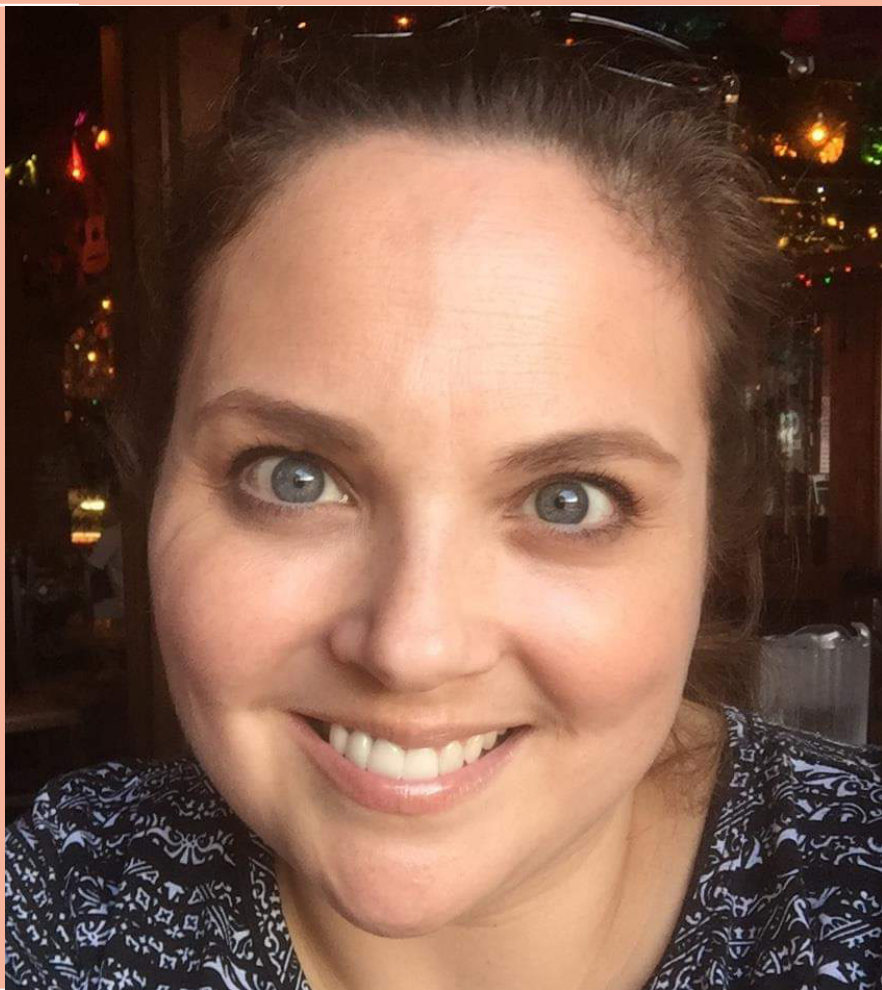


THE BACKBENDER'S GAZETTE

NEWSLETTER OF THE HOUSTON GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY



FEATURED MEMBER:
SARAH METSA

More on Page 7

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About Us: <https://hgms.org/>

Upcoming Meetings and Events: <https://hgms.org/events/>

Calendar: <https://hgms.org/calendar>

Officers and Contact Information: <https://hgms.org/contact-us/>

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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 Nancy English

After ten days volunteering for Early Voting for the 2022 Primary Elections, I am looking forward to representing HGMS at the Clear Lake Gem and Mineral Society (CLGMS) Annual Show on Sunday, February 27, surrounded by like-minded people.

Do not misunderstand, I like working for Harris County (\$17.00 per hour). It is rewarding to see voters come out to tackle 88 and 98 races that fill two legal-size page ballots for each party. I heard of one-hour lines and four hundred-person crowds at other places, but the El Farouq Mosque in Spring Branch must be a secret. Vote there next time. No lines. Workers are friendly, knowledgeable, and glad to see the Voters. The voters were polite, pleasant, yet serious about their business of choosing the people who might govern our lives. Only 4% of the Harris County registered voters turned out for Early Voting.

The HGMS Show Committee kicks off the promotions for our 69th Annual Gem, Mineral, Jewelry, and Fossil Show at the February Clear Lake Show. HGMS volunteers pass out our fresh-off-the-press Show fliers. We give away petrified wood to smiling children and tell their parents about the Show. We promote the benefits of belonging to Houston Gem and Mineral Society: The Youth Section, the lapidary shop, the silversmithing shop, the Section meetings, and programs, whatever we can tell them before they get distracted. The geode door prize forms will provide new email addresses for our mass mailing reminders for our Show. Beverly Mace will bring membership forms for rockhounds eager to commit.

On Saturday morning, Scott Singleton, Show Chair, and Clyde McMeans, Logistics Chair, set up the tables with beautiful, rock, and large, petrified wood specimens with lamps to show them off. Maggie Manly, Beverly Mace, and Amber Garner were on duty all day. Maggie demonstrated how to make beaded spiders, setting the spiders on the rock terrain around her and selling them. Amber and Beverly worked the crowd.

Tomorrow, Sunday, I will get to demonstrate wire wrapping techniques by working on a special piece I set aside months ago. Paula Smith and Daniel Rodriguez will be with me all morning engaging the public. Theo Glandon and Theresa Goodwin will be there in the afternoon to continue our fun work with a like-minded public. Scott and Clyde will be back in the evening to load up the large, stunning rock and petrified wood specimens; pack the supplies and carry them back to the Club.

Volunteerism has always been a theme in my life and now it is rewarding me by keeping me busy in retirement, doing things I enjoy. I can put away my face masks (for a while at

least) and digest the news of the Ukrainian invasion by Russia, portending unthinkable repercussions in all of our futures. It is comforting to look forward to being at the CLGMS Show. I am inspired to apply myself to the HGMS projects the Board of Directors has committed to for the year. I am giving back to the little piece of the world that brings me joy.

VICE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Sarah Metsa

Excited about the March program? So am I! When you know what it is, let me in on the secret!

