

THE BACKBENDER'S GAZETTE

NEWSLETTER OF THE HOUSTON GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY



FEATURED MEMBER:
STEVE BLYSKAL

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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



The

BACKBENDER'S GAZETTE



The Newsletter of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Sigrid Stewart

August is waning as I write this, and September is almost here. Someday in the not-too-distant future we will be able to walk outside and feel a breath of fresh cool air brought by the first cold front of autumn. Let's hope that it is dry cold air from the north and not the moist downdraft of a tropical storm! We just dodged a bullet on that score – Hurricane Ida - but we should be helping our friends in Louisiana because they have been hit far too often.

The Show Committee will begin planning for our Annual Show and various sub-committees will begin implementing their plans for their parts of the show. Scott Singleton, our Show Chairman, is organizing Show Committee meetings, and Steve Blyskal, the Dealer Chairman, is contacting new and old dealers for the show. I pray that the current surge in Covid cases due to the Delta variant ebbs and that we can have our show this year. Everyone is so ready to get out and enjoy life again, and for those of us of the rockhound persuasion, that means shows and maybe field trips as it cools down again!

VICE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Steve Blyskal

The talk for the September 28 General Meeting will be presented by Steve Blyskal. The title of the talk is:

Now you have a Rock/Mineral/Fossil collection. What are you going to do with it? This talk will cover the full gamut of possibilities, from the pile of rocks in the backyard and landscaping options all the way to high end LED lit display cases. Come and see the wide variety of ingenious and imaginative and even humorous ways rockhounds have come up with to display their treasures, found or purchased. This talk will set you to thinking about how you can display YOUR collection!

See Neal and Inda Immega's article on window displays below!

SHOWS

THE COLORADO MINERAL & FOSSIL FALL SHOW

Presented by RMGM Promotions

September 10-18 at the Crowne Plaza near Denver International Airport,
15500 E. 40th Ave., Denver CO 80239.

Hours are Monday-Saturday Wholesale 9AM-6PM and Retail 10AM-6PM

Sunday Sept. 12 10AM-6PM, Saturday Sept. 18th Closing Day 10AM-4PM
Visit www.RMGMPROMOTIONS.com for more information.

LUBBOCK GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY ANNUAL SHOW AND SALE

Lubbock Memorial Civic Center, 1501 Mac Davis Lane, Lubbock TX 79401

Saturday September 25th 10AM-6PM

Sunday September 26th 10AM-5PM

Hosting the South Central Federation of Mineral Societies 2021 Convention

For more information, visit www.LubbockGemandMineral.org

SECTION REPORTS

As always, please see the [Upcoming Programs](#) section under Events on the HGMS website to learn more about planned future meetings.

MINERAL SECTION

The Mineral Section will meet Wednesday September 15th via Zoom. The program, on the new mineral museum in Tucson, will be presented by Steve Steinke. He says:

"There is a new world-class mineral museum in Tucson Arizona, The University of Arizona Alfie Norville Museum is located in the old Pima County Courthouse near downtown, and near the convention center which hosts the annual Tucson Gem and Mineral Show. The new museum had a pre-opening with guided tours that started on June 25th, 2021. Steve Steinke was able to go to the museum on the 2nd day of tours, and took a lot of photos of the new displays. There is something for everyone; massive quartz, calcite, stibnite, chrysocolla and a 400 pound native silver boulder. There are sections on Earth History, Minerals of the World, Minerals of Arizona and Mexico, Mining History, and Gems and Jewelry. There are tremendous specimens of wulfenite and copper minerals like azurite and malachite with a focus on famous Arizona locations like Bisbee. Here is an opportunity to see amazing display cases full of all of your favorite minerals professionally displayed and lit. This is a must-see attraction on your next trip to the Tucson show in February!"

BEADING SECTION

The Beading Group will meet on Sept. 18th at 12:30PM. Ann Money will teach how to make a beaded tassel. We will raid the beading cabinet for many of the beads and / or you may bring your own special beads to supplement your design. As always, bring beading mat, scissors, wire and wire cutter, round nose and needle nose pliers thread and beading needle if you have them. We look forward to welcoming Ann back from her 2-month road travel across the USA!

Reference for this project is as follows: [Beadshop.com/projects/ Beaded Tassels](http://Beadshop.com/projects/BeadedTassels)
Look for the idea book on making beaded tassels and the video class on making them. It will "blow your mind"!

DAY LIGHT SECTION

Nancy Searle reports that Day Light's next next meeting is on Wednesday, September

1st. Maggie Manley is going to be teaching us how to make bead people. They could be used as zipper pulls or Christmas ornaments or any number of other things. The cost is \$5.00 and will be collected at the meeting.

If you are interested in registering for the class, please let me know at daylight@hgms.org.

LAPIDARY AND SILVERSMITHING SECTION

The Lapidary and Silversmithing section will meet in person. The members who braved the rain on August 16 spent time in the shop preparing their petrified wood cubes to run through the bead mill. Tony demonstrated the cuff bracelet with cabochon silversmithing project. He will continue to introduce new projects each month and members may work on as many as they wish. More petrified wood is available for anyone else who wants to try out the bead mill.

PALEO SECTION

For the next Paleo meeting on September 21st at 7:30 PM we are going to try to build a turtle from pieces collected in Florida by the great and late collector George Wolf. Everyone can take home a piece of Pleistocene turtle shell.

FACETING AND GEMSTONES

Unfortunately the workshop on Saturday, August 28 was cancelled. The next faceting meeting will be on September 14th at 6:30 and consist of an open discussion.

POUNDER SALE

Our Donations and Auction Committee (DSAC) has been busy! Donations from people cleaning out their garages and from the estates of rockhounds find their way to the HGMS, and the Committee is doing their darndest to cycle that material back into the rockhound community. Headed up by Michele Marcel, our Treasurer, and aided by Jeaneen Slamen and Fred Breuckner, the committee has sorted through boxes upon boxes of rocks, slabs and minerals. When dealing with this much material, inventory is essential as is a plan of action. Some items such as mineral specimens and equipment find a wider audience, such as the material that was sold in our Buy It Now Event in July.

As the group, helped out by various other volunteers, went through material, it became obvious that there was a ton (literally) of slabs, and it would be nearly impossible to photograph and sell them online. Instead, they were sorted into categories which became the basis of the Pounder Sale. Three rows of tables were set up at the clubhouse, covered with plastic tablecloths, and then used to display almost a thousand pounds of slabs of many kinds.

On the morning of Saturday the 14th, Slabs and rough of West Texas agates and jaspers, turritella, obsidian, shattuckite, red and green plume agate, palmwood, and petrified wood, and Brazilian and old-time lace agate clicked and clanked as people shuffled through them like cards. There were snacks and plenty of cheery gossip as people visited and compared finds. And what they found were bargains: most slabs were priced at

\$2.00/pound, with a few rare items selling for up to \$5.00/pound. When everyone totaled up their buys, we had sold over 350 pounds of slabs. Sadly, the tables did not look much emptier.

More upcoming online auctions in September and October!

