

# THE BACKBENDER'S GAZETTE

NEWSLETTER OF THE HOUSTON GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY



## 2020 TUCSON SHOW

SEE MORE ON PAGE 4

VOLUME LXIII

**HGMS** | HOUSTON GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY

JUNE 2020

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

President's Message	3
Vice President's Message / Upcoming Program	3
Tucson Show 2020	4
Bench Tips	8
Local Bead Shop Review: Beadoholique Bead Shop	9
Turquoise	11
Flat Lapping without a Lapping Machine	13
AFMS President's Message	13
Show Time	15
Purpose of HGMS / Membership Details	16
Board of Director Meeting Minutes – current month	16
Officers List	22
Calendar	23

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### BACKBENDER'S GAZETTE SUBMISSION DEADLINES

*Articles are due on the 15th day of the month before the date on the BBG issue.*

*Copy is due for the next issue by the 15th of this month. Email content to [editor@hgms.org](mailto:editor@hgms.org)*



# *The* BACKBENDER'S GAZETTE



*The Newsletter of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society*

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

*by Sigrid Stewart*

The Covid-19 situation drags on and on, and no magic solution has yet arisen to dispel illness and soothe our fears. Texas is slowly re-opening, but many of us are waiting to see if there is a rebound in the number of cases. Photographs of huge crowds at beaches are not reassuring! Nor are reports of grocery customers who are not wearing masks. We will discuss the club re-opening again at the next Board meeting.

One thing we can continue to do is to publish our Backbender's Gazette newsletter. We will change the format a little, and redouble our efforts to find interesting stories.

Jim Kendall is working to locate interesting links to many subjects of rockhound interest. Some have already been added to our Web site, and more new content will be added. We want to improve it as a major resource for you!

Here's something else we can do: remote meetings. We have had Board meetings remotely using Skype, and we tried to hold our first General Meeting remotely on May 26, but our presenter's Internet was down. We got luckier on the 29th, and had a successful meeting with around 15 people in attendance. Dr. Georgiana Kramer of NASA presented "Water on the Moon", a description of mineralogical research conducted remotely.



## **VICE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

*by Michael Sommers*

With the COVID-19 pandemic situation, we have switched over to holding meetings online. Our first attempt on the fourth Tuesday for the May General Meeting did not go as smoothly as hoped. Our presenter, Georgiana, had technical issues that prevented her from accessing the Internet, and we did not have a copy of her presentation. However, about 20 of us had a nice extended conversation and Show-and-Tell session. We hope to try Georgiana's presentation again (as of this writing—tonight) and we also hope the June General Meeting will go more smoothly.

The plan for June 23 is Nancy Engelhardt-Moore presenting Greco-Roman medicine. This will be very interesting, since there were two major pandemics during Roman times—the Antonine Plague (165-180 AD) and the Plague of Justinian (541-542 AD).

## TUCSON SHOW 2020

by Sigrid Stewart and Steve Blyskal

President / Mineral Section Chair of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society

Any rockhound who has frequented rock shops, been a member of a club for a while, or gone on rock hunts with other rockhounds, hears about the Tucson Show. To describe this show, you should really pull your basket of adjectives out of the closet and sprinkle it on your discussion. Try “world-class,” “stupendous,” “mind-boggling,” or just “overwhelming”! They do not do it justice.

If you have been to the Tucson shows, you already know that it is not ONE show, but many shows. It all started with the original Tucson Gem & Mineral Society’s show (TG&MS). It is about the same age as our own HG&MS. As the popularity of the original show grew, other shows began tailgating around it. In 2020, about 45 shows were located in hotels, tents, and various buildings. Both retail and wholesale shows exist for mineral, jewelry, fossil, and lapidary, with varying schedules—some overlap, and some do not. However, they all come to an end with the Tucson Gem & Mineral Society’s show on the second weekend of February.

Arizona itself is a great place to hunt for rocks and minerals; it is quite pleasant in the wintertime when many northerners are shoveling snow and unable to go rock-hunting. It is also possessed of desert mountain scenery and the fascinating saguaro cactus, making it charmingly unlike other regions of the United States. Jewelers looking for unusual stones, lapidaries seeking rough material, mineral and fossil collectors all began making the pilgrimage to Tucson in January and February. Every year, many become winter Arizonans.



*Saguaro Cactus*

My husband Steve and I had been to Tucson before of course, and had planned to go two years earlier. That trip was sidelined by a death in the family. To guarantee that we would attend, Steve submitted an application to put a display case in the Tucson Gem & Mineral Society’s Club show. His theme was prehnite—his favorite mineral—and he worked on the display for months, commandeering the dining room table, trying out different configurations, and having his daughter compose an artistic background to be printed on poster board. More about prehnite and his display next month.

Steve and I set out for Tucson in early February. This time, we planned to stay for a week and a half at an AirBnB (an online community marketplace that connects people looking to rent their homes with people who are looking for accommodations), and to take in the Westward Look Fine Mineral Show, the new Mineral City Show, and the Kino and 22nd Street shows before going to the TG&MS show that closes out the season.



We packed up the Jeep and headed for Van Horn, Texas, the perfect halfway point to spend the night. The next morning we were out early and on the road, through El Paso and New Mexico, and on to Arizona. In late afternoon, we checked into our BnB and unpacked. We found a wonderful place in a historic neighborhood near Sabino Canyon, and from our room we had a good view of Mount Lemon and the Santa Catalina Mountains.



*Saguaro in Santa Catalina Mountains*

In the morning, we went to the Kino show to see some friends and to check out some of the booths, tents, and buildings. Wonderful fountains and sculptures, and great individual booths selling lapidary material, amethyst cathedrals, beads, and equipment were at the entrance. In the afternoon we headed to the Westward Look Fine Mineral Show, a feast for the eyes and very low on temptation—the prices had even wealthy friends gasping. There were certainly wonderful things to be seen. People we saw told us what they had seen that was new and interesting. Half the fun of the Tucson show is talking to all the dealers who have brought their finest specimens and newest finds, and to customers who have come from all over the world to see and talk about rocks.