Just kidding, sort of. 2022 started out with my family being struck by Covid and getting through that put me behind in every aspect of life. Professionally, personally, and as a resource to HGMS. I am still catching up! The March speaker will be given by a club member, I'm just not sure which one it will be. Rest assured, this information will be available on the website and shared in the weekly eBlast. Stay tuned!

UPCOMING SHOWS

The Gulf Coast Gem and Mineral Society Gem & Mineral Show - March 5-6
1213 Terry Shamsie Blvd, Richard M. Borchard Fairgrounds, Robstown, TX 78380
<http://www.gcgms.org/>

Prospector's Club Annual Show - March 5th from 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. and Sunday, March 6 from 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Howard County Barn, Big Spring, Texas

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 (3RD WEDNESDAY AT 7:30 PM VIA ZOOM)

On February 15th Steve Blyskal presented a talk on the Milpillas Mine in Sonora, Mexico, a copper porphyry mine with world class minerals, describing the geology and showing examples of the minerals that came out during the short lifespan of the mine.

On March 16, 2022 from 7:30 - 9:30. Mineral Section will hold an online Zoom meeting. One discussion topic will be the Clear Lake Gem and Mineral Show, what members saw and what they acquired. Diedre Prince and Burton Dworski will then present a talk on field collecting safety.

BEADING SECTION (3RD SATURDAY AT 12:30 PM)

Bring your beading mat, scissors, wire and wire cutter, round nose and needle nose pliers, thread and beading needles if you have them.

The Section met on February 19th to learn how to create unique beads using wire, thread and special shaped beads, such as crescent shaped two-hold beads and seed beads (provided by Beading Section).

At the next meeting on March 19th, we will be doing something different. We will be making small flower pot flower arrangements out of egg cartons. This craft project is a change of pace for us. Alternatively, you can work on the beading project of your choice.

Bring your beading mat, scissors, wire and wire cutter, round nose and needle nose pliers, thread and beading needles if you have them.

NOTICE: Do you have a bracelet or necklace that needs restringing? The Beading Section will carefully restring your piece at an hourly rate of \$15.00 + materials. Contact beading@hgms.org to make arrangements. All funds will go to the Beading Section. Want notifications about upcoming Beading Group activities? E-mail beading@hgms.org to be added.

DAY LIGHT SECTION (1ST WEDNESDAY AT 1:00 PM)

On February 3rd, Margaret Hardman-Muye taught the group how to make a viking knit chain.

On March 3rd, the activity will be making wire wrap earrings.

The cost is \$5 to be paid at the meeting To register please email Nancy Searle at Daylight@HGMS.org.

LAPIDARY AND SILVERSMITHING SECTION (3RD MONDAY AT 7:00 PM)

The program on February 21, 2022 was Money Clip Part 2; constructing and finishing the project started in January. Silver needed was one 4 x 1 inch piece of 20g sterling (dead soft).

At the March 21st meeting, we will finish inlay work on obsidian, and the money clip and start a new project.

GEMSTONES AND FACETING (2ND WEDNESDAY AT 7:00 PM IN PERSON AND VIA ZOOM)

February's topic will be different types of facet machines from around the world, accessories and how to maintain them.

This month we have two videos covering different types of Faceting machines, how to maintain them, and the different parts and accessories.

Gem Cutting For Dummies - Part 1

Gem Cutting For Dummies - Part 2

Randy Carlson ran a faceting class on February 24th for one new person and 3 people who needed a refresher. All enjoyed the class and said we need more refresher classes like that.

Logan Wilcox Sr. is the new equipment manager for faceting.

The March 9th meeting will probably include a Zoom link for an in-person meeting. We will cover getting started with your own gems.

PALEO SECTION (3RD TUESDAY AT 7:30 PM)

The program for February 15th was "Tips from a Fossil Dealer for Identifying and Buying Dinosaur Teeth"

Jacob Kohr, one of our Paleo section members, made this presentation with his own material from Morocco and Hell Creek, Montana. After the meeting members had a chance to buy specimens.

Neal waseager to see the presentation on Morocco teeth because he has been burned by dealers at the Tucson show. He is beginning to wonder if Morocco even produces real teeth.

The March 15th meeting will feature Pennsylvanian fossils from the Jacksboro spillway and the Decatur sponge outcrops. Program will be by Jeanean Slamen.

YOUTH SECTION (1ST AND 3RD SATURDAYS FROM 10:00 AM TO 12:00 PM)

We will continue our regular activities working in the shop.

NEWS FROM NEAL

Texaco Saw: I have put in a stop that prevents the saw table from being moved so close to the saw blade that the blade CUTS the saw table. One of the users found that they could not complete the final saw cut. They were cutting 1/8 inch into the SAW TABLE!!!! Please stop destroying the saw!

The TIG welder can be made available for use by members. See Neal for training. This machine uses an electric arc to weld metal. The voltage is not dangerous but you need training to avoid eye damage. This micro welder is ideal for repairs. You can work on a piece of jewelry without taking the stones out. It is EASY to weld stainless steel and much harder to do silver because it is so conductive. I now make all my new creations in stainless. It looks like platinum.

See this youtube video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MVdU0Q_-tFo

Oil: I think I have found a new supplier for oil for the diamond saws. I will continue my policy of selling oil to club members. The price will be \$13/gallon. It is related to the price of oil. I do not have any control over that. Yes, I know the price used to be \$12/gallon. I will let you know on the weekly eblast when we have a new barrel.

Poster: The library was given 5 advertising posters and I will mount and hang the one from our FIRST show in 1957. See the poster in the clubhouse. Scott Singleton may have more information pertaining to the poster.

Fred Breuckner passed this fantastic web site to me of fossils through time: http://paleoportal.org/index.php?globalnav=fossil_gallery§ionnav=main

A reminder for the twice a month session (1st and 3rd Saturday) for Kids morning in the Grinding Shop: the rule is that kids get preference on the grinders and trim saws. Slab saws may only be used by adults. Adults should help with the kids, particularly with trim saws and dopping. These rules were created by Libby Guynn and myself.

