



The **BACKBENDER'S GAZETTE**

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

Volume XLV - No. 1

January 2014



President's Message

by Ray Kizer

Hello to all the new and old members of HGMS, and welcome to a new year of activities in all the Sections our club has to offer. If you haven't checked out the programs offered by the various groups, I suggest you do so.

The greatest thing HGMS has going for it is its members and the acquired knowledge they hold collectively. So please go around and visit the different Sections: Archeology, Beading, Day Light, Faceting, Lapidary, Mineral, Youth, and even Paleo. Meet the members of each group, then see what you can learn. I guarantee they are friendly people. At least that will be my plan for the coming year—lots to do, lots to learn.

I want to personally thank all the members who contributed to making the 2013 Gem and Mineral Show such a great success. So many of you give of your time and energy to make the show happen, and I wanted to thank you all for such a great commitment. For the new members and for those who have yet to volunteer, I hope you will consider getting to know the people involved and decide to join them this coming year. Try manning a post at the show for a couple of hours to start and see how much it really makes going to the show a different and unique experience. Oh, the questions the children ask, and the smiles on the faces of those who are learning something fun and new—priceless.

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General Meeting Dates

by Paul Brandes

January 28, 2014: To be announced

February 25, 2014: To be announced

HAPPY NEW YEAR!



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

*Editor: Phyllis B. George
22407 Park Point Drive
Katy, TX 77450-5852
Phone: (281) 395-3087
Copy is due for the February 2014 issue by Wednesday, January 8, 2014.
E-mail the Editor and Webmaster at
pgeorge4@comcast.net*

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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The HGMS Board has several projects already in the works that will carry over into the New Year, and I'm sure we will think up several new improvements to the operation and maintenance of the Club in the coming year. As always, your suggestions are greatly appreciated. As I step into my new role and learn what's up, I will keep you informed.

If you have a story or article relating to the enjoyment of our hobby, or use some shop technique you think the membership would find interesting, please contact our wonderful Backbender's Gazette Editor—Phyllis George—and share it with us all.

Here is to a Great Rock'n New Year...Ray Kizer

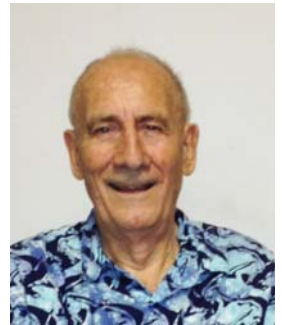
The Miner—The “Cool Water” Aquamarine

by John Anderson

Member of the Houston Gem and Mineral Society

The Miner would like to tell you a story about a very large aquamarine gem that was valued around one million dollars and was known as “Cool Water.” It's been at least fifty years ago since that discovery, so I am relying on my memory.

An article appeared in one of the *Rock & Gem* magazines that was around then. They had a picture of the gem, and it was magnificent. The article would not divulge the location, but it did give a vague description that the average person could not make heads nor tails of, but my friend Tom Saffas could—and did—many times when looking for gold or other different minerals and lapidary-type rocks. An example of that expertise was used when we explored the area of the Virgin Valley (June 2013 *Backbender's Gazette*). My friend Tom and I both saw the Cool Water article, and we wanted to try our hand at finding the location where the gem was discovered.



It is amazing what you can do with a little information from one source, then linking that information to someone else's information, and making a sound judgment. The article stated that the gem was found 100 miles from where most of the famous pegmatite gems are found. Other scraps of information helped us triangulate where the location might be. After we had at least two more leads, we set out trying to find the Cool Water gem—but we would settle for even a small “Cool Water Gem.”

We settled on an area that we called X, and we checked the geology looking for the things that need to be present to produce great gems—high mineralization in a pegmatite location within a large area of granite. In order for pegmatite to be formed, it is thought that the temperature of the granite takes much longer to cool than normal, letting the crystals become much larger and thus creating a pegmatite deposit out of the normal granite deposit.

We arrived at our site, looking everywhere for tell signs letting us know that we were on the right track. We found a dirt country road that followed a camelback type of weathering formation. A camelback is like the name implies—it is a ridge that rises slightly above a normal crown of a mountain. It is present usually when the surrounding formation does not weather as well, but also occurs where there is an uplifting. As we traveled farther and farther up the dirt road, we could see that the camelback type of formation kept getting bigger.



All granite deposits are very resistant to weathering, and pegmatite in some cases is even more resistant to weathering due to its larger crystals that act like the aggregate in concrete. We decided that this was as good as any place to start looking, especially when we kept seeing signs saying “private property” and “no trespassing.” We found a spot on the side of the road that we could drive our car into and be completely hidden.

We started our climb up the mountainside that was at least a 40° rise. As we crawled up the mountain, we kept seeing more and more signs saying “stay out” and “keep out, private property.” We still were not sure if this indeed was the mountain that had the honey hole where the gem was found until we saw signs stating “trespassers will be shot on sight.” When we saw those signs, we knew we were in the right area.

As we approached the hilltop, we started seeing test holes dug into the pegmatite. We finally found the main pit that was about 80 feet in length, about ten feet wide, and about six feet deep. We saw no more signs, but we were very watchful, aware that somebody might appear at any time. We decided not to dig in their open pit operation but to try to find our own deposit in case the owner came up to the claim when we were digging—and maybe they would not shoot us. Crystals were showing themselves almost everywhere we looked. We noticed a rough road that came up over the hill on the other side of the hill that we had climbed, so we decided to go looking for our deposit in the opposite direction of their diggings.

We did this so there would be less chance of the claim owners finding us on their claim. We decided to stay off any type of trail so we could not be easily seen or caught. We kept moving downward towards our right in a direction that looked promising because the pegmatite kept getting better. Our semi-trail finally gave out, and we finally had to bend at the waist to continue our trail downhill following our outcropping of pegmatite. We continued our climb down the mountain, but we did not find any colorful gems. We did find tourmaline, but only shoal or black. We found lots of small quartz crystals, feldspar, massive quartz, mica, and lithium-type ore that make up a good pegmatite deposit.