The next day we headed north to the Sabino Canyon Recreation Area to hike mountain trails amongst saguaro cactus. This is a fabulous area to wander around in, a great natural getaway and very close to the city.

Tuesday we visited Mineral City—a new venue—wooing dealers away from the hotel shows. It is a series of warehouses, much like a storage center, with metal doors that can be pulled down to seal off booths and enable dealers to have a permanent presence in Tucson. Prices were more appealing, and we both found some specimens. Steve questioned many of the European dealers about prehnite localities in their countries, and he left his card with many. One dealer showed Steve a group of prehnite specimens he had dug last year in Massachusetts—the finest ever found in that quarry.

Wednesday was setup day for the main show. The Tucson Gem and Mineral Society mobilized their club and many volunteers to set up hundreds of cases in the Convention Center and to assist everyone with check in. We lined up with everyone else to cart Steve's display materials in and to locate the case. After setting up the case, we got an early look at other exhibits and made mental notes for Thursday, first day of the show. Steve spent some time hanging around his case, talking with



*Copyright Steve Rhykal 2020.*

*Emerald*

other prehnite collectors—yes, there are some! But there were so many things to look at—100-pound chunks of native silver found in the mountains of Arizona, gold specimens bigger than footballs, tourmalines as long as your arm, microphotographs of opals and agates printed on aluminum sheets. Unusual rough. Wonderful jewelry. Many old friends and new acquaintances to be made. It truly is an overwhelming experience. Steve brought his camera and spent many hours documenting the hundreds of displays put in



Copyright Steve Blyskal 2020

*Elbaite on quartz*

bunch of them, and we left him with Texas palmwood, snakewood, and shrinkwood to carry home to Ohio. So many dealers were at just this one show, you would think you had seen everything that could possibly be seen—but you would be wrong.

by ordinary collectors, extraordinary collectors, and the finest mineral museums on the planet. He will place these photos on [Flickr.com](#) in an [album titled Tucson Show 2020](#) for you to see.

Friday was a beautiful day (and Kids' day at the show), so we decided to spend the morning back in Sabino Canyon. A shuttle goes up into the mountains to various stopping points—ride up, walk down! After our hike, we returned to see more of the Kino show. We would have needed two days to see everything. Our friend from Ohio brought flint slabs from Flint Ridge—wonderful colors and patterns. We came home with a



Copyright Steve Blyskal 2020

*Malachite*

We spent Saturday and most of Sunday back at the TG&MS show—always something new to see and interesting people to talk to. We also visited the new retail area upstairs, mostly jewelry, faceted stones, and cabochons. One dealer of Australian opals had a display of opal pseudomorphs after ikaite—commonly called “pineapples.” We went back to look at those several times. Saturday evening after the show closed



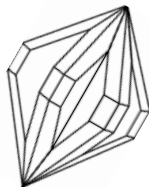
for the day, we attended a dinner and awards ceremony. We met more interesting people! They ran an auction to benefit mindat.org, the mineral information Web site (check it out!). Lots of neat specimens, and not many bidders. Sunday afternoon, Sigrid decided to take a shuttle to the 22nd Street Show, a past favorite. While looking through the hundreds of tables and booths at that show, she spotted a huge specimen of prehnite, a big



plate, and immediately called Steve. Was he interested? Sigrid had to carry that 20-pound rock back to the shuttle and then back into the convention center.

However, all good things end. The show was over, and it was time to head back to Houston. The Jeep definitely rode heavier on the way back.

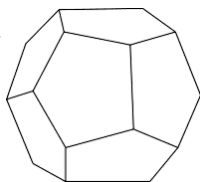
Be sure to check the website at [hgms.org/backbender-extras](http://hgms.org/backbender-extras) to view pictures in color and see additional photos from the show.



*Sigrid with Baby Goat Inside a Giant Geode*



*Pyrite Pete says: "We are going to start a 'featured member' article each month in the BBG. Suggest a friend you think should be highlighted for their role in the club!"*



## BENCH TIPS

by Brad Smith

### QUICK CLOSE-UPS

Often when trying to get a close-up photo with your iPhone or Android, you end up with a fuzzy, out-of-focus image. Next time try using your loupe over the camera lens. It works quickly and easily.



### LITTLE THINGS CAN BITE

Most jewelers treat motorized equipment with caution. We've all heard stories about workpieces coming loose in the drill press or about getting long hair or clothing caught in the polishing machine. It stands to reason that a machine with a motor of a half horsepower or so is going to win out over its operator. We all know that, and I'm not going to harp on it. That's not the point of this story.

I want to talk about the smaller motor powered machines we often use, the ones with little 3 inch diameter motors. For instance, these small motors are used in flexshafts and micro buffers. They're so small that many of us forget caution when using them. I'm guilty of it myself sometimes, and believe me it can get you in trouble. Here's what happened to two people I know.

One friend had a polishing bur bend in the handpiece and then whack the thumb that was holding the workpiece. The swelling was substantial, and it took several weeks to regain normal use. A small underpowered motor? Not so.

Another friend was using one of the small buffing machines, the kind you can stop when you apply too much pressure to the wheel. Not to worry about such an underpowered beast you say. Wrong, it literally jumped up and bit the hand that feeds it!

Buffer was set on a low table to do a quick polish, so was not mounted or clamped. A buff was installed on the right spindle, no buff on the left. Friend was wearing a tight-fitting, long-sleeved sweater. While buffing on the right wheel, the left tapered spindle caught a thread on the friend's left sleeve and started grabbing more and more threads and sleeve.

Rather than pulling the arm into the machine, the light buffer quickly lifted off the table and started climbing up the underside of the friends arm. There was no way to get a hand of the on/off switch because the unit was spinning wildly and battering my friend like a club wielded by a mad man. Only when someone nearby could grab the power cord and yank it from the wall did the mayhem stop. So when you're in the shop, please think safety. Don't take even the little motors for granted.