Faceting: I have always said that my favorite section is Faceting because they never ask me to fix their machines. I once came to one of their meetings with a big hammer in one hand and a big wrench in the other and asked "Does anyone need help fixing their machine?" Everyone replied "NO! we are good."



Well, that ended this Thursday during the Faceting Class. As you can see above, I provided some tools and techniques to get the drive cone off the motor that spins the faceting shaft. The drive cone got a flat spot from being in contact with the drive plate for 1+ years. Logan the Younger and I got the drive cone off with a gear puller which I had hidden on my tool shelf. The process was just like working on the grinding shop machines except MUCH cleaner. Sigh, I never did get to use my big hammer. The moral of this story is to use your faceting machine often.

FEATURED MEMBER: SARAH METSA

I may be the new First Vice President for 2022, but I'm not new to HGMS! I joined in late 2010, I think, I'm not sure of the timing exactly. I know I came to my first general meeting in late 2010 and, somehow, I was convinced by Terry Proctor that I should be the 2011 Secretary of the Board. At the time I thought it a great honor. He must have seen something amazing in me! Now I know that it is just hard to find a secretary.

I had an almost 2-year-old girl at home (Mari) and my husband Mark totally supported me heading to the club to take Board Meeting and General Meeting minutes. During that early time, I also spent energy cleaning up and organizing the office, kitchen, jewelry room, tools cabinet, and volunteered at the Annual Show.

I also agreed to being the Education Chair in mid-2011. And agreed to act as Secretary and Education Chair again in 2012. Sometimes I would bring Mari to the club and set her up under a table against the wall and have her sort rocks (Neal swears I was a troll for doing this, but she loved it and was out of the way of anything dangerous, and I got some time to hang out with other rock nerds.) I was having a great time!

Then my mother died in May 2012. I was devastated and unbelievably busy as executor of her estate in Illinois. I finished out the HGMS duties that I had promised to complete in 2012 and then I went about wrapping up my mom's estate.

In 2013 I became pregnant with my second daughter (Anna) and she was not the type of child to quietly sit under a table and sort rocks. So, between estate work, new job (did I mention a new job during this time?), young kids, and depression, I disappeared from the club for a good while.



The words "I AM" on this pendant designed by Sarah serve as a reminder of God's words to Moses and that we speak our reality into existence. There are also symbols on the pendant tied to sacred geometry and spiritual paths.

And then.... My life calmed down and I started to think about rocks again. I became active in the club again a couple years ago, helping with the Trade Shows and Annual Show. And now I am pretty involved again. In addition to being the 2022 1st VP, I am also the Publicity Chair which includes sending out the weekly eBlast, and I'm an Info Booth Co-Chair with Sigrid Stewart for the annual show.

That's my HGMS journey for now. But my rock collecting journey... like all our journeys.... is never ending.

I grew up looking at the ground as I walked on gravel roads and I will do that for the rest of my life. The bits of jasper I found in Wisconsin at the age of 8 may not shine the way the amethyst cathedral I purchased at the age of 45 shines, but both are beautiful and precious to me. I'm looking forward to continuing my rock collecting journey as a part of HGMS.

UPCOMING CLASSES

The Board has approved opening classes to the public, although members will continue to receive a discounted price. This is to encourage potential students to become members before they take a class.

Classes this month:

Basic Silversmithing, taught by Tony Lucci, on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 7 PM to 10 PM on March 1, 3, 8, 10, and 15th

Basic Jewellery-Making Skills, from 1 PM to 4 PM on Thursdays, March 3, 10, 17 & 24, taught by Maggie Manley

Free-form Wire Wrapping, March 6th from 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM, taught by Joy Lester

Beginning Wire-Wrapping, March 20th from 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM, taught by Joy Lester.

See available classes and register on the HGMS website at:

<https://hgms.org/Classes/Education>

Please send any questions or suggestions for classes to: Classes@HGMS.org

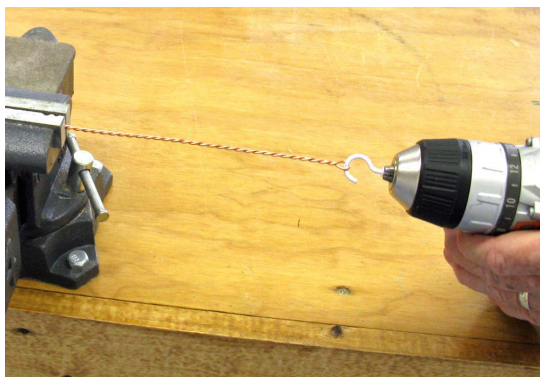
BENCH TIPS FOR MARCH

by Brad Smith

TWISTING WIRE

Twisting wire can be done with an old hand drill, but it goes much faster with a power tool. My preference is to use a screw gun, although a Foreman should do well.

Just make a little hook out of coat hanger wire (or use a screw-in cup hook) and chuck it up in your screw gun. Grip the free ends of the wire in a vice, and slip the looped end onto your hook. Be sure to keep a little tension on the wires as you twist.



Note: a power drill is too fast for this unless you have one with variable speed.

SOLDERING PRONGS

I often use prongs to hold an irregular cab or other object on rings and pendants. But prongs can be a little tricky to solder. You must find some way to hold them upright while soldering, and the simple butt joint that looks strong sometimes breaks when you start to bend the prong over the stone. There is nothing worse than having a prong break off when you are setting the stone—*#~*!!

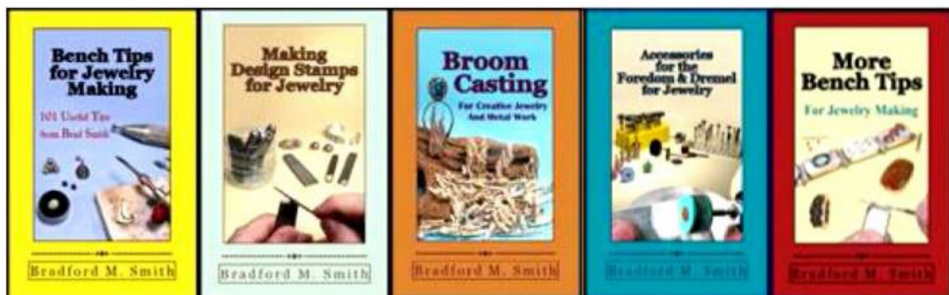
I solved both problems with one little trick. It keeps the prongs in position for soldering, and it gives you a stronger joint at the same time.