I have had blisters on my feet before, but this time I had blisters on top of blisters. We were shuffling our feet and walking downhill, so our feet were jammed forward in our

boots and creating tremendous pressure on our toes. I have never in my life had so much pain in my feet, but we had to keep moving to survive—if we stopped, we might not be able to move again for our descent down the hill was quite agonizing. Sometimes we were almost on our stomachs going through the bushes in our way. We must have traveled about one-and-a-half miles down the mountainside before we found a dirt road. We knew that our car was parked to our right, but we did not know how far away.

We saw a farm to our left about a quarter mile away. We were getting low on water, so we headed to the farm; we thought we might get something to eat. They were drilling a water well and using a dousing stick shaped like a Y. We asked if we might have some water to fill our canteen—which they finally agreed to—but they said “no” to any food.

They kept asking us where we had come from, and we said that we had climbed over the mountain from a vague direction. They kept asking, “Did we not see any private property signs?” We convinced them that we were looking for uranium. I had a real small Geiger counter, and that seemed to convince them that we were not looking for gems in the pegmatite. I feel that saved us from any other problems that could have arisen.

We then walked back to our car, and we were so glad to be sitting down. Finally we both said at the same time, “Let’s go get something to eat.” I remember during the meal that we asked the waitress for another round of bread with our meal because we were so tired and hungry. We made many mistakes that day—going into a private no trespassing area, continuing on, and not turning back when the trip became unbearable—which it did on that trip down the mountain side. I want to tell you more about that pegmatite deposit, but that will have to be another story from the Miner.

John A. Anderson
The Miner



"This the nice isolated spot that no other
rockhounds know about?"

via Golden Spike News 8/00

**Get last-minute news about club events by sending a note
to Jim Kendall at kendal_ja@yahoo.com**

Gorgosaurus

by Neal Immega

Member of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society

“Live fast, die young, and leave a good-looking corpse!”

— “Knock on any door,” Willard Motley, 1947

The *Gorgosaurus* cast in the new paleo hall at the Houston Museum of Natural Science is the most mistreated dinosaur I have ever seen. It should be in a hospital to repair all the damage it suffered, only we are too late. My previous articles on the *Triceratops* and *T. rex* extol their real bone specimens as the best in the world. Well, I must say that the *Gorgosaurus* has to be the best/worst in the world from all the damage it shows. It has bone infections (or cancer), two broken legs, and a brain tumor!

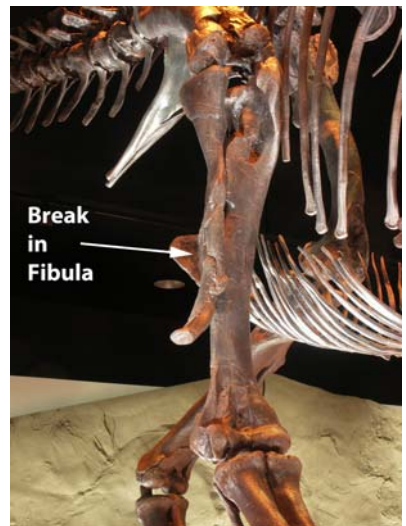
Gorgosaurus is a theropod dinosaur with a two-clawed hand like *T. rex*. It is from the same family, but it is much smaller and has cutting rather than blunt teeth.



Gorgosaurus standing guard over a dead duckbill dinosaur

History: The specimen of *Gorgosaurus*, from which the cast was made, was found in a *Maiaasaura* (“good mother” dinosaur, a duckbill) bone bed in Montana. It is from the Two Medicine Formation, the equivalent to the Judith River Formation which provided the duckbill Leonardo. The original is in the Indianapolis Children’s Museum where it presumably snacks on the small visitors. ☺ The formation spans 74 to 80 mybp (million years before present).

Broken Fibula: You have two bones in the calf of your leg, and so do dinosaurs. Look at its right rear leg, and you will see that the fibula has been broken, healed up, and now sticks out at a right angle. Ooo, that’s gotta hurt! With that bone broken, the dino could not twist its foot from side to side, limiting its agility. Let’s try to figure out how long it lived after the break. Look at the healed bone, mentally restore it to the correct position, and estimate how much too short it is. I guess that it is 3 inches too short. Carl Driever, the human pathologist docent at the museum, tells me that it is common for a badly damaged bone to stop



Right fibula showing healing after a break

growing. I conclude that the *Gorgosaurus* hurt himself as a young adult and survived a minimum of 3 more months (could be much longer). \$%*&^ kids doing dare devil stunts!

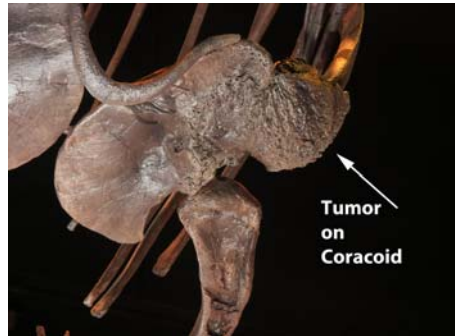
Broken Femur: Were some dinos just accident-prone? Go to the other side of the display and look at the left femur (the upper leg bone). Pete Larson (in the video cited below) says that one of the big lumps on the femur (the trochanter) has broken off. This was serious. Big muscles attach to the trochanter, and if they were ripped off, could they take the trochanter with it? The question is—did this break kill the animal? Pete and Carl cannot tell if the bone has healed, but I would bet that the ripping off the big muscle would kill anything. But maybe not. This dino is really tough, but accident-prone.



Damaged Femur

My view of this is that the upper part of the femur has been pushed INTO the lower part of the leg. This looks serious.

Coracoid tumor: But wait! It gets worse. Go back to the front of the display and look at the coracoid bone (where your clavicle is). The right side is normal, but the left side sports a huge, warty lump. It could be a bone cancer or infection. Human medical doctors always sidestep my question about what caused it and refuse to speculate even though the patient has been dead for 80 million years!



