



The **BACKBENDER'S GAZETTE**

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

Volume XLV - No. 6

June 2014



President's Message

by Ray Kizer

You know what I've noticed? I've noticed that the longer you stay in the Mineral/Fossil/Lapidary/Jewelry hobby, the more space and organization becomes an issue. I don't know about the new members, but I'm pretty sure all the old timers are having this problem too. Trying to keep up with all the STUFF we acquire while participating in this hobby becomes a real chore. I bet a lot of you have a gazillion rocks or fossils laying around in buckets or boxes that have yet to be processed, cleaned or cut, let alone organized and labeled. I know I do.



When we drive miles, as you must to collect in Texas or in the surrounding states, we try to pick up, gather, or buy everything that time and money allow. We rationalize this as a needed thing, you know—just to make the long trip worthwhile. Oh, we look at and clean a few prized pieces after every trip. Some go in our display cases or are the next items we choose to work on in the shop. But what about the rest of it? More

Continued on page 4

Upcoming Programs

by Paul Brandes

May 27, 2014—Volcanoes, Romans, Rivers, and Wine! Due to unforeseen circumstances, Gail Spann's presentation will be postponed until later in the year. Never fear, however! Our own Nathalie Brandes has agreed to take Gail's place and will be presenting on an area of Europe filled with volcanic features, Roman ruins, beautiful rivers, and fine wine. Thinking Italy? Then you'd be incorrect! Nathalie will be taking us on a tour of Western Germany to visit the Vulcaneifel, the former Roman cities of Trier and Xanten, and the wine producing Mosel and Rhine River valleys. Along with many pretty photos, Nathalie will also talk about how these features tie together in European history. Even though the program is short notice, it should be a very entertaining and informative night.

Continued on page 2

Contents

Upcoming Programs	1
President's Message	1
Purpose of HGMS	3
Will Heierman Corundum Collection for Sale	4
French Indochina Vietnam	5
Gravity and Ice	10
Archeology Evolves with Genetics	11
Mineral Section Programs	13
Lapidary Section Report—April 21, 2014	13
General Meeting Minutes	14
Board of Director's Meeting	17
Bench Tips	20
Active Participation in Your Club Needed!	22
AFMS Endowment Drawing for 2014	23
Ankle Sprains	24
SCFMS and Baton Rouge Gem & Mineral Society Show	25
Show Time 2014	26
Calendars	27

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

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Purpose of HGMS

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

Membership dues are \$40 for an adult membership, \$60 for a couple, \$75 for a family (including all children aged 5-18), \$25 for a youth membership (ages 5-18), and \$500 for an adult life membership. Advertising rates: \$70 for 2 months, ¼ page; \$150 for 6 months, ¼ page.

MEMBER: American Federation of Mineralogical Societies & South Central Federation of Mineral Societies.

All meetings are held at the Clubhouse which is located at 10805 Brooklet near the intersection of Highway 59 (Southwest Freeway) and Sam Houston Parkway (Beltway 8). See the calendar inside the back page for when the different Sections meet. The General Meeting is the fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:30. The HGMS Web site address is <http://www.hgms.org>.

President continued from page 1

likely than not it gets stacked in our other “to do” piles of stuff to be dealt with sometime in the future. But then a new opportunity comes along and the cycle repeats all over again. When is enough, enough?

I don't know about the rest of you, but at this point I have to proudly declare myself a rockoholic. It's just too much fun to stop. Wait—was that a knock at the door? Only a neighbor. Whew, I'm always worried it will be someone from the TV show *Hoarders* coming to my house for an intervention. Well for now, Happy Collecting—that is, as long as I can find my way out the front door.

Upcoming Programs continued from page 1

June 24, 2014—Texas Topaz: B. Diane Eames is a fine jeweler, Graduate Gemologist (GIA,) and gem cutter. She specializes in the Texas state gem, topaz. Found in Mason County, Texas, Ms. Eames will discuss where and how to find the elusive topaz. She will also cover the traditional faceting of the gem. Her displays will demonstrate Mason County topaz in the rough and how to differentiate topaz from quartz—the other gem-quality mineral found in the Hill Country. In addition, the Texas Cutters Collection will be exhibited, a collection of the state gem cut by various gem cutters from Texas. Recently, Gems of the Hill Country (Ms. Eames' jewelry store) was relocated to Ingram, Texas from their original location in Mason. For the folks who believe there's nothing in Texas except agate and petrified wood, this presentation should change your perception of Texas minerals.

Will Heierman Corundum Collection for Sale

forwarded to the BBG by Dean Lagerwall

The Will Heierman corundum collection, the subject of the Web site www.corunduminium.com, is being offered for sale. Anyone interested in specimens should contact him at wheierman@corunduminium.com to initiate the conversation. Eventually, the entire collection will be catalogued and prepared for sale, but for now it is “first come, first served.” The approximately 4,000 items range from top museum grade crystals, clusters, and matrix pieces to uglies only a geologist could love—something for everybody, so think about adding a few to your own collection.

Nuggets of Wisdom

“A moment's insight is sometimes worth a life's experience”

Oliver Wendell Holmes

“If you wish to forget anything on the spot, make a note that this is to be remembered.”
Edgar Allen Poe, 1809-1849

French Indochina Vietnam

by John Anderson

The Old Salt (AKA The Miner)

In all wars, innocent people on both sides of the war are hurt or killed. Some wars are not popular, meaning that the nation is not behind its action 100%. The war that I would like to talk about is Vietnam. I will tell you about what I saw happening there in 1954 when my Navy ship the USS Calvert APA 32, among other US ships, sailed to French Indochina to help the French evacuate thousands of Vietnamese who wanted to leave the north due to persecution by the Communists. The Communist North did not want any educated individuals who could think for themselves and make their own decisions, such as doctors, lawyers, and teachers. Our mission was to transport the northern evacuees to the south in Saigon. This operation was called the "Passage to Freedom." That made no sense to me at first, but later it really did become true.



But I need to set the stage as to where I was and what I was doing at the time. I was Assault Boat Coxswain aboard the USS Calvert APA-32 which was operating in Korean waters; it was our second tour in the area. Once prior to 1953 during the so-called UN Police Action, we made a landing at the famous Inchon Harbor with its claim to fame as having the second highest tidal action in the world. During my tour there during our UN Police Action, after our landing we had an air raid almost every night.