Locate and center punch the position for each prong. Then drill holes a little smaller than your prong wire. Sand a small taper on the ends of your prong wires, and stand them up in the holes. The wires support themselves, soldering is easy, and the joint is stronger because of the increased soldering area.

SMART SOLUTIONS FOR YOUR JEWELRY MAKING PROBLEMS:

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

TIPS AND TRICKS FROM BRAD'S BOOKS



LIFETIME AWARD FOR PHYLLIS GEORGE

*Presented by 2021 President Sigrid Stewart
HGMS Christmas Party 2021*

A Lifetime award was presented to Phyllis George in recognition of her many achievements and hard work on behalf of the Houston Gem & Mineral Society, as Webmaster, Editor of the Backbender's Gazette, and Board Representative for the Lapidary and Silversmithing Section.

Phyllis responds:

Thank you, Sigrid. I was stunned when you presented this to me. I was so speechless, I could think of nothing to say other than "THANK YOU." I am extremely pleased to be so honored. I was always happiest when working on something I thought would benefit HGMS.

Very talented people have picked up from where I left off. Their hard work and creative ideas are what makes Houston Gem & Mineral Society the best club that it can be.

DIAMOND JIM BRADY EARNED HIS NAME

*Reprinted from the February 2022 Issue of the Roadrunner Newsletter
of the Prospector's Club of Big Spring, Texas,
earlier From The Trilobite, others via Glacial Drifter 10/93*

The Motto of the Prospectors Club is "See the USA the Rockhound Way"

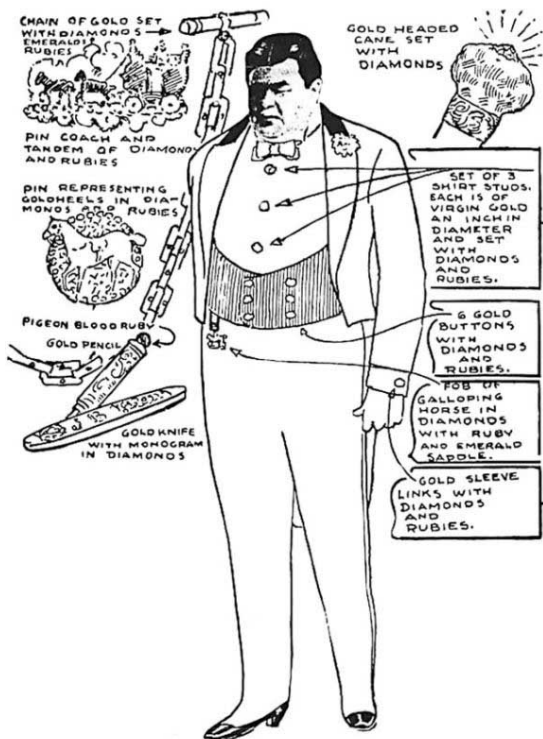
The greatest male collector of diamonds was the flamboyant and portly James Buchanan Brady (1856-1917), the fabulous Diamond Jim. He counted among his friends the lovely Lillian Russell, Lilly Langtry, John L. Sullivan and other celebrities of the Gay Nineties. Diamond Jim was a tremendously successful salesman of railroad equipment during the years of U.S. railroad expansion.

His fabulous diamonds gained him instant entree into the offices of powerful railroad magnates who had reputations for being difficult to approach. By flaunting his glittering diamond wealth, he became both a millionaire and a celebrity who people still talk about today. He was also a well known art collector.

Diamond Jim wore a 25-carat diamond mounted in a heavy gold ring, and his huge tie pin held an even larger stone. He owned 30 complete sets of personal jewelry - a different one for each day of the month.

His most famous one was the Transportation Set, composed of various railroad cars, set with 2,548 diamonds. More than 20,000 diamonds of all shapes and sizes, plus about 6,000 colored gemstones were included in his extensive collection. Is it any wonder he was known as "Diamond Jim"?

Also well-known for a truly stupendous appetite, Diamond Jim passed away at the age of 60, leaving a bequest to Johns Hopkins Hospital, where a medical division is named in his honor.



For more information, visit:
[Diamond Jim From Head to Toe](#),
[Southern Jewelry News](#)

This early illustration depicts Diamond Jim Brady and some of his adornments, circa 1908.

WHAT I LEARNED— VOLUNTEERS

excerpt from SCFMS January-February 2022 Newsletter

http://www.scfms.net/Newsletters/2022_JAN_FEB_SCFMS_NEWSLETTER.pdf

As Past President of the SCFMS, I thank everyone for their support. As all of you who volunteer know, serving in such a position is a learning experience. I learned several things during my service as Vice-President then President of the Federation, which is one reason to volunteer. It is not always easy to volunteer for any position because of the time it takes from your regular life. I find it easier to make it a part of my regular life.



*Jerrold Simpson,
Past President
SCFMS*

One of the hardest jobs of an organization President is to get folks to volunteer. It is generally easier to get volunteers in your local societies because you have frequent contact with each other. It is different with the Federation. Contact with follow volunteers is normally by email, phone call, text and personal contact once a year.

As President, you call on people you know to fill positions and normally these are people that are already volunteering. If you will review the present list of officers, you will note that many of them have been involved in the same position for several years.

The Federation needs volunteers to continue serving the member societies. It is my hope that the Federation members continue supporting Roger Buford, President and Don Shurtz, Vice President in the coming year. Try something new & different, volunteer for a federation position, or a local Society position. Who knows, you could learn something new.

2022 WORLD WIDE TUMBLING CONTEST

Update: November 29, 2021

*from the January 2022 Pick & Shovel, Official Publication of the
Lincoln Gem & Mineral Club, Inc.*

The rock for 2022 is Lahontan Agate from western Nevada. Entry fee is \$35 for 3 pounds of rough rock for continental U.S. residents. This includes shipping the material to you.