Tumor on Coracoid

Brain Tumor: Yes, this dino has a brain tumor. You cannot see it in the mounting, but Pete found it during preparation. Remember that dinosaurs are not overly blessed with brain size, and to lose any would be a serious problem.

Speculation: I know that dinosaurs grow fast. Many of the *T. rex*s on display turn out to be teenagers when the bone rings are counted. If the fibula break did not kill the dinosaur, it would need weeks—if not months—to heal. Could it survive with no food or water for a month? Was someone bringing it food? Did *Gorgosaurus* run in packs? Could the pack have provided a lifeline? Inquiring minds want to know!

References:

1. Pete Larson at HMNS talking about the *Gorgosaurus*. Much of my information comes from this 3-minute video.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yKOrB_vVifo

2. Black Hills Institute catalog entry for *Gorgosaurus*
<http://www.bhigr.com/store/product.php?productid=396&cat=84&page=1>
3. Sarcoma (bone cancer)
<http://www.healthofchildren.com/S/Sarcomas.html>
4. If you thought that quote was from James Dean...
<http://www.thisdayinquotes.com/2010/02/real-origin-of-live-fast-die-young-and.html>

Day Light Section

by Karen Burns

Jim Paras will be teaching crafting with aluminum foil on January 13, and Neal Immega will be demonstrating patinas February 10.

Archeology Section Minutes

December 5, 2013

by Terry Proctor

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Dr. Garth Clark at 7:40 p.m. Vice-Chairman Terry Proctor moved to approve the minutes of the October meeting as published in the November 2013 BBG. (Archeology did not meet in November as it was the day HGMS members were setting up displays for the 2013 Show.)

Treasurer Robert Moore reported that the Archeology Section treasury remained with the full amount from the auction in September, but some minor reimbursements are owed when the bills are received.

The program was presented by Robert Moore and wife, Nancy Englehardt-Moore. The topic of the program was their trip to Yin Xu, Ancient Capital of the Shang (Yin) Dynasty. The Moores presented a number of slides of this most interesting location in China. The city is named Yin Xu.

This city is famous as the source of oracle bones and script, the earliest known Chinese writing. Rediscovered in 1899, the Yin Xu is also a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Over 80 rammed-earth foundation sites including palaces, shrines, tombs, and workshops have been excavated confirming that the city was the spiritual and cultural center of the Yin Dynasty.



Lady Fu Hao Statute. She was the 6-foot tall combination wife, concubine, and war lord of the Emperor. She ruled with great power herself, hence this statute of her holds a huge ceremonial bronze axe.



Exhibit Hall of Chariot Pits



Chariots with horse bones sacrificed so the emperor would have chariots in the afterlife

Photo of Lady Fu Hao Statute by the Moores
Photos of chariot images shown on the wall taken by Terry Proctor

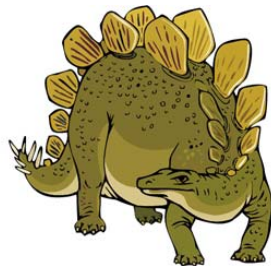
The best-preserved of the Shang Dynasty royal tombs is the Tomb of Fu Hao. She was the extraordinary Lady Hao, military leader and wife of Shang King Wu Ding. Discovered in 1976, the tomb has been dated to 1250 BC. It was completely undisturbed, having escaped the looting that damaged the other tombs.

Also located onsite is the Exhibition Hall of Chariot Pits where the earliest samples of animal-driven carts are on display. Each of the six pits contains the remains of a carriage and two horses. Five of the pits were also found to contain the remains of a human sacrifice (four adult males and one child).

Lapidary Garage Sale—HGMS Club House
Saturday, February 8, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
by Margaret Hardman-Muye

The Lapidary Section is selling large quantities of rough including carnelian, West Texas agate, amethyst, jade, lapis, jaspers, miscellaneous jewelry, and more! Come see, come buy!

Saturday, February 8, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.



Mineral Section Programs

by Paul Brandes

January 1, 2014: No Meeting (New Year's Day)

January 15, 2014—The Tucson Experience: For collectors, the Tucson Gem and Mineral Show in February and the many other smaller shows before and after are the pinnacle of mineral connoisseurs from all corners of the globe. Tim and Holly Smith, seasoned veterans of the Tucson shows, have graciously agreed to give a presentation on what it's like to peruse the many vendors at this, the largest gathering of its kind in the world. Listen to them share their stories and enjoy photographs from the many shows they have attended over the years. For those of you who have never experienced Tucson first-hand, this is an excellent opportunity to learn about what the Tucson experience is all about. This promises to be a very informative and fun presentation! Refreshments will be provided.

February 5, 2014—What's Hot in Tucson, 2013: 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.

February 19, 2014—DVD of attendees' choice: Due to the participation of many Mineral Section members 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.



In Fond Remembrance of William “Bill” Lawrence

by Jaye Smith

E-mail address: lawrewt@flash.net

from Rock Talk 11-12/2013

On October 9, 2013, TGMS member Bill Lawrence, 56, was tragically killed while collecting in the St. David area. Bill's passion was field collecting after he and his wife, Jaye Smith, moved to Tucson following Bill's early retirement from Chevron in September 2012. Bill participated in many of the Tucson Gem & Mineral Society's (TGMS) field trips since coming to Tucson, and both he and Jaye were show volunteers during the 2013 Show.

Bill had collected minerals from childhood, joining the Youth Section of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society and going on many field trips with his father to famous Arkansas mineral localities. After going to work for Superior Oil

Company right out of college, he was able to use the “silver pick” to amass a collection of over 7500 specimens. He specialized in calcite from worldwide localities as well as barite, galena, hematite, and scheelite, plus mineral suites from Brazil, the former USSR republics, China, and an extensive fluorescent mineral collection. Bill was awarded the South Central Federation trophy for Miniature Minerals in 1983 as well as numerous other awards from regional shows.

A very well-done memorial Web site for Bill is at

http://www.forevermissed.com/bill-lawrence/?utm_campaign=welcome_email&utm_medium=email&utm_source=fn_emails#about.