FEATURED MEMBER: STEVE BLYSKAL

I grew up in New Jersey, which had a very active mineral collecting scene from the 1950s through the 1990s. I've been a mineral collector since I was 14. My brother and I were working on Boy Scout merit badges, and he finished his geology badge before me. He gave me the collection he had put together and that started me on the path. My parents were very supportive of my new hobby and took me collecting, to meetings and sales and let me go on field trips out of state! My brother's friend introduced me to a mineral dealer who lived behind him, and I started working for him while in high school, including going to shows all over the East Coast. I was a member of the Trailside Mineral Club while in High School and college. They met at the Trailside Museum, a wonderful place for a kid interested in the natural world. Displays of rocks, minerals, fluorescent minerals, shells and animals consumed endless hours of my summers and weekends. In addition, my brother and I used to take the bus into New York City to go to the American Museum of Natural History, which had wonderful displays of minerals!

My geology degrees are from St. Louis University (BS in Professional Geology) and Indiana University (MA in Geology), and I lived in St. Louis, Kansas City and Bloomington before settling in Houston in 1977. I was a member of the Kansas City Gem and Mineral club and the St. Louis Gem and Mineral Society, where I went on several field trips and started my collection of Midwest minerals. I've been a member of the Houston Gem and Mineral Society for 44 years, and currently hold the positions of Mineral Section Chairman and School Collections Chairman. I'm active on the club show committee and have run the swap area at the annual show for over 35 years. I am currently the Dealer Chairman for the Annual Show. Over the years I have given many talks to the Mineral Study Section and have developed (with Sigrid's help) many talks that were presented at HGMS and at other societies in Texas.



copyright Steve Blyskal 2013

Prehnite, Weldon Quarry, New Jersey

My collecting interests are many and varied, but in the past few years I've concentrated on collecting prehnite both from the East Coast of the USA, especially New Jersey, and worldwide localities. I also collect stilbite, apophyllite and heulandite from New Jersey and worldwide localities. In the past I've assembled collections of Viburnum Trend minerals, Pea Ridge Mine minerals and Arkansas minerals. I have collections of calcite, fluorite, galena and quartz.

Over the last ten years I have increased my collection of Texas minerals and Mexican minerals. Since I got interested in lapidary, I began collecting agate specimens from many localities in Mexico and around the world. We have gone to two Agate Expos, one

in Cedarburg, Wisconsin, and one in Austin, Texas. These are large gatherings of agate collectors that are held every 3-4 years. These trips have increased my knowledge about agates and my collection too!

I am an experienced mineral photographer with over 35 years' experience photographing minerals. I am now working with digital images using a Nikon D7200 and Micro NIKKOR 105mm and 60mm lenses. My photographs have been published in Mineral News, Rocks and Minerals and The Mineralogical Record. They also appear in the privately published Collecting Arkansas Minerals by Art Smith. I have done the show advertisement photography for the HG&MS for the last 10 years, including 6 years of postcards. I have also done the photography for the 2006, 2007, 2008, 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014 Show Posters. I occasionally do mineral photography for other collectors as part of my business, Truscon Minerals.

In 2000 I started a mineral business, Truscon Minerals, which remains active today primarily doing local mineral shows.

My website, trusconminerals.com is now up and running. Future sales on the internet will be through auction sites managed by dedicated web services. Truscon Minerals is also on Facebook and Instagram, showing minerals for sale. The focus of Truscon Minerals is to provide collectable minerals to beginning and intermediate collectors at reasonable prices. I also do appraisals of mineral collections for insurance and resale purposes.



Stilbite from the Pune District, Maharashtra, India



Prehnite from Pune District

An active field collecting interest the last 20 years has been Texas petrified wood, which is reasonably abundant within 100 - 200 miles of Houston. This wood is primarily of Eocene and Miocene age, and most is not of cutting quality, although they can make good display pieces. Many of our larger finds have ended up as borders for our gardens around the house. One exception is snakewood, a rare tropical softwood with a unique grain structure. I have found several pieces of this rare petrified wood (about 1 for every 1000 pieces I've picked up or collected) and my wife Sigrid cut a cabochon from one and had it wire wrapped for my 60th birthday. While I usually wear prehnite to mineral club activities, the snakewood piece has now become a regular item around my neck. I like studying the occurrences of Texas petrified wood and understanding the geology of the formations where it is found. Since Sigrid is a lapidary as well as a mineral collector, I have begun collecting agate in South and West Texas.

In 2010 I found a 70 lb. moss agate in the Davis Mountains that has produced some nice large slabs for wall displays.

I am active on the photo sharing site Flickr.com under the name stone_singer48. There I have posted mineral photos from The American Mineral Treasures Exhibit, the 2008 Tucson Show, the 2017 Tucson Show, the 2018 East Coast Show, the 2019 Denver Show and the 2020 Tucson Show. I have also posted photos from the 2017 Tucson Show Midwest Minerals exhibits. We attended the 2020 Tucson Show where I was a guest exhibitor with a case of prehnite specimens from around the world, and I have posted photos from that show also. I also have mineral photographs from my collection and the collections of others posted. Please visit Flickr if you want to see my photos, since not all of them have been posted to Mindat.org. This site also has photos of my HGMS club activities and petrified wood field trips. I am the moderator of the Houston Gem and Mineral Society group pool on Flickr.

I took over the School Collections from its founder, Art Smith Jr., about 15 years ago. This part of the club was set up to provide sets for schoolteachers after HGMS members had gone to their classes to talk about geology. The last few years we have mainly passed out sets to teachers as they asked for them. This year I am partnering with Katy ISD, a large suburban school district with 43 elementary schools. I anticipate having to build 100 sets/year once the word of our resources gets spread around. Many years ago, Art was able to get funding from Conoco to start the School Collections, but that source of funds has disappeared and has not been replaced. We hope to get further funding so building sets can continue.



Agate from the Kokernot o6 Ranch near Alpine, Texas

We have been going to the Davis Mountains in west Texas since 2009 and have been on guided field trips to several of the ranches there looking for agates. Last year I heard about a new ranch that was available for trips and in March Sigrid and I went to the Kokernot o6 ranch for two days of hunting agate. We collected 330 pounds of agate to bring home!

The trips are organized through a Facebook group – Texas Rockhounds, and I have made enough posts and answers to be declared a “Group Expert”, a position I take seriously. I am the shop foreman two Saturdays a month and can usually be found slabbing up agate, my favorite activity there. After acquiring several templates at the Tucson Show I have been trying my hand at making cabochons again. Fall trips to the Kokernot o6 are starting up again soon and we will be going back for a camping weekend collecting trip this Fall.

NEAL'S SHOP NEWS

Genie Grinder - I have removed the Genie from the grinding bench because it does not want to start. I suspect the bearings but am having trouble getting the wheels off. I will let you know what progress I am making. Logan was extremely useful in getting the rusted bolts off the Genie (i.e. he broke them off!). I will use stainless steel next time. I expect to

replace the machine with the Genie that sits on the table in the room. We do not normally use it and it has a full set of wheels. I will unbolt it from the nearly worthless pressboard base that comes with the grinder and bolt it on the waterproof Corian base. I will then struggle with the old machine and let you know who wins.