- 3 lbs. of rough rock will be shipped to you when the application and payment is received beginning in early January 2022.
- Deadline for application is June 1, 2022.
- Mail 5 (yes, only 5) of your best finished rocks and a copy of the entry form postmarked no later than August 15.
- Apply early in the year to have plenty of time to tumble. Take your time tumbling!
- Cash prizes = \$250, \$100, and \$50 for first, second, and third place winners!

To enter the contest:

- Digitally: Fill out the application and email the completed form to Tumbling@FeatherRiverRocks.org (save completed document to your computer or print topdf). Mail your payment to the address below.
- Hard Copy: Print and fill out the application. Mail the application with your payment to the address below.

- Payment by Mail is required! Please make checks/money orders payable to "FRLMS" and mail to: Tumbling Contest, c/o Lori Millard, 2660 Cherokee Road, Oroville, CA 95965

For more information, call Lori at (530) 533-2968 or email Tumbling@FeatherRiverRocks.org

Go to <https://www.featherriverrocks.org/show/rock-tumbling-contest-dropdown2> for the link to the full rules and application. You can also find the rules and application on LGMC's website www.lincolngemmineralclub.org/resources.

KING TUT'S DAGGER

When archaeologists entered Tutankhamun's burial chamber in the Valley of the Kings in the 1920s, they found a foot-long dagger among the objects buried with the pharaoh. Its blade was made of iron, perplexing considering that the Iron Age didn't kick off until a century after Tut's death.

Iron objects that precede widespread knowledge of iron metallurgy have led researchers to believe that older items come from meteoritic iron—chunks of the metal that fell from

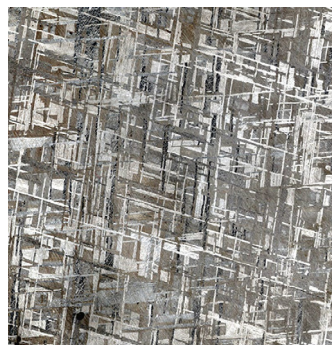


space and were then forged on Earth. Researchers x-ray scanned the dagger, revealing concentrations of iron, nickel, manganese, and cobalt. In the blackened spots on the blade, they found sulfur, chlorine, calcium, and zinc.

Cross-hatched texture present in places on both sides of the dagger suggest Widmanstätten structure, which is typical of octahedrite iron meteorites, as is the mineralogy.

The team also compared the pattern on Tut's dagger with the pattern on the Japanese meteorite Shirahagi. Shirahagi was the source of the iron in some Japanese swords acquired by the Taisho Emperor.

They suspect the dagger was created through low-temperature forging, perhaps by the Hittites in Turkey, who were both allies and enemies.



Widmanstätten structure

Find more information at: <https://gizmodo.com/king-tuts-meteorite-dagger-has-a-mystery-origin-story-1848562565/amp>

GYPSUM

FROM THE BRECCIA NEWSLETTER, FEBRUARY 2022

By Jo Borucki

Gypsum is well-known as the standard for Mohs Hardness of two, and it is a common and plentiful mineral that has a variety of purposes. The walls in your house are most likely constructed using drywall panels where one of the ingredients is gypsum. Plaster of Paris is often used as a hobby material, for example, as a child, I filled small rubber molds with a mixture of powdered plaster of Paris mixed with water, waited for the mixture to harden, and enjoyed the resulting small paintable statues.

Crime shows often show clues such as tire tracks or shoe prints left at a crime scene, which can be preserved as evidence by filling the track or imprint with plaster of Paris, thus obtaining a permanent cast. If you broke a bone, your break may have been protected with a cast made of plaster of Paris. If you are a gardener, you may use gypsum, a source of Sulphur, as a soil conditioner. Portland cement also contains gypsum. Sculptors love the massive, fine grained form of gypsum known as alabaster.

Gypsum in abundance can also become a tourist destination - White Sands National Park in New Mexico. The enormous park covering 227.8 square miles features white sand dunes composed of gypsum crystals which cover about 41% of the park.



Image from White Sands National Park Website

The sand in the park is about 30 feet deep with dunes topping 60 feet.

Around 12,000 years ago, the climate warmed, and rain and snow dissolved the gypsum from the surrounding mountains carrying it into the basin. The gypsum dried and formed crystals which are also called selenite. The strong winds broke up many of the crystals to form the white gypsum sand seen today.

For more information about White Sands National Park: <https://www.nps.gov/whsa/learn/gypsum.htm>



Gypsum crystals form as the water evaporates in Lake Lucero, a playa within the park.

MORE ABOUT GYPSUM

by Sigrid Stewart and Steve Blyskal

Gypsum is a fascinating and easy to collect mineral and widely available. Because of this it is often the first crystal collected by young rockhounds.

The most common sulphate mineral, it has a Mohs Scale hardness of 2 and is composed of calcium sulfate dihydrate, with the chemical formula $\text{CaSO}_4 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$. It is widely mined and is used as a fertilizer and as the main constituent in many forms of plaster, blackboard/sidewalk chalk, and drywall.

Gypsum is often found in the evaporite beds in sedimentary rocks deposited by ancient seas. It is also deposited from hot springs, by deposition of volcanic vapors and by oxidation of sulfides. It is found in oil and coal and can appear as a waste product from extraction or burning. It is usually white or clear, although small amounts of other minerals can give it many different colors.



Copyright Steve Blyskal 2016

Naica, Mexico. Steve Blyskal photo



Santa Eulalia, Mexico. Steve Blyskal photo

Gypsum crystallizes in the Monoclinic system. Crystal forms can be flattened or twinned, and transparent and bladed crystals are called **selenite**. These can be quite large, as in the famous occurrence of giant crystals at Naica in Mexico.