The Arizona State Museum at The University of Arizona will be hosting a Celebration of Life for Bill on Friday, January 31, 2014 at the Arizona State Museum on the University campus. Further information on this event can be obtained from Darlene Lizarraga, e-mail df1@email.arizona.edu, phone (520) 626-8381.

A memorial fund in Bill's honor has been set up to benefit the ongoing conservation and preservation projects of The Arizona State Museum. Please contact Sandra Um, Director of Development, and Arizona State Museum for donations and further information, e-mail sum@email.arizona.edu, phone 520.626.3466.

Photo by Barb Muntyan



October 22 General Meeting Minutes
by Michele Marsel, HGMS Secretary

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

Prior Month General Meeting Minutes: Karen Burns moved and Joan Riley seconded that the September 2013 General Meeting minutes be approved as published in the October 2013 BBG. The motion passed unanimously.

Drawing: Richard Good won the door prize. It was a moon rock micromount donated by Dr. Garth Clark.

Show & Tell:

John Cooper spoke about his extended trip and showed books and maps he used on his journey.

Announcements:

- Michele Marsel reminded everyone about the online signup for Show volunteers. Many slots are still open, and Michele encouraged everyone to go online and sign up.
- Mary Ann Mitscherling is coordinating Demo Area volunteers separately from the online sign up, so please contact Mary Ann if you wish to participate in the Club demonstration area.
- Mary Ann also announced she is working on a list of upcoming courses to be shared with visitors at our Show who are interested in taking classes. If you have a class you would like to teach in early 2014, please give your information to Mary Ann.

Business: Sigrid Stewart presented the 2014 Slate of Officers prepared by the Nominating Committee:

- President: Ray Kizer
- 1st Vice President: Paul Brandes
- 2nd Vice President: Beverly Mace
- Secretary: Vacant
- Treasurer: Rodney Linehan

Sigrid then asked if there were any nominations from the floor. Nancy English asked what was required of the Secretary, and David Hawkins promptly nominated her for the position. Nancy agreed to accept the nomination. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved. A vote to approve the slate will be held at the November 26, 2013 General Meeting.

Program: Dr. Garth Clark presented a program on Lunar Rocks and gave detailed information on how rocks are identified as being from the moon. We learned that there are several key minerals and mineral levels that differentiate rocks that originated on

the Moon. Garth brought some sample rocks and donated a micromount sample as the door prize for the evening.

Refreshments: Everyone was reminded to feed the Sabre Tooth Kitty with donations. John Caldyne provided the evening's snacks.

Adjourn: Clyde McMeans moved and Jim Kendall seconded that the meeting be concluded. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

November 26 General Meeting Minutes
by Michele Marsel, HGMS Secretary

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

Visitors and New Members: Terry Proctor introduced his guest, Molly Brown.

Drawing: Molly Brown had first timer's luck and won the evening's door prize—a selenite gypsum specimen.

Announcements: Michele Marsel reminded everyone that the annual HGMS holiday party and auction will be held on Saturday, December 14. The auction will feature lots of nice slabs and rough material from the collection of Dr. Frances Arrighi. There is LOTS of lapidary material, so if you wish to donate an item for auction, please consider fossils, finished jewelry, or jewelry-making supplies instead of lapidary rough.

Business: The 2014 Slate of Officers was presented for a vote.

- President: Ray Kizer
- 1st Vice President: Paul Brandes
- 2nd Vice President: Beverly Mace
- Secretary: Nancy English
- Treasurer: Rodney Linehan

Terry Proctor moved and Karen Burns seconded that the slate be approved as presented by the Nominating Committee. The motion passed unanimously.

Program: Dr. Patrick Lewis, Associate Professor of Paleobiology at Sam Houston State University, presented a program on recent excavations at Driefontein, South Africa. Each summer for the past three years, Dr. Lewis and several of his students have traveled to Driefontein to excavate, identify, and catalog early Triassic fossils. Driefontein is one of three major Triassic sites in the world and is the newest to be excavated. Dr. Lewis and his team work with the local university to photograph and scan their finds. (Anything they unearth is the property of the state, so nothing can be removed from the country. Hence, everything is carefully photographed.) Each year is a building block for the next season's work.

Refreshments: Everyone was reminded to feed the Sabre Tooth Kitty with donations to cover the cost of the food. Many thanks to Clyde McMeans for a wonderful spread of mini sandwiches, crackers, and hummus which he graciously dropped off early in the day as he could not attend the meeting.

Adjourn: Michele Marsel moved and Jim Kendall seconded that the meeting be concluded. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Board of Director's Meeting Minutes

December 3, 2013

by Michele Marsel

	President – John Caldyne	✓	Beading Rep – Jillynn Hailes
✓	1 st Vice President – Clyde McMeans	✓	Faceting Rep – Gary Tober
✓	2 nd 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
		✓	Archeology Rep – Garth Clark

Call to Order: First Vice-President Clyde McMeans presided over the meeting in the absence of President John Caldyne. The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. with a quorum of nine members present.

Previous Month Board Minutes: Jillynn Hailes moved and Beverly Mace seconded that the minutes of the November 2013 Board Meeting be accepted as published in the December 2013 BBG. The motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report: Rodney Linehan e-mailed financials to all Board members in advance of the meeting. Rodney was asked about 2013 Show profits, and he reported that not all receipts are in yet. Rodney asked members to please indicate clearly the category or purpose for each expense submitted for reimbursement—including Show expenses—as he cannot always tell where the expense should be posted.

Office, Committee, and Section Reports

Archeology Section: Garth Clark reported that Bob and Nancy Moore will present a talk on Chinese Archeology at the meeting on December 5, 2013.

Beading Section: Jillynn Hailes reported that almost everyone who attended the November meeting was able to finish the Opulence Earrings project during the meeting. The next meeting is December 14, 2013 at 1:30 p.m., and the project will be a Christmas wreath or snowflake to be used as a pendant or as BIG earrings.