From Neal the Librarian:

The Library is OPEN! Please come in and read BOOKS! Check them OUT!

WINDOWS AS DISPLAY CASES

by Neal and Inda Immega

Everyone has the same problem of how to display your pretties. Our house was built in 1943 with no AC and LOTS of windows. The windows of course were glazed in the old style - many small panes set in wooden mullions. When the house was converted to whole house AC, the windows were replaced with single panes of glass, eliminating a painting chore. After we moved in, we had the opportunity to make the westward facing windows much more energy efficient and private by putting shade cloth and a sheet of frosted Plexiglas on the outside*. We installed glass shelves inside in the 4-inch window cavity, then added a clear Plexiglas door on the room side to reduce dust problems. The specimens sit on the glass shelves or hang from nylon threads.

I have done this treatment on six of the windows. We love how the back-lit specimens look during the day. We now have more than a hundred linear feet of display space with ZERO footprint, a major consideration in our small house. It also cured an ancient energy liability.

I had wondered if the external Plexiglas would provide some protection from hurricane debris. We had that tested when a neighbor's teenage son hit a golf ball into a window. The Plexiglas broke but not the glass.

*Thermodynamic note - if you put Plexiglas on the outside of the window, in the winter the condensation will be OUTSIDE the glass and the precipitation will run off harmlessly. I first tried putting the Plexiglas on the inside and the high house humidity caused LOTS of water to collect INSIDE (very undesirable).



CALIFORNIA DREAMING

by Sigrid Stewart

I have always loved California from the first time I visited my grandmother and aunts and cousins in Paradise as a 13-year-old. The air was sweet with the smell of pines in Northern California, the mountains and streams were clear and beautiful, and the people

just seemed cooler, somehow, than they did back in Oklahoma, where my family lived then.

Then my sister moved to Livermore to work for Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, which gave my husband Steve Blyskal and I an excuse to visit more often and see some of the iconic landscapes of California. The golden hills of summer and the greens of winter are so different from most areas of the country, which are green in the summer and brown in the winter. And there are interesting rocks and geological formations everywhere we looked! We saw the shore and the pebble beaches, the Coastal Ranges, San Francisco and Half Moon Bay, Santa Cruz and the redwoods, and even went to a Gem & Mineral Show in Santa Cruz one time. We were fascinated by some of California's specialty minerals and rocks, especially jade. Visiting this summer, however, meant focusing on the landscape because California was locked down due to the pandemic.



My sister was moving so this would probably be our last visit to Livermore, a great town surrounded by wineries and full of actual rocket scientists. We agreed to watch her dog while she went out of town so our side trips could not be overnights. Luckily the Bay Area is built around steep mountain ranges which limit the growth of cities and are penetrated by some long and lonely roads through the hills and mountain valleys. The Coast Ranges of California trend north-south for 400 miles, from Del Norte County to Santa Barbara County. These rugged “young” mountains began forming back in the Mesozoic and exhibit extremely complex geology, shaped by tectonic forces, massive sedimentation, and metamorphism.

Tafoni Texture at Pebble Beach near Pescadero, California

The basement rocks in the East Bay area were formed during a 100 million yearlong episode of subduction, due to California's position on the Ring of Fire, specifically the boundary between the North American and Pacific tectonic plates. As a result, the formations of the Bay Area have been folded and faulted, which explains the many earthquakes that Californians experience.

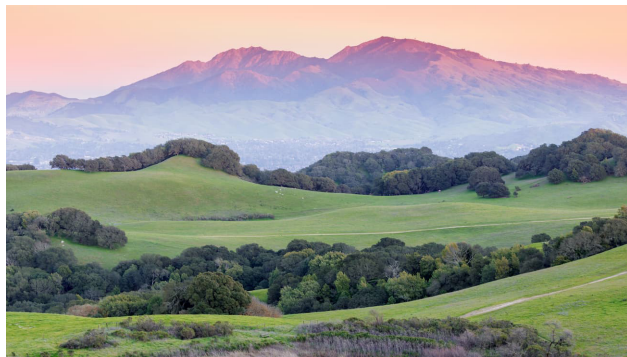
The rocky crust of the earth is broken up into 7 large plates and many smaller ones, and they move about the earth like animated jig-saw puzzle pieces in epochally slow geologic time. If both plates are lower-density continental crust, they crash into each other and create mountain ranges, but if one is the denser oceanic crust, it will dive or subduct

beneath a plate of continental crust.

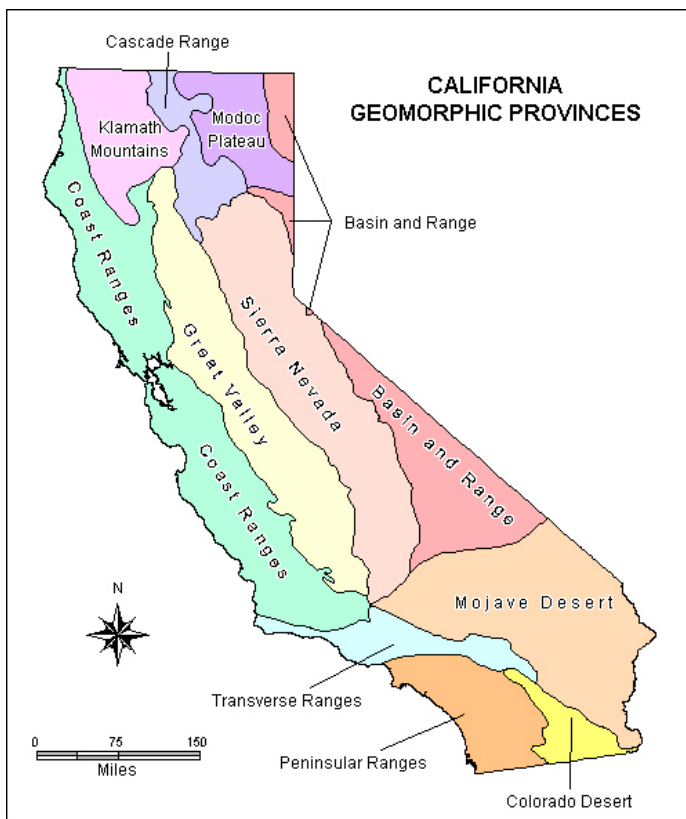
On what would one day become the coast of California, 145 million years ago, an oceanic plate called the Farallon plate began to collide with the continental North American plate. Some of the Farallon material was scraped off onto the North American plate and the rest subducted and melted beneath it, leading to the eruption of a chain of volcanoes.

This plate had come from farther west and brought with it oceanic crust in the form of pillow basalts, and radiolarian chert from deep ocean sedimentation collected on its movement east.

While the scraped-off material was accreting to the North American plate, the North American plate itself was eroding and dumping great quantities of sediments into the subduction trench, forming sandstones called graywacke that grade into fine-grained silt. Some of these rocks of the Franciscan formation were also subject to metamorphism, creating rocks like eclogite, blueschist, serpentinite, garnets and jade.