Whoever says that they are not afraid during those happenings is either a liar or crazy. When we had an air raid, we went to general quarters and tried to brave the extremely cold weather at our general quarters station for hours at a time. Sometimes a US battleship that was around 15 miles away would fire their big guns and blast the hills about 5 miles beyond Inchon Harbor. When that happened, we could actually hear the shells swishing right over heads.

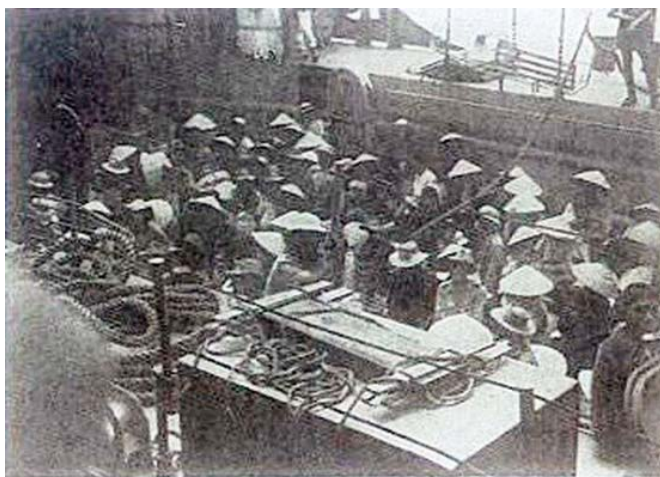
My good friend and shipmate Calvin Towler said that we were located above the 38th parallel. I was driving my LCVP (Landing Craft Vehicle Personnel) boat at full speed when I saw some kids and a few adults at the nearby shore line. I brought extra food along with me that day because I did not know when I would get my next meal. I had an extra apple, and feeling generous, I threw the apple to the kids. The kids rushed to the apple but a few adults started hitting the kids to get the apple. I thought to myself that I would never do that again.

Korean winters are extremely cold and the US Navy, as far as I could tell, did not have any decent cold weather clothing. It was ridiculous that our cold weather gear was so pathetic. Our cold weather footwear consisted of nothing more than rubber galoshes, and our foul weather jackets were just as bad. These items were fine for our Stateside moderate cold climate, but not for the severe Korean winters. I stuffed several pounds of newspaper inside my clothing to try and keep warm. I was always watchful and hoped for one of the troops we carried to maybe leave behind some cold weather gear. In 1954 I got lucky when a soldier left a great cold weather jacket about the same time our ship received its orders to proceed to Sasebo, Japan to replenish our supplies and then to proceed to French Indochina (FIC). FIC later became a familiar name of Vietnam, and then later it became known as "Nam." I asked, "Where is French Indochina?" and the answer I received was that it "was a place that has a warm climate," to which I replied, "Great!"

When we left Japan, we hit a torturous typhoon. The sea was so rough during our steaming that on this particular day, our food trays would actually slide from time to time while we were eating. Occasionally we would grab the tray and pull it back to continue our eating. For breakfast I vividly remember that I had cold cereal, milk, corn-beef hash, a hard-boiled egg, toast, and coffee. I became tired of watching the weevils dog paddling back and forth across my cereal bowl, so I was glad when I had finally finished my cereal. I remember taking a bite of my corned-beef hash when I thought a small bite of my hard-boiled egg would accompany it nicely. I cracked my hard-boiled egg but out of the corner of my eye I spotted a small feathered dead baby chick in the shell. I immediately took my empty cereal bowl and covered it over the egg with the dead chick. At that moment our ship's bow drove into a giant wave, pushing the bow almost straight up and causing my food tray to slide to my right—directly in front of the soldier sitting to my right. The soldier must have seen the unborn chick in my egg earlier, because he immediately upchucked his entire breakfast onto my tray. Almost magically, the tray slid back in front of me when the ship righted itself, but I felt at that moment that my breakfast had ended. My buddy Calvin Towler,

who at the time was working in the food locker area of the ship, recalls that he saw egg crates dated 1946 (8-year old eggs? Hmmm)

After the bad weather, we arrived near Haiphong in North Vietnam to take our first load of men, women, and children who sought to escape the Red Terror that was in their homeland by migrating to the free south. The sight of these terribly oppressed people, the aged and the poor, the unclothed young, and the broken and the wretched brought a wave of compassion to everyone's heart. Abandoning all but the meager possessions that they carried on their backs as these were their treasures be it a young child or an old relative. When the French were badly beaten at Dien Bien Phu, they agreed according to the Geneva Accord to temperately divide



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



the country at the 17th parallel. This created a window of opportunity for the people who wanted to leave the north. Because of security, we had to remove many old swords and guns from the people we brought aboard because many of them were fight-

ing the Communists just days before. The Communist told the evacuees that once at sea the large mouths of the American ships would pour them into the ocean, so the refugees we brought aboard were very scared and watchful in the beginning. After a day aboard, their fears disappeared because of the help and the obvious concern the Americans exhibited every minute.

Due to a recent knee injury that was still healing, I was assigned a security job on the ship that allowed me to communicate and mingle with many of the evacuees by a smile or a gesture. Fortunately English and French was taught in some of the Vietnamese schools, which helped a lot. I was told by some young boys that they belonged to the Boy Scouts. I do not know if that was true, but that is what they told me in English. A few members of our crew from Louisiana could speak some French as well. We had other people come aboard, also assisting, who spoke French or Vietnamese which made things even better for all. Once aboard our ship, the people immediately knew the value of a tin can and razor blades. The small tin cans became a cup and the large cans became a small pot. And the razor blade became a small sharp cutting tool. Many things were foreign to them, especially in our bathroom heads. They thought our flushing urinals were awesome, and at first thought that our gift of a bar of soap was a food. They could not understand why we would eat something that tasted so bad. Once they understood what these items were used for, they had no further problems. The Vietnamese used a lot of seasoning in their cooking such as garlic so when you get hundreds of people together in a small confined space, it became an experience in itself. The French did most of the transporting of people to our ship with anything that could float during the period of time allotted for the evacuation from the North. The Calvert small boats also assisted but to a lesser degree than the French in transporting the refugees to our ship for the two-day trip to Saigon.

As a security guard, I witnessed the many medical issues that these people were having, including births and deaths. I asked a Catholic Priest who was also a medical doctor what one man was dying from. The doctor replied that this man has leprosy,

tuberculosis, and extreme intestinal problems, and that any one of those ailments could be the cause.