Discover New Jewelry Tricks in Brad's "How To" Books

<https://Amazon.com/author/bradfordsmith>



# LOCAL BEAD SHOP REVIEW: BEADOHOLIQUE BEAD SHOP

*by Maggie Manley*

*Education Chair of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society*

Several weeks ago when non-vital stores were first allowed to open, I rushed to Beadoholique, my favorite bead store in the Houston area, to replenish my supply of beading materials. Classes on YouTube have kept me quite busy, however, I ran out of some project materials. I was desperate to purchase needed items. Supplies are available online from various suppliers, but it is faster and more gratifying to select products in person. Other than food shopping and sporadic take-outs from restaurants, this is the only shop that I have visited since mid-March!



*Gemstone Strands*

Beadoholique has an exceptional assortment of items. Many of the bead stores in the area have closed in the last ten years. Others are simply over-priced and limited in selection. Many have poor selections in seed beads and specialize in limited products. At Beadoholique, I can find almost all of the items that I need, and Lisa has special-ordered items upon request.

Lisa Kirkeby was a partner of multiple Beadoholique stores since 2011, and she has been sole owner since January 2020. The Coronavirus has hit her business hard! Lisa's working career began as an administrative assistant. She quickly



*Lisa Kirkeby, owner*

pivoted into the computer industry. She worked in technical support, managing laptop builds and then Web site design and management, which tied into her artistic abilities.

Lisa hails from a large family full of artistic talent so the bead shop was a natural fit for her talent. Lisa, her father, and her sister Shauna are silversmiths and artisans. The shop carries a large selection of Czech glass, Japanese seed beads, Swarovski crystals, gemstones, jewelry findings, wiring, stringing and metalsmith supplies, and dichroic glass.

Lisa also sells beautiful handmade metal and beaded jewelry pieces and beading patterns for various projects. I find the work that is displayed in the store to be of exceptional quality, and I get excited each time I visit the store—seeing the work that is displayed and the products for sale in this store.

Many types of classes are offered at the studio at the rear of the shop including bead stringing, bead weaving and stitching, chainmaille, wire wrapping, and silversmith and metalwork classes. She has beader's night-outs and Saturday metalsmith gatherings at her shop. Lisa can offer custom classes for special groups. Due to the Coronavirus catastrophe, metal classes have been postponed until July 2020 at the earliest.

Here is a list of classes through June 2020:

- June 4 - Beader's Night-Out – Friendship Bracelets
- June 5 - Interlocking Diamonds Bracelet
- June 6 - Chainmaille: Orc Weave Bracelet
- June 9 - Basic Stringing
- June 12 - Super Duo 2-Hole Cab Earrings
- June 13 - Tubular Bead Crochet #2 Bracelet
- June 16 - Basic Wire Wrapping
- June 26 - Peyote Odd Count Bracelet
- June 27 - Chainmaille: Skinny Valentina Bracelet



*Accent Beads*

I highly recommend this shop, and I wish Lisa success in her endeavors at Beadoholique Bead Shop.

Class details and Beadoholique Bead Shop can be followed on Facebook at:

<https://www.facebook.com/Beadoholique>



*Seed Beads, Delicas, Etc.*

Beadoholique Bead Shop  
(Located in the Stone Creek Shopping Center)

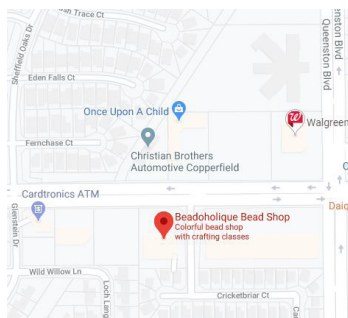
[17321 FM 529](https://www.google.com/maps/place/17321+FM+529,+Houston,+TX+77095)

[Houston, Texas 77095](https://www.google.com/maps/place/17321+FM+529,+Houston,+TX+77095)

Lisa Kirkeby, Owner (281) 256-0904

E-mail: [b2info@beadoholique.net](mailto:b2info@beadoholique.net) or

[Lisa@beadoholique.net](mailto:Lisa@beadoholique.net)



## TURQUOISE

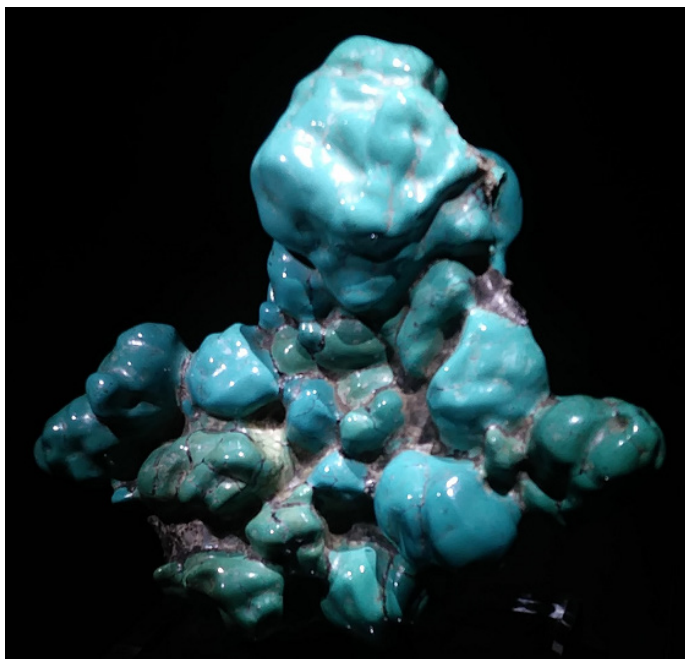
*Don Shurtz, Pleasant Oaks Gem and Mineral Club of Dallas  
from Chips and Chatter Newsletter 6/2020*

Turquoise is a favorite material for rockhounds. It has been a favorite in most cultures, and is one of the earliest stones used for jewelry and other adornments. Turquoise was important to the early Persians, Egyptians, Mesopotamians, Indian (Indus Valley culture), Ancient Greek and Romans, Chinese, Aztecs, Incas, and Native Americans.