Mount Diablo near Livermore, California: from peakvisor.com



from <https://www.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/california-geotour>

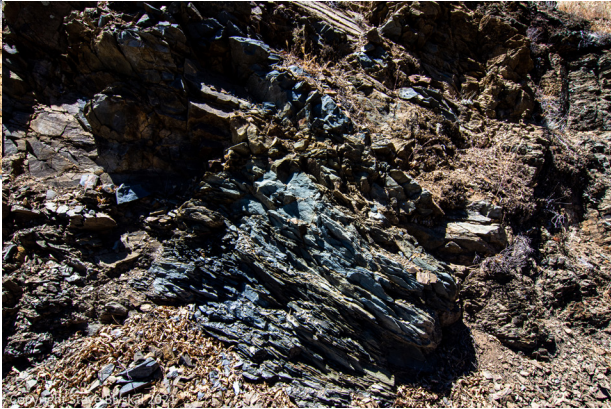
Eventually the Farallon was consumed beneath the North American plate, and about 30 million years ago, the Pacific plate impacted the North American plate and began to slide to the north, creating a region of strike-slip faults, of which the San Andreas is the best-known example. Some of the Franciscan formation was so ground up

and distorted that it is called *mélange*, a soft matrix containing bits of harder rocks. The result is a landscape broken into many different blocks or terranes, often bordered with *mélange*. This is not layer-cake geology!

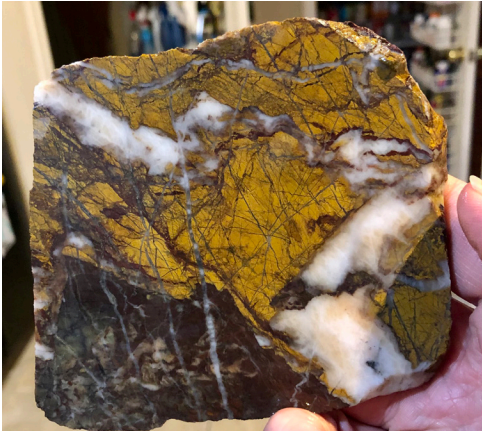


Franciscan Formation rocks found on Hamilton Road near San Jose; Right, possible blueschist. It was too steep to stop at these sites.

Other important formations for this ramble account are the Coast Range Ophiolite, the Great Valley formation, and the younger sedimentary formations that form part of the hills and mountains, and which are still rising. The Coast Range Ophiolite includes plutonic rocks of the mantle, basaltic ocean crust rocks, transitional rocks between those categories and metamorphosed upper mantle rocks. The best example of these is the California state rock, serpentinite, formed by the alteration of mantle rocks, and found in many places in California.



Deposited on top of the Coast Range Ophiolite is the Great Valley Sequence of very thick sedimentary rocks of Jurassic and Cretaceous age, eroded from the eastern continental side as the sinking western side was being subducted and melted. The more resistant sandstones form ridges and the softer shales tend to form valleys. The graywacke sandstones that are so common are poorly sorted but very strong, producing some amazingly steep hills.



Stone Canyon Jasper

What does all this mean for casual rambling about? The East Bay Area is highly urbanized, and in the age of Covid19, that means staying away from lots of people. We had to concentrate on outdoor activities, so we looked for those long roads up in the hills away from the malls and stores and restaurants, roads following the smaller valleys in the Coast Ranges. Not the bigger valleys – those are all built up! We drove Mines Road out of Livermore where there were coal mines a hundred years ago, and Tesla Road, where we stopped at wineries.

We took Patterson Pass Road, which goes from Livermore down into the Valley, then up to Vasco Road to Marsh Creek Road, and then drove Morgan Territory Road around the east side of Mt. Diablo. On a roadside in the area, we saw large cobbles and stopped to look at them. Three turned out to be Stone Canyon Jasper, a popular lapidary material, that was probably brought in from some riverside gravel mine for the roadbed. Can't stop rockhounding!

We took Palomares Road from Niles Canyon past Holy Cross Orthodox Monastery and the Westover and Chouinard Wineries (only open on weekends, darn it) down to Dublin Canyon Road. This time we did not take the wonderful tourist train that runs through Niles Canyon because it was pretty hot, and you know, people. We drove down to San Jose and then up Hamilton Road, which is very steep and has 365 hairpin turns, through young Miocene sandstone canyons up to the famous Lick Observatory. Then we passed Copernicus Peak, elevation 4360 ft and often snow-covered in the wintertime, through the scars of old forest fires. We drove to San Antonio Valley and then back to Mines Road to Livermore, keeping an eye out for the Tule elk that can be found in the area. We saw one deer.

One day, we got an early start and went to Muir Woods in Mill Valley, which is north of San Francisco. We saw great exposures of Franciscan graywackes and faulted and folded radiolarian cherts. In keeping with our desire to stay outside and away from people, we also visited a Japanese garden in Hayward and the San Mateo Central Park which has both a Japanese garden and a lovely rose garden. Of course, any rocks in those gardens were out of place and selected for beauty.



*Radiolarian Chert, Marin County.
Faults are apparent in photo.*

Now that my sister has moved, it will be harder to visit California. Someday, when Covid is a memory and after California gets some much-needed rain and is not actually on fire, I would like to visit the Sierra Nevada and drive those mountains and visit some of the old gold mining towns and collecting sites.

BENCH TIPS FOR JUNE

By Brad Smith

In September, my club will try its first hybrid meeting. Luckily, the city-owned meeting facility we use was upgraded earlier this year with high speed Internet for use by the local schools as temporary classrooms.

By hybrid, I mean that some of our members will attend the meeting while others will watch it online. Our speaker for the evening has been booked a month or two already, and they will be presenting from home.

To pull off this hybrid session, we will use the computer and digital projector in the meeting room that speakers used in the past, but with two changes. The computer will be signed into the Zoom meeting, and its audio output will be connected to a PA system in the room. The club will continue to enjoy excellent speakers from across many time zones—we have become very accustomed to this over the past months.

A second computer, probably located in the meeting room, will be used to host the Zoom meeting. It will be run by our club's Zoom Coordinator. We created the position when the city closed down all public meetings, and it has let us continue club meetings throughout the last 15 months. Not only did we never miss a meeting, but also I believe we have had some dynamite presenters—some of the best quality speakers we have ever had.

All this technology invites some glitches, so wish us well. Looking forward to giving you an update next month.

Happy hammering,
Brad Smith

JUST A DROP

Hobby shops and model airplane stores carry small plastic dispenser bottles that are handy for putting a drop of flux, oil, or glue exactly where you want it. They have a length of small metal tubing coming out the top that lets you squeeze out very small drops.

I use one with a short length of tubing for oil when I'm sawing or when drilling harder metals like steel. Another bottle I found in a plastics store has a longer length of metal tubing on it. Plastics people use them for dispensing fast drying glues to join pieces of acrylic. The long metal tube lets you reach into tight places. Either of these is handy for flux at the soldering station.



FOREDOM MAINTENANCE

If you have a Foredom flex shaft, it makes sense to check it over every so often to be sure it runs properly. But how to do that? You probably lost the little booklet that came with the unit. Well, being the good company it is, Foredom has put together an extensive set of videos on "how to" for everything.