[Information on Naica:](#)

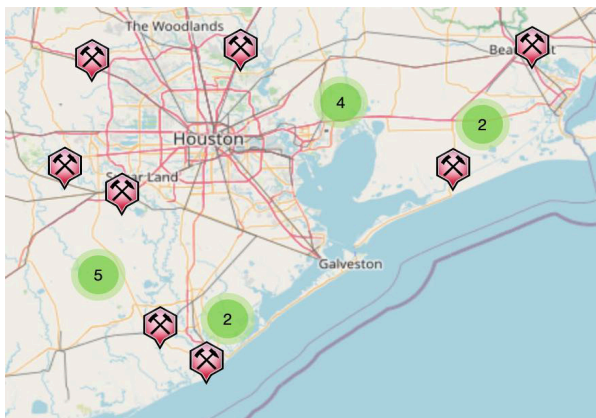
Massive, fine-grained gypsum is called alabaster. Other forms popular with rockhounds are satin spar, which occurs in fibrous masses with a pearly luster, and desert roses, floral forms crystallized with sand inclusions. The surface of crystals may be bent or twisted. It is somewhat water soluble, and unusually, is less soluble at higher temperatures. It is easily redeposited by ground water.



Fishtail twinning, Naica, Mexico. By Didier Descouens - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=8534190>

Gypsum is an important industrial mineral in Texas. Massive gypsum is produced from mines in Culberson, Fisher, Gillespie, Hardeman, Hudspeth, Kimble, Nolan, and Stonewall counties.

Mindat.org shows a variety of locations for gypsum or selenite all over the country. There are several in the Houston area, on private land of course.



Some notable locations are Long Point Dome and Orchard Dome in Ft. Bend County, Hockley Dome in Harris County, and Humble Dome in Humble County.

There are other interesting localities in Texas: The Glass Mountains in West Texas are so named because of the shiny pieces of gypsum on the surface of the limestone hills. The Palo Duro Canyon general area has many sites for gypsum, as do many roadsides throughout West Texas and Central Texas.

Our own Nathan Gandara posted a youtube video on Texas selenite crystal collecting: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kh8VO-IYkac>

Here are some Oklahoma sites from: <http://www.gatorgirlrocks.com/state-by-state/oklahoma.html>

Alabaster Caverns State Park, Freedom, Oklahoma

The highlight of this 200-acre park is the 3/4-mile cavern formed of alabaster, a form of gypsum, making it the largest natural gypsum cave in the world open to the public.

Rockhounding sites for families:

Selenite Crystals at Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge – West of Jet, Oklahoma

Although specimen collecting generally is prohibited in National Wildlife Refuges, recreational rockhounds are permitted (subject to federal restrictions) to collect selenite crystals at the Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge (April 1 – October 15). Single crystals, penetration twins, and clusters are the typical crystal shapes most frequently encountered on the refuge. Exceptional individual crystals measuring up to seven inches long have been found, along with complex combinations weighing as much as 38 pounds. Collectors are permitted to remove up to 10 pounds of crystals plus one large cluster for their personal use in any one day. It is unlawful to sell crystals taken from the refuge.

Oklahoma State Crystal: Hourglass Selenite

Oklahoma also has designated an official state crystal. Oklahoma designated the hourglass selenite crystal as its official state crystal in 2005. Hourglass selenite is a crystalized variety of gypsum. Hourglass selenite is common to the ancient salt plains in north central Oklahoma and this is the only place this variety occurs.



From the Gator Girl site

References:
<https://mindat.org>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gypsum>

<https://www.geologyin.com/2017/06/how-do-desert-roses-form.html>

More photos on the next page.



Desert Roses, locality Tunisia. By Didier Descouens - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=8533640>



Ram's Horn Gypsum at left. Locality: Santa Eulalia District, Municipio de Aquiles Serdán, Chihuahua, Mexico. By Rob Lavinsky, iRocks.com – CC-BY-SA-3.0, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=10132453>



Pernatty Lagoon, Mt Gunson, Stuart Shelf area, Andamooka Ranges - Lake Torrens area, South Australia, Australia. By Rob Lavinsky, iRocks.com – CC-BY-SA-3.0, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=10134992>

HOUSTON GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 1, 2022
by Sharon Halton

X	President— Nancy English	x	Beading— Maggie Manley
	1st Vice President—Sarah Metsa	X	Day Light—Fred Brueckner
X	2nd Vice President—Beverly Mace	X	Gemstones & Faceting—Randy Carlson
X	Treasurer—Michele Marsel	X	Lapidary & Silversmithing—Richard Good
X	Secretary—Sharon Halton	X	Mineral—Ray Kizer
		X	Paleontology—Mike Dawkins

The meeting was called to order by President Nancy English using Zoom at 7:35 p.m. A quorum was present (see attendance list above).
No non-voting members were in attendance:

PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS:

President English noted that all motions from the last meeting had been approved. She stated that Sarah Metsa noted that we will need to have many more volunteers and Sarah added that to the eBlast. The discussion then turned to the new format for the Treasurer's report.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Michele Marsel sent the Treasurer's Report to members on February 1, 2022. PayPal 1099 is received annually but new tax laws need to be discussed with Rodney and Michele will report back to the Board at the March meeting. Michele Marsel discussed all the particulars of the budget spreadsheet and gave explanations of all the items.

All committees need to present a request for a budget increase to the Board of Directors if they are going over the approved 2022 budget.
Board members Randy, Maggie, and Nancy will review the Show Actual budget. The budget for 2022 was discussed and approved.

A motion to approve the budget as presented and revisit any Show changes next month was made by Ray Kizer and seconded by Maggie Manley, all other members approved with no abstentions.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

BBG: Beverly will notify members when the online version of the February BBG is

available on the HGMS Website.

Donations, Sales, Auction Committee (DSAC): Michele Marsel

Michele Marsel reported that she had 7 volunteers come to help package bags of slabs for sale from the Helm donation and will be put on eBay on February 6, 2022. Ray Kizer is reviewing the remainder of the Saxman donation.

Richard Good has refurbished a 16" {1970's Highland Park) saw which was received as a donation.