Both the Aztec (900 AD) and Inca (1400 AD) cultures of the Americas used turquoise for jewelry and masks. Much of their work was beautiful, intricately crafted,

and was well preserved. There is some evidence that the Olmec (2000 BC) and Mayan (300 AD) cultures used turquoise for jewelry, and this use would have predated the use by the Aztec and Inca cultures. The use of turquoise by the Native Americans evolved independently. There were rich turquoise mines in Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, and New Mexico. The earliest known turquoise mine was in New Mexico, and it dates to 200 B.C. The Native Americans developed a turquoise trading network that extended from California to Colorado, and it included Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico. In the 1900s, the Native Americans developed a now-common style of backing the turquoise with a harder material to lessen the amount of turquoise needed in each piece. This technique is still confined to the American Southwest; other countries prefer a solid turquoise stone.

Natural turquoise is quite rare; high-quality turquoise is very hard to find. That is more true today with all the enhancements and simulated turquoise. As you can see from its numerous cultural ties, turquoise can be found in many locations on many continents. Turquoise has been mined in Iran for 2000 years. The Sinai desert has been a steady source of turquoise for about 5000 years. The southwest United States continues to be an important source for turquoise as it has been for several thousand years. China has mined turquoise for more than 3000 years, and they continue to export the finished and raw material. Other sources of turquoise include Afghanistan, Austria, Australia, Chile, Great Britain, Saxony, and Turkestan.



*Turquoise Mineral Specimen from China*





*Aztec Turquoise and Gold Earrings*

Turquoise is hard enough to withstand the rigors of use in jewelry, yet it is soft enough to be easily worked. Turquoise varies in hardness from 5 to 6, which is softer than typical agate and jasper materials. The hardness of turquoise depends on the microcrystalline structure of the stone—the smaller microcrystalline particles

allow it to be packed more closely, resulting in a higher density and higher Mohs hardness. Turquoise is chemically a hydrated phosphate of copper and aluminum,  $\text{CuAl}_6(\text{PO}_4)_4(\text{OH})_8 \cdot 4\text{H}_2\text{O}$ . Piney the Elder called it callais (greenish-blue). The Aztec knew it as chalchihuitl. The English name turquoise is derived from the French *turquoise* meaning Turkish. The stone was imported from Turkey who obtained them from the historical mines in Khorasan of Persia.

#### References:

- Birthstones for December, Shurtz, Don, December 13 Chips and Chatter, <http://www.pogmc.org/newsletter/Dec13cc.pdf>
- Turquoise, Wikipedia, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turquoise>
- Massive Turquoise Trade Network, Live Science, <https://www.livescience.com/massive-turquoise-trade-network>

Pictures: Photographs by Don Shurtz of specimens displayed at the Perot Museum of Nature and Science



## FLAT LAPPING WITHOUT A LAPPING MACHINE

*by Virgil Stine, Osage Hills Gems Rockpile How-To Book  
via The Rockpile, 03/2020, via The Conglomerate, 06/2020*

The process of flat lapping is so simple that anyone can do it even if you do not have a flat lap. So, go to it, and polish the bookends you want, or that clock face. Just get a piece of aluminum about 12 or 14 inches square. [ED: Repurpose an old cookie sheet, perhaps] Place it on a flat surface. Take a teaspoon of 120 grit (or even 90 grit if you have saw marks on the slab), mix with Vaseline® or water. (I like Vaseline® because it holds the grit better.)

Now take your slab to be polished or sanded and dop a piece of wood to it so that you have a handle and can hold [the slab] down on the grit. Just keep twisting and pushing it over and around on the grit.

Be sure that your grit is always under your slab. Do not run it over the dry aluminum. Soon the aluminum will be well covered. Spread out the grit as you move the stone over it, in any movement pattern you like. Be sure to add more grit so it does not get too fine. Keep at it until all saw marks are well sanded off.

Next, wash the stone well—and the aluminum too—so that there is no grit left. The next step is to mix 220 grit as before, and start sanding all over for a finer finish. Wash everything again well, and mix 400 grit, and start sanding again. Finally, mix 600 grit and sand again. Your slab should now be ready for polishing.

For polishing, obtain a piece of leather. You can get it at some shoe repair shop or leather shop. Get a square about 12 x 12 inches. Stick it to a board and keep it for polishing only. Do not tack it down because the tacks can scratch your stone. Put your favorite polish mix all over the leather. Start polishing it as you sanded it. When polished, wash well and you will have a lovely shine. This is the oldest way to do it before we had motors. It takes time and work, but a little time each night will do the trick.

## AFMS PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*David Wayment, AFMS President 2019-2020  
from AFMS Newsletter*



*David Wayment*

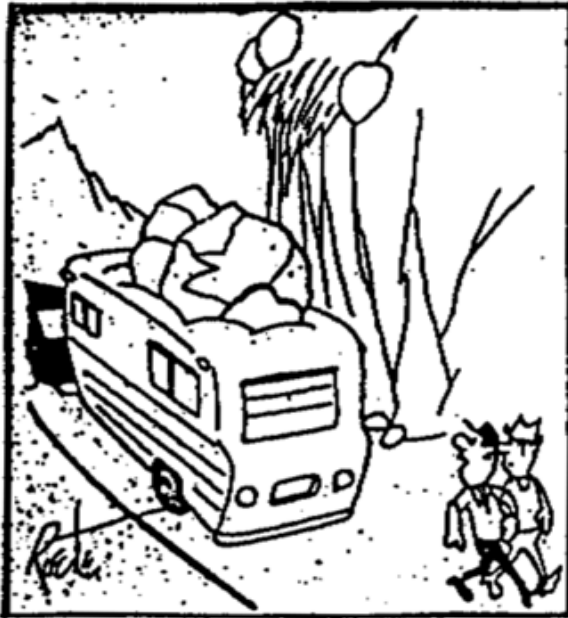
Greetings, fellow rockhounds. As of the first week in May, about half the states are entering Phase One of reopening. Most clubs and federations have had to make difficult decisions about shows, field trips, meetings, and workshops, but it all depends on your location and the status of the virus in your area.

Unfortunately, at this time the AFMS annual meeting for October is on hold. Meetings and conventions cannot be held until we are in Phase 3. Phase 2 only permits groups up to 50 people, and no show can be successful with only 50 people. The ability to hold a convention will depend mostly on the geographic area. Ours is scheduled for Knoxville, Tennessee. While a lot of Tennessee opened up to Phase 1, Knox County is still on total

lockdown. The venues and hotels are not taking reservations for a conference. We are unable to confirm plans at this time.