Day Light Section: Mary Ann Mitscherling reported that the Day Light Christmas party will be held December 9, 2013 at noon at HGMS. Program details for December and January are posted on the HGMS Web site.

Education Committee: No report.

Faceting Section: No report.

Lapidary Section: Phyllis George reported that 15 people attended the meeting. They discussed plans for a cutting contest to be held just prior to the 2015 or 2016 show. Final figures have not been set, but it's possible that we will have a \$400 1st prize and \$200 2nd prize for somewhere between 7 and 14 cabochons that have been cut to R.O.L.E. standards. Each of the Section's six templates must be used during the cutting of the stones. A Show 'n Tell followed with everyone bringing some of their purchases from the show.

Mineral Section: Pete Stassi reported that Section members shared Show 'n Tell from recent field trips and Show purchases at the last meeting. Plans for the Mineral Section Christmas party were finalized.

Outreach Committee: No report.

Paleo Section: Mike Dawkins was not present, but he sent his report by e-mail: The most recent program was on Pennsylvanian sponges. Everyone picked through samples of material from Lake Bridgeport and from the Mineral Wells Fossil Park. Sponges of many types were found and identified along with several other creatures that were in the mix. All current Paleo officers will continue to serve in their current roles for 2014: Neal Immega: Section Chair, Chris Peek: Treasurer, and Mike Dawkins: Field Trip dude and HGMS Board Representative. The Paleo holiday party will once again be held at the February meeting—in the middle of the boring mid-winter season.

Publicity Committee: No report.

Show Committee: We had another successful show with a record turnout of students on Friday. There are still outstanding invoices, and Rodney Linehan asked that everyone turn in their bills for reimbursement as soon as possible so all Show expenses can be paid before the end of 2013.

Youth Section: The shop was busy during the last meeting. Michele Marsel commented on the nicely displayed and well-made cabs in the Youth Show Case. Beverly said she received many compliments on the quality of work by our Youth members.

BBG Editor and Webmaster: Phyllis George reported she received a very nice Christmas card from Diane Dare (long-serving contest judge for the AFMS and for all the various regional federations as well) congratulating HGMS winners in the AFMS 2013 Bulletin Editors' Contest. Diane said our Section always has high quality articles, and she was happy to see us win so many awards.

Old Business

- **Club Renovations/Security Monitoring Cameras:** Per John Caldyne's report at the November Board Meeting, Jim Burrell indicated his willingness to manage this work. The Board needs to confirm that he is able to do so and to set a firm timetable for the work to be completed. John was not at the meeting, so no updates were available on this item.

- **Club Data Backups:** Michele Marsel reported that 1-terabyte external hard drives are no more than \$100 each. Most of the data to be backed up is small (text and spreadsheets). Everyone agreed that two drives of that size would be a good starting place, and one drive should be kept in the locked file cabinet in the HGMS office. An offsite location for the second backup drive is still to be determined. Michele Marsel moved and Jillynn Hailes seconded that we purchase two 1-terabyte drives at a cost of up to \$200. The motion passed unanimously. Michele Marsel volunteered to purchase the drives and to document a backup plan which will be e-mailed to Board Members for input.
- **2013 Holiday Party/Auction:** Michele Marsel is coordinating this year's party and auction on December 14, 2013. Turkey and brisket cooks are arranged. The auction will feature lapidary materials from Frances Arrighi's estate as well as faceting equipment and jewelry-making tools. The Auction will be limited to 2 hours. Dinner will be from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., and the auction will run from 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Neal Immega will be an auctioneer. Michele is still looking for a second auctioneer as well as auction assistants. Beverly Mace will take care of decorations.

New Business

- **2013 Show Dealer Refund:** The Show Dealer Chair submitted a request to approve a refund of \$722.50 to Top Shelf Minerals. Bhakti Bhale, the owner of Top Shelf Minerals, has been a dealer for the last 4–5 years. She had a family emergency this year and had to cancel. Fortunately, she was able to give enough notice for Steve Blyskal to replace her with another dealer, so HGMS suffered no financial loss due to the cancellation. Jillynn Hailes moved and Michele Marsel seconded to approve the refund of \$722.50 to Top Shelf Minerals. The motion passed unanimously.
- **Request to Assign Percentage of 2013 Holiday Party Auction to Day Light Section:** Mary Ann Mitscherling had requested that the Board authorize a percentage (minimum 25% suggested) of the proceeds from Frances Arrighi's estate to be assigned to the Day Light Section for establishing a treasury. Phyllis George asked that the percentage be 50% to establish the Day Light Section's first treasury. She pointed out that Frances had been a very active and generous club member who was devoted to the Day Light Section. Not only was Frances the Day Light Section founder, she personally paid for most of Day Light Section's programs and project materials over the many years since its creation. Mary Ann Mitscherling moved and Phyllis seconded that 50% of the auction proceeds from Frances' collection be given to the Day Light Section. The motion carried with one person opposed.
- **HGMS Annual Scholarship:** Two items were discussed.
 - ◆ We need to advertise the scholarship to more area college professors with a goal of obtaining more applicants for the scholarship. We have had only one

applicant in each of the past two years. Pete Stassi volunteered to draft a letter to be sent out by 2014 President Ray Kizer in early January announcing the program to college professors, department heads, and registration offices and to prepare a list of contact names and addresses.

- ◆ Mary Ann Mitscherling suggested broadening the acceptable use of the \$2,500 scholarship to include paying for costs to student participants in Dr. Lewis' annual research program trip to Drefontein, South Africa. Michele Marsel noted that the research program is an extracurricular activity for which students receive no credit. They also do not register through Sam Houston State University to participate in the trip. Rodney Linehan expressed concern about making a scholarship payment to an individual rather than to an institution, possibly causing issues with our non-profit status. Everyone agreed that Dr. Lewis' program was worthwhile, but chose to leave the scholarship rules as they are.
- **Adjourn:** Michele Marsel moved to adjourn the meeting, and Jillynn Hailes seconded. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

AFMS President's Message

by Richard Jaeger

from AFMS Newsletter 12/2013–1/2014

From My Desk to Yours

Communication is important at all levels in any organization, and our rockhound hobby is no exception. The Internet and cell phones have made better communication easier and less expensive to achieve. The newsletters of the AFMS, the regional federations, and the local clubs have always served as the basic means of sharing information. At the local level, clubs used to have telephone committees to pass on important news that could not wait for the next newsletter. Today, much of that is done via e-mail, but we shouldn't forget that many of us have members who don't use e-mail.