Education Committee: Maggie Manley

Classes are being arranged and currently, Joy has two wire wrap classes in February and Tony will offer Silversmithing in March, and Maggie will be offering Basic Jewelry Making Skills (4 classes) also in March. She also stated that she is planning for Diane Schaub to offer a class on mosaics in April, and Susan Canter will possibly conduct a PMC class. Schedules can be found in the BBG or on our website.

Health Safety & Environmental Committee-Sarah Metsa

President English thanked Sarah for offering to chair the committee. In Sarah's absence Ms. English presented for the HSE committee.

An HVAC contract for maintenance was discussed and a motion to accept the bid from Lee Thompson for an annual fee of \$1282.00 payable quarterly (\$320.50) when the inspection is performed was moved by Sharon Halton and seconded by Maggie Manley, all other members approved with no abstentions.

A roofing contract from Resolute Roofing was discussed. Their contract was for exterior inspection at \$350 per year. Discussion of the need for them to do an interior inspection also was brought up which would require the contract to be rewritten and confirm that the price stays the same. Once this is completed the Board decided that a vote by email could be done.

Clubhouse cleaning services are still being received and will be reviewed next month. Contracts have been received from 3 companies but two have not come to the club to see the venue. President English will create a spreadsheet with included services and circulate it to the Board.

Membership Committee: Beverly Mace Membership report.

Member Counts	New	Renewed (January)	Renewed to Date	Not yet paid for 2022
Singles	10	41	135	134
Couples	2	15	37	35
Families	1	2	7	18
Youth	2	2	9	2

Scholarship Committee: Mike Sommers

Mike was not present. He will start contacting schools when he returns.

Show Committee: Scott Singleton/ Sigrid Stewart

Of the missing show Member's ticket money, \$255.00 has been received.

Website Committee: Scott Singleton

The Board discussed the option suggested by the Website Committee to move the BBG to a "blog". More discussion will occur before any decisions are made.

SECTION REPORTS

Beading Section: third Saturday, 12:30 p.m.,

Motion to transfer ownership of the Wells Fargo checking account ending in 2554 to Maggie Manley, HGMS Beading Chairperson, and update the TIN to 74-6060691 which belongs to Houston Gem & Mineral Society was made by Maggie, seconded by Richard Good- and unanimously approved by the rest of the Board.

Motion to close the Wells Fargo account and move the money to Chase Bank was made by Mike Dawkins, seconded by Michele Marsel, and unanimously approved by the rest of the Board.

A motion to establish an HGMS Chase checking account for the Beading Section with Maggie Manley, Section Chairperson, as the signer on the account and a second person in their Section will need to be identified to be authorized to sign in Maggie's absence; Sharon Halton, Secretary of HGMS will be the administrator, and Michele Marsel, Treasurer will be allowed viewing access was made by Fred Brueckner, seconded by Ray Kizer, and unanimously approved by the rest of the Board.

Daylight Section: first Wednesday, 1:00 p.m.

Gemstones and Faceting Section: second Wednesday, 7:00 p.m., Zoom Lapidary and

Silversmithing Section: third Monday, 7:00 p.m.

At the January 17 Lapidary meeting, Richard Good requested approval to remove Phyllis George as the second signer on the Chase Checking account ending in 7337 and appoint another member in her stead. Richard nominated Michele Marsel to be the second signatory and she accepted. The account signatory changes were approved by the unanimous vote of the 13 members present at the Lapidary meeting.

A motion to remove Phyllis George as a signer on the HGMS Chase Lapidary account ending in 7337 and approve Michele Marsel as the second signer on the account. Sharon Halton, Secretary of HGMS will be the administrator was made by Maggie Manley, seconded by Ray Kizer, and unanimously approved by the rest of the Board.

Lapidary Section notified the Board that they are changing their meeting start time from 7:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

President English asked if there was any other Section News, none was received.

OLD BUSINESS

Display Cases status: Sigrid Stewart: not present, no report.

Update signers on the HGMS Prosperity Account. Richard moved to update the signatures on the Prosperity Bank as follows:

- Sigrid Stewart, Nancy English, and Beverly Mace currently sign on the checking account ending 8888.
- Remove Beverly Mace and Sigrid Stewart.
- The new signers are Michele Marsel, Sarah Metsa and Nancy English.
- Establish Sharon Halton as the new Secretary and administrator.

The motion was seconded by Mike Dawkins, and it passed unanimously.

New signers will need to meet at Prosperity Bank in February (prior to February 14) to change signatories on the HGMS Capital Repairs and Improvements account.

NEW BUSINESS

ALAA Membership: Mike Dawkins informed the Board that this organization helps to protect the access to spaces controlled by the Bureau of Land Management and other organization that prevent "us" from looking for rocks and minerals. The cost of membership for the ALAA - American Lands Access Association is \$50.00 per year. Motion to pay the membership dues for this year and annually was made by Richard Good, seconded by Mike Dawkins and passed unanimously.

Dogs on Premises: A brief discussion on concerns and complaints received about dogs at general meetings and the holiday party was held. It was decided to adopt a policy that all dog visitors including service dogs and emotional support animals will be leashed and under the full and immediate control of their owner/handler at all times.

A motion was made to adopt the policy that all dogs (including service dogs and emotional support animals) are to be leashed and at the owner/handler's side at all times by Sharon Halton, seconded by Randy Carlson, 8 members approved and one abstained.

The next Board of Directors Zoom meeting will be the first Tuesday, March 1, 7:30 p.m.
The next General Meeting will be fourth Tuesday, February 22, 7:30 p.m.

Maggie thanked Michele for all the work that she has done for the club during the last 18 months that she has devoted to HGMS.

Adjourn: A motion to adjourn was made by Fred Brueckner, seconded by Ray Kizer. and the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 9:36 p.m.

I certify that the foregoing minutes were distributed to and approved by the Houston Gem and Mineral Society Board, Sharon Halton, Secretary

HOUSTON GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

February 22, 2022

by Sharon Halton

Vice President Sarah Metsa called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Because of the rise in Covid cases with the Delta and Omicron Variants, the Board of Directors is asking for everyone to wear masks at our General Meetings whether or not they are vaccinated.

President English arrived to conduct the meeting. She welcomed ten attendees in the room and eight members attending the online Zoom. There were no new members or guests.

PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

The Silent Auction opened at 7:00 p.m. Members bid again during the break. Final bids were collected after the break and paid for their items after the program.

The speakers used for the hybrid meetings are very sensitive. President English asked members to take any personal conversations during the meeting or the program, to the garage.

EFMLS Wildacres May 16-22, 2022.

Every year, the Eastern Federation holds a Spring and Autumn lapidary and jewelry workshop in the mountains of North Carolina. This year's Spring workshop Speaker-in-Residence is Dr. Nathalie Brandes. Some of the membership might be interested in attending. The direct link to the workshop and the Registration Form is in the week of February 13 Eblast for those interested.

Dr. Brandes is a geologist, author, and distinguished college professor and researcher. She is a Professor of Geosciences at Lone Star College, where she has been teaching for the past 17 years. In 2019, she was presented the Faculty Excellence Award in recognition of outstanding teaching methods and dedication to student success in the classroom and beyond. Her current research focuses on ancient mining techniques as well as the history and geology of classic mineral localities.

HGMS is immensely proud of Nathalie Brandes. Nancy English is hoping that Nathalie will present her speech to the General Meeting sometime this year. Sarah Metsa will contact Nathalie.

Approval of Minutes: Sarah Metsa moved to approve the minutes of the January 25, 2022, General Meeting as published in the February 2022 BBG. Nancy Fischer seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

COMMITTEE/SECTION REPORTS

Please look for reports of future Section meetings and programs in the BBG calendar, on the Website <https://hgms.org/events>, 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, using the Subject Line: "New Member to be added." President English invited Section Chairs and Standing Committee Chairs to make any additional announcements.

Volunteer Committee Nancy English:

The Clear Lake Gem and Mineral Society Annual Gem Show will be February 26-27 at the Pasadena Convention Center, 7902 Fairmont Parkway, Pasadena, Texas 77507. HGMS

will have a booth at the show to promote the HGMS 2022 Show and our club.

- Saturday shifts: 9:45 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and 1:45 to 6:00 p.m.
- Sunday shifts: 10:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and 1:30 until HGMS displays are packed and loaded to return to the Club. (will be after 5:00 p.m.)

So far, we need two more volunteers on Saturday for each shift and three more on Sunday morning. Someone will need to help with the collection of club displays before the show.

Membership Committee: Beverly Mace

Time to pay your dues. Keep those 2022 dues rolling in! People can check their membership status and pay their dues at the Clear Lake Show from February 26-27. If you prefer to pay your HGMS dues with a check or cash, you can do so at the show. And you can always email Beverly at beverly_mace@att.net anytime to check on your membership status.

Seven new children from the same family became members this past weekend.

Health Safety & Environmental Committee: Nancy English: Three cleaning companies have been interviewed and the decision on which one to hire will be made soon. By the next General Meeting, the clubhouse should be nice and clean.

Show Committee: Scott Singleton/Sigrid Stewart:

The next Show Committee meeting is Tuesday, March 8. More information will be presented at the next General Meeting. Steve Blyskal informed the group that the show committee passed a motion to raise the price of admission to \$9.00; member discounts will still apply. No tickets will be mailed out to members for this coming year. A new flier was created by Scott Singleton and will be ready for distribution at the Clear Lake show this coming weekend. The fliers are beautiful.

Publicity Committee: Sarah Metsa:

The Publicity Committee produces the Sunday E-blast every week with Section meeting programs, shop news, and upcoming events. Any information can be sent to news@hgms.org.

Shop Committee: Neal Immega: no news is good news, and it is all good news.

SECTION NEWS

Lapidary and Silversmithing:

Michele Marsel reminded everyone that the Lapidary Section has changed its start time to 7:00 p.m.

Day Light:

Mary Ann Mitscherling will teach the next Day Light Section program, showing three different wirework techniques. The fee to participate is \$5.00 and she expressed that people would receive much more than five dollars' worth of material.

OLD BUSINESS

President English 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

NEW BUSINESS

President English asked for any New Business. None was presented.

The next Board of Directors meeting will be Tuesday, March 1, 2022, at 7:30 p.m. by Zoom.

The next General Meeting will be Tuesday, March 22, 2022, at 7:30 p.m. In-person and by Zoom.

Show-n-Tell: Nancy English asked presenters to limit items to three items.

Sarah Metsa showed four necklaces that she has gotten from an online auction "Hi Bid."

Mary Ann Mitscherling showed the necklace that she made about 20 years ago of wire-wrapped dichroic glass.

Nancy Fischer expressed gratitude for Sarah coming to the front of the room so that the camera can show the online viewers who is speaking.

Steve Blyskal said that he and Sigrid have a total of twelve people signed up for their trip to the Kokernot Ranch 06 in Alpine. He said that they are going to have meetings for those people to prepare them for what they will see at the ranch. He was asked if this would be available to see on Zoom, and he replied that they might try but it will be difficult to see the rocks they will be showing. He will also be presenting talks on the Kokernot 06 to both the Colorado Mineral Society and the Fort Worth Mineral Society and if anyone is interested in seeing this, he could send out the links once he receives them from the clubs.

Drawing: Charles Shupe won the Selenite display from Jet Oklahoma, donated by the Youth Section.

Sharon Halton provided refreshments. A volunteer for next month's refreshments did not come forward.

During the break President English asked attendees to do the following:

Place final bids on the Silent Auction items. Remember to pay for them after the program.

Feed the Kitty! Your donations offset the cost of the snacks.

Thank the volunteers that made tonight possible.

Adjourn: John Mitscherling moved to adjourn. Michele Marsel seconded it and it was unanimously passed. The meeting was adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

Vice President Metsa introduced the program: "High or Low? The Uplift History of the Colorado Plateau" by Emma Heitmann. Emma is a Ph.D. student at the University of Washington and joined us via Zoom from Washington. She is a geoscientist with an interdisciplinary educational background, driven by a passion for environmental and social sustainability. After earning her doctorate her dream career will allow her to collaborate with other creative and driven individuals to develop solutions for challenging environmental problems.