Much can change in the next six weeks. We might find things getting better quickly, or we might have a resurgence of the virus. The AFMS does not have the ability to do an email blast. (Maybe we should look into this.) We will have to rely on the ability of the different regions to do an email blast to get out more information about the annual meeting when we know more.

While we are in our lockdown, I encourage everyone to take advantage of some of the offerings in Rock & Gem Magazine—our official magazine. They have a selection of Virtual Adventures on their Web site. Check out [rockngem.com](http://rockngem.com) for their offerings. All club members are offered a discount subscription rate of 12 issues for \$24, using code RG24, and I have been told it can be used for multiple-year subscriptions. When we get back to having shows, they have a nice club directory and show listing, with additional advertising options. Contact Talvarez at [beckett.com](http://beckett.com).



**"Rockhounds, I'd assume."**

**From Sooner Rockologist 11/96  
via T-Town Rockhound 2/98 & others**

**A CHUCKLE:** The doctor recommended a patient lose 75 pounds of excess weight. He told him to run five miles a day for the next 200 days. Exactly 200 days later, the patient called him and complained that he was unhappy with the program. "Didn't you lose the weight?" Asked the Doctor. "Yes, of course," admitted the patient, "but now I'm a thousand miles from home!"

*from The Petrified Digest 8/00 via Montana Council Reporter 10/01 via Golden Spike News 11/01*



## SHOW TIME 2020

DATE	LOCATION	SHOW INFO
Aug-1-2	Lubbock, TX	Lubbock Gem and Mineral Society Lubbock Memorial Civic Center, 1501 Mac Davis Lane <a href="mailto:walt@lubbockgemandmineral.org">walt@lubbockgemandmineral.org</a> <a href="http://www.lubbockgemandmineral.org">www.lubbockgemandmineral.org</a>
Aug. 8-9	Gonzales, LA	Baton Rouge Gem & Mineral Society Lamar Dixon Expo Center-Trademart Building 9039 S. Saint Landry Ave <a href="mailto:mercymom3@gmail.com">mercymom3@gmail.com</a> <a href="http://www.brgemandmineral.org">www.brgemandmineral.org</a>
Aug. 15-16	Bossier City, LA	Arklatex Gem & Mineral Society Bossier City Civic Center, 620 Benton Rd. <a href="mailto:larockclub@gmail.com">larockclub@gmail.com</a> ; <a href="http://larockclub.com">larockclub.com</a>
Aug. 22	San Antonio, TX	Southwest Gem and Mineral Society Wonderland of the Americas Mall I-10 and Loop 410 at Fredericksburg Road <a href="mailto:jspeck2@att.net">jspeck2@att.net</a> ; <a href="http://www.swgms.org/">http://www.swgms.org/</a>
Aug 29-30	Fort Worth, TX	Fort Worth Gem and Mineral Club Will Rogers Memorial Center, 3401 W Lancaster <a href="http://www.fortworthgemandmineralclub.org/show.html">http://www.fortworthgemandmineralclub.org/show.html</a>
Sep. 11-20	Denver, CO	Annual show; Greater Denver Area Gem and Mineral Council Denver Mart, Expo Hall, 451 E 58th Ave Many shows, many venues Denver Mart, Expo Hall, 451 E 58th Ave <a href="mailto:nkk9960@hotmail.com">nkk9960@hotmail.com</a> <a href="https://www.denvermineralshow.com/">https://www.denvermineralshow.com/</a>
Sep. 18-20	Howell, MI	MWF hosted by ??
Oct. 10-11	Temple, TX	Tri-City Gem and Mineral Society Frank Mayborn Civic and Convention Center, 3303 N. 3rd Street / Lois Ruth Rolston, 106 Ottoway Drive, Temple, TX 76501, <a href="mailto:lrolston@hot.rr.com">lrolston@hot.rr.com</a>
Oct. 23-25	Austin, TX	Austin Gem and Mineral Society (AGMS) Palmer Events Center, 900 Bartons Springs Rd Laird Fowler, 6719 Burnet Ln, Austin, TX 78757 (512) 458-9546, <a href="mailto:showchairman@austingemandmineral.org">showchairman@austingemandmineral.org</a> <a href="http://www.agms-tx.org">www.agms-tx.org</a>
Nov. 6-8	Humble, TX	Houston Gem and Mineral Society Humble Civic Center, 8233 Will Clayton Parkway <a href="mailto:show@hgms.org">show@hgms.org</a> ; <a href="http://hgms.org">hgms.org</a>
Nov. 7-8	Amarillo, TX	Golden Spread Gem, Mineral & Treasure Society Amarillo Civic Center, 401 S. Buchanan <a href="mailto:patfoster2@hotmail.com">patfoster2@hotmail.com</a> ; <a href="http://amarillotreasure.com/">http://amarillotreasure.com/</a>

## 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, 1/4 page; \$150 for 6 months, 1/4 page.

MEMBER: American Federation of Mineralogical Societies and 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 (except December) at 7:30PM.

The HGMS web site address is <https://hgms.org>

## HGMS BOARD OF DIRECTOR MEETING MINUTES

MAY 5, 2020

*by Nancy English*

X	President—Sigrid Stewart	X	Beading—Maggie Manley
X	1st Vice President—Mike Sommers	X	Day Light—Fred Brueckner
X	2nd Vice President—Beverly Mace		Gemstones & Faceting—Randy Carlson
	Treasurer—Tatyana Kuhne	X	Lapidary & Metalsmithing—Phyllis George
X	Secretary—Nancy English	X	Mineral—Steve Blyskal
X	Archaeology—Nancy Engelhardt-Moore	X	Paleontology—Mike Dawkins

President Sigrid Stewart called the SKYPE meeting to order at 7:35. A quorum was present.

### PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

The HGMS clubhouse will remain closed for member use in order to minimize the danger of Coronavirus spread. It will remain closed until the BOD determines that it is safe to reopen. All classes have been canceled.