The Calvert crew really went into action in caring for the newborns and assisting the elderly and handling the cumbersome bundles that each of the evacuees had carried aboard. The biggest heroes aboard were probably the medical team led by Doctor Flores and his tireless medical assistants as well as the ship's cooks who prepared numerous strange foods for over 2,000 extra meals a day. But really, the entire crew all became heroes in this humanitarian undertaking with the crew continually helping these people the best they could. I can say this without reservation that every American would be proud of our service men and women in helping these poor people. We were undertaking a humanitarian service during that period in 1954. When the evacuees left our ship, they joined a group of their countrymen assisting them in their quest for freedom. As they left the Calvert, each family received a 50-pound bag of rice and some cooking utensils to assist them.

In closing I need to say that every man, woman, and child should thank God for having the US help those poor souls that were without a country and trying to start a new life.

The Vietnamese people are a very hard working industrious people, and I and other members of the Calvert were proud to be able to assist during those trying times in 1954.

After my tour in Vietnam, my ship the Calvert returned to Japan and then to the US where I was assigned to a highly-classified Naval operation working with a submersible unit until my enlistment was up one year later. I joined the US Navy Reserves and was sent to Advanced Amphibious Warfare School which was very interesting. At the Reserve Center, I taught Boatswain Mate Classes which covered all forms of seamanship in preparing the candidates to become Boatswain Mate Petty Officers.

While in the Navy, different jobs I was assigned to caused me to be in areas where many men became heroes. I was in those areas, but I never had any heroic ideas or notions. I just happened to be there doing my job because it was my duty.

My story is true to the my best of my recollection, and I wish to thank the men of the Calvert who wrote *The Calvert Cruise Book* that helped me write this story and especially Calvin Towler who helped me and has been my friend for the past 61 years.

The Old Salt, John Anderson



Gravity and Ice

by Kemp Maer

Member of the Houston Gem and Mineral Society

It all started in New Mexico,
High in the mountains, eons ago.
Granite exposures, rhyolite flows,
Basalt intrusions, and some gabbros.
Vein quartz sheets and quartzite beds,
Quartz of many colors mixed with jasper's reds,
Precambrian schist and ancient gneiss,
Pulled by gravity and fractured by ice.

Erosion uses the same prescription
To bring down rocks of every description.
They tumble down a talus slope
That's steep and rocky and broad of scope.
Jagged boulders, shattered rocks,
Lie on the slope and take their knocks
As gravity and ice again go to work,
With chemical weathering an added perk.

Rain and snowmelt help the flow,
And downward the debris has to go.
Streams bankfull with swollen rains
Spread the rocks over the Texas plains.
Picked up by rivers like the Colorado,
They help carve canyons through the Edwards Plateau.
Along the way, and all to the good,
Are added limestone, chert, and silicified wood.

When the Colorado crosses the Balcones Fault,
Canyon construction comes to a halt.
The river now wanders, and in this way lends
Its gravel to the land in old meander bends.
But gullies find their way to this old rock source
And carry it back to the river, of course.

Some of these rocks find their way to my hand
As I walk the gullies that cross my land.
They look mighty good sitting on my desk,
And I'm grateful to those mountains far to the west.
When cut and polished, they look nice,
These rocks set free by gravity and ice.

Archeology Evolves with Genetics

by Dr. Garth A.A. Clark

Member of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society

Gordon Moore, a co-founder of Intel, observed a trend in 1965. The number of transistors on integrated circuits doubles about every two years. Amazingly, almost 50 years later, Moore's Law still holds true. Roughly, this means that computers are 33 million times faster and more complex than 50 years ago, and in just eight years they will be a quarter billion times faster. This stunning advance has real world meaning. Twenty years ago I could spend months in a lab and tell my professor the amount of one enzyme in one type of cell. Now I can direct a grad student to tell me the amounts of all 2600 enzymes and proteins in every type of cell in a sample – and I want it tomorrow. I can measure every molecule in a cell, down to trillionths of a gram. I can analyze the DNA of an organism or an individual in just days.

But it's not just in patient care or medical research that I can apply these methods. I can conduct my own version of a CSI investigation. Genetic analysis can be done on what is found at an archeology site or on a living population in what is termed archeogenetics.

Thousands of individuals have now had their complete genomes sequenced, giving us a genetic map of the world. Certain areas of DNA differ among ethnic or national groups and can be used as markers. This is how anyone can send in a cheek swab and get back a report saying where their ancestors are from. With larger databases and improved technology, I can perform this analysis on smaller and incomplete bits of DNA. I no longer need a complete book—just a torn fraction of a sheet to know it's from page 42 of Don Quixote. I can analyze small bits of DNA and protein from a bone and know the sex, ethnicity, nutritional status, and more. Sometimes there is a surprise such as a Turkic male in ancient China or a Caucasian in ancient North America.

Archeogenetics can track the migrations of groups and their genes. For example, Iceland is known to have been settled by Norwegians. Genetic analysis shows that most males are indeed Norwegian. However, females show quite a number of markers found in Ireland and Britain. Evidently some Vikings decided to pick up female companions along the way to Iceland. More startling is the presence of a small amount of haplotype C1, found only in Siberia and North American Indians. This hints at an unwritten history where North American Indian female genes made their way to Iceland.

The same type of analysis used on people can be used on the important plants and animals in human history. A DNA tree can be constructed for the domestic dog, cat, horse, cow, and pig, or for crops like wheat, corn, or tomatoes. Interestingly, the DNA trees for all domesticated animals (except one) show early selection pressure, implying that humans selected the animal for certain desired traits. The exception is the cat, which seems to have chosen us.

Every DNA tree of a domesticated species has a base or the wild origin. The branches are caused by genetic changes. By tracing back these changes, corn originates from teosinte in central Mexico 5000 years ago. Teosinte and corn look very different—

wild teosinte is short and bushy with very small leaves; corn is tall with a single stalk and multiple large leaves. The dramatic difference is achieved by selection pressure on just two genes. The oldest DNA tree base and thus the first domesticated plant seems to be the bottle gourd, dating back 12,000 years to Asia and used not for food, but as a water container.