The series covers set-up, lubrication, replacing a sheath, motor maintenance, and hand piece maintenance. Few if any special tools are needed. You can watch the videos at <https://www.foredom.net/product-category/flex-shaft-tools/> particularly under "Foredom Basics" or the "Foredom Shafting..." categories.

Any repair parts needed are available on the Foredom site or from most jewelry supply catalogs. If you have any question about their products, a phone call or an email will get quick answers.

SMART SOLUTIONS FOR YOUR JEWELRY MAKING PROBLEMS:

[Amazon.com/author/bradfordsmith](https://www.amazon.com/author/bradfordsmith)

TIPS AND TRICKS FROM BRAD'S BOOKS



HUGE DIAMOND FOUND IN BOTSWANA

*by Ken Rock, MSDC Newsletter Editor
Mineralogical Society of the District of Columbia*

One of the world's largest diamonds was unearthed in June 2021 in Botswana, Africa's largest producer of diamonds. The stone, weighing 1,098 carats, was shown to President Mokgweetsi Masisi, two weeks after the diamond firm, Debswana, unearthed it. The gem is only slightly less heavy than the world's second-largest diamond which was also found in Botswana in 2015.

"This is the largest diamond to be recovered by Debswana in its history of over 50 years in operation," said Lynette Armstrong, Debswana Diamond Company's acting managing director. "From our preliminary analysis it could be the world's third largest gem quality stone."

The discovery was made at the Jwaneng mine, around 75 miles from the country's capital, Gaborone. The mine is operated by Debswana, a joint venture between the government and global diamond giant De Beers. As much as 80 percent of the income from sales goes to state coffers through dividends, royalties and taxes. An official government

Twitter account noted that "proceeds from the diamond will be used to advance national development in the country." Officially opened in 1982, the Jwaneng mine usually yields between 12.5 million and 15 million carats of diamonds a year, according to Debswana. The June find is the largest gem unearthed by the company since diamonds were first discovered in Botswana in 1967, the government said.



*Botswana's president, Mokgweetsi Masisi, inspects Debswana's find.
Photograph: Monirul Bhuiyan/AFP/Getty Images*

Botswana's Minerals Minister, Lefoko Moagi, said the latest find could not have come at a better time for Botswana after the pandemic caused diamond sales to slump last year. The newly discovered stone is yet to be named. Ms Armstrong said a decision had not yet been taken on whether to sell the "rare and extraordinary stone" through De Beers or through the state-owned Okavango Diamond Company. An estimate of the value of the find is not readily available.

OTHER LARGE DIAMONDS FROM BOTSWANA

The second largest gem-quality diamond from Botswana is believed to be the "Lesedi La Rona," a 1,109-carat stone found in 2015 by Canadian firm Lucara Diamond at the Karowe mine, also in Botswana. The diamond was sold to luxury jeweler Graff Diamonds in 2017 for \$53 million. The stone is believed to have been formed between 2.5 and 3 billion years ago and is roughly the size of a tennis ball. The name "Lesedi La Rona" means "our light" in Botswana's Tswana language.

Lucara Diamond Corp. found this 1,109-carat rough diamond, later dubbed "Lesedi La Rona," at the Karowe Mine in Botswana in November 2015. On Monday, the company announced that it had found a buyer for the stone--Graff Diamonds.

The company says it will be scanned using state-of-the-art 3D equipment that searches for inclusions, small imperfections in the heart of the stone, to decide how the diamond



Lesidi-La-Rona Diamond

will be polished. Then an expert team will examine the diamond using microscopes to pick up and navigate any further pinpoint inclusions. They will then work out how to cut the diamond and into how many individual stones.

"Cutting a diamond of this size is an art form, the ultimate art of sculpture," Laurence Graff, founder of Graff Diamonds, said in a statement. "It is the riskiest form of art, because you can never add and you can never cover up a mistake; you can only take away. You have to be careful and you have to be perfect."

Rough diamonds are usually classified as being gem-quality, near-gem or industrial-quality, depending on their color, clarity, size and shape. According to Rob Bates, a blogger on the diamond and jewelry industries, only "a handful" of companies in the world know how to "economically cut" such large rough diamonds. "But it's always an exciting moment when a mine coughs up a huge stone like that," he said. "It's good for the business, good for the country of Botswana."

Other large diamonds continue to be found in Botswana, including a recent find by Canadian diamond miner Lucara of a 1,174-carat rough stone from its Karowe diamond mine. This stone is described as clivage-- lower quality rough that needs to be split before being processed further -- of variable quality with "significant domains" of high-quality white gem material, according to the miner.

Lucara said on the same production day, several other diamonds of similar appearance were recovered from the same circuit—weighing 471 carats, 218 carats, and 159 carats—indicating the large rough was part of a bigger diamond with an estimated weight of more than 2,000 carats. Lucara also found these diamonds in the same production run as the 1,174-carat rough diamond. Though it cannot be proven beyond doubt, GIA researchers strongly believe that the diamond weighed more than 2,700 carats at one point, as it is thought the 812.77-carat "Constellation" along with a 373-carat rough and 296- and 183-carat chunks all broke off this same stone.

ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY

As these numbers show, big diamond finds have become more common in the past handful of years. This is due largely to an improvement in the technology behind processing and recovering diamonds, spurred along by a demand for larger stones, industry expert Russell Shor wrote in a 2016 Gems & Gemology article.

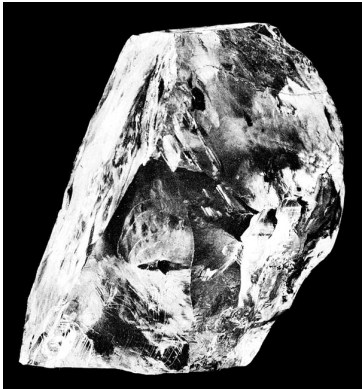
Advances, he wrote, include in the initial crushing, “‘kinder, gentler’ methods known as ‘autogenous,’ which tumbles or grinds the kimberlite pieces against one another without the intense pressure generated by crushing,” as well as the use of X-ray processing, which improved the recovery rate and saved large stones before they hit the crushers.

Sources: The Guardian, June 16, 2021; National Jeweler, June 24, 2021
Graff website: <https://www.graff.com/us-en/famous-diamonds/lesedi-la-rona.html>

COMPARE TO THE CULLINAN

The Cullinan Diamond is the largest gem-quality rough diamond ever found, weighing 3,106.75 carats, discovered at the Premier No.2 mine in Cullinan, South Africa in 1905.

Splitting and cutting the diamond took eight months, with three people working 14 hours per day to complete the task. The Cullinan produced 9 major stones of 1,055.89 carats in total, plus 96 minor brilliants. Cullinans I and II are part of the Crown Jewels of England.



The uncut Cullinan diamond

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cullinan_Diamond

MARTHA MCRAE

Martha Fay McRae, a former member, passed away May 11th in Lago Vista. She was a geologist who worked for Landmark and Chevron, and volunteered many hours, serving as chair of the Houston Geological Society’s Earth Science Week, as an American Geological Institute educational science lobbyist and docent for HMNS. Martha was also a Master Gardener. She was a cheerful and positive person and a great friend.

