do.

While working hard and trying to do everything I could for anyone who needed me, I heard my (g) friend say, "Paul, could you come outside with me. I need a favor." I thought this was strange, but now I know that he didn't want any eavesdropping (witness) by others. Anyhow, when we were by ourselves he wanted to know if he could borrow my low-boy trailer to haul some wood on. Now you have to realize this is a (good) friend, so I said, "Sure, **Fre.**, go ahead, you know where it is." Whoops, I nearly used his name.

After some time had passed, my (g) friend kind of sidled up to me, where I was hard at work doing whatever I was doing, and said something like, "I need another favor." I said, "Sure, **F .. d**, what do you need?" He then told me that he needed to take my low-boy to 13 miles north of Huntsville, TX.

At this time I developed more than a curiosity. It had turned into a *real* interest, so I decided to look for myself since everyone at the show was beginning to go out to see what my (g) friend had on my lowboy. I asked someone what he had and was told that it was a big log of petrified wood that he had found alongside the road cleaned by a dozer. They even told how he had gotten his son to help, who later made it abundantly clear where the log was going to stay. Well, by then most everyone agreed it should be mine but gave no suggestions as to how I could claim it.

The log was transported (on my low-boy) to 13 miles north of Huntsville, and according to some pictures I've seen, it will stay there until some drastic changes take place.

I would like to note that I did get my low-boy back (minus a tailgate) and even a little fragment of wood that my (G) friend thought I might like to remember how well we co-chaired the field trip.



Moral of this story: If you see a potentially nice piece of wood or rock, you might want to keep it to yourself!

F—d and Ca—in, leave a message for Paul concerning the petrified log.

COME AND TAKE IT!!!!

Trillions of Carats of Diamonds Found under Russian Asteroid Crater *from The Rockpile 11/2012*

The Russian government has announced a discovery of an enormous diamond deposit that reportedly contains *trillions* (1,000,000,000,000s) of carats of the precious gem, large enough to meet market demand for 3,000 years! The government has known about the diamond field beneath a 62-mile wide asteroid crater in eastern Siberia since the 1970s, but went public about it just recently.

The “impact” diamonds, which are formed when a meteor collides with a deposit of graphite, are reportedly twice as hard as other diamonds! The reserve of diamonds in the crater could have a huge effect on the diamond market, too. The Director of the Institute of Geology and Mineralogy from the Russian Academy says, “The value of impact diamonds is increased by their unusually abrasive (grinding) qualities and large grain size. This expands significantly their scope of industrial uses and makes them even more valuable for industrial purposes.”

The Art of Display
by June Culp Zeitner
from SCFMS Newsletter 7–8/2012

W

rritten sometime in the 1970s and sent to Paul Good, Editor of the SCFMS Newsletter

To show off minerals and gems, one need only learn and apply a few rules of art. Some are so elementary that most pebble-pups as well as advanced rockhounds know them; nevertheless, they are all important.

Cleanliness: A dusty or finger-printed specimen or case detracts from any display.

Arrangement: A pleasing arrangement has balance, good proportion, pleasing color harmony, rhythm, design, and suitable background. Generally speaking there are two types of balance in art—formal and informal. If you can draw a line through the center of a design and find that each half is a mirror image of the other, that design is formal. If the two halves are not the same, the balance is informal. An old fashioned garnet brooch is usually formal in design. A modern free form brooch set with a garnet baroque would probably be informal in balance.

Formal balance is well suited to arrange cabochons for display. A group of slabs of dissimilar sizes and shapes lend themselves to informal balance. Why strive for balance? We want to show it off to the best advantage. Just as we would never lay a “picture agate” upside down, so we would not place it in a row with bigger or brighter stones.

Trained to take in things at a quick glance, our eyes naturally seek the center of interest. If you have any prized specimens, you are anxious to give them plenty of space. Overcrowding is a sin of which most of us are guilty.

According to the strict rules of art, a display should have most of its weight toward the bottom. This means apparent weight rather than actual weight. A good display can't have the most massive or the brightest pieces at the top. It would appear too heavy. The eye is upset at seeing a display with high center of gravity which looks as if it would topple over. In a display all on one level, the larger items naturally go to the background, the more spectacular specimens toward the center, and the smaller items in the foreground.

Every good display, like every good picture, should have margins. The rules governing margins in art call for the widest to be at the bottom, the second at the top, and the two sides either equal to or a little narrower than the top.

Remember that bright colors strike the eye before dull colors. They tend to come forward. They can be used in smaller amounts and still attract attention.

The placing of bright colors must be watched carefully. For example, if you placed a slab of electric blue chrysocolla in each corner of your show case, they would tend to draw the eyes in four directions at once. Whatever you planned for the center of interest in the middle of the case would be lost. Bright colors placed in a hit-or-miss manner spoil any feeling of balance and rhythm by causing the eye to jump.

One large specimen can be balanced by a group of small ones. One bright specimen can be

balanced by several duller ones. The subject of color is important to rockhounds, and we should know and understand the color wheel; the primary, secondary, and tertiary colors; and the basic color harmonies. A very bright color should be used in smaller amounts than muted shades or tints. The center of interest of any arrangement should be toward the center where the eye naturally falls first. If too many bright colors other than the center of interest are used, the result is a “busy” or jumpy arrangement.

It is definitely worth the effort when arranging a gem or mineral display to carefully consider the color of every piece before deciding where to place it. The artful use of color can make an average collection spectacular, while the poor use of color will make a superb collection seem like a dull jumble.