Genetic analysis helps with field finds. A common problem in archeology is finding an object and not having a clue as to what it is or what it was used for. Stylized pottery is a common find in ancient Peruvian Moche and Chimú digs. They come in a wide variety of shapes and styles, some quite unusual. Many were just defaulted into a “ceremonial” or funeral offering category. But now with genetics, I can tell if the vessel was ever used, and if so, for what. For example multiple micro-layers of theobromine proteins and other markers can tell me that a vessel is not just another cool-looking ceremonial pot, but that it was used hundreds of times for drinking alcoholic chocolate drinks. Plus, I can carbon date the organics to know that it was used around the year 1150 A.D.

European archeologists had a bad habit of “cleaning” field finds to make them pretty for museum displays or “clean” for study, not realizing they often literally washed away important information. Older museum collections are now being scoured for old “dirty” finds, and some of the best have been in a museum box for a century. We can analyze a container to see what it held and when.

One problem with most food sources is that they are often “lumpy,” meaning that they are plentiful for a short period like harvest time, then scarce. Many of our foods come from a search for ways to transform a portion of a harvest into calories that will last and not spoil. So man has pickled, salted, dried, sealed, jellied, and transformed foods. The greater calorie availability has often preceded the rise of whole cultures. And so man fermented—inventing beer, cheese, and wine. With genetic analysis and some of those “dirty” pots, we can now see when and where these transforming events occurred.

It could be argued that civilization rests heavily on just one discovery—beer. The genetic dating of wheat and barley domestication and beer residues converge at around 9,000 B.C. It was one thing to grow a crop, but what made it worthwhile was to be able to preserve and store the calories for later.

The introduction of genetics into archeology is greatly transforming our understanding of where peoples came from and how their societies rose and fell. Instead of sterile or mute stone and pottery shards, we are getting views of how agriculture and husbandry developed, what people ate, who they married, where they migrated, what diseases they suffered, and how their societies were structured. Often what is found contradicts what was believed, but therein lays the excitement of exploring and understanding our past.

The Archeology group meeting for July 10 will explore the exciting application of genetics in archeology. The meeting has been moved to the second Thursday to not interfere with July 4th weekend plans.

Mineral Section Programs

by Paul Brandes

June 4, 2014 Swap Night: Back by popular demand, we will have a Swap Night where excess material from our collections can be bought/sold/swapped. This will be an informal event and will be held inside. All Sections are invited to participate and swap. Setup begins at 7:00 p.m., and the formal business meeting will be kept to a minimum to allow ample time for specimen exchange and socializing. This is also our last regularly scheduled meeting before the summer workshops begin. Refreshments will be provided.

Lapidary Section Report—April 21, 2014

by Mary Ann Mitscherling

Stephen Wilkerson and Margaret Hardman-Muye demonstrated the use of spool polishers at the April 21 Lapidary Section meeting. Stephen used his wooden unit, and Margaret used her phenolic resin unit. In addition to polishing opals, turquoise, and other softer gemstones, spool polishers can be used effectively in polishing harder stones like jade and emerald. Afterwards, Ed Clay showed his master's set of cabochons for attendees to enjoy.



General Meeting Minutes

04-22-2014

by Nancy English, HGMS Secretary

The meeting was called to order at 7:38 p.m.

President Ray Kizer thanked everyone who donated to the new monthly silent auction benefiting the club. The president reminded everyone that proceeds from the silent auction will be split 50–50 between the Building Fund and the General Fund that is used to operate HGMS.

Dues: Haven't paid your 2014 dues yet? Please see Beverly Mace and get that done.

Attendance: The meeting was attended by 29 regular members, two new members—Autumn Breeze and Dominga Meyer, and one visitor—Olive Jarrell.

Drawing: We had a geode and a jade slab as our door prizes. Mary Ann Mitscherling won a drawing and selected the jade slab. Nathalie Brandes also won a drawing, and she chose the geode.

Minutes: Karen Burns moved to approve the minutes of the April General Meeting as published in the BBG. Mary Ann Mitscherling seconded, and the membership passed the motion.

Section Reports

Archeology Section: The next Archeology Section meeting is Thursday, May 1, 2014 at 7:30 p.m. The program will be **Sicily, the Great Greek Isle** by Robert Moore and Nancy Engelhardt-Moore. Bob and Nancy will give a PowerPoint presentation focused on the great Greek ruins of Sicily. The island is famous for its beauty, food, history, and culture. Many people associate Sicily with the “Godfather,” and this is even promoted by the locals! But, you will be amazed how Greek the Italian island of Sicily is by its history and ruins. The talk will present an overview of the Greek areas of the island. Its magnificent temples and ruins rival those on mainland Greece.

Beading Section: The next regular Beading Section meeting will be on Thursday, May 17 at 1:30 p.m. Special Guest Teacher Kay Maddox will demonstrate the techniques for constructing a Crocheted Braided Wire Necklace. Instruction fee is \$10, payable on class day. This class is open to any club member who would like to attend. Guests allowed!

Day Light Section: The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 12, 2014 at 1:00 p.m. The next program will be making a wire pendant.

The Day Light Section received a gift of a jeweler's bench with tools. It will be auctioned off at the next General Meeting; the proceeds will go to the Day Light Section, per the donor's request. The owner of the bench was a watchmaker. The watchmaking and engraving tools will be separated into what the club can use and what will be auctioned at the next General Meeting.

Education Committee: Carrie Hart has volunteered to head the Education Committee, and she has put out a call to all HGMS members who would LOVE to share their skills and knowledge with others in the club by teaching a class—anything from beginning to advanced. If you have an interest in teaching a class, please e-mail Carrie at classes@hgms.org or at carriehart2000@yahoo.com.

Faceting Section: The next meeting is on Wednesday, May 14 at 6:30 p.m., the program will be Favorite Faceting Designs and Reference Materials: Plus we will take another look at GemCad and GemRay, faceting software programs. The April 16 meeting program was a hands-on refractometer class.

Lapidary Section: The April 21 meeting had a large turnout to have Show 'n Tell from the field trip. On Saturday, April 12, trip leader Ed Clay took a group of nine adult members and three kids on a field trip to the Tessman Ranch located near Falls City, TX. The Tessman Ranch is a great location for collecting golden petrified wood and palm wood pieces. The group found many gemmy pieces with great palm vesicular structures.