I would hope that each club has someone, or soon will have someone, who maintains a group e-mail list of club members. Information such as changes in meeting times or field trips, rock sales and swaps, member concerns, or other news and events can thus easily be passed on. A telephone committee can still be used for those members who don't have e-mail. News from other area clubs can also be passed on. For example, in Oklahoma, we just had two clubs which sent out an e-mail inviting members of other clubs to attend one of their field trips.

It is desirable to have a section in club bulletins that summarizes information contained in your Regional Federation and AFMS Newsletters. Many club members have

little idea of the role these organizations serve for the betterment of our hobby.

In the past, most clubs received a few exchange bulletins from other clubs. Generally, those were probably seen just by the club newsletter editor and maybe the club president. Now, those newsletters can be forwarded to the whole club membership. Hopefully, we can increase the number of exchange bulletins being sent in this manner and form a closer link between clubs in our region and around the country.

Finally, the Tulsa Rock & Mineral Society is looking forward to hosting the AFMS Show on July 11–13, 2014. Plans are well on the way, and information should be available on the AFMS Web site (Amfed.org) in the near future. Hope to see many of you there next summer.

Since this is the last AFMS Newsletter before the holidays, let me wish each of you a very Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukah, and a prosperous, healthy, and happy new year. Richard

AFMS-Conservation & Legislation

by Dr. Mike Nelson, Chair

from AFMS Newsletter 12/2013–1/2014

I was recently appointed by President Richard Jaeger to Chair the AFMS Conservation and Legislation Committee. At first I debated about accepting the position since land management issues are often contentious among members of rock and mineral clubs. However, I decided to give it my best shot since these issues have long interested me. I serve on both the Kansas and Colorado Public Lands Advisory Committees (as well as International Relations) of the Rocky Mountain Federation. I enjoy the outdoors and love to collect, hike, camp, travel, and fish. In addition, I have a passion for writing, and editors are kind enough to accept my monthly columns in the Rocky Mountain Federation Newsletter, the Colorado Springs Pick & Pack, and occasional articles in a couple of out-of-state club newsletters. I also enjoy my blog at <www.csmsgeologypost.blogspot.com>. Readers may always contact me at <csrockguy@yahoo.com>.



Lands that are owned/managed by “the government” fall into numerous categories and cannot be lumped together by rockhounds looking for legal places to collect minerals and fossils. The land owners/managers range from the U.S. federal government to states, counties, municipalities, and smaller entities. It seems all have their own particular idiosyncratic collecting rules, and it is almost impossible for the rockhound to sort out the regulations as they vary from state-to-state and among the federal agencies. Unfortunately, regulations often vary within a single agency (at least according to their Web sites).

The federal government manages several hundred thousand acres of land in the states, and in some western states is the major land owner (i.e. Nevada ~86%). The collection

of fossils and minerals on these lands have been a source of contention and confusion for many years. Rockhounds want to know “what can I collect, is there a limit on amounts I can collect, and are some areas off-limits to collecting?” In this monthly column I hope to explore the answers to these questions as well as provide timely updates on proposed legislative/congressional actions under consideration. Of course I could use much help from the readership about agency actions in their respective states/areas. I hope this column will have an educational slant as I prefer to work with people and agencies as defined in the 9th point of the AFMS Land Use Policy: ***The AFMS urges its members to work with any or all government authorities to achieve a good working relationship in order to improve the “Public Image” of recreational collectors.***

The two largest federal management agencies in the western states are the United States Forest Service (in the Department of Agriculture) and the Bureau of Land Management (in the Department of Interior). Both agencies have land use policies that are described as “multi-use.” I have been working trying to analyze how all of these lands are managed for recreational collecting, and I thought that such a job would be straight forward and comparatively easy due to the passage of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act (OPLMA) of 2009, Public Law 111-011 and its subsection P.L. 111-011, Title VI, Subtitle D on Paleontological Resources Preservation (PRP). However, I was mistaken about “being easy.” The more that I delve into the issue, the more confused I become. Therefore, this article has as its major focus the lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

The BLM is a major land stakeholder in 10 western states and Alaska. At my last count, the Agency administered ~258 million acres of public land. In my home state of Colorado the BLM manages ~8.4 million acres, including several components of the National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS)—created in 2000 to conserve, protect, and restore nationally significant landscapes recognized for their cultural, ecological, and scientific values. NLCS areas are congressionally- or presidentially-designated and include Wilderness Areas, Wilderness Study Areas, National Conservation Areas, National Monuments, and National Scenic and Historic Trails. In addition to NLCS lands, there are other BLM special land designations such as Special Recreation Management Areas, Travel Management Areas, and Areas of Critical Environmental Concern. In Colorado about one million acres of BLM land is designated as being a part of the NCLC (about one-eighth of total BLM acreage).

In the BLM-managed lands in Colorado, in general, rockhounding is allowed except on developed recreation sites, special management areas, or where otherwise prohibited and posted. The Colorado rules are:

Mineral specimens, precious and semiprecious gemstones, petrified wood, common invertebrate fossils, and plant fossils may be collected on public lands without charge or permit in reasonable amounts as long as the specimens are for personal use and not collected for sale or barter to commercial dealers. For rocks (such as decorative rock), a reasonable amount is defined as the maximum amount which one person can fit in a 5-gallon container in one day.

For petrified wood, a reasonable daily amount is 25 pounds plus one piece that one person can remove, with a maximum amount of 250 pounds removed in one calendar year. Pooling of quotas to obtain pieces heavier than 250 pounds is not allowed.