**HOUSTON GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
AUGUST 3, 2021**

by Nancy English

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

Approval of Minutes: Phyllis George moved to approve the minutes of the July 6, 2021, Board of Directors’ Meeting. Tricia Rittaler seconded the motion and it passed.

X	President—Sigrid Stewart	x	Beading— Maggie Manley
X	1st Vice President— Steve Blyskal	X	Day Light—Fred Brueckner
X	2nd Vice President—Beverly Mace	x	Gemstones & Faceting—Randy Carlson
X	Treasurer—Michele Marsel	X	Lapidary & Silversmithing—Phyllis George
X	Secretary—Nancy English	X	Mineral—Tricia Rittaler
	Archaeology—Vacant	X	Paleontology—Mike Dawkins

Treasurer Report: Michele Marsel sent the Treasurer's Report to members on August 3, 2021. Treasurer Marsel will send a communication to all Section Chairs and Treasurers clarifying how sales tax collection and payments need to be managed going forward. Sections may not opt out of sales tax collection.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

BBG Editor: On August 3, Beverly Mace notified members that the online version of the August BBG is available on the HGMS Website. Nancy English moved to suspend mailing the BBG to members until enough members request the print version to meet the bulk mail requirements of 200 mailings. Maggie Manley seconded the motion and it passed. No one has complained to Beverly about not receiving the BBG in the mail. Michele Marsel and Beverly Mace will research the specific impact of the expense for First Class Mail and propose a solution for future mailings at the September 7, 2021, BOD meeting.

Donations, Sales, Auction Committee (DSAC): Michele Marsel reported that we recently picked up a large donation (50/50 split with the donor) and the Committee is busy inventorying material. Thank you to Fred Brueckner, Libby Guynn, Foster Kneeland, and Nancy English for their help on Saturday, July 31 sorting, weighing, and packaging close to 1,000 pounds of rock to be sold at our first Pounder sale on August 14, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

The Auction & Buy It Now Event held on Saturday, July 10, 2021, was successful. Members enjoyed great bargains and it was good to see and visit with members. The Pounder Sale is scheduled for Saturday, August 14 from 10:00 to 3:00 at the Clubhouse. Slabs and rough from pre-sorted piles of west Texas agates and jaspers, turritella, obsidian, shattuckite, red and green plume agate, palmwood, and petrified wood, and old-time lace agate will be available. Most are priced from \$2.00 to \$3.00 per pound; nicer select slabs are \$5.00 per pound.

The DSAC is planning an online auction in September with select rough, cabochons, and small equipment. The committee picked up another large donation on Monday, August 2, 2021. HGMS rented a 10 x 10 storage unit to store it until we make room for the donation at the Club. Michele Marsel moved to amend the 2021 DSAC Committee budget from \$1000 to \$2500. Several recently received, higher-value donations required repackaging due to rotting containers and boxes. We are out of storage space at the Club, and the large donation picked up on August 2, required the rental of storage space near the Club.

DSAC anticipates retaining the storage space for several months. We also expect some additional costs for online auctions for the rest of this year. Nancy English seconded the motion and it passed.

Martha McRae of Lago Vista, a former club member, willed her mineral collection to Steve Blyskal and Sigrid Stewart, both of whom worked with her at different companies. After Steve and Sigrid sort the collection, they will donate some of it to the Club.

Education Committee: The next Beginning Wire Wrap class will be on Sunday, August 8, 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., and a Tree of Life Wrap class on August 22, same time.

Maggie Manley, Education Chairman, sends notices of classes to the people who signed up on the Website as interested in certain classes.

Five people are interested in the 3D Printing class. Logan Wilcox will be conducting the class. He will have multiple 3D printers running while he conducts the class. No date is set yet.

Before Paul Robles passed away, he and Logan Wilcox were working on a website called Artisans of HGMS. It would be a site for members to sell their jewelry, rocks, and minerals. The Board tabled the discussion until there is a more specific plan for the Website and its relationship with HGMS.

Membership Committee: Beverly Mace reported on our current membership numbers: 195 single memberships 56 couples, 18 families, and 38 youths. From January through July 31, 2021, membership has increased: 35 singles (13 in July), 14 couples, 7 families, 2 youths (parent not a member).

Scholarship Committee: Tricia Rittaler reported that at the July 20 meeting the committee agreed to split up the list of schools among the committee members, call all of them, and ask these questions:

- 1) Does the school have a scholarship platform or database? If so, can we access it?
- 2) Does the department have a student group, and if so, who is the contact?
- 3) If the school is in our local area, does the department have a program or fund for students that we can contribute to directly?
- 4) Is there better contact information—for instance, a generic or departmental position email that is always monitored?
- 5) Is there an “endowment” type of program to which we can send money directly for the school to disseminate?

The committee will meet again in September via Zoom to compare the results of their phone calls to the colleges and universities.

Show Committee: Steve Blyskal reported that he has two spots available for new dealers. He is reviewing the waiting list to qualify new dealers.

Website Committee: The DSAC Policies will be posted on the Website. The Website Committee will discuss where to post it at their upcoming meeting. Members are working on updates for Annual Show information.

SECTION REPORTS

Beading Section: third Saturday, 12:30 p.m., August 21, 2021. Gretchen Cockerill will teach participants how to make a crocheted, beaded necklace. All interested persons are welcome to participate.

Day Light Section: first Wednesday, 1:00 p.m., August 4, 2021. Neal Immega will teach "How to Make a Cabochon." He will provide stones to make cabochons, or we may bring our stones. There will be no cost for this session. On September 1, Maggie Manley will teach how to make bead people. The cost for this session is \$5.00.

Gemstones and Faceting Section: second Wednesday, 7:00, p.m., August 18, 2021. The Gemstones & Faceting Section will have two events in August. Our monthly virtual meeting, via Zoom, will be on Wednesday, August 18, at 7:00 p.m. This is one week later than our normal scheduled meetings. We will continue our review of gemstone I.D. equipment, going over the dichroscope, Chelsea filter, microscope, and spectrometer. Email invitations will be sent to current Section members. If any others would like to join, send a request to faceting@hgms.org

On Saturday, August 28, we will have a workshop at the clubhouse from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Attendees can have hands-on use of all the gem I.D. tools reviewed in the last two months, along with a competition (including prizes) for correct identification of six gemstones. We will also have our faceting machines out and available for use by attendees.

Lapidary and Silversmithing Section: third Monday, 7:30 p.m., August 16, 2021. The cabochon stone of the month program has restarted. Participants will present their July picture jasper cut in a teardrop-shaped cabochon at the August meeting. The Bead Mill project will continue, and we will start a bracelet silversmithing project. The August stone of the month and shape will be announced at the meeting.

Mineral Section: third Wednesday, 7:30 p.m., August 18, 2021. Via Zoom, Sigrid Stewart will present a program on the interior of Mars and recent discoveries regarding the structure of Mars, which relates to planetary science and how minerals are formed.

Paleo Section: third Tuesday, 7:30 p.m., August 17, 2021. Neal will be guiding a detailed examination of Texas sponges. Attendees will be sectioning them. The door prize is a crinoid float-Scyphocrinites.