Background: In the successful display of gems, the background against which the gems are placed looms as a major item. The color and texture of your background should be in keeping with the value of the gems. It should not detract from the color of your gems but should flatter every stone in the display. Tweed or calico would not be used to set off a faceted collection. Velvets, velours, silks, and satins are more appropriate. However, as beautiful as red velvet is, it would not be an appropriate background because red is a distracting color. After much experimenting, we have found that a pale blue satin, a gray tone of blue, is the most versatile of background materials for mineral displays. There is just enough color in this to set off tints as well as shades.

Another wonderful background for gems or jewelry is the use of mirrors. A sparkling mirror multiplies the beauty of your gems. Snowy white Styrofoam is another suitable background. It can be cut in various shapes to enhance the beauty of a specimen and is useful in creating split levels of display. A specimen can also be made to stand in the precise position where it looks best. Besides the ordinary background materials, many rockhounds with imagination use other devices to add interest.

A piece of silvery driftwood against a sea-blue drop may be used to set off a collection of beach agates. A piece of Ibduan pottery will add interest to a turquoise display. Under no circumstances should the background be so big, bright, or unusual that it detracts from the real purpose of the exhibit.

Lighting: Good lighting is essential. Scenic agate slabs are best viewed with a light behind them. Spotlights are suitable for large spectacular pieces, but in most cases tube lights directly above or inside each display case are best. Natural light is a big help for home displays. A big north or south window opposite your display gives a good light.

Flair: For want of a better word, I use “flair” to describe that something extra which the personality of the rockhound stamps on his display. A beginning artist should learn the rules of art; however we all know artists who have broken rules and come out on top. Not all great gem displays follow the artists’ display rules, but you should learn the rules first before you build up enough faith in your flair to learn when it is right to break a rule or two.

If gem dealers and collectors would think of themselves more often as artists, many shops and collectors would be greatly enriched with very little extra expenditure. Display cases are not hard to build. With a little effort, every hidden box of specimens could graduate into a real artistic display.

Show Time 2013

January 1- 31	Quartzsite, AZ	Wholesale and retail shows, one of many Desert Gardens RV Park info@desertgardensrvpark.net www.desertgardensrvpark.net
January 19-20	Fredericksburg, TX	Fredericksburg Rockhounds Lady Bird Johnson Municipal Park www.fredericksburgrockhounds.org
January 25-27	Tyler, TX	East Texas Gem & Mineral Society Tyler Rose Garden Center; Keith Harmon keithharmon19@yahoo.com
Jan. 31-Feb. 17	Tucson, AZ	Wholesale and retail shows.
February 1-28	Quartzite, AZ	Wholesale and retail shows.
February 2-3	Panama City, FL	Panama City Gem & Mineral Society Bay County Fairgrounds, Am. Legion Bldg. Joseph Schings, mojo3002@comcast.net
February 16-17	Plainview, TX	Hi Plains Gem & Mineral Society Ollie Liner Cntr, 2000 S. Columbia Josephine Macha, josefcmacha@aol.com
February 16-17	Georgetown, TX	Williams County Gem & Mineral Society Community Center, San Gabriel Park dragon.reynolds@hotmail.com; www.wcgms.org
February 23-24	Pasadena, TX	Clear Lake Gem & Mineral Society Pasadena Convention Center 7902 Fairmont Parkway; Al Pennington gapenning@earthlink.net http://www.clgms.org
March 2-3	Big Spring, TX	Big Spring Prospectors Club Howard County Fair Barn
March 2-3	Robstown, TX	Gulf Coast Gem & Mineral Society Regional Fairgrounds
March 16-17	Live Oak, TX (San Antonio)	Southwest Gem & Mineral Society Live Oak Civic Center, 8101 Pat Booker Rd.
April 13-14	Abilene, TX	Central Texas Gem & Mineral Society Abilene Civic Center, North 6th & Pine
April 19-21	Alpine, TX	Chihuahua Gem & Mineral Society Alpine Civic Center

2013		January				2013
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 New Year's Day	2 7:30 Mineral Section	3 7:30 Archaeology Group	4	5 10-5 Shop Open 10-12 Youth Section
6	7	8 7:30 Board Meeting	9 7:30 Faceting Section 10-3 Shop Open	10	11	12 10-5 Shop Open Beading Section lunch & field trip
13	14 1:00 Day Light Section	15 7:30 Paleo Section	16 7:30 Mineral Section 10-3 Shop Open	17	18	19 10-5 Shop Open 10-12 Youth Section 1:30 Beading Section
20	21 7:30 Lapidary Section	22 7:30 General Meeting	23 10-3 Shop open	24	25	26 10-5 Shop Open
27	28	29	30	31		

2013		February				2013
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 10-5 Shop Open 10-12 Youth Section
3	4	5 7:30 Board Meeting	6 7:30 Faceting Section 10-3 Shop Open	7 7:30 Archeology Section	8	9 10-5 Shop Open
10	11 1:00 Day Light Section	12 7:30 Paleo Section	13 7:30 Mineral Section 10-3 Shop Open	14	15	16 10-5 Shop Open 10-12 Youth Section 1:30 Beading Section
	18 7:30 Lapidary Section	19 7:30 General Meeting	20 10-3 Shop open	21	22	23 10-5 Shop Open
24	25	26	27	28		

The BACKBENDER'S GAZETTE

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

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