Invertebrate fossils are the remains of animals without skeletal structures such as insects, crabs, clams, and snails. Vertebrate fossils, which include dinosaurs, mammals, sharks, and fish, or any animal with a skeletal structure, cannot be collected without a special collecting permit.

Collection and removal cannot be assisted with motorized or mechanized equipment.

No undue or unnecessary degradation of the public lands is allowed during the removal of rocks, minerals, gemstones, or fossils.

Other rules and restrictions may be in effect in a particular area. Always check with the local BLM Field Office Web site by phone or personal visit. To avoid trespassing, rockhounds should check with local BLM field offices for locations of existing mining claims.

All of this seems rather straight-forward, but there remain a myriad of unanswered questions that will be explored in future columns: are reasonable amounts the same on all BLM-managed lands; can rockhounds drive to all collecting sites; can a rockhound sell collected minerals; can rockhounds purchase decorative rocks; what should a rockhound do if a vertebrate fossil is discovered; will the BLM attempt to institute new rules and curtail the intent of the OPLMA for rockhounds collecting fossils; how does the BLM “post” restrictions on collecting; how can rockhounds become more involved with the BLM? Until next month, Mike.

AFMS Multi-Federation Field Trip – Make Plans to Attend NOW!

*by Doug True, Field Trip Chair
from AFMS Newsletter 11/2013*

The town of Terry, Montana may be small, but they are planning on rolling out the red carpet for us as they host the AFMS 2014 Multi-Federation field trip gathering. The dates are July 3 1–August 4, 2014, so mark your calendars and get ready to register!

Terry is right in the middle of some of the best Montana rock hounding areas. We'll have numerous trips to the Gravel Bars on the Yellowstone River, productive areas that I've been hunting on annually for 40+ years. Many are accessed only through private property, but permissions have been granted. We'll be hunting for Montana agates, Jasper, Petrified Wood, fossil coral, stromatolites, and numerous other “oddities.”

We'll have numerous trips into Montana fossil country to the Pierre and Bear Paw formation areas, and we'll collect ammonites, baculites, scaphites, nautiloids, and many other shells (70-95 million years old) in the ancient seabed areas. We are also working



on trips to several areas where we can collect dinosaur fossils from the Hell Creek Formation. More information will be forthcoming as plans are solidified.

In addition, we'll have an opportunity to take a guided tour through the Eastern Montana Badlands—a once-in-a lifetime opportunity.

Start planning your collecting vacation now. Kids are welcome!!!! What could be better than four days in Eastern Montana with a chance of collecting wonderful material?

But wait, there's more....The town of Terry is allowing us to use their 2-block city park for dry camping and other activities. We'll have potluck dinners, a barbecue, and much, much more.

For more information contact Doug True, Fieldtrip Chair, (406) 670-0506, or e-mail dtruefossils12@yahoo.com.

Warning from a Fellow Rockhound

by Chad Cross from El Gambrino

from Rocky Mountain Federation News 12/2013

To all my friends who hunt, camp, or spend time in the woods: The pic below is of my left leg after being struck by a 6-ft timber rattler today while turkey hunting. The snake bit through my hunting pants and Muck Boots (I usually wear snake boots when turkey hunting, but could not locate them this morning). The initial bite felt like being hit in the calf by a baseball bat at full swing followed by excruciating pain radiating out from the bite wounds.

Fortunately, I carry a snake bite extractor kit in my turkey vest, and was able to remove the majority (I guesstimated 3–4 cups) of the venom-contaminated blood. Following the instructions from the kit, I kept my heart rate down as best I could, slowly limped the 200 yards to my vehicle, and was able to drive myself to the hospital which, thank the good Lord, was about 20 minutes away. Once there, I was administered the antivenin, antibiotics, etc. The ER Doc told me that based on the distance between the two fang punctures and their diameter and depth, if I had not used the venom extractor kit, I would have died before I ever made it to my truck.



So, if you do not already own one, I want you to go to a sporting goods store and purchase a venom extractor kit ASAP. I bought mine at Academy, and it was around \$10.00. I would urge you to buy a couple. Put one in each vehicle in your household, in your hunting or hiking pack, and especially your B.O.B. etc.—they are about the size of a bar of soap and can literally save your life or the life of someone you love.

Please don't blow this off. Do it tomorrow!!!! I am spending one night (hopefully) in the hospital, and I may require some minor surgery to remove any tissue damaged by the poison, but that is a far cry from losing my leg or passing through the pearly gates!!!!

(Chad just got out of the hospital today, this happened Sunday in Montgomery County, Alabama)

Bench Tips

by Brad Smith

More Bench Tips by Brad Smith are at [facebook.com/BenchTips/](https://www.facebook.com/BenchTips/) or search for “Bench Tips for Jewelry Making” on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

Mini Drill Press

If you find yourself drilling a number of small holes for your work, you might want to look at the small, inexpensive drill presses now available. They take up just minimal space on your bench and are always ready to give you nice straight holes. Some models even have a variable speed control. I've been very pleased with a low-priced one that's been well-used in my classes for over a year.

Because these machines are only a foot high, they're limited as to the size of workpieces that can fit into the machine and the size of the drill bits you can use. But I've had no problems with drill bits up to about 3/16" (4.5mm), even drilling steel.

The machines are sold by a number of companies. If you do get one, be sure to buy a spare belt because they are generally not available at local hardware stores.



Laser Welding

A question came up this week about how to solder some jump rings to hold blue topaz briolettes onto a necklace. We've all heard about ways to do some soldering close to a stone, and some of us have sized a ring without taking the stones out of their mounts. We've used wet paper towels, garnet sand, cooling gels, and my favorite of suspending the stone in a dish of water. All techniques bank on the principal of using a small, hot flame to do the job quickly before the stone gets hot enough to crack or change color.

But each job is somewhat of a gamble. Some stones are hardy and some are frail. Jades and jaspers will generally take a lot of heat, but I'd never chance it with the likes of topaz or opal. Trying to shield a stone from the torch is always a betting game, and sometimes you lose.