Steve Wilkerson and Margaret Hardman-Muye demonstrated and explained the spool polishing technique for opals and jades. The next regular meeting is May 19, and it will feature an Auction for Lapidary Section! Following the auction, Ed Clay will explain and demonstrate the skill of intarsia. Intarsia is a mosaic containing carefully cut pieces that fit together precisely, frequently separated by metal wire. The finished piece is highly polished.

Mineral Section: On April 16, the Mineral Section hosted its annual auction to help raise money for the Section. Members donated their spare specimens, and the overall auction raised \$250 for the Section. The next regular meeting will be May 7 at 7:30 p.m. The program will be a Wrap-up of the Houston Fine Mineral Show (April 25–27): Bring in your recent acquisitions from the show, and let other Section members gaze at your shiny new specimens. Tell us where you looked and what dealers had the best of what you were looking for. Also, please share your experience of the show, good or bad. What did they do correctly or poorly in your mind? What did they do that could benefit our show in November, etc. Bring photos.

Ray Kizer asked for volunteers for the Fine Gem and Mineral Show at the Embassy Suites. Setup will start at 9:00 a.m. Friday. Dave Waisman at the hotel confirmed that the booth will be available for us.

Outreach Committee: No Report

Paleo Section: The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 20. The program will be about fossil fish.

Youth Section: The Youth Section will meet Saturday, May 3 and again on May 17.

BBG Editor and Webmaster: Phyllis George mentioned that the due date is May 7, 2014 for all submissions for the next addition of the BBG.

Shop Report: All saws are working. Cooper is almost done with the large saw in the garage. The air regulator is done. They are waiting on a part.

May General Meeting: The May 27 General Meeting Program will be on **Volcanoes, Romans, Rivers, and Wine!** presented by Nathalie Brandes. Due to unforeseen circumstances, Gail Spann's presentation on women collectors will be postponed until September. Never fear, however! Our own Nathalie Brandes has agreed to take Gail's place and will be presenting on an area of Europe filled with volcanic features, Roman ruins, beautiful rivers, and fine wine. Thinking Italy? Then you'd be incorrect! Nathalie will be taking us on a tour of Western Germany to visit the Vulkaneifel, the former Roman cities of Trier and Xanten, and the wine producing Mosel and Rhine River valleys. Along with many pretty photos, Nathalie will also talk about how these features tie together in European history. Even though the program is short notice, it should be a very entertaining and informative night.

Old Business

In the interest of time, President Kizer asked the members to follow the progress of Old Business items in the April 1, Board meeting minutes as published in the May edition of the BBG.

New Business

Sunday Shop Supervisor Needed: Many Thanks to Sharon Hulton, our Sunday shop supervisor opened the lapidary shop for her last time before leaving Houston to return to North Carolina, her home state. Sharon has been a wonderful shop super for the last year, but now that she is leaving, we need a new volunteer or couple of volunteers who can continue as before and keep the shop working on Sundays. Al Mowery volunteered to be the Sunday Shop volunteer. However, he occasionally will need some substitute help.

Show 'n Tell: Steve Blyskal brought minerals acquired at the New Jersey Gem & Mineral show. Discussion of the New Jersey venue led James___ to request that Michele Marsel ask Dunn Southwest whether there is an empty warehouse in our area that could accommodate our Gem & Mineral show.

The next Board of Directors meeting is Tuesday, May 3. The next General Meeting is Tuesday, May 27.

After the break, the silent auction was officially closed. Different bidders participated in the auction. The auction brought in \$49.00. Three items have not been paid for or picked up, so this amount should go up.

Paul Brandes introduced and moderated our program for tonight: **An Earth Science Panel Discussion.** This features a panel of selected HGMS members who answered questions concerning many topics ranging from general geology to mineralogy, collecting, paleontology, archeology, gemstones, and many other earth science topics. Panelists are Steve Blyskal, Garth Clark, Nathalie Brandes, Neal Immega, and Margo Bedman.

Refreshments: Provided by Nancy English

Adjourn: Paul Brandes moved to adjourn the business meeting, and Gary Anderson seconded. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Board of Director's Meeting

May 6, 2014

by Nancy English

X	President - Ray Kizer	X	Archeology Rep - Garth Clark
X	1st Vice President - Paul Brandes	X	Beading Rep - Jillynn Hales
X	2nd Vice President - Beverly Mace	X	DayLight Rep - Mary Ann Mitscherling
X	Treasurer - Rodney Linehan	X	Faceting Rep - Gary Tober
X	Secretary - Nancy English	X	Lapidary Rep - Phyllis George
	Past President - John Caldyne		Mineral Rep - Sigrid Stewart
		X	Paleontology Rep - Mike Dawkins

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:38 p.m. with a quorum of 10 members present. President Ray Kizer presided over the meeting.

President's Comments: I would like to thank all of you who helped staff the Information Table at the April 25–27 Fine Gem & Mineral Show. We talked to many potential members and answered many questions about the club. It was a successful venue for us as we signed up ten new members—nine adults and one youth member. We also received payment for one membership renewal. It is important for the club to be visible at these types of events and shows. It brings new blood into the club and broadens our opportunity to offset expenses by signing people up for various classes and keeps the lapidary shop open. Ray will ask Carrie Hart, Education Chair, to review the interest list from the show to build a class list. Classes can be accessed at classes@hgms.org

Approval of Previous Month Board Minutes: Gary Tober moved and Phyllis George seconded that the minutes of the April 2014 Board Meeting be accepted as published in the March 2014 BBG. The motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report: Rodney Linehan e-mailed financials to all Board members in advance of the meeting. The 2013 Fall HGMS show made \$8,000. \$6,000 of it represents dealer deposits to hold their place in the November 2014 HGMS show.

Office, Committee, and Section Reports

Archeology Section: On May 1, Robert Moore and Nancy Engelhardt-Moore gave a very interesting and informative presentation on the great Greek sites found on the Italian isle of Sicily. The talk was an overview of the Greek areas of the island including Palermo, Segesta (Grand Temple, a duplicate of the Parthenon), Selinunte, Agrigento (Valley of Temples).

Four people went on the recent McFadden Beach field trip. They found mammoth teeth and other fossils.

The Section's next meeting is Thursday, June 5 at 7:30 p.m. The program will wrap up information on the recent field trips. On Thursday, July 10, 2014 the program will be "Genetic Archeology."