**Approval of Minutes:** Maggie Manley moved to approve the minutes of the April 7, 2020 BOD meeting. Nancy Engelhardt-Moore seconded the motion, and it passed.

**Treasurer Report:** Tatyana Kuhne sent the Treasurer's Report to members on May 2, 2020.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

**BBG Editor:** The new editor, Sharon Thomas, resigned. The Web Site Committee Meeting was scheduled right after that happened on April 11, 2020. The group decided the Web Committee would take over the BBG for the time being, with an eye to integrating it with the Web. Libby Guynn said she would like to take on the BBG full time when she retires, but she is too busy now. She can help, however. They decided to use Adobe InDesign, rated as the best software for newsletter layout. Lauren Blyskal built a template. Libby collected articles; Phyllis George contributed some articles and small items, and she edited it. The BBG should go out today, May 5, 2020. This will result in a higher than usual invoice from Lauren.

There is much more we could do to integrate the Web site and the BBG: We can add links to more online content, much as the Houston Chronicle does. This could pave the way for an all-digital edition. We can add more member articles and shop tips. Maybe we can create videos on a YouTube Channel. We can post teasers on Facebook too—that would drive traffic to the site.

**Education Committee:** No classes until further notice. All the refunds for canceled classes have been processed. The Web Site Committee is working on a new Classes page with new features. For now, see the free online classes suggested in past and future E blasts.

**Scholarship Committee:** Mike Sommers. Notices were sent out to all the schools on our list as of April 10, 2020. Mike received two reply thank you notes, but no applications as of this meeting. He plans to post reminders on Facebook pages and to send out email reminders. An unofficial transcript for applications is all that will be required going forward. He asked the Web Site Committee to make the application form interactive so the applicant can come and go from the form without losing data.

**Show Committee:** Steve Blyskal reported on dealer contracts. Reserve dealers are being vetted for contact. The Dealer Committee invited the Katy Rock Shop to become part of the permanent Dealer List. They are the only Rock Shop in the Greater Houston Area. Twenty-six dealers have paid in full. Three dealers have paid 50%. The HGMS Annual Show is scheduled for November 6, 7, 8, 2020, the first weekend in November.

**Web Site Committee:** At the Saturday, April 11 meeting, Scott Singleton reported on disarray and chaos in the oil industry, and on problems with his professional societies and plans for conferences.

Lauren Blyskal is working on WooCommerce, software that plugs into Word Press. It charges for downloads of Paleo books to be stored in Drop Box, waiting to be picked up. Currently, Neal Immega cuts CDs and mails them.

Lauren worked on a new Class page with better registration and added "jump links" to different classes. She also added "Miner Dan's" educational materials to the Web site, and it looks great.

Darryl Powell, AKA "Diamond Dan," emailed those materials with a message: "You have our permission and encouragement to share this issue with anyone you can. Pass it



around. Email it to all your family and friends. Email it to your teachers, and invite them to email it to their students.” THANK YOU, Diamond Dan!  
We are considering adding a privacy policy. The upshot of the extra activity for the BBG and the Web site will be a higher invoice for Lauren this month.  
The Web hosting service mistakenly billed Phyllis George, rather than Scott Singleton. Phyllis will research it and be sure it has been resolved. The next Web Site Committee meeting is scheduled for Saturday, May 9, 2020.

## SECTION REPORTS

**All Section Meetings are canceled until further notice due to the Coronavirus pandemic.** Programs to look forward to are described below.

**Archaeology Section: Thursday, 7:30 p.m., May 7, 2020. Postponed due to Coronavirus.** Bob Moore was planning to present “Excavating at Ancient Salona, Croatia.” It will be rescheduled for the fall. See weekly e-blasts for interesting presentation links. The Archaeology Section Summer Hiatus begins in June. Meetings will resume in September if the quarantine is lifted.

**Beading Section: Saturday, 1:30 p.m., May 16, 2020. Postponed due to Coronavirus.** Enjoy this project at home. Contessa Bracelet - DIY Jewelry Making Tutorial by PotomacBeads <https://youtu.be/5pPgMZo-uGc>. (Thanks to Kim Fuselier.)

**Day Light Section: Wednesday, 1:00 p.m., May 6, 2020. Postponed due to Coronavirus.** Look for these four programs to be scheduled at meetings this summer. Maggie Manley will teach us how to make Bead People. Neal Immega will demonstrate using a diamond drill to make holes in glass beads. Mary Ann Mitscherling is planning to teach two classes: Wire and Bead Earring Making, and Wire Wrapping Cabochons.

**Gemstones and Faceting Section: Wednesday, 6:30, p.m., May 13, 2020. Postponed due to Coronavirus.** In the meantime, check out this Web site from the International Gem Society, on common gemstone treatments <https://www.gemsociety.org/article/understanding-gem-synthetics-treatments-imitations-part-5-identifying-gemstone-treatments/> (Thanks to Randy Carlson). Randy is working on his competition stone.

**Lapidary and Silversmithing Section: Monday, 7:30 p.m., May 18, 2020. Postponed due to Coronavirus.**

**Mineral Section: Wednesday, 7:30 p.m., May 20, 2020.** Section is considering on-line meetings in the future.

**Paleo Section: Tuesday, 7:30 p.m., May 19, 2020. Postponed due to Coronavirus.** Jim Kendall posted these links on the May 3, 2020 HGMS e-blast for viewing at home. Spinosaurus Aegyptiacus - Giant Spinosaurus Was Bigger Than T. Rex—And First Dinosaur Known to Swim  
[https://paulsereno.uchicago.edu/discoveries/spinosaurus\\_aegyptiacus/](https://paulsereno.uchicago.edu/discoveries/spinosaurus_aegyptiacus/)  
Burgess Shale fossil site discovered in Kootenay National Park  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KYrMxdTrQHw>  
‘Crazy beast’ lived among last of dinosaurs  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-52465584>

Digitizing the vast "dark data" in museum fossil collections

<https://theconversation.com/digitizing-the-vast-dark-data-in-museum-fossil-collections-102833>

Neal Immega suggested that the professional talks from the Dallas Fine Mineral show are wonderful, and they are much easier to listen to than the ones on the CD. Bring up youtube.com, search for "2019 Dallas Symposium," and you will have many choices. Go back in time as far as you like. This assumes that you have secret Mineral Section longing.