Youth Section: first and third Saturdays, 10:00 a.m. to Noon., August 7 and August 21. Masks are required for all the children. The age range for the Youth Section is five to eighteen years old. Vaccinations are not available to children under 12 years old.

Archaeology Section: first Thursday, 7:30 p.m. The updated Bylaws, if approved, provide for a one-year dormancy before the Board officially dissolves the Section.

It will be listed as Dormant in the Board of Directors listing (top of page 1) and removed from this list in the future. Under Article IV Sections Section 3 (Special Interest Groups) of the by-laws:

If an existing Section becomes dormant due to loss of Section leadership or lack of member participation, the Board will hold the Section in dormant status for at least one year. After one year, the Section may be dissolved at the Board's discretion.

OLD BUSINESS

Replacement of Show Cases: President Stewart has emailed information compiled by Jeanean Slamen regarding the bid process to the BOD. Sigrid has bids from two carpenters for \$450 and \$750 per case.

The BOD discussed how many cases we need this year. We may have enough types of cases of other types for this year's Show.

Michele moved to amend the 2021 budget to allocate up to \$750 to build one prototype case by the carpenter of Sigrid's choice. Steve Blyskal seconded it and it passed.

Committee Chairmen (cc) List for Minutes and Board work:

On July 17, Nancy English emailed all Committee Chairmen, announcing that they will be receiving Minutes and other Board business emails. Starting with the August 3, 2021, Board of Directors meeting, she is also asking them for a quarterly report. Nancy received no feedback, so she will send it again.

Bylaws Committee: A Committee of three—Sigrid Stewart, Michele Marsel, and Nancy English—met on July 22 and July 29 to update the HGMS Bylaws. Michele Marsel emailed the resulting first draft to the Board on August 1 for them to read in preparation for this BOD meeting. The Board will approve the new Bylaws no later than the October BOD meeting. Following Board approval, the updated Bylaws will be emailed to all HGMS members. That will allow members at least 30 days to review and be prepared for a vote on the Bylaws at the November General Meeting. If anyone wants a specific change, please notify Nancy English at secretary@hgms.org. The Board suspended work on the Bylaws until after New Business.

NEW BUSINESS

HGMS Internet Service:

Our current Internet service, Mobile Beacon, renews on August 28, 2021. Jeanean Slamen and Michele Marsel did the research described below to facilitate a Board decision on whether to keep the existing slow Internet Service or to upgrade.

Even keeping Mobile Beacon will require an extra cost for Wi-Fi extenders to ensure reliable connections, because they do not offer an upgraded service. The current service is LTE 4G cellular service 25Mbps for \$240 per year. That speed is insufficient to support videoconferencing or the streaming of hybrid meetings. Even our PayPal card readers do not perform well at this low speed.

The recommended speed for up to ten simultaneous users on Wi-Fi and Zoom calls is 100Mbps. For clear higher-end videoconferencing and broadcast capability, 200Mbps is recommended. If we upgrade our security camera system next year, we will need higher-performance Internet.

Comcast Xfinity is available in the Dunn Southwest complex. Michele and Jeanean researched other carriers, but Xfinity offers the best price for the speeds HGMS needs. Xfinity Business 100Mbps is \$119.99 per month plus taxes and router rental fees; 200Mbps is \$134.99/month plus taxes and fees (Annual cost \$1700-\$2000 per year. They do not offer a non-profit discount).

Michele Marsel moved to switch the Club Internet service provider to Comcast Xfinity to achieve higher performance and reliability, provide the capability to host broadcasts of

Society Meetings, and support an upgraded security system in the future. The expected cost of the new service, including hardware, is \$1800–\$2200 per year. In the event Xfinity cannot deliver by August 28, we will renew our Mobile Beacon service for short-term coverage. Nancy English seconded the motion and it passed.

Bylaws Committee: The Board reviewed the Bylaws through Article V. There are nine articles. Michele Marsel will update what we have completed at this meeting and send it to the BOD. The other four articles will be reviewed during the September 7 BOD meeting.

The next Board of Directors meeting will be the first Tuesday, 7:30 p.m. September 7, 2021, on Zoom.

The next General Meeting will be the fourth Tuesday, 7:30 p.m. August 24, 2021. Dr. Neal Immega, paleontologist, will present the demise of the dinosaurs. The Chicxulub meteor did not do it. It is his second-most popular program at the Houston Museum of Natural Science (HMNS) and HGMS.

Adjourn: Nancy English moved to adjourn. Steve Blyskal seconded the motion, and it passed. The meeting adjourned at 9:28 p.m.

HOUSTON GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY
GENERAL MEETING MINUTES
AUGUST 24, 2021
by Nancy English

President Sigrid Stewart called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m. She welcomed twenty-six attendees. Ted Ornis became a new member that night. He currently lives in The Woodlands. He is a rock collector who will now enjoy the company of like-minded people.

PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS:

Because of the rise in Covid cases with the Delta Variant, the Board of Directors is asking for everyone to wear masks at our General Meetings whether or not they are vaccinated. The Silent Auction was open from 7:00 p.m. until the meeting started at 7:30 p.m. In keeping with the theme of the program, the auction items were paleo fossils. The bidding continued during the refreshment break. Final bids were collected after the break and paid for after the program.

Approval of Minutes: Mary Ann Mitscherling moved to approve the July 27, 2021, General Meeting Minutes as published in the August 2021 BBG. Ken Bruneau seconded the motion and it passed.

COMMITTEE/SECTION REPORTS

In the interest of time, President Stewart asked members to look for reports of future Section meetings and programs in the BBG calendar, on the Website <https://hgms.org>, or by reading the weekly e-blast from Houston Gem and Mineral Society. If you are a member and not on our email list, please contact the Publicity Chair at News@hgms.org,

use subject line: "New Member to be added."

President Stewart invited other Section Chairs and Standing Committee Chairs to make any additional announcements.

Donations, Sales, Auction Committee (DSAC): Michele Marsel reported via email. The "Pounder Sale" was a 388-pound success. About 40 members attended the sale and purchased slabs of west Texas agates and jaspers, turritella, obsidian, shattuckite, red and green plume agate, palmwood, petrified wood, and old-time lace agate. It was fun to see people enjoying rockhounding in the air-conditioning. Watch the weekly E-blast for announcements about online auctions coming up in September and October.

Nominating Committee: Sharon Halton volunteered to be on the Nominating Committee this year. We still need two more people for that committee.

Scholarship Committee: The Committee proposes to meet via Zoom on August 26, 2021, to review the results of survey questions asked of the colleges about their scholarship programs for Earth Sciences and Jewelry Arts.

School Collections Chairman, Steve Blyskal explained that HGMS provides display boxes of minerals to local schools. It is time to make more. Steve ordered 2000 small box flats to assemble. Volunteers will fold the specimen boxes, label the minerals, and fill the display boxes. He will make a request for volunteers on the weekly e-blast this Sunday.

Show Committee: The Committee will meet via Zoom on Tuesday, September 14, 2021. Nancy English told members they can sign up on the HGMS Website to volunteer for one of the 125 half-day shifts over the four days of the HGMS Annual Show. Three colleges will also provide volunteers for the Show.