Beading Section: Next meeting is Saturday, May 17 at 1:30 p.m. The new project will be the techniques for constructing a Crocheted Braided Necklace with Special Guest Teacher Kay Maddox (rescheduled from 2/15/2014). Instruction fee is \$10, payable on class day. This class is open to any club member who would like to attend. The June meeting project will be announced.

Day Light Section: Next meeting is Monday, May 12 at 1:00 p.m. Karen Burns will teach members to make a wire pendant with beads. There were not enough participants to teach it during the last meeting.

Education Committee: No report

Faceting Section: The last meeting provided several refractometers to allow members to analyze faceted stones. The next meeting is Wednesday, May 14 at 6:30 p.m. The program will be on Favorite Faceting Designs and Reference Materials: Plus, they'll take another look at GemCad & GemRay--excellent software programs for designing faceting cuts.

Lapidary Section: Next meeting is Monday, May 19 at 7:30 p.m. Ed Clay will explain and demonstrate Intarsia. Lapidary Intarsia is a jewelry making technique that uses varied shapes, sizes, and species of highly polished stone fitted together in a host matrix to create a mosaic-like picture with an illusion of depth. For the meeting on Monday, April 21, 2014, Steve Wilkerson and Margaret Hardman-Muye demonstrated the use of wooden and phenolic resin polishing wheels. Members also had show-and-tell with their finds from the Tessman Ranch field trip.

Mineral Section: Next meeting is Wednesday, May 7 at 7:30 p.m. The program will be a Wrap-up of the Houston Fine Mineral Show: Bring in your recent acquisitions from the Houston Fine Mineral Show (April 25-27). Let other Section members gaze at your shiny new specimens while telling us how you came to buy them and from which dealer. Also, please share your experience of the show, good or bad, with the rest of the Section. What did they do correctly or poorly in your mind? What did they do that could benefit our show in November?

Paleo Section: Next meeting is Tuesday, May 20 at 7:30 p.m. The program will be Fossil Fish. Neal Immega says, "We will have lots to look at from my collection, and you are encouraged to bring your own. Larry will have some from the Green River to sell." At the April meeting, Scott Singleton identified several petrified wood samples. On May 3, members of the Paleo Section made a short guided field trip to Canyon Lake Canyon. See Neal for more details.

Publicity Committee: Tamara Richie – see Advertising section in **Old Business**.

Show Committee: Michele Marsel –The next meeting is Tuesday, May 13, 2014. There are a few chair positions not filled. Michele will put a request in the BBG for volunteers.

Youth Section: Next meeting is Saturday, May 17 at 10:00 a.m. They are planning a field trip the third week in June to Wagoner's mine in Mt. Ida, Arkansas.

BBG Editor and Webmaster: The deadline to submit articles is May 7, 2014. Phyllis George explained that she uses Dreamweaver for the Web site. President Ray Kizer encouraged her to train a member as her backup.

General Meeting Presentation: Next meeting is May 27 at 7:30 p.m. We will hold a membership vote (up or down) on the recent Bylaw changes approved by the Board of Directors. Then Natalie Brandes will present the program "**Volcanology, Wine, and Romans**" about ancient German history. The originally scheduled program by Gail Copus Spann titled "A Woman's Perspective on Mineral Collecting" has been postponed until September.

Old Business

1. Show Trailer Repairs: Clyde McMeans, Neal Immega, possibly Tony Lucci, and others. No update available.

2. Security System: Garth Clark – Garth is still waiting for the latest upgrade to the surveillance system he is considering. It will be important to have a "push" feature that calls a designated member if the alarm goes off.

3. Veteran's Outreach: Gary Tober (*Air Force Colonel Retired*) – Al Tarr called the VA but was unable to reach a suitable person to discuss our offer for Veterans to be able to come to the club. Gary said we first need to establish a rapport with someone in the VA administration. It was suggested that the Admin person be invited to the Club to see our facilities, then we would present the idea to the veterans. Ray Kizer asked Gary Tober to provide him a simple flow chart of what has to be accomplished. If we cannot get the VA Administration interested in our outreach idea, we may have to drop it.

4. Club House Repairs / upgrades: Ray Kizer – Update – The club house entrance door received its first coat of primer and will receive its second coat and final painting in the next two weeks. The door bell system has been rewired and will be reconnected after the painting project is completed.

5. Advertising: Tamara Richie stated that she would have an Advertising Spreadsheet available next week, and she asks for any announcements touting HGMS that need to be made in free newspapers and on Craig's list be sent to her so she can post them before the next General Meeting.

New Business

1. Student Scholarship Award: The Board will review the achievements of our two potential scholarship candidates Ms. Adeene Denton and Ms. Zhenchen (Stephanie)

Zou. Both students currently are enrolled in Earth Science at Rice University, and both have displayed outstanding scholarly efforts so far. They are both entering their junior year this coming fall and would like to be able to apply the HGMS Scholarship funds to help offset the cost of their proposed summer 2014 field camp training. Ray Kizer read the letters from both candidates. He will forward their letters of recommendation and grades to the Board via e-mail for review and evaluation.

2. Donation: HGMS has received a donation of a jewelry bench and assorted jewelry finishing tools. Approximately 50 items from the estate of Eugene A. Rooney were donated via Sig Altman. The BOD Representative for the Day Light Section, Mary Ann Mitscherling, made two motions.

Motion 1: was moved by Mary Ann Mitscherling and seconded by Nancy English. That the club hold a silent auction of the items at the May 27, 2014 General meeting. Motion passed.

Motion 2: Was moved by Garth Clark and seconded by Gary Tober, that in this one instance, 100% of the proceeds go to the Day Light Section in accordance with the prior wishes of the donor.

3. Proposed 2014 Budget: Rodney Linehan – Final review of previous profit and loss statements to build a functional 2014 budget. This is postponed until the June Board meeting.

Adjourn: Paul Brandes moved to adjourn the meeting, and Gary Tober seconded. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:55 p.m.

Bench Tips

by Brad Smith

Get all 101 of Brad's bench tips in "Bench Tips for Jewelry Making"

(<http://amazon.com/dp/0988285800/>) on Amazon.com

Polishing Wheels

In the finishing sequence there's a step called pre-polishing—between sanding and buffing—and one of the most effective tools I've found to help here is the little silicone wheels used in a Foredom or Dremel. They come in several different abrasive levels and several different shapes. The wheels are color coded to denote their abrasive level. Different shapes (coin, knife, cylinder, point, etc.) are available to match the geometry of the area being cleaned up.