If you're worried about soldering something close to a stone, perhaps it's time to consider a no-heat method like laser welding. Most jewelry stores have laser welders these days, and the cost of having it done is quite affordable. They used to have problems doing silver, but now seem to do it routinely.

I've used a local shop twice in the last year, once for a piece with little emeralds a "friend" asked me to repair and for a second piece where I needed a safety catch and didn't want the torch heat to expose all the solder lines again.

Mindat and Gemdat.org

by Carolyn Weinberger
from Chippers' Chatter 12/2013

There are two outstanding reference sites on the Web that deal with minerals and gemstones. The first, 13 year old <Mindat.org>, contains data for almost all the minerals that have been discovered and recognized by the IMA (over 4,200 as of this writing) as well as information on over 242,000 localities and over 555,000 member-submitted photographs. It's an incredible reference tool for help with identifying minerals, learning chemical composition, or just looking at fabulous photos of minerals ranging in size from "Bernie-sized" to micro. You can search for minerals by chemical composition or properties. There is also a discussion forum, listing of newly discovered minerals and localities, and lots more.

Mindat is "operated" by a volunteer management team of 46 led by Jolyon Ralph that includes such mineral luminaries as Alfredo Petrov, Anthony Kampf, Gail Spann, Georges Favreau, and Rock Currier.

Now there's a companion site, sponsored by the same folks as Mindat, called <Gemdat.org> It's dedicated to providing information about gemstones and gemology.

I encourage you to visit the site. To date, 500 data pages on gemstones have been posted, and the site is growing almost daily as additional information and photographs are added. Currently there are over 5,600 photographs.

Interested in garnet? Type in the name and you'll be transported to a page showing information about it plus all the colors that they're found in. Click on a specific photo, and you'll have an instant enlargement of a faceted or cabochon-cut gemstone. Or just click on the "photo" button, and you'll get a full gallery of the photos that have been posted thus far.

Scroll further down on the main garnet page, and you'll find some of the more technical data about the gem including chemical formula, optical properties, localities where the gems are mined, and the various treatments that have been given to the natural stones to enhance their beauty.



Like its companion Mindat, Gemdat.org is an interesting and useful site. One caution though—don't expect to take a quick peek and log off. You'll get hooked—like I did.



AFMS Code of Ethics
from AFMS Newsletter 11/2013

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

Show Time 2014

January 11	Arlington, TX	Arlington Gem & Mineral Club Annual Faceting Swap Meet AGMC Clubhouse, 1408 Gibbons Rd. Jack Spinks (214) 335-9452 e-mail: jlspinks@sbcglobal.net
January 18-19	Fredericksburg, TX	Fredericksburg Rockhounds Pioneer Pavilion, Lady Bird Johnson Park Hwy. 16S; gedeonjim1@gmail.com
February 1-15	Tucson, AZ	Multiple locations
February 1-28	Quartzsite, AZ	Desert Gardens RV Park 1064 Kuehn St. www.desertgardensrvpark.net
February 15-16	Plainview, TX	Hi Plains Gem & Mineral Society Ollie Liner Center, Business I-27S e-mail: josefcmacha@aol.com
March 1-2	Robstown, TX	Gulf Coast Gem & Mineral Society Richard M. Borchard Regional Fairgrounds 1213 Terry Shamsie Blvd. www.gcgms.org
March 8-9	Pasadena, TX	Clear Lake Gem & Mineral Society Pasadena Convention Center 7902 Fairmont Pkwy sara_chelette@sbcglobalnet.com www.clgms.org
March 15-16	San Antonio, TX	Southwest Gem & Mineral Society San Antonio Events Center 8111 Meadow Leaf Dr., Loop 410 & Marbach krbotx@gvtc.com www.swgemandmineral.org
April 12-13	Abilene, TX	Central Texas Gem & Mineral Society Abilene Civic Center, N. 6th & Pine St. kmedaniel23@suddenlink.net ; rockclub.txol.net
April 25-27	Houston, TX	Fine Mineral Shows--Annual Show Embassy Suites Hotel, 2911 Sage Rd. Near The Galleria-Houston. e-mail: dave@finemineralshow.com www.FineMineralShow.com

2014		January					2014
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
			1 7:30 NO Mineral Section New Year's Day	2 7:30 Archeology Section	3	4 10-5 Shop Open 10-12 Youth Section	
5 10-4 Shop Open	6	7 7:30 Board Meeting	8 7:00 Faceting Section 10-3 Shop Open	9	10	11 10-5 Shop Open	
12 10-4 Shop Open	13 1:00 Day Light Section	14 7:30 Show Committee	15 7:30 Mineral Section 10-3 Shop open	16	17	18 10-5 Shop Open 10-12 Youth Section 1:30 Beading Section	
19 10-4 Shop Open	20 7:30 Lapidary Section	21 7:30 Paleo Section	22	23	24	25 10-5 Shop Open	
26 10-4 Shop Open	27	28 7:30 General Meeting	29	30	31		

2014		February					2014
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
						1 10-5 Shop Open 10-12 Youth Section	
2 10-4 Shop Open	3	4 7:30 Board Meeting	5 7:30 Mineral Section 10-3 Shop open	6 7:30 Archeology Section	7	8 10-5 Shop Open	
9 10-4 Shop Open	10 1:00 Day Light Section	11 7:30 Show Committee	12 7:00 Faceting Section 10-3 Shop Open	13	14	15 10-5 Shop Open 10-12 Youth Section 1:30 Beading Section	
16 10-4 Shop Open	17 7:30 Lapidary Section	18 7:30 Paleo Section	19 7:30 Mineral Section 10-3 Shop open	20	21	22 10-5 Shop Open	
23 10-4 Shop Open	24	25 7:30 General Meeting	26	27	28		

The BACKBENDER'S GAZETTE

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

10805 BROOKLET

HOUSTON, TEXAS 77099

(281) 530-0942



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