**Youth Section: Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to Noon, May 16, 2020 Postponed due to Coronavirus.**

## OLD BUSINESS

**Building Issues:** Items in italics are still outstanding. Tasks will be tackled when Club reopens.

1. New batteries are needed for the solar light under the hood of parking lot door. Would anyone like to take ownership of this? If not, Sigrid will have someone look at it.
2. The filters in the shop have not been changed.
3. A tech specialist from Lee Thompson Air Conditioning told President Stewart that we need to put larger vents into the doors of the libraries to facilitate circulation. Kris Dingfield may take care of this. He has been out of the country. If the doors come off to put in the vents, maybe we can refinish them too.
4. Time to look at a new air conditioner for the shop area. Due to the Coronavirus quarantine, the replacement air conditioner is delayed until late spring. Postpone until fall.
5. We should replace the meeting room carpeting. Postpone until fall.
6. We should replace the hot water heater.
7. A flowerpot with sand in it will satisfy the need for the outdoor cigarette disposal requested by Dunn Southwest.
8. The Automated Emergency Defibrillator needs a new battery and pads. (LATER: President Sigrid Stewart purchased a new battery and pads, and they will soon be taken to the club for installation by Neal Immega.)

**Membership:** Beverly Mace, Membership Chairman: HGMS membership renewal time for 2020 has been extended to May 15 due to COVID-19. Future and renewing members are encouraged to use the online membership renewal form instead of paying by check or cash. If that is too inconvenient, please mail a check (payable to HGMS) directly to Beverly Mace. Her address is 30816 N Holly Oaks Cir, Houston, TX 77355. Please use her complete address as given. If you pay by mailing cash, you run the risk of theft. Cash payment can be made when the clubhouse reopens. If you have any questions, please direct them to Beverly Mace at [beverly\\_mace@att.net](mailto:beverly_mace@att.net) (underscore between "beverly" and "mace"). Only twelve more people have joined since the April BOD meeting. Beverly will provide some membership percentage statistics at the next BOD meeting.

**RMGM Texas Mineral and Show changed to July 17–19, 2020 Conroe:** Sandra Gonzales will let us know about any further changes to the schedule.

**Tax issue:** The IRS sent a notice that the penalty payment for 2018 taxes was received. The request for abatement has not been processed. Rodney Linehan has offered to do the 2019 taxes. The 2019 taxes are due July 15, 2020.

**Zoom vs Skype:** The Board will be using SKYPE for its monthly meetings until further notice.

## NEW BUSINESS

**Reopening the HGMS Clubhouse:** The Board of Directors discussed the aspects of reopening the Clubhouse to members. Since the Board meeting, the consensus is reflected in the comments below. July is the soonest the BOD is considering for a reopening plan to begin. The Board Comments are in italics. Full and unrestricted use of the HGMS Clubhouse would be best considered after a vaccine and cures are available.

- What authority do we go by? Many government agencies offer differing guidelines for reopening businesses. HGMS is not a business and is under no pressure to reopen for the economy. The BOD will make conservative decisions based on Shop Foremen requests and the Board's ideas on best practices.
- Some kind of 25% open is an option. Section Meetings and General Meetings are postponed indefinitely. Only the Shops with Shop Foremen could be open before the meetings are reinstated.
- Do we require masks? If vaccines and cures are not available, then at the very least members should wear masks when the Shops are reopened.
- Obviously, that will not work for a speaker. Since General and Section Meetings are postponed, this issue of the audience wearing masks is also postponed.
- Will we want to enforce some kind of social distancing? Yes. This may require limited shop usage or appointments.
- Do we consider having small meetings with Zoom presentations? Zoom and Skype meetings are best done from home. No need to gather in a group to see a Zoom presentation.
- How do we clean surfaces at the club after public use? The Club will look into commercial cleaning services to clean and disinfect on a regular schedule. But sanitizing surfaces after usage would be best.
- If we open, should we consider requiring temperature taking? To be determined later.
- Should we post a list of rules, and ask people to sign waivers? Rules that punctuate the obvious list of precautions: hand washing, masks, social distancing, and whatever is germane to HGMS should be posted.
- Waivers will be determined later. However, a disclaimer "Use at your own risk" could be posted on the entrance.
- If we open the shop, who will be the shop managers? President Stewart polled the Shop Foremen to find out who is willing to open the Shop and under what circumstances.
- Shop use by appointment, to limit number of people. Some Shop Foremen asked for limited numbers of members to use the Shop. Appointments may be the best way to limit usage. However, very few people were using the shops before the pandemic, so high usage may not be an issue.
- What about social Wednesdays? To be determined later.
- Daylight Section? Day Light Section will follow the timetable and guidelines the Board sets up, but only if the presenters and instructors are willing to participate.
- Other Section meetings? Like Day Light, these decisions must be made by

Section Chairmen and the Section members, based on interest—and only after the Clubhouse reopens.

- When should we consider having classes again? Right now, Maggie Manley and others are posting online classes on the weekly E-blast. Once the Quarantine is lifted and the Club reopens, it will still be based on member interest, an instructor's willingness to teach, and be subject to new precautions.

**Professional Cleaning Service:** Yanique Mott from Anago Cleaning Service called the Club the morning of May 5. Nancy English spoke to Yanique Mott. They are a commercial service, and have been in business for 25 years in 30 states. Since we no longer have a regular cleaning person, Nancy thought we might want to consider this during and after the COVID-19 crisis.

The Board decided to postpone a decision on a commercial cleaning company until a reopen date is determined, which is looking like July. Nancy English offered to follow up with the company.

**The next Board of Directors meeting (probably a visual online meeting) will be Tuesday, 7:30 p.m. June 2, 2020.**

**The last General Meeting was on Tuesday, 7:30 p.m. April 28, 2020.** Due to the Coronavirus, the meeting was held on SKYPE. President Stewart referred to it as a Roll Call meeting. People who attended shared what they are doing during the quarantine.