Mary Ann Mitscherling asked for volunteers to demonstrate various lapidary skills at the Show. There are three shifts per day to demonstrate cabochon grinding and polishing, carving, silversmithing, wire wrapping, Viking knit, faceting, and beading. Contact her to sign up for the shifts you want.

Steve Blyskal, Dealer Chairman, has three more spots to fill. He is reviewing the waiting list of dealers that have asked to take part in the Show. This year will be the largest change of dealers in thirty years.

Replace Display cases: The BOD authorized Sigrid Stewart to hire the carpenter of her choice to make one prototype case to set the price of supplies and labor for the rest of the cases. Unfortunately, the carpenter she chose suffered an industrial accident. He will be unable to make the cases before the Annual Show. Because of donations, we may have enough different types of cases available to use this year.

Website Committee: met on August 19. Michele Marsel will be handling the updates to Website current events. The team is working on updating the Website for the show.

OLD BUSINESS

President Stewart asked members to look for the progress of Old Business items in the Board of Directors' Meeting Minutes in the latest BackBenders Gazette (BBG) on the HGMS Website <https://hgms.org> under Publications.

Bylaws: The Board reviewed the updates of Articles I through V of the HGMS Bylaws during the August 3 BOD meeting. They will finish Articles VI through IX during the Board meeting on September 7, 2021.

Internet upgrade for the Clubhouse: Michele Marsel reported the upgrade to Comcast is in progress and will be complete by end of September. Our existing LTE coverage will be active until the new service is fully in place.

NEW BUSINESS

President Stewart asked if anyone is planning on attending the SCFMS meeting, during the Lubbock Gem & Mineral Show on September 25 and 26. HGMS sponsors the trip, food and lodging. No one volunteered.

The next Board of Directors meeting will be Tuesday, 7:30 p.m. September 7, 2021.

The next General Meeting will be Tuesday, 7:30 p.m. September 28, 2021. Steve Blyskal's presentation will explore the full gamut of possibilities, from the pile of rocks in the backyard and the garden borders through various ways to store and display your collection, up to and including fine mineral display cases.

Refreshments will be provided by Michele Marsel.

SHOW-N-TELL

Paul Brandes brought a rare, oldest known, 2.1-billion-year-old megascopic fossil slab of *Grypania spiralis*. It was found at the Empire Mine in Ishpeming, Michigan. He also showed a thick slab of gold veined Mohawkite.

Drawing: Sandra Cline won the fossilized ammonite that Sigrid Stewart and Steve Blyskal donated from the estate of Martha McRae.

Adjourn: Phyllis George moved to adjourn the meeting. Foster Kneeland seconded it. The motion passed and the business meeting adjourned at 7:58 p.m.

Refreshments were provided by Nancy English. She made watermelon dinosaurs in honor of the program topic. Members were asked to "Feed the Kitty" with donations toward the food.

Vice President Blyskal introduced the program presented by Dr. Neal Immega, Paleontologist. The program was about the demise of the dinosaurs. The Chicxulub meteor did not do it! Dr. Keller from Princeton University visited outcrops all over Texas and Mexico and drilled new wells near Bryan, TX to provide core samples of the impact event and found that the impact happened more than 100,000 years BEFORE the extinction event. This program showed the data that Dr. Keller collected. She kindly permitted Dr. Neal to use her slides.

Members paid for their Silent Auction items after the Program.

2021 HGMS OFFICERS

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

HGMS SECTION CHAIRS

Archaeology Section Chair	Vacant	Archaeology@HGMS.org
Beading Section Chair	Maggie Manley	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

HGMS APPOINTED POSITIONS

Assistant Show Chair	Clyde McMeans	
Assistant Show Chair	Sigrid Stewart	
Backbender's Gazette Editor	Sigrid Stewart	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	Michele Marsel	Templates@HGMS.org
Librarian for Main Library	Neal Immega	Librarian@HGMS.org
Publicity Chair	Sarah 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	Lauren Blyskal	Webmaster@HGMS.org
Youth Section Assistant	Elizabeth Guynn	Youth2@HGMS.org

SEPTEMBER 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2 SHOP 9-3	3	4 YOUTH 10-12 SHOP 10-3
5 SHOP 10-3	6	7 BOD 7:30-9:30	8 SHOP 10-3 DAY LIGHT 1:00-3:00 FACETING 6:30-8:30	9 SHOP 9-3	10	11 SHOP 10-3
12 SHOP 10-3	13	14	15 SHOP 10-3 MINERAL 7:30-9:30	16 SHOP 9-3	17	18 YOUTH 10-12 SHOP 10-3 BEADING 12:30-3:30
19 SHOP 10-3	20 LAPIDARY 7:30-9:30	21 PALEO 7:30-9:30	22 SHOP 10-3	23 SHOP 9-3	24	25 SHOP 10-3
26 SHOP 10-3	27	28 GENERAL MEETING 7:30-9:30	29 SHOP 10-3	30 SHOP 9-3		

OCTOBER 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2 YOUTH 10-12 SHOP 10-3
3 SHOP 10-3	4	5 BOD 7:30-9:30	6 SHOP 10-3 DAY LIGHT 1:00-3:00	7 SHOP 9-3	8	9 SHOP 10-3
10 SHOP 10-3	11	12	13 SHOP 10-3 FACETING 6:30-8:30	14 SHOP 9-3	15	16 YOUTH 10-12 SHOP 10-3 BEADING 12:30-3:30
17 SHOP 10-3	18 LAPIDARY 7:30-9:30	19 PALEO 7:30-9:30	20 SHOP 10-3 MINERAL 7:30-9:30	21 SHOP 9-3	22	23 SHOP 10-3
24 SHOP 10-3	25	26 GENERAL MEETING 7:30-9:30	27 SHOP 10-3	28 SHOP 9-3	29	30
31 SHOP 10-3						

THE BACKBENDER'S GAZETTE

NEWSLETTER OF THE

HGMS | HOUSTON GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY

10805 Brooklet
Houston, Texas 77099
(281) 530-0942



SCFMS Bulletin Awards

1998 - 1st (Large)
2000 - 1st (Large)
2003 - 1st (Large)
2005-2019 -1st (Large)
2020 - 3rd (Large)

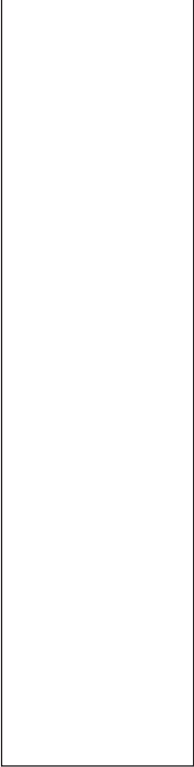
AFMS Bulletin Awards



1998 - 2nd (Large)
2004 - 3rd (Large)
2007 - 1st (Large)
2010 - 2nd (Large)
2012 - 2013 - 3rd (Large)
2014 - 2nd (Large)
2017 - 3rd (Large)
2019 - 2nd (Large)
2020 - 2nd (Large)



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