For a starter, I'd suggest a medium, a fine, and an extra fine wheel in both the coin shape and the knife-edge shape. The thicker coin shapes are particularly handy. Be sure to get a few extra mandrels so you will have one of each wheel shape mounted and ready to go.

Cylinder shapes are nice for doing the inside of rings. Knife-edge shapes clean up the base of bezels quickly. Most jewelry catalogs carry these wheels, but often the color codes do not match between different manufacturers.

Reshaping Silicone Wheels

Silicone polishing wheels in the Dremel or Foredom are a great time saver, but after using them a bit, they often need to be reshaped. This is particularly true with the knife-edge wheels.

The natural thought is to grab one of your files and hold it up against the rotating wheel to reshape it. But this gives you a problem. The grinding grit in the silicone wheel is much harder than steel, meaning that you end up grinding down the teeth of your file.

The best way to reshape your polishing wheels is to use a diamond file. If you do not have one and must use a steel file, I sacrifice the area of the file that is closest to the handle. That area is not used in normal bench work.

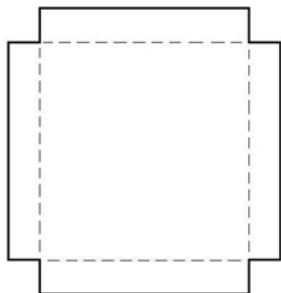
Revolving Solder Pad

Often when we're soldering we have multiple pieces on the pad or a single piece, and we would like to work on several sides of it during the same heat.

One of the ways to deal with this is to put your solder pad onto a turntable. That way you can rotate each piece into position when you need to or can rotate the pad to reach another side of a larger piece.

All you need to make one of these is a piece of aluminum sheet and an inexpensive turn table assembly. A good hardware store will have both, although you can usually find the aluminum in the scrap pile of a local sheet metal shop.

In building a turntable for my 6-inch solder pad, I used a seven-inch square piece of aluminum and cut out 1/2 inch notches from each corner. Then I used a bench vice to



Continued on page 22

bend the sides along the dotted lines to form a tray that cradles the solder pad. I attached the tray to the turntable assembly with a couple small machine screws and nuts.

Quenching

Some jewelers drop the hot piece from soldering directly into the pickle. Do you hear that little hiss? The hot piece sends small droplets of acid into the air. This can rust nearby tools and can't be all that good to breathe either. To avoid this, I quench in water.

A coffee cup of water at the solder station lets me cool a soldered piece before dumping it into the pickle. It's also useful for annealing metals and for cooling off tweezers.

Active Participation in Your Club Needed!

by Fred Ott

President of the El Dorado County Mineral & Gem Society
from Petroglyphs 9/2013

*(Editor's Note: As you read this, you will discover that many things in this article apply directly to HGMS members too! HGMS is a very large club with many and varied interests, and it takes many hands to make short work of big projects. **Please volunteer.** Gently modified by eliminating activities that are not part of the HGMS experience.)*

There is an old saying that the world is filled with three kinds of people:

- 1) those who **make** things happen,
- 2) those who **watch** things happen and
- 3) those who **wonder** what in the heck happened!

Our society is blessed with a LOT of members who fit the first category, oftentimes working "behind the scenes" to make our society one of the most active rock and gem organizations in the Federation. Nonetheless, it is important (and, in fact a requirement for being a member) that all members **actively participate** in the society's activities beyond just attending meetings and other functions. Here are some examples of such activities:

- Serve as an officer or director of the Society. Serve as a committee chairperson, co-chair, assistant, or committee member.
- Lead a field trip.
- Work at the annual Rock and Gem Show.
- Be an exhibitor at the annual Rock and Gem Show.
- Be a demonstrator at the annual Rock and Gem Show.
- Help put up signs and distribute flyers for the Rock and Gem Show.
- Present a program at a General Membership meeting, Junior Meeting, or Jewelry Class. Bring samples of recently collected rocks to General Membership meetings, and give a Field Trip Report.

- Bring samples of personally produced jewelry, crafts, etc. to General Membership meetings.
- Tumble rocks/stones for grab bags.
- Collect and donate rocks for grab bags, Education Program, Silent Auctions, and Raffles. Donate items to Raffles, Silent Auctions, Kid's activities, and Rock & Gem Show Bargain Rocks
- Exhibit or staff the club booth at shows put on by other organizations (*Houston Fine Mineral Show, Intergem Show, etc.*)
- Bring refreshments to a General Membership meeting.

Please review your participation in our society and consider contributing in one or more of the above activities. You will be glad you did! Remember: Rockhounding is more than a hobby; it's a *passion!*



AMERICAN FEDERATION OF MINERALOGICAL SOCIETIES

AFMS ENDOWMENT DRAWING FOR 2014

DRAWING TO BE HELD DURING THE AFMS CONVENTION AND SHOW
JULY 12, 2014
TULSA, OKLAHOMA

Interest from AFMS Endowment Fund investments is used to support numerous programs that benefit our affiliated member clubs. In the past several years, interest money has:

- Purchased badges for the juniors program which are given at no charge to clubs with organized junior activities programs.
- Digitized the old AFMS slide programs that have been distributed at no charge to the regional federations.
- Purchased new commercially produced programs for the regional federation libraries.
- Supported the Judges Training Program.

TICKETS ARE \$5 EACH OR 5 FOR \$20.

Many door prizes have been collected.

Such as: A page of mineral stamps, estimated value of this page is \$40 (MWF). Float Copper Specimen--estimated value: \$65 (MWF), A Mosasar Tooth from Khouribga, estimated value of \$50. (MWF), and many many more.

Deadline to have tickets returned to your regional federation representative
Catherine Rouchon of Baton Rouge G&M is June 30.