On Tuesday, June 23 at 7:30 PM, Bob Moore, Chair of the Archaeology Section, will present a virtual talk at the HGMS General Meeting entitled "Lost Ancient Greco-Roman Medicine". His presentation will cover the origins of ancient medicine and how it became sophisticated during the 2nd century due to the Roman gladiator games and then, how it was lost for centuries.

**Adjourn:** Nancy English moved to adjourn. Phyllis George seconded the motion, and it passed. The meeting adjourned at 8:48 p.m.



We'll be on our way in no time Agnes  
You unload the rocks and I'll change the tire

by Bill Mittlebeeler via Dust & Grit 2/00  
via Golden Spike News 4/00



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## 2020 HGMS OFFICERS

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President	Sigrid Stewart	President @HGMS.org
First Vice President	Mike Sommers	Programs@HGMS.org
Second Vice President	Beverly Mace	Membership@HGMS.org
Secretary	Nancy English	Secretary@HGMS.org
Treasurer	Tatyana Kuhn	Treasurer@HGMS.org
Archaeology Section Board Member	Nancy Engelhardt-Moore	Archaeology@HGMS.org
Beading Section Board Member	Maggie Manley	Beading@HGMS.org
Daylight Section Board Member	Fred Brueckner	
Faceting Section Board Member	Randy Carlson	Faceting@HGMS.org
Lapidary Section Board Member	Phyllis George	
Mineral Section Board Member	Steve Blyskal	Mineral@HGMS.org
Paleo Section Board Member	Mike Dawkins	Field_trips@HGMS.org

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## HGMS SECTION CHAIRS

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Archaeology Section Chair	Bob Moore	Archaeology@HGMS.org
Beading Section Chair	Kim Fuselier	Beading@HGMS.org
Day Light Section Chair	Nancy Searle	Daylight@HGMS.org
Gemstone & Faceting Section Chair	Randy Carlson	Faceting@HGMS.org
Lapidary & Silversmith Section Chair	Anthony Lucci	Lapidary@HGMS.org
Mineral Section Chair	Stephen Blyskal	Mineral@HGMS.org
Paleo Section Chair	Neal Immega	Paleo@HGMS.org
Youth Section Chair	Beverly Mace	Youth@HGMS.org

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## HGMS APPOINTED POSITIONS

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Assistant Show Chair	Clyde McMeans	
Backbender's Gazette Editor		Editor@HGMS.org
Clubhouse Chair	Neal Immega	ClubhouseChair@HGMS.org
Day Light Contact Person	Nancy Searle	Daylight@HGMS.org
Donations	Neal Immega	Donations@HGMS.org
HGMS Education Chair	Maggie Manley	Classes@HGMS.org
Lapidary Templates	Mary Ann Mitscherling	Templates@HGMS.org
Librarian for Main Library	Neal Immega	Librarian@HGMS.org
Publicity Chair	Sara Metsa	Publicity@HGMS.org
Scholarships	Mike Sommers	Scholarship@HGMS.org
Show Chair	Scott Singleton	ShowChair@HGMS.org
Trade Show	Scott Singleton	Tradeshow@HGMS.org
Trade Show	Sigrid Stewart	Tradeshow@HGMS.org
Volunteer Coordinator	Nancy English	VolunteerCoordinator@HGMS.org
Webmaster	Sigrid Stewart	Webmaster@HGMS.org
Youth Section Assistant	Elizabeth Guynn	Youth2@HGMS.org

## JUNE 2020

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
X	1	2	10a-3p Shop Open 1p-3p Day Light Section	3 10a-3p Shop Open 7:30p-9:30p Archaeology Section	4	5 10a-12p Youth Section 12p-3p Shop Open
7 10a-3p Shop Open	8	9 10a-3p Shop Open	10 10a-3p Shop Open 6:30p-8:30p Gemstones & Faceting Section	11 10a-3p Shop Open	12	13 10a-3p Shop Open
14 10a-3p Shop Open	15 7:30p-9:30p Lapidary & Silversmithing Section	16 10a-3p Shop Open 7:30p-9:30p Paleo Section	17 10a-3p Shop Open 7:30p-9:30p Mineral Section	18 10a-3p Shop Open	19	20 10a-12p Youth Section 12p-3p Shop 1:30p-3:30p Beading Section
21 10a-3p Shop Open	22	23 10a-3p Shop Open 7:30p-8:30p General Meeting	24 10a-3p Shop Open	25 10a-3p Shop Open	26	27 10a-3p Shop Open
28 10a-3p Shop Open	29	30 10a-3p Shop Open	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <p><b>Due to coronavirus, many club events are postponed</b></p> <p><b>-Please check our online calendar at</b></p> <p><b><a href="http://hgms.org/events/calendar">hgms.org/events/calendar</a> for updated information</b></p> </div>			

## JULY 2020

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
X	X	X	1 10a-3p Shop Open 1p-3p Day Light Section	2 10a-3p Shop Open 7:30p-9:30p Archaeology Section	3	4 10a-12p Youth Section 12p-3p Shop
5 10a-3p Shop Open	6	7 10a-3p Shop Open	8 10a-3p Shop Open 6:30p-8:30p Gemstones & Faceting Section	9 10a-3p Shop Open	10	11 10a-3p Shop Open
12 10a-3p Shop Open	13	14 10a-3p Shop Open	15 10a-3p Shop Open 7:30p-9:30p Mineral Section	16 10a-3p Shop Open	17	18 10a-12p Youth Section 12p-3p Shop 1:30p-3:30p Beading Section
19 10a-3p Shop Open	20 7:30p-9:30p Lapidary & Silversmithing Section	21 10a-3p Shop Open 7:30p-9:30p Paleo Section	22 10a-3p Shop Open	23 10a-3p Shop Open	24	25 10a-3p Shop Open
26 10a-3p Shop Open	27	28 10a-3p Shop Open 7:30p-8:30p General Meeting	29 10a-3p Shop Open	30 10a-3p Shop Open	31	X

# THE BACKBENDER'S GAZETTE

## NEWSLETTER OF THE

**HGMS** | HOUSTON GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY

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