Ankle Sprains

by Barbara Brillhart RN PhD FNP-BC

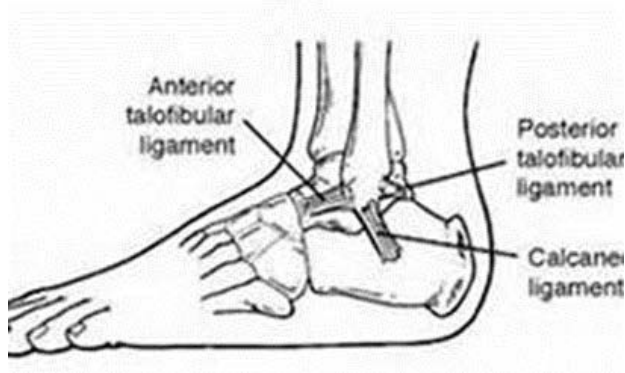
from *Smoke Signals* 1/2013, via *Rocky Mountain Federation News* 2/2014

Ankle sprains can occur while participating in field trips out in the Arizona deserts, especially with our rocky desert areas. Such injuries occur by stepping in a hole, falling, or jumping on an outstretched ankle. This article will focus on the types of ankle sprains, symptoms of ankle sprains, treatment for ankle sprains, and prevention of ankle sprains.

Ankle sprains are classified as first-, second-, or third-degree sprains. The first-degree sprain is due to a stretching or minor tearing of the ligaments. The symptoms of the first-degree sprain include minimal pain, mild swelling, mild bruising, and mild point (isolated) tenderness. The person still has a stable joint, full range of motion of the joint without pain, and the joint is able to bear weight. This level of injury is treated with **RICE** which stands for **R**est, **I**ce, **C**ompression (using an ace bandage), and **E**levation. The person should be able to return to full activity within 2 to 3 weeks using an ankle support.

The next level of ankle sprain is second-degree and is due to major but not complete tearing of the ligament. It is characterized by mild to moderate pain, moderate swelling, moderate amount of bruising, slightly limited painful joint motion, isolated tenderness. The second-degree sprain also has mild joint instability plus pain plus the inability to bear weight. This level of injury is treated with RICE, partial weight bearing, an air cast or joint taping, and a gradual return to full activity.

The most serious or third degree sprain is due to a complete tear of the ligament. Symptoms of the third degree sprain include severe pain, rapid (within 30 minutes) swelling, a larger amount of joint swelling, severe bruising (usually within 30 minutes), severe isolated tenderness, limited or loss of motion of the joint, very unstable joint, and the inability to bear weight. Many ex-



perience a “pop” sensation with this sprain. Immediately, the person should apply the treatment of RICE in the field, and then refer to care by an orthopedic specialist. The treatment of this serious injury often requires surgery, casting, no weight bearing, and rehabilitation. X-rays are often taken to rule out a fracture.

Prevention of ankle sprains is as follows:

- Wear laced hiking boots that extend above the ankle and are in good condition. Avoid worn tennis shoes or sandals.
- Be aware of the terrain for conditions such as loose stones or gravel, holes, wet rocks, and mossy ground.



**THE BATON ROUGE GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY SHOW
and
SCFMS REGIONAL CONVENTION SCHEDULE
Marriott Hotel
Hilton Ave.**

Show Times: Saturday, August 9 10:00 – 5:00
 Sunday, August 10 10:00 – 5:00

SCFMS Activities: Saturday, August 9 in the Beauregard Room

Breakfast with the Editors and Webmasters:8:00
SCFMS Meeting:1:00
SCFMS Awards Banquet:7: 00

Sunday, August 10th in the Beauregard Room

Rolling Rock Club Meeting:8:00

Room Rate Discounts will be available

Show Time 2014

June 7-8	Grapevine, TX	Arlington Gem & Mineral Club Grapevine Convention Center 1209 S. Main St. Krisk@kirstnerphotogry.com
June 7-8	Stafford, TX	The Bead Market The Stafford Centre; 10505 Cash Rd. rebekah@thebeadmarket.net www.thebeadmarket.net
August 16-17	Bossier City, LA	ArkLaTx Gem & Mineral Society Bossier Civic Center, 620 Benton Rd. larockclub@gmail.com; www.larockclub.com
August 23-24	Jasper, TX	Pine Country Gem & Mineral Society The Event Center, 6258 State Hwy. 190W 5 miles west of Jasper; Jonetta Nash jonetta.nash@yahoo.com
October 3-5	Austin, TX	Austin Gem & Mineral Society Palmer Events Center, 900 Barton Springs Rd. showchairman@austingemandmineral.org www.gemcapers.com
October 4-5	Stafford, TX	The Bead Market Stafford Centre, 10505 Cash Rd. rebekah@thebeadmarket.net www.thebeadmarket.net
October 11-12	Temple, TX	Tri-City Gem & Mineral Society Mayborn Civic and Convention Center 3303 N. 3rd St.; Chip Burnette burnette@aceweb.com www.tricitygemmineral.org
November 1-2	Amarillo, TX	Golden Spread Gem & Mineral Society Amarillo Civic Center, 400 S. Buchanan St. Wanda Finley, finfran@midplains.coop
November 7-9	Humble, TX	Houston Gem & Mineral Society Humble Civic Center, 8233 Will Clayton Pkwy. 5 miles east of Bush Intercontinental Airport 1 mile east of Hwy. 59 www.hgms.org; show@hgms.org
November 22-23	Mesquite, TX	Dallas Gem & Mineral Society Rodeo Center Exhibit Hall, 1800 Rodeo Dr. mark_a_hall@yahoo.com www.DallasGemAndMineral.org

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

2014		July				2014
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 7:30 Board Meeting	2 NO Mineral Section 10-3 Shop open	3	4 Independence Day	5 10-5 Shop Open 10-12 Youth Section
6 10-4 Shop Open	7	8 7:30 Show Committee	9 6:30 Faceting Section 10-3 Shop Open	10 7:30 Archeology Section	11	12 10-5 Shop Open
13 10-4 Shop Open	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 10-4 Shop Open	21 7:30 Lapidary Section	22 7:30 General Meeting	23 10-3 Shop open	24	25	26 10-5 Shop Open
27 10-4 Shop Open	28	29	30 10-3 Shop open	31		

The BACKBENDER'S GAZETTE

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

10805 BROOKLET

HOUSTON, TEXAS 77099

(281) 530-0942



SCFMS

1998 - 1st (Large)
2000 - 1st (Large)
2003 - 1st (Large)
2005 - 1st (Large)
2006 - 2012 - 1st (Large)
2013 - 1st (Large)



AFMS

1998 - 2nd (Large)
2004 - 3rd (Large)
2007 - 1st (Large)
2010 - 2nd (Large)
2012 - 3rd (Large)
2013 - 3rd (Large)



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